

Frequently Asked Questions for Strong Foundations Implementation (SFI)

This document will provide frequently asked questions, to guide our partners in their decision-making process to determine which grants are the best fit, aligned to district goals and needs.

General Questions and Resources

No questions in this section

Section A: Eligibility

Question 1: Will districts be allowed to continue implementation into another year if we already have SFI?

Answer: Past participation in implementation grants does not impact an LEA's eligibility to apply. Previous SFI LEAs are welcome to apply.

Question: Could an LEA apply for SFI for 9 campuses (all Title 1), but add on the PLC supports only for the 4 campuses identified for school improvement?

Answer: Yes. It is LEA's choice on which campuses they would like to apply for any given grant. (considering the campus still meets all eligibility requirements). The eligibility information can be found in one-pagers:

<https://tea.texas.gov/media/392436/>

Question 2: If we currently have SFI for ELAR and are implementing OER curriculum, are we able to apply and be awarded SFI to continue implementing the approved curriculum?

Answer: LASO Cycle 3 will switch to the updated OER Edition 1 materials. The COVID Emergency Release (CER) versions of the OER instructional materials (also called Amplify Texas Elementary Literacy Program, Eureka Math TEKS Edition, and Carnegie Learning 6-12 Texas Math Solution) are the base products for the OER Bluebonnet Learning Edition 1 instructional materials; however, significant revisions/upgrades have been made to the CER versions. LASO 3 Strong Foundations Implementation grants will only be available for districts implementing the OER Bluebonnet Learning Edition 1 instructional materials.

Question 3: If an LEA has an ESF Grant at once campus that spans school years from 24-26, are they still able to apply for implementation?

Answer: Yes, an LEA can apply and be eligible for the Strong Foundations Implementation grant if they have an ESF grant. They are not eligible for the SFI School Improvement PLC grant during that time.

Question 4: What would qualify an LEA for the "rural" priority tier?

Answer: Eligible entities are ISD's classified as rural per the TEA District Type Classification or Charter Schools who otherwise meet the definition of rural in the TEA District Classification System. You can see more about the TEA designations for district types here: <https://tea.texas.gov/reports-and-data/school-data/district-type-data-search/district-type-glossary-of-terms-2022-23#teadist>

Question 5: If a district has completed SFI while using Eureka Math TEKS formally, are they eligible to apply for SFI again with the new adoption of Bluebonnet learning? If so, what 'year' would they apply for?

Answer: Any LEA may apply to SFI in LASO Cycle 3 regardless of their participation in previous implementation grants. LEAs do not need to designate anything about prior participation on their application.

Question 6: If a campus is engaged with SFI with the 24-26 ESFFSG, are they eligible to apply for the SFI grant through LASO Cycle 3- and also the SFI SI PLC grant? What would the additional requirements for the SFI grant be if this is allowed?

Answer: The district can apply for SFI, but would be ineligible for the SFI SI PLC Supports Grant, there are no additional requirements to apply.

Question 7: Can a district apply for planning and implementation in the same cycle?

Answer: This is up to the LEA's discretion. It is allowable for LEAs to apply for SFI and SFP in the same grant cycle.

Question 8: Can current LASO Cycle 2 Math Option C apply for 6-12 Math in Cycle 3?

Answer: Yes, all LEAs are eligible to apply for LASO Cycle 3 Strong Foundations Implementation, regardless of their previous participation in implementation grants (TCLAS, CRIMSI, SFI, etc.)

Question 9: Can you clarify if a school must be in School Improvement to be eligible for the PLC grant?

Answer: Yes, schools must be federally identified from the 2023-24 school year and title-1 serving to be eligible for the Strong Foundations Implementation School Improvement PLC Supports Grant.

Question 10: If we have the cycle 2 with Eureka and Carnegie, can we still apply for this implementation for Bluebonnet?

Answer: Yes. Any LEA may apply to SFI in LASO Cycle 3 regardless of their participation in previous implementation grants. LEAs do not need to designate anything about prior participation on their application.

