

Informal Discretionary Competition (Grant)

LASO Cycle 3 (2024-2025)

Learning Acceleration Support Opportunities

2025-2026 School Action Fund Grant-Planning and Implementation

Program Guidelines

REVISED 03/25/25

Authorized by Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Title I, Part A, Section 1003



Grant Application Due Date

December 13, 2024; 5:00 p.m. CST



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Grant Program Guidelines

Grant Name as it will appear on the TEA Grant Opportunities Page	2025-2026 School Action Fund-Planning and Implementation
Application Due Date	December 13, 2024; 5:00 p.m. CT
Program Authority	Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Title I, Part A, Section 1003

Introduction

TEA, as the pass-through entity¹, is the grantee² from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and TEA awards subgrants to non-federal entities³ such as local educational agencies (LEAs), including school districts, charter schools, and education service centers, and to a lesser degree institutions of higher education (IHEs), and nonprofit organizations (NPOs) who are the agency's subgrantees⁴. These guidelines apply to all subgrantees of TEA, regardless of whether referenced herein as subgrantee or grantee. For purposes of this document, TEA may use the terms grantee and subgrantee synonymously for its subrecipients.

This part of the request for application (RFA), Program Guidelines, is to be used in conjunction with the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) and any application instructions.

For applicants selected for funding, all guidelines and instructions will be incorporated by reference into the Notice of Grant Award (NOGA).

Reference to the General and Fiscal Guidelines

The Program Guidelines provide information specifically relevant to this grant program. The [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) provide information relevant to all TEA grant programs. Throughout the Program Guidelines, cross-references are given to applicable sections of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#). It is critical that you review all referenced sections of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) when preparing your application.

Errata Notices

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Errata Notices.

¹ Pass-through entity is defined as a non-Federal entity that provides a subaward to a subrecipient to carry out part of a federal program. (2 CFR 200.74)

² Grantee is defined as the legal entity to which a grant is awarded and that is accountable to the federal government for the use of the funds provided. The term "grantee" does not include any secondary recipients, such as subgrantees and contractors that may receive funds from a grantee. (34 CFR 77)

³ Non-federal entity is defined as a state, local government, Indian tribe, institution of higher education, or nonprofit organization that carries out a federal award as a recipient or subrecipient. (2 CFR 200.69)

⁴ Subgrantee is defined by TEA to be the same as a subrecipient which is defined as a non-federal entity that receives a subaward from a pass-through entity to carry out part of a federal program; but does not include an individual that is a beneficiary of such program. (2 CFR 200.93) Subgrantee is defined in 34 CFR 77 as the legal entity to which a subgrant is awarded and that is accountable to the grantee for the use of the funds provided.

Overview of the Informal Discretionary Competition (IDC) Process

The following steps provide a high-level overview of the process for responding to a grant opportunity, including submitting an application, and being selected for funding:

1. TEA publishes IDC application and supporting documents on the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#).
2. Eligible applicants submit the grant application via Qualtrics by the specified deadline in this document.
3. Grant applications are reviewed and scored. Note: The highest scoring applicants may be required to attend an oral interview or respond to questions regarding their IDC application.
4. TEA announces applicants selected for funding on the TEA [Grants Awarded Data](#) webpage.
5. Applicants selected for funding will be required to submit and certify an eGrants funding application including assurances and a budget summary to receive funding. Note: All data submitted in the grant application is incorporated into the eGrants funding application under the Notice of Grant Award (NOGA).
6. TEA staff conducts budget negotiations on the IDC application.
7. Notice of Grant Award (NOGA) issued upon successful completion of the negotiation process.

Contact for Clarifying Information

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *TEA Contacts*.

The following TEA staff member should be contacted with questions:

Grant Program Contact

Program manager name	Laura Hyatt
Program manager title	Manager, School Action Fund
Program manager email	Laura.Hyatt@tea.texas.gov
Program manager phone	(214) 274-6232

Additional Program Contact

Program manager name	Christopher DeWitt
Program manager title	Director, System Support
Program manager email	Christopher.DeWitt@tea.texas.gov
Program manager phone	(202) 365-1347

Additional Program Contact

Program manager name	Brian Doran
Program manager title	Director of Expanded Learning Models
Program manager email	Brian.Doran@tea.texas.gov
Program manager phone	

Funding Contact

Program manager name	Competitive Grants Unit
Program manager title	Grants Administration Division
Program manager email	competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov
Program manager phone	(512) 463-8525

U.S. Department of Education and/or State Appropriations

The following is provided in compliance with the U.S. Department of Education Appropriations Act:

CATEGORY	AMOUNT
Total funds available for this project	Approximately \$8,000,000* in direct-to-LEA grants Approximately \$2,500,000 in in-kind support
Percentage to be financed with federal funds	100%
Amount of federal funds	Approximately \$8,000,000* in direct-to-LEA grants Approximately \$2,500,000 in in-kind support
Percentage to be financed from nonfederal sources	0%
Amount of nonfederal funds	\$0

* Should additional funding become available for this program, the agency may add it to the base amount indicated above and fund additional qualifying awardees till all funding is exhausted

Timeline

For all dates related to the grant, including reporting dates, see the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#) page. If a report due date falls on a weekend or holiday, the report will be due the following business day. All dates except the grant ending date may vary slightly as conditions require.

