Application Guidelines

Program Guidelines

2016-2020 Texas Title I Priority Schools (TTIPS), Cycle 5 Grant

Authorized by P.L. 107-110, Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Section 1003(g)

Application Closing Date—5:00 p.m., Central Time

September 15, 2016

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

**Division of School Improvement and Support
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701**

Contents

Introduction to the Program Guidelines

TEA, as the pass-through entity[1], is the grantee[2] from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and TEA awards subgrants to non-federal entities[3] 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 subgrantees[4]. 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 the schedule instructions. The Standard Application System (SAS) consists of all schedules (i.e., forms) to be completed in order for the applicant to be eligible for funding.

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.**

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[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.

US Department of Education and/or State Appropriations

The following is provided in compliance with the US Department of Education Appropriations Act:

Category	Amount
Total funds available for this project	Approximately $81,000,000
Percentage to be financed with federal funds	100%
Amount of federal funds	Approximately $81,000,000
Percentage to be financed from nonfederal sources	0%
Amount of nonfederal funds	$0

Grant Timeline

All of these dates except the grant ending date may vary slightly as conditions require.

Date	Event
July 29, 2016	RFA available; notice of the RFA published in the *Texas Register*
August 15, 2016	Last date to submit FAQs to TEA contact person See General and Fiscal Guidelines, Frequently Asked Questions
August 15, 2016	Last date to submit questions to be addressed in the applicant's conference See General and Fiscal Guidelines, Applicants' Conference
August 26, 2016	FAQs posted to TEA Grant Opportunities page
August 26, 2016	Applicants' conference posted to TEA Grant Opportunities page
August 29, 2016	Due date for the Notice of Intent to Apply in the TEA Document Control Center See General and Fiscal Guidelines, Notice of Intent to Apply
August 29, 2016	Due date for Reviewer Information Form See General and Fiscal Guidelines, Reviewer Information Form
September 15, 2016	Due date for the application in the TEA Document Control Center, 5:00 p.m., Central Time See General and Fiscal Guidelines, Submission Deadline
September 16, 2016 – November 4, 2016	Competitive review period See General and Fiscal Guidelines, Application Review
February 1, 2017	Beginning date of grant See General and Fiscal Guidelines, Grant Period

Date	Event
Annually on May 31ˢᵗ, throughout grant term	Final date to submit an amendment
July 31, 2020	Ending date of grant See General and Fiscal Guidelines, Grant Period.

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.

Grant at a Glance

This section provides fundamental information pertinent to the grant program.

Authorizing Legislation

This grant program is authorized as the School Improvement Grants (SIG) program by P.L. 107-110, Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Section 1003(g).

The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) published final requirements for the SIG program in the *Federal Register* on October 28, 2010 (http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2010-10-28/pdf/2010-27313.pdf). In 2015, the Department revised the final requirements to implement language in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014, and the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015.

Where to Submit the Application

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Where to Submit the Application.

Number of Copies

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Number of Copies.

Three complete copies of the application are required to be submitted, printed on one side only. All three copies must have an original signature (blue ink preferred) of the person authorized to bind the applicant in a contract.

Purpose of Program

The purpose of this program is to provide funding to LEAs for use in eligible schools, in order to substantially raise the achievement of their students and enable the schools to meet annual goals and program-term measurable objectives. Funding is intended for LEAs that demonstrate the greatest need for the funds and the strongest commitment to provide adequate resources to support schools in meeting the criteria to exit priority or focus status.

Eligible Applicants

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Eligibility Requirements.

Eligible applicants include campuses currently identified as Title I priority schools and Title I focus schools, and who are not currently receiving Texas Title I Priority Schools (TTIPS) funds.

The entitlement of Title I, 1003(a) priority and focus school funding will terminate as of the date of award of Title I, 1003(g) TTIPS funding.

Eligibility List

Campuses are identified as priority and focus in the state of Texas flexibility waiver from specific provisions from the U.S. Department of Education Elementary and Secondary Education Act. A list of campuses identified as priority or focus is posted on the TEA Grant Opportunities page, with all documents pertaining to this RFA.

Shared Services Arrangement

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Shared Services Arrangements.

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are not allowed.