(Last updated as of 10/28/2024)

Section B: Application-Related Questions

Question 1: Is it a requirement to have board approval for instructional materials before this grant is submitted? If the materials aren't approved until November, it makes the timeline extremely short.

Answer: Yes, it is required that districts have the approval of their board to apply to the LASO Cycle 3 SFI and PLC grant.

(Last updated as of 10/28/2024)

Section C: Program-Related Questions

General Webinar Questions

Question 1: Are districts able to apply or be awarded SFI in K-5 ELAR and Math?

Answer: Yes, SFI supports are available for K-5 Math, 6-8 Math, Algebra 1, and K-5 RLA

Question 2: Will the agency recommend districts to apply for SFP when recommending SFI? The planning is SO important for districts before implementation.

Answer: Previous participation in Strong Foundations Planning is highly recommended, but not currently required to apply for Strong Foundations Implementation.

Question 3: For SFI will the grant include the textbooks?

Answer: Strong Foundations Implementation does not include in-kind print materials in Cycle 3. SFI does allow for up to 30% of grant funds for print materials.

Question 4: Do you have the list of OER instructional materials? Are there predetermined resources?

Answer: Approved core instructional materials pending approval by the State Board of Education through the Instructional Materials Review and Approval (IMRA) process include:

- Bluebonnet Learning K-5 Reading Language Arts, Edition 1
- Bluebonnet Learning K-5 Math, Edition 1
- Bluebonnet Learning Secondary Mathematics, Edition 1 (Grades 6-8 and Algebra I)

Additional pilot approved core instructional materials include:

- Aprendizaje Bluebonnet Artes del lenguaje y lectura K-5, Edición 1
- Aprendizaje Bluebonnet Matemáticas K-5, Edición 1

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SFI Program Webinar Questions

Question 5: Districts currently planning Eureka/Amplify have to switch to Bluebonnet? Did the HQIM materials change?

Answer: Yes. LEAs participating in SFI for LASO Cycle 3 are required to implement the approved core instructional materials. Beginning in the 2020-2021 school year, the CER or “COVID Emergency Release” 1.0 pilot versions were released as part of Texas Home Learning. COVID Emergency Release versions were made available in multiple content areas, including K-5 RLA, K-5 Math, and 6-12 math. Over the next four years, the CER versions underwent additional enhancements and changes based on the previous year’s stakeholder feedback. To fulfill the requirements of HB1605, TEA focused its efforts on creating Bluebonnet Learning. Bluebonnet Learning has enhanced the COVID Emergency Release versions by incorporating valuable feedback from Texas stakeholders and users. These updates are subject to approval by the SBOE through the IMRA process. The key improvements include revised content in RLA and adjusted pacing in math. The CER versions (formerly Amplify Elementary Literacy Program, Eureka Math TEKS Edition, and Carnegie Learning 6–12 Texas Math Solution) maintain the same instructional approach as their Bluebonnet Learning counterparts, including same instructional design, same programmatic resources and components, same unit and lesson-level structures, same rigor level, and the same opportunities for students to practice. This means that if an LEA has been implementing a COVID Emergency Release pilot version, the similarities between structure and design of CER and Bluebonnet Learning should help with a seamless transition.

Question 6: Is Bluebonnet Learning taking over for Amplify, Eureka and Carnegie?

Answer: Beginning in the 2020-2021 school year, the CER or “COVID Emergency Release” 1.0 pilot versions were released as part of Texas Home Learning. COVID Emergency Release versions were made available in multiple content areas, including K-5 RLA, K-5 Math, and 6-12 math. Over the next four years, the CER versions underwent additional enhancements and changes based on the previous year’s stakeholder feedback. To fulfill the requirements of HB1605, TEA focused its efforts on creating Bluebonnet Learning. Bluebonnet Learning has

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Question 7: Does the curriculum dictate the school calendar as well as the number of school days required in addition to minutes?

Answer: Bluebonnet Learning includes teacher and student facing materials, a year-long scope and sequence for each grade-level, requirements around number of instructional minutes for each grade-level, and curriculum-embedded assessments for teachers to use with students. LEAs will use the provided scope and sequence and instructional minutes to design their school-wide calendar.