Date	Event
October 1, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.	General Webinar Option 1 Registration link can be found on the LASO 3 website .
October 3, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.	General Webinar Option 2 Registration link can be found on the LASO 3 website .
October 14, 2024	Grant application available LASO individual application links will be emailed to Superintendents on October 14, 2024. Please see the LASO 3 website for more information.
October 18, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.	Program Specific Webinar Option 1 Registration link can be found on the LASO 3 website .
October 24, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.	Program Specific Webinar Option 2 Registration link can be found on the LASO 3 website .
November 1, 2024	Deadline to submit questions for the final FAQ document Applicants may email their questions to the LASO central inbox at LASO@tea.texas.gov .
November 13, 2024	FAQ Publishing The FAQs for this grant program will be posted to the TEA Grant Opportunities page and LASO website no later than the date listed on the Grant Timeline. See General and Fiscal Guidelines , Frequently Asked Questions.
December 13, 2024	Due date for the IDC Qualtrics application The LASO 3 application must be received by the TEA by 5:00 p.m., Central Time. See General and Fiscal Guidelines , LASO 3 Application Due Date and Time.
December 20, 2024- January 30, 2025	Application review period, including interviews if necessary See General and Fiscal Guidelines , Review Process.
February 20, 2025	Anticipated award announcement
February 20, 2025	eGrants ADC and Application opens for awarded applicants
March 1, 2025	Beginning date of grant (if selected for funding) See General and Fiscal Guidelines , Grant Period.
April 7, 2025	Due Date for eGrants Application
April 1, 2026	Last day to amend grant (if selected for funding) See General and Fiscal Guidelines , Grant Period.
June 30, 2026	End date of grant (if selected for funding) See General and Fiscal Guidelines , Grant Period.

Grant at a Glance

This section provides fundamental information pertinent to the grant program.

Authorizing Legislation

This grant is authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Title I, Part A, Section 1003.

Where to Submit the Grant Application

LASO individual application links will be emailed to Superintendents on October 14, 2024. Please see the [LASO 3 website](#) for more information.

Purpose of Program

School Actions are whole-school strategies districts use to increase access to high-quality schools, meet community needs, and address chronic underperformance. The School Action Fund (SAF) grant provides technical assistance and funding to support the planning and implementation of school actions, which include restarting a chronically underperforming campus, creating a brand-new school, reassigning students after a school closure from an underperforming campus to an A/B-rated campus, and redesigning a campus with a new whole-school model. The ultimate goal of the SAF grant is to give more students access to A/B-rated campuses and for more families to have the schools they want, need, and deserve in their communities.

Eligible Applicants

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Eligibility for Funding.

Eligible applicants are LEAs that apply on behalf of schools that are Title I-serving schoolwide as designated by its LEA by September 30, 2024, and are Comprehensive Support-identified or Targeted Support-identified campuses, based on school year 2023-2024 ratings. For new schools, there must be clear Title I, Part A eligibility and intent to obtain Title I-serving status for school year 2026-2027 and beyond. NOTE: Campuses must be SAF grant-eligible at the time of application, and, if awarded a SAF grant, remain Title I-serving schoolwide for the entire grant period.

A campus may not have received any School Action Fund (SAF) grants, including TCLAS Decision 10 and any LASO SAF grants, since 2019-2020 (Planning, Continuation, or Implementation) or 2024-2026 Effective Schools Framework-Focused Support Grant (ESF-FSG).

If a campus qualifies for multiple Curriculum and Instruction bundled grants, the LEA will be invited to an interview to determine the best fit of grants.

TEA reserves the right not to award a grant to a campus, LEA, or charter school that is identified by TEA as a high-risk grantee.

A maximum of six total SAF grants will be awarded to any individual LEA. A maximum of four awards of any one action will be awarded to any individual LEA.

Education Service Centers (ESCs) are not eligible to apply.

Eligibility List

There is an eligibility list and it is posted in the Application and Support Information section of the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#) page.

Shared Services Arrangement

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Shared Services Arrangements.

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are not allowed.

Application Funding

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#): *Continuation Funding, Fund Management, and Use of Funds*.

It is anticipated the up to 36 applicants(s) will be awarded approximately \$185,000*-\$375,000*, to be determined at a later date.

* Should additional funding become available for this program, the agency may add it to the base amount indicated above and fund additional qualifying awardees till all funding is exhausted

Selection of Applicants for Funding

Applicants will be selected in rank order by selected action.

Cost Share or Matching Requirement

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Cost Share/Match Requirement.

There is no cost share or matching requirement for this grant program.

Supplement, Not Supplant

For supplement, not supplant guidance, see the Supplement, Not Supplant Handbook on the Department of Grant Compliance and Administration's [Training and Other Resources](#) page.

The supplement, not supplant provision does apply to this grant program.

Limitation of Administrative Funds

TEA limits the amount of direct administrative costs for this Grant program to no more than 8% of the total Grant award.

Indirect Costs

For this federally funded Grant, the Grantee may claim a maximum for indirect costs equal to its current approved restricted indirect cost rate

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Administrative Costs*.

NOTE: Administrative funds include **both** direct administrative costs **and** allowable indirect costs.

Pre-Award Costs

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Pre-Award Costs*.

Pre-award costs are not permitted for this grant.

Grant Application

This section identifies the types of requirements in which applicants must comply to be eligible for funding:

- Statutory requirements (requirements defined in the authorizing statute)
- TEA program requirements (requirements defined by TEA program staff)

Statutorily Required Responses

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Statutory Requirements*.