More Than One Campus

Eligible applicants (LEAs) may apply for the grant on behalf of more than one campus. A separate application must be submitted for each campus, and that application must be unique, specific, and singular to only that campus. Note that in this campus-based grant, any student receiving services funded through the grant program must be enrolled in the eligible grantee school.

Application Funding

See the following sections of the General and Fiscal Guidelines:

- Grant Funding
- Continuation Funding
- Fund Management
- Use of Funds

It is anticipated that approximately 10 grants will be awarded ranging in amounts from $50,000 to $2,000,000 per each year of the four-year grant period. Each awarded project could receive up to a maximum of $8,000,000 for operation in the school years of 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020. Maximum funding per year for any applicant is $2,000,000.

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.

Limitation of Administrative Funds

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Administrative Costs.

Section 1003(g) of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 limits the amount of funds that may be budgeted to administer the program, including direct administrative costs and indirect costs, to no more than 5% of the total grant awarded.

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

Pre-Award Costs

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Pre-Award Costs.

There are no pre-award costs for this grant program.

Applicant Assistance

The following types of assistance are available to applicants for this grant program.

Contact for Clarifying Information

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, TEA Contacts.

The following TEA staff member should be contacted with questions about the RFA, the grant program, or for assistance with the applicants' conference:

> Leticia Govea, Division Manager, School Improvement and Support
> leticia.govea@tea.texas.gov
> Phone: (512) 463-1427

Frequently Asked Questions

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Frequently Asked Questions.

The FAQs for this grant program will be posted to the TEA Grant Opportunities page no later than the date listed on the Grant Timeline. Applicants may email their questions to the TEA staff member listed in the Contact for Clarifying Information section.

Applicants' Conference

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Applicants' Conference.

Questions that applicants wish to have addressed during the applicants' conference must be submitted no later than the date given in the grant timeline.

Errata Notices

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Errata Notices.

Email Bulletins

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Email Bulletins.

Program Elements

This section provides detailed information about the grant program.

Program Description

This program is designed to substantially raise the achievement of students in Title I low-performing schools, and enable the schools to meet annual goals and program-term measurable objectives. Funding is intended for LEAs that demonstrate the greatest need for the funds and the strongest commitment to provide adequate resources to support schools in meeting the criteria to exit priority or focus status.

The intent of the TTIPS grant program is to achieve lasting positive reforms in the state's most struggling campuses through highest-quality implementation of strong evidence-based interventions. These interventions are designed within a framework of one of seven school reform models.

The LEA must describe how it will use school improvement funds in its priority/focus schools to plan and effectively implement within one of the following school reform models:

- **Transformation model**, which addresses specific areas critical to transforming persistently lowest-achieving schools.

- **Texas state-design model**, in which a campus delivers a comprehensive school improvement strategy for all students in the school that improves student achievement or attainment. The strategy must address school leadership, teaching and learning in academic content areas, professional learning for educators, and student non-academic supports. Additionally, the strategy will be consistent with the Texas concept for developing an *Early College High School* (ECHS). In doing so, the LEA/campus will (1) pursue designation as a Texas ECHS, with a target of earning TEA ECHS designation and full-operation as an ECHS, no later than the start of the second year of the TTIPS grant implementation period; (2) provide a rigorous course of study that enables students to receive a high school diploma and complete the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's (THECB) core curriculum, or an associate's degree, or at least 60 credit hours toward a baccalaureate degree during grades 9-12; and (3) provide college credit earned through the high school years for all students at no cost; including tuition, fees and textbook costs.

- **Early Learning Intervention Model**, in which a campus addresses specific areas critical to transforming a persistently low-achieving elementary school; and additionally offers: full day kindergarten and a pre-kindergarten program that meets the requirements of a high-quality preschool program, as defined in the U.S. Department of Education's Preschool Development Grants program.

- **Turnaround model**, which includes, among other actions: replacing the principal and rehiring no more than 50% of the school's staff, adopting a new governance structure, and implementing an instructional program that is research-based and vertically aligned from one grade to the next as well as aligned with Texas' academic standards.

- **Whole-School Reform model**, in which the campus must implement an evidence-based whole-school reform in partnership with a model developer. The model developer is an entity or individual that either has proprietary rights to the model or an entity or individual that has a demonstrated record of success in implementing whole-school reform models in one or more low-achieving schools that is comparable on severable variables to the TTIPS applicant.