Question 8: LEAs can only apply for one IMRA at a time, does that include Spanish? For example, if we want to do K-5 Math, could we apply for K-5 math English and Spanish? We are a heavy bilingual district.

Answer: LEAs may apply to SFI for any contents they plan to implement. There is no restriction on the number of contents.

Question 9: Will we be able to use any of our remaining HQIM that we have implemented this school year?

Answer: No. Strong Foundations Implementation grant will support implementation of Bluebonnet Learning in K-5 RLA in English and Spanish, K-5 Math in English and Spanish, and 6-8 Math, Algebra I. Districts may apply for different content areas and grade levels. K-5 OER RLA COVID Emergency Release v3 (also called Amplify Texas Elementary Literacy Program), K-5 OER Math COVID Emergency Release v2 (also called Eureka Math TEKS Edition), and 6-12 OER Math COVID Emergency Release v2 (also called Carnegie Learning 6-12 Texas Math Solution) are not eligible for SFI.

Question 10: Can you please clarify about the Spanish piece? If we receive the grant, what materials will we use for Spanish courses for 2025-26?

Answer: Strong Foundations Implementation grant will support implementation of Bluebonnet Learning in K-5 RLA in English and Spanish, K-5 Math in English and Spanish, and 6-8 Math, Algebra I. Districts may apply for different content areas and grade levels. The Spanish materials will be available in K-5 RLA and K-5 Math.

Question 11: What supports for LEAs have changed from LASO Cycle 2 other than utilizing Bluebonnet Learning?

Answer: Supports for LEAs in LASO Cycle 3 will largely mirror those in LASO Cycle 2, and Approved Providers will receive additional training to support LEAs in the change management process as they adjust to the Bluebonnet Learning implementation.

Question 12: For the print materials funding, is the \$20 for each curriculum (math and reading, \$40 total)? Or is it \$20 total?

Answer: The \$20 is per student, not per content.

Question 13: What will be used for STAAR scores for grade levels below 3rd?

Answer: The scoring system will utilize the LEA's 3rd grade Math and RLA STAAR scores for any K-5 SFI applications regardless of the grade band.

Question 14: So, districts will have to fund the printing of the RLA Resources?

Answer: Yes, LEAs will procure their own print resources through the EMAT system for LASO Cycle 3 SFI. There will be more information about printing costs and how to order print in the upcoming print webinar.

Question 15: Is there an estimate of how much all HQIM costs?

Answer: Yes, there will be more information about printing costs and how to order print in the upcoming print webinar.

Question 16: LEAs will be responsible for purchasing their own print materials. When will a price list for materials be available?

Answer: Yes, there will be more information about printing costs and how to order print in the upcoming print webinar.

Question 17: If a district has a digital only instructional model does this leave them out of the opportunity to get supports?

Answer: Bluebonnet Learning materials are not intended to be digital only. They are designed to be printed for instructional use.

Question 18: Are there plans for secondary RLA?

Answer: Plans for the development of a secondary RLA OER are to be determined.

Question 19: Do we get one grant per content area? (Math & RLA)

Answer: Districts are eligible to apply for different content areas and grade-levels. Instructional materials for this grant include K-5 RLA in English and Spanish, K-5 Math in English and Spanish, and 6-8 Math, Algebra I.

Question 20: Does the grant support implementation of the Accelerated 6 & 7 grade math curriculums? As well as Algebra 2 & Geometry (Carnegie)?

Answer: No, Bluebonnet Learning instructional materials are not yet available for Accelerated Grade 6 Math, Accelerated Grade 7 Math, Algebra 2, or Geometry.

Question 21: Do you have to implement the entire sequence of grades. For example, Bluebonnet Math 6-8. Our JH is a 7th & 8th grade campus, can we simply adopt for grades 7 & 8?

Answer: No, districts may apply for specific grade-levels, content areas, and campuses based on LEA discretion.

