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

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, 2021**.

Grant period from: **July 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: Austin Independent School District | CDN: 227901 | Campus: multiple | ESC: 13 | DUNS: 076933746

Address: 4000 S. Interstate 35 | City: Austin | ZIP: 78704 | Vendor ID: 74-6000064

Primary Contact: Laura Stout | Email: laura.stout@austinisd.org | Phone: 512-414-1700

Secondary Contact: Gina Cordero | Email: gina.cordero@austinisd.org | Phone: 512-414-9959

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: Dr. Mary L. Thomas | Title: Exec Director, State & Federal Accontability

Email: mary.thomas@austinisd.org | Phone: 512-414-3280

Signature: *Mary Thomas*
DocuSigned by:
5EA2423EB1324EA...
| Date: 4/21/2021

Shared Services Arrangements

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

Number of Campuses Included in this Application

Pathway 1   8

Pathway 2   0

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.

Austin ISD has adopted many of the practices from the ESF District Commitment Theory of Action for Essential Actions 1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 5.1, and 5.3 that intentionally support campuses in carrying out school support and improvement. Specifically, the district commits to the following actions: providing opportunities for ongoing support and coaching of the campus leader; prioritizing principal and principal supervisor instructional leadership (specifically, time dedicated to instructional practices); establishing organizational structures and supports to ensure opportunities for continued teacher development; ensuring access to high-quality common assessments aligned to state standards for all tested areas and PK-2nd grade math and reading; releasing assessments at the start of each reporting period so they can be used to define the roadmap for teaching; and ensuring that schools receive item-level, standards-level, and bottom-line results within two instructional days. As a result, the campuses included in the grant will be better able to build the capacity of teachers so that all students have access to high-quality educators, and will be better able to develop, implement, and monitor focused improvement plans that address the causes of low performance. Also, the campus Instructional Leaders from these schools will have the data necessary for teachers to reflect, adjust, and deliver instruction that meets the needs of each student.

To actualize these, Austin ISD will support campuses awarded the ESF-Focused Support Grant by building on the systems in place to provide ongoing support and coaching for campus leadership in alignment with the activities of the TIL cohort of each campus. AISD commits to participating fully in Region 13 TIL Cohort requirements. At all AISD campuses, the DCSI is also the principal supervisor and will participate in cohort learning and coaching throughout the grant period. The DCSI and Campus Leadership Team (CLT) will engage in biweekly meetings to ensure ongoing support and monitoring of improvement activities. The Associate Superintendent of Secondary Schools will engage in monthly progress monitoring. These opportunities for ongoing support and coaching will provide a firm foundation for our campus leaders so that they will be equipped and supported to build the capacity of their teachers and ultimately address the causes of low academic performance.

All awarded campuses will develop their web-based improvement plans in alignment with the Eﬀective Schools Framework and best practices in continuous improvement, including data analysis, needs assessment, stakeholder input, and frequent progress monitoring of strategies to ensure eﬀective implementation (see question 2 for details regarding monitoring). The AISD Accountability Coordinators will support all awarded campuses in the development of the web-based Improvement Plan.

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.

An Accountability Coordinator from the Department of Campus and District Accountability will be assigned to each campus to support the DCSI and campus in monitoring of implementation of the web-based Improvement Plan and ensure all requirements are completed in a timely manner. At the DCSI's discretion, an additional Instructional Leadership Coach (ILC) can also be assigned to the campus to support implementation. For purposes of this grant application, the Accountability Coordinator and ILC are considered members of the CLT. At a minimum, the DCSI will meet with the CLT twice per month to monitor plan implementation either by reviewing artifacts/evidence or by observing classroom instruction or PLCs. At the end of each cycle, the DCSI and CLT will review plan implementation and the results of common assessments and make any necessary adjustments moving forward.

These actions will enable the DCSI, CLT, and Region 13 Cohort Leader to determine if the plan is being implemented with fidelity and determine if activities are yielding shifts in instructional leadership and practices aligned with the goals identified in the ESF Self-Assessment or Diagnostic. If the plan is being implemented with fidelity but is not yielding the desired outcomes, the DCSI and CLT will have an opportunity to reassess the plan at the end of each 90-day reporting period, and adjust accordingly. If the plan is not being implemented with fidelity by the end of the first school year included in this grant period, the DCSI and CLT will determine whether reallocation of staﬀ or resources is necessary and whether to continue working on the same Essential Action or to shift to a diﬀerent Essential Action that will better improve results. At the end of the second school year included in this grant period, the DCSI and CLT will review student academic achievement data to learn how support received through this grant has yielded improvement in academic achievement for student groups disaggregated by race, ethnicity, Special Education, emerging bilingual, and economically disadvantaged.