- **Restart model**, in which an LEA converts the school or closes and reopens it under the management of a charter school operator, a charter management current organization (CMO), or an education management organization (EMO) that has been selected through a rigorous review process.

- **School closure**, in which an LEA closes the school and enrolls the students who attended the school in other, higher-achieving schools within the LEA.

- **Optional modification: Rural LEA Applicant Flexibility,** in which an applicant proposes to modify one element of the Transformation or Turnaround model, but only in a manner that the modification meets the original intent and purpose of the element and does not eliminate the element from the resulting implementation plan.

See a full description of all elements within each of the school intervention models in the Program Assurances section of the Standard Application System of this RFA package.

Note that applicants are limited to select, design and implement a grant program in keeping with only one model and not a combination of models.

Supplement, Not Supplant

For supplement, not supplant guidance, see the Supplement, Not Supplant Handbook on the Division of Grants Administration Administering a Grant page.

The supplement, not supplant provision applies to this grant program.

The TTIPS grant program will require an LEA that receives TTIPS funds for implementation at an eligible priority/focus school (whether the campus receives Title I, Part A, funds or not) to ensure that the campus receives all of the state and local funds it would have received in the absence of the TTIPS grant funds. As a result, an LEA must provide a TTIPS grantee campus all of the non-Federal funds the campus would have received were it not a TTIPS grantee campus, and TTIPS funds must supplement the *amount* of those non-Federal funds. Note, however, that the campus does not need to demonstrate that TTIPS funds are used only for activities that supplement those activities the campus would otherwise provide with non-Federal funds.

Indirect Costs

The grantee may claim a maximum for indirect costs equal to their current approved restricted indirect cost rate for this federally funded grant.

Refer to the Indirect Cost Handbook, posted in the Handbooks and Other Guidance section of the Division of Grants Administration Administering a Grant page for more information on indirect costs and the correlation to the supplement, not supplant provision.

Use the Maximum Indirect Costs Worksheet, posted on the Division of Federal Fiscal Compliance and Reporting Indirect Cost Rates page, to calculate the maximum indirect costs that can be claimed for a grant.

Application Requirements and Assurances

This section describes the two types of requirements that applicants must address in the application (such as with a narrative description, an activity timeline, or a checklist) to be eligible to be considered for funding:

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

> **IMPORTANT NOTE:** All requirements must be properly addressed in the application. Failure to address a requirement can result in ineligibility for scoring and review. For details, refer to the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Completing the Application.

Statutory Requirements

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Statutory Requirements.

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.

The following requirements are defined in the statute that authorizes this program. The applicant must address each of these requirements in the application to be considered for funding:

1. The LEA has analyzed the needs of the campus identified in the application and has selected an intervention that is designed to meet the specific needs of the campus, based on a needs analysis that, among other things; analyzes the improvement needs identified by families and the community, and takes into consideration family and community input in selecting the intervention for the campus.

2. The LEA has designed and will implement interventions consistent with the School Improvement Grant (SIG) requirements and will implement interventions on a timeline that will increase student achievement by the end of the grant period. See a full description of all requirements within each of the SIG school intervention models in the Program Assurances section of the Standard Application System of this RFA package.

3. The LEA will use the SIG funds to provide adequate resources and related support the campus in order to implement fully and effectively the selected intervention. In doing so, the LEA ensures the campus will continue to receive all of the state and local funds it would have received in the absence of the SIG funds.

4. The LEA will recruit, screen, and select external providers, if applicable; using methods that ensure their quality. LEAs will regularly review and hold accountable such providers for their performance.

5. The LEA will align other existing resources with the selected intervention.

6. The LEA will modify its practices or policies, if necessary, to enable the LEA and campus to implement the selected intervention fully and effectively.

7. The LEA will provide effective oversight and support for implementation of the selected intervention for the campus served, such as by creating an LEA turnaround office.

8. The LEA will meaningfully engage families and the community in the implementation of the selected intervention on an ongoing basis.

9. The LEA will sustain the reforms after the funding period ends; largely through significant gains in capacity that lead to lasting positive change on the campus.

