TEA
Texas Education Agency®

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, 2023**.

Grant period from	**July 3, 2023-September 30, 2025**

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 Attachment
3. Pathway 2: Pathway 2 Supplemental Attachment
4. Memo of Discussion

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	Waco ISD	CDN	161914	Campus	Waco	ESC	12	UEI	

Address	501 Franklin Ave		City	Waco	ZIP	76712	Vendor ID	1-746002532

Primary Contact	Kourtni Parnell	Email	kourtni.parnell@wacoisd.org	Phone	254-799-0983

Secondary Contact	Deena Cornblum	Email	deena.cornblum@wacoisd.org	Phone	254-754-9448

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	Susan Kincannon	Title	Superintendent of Schools

Email	susan.kincannon@wacoisd.org	Phone	254-755-9473

Signature	*[signature]*	Date	4/21/23

Shared Services Arrangements

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

Number of Campuses Included in this Application

Pathway 1	
Pathway 2	14

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 2023-2025 Title I, ESF-Focused Support Grant Program Guidelines.

☒ 4. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2023-2025 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. The applicant will identify a campus leader, on each awarded campus, who will be responsible for managing the grant project.

Statutory/Program Assurances, cont'd.

☒ 10. The applicant will provide access to TEA and its Vetted Improvement Partners for on-site visits to the district and campus(es) as appropriate.

☒ 11. 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 Targeted Improvement Plan, and submission of funding and pathway progress reports.

☒ 12. The applicant provides assurance it will provide awarded campuses access to grant funding and funding information in a timely manner, so that funding can be used to meet the needs and action steps of the campus during the grant period.

Summary of Program

1. Describe how the LEA will support campus(es) in carrying out school improvement activities, including how the LEA will help develop a Targeted Improvement Plan for the eligible campus(es) selected for this grant.

In 2018, Waco ISD (WISD) forged an in-district partnership and contracted with the non-profit Transformation Waco (TW) to manage five campuses with four consecutive years of Improvement Required ratings. Both WISD and TW campuses are included in this application.

With an overarching goal of supporting campuses in school improvement activities, district leadership has developed a multi-faceted, systematic approach to ensure each campus receives the support needed to succeed. Each entity's leadership strategy for supporting campuses is outlined below. Using the data collected from ESF diagnostic or self-assessment, universal screening data, STAAR data, and other sources of data, district leadership will meet with each campus to analyze data, prioritize problems of practice gleaned from data, determine the root cause, and determine prioritized focus areas that align with the ESF Framework and intent of the grant. Target Improvement Plans are entered into Plan4Learning.

In addition, each school leader will receive ongoing support through the grant, which includes continuing one-on-one coaching, offering face-to-face meetings with an appointed Principal Supervisor (PS), conducting ongoing reviews with the PS to monitor implementation, and gathering/reviewing student data to determine the next steps for improvement.

District leadership, with aid from the VIP, will provide support to campuses in implementing prioritized focus areas to help with school improvement in the following ways: Focuses on increasing staff capacity by offering professional development (PD) that reinforces objective-driven lesson planning and aligns lesson plans with the curriculum; Provide Job-embedded professional development focused on building the leadership capacity of campus leadership teams; Data-driven instruction, observation, and feedback into their campus systems—providing "just-in-time" practice-based professional development. Teachers will receive coaching by campus leadership, and the leadership teams will receive coaching to build their capacity; Offering monthly training through the Novice Teachers Academy to teachers with 0-3 years of experience to address common concerns and challenges; Providing monthly Principal PLCs to build individual and collective leadership capacity to deliver on TIP activities and action steps; and Supplying Executive Coaching to principals, consisting of intense 1:1 time focused on identified growth areas.

2. Describe how the LEA will monitor schools receiving the ESF-Focused Support Grant, including how the LEA will: (a) Monitor Targeted Improvement Plans upon submission and during implementation, and (b) Implement additional actions as needed to meet barriers and challenges, after the first year of the grant cycle.