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.

Austin ISD will enable full and effective implementation of the ESF-aligned web-based Improvement Plan developed through this grant project. Austin ISD campuses already have autonomy to create their own master schedule, including for core subjects, and make staffing assignments according to that schedule. Additional campus-specific practices will be supported by the DCSI in alignment with the web-based Improvement Plan.

Austin ISD will provide flexibility in practices on campuses that, in some cases, will be cohort-dependent. For example, in the Data Driven Instruction cohort, the campus will develop a system and cadence for instructional leaders and teachers to monitor data that both follows best practices and also meets the unique circumstances of the campus (i.e., campus with higher percentage of Special Education students or one that is dual language). Middle schools in the cohort will be supported to shift to a 9-week grading cycle to allow them the flexibility to create meaningful common assessments, while maintaining district assessments.

In the Action Coaching cohort, each campus will embed a systematic coaching protocol, and the district will support campuses in having the flexibility required to provide dedicated time for 1:1 coaching. Additionally, beginning in Fall 2021, campuses will be able to utilize a new district system designed to aid campuses in scheduling walkthrough and feedback data collection, which will ease implementation and embedding of coaching systems. All campuses will be able to schedule their walkthrough, coaching, and feedback cycles at a schedule in alignment with the ESF grant. In the Lesson Alignment and Assessment Cohort, campuses will be granted flexibility in how they structure and schedule their Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), allowing for PLCs that prioritize aligning content across grade levels.

In addition to the flexibilities afforded to these campuses, the district also commits to providing principal supervisors protected time to engage in instructional leadership and principal coaching by reserving Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays as campus site visits with no central office meetings. The district will ensure that awarded campuses have protected time to engage in partnership with Region XIII's Texas Instructional Leadership cohorts. The district will deliver high-quality and aligned common assessments to campuses at the start of each reporting period so that campuses can follow the backwards design model to plan their instruction with the end goal of the expectations of the assessment in mind. As a result, campuses can focus on analyzing and responding to meaningful, aligned data in order to strengthen instruction and focus on the individual needs of each student.The district will ensure all awarded campuses receive professional learning and support in how to run reports and engage in data analysis using a new assessment management platform. Austin ISD will also work with TEA's Division of School Improvement to streamline reporting and monitoring requirements for awarded campuses that are also required to complete Targeted Improvement Plans due to receiving School Improvement Grant funds.

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.

Our budget request for this grant is based on $99,000 per campus. Austin ISD has included applications for eight campuses, for a total of $792,000. Austin ISD will ensure that the budget allocated to each campus is utilized e ciently and e ectively to meet the needs and goals of the ESF-Focused Support Grant and all expenses are directly linked to the ESF. The budget for the award will be monitored and maintained at the district level, making certain that these funds are utilized for this purpose and that they supplement and do not supplant existing funds. The DCSI will work closely with campus leadership throughout the two-year grant period to be responsive to needs identified through progress monitoring and ensure continuous improvement in implementation of the web-based Improvement Plan with fidelity.

Region 13 has provided Austin ISD with an estimate for the cost of services per Texas Instructional Leadership cohort to be $14,775. According to Region 13, the cohort typically includes 1 DCSI and up to 15 participants. A DCSI that provides supervision and coaching to two campuses that have identified the same TIL Cohort through their ESF Self Assessment or Diagnostic will be placed in a cohort together, enabling the DCSI and campus leadership teams from both campuses to do some learning together while providing enough space for 6-8 instructional leaders per campus to participate. Based on eight campuses participating in this application, we anticipate three cohorts of Action Coaching, three cohorts of Data Driven Instruction, and one cohort of Lesson Alignment and Assessment. We estimate the cost of participating in seven cohorts to be $118,200 annually and a total of $236,400 over the two-year grant period.

To support implementation of the web-based Improvement Plan and all cohort activities, we anticipate spending approximately 20% of funds ($20,000 per campus) on extra duty pay (plus benefits) for teachers, teaching assistants, and other instructional sta . While use of these funds may vary by cohort, we anticipate using funds to support sta returning to campus a week early prior to the start of duty days each school year for induction, planning and coaching to ensure all sta are in alignment with the Improvement Plan and activities of the TIL cohort. Fringe rate: 7.65% FICA, .75% workers' compensation, and 2.35% TRS for a total of 10.75%.