10. The LEA will, to the extent practicable, and in accordance with its selected SIG intervention model(s), implement evidence-based strategies.

11. The LEA has the capacity to use school improvement funds to provide adequate resources and related support to the campus in order to fully and effectively implement the selected intervention.

12. The LEA will monitor the campus that receives school improvement funds by establishing annual goals for student achievement on the State's assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics.

13. The LEA/campus will regularly report progress and submit annual summative outcomes on the leading performance indicators for this program. At minimum, these include:

    a. Number of minutes within the school year.
    b. Average scale scores on State assessments in reading/language arts and in mathematics, by grade, for the "all students" group, for each achievement quartile, and for each subgroup (ethnicity, sex, disability status, LEP status, economically disadvantaged status, migrant status)
    c. Number and percentage of students completing advanced coursework (e.g., AP/IB) early-college high schools, dual enrollment classes, or advanced coursework and dual enrollment classes (High Schools Only)
    d. College enrollment rates (High Schools Only)
    e. Teacher Attendance Rate
    f. Student Attendance Rate
    g. Student Completion Rate
    h. Student Drop-Out Rate
    i. Number and percentage of students demonstrating chronic absenteeism (15 or more absences)
    j. Locally developed competencies created to identify teacher strengths/weaknesses
    k. Types of support offered to teachers
    l. Types of on-going, job-embedded professional development for teachers
    m. Types of on-going, job-embedded professional development for administrators
    n. Strategies to increase parent/community involvement
    o. Types of strategies which increase student learning time
    p. Number of teachers and principals at each performance level (proficient/non-proficient) used in the district evaluation systems for assigning teacher and principal performance ratings.

TEA Program Requirements

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Program Requirements.

In addition to the statutory requirements, TEA has established the following program requirements. Applicants must address within the application how they will achieve the following:

1. The LEA/campus has designed and will implement a school improvement reform program that is unique to the campus and responds directly to the unique needs of the specific campus. An applicant that plagiarizes or copies any other application does not meet this standard and will be disqualified.

2. The LEA will designate an individual or office with primary responsibilities for supporting the LEA/campus' school improvement efforts. This individual/office will have primary responsibility and authority for ensuring the effective implementation of the grant option approved by TEA; serve as the district liaison to TEA and those providing technical assistance and/or contracted service to the LEA/campus as part of the approved grant. The LEA will notify TEA immediately of any changes to this contact.

3. A team from the grantee LEA/campus will attend and participate in grant orientation meetings, technical assistance meetings, other periodic meetings of grantees, the Advancing Improvements in Education Conference, and sharing of best practices through the TEA program office.

4. The LEA and campus will fully engage in all required elements of Texas Accountability Interventions System (TAIS) framework, at the level described for priority schools; regardless of model selected for implementation. Through this engagement, campuses are required to submit an annual improvement plan and quarterly progress reports documenting school's continuous processes around data analysis, needs assessment, implementation and monitoring; as delineated in the TAIS framework.

5. The LEA and campus will engage in necessary effort to align and complement existing school improvement strategies, goals and interventions in their final approved TTIPS grant, in order to effectively deliver a single and comprehensive school improvement plan.

6. At the close of the pre-implementation period, the LEA/campus will prepare and submit an Implementation Readiness Portfolio to the TEA program office. The LEA/campus will engage with the TEA program office to provide clarifications and adjustments to the portfolio based on the review and assessment recommendations. This portfolio will include:

   - A vision statement for transformational change on campus
   - Core values aligned to vision statement
   - Annual Performance Goals
   - Evaluation of staff effectiveness and projected staffing needs
   - Finalized annual implementation plan
   - Evidence of effective professional development in asset-based thinking
   - Demonstration of family and community input for final intervention design and plan for meaningful and ongoing family and community engagement in the implementation.

7. The LEA/campus will participate in and make use of technical assistance and coaching support provided by TEA and/or its subcontractors.

8. The LEA/campus will provide access for onsite visits to the LEA and campus by TEA and its contractors.

9. At periods during implementation, the LEA/campus will participate in formative assessments of the LEA's capacity and commitment to carry out the selected school improvement intervention model.

Program-Specific Assurances

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Provisions and Assurances.