The following requirements are defined in the statute that authorizes this program.

The applicant must comply with each of these requirements in the application to be considered for funding:

1. Per TEC §22.0834, any person offered employment by any entity that contracts with TEA or receives grant funds administered by TEA (i.e., a grantee or subgrantee) is subject to the fingerprinting requirement. TEA is prohibited from awarding grant funds to any entity, including nonprofit organizations, that fails to comply with this requirement. For details, refer to the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Fingerprinting Requirement.
2. Develop comprehensive support and improvement plans under ESEA section 1111(d)(1) for schools receiving funds under this section.
3. Support schools developing or implementing targeted support and improvement plans under ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A), if funds received under this section are used for such purpose.
4. Monitor schools receiving funds under this section, including how the local educational agency will carry out its responsibilities under clauses (iv) and (v) of ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(B) if funds received under this section are used to support schools implementing targeted support and improvement plans.

5. Use a rigorous review process to recruit, screen, select, and evaluate any external partners with whom the local educational agency will partner.
6. Align other Federal, State, and local resources to carry out the activities supported with funds received under subsection (b)(1).
7. As appropriate, modify practices and policies to provide operational flexibility that enables full and effective implementation of the plans.

TEA Application Required Responses

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), TEA Program Requirements.

In addition to the statutory requirements, TEA has established the following program requirements.

Requirements for Applicants of all Actions

1. Grantees will work in good faith with the TEA-vetted and matched school action Technical Assistance provider and agency-provided technical assistance.
2. Grantees will identify flexibilities and autonomies along with clear goals and metrics that are contextual to each campus. Flexibilities and metrics must be articulated in a Performance Agreement (for district-run actions) OR a Partnership Performance Contract (for partner-managed actions) signed by the campus leader and the district Superintendent and/or School Board by the end of the first year of the grant.
3. Grantees will attend and participate in grant orientation meetings, technical assistance meetings, other periodic meetings of grantees, and sharing best practices through the TEA program office.
4. The grantee's Board of Trustees must complete, TEA-approved Board training and coaching by Gate 3 of the first year of the awarded grant.
5. Applicants applying for Implementation grants must have completed planning the school action with a TEA-approved Technical Assistance provider before receiving a School Action Fund award in March 2025, and be ready to implement the Action in Fall 2025.
6. Any campus that is closing, or potentially being repurposed as part of a school action, must adhere to, and comply with, rule §97.1066: Campus Repurposing and Closure. (More information can be found [here](#) and [here](#).)
7. LEAs must commit to guaranteeing that school leaders of awarded campuses have at least 20 hours of release time built into their weekly schedules to plan and create the ESF-aligned school design and educational model.
8. Grantees must meet all universal requirements for successful school actions, including selection of a TEA-codified school model playbook (for District-Run actions) OR implementing high-quality authorizing practices (for Partner-Managed actions); development of a strategic schedule that maximizes instructional staff and time; selection, assignment, and empowerment of a campus leader with a track record of success to lead the planning and implementation of the school action and model; and implementation of high quality instructional materials (HQIM, as defined in these Program Guidelines) and research-based instructional strategies (RBIS).

Requirements for Applicants of Partner-Managed Actions

9. Applicants selecting "Partner-managed" actions must commit to the adoption of TEA's Texas Partnership model [authorizing](#) tools and resources, including Performance Contracts.
10. Grantees awarded "Partner-managed" actions must register for the Texas Authorizer Leadership Academy (TALA) by December 1st of the first year of the awarded grant and complete TALA training by the end of the first year of the awarded grant.
11. LEAs may apply for a Restart partnership with a Partner-Managed governance structure ONLY for campuses that received an overall "F" rating (or, an equivalent, as defined by TEA, or as confirmed by internal LEA data analysis using all publicly available data) the year prior to becoming a partnership school, per Texas Partnerships requirements. ONLY these campuses may be eligible for the pause in accountability sanctions outlined in the TEA Texas Partnerships Guide available at [txpartnerships](#).
12. Grantees awarded a "Partner-Managed" action must meet all funding requirements defined by Texas Partnerships, including allocating all federal, state, and local funds due to the campus, in alignment with Texas Partnership Guidelines.
13. Grantees awarded "Partner-Managed" actions must evaluate Operating Partner applicants' plans for the implementation of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM, as defined in these Program Guidelines) during the Call for Quality Schools process. More information about a Call for Quality Schools process can be found in the TEA's Authorizer's Handbook available on the Texas Partnerships website.

Requirements for Applicants of Create New School Actions

14. Applicants selecting "Create a New School" must select and designate a campus leader no later than June 13, 2025, and commit to that empowered campus leader's full participation in the New School Design Fellowship program beginning Summer 2025.
15. Applicants must apply for a new CDCN (County District Campus Number) for "New Schools" by March 2026.
16. "New Schools" established without tested grade levels must be paired with another campus in the same LEA or the overall LEA for accountability purposes by March 2026, as per guidelines in Chapter 7 of the 2024 Accountability Manual (or, a later version if published).
17. "Create a new school" school actions will use an evidenced-based slow-grow model approved by TEA, such as K-1 for K-5th grades or 6th grade for 6th – 8th grades, and grow one grade at a time, year over year over, beginning with the earliest grade level(s); or the new school may open with all grade levels only if the district is opening a newly constructed facility or planning to use an unoccupied building. Any deviations from the slow-grow model described herein must be pre-approved by TEA.
18. Applicants selecting "Create a New School" school actions must include the new campus in its Title I ESSA plan in time for SY 2026-2027.
19. The applicant assures enrollment at a "New School" will prioritize students previously attending, or zoned to, a Title I-serving SY2024-25 and beyond and Comprehensive Support-identified or Targeted Support-identified school (2023-2024 ratings).

