



**2021-2023 Title I, 1003 ESF-Focused Support Grant
Letter of Interest (LOI) Application Due 11:59 p.m. CT, April 21, 2021**

NOGA ID

Authorizing legislation

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), P.L. 114-95, Section 1003, School Improvement

This LOI application must be submitted via email to loiapplications@tea.texas.gov.

The LOI application may be signed with a digital ID or it may be signed by hand. Both forms of signature are acceptable.

TEA must receive the application by **11:59 p.m. CT, April 21, 2021**.

Grant period from

June 8, 2021-September 30, 2023

Pre-award costs permitted from

Award Date

Required Attachments

1. Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)
2. Pathway 1: Pathway 1 Supplemental Pathway Attachment
3. Pathway 2: Pathway 2 Supplemental Pathway Attachment

NOTE: All applicants MUST submit an appropriate Supplemental Pathway Attachment for EACH CAMPUS on behalf of which the applicant is applying.

Amendment Number

Amendment number (For amendments only; enter N/A when completing this form to apply for grant funds):

Applicant Information

Organization CDN Campus ESC DUNS

Address City ZIP Vendor ID

Primary Contact Email Phone

Secondary Contact Email Phone

Certification and Incorporation

I understand that this application constitutes an offer and, if accepted by TEA or renegotiated to acceptance, will form a binding agreement. I hereby certify that the information contained in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, correct and that the organization named above has authorized me as its representative to obligate this organization in a legally binding contractual agreement. I certify that any ensuing program and activity will be conducted in accordance and compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

I further certify my acceptance of the requirements conveyed in the following portions of the LOI application, as applicable, and that these documents are incorporated by reference as part of the LOI application and Notice of Grant Award (NOGA):

- LOI application, guidelines, and instructions
- Debarment and Suspension Certification
- General and application-specific Provisions and Assurances
- Lobbying Certification

Authorized Official Name Title

Email Phone

Signature Date

RFA #

SAS #

Shared Services Arrangements

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are NOT permitted for this grant.

Number of Campuses Included in this Application

Pathway 1	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Pathway 2	<input type="text" value="3"/>

Statutory/Program Assurances

The following assurances apply to this program. In order to meet the requirements of the program, the applicant must comply with these assurances.

Check each of the following boxes to indicate your compliance.

- 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 LOI 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 provides assurance 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 provides assurance to adhere to all the Statutory and TEA Program requirements as noted in the 2021-2023 Title I, ESF-Focused Support Grant Program Guidelines.
- 4. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2021-2023 Title I, ESF-Focused Support Grant Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.
- 5. The applicant provides assurance that they accept and will comply with the requirements of [Every Student Succeeds Act Provisions and Assurances](#).
- 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. Title I served Federally Identified campuses awarded this grant will engage in the Effective Schools Framework (ESF) continuous improvement process and create a plan to be submitted to TEA that addresses the selected pathway aligned to the Essential Actions (EA) from the ESF.
- 8. The applicant ensures it will notify the Vetted Improvement Program provider of intent to apply and, if awarded, will work in good faith with the Vetted Improvement Program.
- 9. For all pathways, the applicant will budget at least the minimum amount indicated in the Budget Object Code 6200 - Profession and Contracted Services.

Statutory/Program Assurances, cont'd.

- 10. The applicant will identify a campus leader, on each awarded campus, who will be responsible for managing the grant project.
- 11. The applicant will provide access to TEA and its Vetted Improvement Partners for on-site visits to the district and campus(es) as appropriate.
- 12. The applicant will attend and participate in grant orientation meetings, technical assistance meetings, other periodic meetings of grantees, and sharing of best practices through the TEA program office.
- 13. The applicant provides assurance it will participate in all grant requirements including but not limited to an ESF Self-Assessment, and ESF Diagnostic, developing a web-based improvement plan, submission of funding and pathway progress reports.

Summary of Program

1. Describe how the LEA will support campus(es) in carrying out school support and improvement activities, including how the LEA will develop a web-based improvement plan for the eligible campuses selected for this grant.