The program-specific assurances for this grant program are listed in the SAS. Refer to Schedule #2—Required Attachments and Provisions and Assurances, Part 3: Program-Specific Provisions and Assurances.

Activities and Use of Funds

See the Administering a Grant page for general guidance on allowable activities and use of funds.

Allowable activities and use of funds for this grant may include but are not limited to the following:

- Costs associated with implementing the selected model within the granted campus;
- Conducting LEA-level activities designed to support implementation of the selected school intervention model;
- Supporting school improvement activities, at the campus or LEA level.

Supplies and Materials requiring program-specific approval

In this grant program, some categories of supplies and materials require program-specific approval. These include:

- Technology Hardware-not capitalized
- Technology Software-not capitalized
- Textbooks/Curricular Materials
- Supplies and materials to be used as student incentives

Advisory Council

Supplies and materials to support an advisory council may be funded under the grant program, when costs are in keeping with the following conditions:

- The council purpose is consistent with/reasonable to address needs identified in the application;
- The council purpose is consistent with/reasonable to deliver a strategy identified in the application;
- The council and costs are allocable, reasonable and necessary to carry out the intent and purpose of the grant program;
- The council activities will result in a positive impact on student achievement;

The LEA/campus must maintain records of the council which document membership, council activities, council purposes, and council's achieved outcomes; as aligned to student achievement.

Field Trips

Field trips may be funded under the grant program, when in keeping with the following conditions:

- Are consistent with/reasonable to address needs identified in the application;
- Are consistent with/reasonable to deliver a strategy identified in the application;
- Is allocable, reasonable and necessary to carry out the intent and purpose of the grant program;
- Will result in a positive impact on student achievement;
- Includes instruction that addresses the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS); and
- Includes an evaluation of the field trip that measures the impact on student achievement.

The LEA/campus must keep documentation on each field trip to support the conditions listed above.

Field Trips will require a written justification form. To access the Field Trips Justification form, refer to the Administering a Grant page.

Cost of Membership in Any Civic or Community Organization

The cost of membership in any civic or community organization may be funded under the grant program, when costs are in keeping with the following conditions:

- Membership in the organization is consistent with/reasonable to address needs identified in the application;
- Membership in the organization is consistent with/reasonable to deliver a strategy identified in the application;
- Membership costs are allocable, reasonable and necessary to carry out the intent and purpose of the grant program;
- Membership in the organization will result in a positive impact on student achievement;

The LEA/campus must maintain records of their participation in the organization, which documents the LEA/campus' members in the organization, activities with the organization, outcomes achieved through membership; as aligned to student achievement.

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 access the Out-of-State Travel Justification form, refer to the Administering a Grant page.

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

The cost of travel costs for officials such as the executive director, superintendent, or board members may be funded under the grant program, when costs are in keeping with the following conditions:

- The official participating in grant funded travel **must** have a direct role in school improvement efforts at the campus implementing the grant, and this is indicated in the Management Plan of the application; and

- Travel of the official is consistent with/reasonable to address needs identified in the application; and

- Travel of the official is consistent with/reasonable to deliver a strategy identified in the application; and

- The official is traveling to attend a conference required under this grant program, and as a required participant (i.e. the District Coordinator of School Improvement is a required attendee at TTIPS grant training); or

- Travel costs for the official supports their attendance at a supplemental, non-compulsory Texas school improvement and accountability conference, including but not limited to: District Institute, Advancing Improvement in Education.

General Unallowable Activities and Use of Funds

In general, refer to the Budgeting Cost Guidance Handbook on the [Administering a Grant](#) page for unallowable costs.

Hosting or Sponsoring of Conferences

Conferences may not be hosted or sponsored under the grant program.

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

- Debt service (lease-purchase)
- Retroactive amendment requests for items requiring specific approval.
- Personal computing, electronics, devices purchased in a quantity that will create an excess of a one-to-one technology ratio for students or faculty/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/staff.
- Funds to support personnel, activities, supplies or equipment that are assessed to be a part of the normal course of conducting school business; and by which the use of grants funds would not be supplemental.

Program Evaluation

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. TEA will collect and analyze relevant data from PEIMS if it is available.