Statutory and Program-Specific Assurances

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Provisions and Assurances.

1. The applicant provides assurance that program funds will supplement (increase the level of service), and not supplant (replace) state mandates, State Board of Education rules, and activities previously conducted with state or local funds. The applicant provides assurance that state or local funds may not be decreased or diverted for other purposes merely because of the availability of these funds. The applicant provides assurance that program services and activities to be funded from this Grant will be supplementary to existing services and activities and will not be used for any services or activities required by state law, State Board of Education rules, or local policy.
2. The applicant assures that the application does not contain any information that would be protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) from general release to the public.
3. The applicant assures to adhere to all the Statutory and TEA Program requirements as noted in the Program Guidelines.
4. The applicant assures to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.
5. The applicant assures that they accept and will comply with Every Student Succeeds Act Provisions and Assurances requirements.
6. The applicant assures that any Electronic Information Resources (EIR) produced as part of this agreement will comply with the State of Texas Accessibility requirements as specified in 1 TAC 206, 1 TAC Chapter 213, Federal Section 508 standards, and the WCAG 2.0 AA Accessibility Guidelines.
7. The applicant acknowledges that Per Section 22.0834 of the Texas Education Code (TEC), any person offered employment by any entity that contracts with TEA or receives Grant funds administered by TEA (i.e., a Grantee or subGrantee) is subject to the fingerprinting requirement. TEA is prohibited from awarding Grant funds to any entity, including nonprofit organizations, that fails to comply with this requirement. For details, refer to the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Fingerprinting Requirement.
8. The LEA will maintain current contact information in AskTED to ensure timely communication.
9. The LEA will regularly submit their expenditures (monthly preferred, quarterly at minimum) to remain on-track for grant expenditures.
10. Use a data-informed, both quantitative and qualitative, evaluation process and criteria for selecting the school action model for the specific campus to be supported with this grant.
11. If a specific campus has not yet been identified, use a data-informed, both quantitative and qualitative evaluation process, criteria, and appropriate timeline for identifying the campus for school action, including the rationale for naming a specific campus, by Gate of the first year of the awarded grant.
12. Align the school action with the LEA's overall strategy for support and intervention in low-performing schools and/or the LEA's strategy for expanding high-quality school choices for students and families.
13. Assure that senior LEA leaders have been, and will be, involved in the decision to select the school action for the campus(es) and to apply for this School Action Fund Planning and Implementation Grant, and that they will continue to be involved throughout the grant period.
14. Assure that the applicant LEA worked, or will work, with members of the school community (staff, families, community leaders) to communicate plans and solicit input into the school action planning and implementation process.

15. Identify a LEA staff member to coordinate the planning and implementation grant who is both qualified and experienced in project and program management.
16. The LEA's School Action Fund Project Manager must attend regular meetings with TEA SAF Team program staff. LEA-level Business/Finance Office staff responsible for overseeing grant expenditures and draw down processes must attend at least two of these meetings per semester.
17. Implement with fidelity high-quality instructional materials (HQIM, as described in these Program Guidelines) into the design and implementation of the chosen action.
18. Implement strategic scheduling (such as ADSY, extended day/year, and/or blended learning programs that require operational and staffing shifts to rethink and maximize time and flexibility) and accelerated instruction, including all requirements of HB 1416, at the school action campus by the first year of implementation as defined by TEA, unless otherwise approved or stated by TEA.

ADSY Full Year program-specific assurances are listed below. ADSY Full Year is a specific model that applicants may select for eligible campuses.

19. Serve at least one grade level within grades PreK-5.
20. Have campus academic calendar(s) that meet ADSY eligibility requirements (currently 180 instructional days), not including staff development waivers, as well as at least 75,600 operational minutes.
21. Add between 25 and 30 additional days of instruction (ADSY days) to the campus's academic calendar (currently at 180 days). ADSY days must be on separate days from regular instructional calendar days.
22. Create a comprehensive Strategic Plan utilizing the planning resources and templates provided in the grant program.
23. Develop a strategic scheduling plan focused on reducing teacher workload that includes brain breaks and enrichment time for students, and additional collaborative planning time for teachers.
24. Identify a Project Manager who will manage the planning process as well as a cross-departmental steering committee that includes a representative from the LEA's Finance team to facilitate strong planning.
25. Have a teacher meeting the LEA's certification requirements deliver at least two hours of academic instruction specific to Math and Reading on dedicated ADSY days.
26. Utilize an approved SAF ADSY Technical Assistance provider to support the program design and planning process.
27. Participate in all learning community sessions during the 2025-2026 school year (up to one day per month).
28. Participate in periodic reflection processes following the planning year to continuously improve program based on existing data.
29. Grantees commit to forming a cross-departmental Steering Committee, including a representative from the Finance team, to guide full year redesign planning.
30. Grantees commit to bringing an ADSY calendar to their school board for approval by March 1st of the year prior to their selected year of implementation.

The program-specific assurances for this Grant program are listed in the Qualtrics Grant application.