Mercedes ISD's vision lies in creating confident, innovative leaders and our mission is to provide a versatile educational experience grounded on the belief that all students can succeed! MISD is dedicated to supporting our campuses as they continue seeking improvement in building staff capacity, improving student growth and increasing student achievement. In reviewing ESF diagnostics and ESF self-assessments for Sgt. William G. Harrell Middle School, Sgt. Manuel Chacon Middle School and Mercedes Academic Academy, we found that the levers identified as prioritized focused areas of improvement are similar. All three campuses have selected Levers 1.1 and 5.1 for pursuing supplemental supports. This being the case, MISD will be able to leverage ESF Focused Support Grant funds through common trainings and through campus on-site individualized supports that will strengthen campus systems, build staff capacity and ultimately improve student outcomes. As a part of the ESF grant, we will support our campuses as they focus on Essential Actions (EA) 1.1: Develop campus instructional leaders (principals, assistant principals, counselors, teacher leaders) with clear roles and responsibilities and Essential Action (EA) 5.1. Objective-driven daily lesson plans with formative assessments. We will do this by partnering with an External Vetted Improvement Program (VIP) who will support our development of clear roles and responsibilities for campus instructional leaders through instructional leadership team training, instructionally focused accountability training and ongoing, applied professional development on each campus. We would also seek to have our VIP provide leaders and teachers with ongoing, job-embedded, collaborative, student-centered professional learning that enables them to improve practice, grow in their leadership capacity, and meet their performance expectations. This would include training, modeling, and preparing teacher leaders to lead collaborative learning sessions through Professional Learning Communities (PLC). PLC supports would provide ongoing, applied professional development in building capacity for implementation of high quality, objective-driven daily lesson plans with formative assessments. Our selected VIP would be able to provide, and support the implementation of a system for observing and providing feedback to teachers and leaders that honors and rewards them for how well they teach their students and improve their practice. This would allow for us to monitor the improvements and accomplishments of our teachers and leaders relative to their individual goals. Our Web-based Improvement Plan would be developed to allow us to initially identify and track the needs of each campus aligned to (EA) 1.1 and (EA) 5.1, plan for the focus that we will have with our VIP on each campus, implement the program provided by the VIP, and monitor campus growth compared to the success criteria within the ESF for (EA) 1.1 and 5.1.

2. Describe how the LEA will monitor schools receiving the ESF-Focused Support Grant, including how the LEA will: (a) Monitor a web-based improvement plans upon submission and during implementation, and (b) Implement additional action following unsuccessful implementation of such plan after the first year of the grant cycle.

Mercedes ISD will monitor the campuses receiving ESF Focused Support Grant funds through leveraging the web-based platform, and working with our VIP to determine how each campus is progressing within the success criteria for (EA) 1.1 and EA 5.1 throughout implementation. Based on our initial ESF diagnostic, we have developed a plan for the scope of work for each campus. We will use the web-based improvement plan to document clear, cyclical assessment points with the VIP to inform additional actions that may need to be taken if implementation was unsuccessful. Additional needed actions will be as immediate as allowable. We will use the ESF success criteria to determine the metrics by which we assess the success of the program and to determine potential adjustments. We have planned for built in continuous supports from our VIP in year 2 that will be based on an ESF Focused Support Grant outcomes review at the end of year 1. These continued supports could include further training for identified groups, including staff new to the district in year 2, on-site coaching and supports based on identified needs and revising campus goals based on progress.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies, Performance and Evaluation

1. Describe how the LEA will modify, as appropriate, practices and policies to provide operational flexibility to the awarded campus, that enables full and effective implementation of the Effective Schools Framework Essential Actions aligned web-based Improvement Plan.

In our work to enable the full and effective implementation of Essential Actions 1.1 and 5.1, we will seek to ensure that our practices and policies provide the necessary operational flexibility to the awarded campuses. To do this, we will work with our selected VIP to create new pathways and modifications within the selected schools. This would enable the participating campuses to implement the program as designed.