Austin ISD proposes to spend $20,000 per campus on summer professional development, divided among extra duty pay ($5,000/campus), contractual services ($10,000/campus), and supplies ($5,000/campus). This will be used to provide sta with summer professional development and will vary by cohort and by campus. Summer PD will be directly aligned to the Prioritized Focus Area identified, and be customized to the needs of the campus, which may shift over the course of the two-year grant period (e.g., book studies for Action Coaching or Data-Driven Instruction).

For instructional materials, Austin ISD proposes to spend $10-15,000 per campus, anticipating the likelihood of requiring more funds for the one campus in the Lesson Alignment and Formative Assessment cohort. These funds will support the purchase of high-quality instructional materials aligned to the TEKS. We anticipate investment in instructional materials in order to align lessons across grade levels and possibly a feeder school. We also anticipate using the funds to support re-teaching following coaching and data-driven analysis.

Austin ISD proposes $5,000 per campus on additional technical assistance from Region 13 or the Center for E ective Schools. This would be tied to the prioritized focus area identified in the campus grant application or a new focus area identified following one year of implementation. The district also proposes approximately $6,000 per campus in travel expenses. to support any travel required by TEA in support of this grant or by Region 13 in support of the TIL cohort. While the district would benefit greatly from travel to observe and learn from other districts about implementation of the ESF, we are not budgeting more at this time due to the uncertainty of travel restrictions in the coming years due to the pandemic.

Austin ISD will not be requesting funds to support the salary of the Campus Grant Project Contact. Each of the campuses included in our application already participates in TEA monitoring and, as such, is assigned an AISD Accountability Coordinator and a DCSI, who is their principal supervisor. The DCSI will act as the Campus Grant Project Contact. Austin ISD has budgeted for indirect costs using a restricted indirect cost rate of 5.115%.

All of these campuses utilize Title I funds to support instruction; however, none of these campuses allocate funds to systematically address the prioritized focus areas identified for this grant project. Austin ISD will reallocate funds (and request budget amendments as appropriate) during the grant period in order to support campuses in achieving the goals of their web-based Improvement Plan (e.g., a campus' prioritized focus area shifts and more funds need to be allocated to additional technical assistance or additional extra duty in order to support a campus participating in a new cohort).

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.

As part of the grant development process, the project team reviewed the way in which federal, state, and local resources could be coordinated to support the most effective use of grant funds. All eight campuses are served with Title I funds. These funds are used in a variety of ways across the eight campuses, including for personnel costs for additional instructional staff (e.g., reading specialists), extra duty pay, and wraparound supports (e.g., Communities In Schools). Austin ISD will align ESF-Focused Support Grant funds with these Title I funds to support campus goals. Austin ISD's Department of State and Federal Accountability will monitor use of both these grant funds and Title funds for appropriate use.

Austin ISD will use local funds to support the project, including oversight and monitoring by the DCSI and Accountability Coordinators who are already working with the project campuses. This enables grant funds to be used specifically to support the work of the ESF prioritized focus area and spend less on administrative oversight costs. For example, the Accountability Coordinators will support each campus' ESF Diagnostic, training on and support for the web-based Improvement Plan, and ensuring all requirements for monitoring are met.

All Austin ISD campuses also utilize eCST (electronic Child Study Team), Austin ISD's web-based, real-time student progress monitoring system. eCST is used to help identify how wraparound services that support academics, behavior, and attendance are being utilized and to enhance coordination efforts (e.g., identification of gaps; reduce duplication). With this resource, a campus will be able to better analyze the campus system as a whole and determine how district resources and partner resources are being or could be better utilized to support the prioritized focus area.

Austin ISD also uses local resources, including philanthropic and other grant funding, to support Social and Emotional Learning, cultural proficiency, student and staff mental health, and learning through the arts (e..g, Creative Learning Initiative). These initiatives are critical to supporting the social and emotional well being of students and staff. Without these elements in place to form a healthy school climate within which teaching and academic learning can occur, the ESF-Focused Support grant will not be successful. This is especially critical given the shifts that have occurred and that may still occur this coming school year due to the pandemic.

Austin ISD will carefully consider alignment of this grant with any other grants that become available for these campuses during the grant period. The DCSIs, located in the AISD Office of School Leadership, and the Resource Development team in the AISD Office of Innovation and Development will work closely to properly vet any future funding opportunities to ensure alignment of scope and activities with this project and each campus's prioritized focus areas.

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		Barrier	
Group		Barrier	
Group		Barrier	

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

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

You may duplicate this page

Amended Section

Reason for Amendment