Program Elements

Description of Program

School Actions are whole-school strategies districts use to increase access to high-quality schools, meet community needs, and address chronic underperformance. By providing technical assistance and grant funds to support school actions for individual campuses, TEA also supports school districts to take strategic actions that both improve schools and provide communities, parents, and families with the schools and programs they want, need, and deserve.

All School Action Fund (SAF) grantees must plan and implement an ESF-aligned, evidence-based model. School Actions may be district-run or managed by an operating partner, as defined by Texas Partnerships/SB1882 requirements. District-Run campuses must implement a TEA-supported school model outlined below. LEAs applying for a Partner-Managed campus must implement high-quality authorizing practices that result in a high-quality campus.

LEAs that receive a 2025-2026 School Action Fund (SAF) Planning grant may be eligible for one to two years of continuation funding, resources, and support to implement the school action(s) on the awarded campus(es). LEAs must satisfactorily complete all required elements, meet all milestones of the 2025-2026 SAF Planning grant, and all Statutory and Program-Specific Assurances outlined in this document to be eligible for a non-competitive Continuation grant. (See below Program Descriptions for more details of each action.)

Implementation grants in the 2025-2026 School Action Fund—Planning and Implementation grant are available to potential grantees who have completed planning the school action with a TEA-approved Technical Assistance provider before receiving a School Action Fund award in March 2025. and who are ready to fully implement the action in Fall 2025.

To learn more about school actions and model playbooks, please visit the Center for School Actions' [website](#).

When selecting actions, LEAs should follow the decision process below based on individual campus needs.

STEP 1: Select one of the 4 Actions below for each eligible campus

1. Restart Action: LEAs reconstitute campus leaders and a majority of staff, and implement a new whole-school academic and educational model, including high-quality instructional materials (as defined later in these Program Guidelines), to turnaround a chronically underperforming campus. LEAs plan and implement the selected school model in all grade levels in Year 1 (one) of implementation.

2. Create a New School Action: LEAs create a new school that may be phased-in one grade level at a time OR implemented with all grade levels in a new facility or a facility that was unoccupied by a school in the previous year. Campuses receive a new CDCN, recruit, select, and hire a new empowered campus leader and staff, and implement an evidence-based academic model, including high-quality instructional materials (as defined later in these Program Guidelines). Districts closing and repurposing an existing campus must comply with rule §97.1066: Campus Repurposing and Closure. (More information can be found [here](#) and [here](#).) Campuses must also be designated Title I-serving in Year 1 (one) of implementation.

3. Reassign Action: Transition Students to Higher-Performing Campuses after School Closure; LEAs work with their communities to thoughtfully close school(s) and reassign students to A/B-rated campuses (according to 2023-2024 ratings, or, an equivalent, as defined by TEA or new schools, or, an equivalent, as defined by TEA). Districts closing an existing campus must comply with rule §97.1066: Campus Repurposing and Closure.

4. Redesign Action: LEAs support empowered campus leaders with track records of success and staff at an existing campus to plan and implement an evidence-based, whole-school academic and educational model, including high-quality instructional materials (as defined later in these Program Guidelines) to transform all aspects of school. LEAs implement the selected school model in all grade levels in year one of implementation.

STEP 2: Select one of 2 Governance Structures for each eligible campus

1. District-Run: The campus is directly run and supported by the LEA. All staff members of the campus are employees of the LEA. The grant-awarded campus is allowed flexibility from LEA policies and practices in order to enact the school action, model, and implement high quality instructional materials, or HQIM. This flexibility is documented in School Design Plans, Performance Agreements, and Implementation Plans, and is approved by the Superintendent and/or the Board of Trustees.

2. Partner-Managed: Districts authorize an Operating Partner to manage the school through an SB 1882 partnership, which is either a Turnaround Partnership (available for F-rated campuses only, or, an equivalent, as defined by TEA, or as confirmed by internal LEA data analysis using all publicly available data) or an Innovation Partnership. The LEA launches a Call for Quality Schools (which must require that Operating Partners implement high quality instructional materials, or HQIM, as defined later in these Program Guidelines) to recruit, evaluate, and approve a high-quality operator to plan and implement the school action(s). More information about Texas Partnerships can be found [here](#).

STEP 3: Select a school model.

For each eligible district-run campus, select one of the evidence-based, codified school models from those found below. LEAs planning and implementing Turnaround or Innovation Partnerships campuses with Operating Partners may select the Partner-Managed campuses option.

1. ACE (Restart Actions Only)
2. Advanced STEM (Elementary and Middle schools Only)
3. ADSY Full Year \$ (grades PK-5 and/or K-5 bands Only)
4. Partner-Managed \$; refer to the TEA Texas Partnerships website

\$ Models that may yield additional sustained funding opportunities.

School Model Playbooks for options 1-3 above are found on the Center for School Actions' [website](#).

High Quality Instructional Materials Requirements

For School Action Fund grantees, high quality instructional materials ([HQIM](#)) include at least Math and English Language Arts/Reading materials and are curricular resources that, in order of preference, either

1. meet all of the requirements of the appropriate SBOE-approved content-area IMRA quality rubric and the suitability rubric, found [here](#); or
2. have been approved by the Texas SBOE and are on the SBOE's list of adopted instructional materials found on the TEA website; or
3. meet all of the following requirements:
 - i) ensure full coverage of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS);
 - ii) are aligned to evidence-based best practices in the relevant content areas of RLA, math, science, and social studies;
 - iii) support all learners, including students with disabilities, English Learners, and students identified as gifted and talented;
 - iv) enable frequent progress monitoring through embedded and aligned assessments;
 - v) includes implementation supports for teachers; and
 - vi) provide teacher and student-facing lesson-level materials.

