2018–2019 Recommended Use of Funds

School Improvement Partnerships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Strategic Priority:</th>
<th>#4—Improving Low-Performing Schools</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statutorily allowable use of funds:</td>
<td>Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs—Schoolwide Programs: Supplemental programs or activities that strengthen the academic program of the school, targeting specific, identified needs and providing students, particularly those failing, or at risk of failing to meet standards, opportunities to meet State academic standards.</td>
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Project Summary

Research shows that while results vary widely, most effective school transformation efforts include some external support. LEAs and campuses can use School Improvement Partnerships to increase capacity and access local, state, and national expertise in school improvement. Under this initiative, LEAs would use the results of their Campus Deep Needs Assessments and then work with Professional Service Providers, Education Service Centers, and TEA to find and partner with qualified school improvement partners that have shown their success in dramatically improving student and school performance and deploy evidence-based strategies. Partners might be a) non-profit comprehensive school redesign providers who provide holistic support on all aspects of school design/re-design, organization with targeted expertise in necessary elements of school improvement such as talent development, data-driven instruction processes or student and school culture, b) entities that provide targeted support to address opportunity and achievement gaps felt by specific subgroups of students such as English Language Learners, students with disabilities or other sub-populations, c) or Texas Universities’ Colleges of Education, working in partnership with the LEA through an agreement to provide board training, curriculum, instructional planning and delivery, assessment, and student success/student access. (Note that LEAs, in partnership with ESCs, must use a rigorous, competitive processes to find partner organizations with a history of improving student outcomes using evidence-based strategies, if using ESSA school improvement funds to support School Improvement Partnerships, as required by ESSA and EDGAR.)

LEA Financial Commitment (estimated start-up and annual costs)

The estimated start up and ongoing costs for supporting school improvement partnerships will be vary based on the scope of the partnership.

* When possible, TEA staff has estimated costs by major expenditure categories used in the ESSA Consolidated Application and the Expenditure Reporting (ER) System. Costs, such as locally-determined salaries, benefits, and wages, could not be estimated.

Project Description

LEAs and schools can develop School Improvement Partnerships to increase capacity and access local, state, and national expertise in school improvement. From the work completed in a Deep Needs Assessment, the LEA and school work with Professional Service Providers, Education Service Centers, and TEA to find and partner with qualified school improvement partners.

These school improvement partners must offer examples or other evidence documenting a history in dramatically improving student outcomes and school performance and must deploy evidence-based strategies, as well. Eligible partners may include a) non-profit comprehensive school redesign providers who offer holistic support on all aspects of school design/re-design, organization with targeted expertise in necessary elements of school improvement such as
talent development, data-driven instruction processes or student and school culture, b) entities that provide targeted support to address opportunity and achievement gaps felt by specific subgroups of students such as English Language Learners, students with disabilities or other sub-populations, c) or Texas Universities’ Colleges of Education, working in partnership with the LEA through a formal agreement to provide board training, curriculum, instructional planning and delivery, assessment, student success/student access. (LEAs, in partnership with ESCs, must use rigorous processes to find partner organizations with demonstrable results and deploy evidence-based strategies to use ESSA school improvement funds to fund or subsidize the costs of partnerships).

Goals and Student Achievement Objectives

The goal of School Improvement Partnerships is to match high-quality school improvement partners with persistently struggling schools or sets of schools. These qualified School Improvement Partners will support schools in improving academic performance of their students.

Expected Outcomes

The list below offers a sample of expected outcomes from successful School Improvement Partnerships formatted as SMART goals (the percentage of ______ will increase from X% to Y% by Z (target date) or the number of _____ will increase from X to Y by Z):

- The percentage of students working at or above grade level on a specific STAAR content area assessment will increase from X% to Y% by Z.
- The percentage of students graduating career or college reading will increase from X% to Y% by Z.
- The percentage of parents that say they are satisfied with school climate or academic instruction, as documented in parent surveys, will increase from X% to Y% by Z.
- The number of highly effective teachers assigned to the specific school in need of comprehensive or targeted support will increase from X to Y by Z.
- The number of students attending schools in need of comprehensive support will decrease to X from Y by Z.
- The number of students attending schools in need of targeted support will decrease from X to Y by Z.
- The percentage of students enrolled in Improvement Required schools (Texas accountability system) will decrease from X% to Y% by Z.

How Will Success Be Measured and Data Sources Available

Success of School Improvement Partnerships should be measured by improved student outcomes. The new A-F report cards provide data for needs assessments. Status updates on the new A-F accountability system are available on TEA’s A-F Accountability Resources page. LEA and school-level data is in Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR), available online.

Training or Support TEA Offers

The Division of School Improvement at TEA facilitates the collaboration between experienced, effective Professional Service Providers, LEAs, and external organizations for School Improvement Partnerships. In addition, the twenty regional Educational Service Centers (ESCs) offer training and other resources for finding and collaborating with external organizations with a demonstrated past performance of improving student outcomes.

TEA facilitates Improvement Partnerships between LEAs and colleges of education at Texas colleges and universities. The College of Education Turnaround Partnerships initiative uses the expertise of colleges of education to expand school improvement capacity and turn around the State’s lowest performing schools. Colleges of Education and LEAs develop interlocal agreements focused on the goal of improving student outcomes at one or more now low-performing campuses.
Higher Ed institutions dedicate funds or resources for project management, to include Deep Needs Assessments or other strategic planning. These postsecondary institutions offer services based on needs found in the needs assessment, to include board training, curriculum audits and curriculum selection, instructional planning and delivery, assessment, supports for student success/student access, monthly site visits, and possibly graduate student site-based support for low-performing schools.

TEA offers support for successful Higher Ed–LEA Turnaround Partnerships. For example, a recent three-year partnership gave extensive wraparound services to low-performing schools that resulted in significant outcome gains for students and, schools transitioned out of IR status (State accountability system). Benefits for the college or university include improved practices related to teacher preparation, increased numbers of applications to Colleges of Education, and published studies of the benefits of these partnerships.

**Required Components or Activities**

LEAs must use a rigorous, competitive process for identifying and collaborating with external organizations in School Improvement Partnerships. The process must follow ESSA requirements, but also with EDGAR federal fiscal requirements. LEAs developing formal partnerships with other units of state government should contact their contracts and procurement staff for information regarding interlocal agreements.

**Program Duration, Timeline, or Significant Milestones**

The Campus Deep Needs Assessment is the driver for an ongoing continuous improvement process that may include School Improvement Partnerships with external organizations. The assessment is conducted annually and should include an evaluation of how effective strategies, programs, and activities implemented to address a school’s specific needs were in improving student outcomes. LEAs use the same annual process to assess the effectiveness of School Improvement Partnerships.

**Staffing Requirements for LEAs**

The LEA may not need to hire more staff for this Recommended Use, but should consider budgeting for extra duty or supplemental pay for teachers or other school instructional leadership that take part, as needed to address added time dedicated to needs assessment and monitoring activities, outside of the scheduled work day.

LEAs may engage an external facilitator for Deep Needs Assessments. The facilitator may take part selecting an external entity for School Improvement Partnerships.

**Resources**

- TEA’s Division of School Improvement and Support offers more information about needs assessments and School Improvement Partnerships, to include model Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and facilitation for LEA–postsecondary partnerships.
- The “Strategies for Improving Low-Performing Schools: A Search Tool” from the IES Southeast Regional Educational Laboratory offers research on effective school improvement partnerships.

**TEA Contact Information**

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