District Leadership takes an active role in comprehensive monitoring throughout the grant cycle, ensuring barriers are identified, adjustments are planned, and changes are implemented. The organization will designate staff as supervisors/mentors to their respective campus leadership, beginning with creating the improvement plan. The principal and the supervisor will review multiple data measures, complete the needs assessment, and work together to develop, implement, and monitor the ESF web-based improvement plan. This team will meet monthly to review progress on the TIP, discuss newly identified barriers, and create action steps. Campus and district leadership will partner with the Vetted Improvement Programs (VIP) to monitor and increase effectiveness through the observation and feedback systems, conducting quarterly reviews of walkthrough and evaluation data, conducting inter-district walks to calibrate around observation/feedback data, implementing just-in-time, practice-based professional development, and performing mid-year reviews to check for congruence of data from walkthroughs, evaluations, student progress data, and teacher action step data. Campuses with unsuccessful implementation after the first year of the grant cycle will be supported through additional actions to ensure successful completion during year two. Those actions will include completing a thorough internal program evaluation to ensure fidelity to the VIP plan, analyzing the usefulness and effectiveness of data from year one, evaluating VIP services to determine if implementation aligns with the original contract, and reviewing VIP goals to ensure they are SMART goals.

Additionally, campus and district leaders will collaborate with the VIP to identify barriers related to the unsuccessful plan and determine if and how the barriers can be overcome. Campuses that reached successful implementation of the VIP will be provided as an exemplar. Finally, district leadership will analyze all artifacts and evidence to determine if leadership at the campus level has the necessary resources to implement new systems, structures, and leadership practices. After analyzing all data, district leadership will decide how to support the campus and its progress moving forward effectively.

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 and aligned Targeted Improvement Plan.

District Leadership firmly believes that operational flexibility is a critical component of and significantly contributes to the success of a Campus Improvement Plan. Several key areas have been identified within the standard practices and policies, expanding flexibility to campus leaders.

One avenue for operational flexibility is using the ESF Self-Assessment and the ESF Diagnostic tool as critical resources for the campus needs assessment (CNA), campus improvement plan (CIP), and the ESF web-based Improvement Plan. Utilizing the self-assessment and the diagnostic tool will modify current practices for the CNA and CIP. The participating campuses complete CNA as outlined by district expectations due to Title I requirements but use the CNA in conjunction with the diagnostic or self-assessment to create an aligned comprehensive plan.

Another measure of flexibility will be allowing participating campuses to decide on their own goals and initiatives. Principals will be allowed to review their data with the support of the district leadership supervisor and the VIP. Principals can focus on the levers prioritized from the ESF diagnostic or ESF self-assessment. Campuses will choose the action steps and strategies to meet the goal of the lever.

Since funding is the foundation for implementing any TIP Essential Action fully and effectively, campus budgeting flexibility is key. Principals are empowered to make decisions on using the ESF funds to support school improvement activities to meet targeted improvement goals based on the campus' individualized needs. Other campuses in the district will not receive one-on-one support from district leadership or the VIP to review data artifacts or assist in determining action steps and strategies. Instead, other campuses in the district will be expected to follow the best-practice initiatives and goals set by the district. The campuses participating in this grant will be allowed the autonomy to pursue specific goals and strategies to create a plan supporting clear steps for improvement and implementing particular levers in the ESF web-based Improvement Plan. Examples of operational flexibility for ESF-awarded campuses include the choice of topic and vendor for PD opportunities, additional curriculum resources not implemented on other campuses, and enrichment activities such as afterschool programs and extra tutoring. The district implements systems to protect and ensure flexibility remains a top priority for the ESF campuses.

District Leadership are committed to frequent and intentional conversations to retain an awareness of how they can continue supporting operational flexibility and empowering each campus with authority to identify specific needs and determine how to address those needs best using the ESF grant fund.

Budget Narrative

1. Describe how the proposed budget will meet the needs and goals of the program, including staffing, supplies and materials, contracts, travel, etc. Include a short narrative describing how adjustments will be made in the future to meet needs.