All SAF grantees **must** implement HQIM at the school action campus by the first year of continuation/implementation. Authorizers must demonstrate evidence of evaluating and approving the academic model proposed by the operating partner, including HQIM in the Call for Quality Schools.

Qualifications and Experience

The applicant agrees to provide data on the qualifications and experience of the existing or future staff members, as required per the program guidelines as follows:

The LEA must select a qualified Project Manager at the district-level who has access to C-suite decision-makers, and who has the authority to implement activities as related to this grant. This staff member must be identified and in place no later than February 20, 2025 (beginning of the 2025-2026 School Action Fund–Planning and Implementation grant).

Performance and Evaluation Measures

The applicant agrees to collect data and report on the following mandatory performance and evaluation measures:

Grantees must establish goals which will allow student performance and achievement to result in the SAF North Star Goal of A/B rating after two years of Continuation/Implementation. These goals must be identified for Measurable Progress and be written as SMART goals. Each grant year will have either four or five “Gates”: 0-4, or 1-4. There will be specific “Deliverables” due in each Gate. The section below includes a representative sample, but not all Deliverables.

Note: Deliverables and Gates may be adjusted based on feedback and need in an ongoing continuous improvement process.

District-Run Actions, Planning Deliverables
o School Design Plan

- o Project Plan
- o Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan
- o Change Management Diagnostic
- o Board Governance Training and Coaching
- o Performance Contract (or, Call for Quality Schools)
- o Master Schedule
- o Two-year Implementation Plan, including Goals and Campus Budget

Partner-Managed Actions, Planning

- o Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan
- o Authorizer TALA Participation
- o LEA Board-approved District Authorizing Policy
- o Call of Quality Schools, including HQIM and RBIS as requirements
- o Operating Partner Approval Process
- o LEA Board-approval of Operating Partner
- o LEA Board-approval of Partnership agreement, Performance Expectations and Contract Terms
- o SB 1882 Benefits Application
- o Monitoring Plan
- o Implementation plan

District-Run Actions, Implementation

- o Classroom observations/walkthrough schedule and leadership team and teacher assignments
- o Baseline data for Math, ELAR, and sub-population SMART goals
- o PLC schedule and professional development agendas/topics
- o Data Survey: BOY CBA data and/or Formative Assessment Data for Math and RLA
- o MOU or contract for independent third party ESF-aligned review
- o Spring semester Professional Development calendar, topics
- o Data analysis meetings and Learning Acceleration Plans (DDI) based on BOY data
- o Data Survey: MOY CBA data and/or Formative Assessment Data for Math and RLA
- o Report from independent third party ESF-aligned review
- o Data analysis meetings and Learning Acceleration Plans based on MOY data

Partner-Managed Actions, Implementation

- o Implementation Plan
- o TALA Training
- o Operating Partner updates on progress toward goals outlined in the Partnership Contract
- o Authorizer Progress Monitoring Plan and Reports
- o Third-party review
- o Data review meeting

Project Evaluation and Modification

By submitting this application, the applicant agrees to comply with any evaluation requirements that may be established by TEA and agrees to submit the required evaluation reports in the format and time requested by TEA. Grantees/LEAs will collect and analyze relevant data from PEIMS if it is available, and submits the data/LEA reports to TEA.

Specific critical success factors and milestones will be developed in a manner determined appropriate by TEA.

Performance Measures

The applicant agrees to collect data and report on the following mandatory performance measures:

Completion of ongoing progress monitoring through quarterly Gates and Deliverables, including Student Performance and Achievement goals, as established by the TEA. Upon grant award, TEA will provide awardees with the SAF Progress Monitoring Rubric (PMR) and access to data upload systems/platforms on or around April 4, 2025. LEAs must complete the SAF Progress Monitoring Rubric (PMR) with support from their matched school action technical assistance provider. Progress will be monitored by the TEA SAF Team on a regular basis.

An ESF-aligned third-party implementation quality review must be completed during the Fall semester of year one Continuation or Implementation, unless otherwise approved by TEA. The third-party implementation quality review must be conducted by an organization not connected to the grantee district, campus, or TEA-matched technical assistance provider and must be skilled in understanding the Levers, Essential Actions, and Key Practices of the Effective Schools Framework and well-versed in the aligned and relevant School Model Playbook.

The third-party organization must use a tool which measures i) effective implementation of both the selected school action and model, and ii) the Effective Schools Framework Levers, Essential Actions, and Key Practices. The tool should also include an opportunity to provide insight and guidance into areas of need and improvement with practical follow-up activities and data analysis. The tool to be used must be approved by TEA.

Limits on Contracted Evaluators

Applicants should make every effort to ensure that contracted evaluators are independent and objective.

Allowable Activities and Use of Funds

Refer to the [Budgeting Costs Guidance Handbook](#) on the Grants Administration Division's [Grant Resources](#) page for general guidance on allowable activities and use of funds.

