



**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.

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

Pre-award costs permitted from

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 Date

RFA # SAS #

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="15"/> |
| Pathway 2 | <input type="text" value="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.

Fort Worth ISD is a large urban district serving 77,250 students on 145 campuses in North Central Texas. In FWISD, 85% of students qualify to receive free or reduced-priced meals. The student population at Polytechnic High School is 95% ED, and the schools that feed into Poly are 95% and higher: Morningside Middle (98%), William James Middle (96%), EJ Briscoe Elementary (97%), Carroll Peak Elementary (98%), SS Dillow Elementary (98%), D McRae Elementary (95%), Morningside Elementary (95%), TA Sims Elementary (97%), and Van Zandt-Guinn Elementary (95%). Poly was invited by TEA to pilot the Effective Schools Framework and is entering year three of ESF implementation. FWISD is applying for ESF-Focused Support Grant funds to provide the Poly Pyramid with ongoing, focused support as schools carry out ESF essential actions and improvement activities at every grade level. In addition, FWISD is applying for ESF-Focused Support Grant funds to assist the district's 1882 charter schools that are run by the Leadership Academy Network and Texas Wesleyan University. The charter school student populations are also well above the District's ED percentage: Forest Oak Middle (98%), Glencrest Sixth (96%), Como Elementary (97%), Logan Elementary (97%), Mitchell Boulevard Elementary (97%), and John T White Elementary (95%). FWISD charter schools receive flexibility from the district to select curriculum, assessments, and staffing to ensure that student needs are met, and FWISD will extend flexibility to each school selected for this grant, as needed to implement the program. FWISD is committed to supporting ESF-focused school improvement activities to increase academic achievement, and FWISD is applying for grant funds for only 15 out of 74 eligible schools to demonstrate intent to implement the program with fidelity. According to the School Performance Framework, where schools are ranked 1-5 and a 5 indicates a need for additional support, FWISD is applying for four 5's, seven 4's, three 3's, and one 2. FWISD places effective leaders in its highest-need schools. Poly Pyramid principals received ESF training from their executive director, Dr. Susan Hernandez, a strong advocate of the ESF who was trained by Bambrick and Teaching Trust. Dr. Hernandez is equipped to support levers 3.1, 4.1, 5.1, and 5.3. Priscila Dilley, senior officer of the Leadership Academy Network, is equipped to support levers 4.1, 5.1, and 5.3 at the FWISD charter schools. FWISD will protect the time of the executive director, senior officer, and instructional leadership teams so that awarded schools can hone efforts using the ESF. FWISD devotes time, resources, and attention to campus planning. Collaboration among district and school stakeholders led to development of an in-house software-based school improvement plan that was used during 2019-20 and 2020-21; however, feedback from principals and executive directors inspired a change in direction, and FWISD contracted a well-known vendor to provide a web-based improvement plan for 2021-22. FWISD provided multiple campus improvement plan training opportunities during the spring 2021 semester for principals and executive directors to ensure a smooth adoption of the web-based plan, and FWISD will ensure that the principals of schools selected for this grant will receive additional training and support as they develop their ESF-focused web-based improvement plans.

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.

Fort Worth ISD is applying for funds to support two groups of schools, and this will streamline monitoring of the ESF-focused web-based plans during development, submission, and implementation. The Poly Pyramid schools share an executive director and a project development specialist. The charter schools share a senior officer and a project development specialist. Poly Pyramid ESF-focused web-based improvement plans will be reviewed by the executive director, the project development specialist, and the chiefs of elementary and secondary education. Charter school ESF-focused web-based improvement plans will be reviewed by the senior officer, the project development specialist, and the chiefs. Based on training received from ESC Region 11, the executive director and senior officer will ensure that, during the development of the ESF-focused web-based improvement plans, their principals and instructional leadership teams review school data carefully. Multiple data sources will be reviewed, including but not limited to pre-K and kindergarten readiness measures; BOY, MOY, and EOY MAP assessments; EOC results; STAAR results; CCMR measures; feedback from data walks; attendance records; discipline records; and survey results from students, parents, and staff. Data will be desegregated, and ESF-focused web-based improvement plans will be based on a close and careful analysis of the data. The executive director and senior officer will work with their principals to ensure that the ESF-focused web-based plans are clear and actionable, and the project development specialists will ensure alignment among plans and budget allocations. The executive director, senior officer, and project development specialists will monitor progress during implementation. ESF-focused web-based improvement plans and campus improvement plans will be reviewed again at MOY and EOY to gauge progress and compliance. Evidence of unsuccessful implementation at MOY and EOY will require additional action, which could include adjusting the plan to reflect unexpected barriers to implementation, additional training of campus staff, and closer or more frequent monitoring. Similar to a lesson plan that needs to be adjusted when students do not master the objective, ESF-focused web-based plans will be monitored closely, and unsuccessful implementation of a plan after the first year of the grant cycle will signal that the team needs to collaborate to review the data and perhaps adjust the lens, reflect on root causes, amend the plan, and move forward.

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.