Upon selection and negotiation of the grant, TEA and/or the state selected technical assistance provider will guide each grantee through the process of setting rigorous, attainable and aligned performance targets that will indicate significant progress in turning around the school. Each LEA/campus will submit Annual Performance Goals and progress targets for each of the implementation years of the grant. These Annual Performance Goals and performance targets shall be incorporated/aligned within the campuses' Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS)-based annual Targeted Improvement Plan. Progress toward these targets will be monitored through the quarterly reporting and conferencing.

Goals for the full-implementation period of the grant will be established prior to the start of the 2017-2018 school year and submitted with the Implementation Readiness Portfolio.

TEA will require the submission of corresponding actual performance data for each Annual Performance Goal in August as a condition for releasing subsequent year funding awards. TEA will review the achievement data annually and use to determine whether the next year's funding award will be released. Grantees are expected to reach achievement on their established targets in student performance goals and critical success factors goals, in order to receive their annual grant allocation each year of the grant.

Performance Measures

In addition to the actual data on the Annual Performance Goals and performance targets described above, the applicant agrees to collect data and report on the following mandatory performance measures, identified as leading indicators for the federal school improvement grant program:

1. Number of minutes within the school year.
2. Average scale scores on State assessments in reading/language arts and in mathematics, by grade, for the "all students" group, for each achievement quartile, and for each subgroup (ethnicity, sex, disability status, LEP status, economically disadvantaged status, migrant status)
3. Number and percentage of students completing advanced coursework (e.g., AP/IB) early-college high schools, dual enrollment classes, or advanced coursework and dual enrollment classes (High Schools Only)
4. College enrollment rates (High Schools Only)
5. Teacher Attendance Rate
6. Student Attendance Rate
7. Student Completion Rate
8. Student Drop-Out Rate
9. Number and percentage of students demonstrating chronic absenteeism (15 or more absences)
10. Locally developed competencies created to identify teacher strengths/weaknesses
11. Types of support offered to teachers
12. Types of on-going, job-embedded professional development for teachers
13. Types of on-going, job-embedded professional development for administrators
14. Strategies to increase parent/community involvement
15. Types of strategies which increase student learning time
16. Number of teachers and principals at each performance level (proficient/non-proficient) used in the district evaluation systems for assigning teacher and principal performance ratings.

Critical Success Factors

Specific to this grant program, Critical Success Factors are the key research-based focus areas, aligned with the statutory requirements of this program, under which school improvement initiatives shall be planned. Research provides evidence that effort and investment in these focus areas is most impactful to achieve continuous school improvement. These Critical Success Factors include:

1. Improve the Instructional Program
2. Increase Teacher Quality
3. Increase Leadership Effectiveness
4. Increase the Use of Quality Data to Drive Instruction
5. Increased Learning Time
6. Increase Family and Community Engagement
7. Improve School Climate

Milestones

Milestones are key processes or structures that need to be in place before the Critical Success Factor can be impacted. This grant program and the Texas Accountability Interventions System guidance recognizes that some interim steps taken in pursuit of the Critical Success Factors require schools undergoing reform to establish process-based goals. These process-based goals are milestones, or steps along the way to the desired result. For example, in pursuit of Increased Teacher Quality, a school may have some process-based goals of scheduling and delivering professional development sessions. While these action steps are smaller process-based goals and are a part of the continuous improvement process, TEA program staff require grantees to establish performance measures and program targets using results-based goals. These result-based goals clearly state measurable impact on the program's intended beneficiaries. For example, a results-based goal would establish a quantifiable target for student academic outcomes or demonstrated teacher instructional practices.

Limits on Contracted Evaluators

When a grantee chooses, or is required under a grant, to hire a contracted evaluator, TEA believes that the evaluator must have the capability to remain independent and objective in carrying out the evaluation. "Independent and objective" implies that there is no influence or control, real or perceived, exerted on the evaluator by any person who is involved in the provision of program services. Therefore, the only way in which a contracted evaluator can be truly independent and objective is not to be involved in any manner with the provision of program services or activities. Otherwise, the evaluator is, at least in part, evaluating its own services.