Allowable activities and use of funds for this Grant include only the following:

General Allowable Activities and Use of Funds

Include from the following list any applicable activities and any other general uses of funds allowed for the Grant program. If programmatic allowable activities are more specific, as appropriate use that language instead. If limitations apply, include them (e.g., specific payroll positions, required contracts, etc.). If an activity is NOT allowable for this Grant program, add to the Unallowable Activities and Use of Funds list, and check the box and we will delete the activity

- Payroll costs
- Professional and contracted services
- Consumable and durable supplies and materials
- Debt services (lease liabilities for terms greater than 12 months) — allowable costs include: The bullets below are for SBITA, but there are other debt service possibilities. If SBITA costs (6514 and 6526) are unallowable for the Grant program, delete and move to the Unallowable Activities and Use of Funds list. If 6512, 6522, and 6523 are allowable debt service costs, move them from the Unallowable section to here.
 - a. Subscription-based Information Technology Arrangement (SBITA) – Principal Costs (6514)
 - b. Subscription-based Information Technology Arrangement (SBITA) – Interest Costs (6526)
- Capital outlay
- Operating transfers out
- Grant applicants must establish grant budgets that align with the following requirements for use of funds which is specific to the selected school action and includes all required budget line items below. It is expected that grantees will closely adhere to the categories and amounts listed in the Budget Guidance section below. Exceptions and capital expenditures must be pre-approved by the TEA SAF Team.
- The District Project Manager must attend monthly meetings with TEA grant program staff and district-level Business/Finance Office staff responsible for overseeing grant expenditures and draw down processes must attend at least two of these meetings per semester.
- District-Run Actions, Planning:
 - Planning Year School Leader release time to complete planning activities: 80,000
 - District Administrator / Innovation Officer Position: 20,000
 - High quality instructional materials and support: 30,000
 - Educator Stipends and Salaries: 40,000
 - Travel expenses: 15,000
 - School community engagement support: 15,000
- Partner-Managed Actions, Planning:
 - Authorizer Administrator / Innovation Officer Position: 30,000
 - Operating Partner Organization Start-up/Transition Funding: 125,000
 - Travel expenses: 15,000
 - School community engagement support: 15,000

District-Run Actions, Implementation:

- District Administrator / Innovation Officer Position: 20,000
- High quality instructional materials and support: 75,000
- Educator Stipends and Salaries: 125,000
- Travel expenses: 15,000
- School community engagement support: 15,000

- Partner-Managed Actions, Implementation:
 - Authorizer Administrator / Innovation Officer Position: 50,000
 - Operating Partner Funding: 300,000
 - Third-party School Quality Review: 10,000
 - School community engagement support: 15,000

Other Allowable Operating Costs Requiring Specific Approval in the Grant Application (6400)

Out-of-State Travel

Out-of-state travel costs are allowable.

Out-of-state travel costs should be minimal. Travel costs are allowable as long as the expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence, and related items are only incurred by employees on official business of the Grantee and follow the Grantee's regular business operations and written travel policy.

Out-of-state travel will require a written justification form to be maintained locally and made available to TEA upon request. To access the Justification for Out-of-State Travel form, refer to the [Forms for Prior Approval, Disclosure, and Justification](#) page.

Travel Costs for Officials such as Executive Director, Superintendent, or Board Members

Travel costs for officials such as executive director, superintendent, or board members may be funded under the Grant program.

Only the following travel costs may be allowable for these positions:

- Travel expenses for TEA required events, school action convenings hosted by TA provider organization, LEA-directed trips to visit similar in-state model-specific successful campuses, or other TEA-approved activities to support school action planning and implementation.

Unallowable Activities and Use of Funds

Refer to the [Budgeting Costs Guidance Handbook](#) on the Grants Administration Division's [Grant Resources](#) page for general guidance on unallowable costs.

- Advisory Council
- Field trips
- Cost of Membership in Any Civic or Community Organization
- Hosting or Sponsoring of Conferences
- Travel costs for students to conferences
- Stipends for non-employees
- Non-employee costs for conferences
- Debt service (lease-purchase)

- Personal computing, electronics, and other devices (purchased in a quantity that will create an excess of a one-to-one technology ratio for students or faculty and staff)
- Textbooks or curricular materials (purchased in a quantity that will create an excess of a one-to-one resource ratio for students or faculty and staff) Unallowable activity/use of funds

In addition, unallowable activities and use of funds for this Grant include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Debt services (lease liabilities for terms greater than 12 months) — unallowable costs include:
 - a. Capital Lease Liability — Principal Costs (6512)
 - b. Capital Lease Liability — Interest Costs (6522)
 - c. Interest on Debt Costs (6523)

Federal Grant Requirements *

Equitable Access and Participation

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Equitable Access and Participation.

This requirement does apply to this federally funded Grant program.

Private Nonprofit School Participation

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Private Nonprofit School Participation.

This requirement does not apply to this federally funded Grant program.

Maintenance of Effort

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Maintenance of Effort.

This requirement does apply to this federally funded Grant program.

Attachments

There are two types of attachments that may be required to be submitted with your Qualtrics application:

Required Program-Related Attachments

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Required Program-Related Attachments, for a general description of program-related documents that can be required as attachments to the application.

The applicant must submit with the application the following required program-related attachments.

The applicant may be required to submit a PDF attachment, as noted in the application.

Reminder: Do not submit unsolicited attachments. Unsolicited attachments will not be reviewed.

Required Fiscal-Related Attachments

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Fiscal-Related Documentation Required to Be on File, for a general description of fiscal-related documents that can be required as attachments to the application.