Question 22: Is TNTP still on the approved provider list? I did not see them on the list shared.

Answer: No, TNTP is no longer a Strong Foundations Approved Provider for SY25-26.

Question 23: We are currently in Cycle 2; would we be allowed to use funds from Strong Foundations Implementation currently to purchase Bluebonnet for this upcoming school year?

Answer: No. Bluebonnet Learning materials are not an allowable expense of LASO Cycle 2 funds.

Question 24: Are there any other approved products besides bluebonnet?

Answer: No. Strong Foundations Implementation provides direct grant funds to LEAs for technical assistance to support high-fidelity implementation of the Texas open education resource (OER) instructional materials, Bluebonnet Learning.

Question 25: Define "participants" for the SFI grant awards

Answer: Participants include teachers, instructional coaches, and campus/district leaders. Districts will be asked to submit teachers, instructional coaches, and campus/district leaders who will participate in the Strong Foundations Implementation grant.

Question 26: Are our current APs expected to facilitate 20 PLCs or is this for next year?

Answer: Strong Foundations Implementation School Improvement PLC Supports Grant is for SY25-26. If an LEA is awarded this grant, they will identify and contract with an Approved Provider from the Strong Foundations Approved Provider list in spring of 2025. LEAs will need to use the same Approved Provider for Strong Foundations Implementation grant and the Strong Foundations Implementation School Improvement PLC grant.

Question 27: Is it allowable to purchase the pilot "Spanish" versions of Bluebonnet with Cycle 3 SFI grant funds?

Answer: Yes, districts may utilize up to 30% of grant funds on Bluebonnet Learning instructional materials including K-5 RLA in Spanish and K-5 Math in Spanish.

Question 28: Will this presentation be made available to those in attendance?

Answer: Yes. All webinar recordings for LASO grants will be posted on the LASO Cycle 3 website after the conclusion of all webinars: <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/laso-cycle-3>.

Question 29: If an LEA applies for both Instructional Leadership and Strong Foundations Implementation, how do they select an Approved Provider.

Answer: An LEA is eligible to apply to both Strong Foundations Implementation (SFI) and Instructional Leadership (IL) grants, but in the event that both are awarded, the LEA must select the same Approved Provider for both SFI and IL. SFI programming will be limited to support of OER implementation and IL programming will be limited to non-OER support.

(Last updated as of 10/28/2024)

SFI SI PLC Support Program Webinar Questions

Question 1: How does SFI SI PLC relate to the TXLS PLC program?

Answer: Texas Lesson Study is a state funded grant that provides direct support to LEAs through ESCs to support deeper implementation of Texas OER (including lesson rehearsal and student work analysis protocols). SFI SI PLC is a federally funded grant through LASO that provides campuses in school improvement with additional PLC facilitation support focused on initial implementation practices such as unit and lesson internalization.

Question 2: What PLC Model will be used by the PLC Facilitators?

Answer: PLCs will focus on the TEA protocols of unit and lesson internalization, lesson rehearsal, and student work analysis.

Question 3: Are there time recommendations for how long a PLC should last?

Answer: PLC times are a local decision, however according to Texas Education Code (TEC) § 21.404, each classroom teacher is entitled to at least 450 minutes within each two-week period for instructional preparation, including parent-teacher conferences, evaluating students' work, and planning.

Question 4: If a school is interested in the SFI PLC, does that school need to implement the Bluebonnet Learning curriculum?

Answer: Yes. Strong Foundations Implementation provides direct grant funds to LEAs for technical assistance to support high-fidelity implementation of the Texas open education resource (OER) instructional materials, Bluebonnet Learning.

Question 5: Is it 20 PLCs per grade level and by content area?

Answer: The 20 PLCs are provided by content area for each content area that the individual campus is awarded.

Question 6: For the school improvement grant is participants (campuses) or teacher/student numbers?

Answer: The award is based on the campus and number of content areas. Per campus/content area the award is \$75,000.

Question 7: Is the SFI SI PLC grant award provided to the campus or to the district?

Answer: The award is provided to the individual campus level.

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