



**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](mailto: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  Digitally signed by Dr. Frances A. M. Perez  
Date: 2021.04.19 15:15:29 -05'00' Date

**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="2"/>

**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.

Freer ISD will support school improvement activities by allowing for operational flexibility with resources, processes and practices. Norman Thomas Elementary and Freer High School have prioritized Essential Action (EA) 5.1: Effective Instruction, however, the district recognizes that a customized approach is beneficial to meet individualized campus needs. We will do this by partnering with an External Vetted Improvement Program (VIP), National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) who will work collaboratively with us to build the capacity for objective-driven daily lesson plans with formative assessments. In addition, ESC2 will supplement the work. Support for each campus will include a refresher of Effective Schools Framework (ESF), reviewing diagnostics conducted (prioritized levers), evaluating current status of activities (targeted improvement plan- tip), planning next steps (Where are we now? Continuation of the work), and 30 day checkpoints for monitoring success of 90 day/ annual goals. The VIP will provide specialized on-going, job embedded, collaborative, student-centered professional development for educators. This learning will focus on the instructional content of lessons and increase ability to leverage formative assessments. The VIP will support an instructionally focused accountability. To meet our goal for objective-driven daily lessons with formative assessments, we selected a VIP who could build capacity to assess this through observations and aligned feedback. The VIP will work with instructional leaders to build adult-led systems to provide effective feedback on lesson plans and their alignment with expectations and standards. We also seek to empower our most effective teachers by having them mentor peers and work with the VIP who has experience in the creation of multiple career pathways. This will allow us to expand the scope of effective daily lesson practices happening across campuses. This would also include training, modeling, and preparing teacher leaders to lead collaborative learning sessions within improved Professional Learning Communities (PLC) structures. Freer ISD has successfully worked with the TEA TIP Template and will plan a similar model. Our web-based improvement plan will be developed to allow us to identify and track the needs of each campus aligned to EA 5.1, plan for the focus with our VIP on each campus, implement the program provided by the VIP, and monitor campus growth compared to the success criteria with the ESF for EA 5.1. An annual goal will be set and 90 day cycles will chunk the work out for the school year. Freer ISD and NIET and will implement System for Teacher and Student Advancement (TAP). TAP focuses on creating school/district structures for building educator capacity to increase student achievement and is backed by more than 20 years of research. Through the TAP components of Ongoing Professional Development, Instructionally Focused Accountability and Performance-Based Compensation, ESF lever 5.1 and its related essential actions will be translated into practice for sustained school improvement. A detailed plan for supports and improvement activities has been collaboratively drafted by Freer ISD and NIET. ESC2 will support and supplement the work outlined.

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.

Freer ISD will leverage the web-based platform and work with our VIP and ESC2 to determine how each campus is progressing within the success criteria for Essential Action (EA) 5.1 throughout implementation. In monitoring plans upon submission and during implementation, we will utilize our District Coordinator for School Improvement (DCSI), Campus Leadership Teams (CLTs), VIP & ESC2 to determine clear 30 day assessment points that inform additional actions that may be needed if implementation is unsuccessful. To ensure campuses make progress, Freer ISD will meet with CL Ts every 90 days to review student performance and data collection to determine if at least 75% of the action steps were achieved and showed improvement in the adult-led systems supporting EA 5.1 . If evidence shows that a campus has made some or no progress, Freer ISD will oversee adjustments to the web-based improvement plan for the next cycle. Discussions about potential barriers will also be explored and addressed. ESC2 and our VIP will be consulted when additional action may be necessary to support/guide unsuccessful or developing implementations. Cycle 4 that runs from June-August will include an evaluation of the Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP). This evaluation process will provide Freer ISD, NIET and ESC2 with an opportunity to celebrate the successes and improve upon the areas that fell short. Based on our initial ESF diagnostic, we have developed a plan for the scope of work for each campus. 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. Ultimately, Freer ISD will monitor schools in the following ways to ensure compliance with the web-based improvement plan: 30 day/ quarterly check-ins for formative reviews, principal support/ coaching, continuous professional development, campus visits to include observation focus on TIP action steps, and VIP practices. If any campus is unsuccessful in the implementation of the plan in the first year of the grant cycle, Freer ISD and campus(es) will review all data sources, conduct a root cause analysis, develop strategies for corrective implementation, and monitor implementation of corrective actions with the assistance of our VIP and ESC2.

**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.

Freer ISD will modify, as appropriate, practices and policies to provide operational flexibility to the awarded campuses (and feeder), that enables full and effective implementation of the Effective Schools Framework (ESF) Essential Actions (EA) aligned web-based improvement plan by having the District Coordinator for School Improvement (DCSI) work closely with campuses, the VIP and ESC2. The DCSIs primary role is to support the campuses in the work of everything "school improvement" and to recognize potential barriers in order to address those accordingly. Operational flexibility includes the autonomy to revise schedules, manage budgets, and/or reassign teachers.

Freer ISD will also provide flexibility within our policies for observation and feedback cycles at each campus to ensure these align to our instructional planning initiative while still ensuring that they meet the highest level of expectations required to improve student outcomes. District leadership fully understands the importance of campus autonomy for general operations and staffing decisions that impact school improvement. Freer ISD will prioritize the need to change ineffective practices and processes that hinder student success by soliciting stakeholder input and eliminating barriers. Teacher feedback is critical-we would like to empower them in the school improvement process. We will send out teacher surveys at the end of each cycle with regards to the action steps and ask them to reflect on the status of each, providing input with regards to solutions, ideas, or next steps.