This does not apply to this grant.

LASO Scoring and Review

This section provides information on the scoring and review of LASO applications.

LASO Review and Funding Criteria

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Review Criteria*

Standard GRANT Review Criteria	Description	Maximum Points Available
Eligibility Determination Part I	Title I-serving in SY 2024-2025 and throughout the SAF grant, if awarded and Comprehensive Support-identified or Targeted Support-identified	0
Eligibility Determination Part II	Not prior recipient of any School Action Fund grant from 2019-2020 and beyond Not recipient of 2024-2026 Effective Schools Framework-Focused Support Grant (ESF-FSG)	0
Priority Points	Federal Identification; Low Student Academic Achievement/Performance; Economically Disadvantaged Campus; Model Selection Evidence of established Office of Innovation/Transformation. (See Program Review and Scoring section below for details)	50
Virtual Oral Interview	LEA and campus leaders with the TEA program leads (See Oral Interviews for Funding section below for details)	100
Total Standard Review Points Possible		150

Program Review and Scoring

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Priorities for Funding.

All eligible School Action Fund (SAF) grant applications will be evaluated based on the methodology below using school year 2023-2024 accountability ratings (or, an equivalent, as defined by TEA).

- Priority Points based on campus and district context; up to a maximum of 50 points per campus:
 - o 10 points if campus is designated as Comprehensive Support-identified as determined by 2023-2024 federal identification,
 - o 10 points per low achieving campus (less than 50% of students "Meets" combined Math + RLA STAAR, based on 2023-2024 STAAR data),
 - o 10 points per economically disadvantaged campus (greater than 80% of students at the campus are identified as economically disadvantaged),
 - o 10 points per campus that has selected the ADSY FYR model to implement (whole-school, not just for strategic scheduling as part of another model),
 - o 10 points per district that has an Office of Innovation/Transformation, with a clearly designated leader and identified on LEA-level organizational charts. NOTE: This is different from being a District of Innovation.

TEA will rank order campuses by priority points within each action.

- Virtual Oral Interview with district and campus leaders: up to 100 points per campus

Awards will be determined according to the following methodology:

1. Determine Eligibility: Applicants will complete the LASO application and indicate the school actions, governance structure, and model the district is applying for each eligible campus. Title I-serving and Comprehensive/Targeted-identification status will be confirmed.
2. Virtual Oral Interview: Based on Priority Points as calculated above, the top 50 campuses will proceed to the virtual Oral Interview. In the case of a tie, campuses with the higher economically disadvantaged percentage will go to the Oral Interview. (For new schools or campuses that have not yet been identified, the district average will be considered.)
3. Determine Finalists: Applicants must meet at least 80% of overall points (Priority and Oral Interview points) to be considered for a grant award.
4. Determine Awards: Awards will be granted to all of the finalists for each action until funds are expended, with priority for funding in the order listed below:
 1. Restart actions
 2. Create New School actions
 3. Reassign actions
 4. Redesign actions

5. Finally, awards will be made as funding allows based on the prioritization of actions as noted above. Any remaining funds may be awarded to applicants who scored less than 80%, in rank order with the highest percentage of economically disadvantaged students on a campus, while keeping the maximum of six awards of grants and a maximum of four awards of any one action per individual LEA in place.

In the case of a tie between applicants at the end of available funding, the grant will be awarded to the applicant with the highest percentage of economically disadvantaged students at the campus.

Please note: A maximum of six grants will be awarded across all actions to any individual LEA. No more than four awards of any one Action will be awarded to an individual LEA.

Oral Interviews for Funding

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Oral Interviews for Funding*.

All finalists for grant awards will be invited to attend a virtual interview. If a campus qualifies for multiple Curriculum and Instruction bundled grants, the LEA will be invited to an interview to determine the best fit of grants (*see additional context below).

LEAs should include the following individuals in the oral interview process:

- Superintendent, or Superintendent delegate
- Proposed grant project manager

Chief Financial Officer

- Senior district leader directly responsible for overseeing the selected campus
- Campus-level leader with track record of success selected to lead the school action planning process (if identified)

The interviews will cover the following topics:

School Action Selection, and multiple Curriculum and Instruction grants, if qualified (50 points)

- Evaluation process and criteria for selecting the school action and campus leader
- Alignment of school action with overall district strategy for school improvement
- Support from Board of Trustees and district leadership, including Human Resources/Talent, Finance/Budget, Curriculum and Instruction (Teaching and Learning; Academics)

Readiness to Plan/Implement, including multiple Curriculum and Instruction grants, if qualified (50 points)

- Understanding of school action requirements and planning activities
- Awareness of school action implementation challenges and mitigation strategies
- Plans for engaging technical assistance organizations
- Presence of existing practices and policies to support school action planning and implementation, such as Human Resources/Talent, Finance/Budget, Curriculum and Instruction (Teaching and Learning; Academics).

*If a LEA qualifies for multiple Curriculum and Instruction bundled grants, then the following criteria will be used to grant multiple grants.

- Readiness: LEAs provide plan on how these programs would successfully co-exist.
- Resource considerations: LEAs provide plan for staffing resources to execute multiple programs well.
- Past success: LEAs provide success data for prior participation.

The LEA may be asked to submit evidence for the above criteria, and/or invited to a virtual interview to determine best-fit grants, if deemed necessary by the TEA.