In addition, TEA is aware that some grant writers develop and design the grant program, write the entire grant application, and then wish to evaluate the grant program. TEA also believes that this scenario poses a conflict of interest for the evaluator, in that the evaluator is evaluating the grant program that he or she designed, developed, and wrote. Again, it is not possible for the evaluator to function independently and objectively if the evaluator performed in this capacity. It is certainly acceptable for the grant writer to receive some information from a potential evaluator to include in the evaluation section of the grant application with regard to an appropriate evaluation plan or design, but communication between the grant writer and evaluator should be limited to that specific topic.

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

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 applies to this federally funded grant program.

Application Elements

This section describes the requirements and attachments that must be addressed in and included with the application.

Notice of Intent to Apply

For competitive grants, prospective applicants are requested to submit the Notice of Intent to Apply (NOI) by the date specified in the Grant Timeline. The NOI provides helpful information that allows TEA staff to plan for the management of the application and review processes. Failure to notify TEA of the intent to apply will *not* disqualify the applicant from applying for grant funds.

The NOI is published along with the RFA on the TEA Grant Opportunities page.

Reviewer Information Form

For every application submitted for a competitive grant, the applicant is required to submit the names of three individuals to serve as reviewers in the competitive review process for the grant program. For LEAs submitting multiple campus grant applications, the LEA must submit a minimum of three reviewers per campus application or a total of 10 reviewers, whichever is less.

Individuals who are hired to prepare grant applications may not serve as reviewers, and their names should not be submitted. Applicants must notify the people whose names they submit that they may be asked by TEA to serve as reviewers.

Once reviewers are selected, they will receive detailed information about the review process. The competitive review for the grant program will take place during the time period given in the Grant Timeline.

The Reviewer Information Form is published along with the RFA on the TEA Grant Opportunities page. All applicants are required to complete the form and to submit it online on or before the date given in the Grant Timeline.

Required Attachments

See the following sections of the General and Fiscal Guidelines:

- Fiscal-Related Documentation Required to Be on File
- Required Fiscal-Related Attachments
- Required Program-Related Attachments

This section describes the two types of attachments that may be required to be submitted with the application: fiscal-related attachments and program-related attachments.

Required Fiscal-Related Attachments

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Required Fiscal-Related Attachments, for a general description of fiscal-related documents that can be required as attachments to the application.

For a list of the fiscal-related attachments required for this grant application, refer to the SAS, Schedule #2—Required Attachments and Provisions and Assurances.

Required Program-Related Attachments

The applicant must submit with the application any required attachments listed below.

There are no program-related attachments required for this grant application.

Scoring and Review

This section provides information on the scoring and review of applications for competitive grants.

Standard Review Criteria

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Standard Review Criteria.

Specific Review Criteria

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Specific Review Criteria.

In addition to the standard review criteria, the following grant-specific criteria will also be considered (corresponding point values are given).

Grant-Specific Criteria	Maximum Points
The applicant has demonstrated a clear ability to benefit from grant resources based on their vision for school reform, district commitments, and existing structures that enable reforms to take hold.	10
Family and community members were meaningfully engaged in assessing the program needs and selecting the school improvement model.	10
Family and community members will be meaningfully engaged in an ongoing basis through the implementation of the program.	10
The staff and external providers on the project each serve a function that is essential to meet program goals and their roles are non-duplicative.	10
Methods described for recruiting, screening, and selecting external providers ensures highest possible quality in providers.	10
Methods described for rigorous oversight of external providers ensures ongoing high-quality service and success in delivering outcomes.	10
Capacity gained through the proposed project will create lasting change to campus culture and practices that can be sustained after the grant period ends.	10
The interventions planned (Schedule 17, all parts) are of adequate scope and scale to meet all requirements of the federal School Improvement Grant model selected, as described in the Program Assurances.	30
Total maximum number of grant-specific criteria points	100

Priorities for Funding

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Priorities for Funding.

In addition to the factors considered in awarding competitive grants as outlined in the previous sections above, TEA will award grants according to the following priorities. Applications that receive 70% of the points available through the standard and specific review criteria will have priority points added, if earned and if available per the program guidelines.

Statutory or TEA Priority	Maximum Points
Campuses that have not met state accountability ratings for two or more years as of August, 2016.	10
Campuses that select the Texas State-Designed or Early-Learning Model.	10
Total maximum number of statutory/priority points	20