Mercedes ISD makes the following commitments to our ESF Focused Grant initiative campuses:

Lever 1.1:

MISD recognizes the unique needs of low-performing schools and provides the flexibility to address those needs.

MISD provides opportunities for ongoing support and coaching of the campus leader.

MISD provides the campus with adequate funding and sufficient control over their budget to ensure access to necessary resources for implementation of the school's improvement plan and high-quality instruction to meet students' learning needs.

MISD supports principals by protecting their time dedicated for school instructional leadership.

MISD ensures that principal supervisors have necessary authority to create conditions for school success (e.g. remove barriers).

MISD policies and practices prioritize principal and principal supervisor instructional leadership (e.g. manageable span of control, time dedicated to instructional practices).

MISD provides effective governance to support and promote student outcomes.

Lever 5.1

MISD ensures access to high-quality common formative assessment resources aligned to state standards for all tested areas and PK-2nd grade math and reading

For assessments that are district provided and graded, MISD ensures that schools receive detailed reports within two instructional days, through use of Eduphoria.

MISD provides schools with access to student academic, behavioral, and on-track graduate data (present and historical).

MISD has effective systems for identifying and supporting struggling learners.

MISD policies and practices support effective instruction in schools.

We will allow these campuses to modify their school and employee calendars as necessary to accommodate additional days of professional learning required to meet the goals of (EA) 1.1 and 5.1. This would include integrating the ESF Focused Web-based Improvement Plan as the standing improvement plan for ESF Focused Support Campuses. We will also provide flexibility within our policies for PLCs and observation and feedback cycles to ensure policies align to the VIP's programming while still ensuring that they meet the highest of expectations required for our staff and students.

Budget Narrative

1. Describe how the proposed budget will meet the needs and goals of the program, including for staffing, supplies and materials, contracts, travel, etc. If applicable, include a high-level snapshot of funds currently allocated to similar programs. Include a short narrative describing how adjustments will be made in the future to meet needs.

The proposed budget includes procuring a contract for National Institute for Excellence in Teaching's (NIET) System for Teacher and Student Advancement (TAP System). We selected TAP because it is a comprehensive capacity building model. TAP focuses on creating school and district structures for building educator capacity to increase student achievement and is backed by more than 20 years of research. TAP on-site support will be crucial to effective implementation and support throughout the life of the grant. This would include direct professional learning services, support for implementation of enabling structures (e.g., PLC, ILT, Coaching, Feedback and Evaluation Cycles, Lesson Planning Structures etc.) as well as coaching and consultancy services to allow us to get ongoing support. Using the TAP system will empower us to meet the overall goals of our ESF Focused Support Grant Program by providing scaffolded supports that will sustain (EA) 1.1 and 5.1 after the two years of funding is complete. MISD does not have this level of ongoing support on any of our campuses at this time so these funds will be used to truly supplement school improvement efforts with additional services that will make a difference in acceleration of improvement. Contracted services funds will be allocated to research-based professional development that will be provided through initial training days and then ongoing, on campus coaching surrounding 1.1 and 5.1. Professional development training provided through our contract with NIET would include: Instructional Focused Accountability Training that will prepare our staff to develop clear, written, and transparent roles and responsibilities, schedule core leadership tasks on weekly calendars (observations, debriefs, team meetings), ensure that performance expectations are clear, written, measurable, and match the job responsibilities, train campus leaders to use consistent, written protocols and processes to lead their department, grade-level teams, or other areas of responsibility, create campus protocols that empower campus instructional leaders to meet on a weekly basis to focus on planning instruction based on student progress and formative data, build principal capacity to improve campus leaders through regularly scheduled, job-embedded professional development consistent with best practices for adult learning, deliberate modeling, and observation and feedback cycles. Through PLC training and ongoing supports, MISD will ensure that all teachers create and submit daily lesson plans that include clear objectives, opening activities, time allotments that indicate the amount of time spent on each step of the lesson, multiple, differentiated paths of instruction to a clearly defined curricular goal, including paths to meet the specific needs of students with disabilities and English learners among other student groups, and daily formative assessments along with exemplary responses. Ongoing Applied Professional Development through on-site monitoring/coaching days will be planned with our VIP and Campus Instructional Leadership Teams collaboratively according to data generated at the campus level and implemented collaboratively with ILTs so that the campus has ownership in the Essential Actions for sustainability and capacity building. Contracted services will include:

1. Instructional Focused Accountability Training for all leaders on all three campuses- 3 days of training around effective implementation of a valid and reliable appraisal system for district leaders and school administrators including feedback cycles and calibration supports, followed by campus evaluator coaching and co-observation each semester on individual campuses.
2. Instructional Leadership Team Training for all leaders on all three campuses- 2 days of training in which educators will reflect on the actions of highly effective administrators and develop their own skills to ensure Instructional Leadership Team members and ILT meetings impact teaching and learning.
3. Professional Learning Communities Training for all administrators and teacher leaders on all three campuses- 2 days of training in structures that support adult learning and planning and implementing PLC structures on individual campuses. The focus for PLC will be ongoing, applied professional development in building capacity for implementation of high quality, objective-driven daily lesson plans. Our budget also includes funds to support the extra days of work and time outside of the regular school our teacher leaders will be committing to by providing these educators stipends to recognize and compensate them for their school improvement commitment and effort. Finally, MISD has included funds for supplies so that PLC meeting spaces are equipped with proper materials to enhance professional learning, collaboration and data gathering.

Budget Narrative, cont'd.

2. Describe how the LEA will align other Federal, State, and local resources to carry out the activities supported with funds received under this grant.

The pandemic caused major disruption in instruction for our MISD students. The gap in instruction could take many years to remediate. Therefore, MISD is committed to assuring that our campuses receiving the ESF Focused Support Grant funds are prioritized as district level staff work with campus administrators and teachers to meet the ongoing challenges our students face due to the disruption in their education. District level staff (funded through various funding sources) will work with the selected VIP to support the quality professional learning provided to meet the goals of (EA) 1.1 and 5.1. The district will participate with and monitor each campus according to their specific needs. The district will also closely monitor each campus' implementation of (EA) 1.1 and 5.1 as it monitors the Web-based Improvement Plan, provides feedback and allows for flexibility based on each campus' individual needs.

The district will also allocate additional Title I, Part A and State Comp Ed funding to each ESF Focused Support Grant Campus to support the learning needs of students and the teaching needs of staff.

The district and campus Family and Community Engagement program will work together in a shared responsibility between the school, child and family to encourage a well-rounded and successful child. The goal is to have the whole team work together to allow every student the opportunity to reach his or her full potential. We know that our students and families are facing emotional issues and lack resources needed in home life. The Family and Community Engagement program will provide needed parent training and provide the connections to much needed community resources that families need.

Equitable Access and Participation

Check the appropriate box below to indicate whether any barriers exist to equitable access and participation for any groups that receive services funded by this program.

- The applicant assures that no barriers exist to equitable access and participation for any groups receiving services funded by this program.
- Barriers exist to equitable access and participation for the following groups receiving services funded by this grant, as described below.

Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>

Appendix I: Amendment Description and Purpose (leave this section blank when completing the initial application for funding)

An amendment must be submitted when the program plan or budget is altered for the reasons described in the "When to Amend the Application" document posted on the [Administering a Grant](#) page. The following are required to be submitted for an amendment: (1) Page 1 of the application with updated contact information and current authorized official's signature and date, (2) Appendix I with changes identified and described, (3) all updated sections of the application or budget affected by the changes identified below, and, if applicable, (4) Amended Budget Request. Amendment Instructions with more details can be found on the last tab of the budget template.

You may duplicate this page

Amended Section

Reason for Amendment