To accomplish this, we will work collaboratively with our selected VIP to create new pathways and modifications to lesson plan protocols and practices within Freer ISD. This work will include teacher teams from each campus using the TEA exemplars as a guide. Together, the lesson plan template, expectations for lesson plan submissions, lesson plan rubrics that outline approach/meet/master expectations will be drafted, and appropriate lesson plan feedback cycles will be created and put in writing. A professional learning plan has been drafted for continuous support and development of administrators as well as teachers that spans throughout the first school year of the grant period leaving room for adjustments in the second school year of the grant period. The learning plan will be reviewed at specific points in time in order to modify according to personnel needs. Freer ISD will modify school and employee calendars as necessary to accommodate additional days of professional learning required to meet the goals of this grant. This will include integrating the Web-Based Improvement Plan as a means of tracking teacher professional learning time.

As operational barriers to success are identified and mitigated, our team will be empowered to offer potential solutions and to implement NIET's TAP Program components as designed. ESC2 will support and supplement this work.

In summary, Freer ISD will provide operational flexibility for staffing, budget decisions, and general operations by providing a structure for which these decisions can best be made that includes the involvement of the DCSI, teachers, and other stakeholders. Freer ISD will reduce potential barriers by having the DCSI work directly with campus leadership teams to recognize and discuss/recommend solutions. Freer ISD will use public meetings, faculty meetings, teacher surveys, CLT, District and Campus SBDMs, and District Admin Team to solicit feedback for informed decision making. Lastly, Freer ISD will use Annual and 90 day cycle SMART goals embedded into the web-based Improvement Plan to evaluate effectiveness per cycle.

**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 covers a maximum award of \$198,000 and includes implementing elements of the VIP's TAP system and training that will carefully and strategically target 5.1: Objective-Driven daily lesson plans with formative assessments. NIET's System for Teacher and Student Advancement (TAP System) is a comprehensive model to develop high-quality educators by focusing on creating school and district structures - adult led systems- for building educator capacity to increase student achievement. TAP is backed by more than 20 years of research. On-site support will be crucial to effective implementation throughout the life of the grant. The plan includes bringing in the ESC2 who will supplement NIET's TAP by customizing intense support for each school according to need. This would include direct professional learning services and support for implementation of enabling structures (PLC, CLT, etc.) as well as coaching and consultancy services to allow ongoing development. This two-year grant provides the district with an opportunity to plan a budget for the two awarded schools (elementary and high school) along with the junior high (feeder school) that includes supports and stipends to teachers and professionals who will be responsible for moving this work forward. The district will plan for future year's budgets and make priority decisions about spending to ensure sustainability beyond the grant period.

Category 6100-\$78,000 through 2 year grant period

Personnel costs will cover the largest part of the grant expenditures. Building capacity and ensuring fidelity of implementation takes human capital. Campus & district professionals will be compensated via stipend to carry out planning and grant management duties. Teacher teams from each campus will be paid extra duty pay for additional days/ hours. The goal is to improve outcomes at the awarded campuses, but also consistency throughout the district. This line item will also cover substitute costs as teachers attend professional development with NIET and or ESC2. The drafted plan covers seven professional development days in the summer of 2021 along with a minimum of three professional development days in the summer of 2022- training will specifically target a team from each campus along with district leadership. Topics are all around lesson planning work- from creating a template to creating rubrics for feedback to submission and feedback protocols in connection with daily formative assessments.

Category 6200-\$73,500 through 2 year grant period:

Professional and Contracted Services will cover the next largest part of the proposed budget in order to work in a strategic partnership with NIET and ESC2. Principal supervisors, principals, campus leaders, and instructional staff will actively engage with NIET and/ or ESC2 activities that include professional development, reflections, and coaching sessions that will guide school transformation outlined by Effective Schools Framework. In addition, Freer High School and feeder school Freer Junior High will participate in the diagnostic process in the Spring of 2022. This work will contribute to the progress monitoring and planning for 2022-23.

Category 6300-\$32,500 through 2 year grant period:

Supplies and materials will include instructional manipulatives, technology hardware/software, supplemental instructional materials, books for professional development, student texts, and items to enhance a cohesive learning culture/climate. There may be a need for specific resources that provide teachers with formative assessment options.

Category 6400-\$14,000 through 2 year grant period:

Travel costs will be minimal but budgeted for mileage to and from campus/training site, consultant travel, etc.

**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 proposed budget was collaboratively developed by district and campus instructional leaders to meet the targeted and prioritized needs of students and staff as identified during the comprehensive needs assessment process that included evaluation of the 2020-21 Targeted Improvement Plans of the elementary and high school. In order to align Federal, State, and local resources to carry out the activities supported with potential funds from this grant, it was important to bring in the District's Chief Financial Officer. An inventory of instructional resources and funding sources was reviewed in preparation of 2020-21 instructional materials evaluations and 2022-23 budget process. The end of year instructional materials evaluations (teacher/campus administrator survey) indicate the effectiveness of materials. This, in addition to end of year data, allows district/campus leaders to make well informed decisions about needs. The 2022-23 budget process allows stakeholders (teachers/parents/district - campus leaders/ students) to provide input about how we can maximize our resources in accordance to need. The District Site Based Decision Making Committee (SBDM) and the Board of Trustees play a role in the process as well.

To increase program effectiveness, eliminate duplication, and reduce fragmentation of instructional programs, the district will carefully coordinate these supplemental funds with federal, state, and local resources to provide appropriate programs, instruction, and services to all students while maximizing the impact of all available funding. The initial planning of schedules, time, and available resources will be taken into consideration prior to the full implementation of services and goods being procured.

**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.

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**Amended Section**

**Reason for Amendment**