Waco ISD utilizes federal, state, and local funds to support all five identified levers essential for successful school outcomes. The approach to budgeting all federal, state, and local grant funds yields the highest benefits for their respective campuses.

Described below is the proposed budget and how it will meet the intent of the program:
Funds from the ESF grant be used for the contracting (6200) of the VIP. Waco ISD will use the University of Virginia- Darden (UDV) for five Waco ISD, and five campuses will use Relay GSE. UDV and Relay GSE contract services will be utilized for coaching and a continued focus on data-driven instruction while providing additional support for campus leaders in the following focus areas include: 1)Providing all educators with training on objective-driven lesson plans and 2) data-driven instruction 3)developing campus leadership roles 4) daily implementation of high-quality materials and 5) explicit school comprehensive behavior expectations.

The four Transformation Zone Campuses will propose to fund their previous VIP partner from the 2021-23 ESF, AUSL. AUSL will support each campus in meeting its needs and attaining its goals. It is important to note that data from state and local assessments, surveys, and testimonials demonstrate these campuses are making school improvements. AUSL will assist in continuing the upward trajectory and bring campuses out of an Improvement Required rating.

AUSL's Contract Services have three focus areas: 1) Novice Teachers' Academy, 2) Principal PLCs, and 3) Executive Coaching for Principals. Services in all areas occur monthly and more frequently if needed. All other supports needed to implement the ESF Focused Support Grant, such as the personnel, supplies, materials, travel, and other operating expenses, are covered through separate TW funding (e.g., ESEA III, Title I, etc.) and not budgeted in this grant proposal.

If adjustments are needed in the grant expenses when district leadership conducts the monthly meetings with campuses, the administration and state or federal programs department will collaborate with the campus leadership to ensure the needed change aligns with the campus targeted improvement plan and specific action steps. Once confirmed, the campus principals and state and federal programs office will work together to complete the transfer of funds from contracted services to the correct object code. Once completed, the TIP will be revised to reflect the change and expense noted. If the cumulative adjustment requires a grant amendment, the state and federal programs will change part two of the grant application and submit it to TEA for approval.

Budget Narrative, cont'd.

2. Describe how the LEA will ensure campus leaders have direct access to grant funding to ensure alignment to the Targeted Improvement Plan.

Waco ISD ensures all campus leaders have direct access to local, state, and federal funding. Waco ISD also ensures the grant funding aligns to campus Targeted Improvement Plans and meets the grant's intent using the TEAMS system.

TEAMS is a comprehensive software with vast capabilities, including entering and processing requisitions, tracking expenses, and producing fiscal reports. TEAMS assigns nineteen-digit account numbers to delineate the fund type, function, object code, and campus, among other categories. Thus, TEAMS provides campus leaders with the confidence that expenditures charged solely to their campus' ESF grant remain separate from expenditures charged to other budget codes.

Waco ISD uses TEAMS to support direct access to the grant funding for campus leadership with operational flexibility, as previously noted. Alignment to the grant is stated in the Plan4learning system where TIPS are developed and progress noted. Each campus principal adds the funding source and amount for each focused action step.

With ongoing and direct access to TEAMS, the Principal can view fiscal information such as campus budgets, amendments, encumbrances, transactions, and grant balances. Although campus secretaries enter requisitions, principals must approve every requisition before issuing a Purchase Order (PO). While entering requisitions, secretaries upload supporting documentation and required federal EDGAR forms. Examples of supporting documentation include invoices from a vendor, pricing procurement documentation, training agendas, mileage logs, and justification of alignment with grant funds. The district will have each campus complete the ESF justification form and upload it into the TEAMS with the requisition system to document alignment to the Target Improvement Plan.

After a principal's approval, requisitions are routed to the State and Federal Grants Department before reaching the Purchasing Department. This step provides another layer of verification to ensure TIP-alignment documentation is attached to each expenditure.

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		Barrier	
Group	Students	Barrier	high mobility rate
Group	Teachers	Barrier	shortage and retention of highly qualifed teachers
Group		Barrier	
Group		Barrier	