Fort Worth ISD has well-established policies and procedures but will modify, as appropriate, certain practices and procedures to provide operational flexibility to awarded schools to enable full and effective ESF-focused plan implementation. FWISD is a large urban district with a long history of implementing grant-funded projects with fidelity. Experience has taught us that one size does not fit all in FWISD. Successful programs often begin with discretionary grant funding, and providing schools with flexibility to try new things has proven an effective approach. District leaders are accustomed to fulfilling the requirements associated with accepting federal grant funds, and schools that receive funding through this grant will have discretion to implement the essential actions necessary to meet the needs of their students. Awarded schools will have access to their budgets in July. Awarded schools will receive supplemental training and ongoing professional development within their pyramid or group of charters. Principals will be given the operational flexibility to bring back their teachers early so that they can begin to implement their web-based plans on the first day of school. Principals at awarded schools will have the authority to train new and current teachers in the Effective Schools Framework, and they will receive the flexibility to design operational systems to address school improvement according to the expectations of the grant. Awarded schools will have the flexibility to assess for student understanding more frequently than at the BOY, MOY, and EOY (which is the norm in FWISD), and they will be given time to address the foundational levers and essential actions with intention. Instructional leadership teams and PLCs will monitor student comprehension weekly, and teachers will receive additional opportunities to reteach concepts that were not originally mastered based on common formative assessment results. Awarded schools will collaborate within their pyramid or charter school network, using data to drive discussions. District leadership views this as a pilot program, and if the Poly Pyramid and the charter schools are able to improve the academic achievement of their students and increase school performance through their focus on the Effective Schools Framework and implementation of the ESF essential actions, other pyramids are sure to follow.

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.

Fort Worth ISD prioritizes strong leadership, giving school leaders, their executive directors, and charter schools the authority to manage their schools according to what works best for their students. FWISD provides school leaders with adequate funding and control over their budgets. School leaders exercise great discretion over their Title I funds, requesting positions in the spring and filling them with highly qualified employees who will address the needs of their schools. School leaders solicit staffing feedback from their site-based decision-making teams during the comprehensive needs assessment process, but the principal ultimately has discretion to fill supplemental grant-funded positions. The SBDM team must approve Title I and School Improvement Grant budget transfers of \$5,000 or more, and this threshold was set to ensure that activities do not deviate from the school's CNA priorities and planned strategies. The proposed ESF-Focused Support Grant budget will be used to supplement and amplify the essential actions that are already underway at Poly Pyramid schools and will assist implementation of the essential actions in the charter schools. The budget will be allocated equitably to meet the needs and goals of the program. FWISD is applying for nine schools in the Poly Pyramid because the tenth school is ineligible to apply. Applicants include one high school, two middle schools, and six elementary schools; however, up to 30% of grant funds will be reserved at the district level to serve the ineligible school, which is the lowest performing elementary school in the pyramid. This school will be included in all of the trainings and ongoing professional development, the ESF planning process, and all essential action-based activities. Adequate funds will be allocated for contracts for professional development, including training on data-driven instruction above and beyond what is currently provided by the district to the executive director, senior officer, and school leadership teams. The district has a working relationship with Educational Service Center Region 11, and the executive director, senior officer, and federal programs team have already spoken with ESC staff to ensure their capacity to provide support to the executive director, senior officer, and instructional leadership teams at all of the schools for which FWISD is applying. Ongoing professional development will be provided to instructional leadership teams and teachers as well, through contracted services and extra duty pay for receiving professional development outside contract hours. No more than 60% of funds will be allocated for payroll, and these funds will add an instructional coach to serve the charter school network and provide extra duty for professional development in the Poly Pyramid. Funds will be used to purchase books for professional development to reinforce key concepts throughout the pyramid and the charter schools, and funds will be used for instructional supplies and materials and to provide for supplemental extended learning opportunities for students. If all of the eligible schools in the Poly Pyramid and all of the charter schools are awarded ESF-Focused Support Grant funds, the two separate groups will be given the flexibility to determine how to best spend the funds based on their data and the needs of their students.

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.

Nearly all of Fort Worth ISD's 145 schools are eligible to receive Title I funds based on free and reduced-price meal data. FWISD does not skip schools, and FWISD allocates Title I funds to all eligible schools to implement schoolwide programs. The district is committed to supporting every student, and its goal is preparing all students for success in college, career, and community leadership. FWISD prioritizes school improvement activities and will align federal, state, and local resources to carry out the activities required with ESF-Focused Support Grant funds. FWISD principals have several years of experience aligning resources in their campus improvement plans, and the district's new web-based campus improvement plan will simplify this task. Principals are required to allocate local funds in their campus improvement plans for activities necessary to provide instruction. In their campus improvement plans, principals are required to describe how they are allocating State Compensatory Education funds for accelerated instruction and funds for special populations to best serve individual students. Principals are required to allocate Title I funds in their campus improvement plans, and requisitions using Title I, School Improvement Grant, and State Compensatory Education funds must align with the priorities that were identified in their comprehensive needs assessment and strategies outlined in their campus improvement plan to support school progress measures and district goals. Principals receive training at every step of the campus planning process, and they receive clear feedback from multiple sources--including their executive director, project development specialist, and chief--upon submission of their plans. The Federal Programs Department monitors campus Title I, School Improvement Grant, and State Compensatory Education budgets regularly throughout the schoolyear and sends reminders and updates when deadlines are approaching. FWISD allocates federal grant funds for programs such as our instructional coaches initiative, and FWISD allocates funds above and beyond what is required for family engagement activities. When needed to ensure the success and sustainability of programs, FWISD actively pursues additional external funding. If awarded, FWISD will prove committed to the success of the Effective Schools Framework in the Poly Pyramid and the FWISD charter schools by aligning local, state, and federal resources to carry out the activities supported with funds received under this grant.

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"/> |
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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