Pathway to Improvement for Identified Schools

Introduction
Ohio’s 1.7 million students attend nearly 4,000 schools situated within approximately 620 school districts or sponsor organizations. State and federal regulations dictate that Ohio routinely identify its lowest performing schools and districts (Ohio Administrative Code 3301-56-01; Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 1965; Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). Ohio identifies its lowest performing schools every three years, in accordance with federal regulations.

As Ohio’s districts and schools are identified for support, they must create or update district and school improvement plans through the ED STEPS process, which includes the One Needs Assessment and the One Plan. Future Forward Ohio is the state’s plan to help students recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and strategically focus efforts around four priorities: literacy, accelerating learning, workforce readiness and student wellness. Support for Ohio’s identified districts and schools is centered around these priorities.

School Identification: Based on federal requirements in ESSA, the lowest performing schools (15%) are identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement.

- **Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI)** designations encompass, at a minimum, the lowest performing 5% of schools receiving Title I funds statewide and any public school with a graduation rate at or under 67%.
- **Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI)** and **Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI)** designations include schools with one or more student subgroups that are among the lowest performing of student subgroups statewide.

The pathway to improvement for identified schools includes **notification**, **improvement planning requirements**, and **access to support** from the Ohio Department of Education. The Department provides comprehensive and targeted improvement support for schools and districts (including community schools and sponsor organizations). Support includes professional development, coaching, technical assistance, tools for improvement planning and implementation, and grant funding.

![Figure 1: A Model of the Pathway to Improvement](image)

Notification of Identification
The Ohio Department of Education notifies schools of their identification status on a recurrent basis. Most identification statuses will be determined starting in 2022-2023 and then redetermined every three years, except for TSI schools, which are identified yearly. Once identification occurs, schools have until the next fiscal year to complete required actions.
Improvement Planning: Required Actions

Each district and school will have required actions based on the specific identification category. Schools should assemble their Building Leadership Team (BLT) to create or revise their improvement plans.

All schools identified for improvement support (CSI, ATSI, and TSI) are required to examine their school data and complete or update the One Needs Assessment and One Plan. Improvement plans should be developed using the Ohio Improvement Process. The Department expects schools to routinely update One Needs Assessment and One Plan submissions based on developing priorities. For example, schools should examine literacy outcomes and include activities aligned with Ohio’s Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement, including increasing teacher and administrator knowledge of reading research and best-practices, differentiating core instruction across a multi-tiered system of supports that aligns to the science of reading, and using data across district and building collaborative teams to create a problem-solving model for ongoing improvement.

For CSI schools the One Plan must be approved by the district and the Ohio Department of Education. For ATSI and TSI schools the One Plan must be approved by the district.

When identified as CSI, ATSI or TSI, the school must take the following steps related to their One Plan:

- Develop or revise their One Plan in partnership with stakeholders. The school’s leadership team should include or receive input from a variety of stakeholders. Examples include but are not limited to school leaders, classified staff, teachers, specialists, parents, students, sponsor or partner agency and community partners.
- Address the reason for identification including Ohio School Report Card data or subgroup performance.
- Include a minimum of two evidence-based strategies as defined by the Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015.
- Allocate fiscal resources in alignment to the strategies identified in their One Plan.
- Identify resource inequities, which may include a review of district or school level resources.

Access to Support

Identified districts and schools have access to the following supports provided by the Department and its regional partners.

Coordinated Support from the Department

Ohio utilizes a statewide system of support that includes services from the Department, State Support Teams (SSTs), Educational Service Centers (ESCs), Information Technology Centers (ITCs) and professional associations and organizations.

State Support Teams (SSTs):

State Support Team consultants provide at no cost technical assistance and support to revise or create One Needs Assessments and One Plans. They also provide specialized support for the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP), Early Literacy, Early Learning and School Readiness, Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS), Regional Data needs, and Special Education. Contact your SST for additional information.
School Improvement Grant Funding

- The School Quality Improvement Grant is a competitive grant that provides funds to identified schools to implement sustainable, strategic improvement strategies. Activities funded by these grants should be part of a broader continuous improvement plan. For information about the School Quality Improvement Grant, contact school_improvement@education.ohio.gov.

- The Title I Non-Competitive, Supplemental School Improvement Grant funds should support evidence-based school improvement strategies that are data driven and aligned with the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) and the school’s One Plan. The funds should also build the capacity of building staff and the community to address identified needs. For information about the Title I Non-Competitive, Supplemental School Improvement Grant, contact school_improvement@education.ohio.gov.

- The Expanding Opportunities for Each Child Non-Competitive Grant is designed to expand access to and increase enrollment in school improvement activities for low-achieving students and students from low-income families through four grant focus areas: advanced coursework, career pathways, personalized learning, and credit recovery and academic acceleration services. For information about the Expanding Opportunities for Each Child Grant, contact eoecgrant@education.ohio.gov.

- The Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) grant program provides opportunities for children who come from economically disadvantaged families and attend low-performing schools to receive academic supports. School districts, schools, community-based organizations, including faith-based organizations, institutions of higher education, city or county government agencies, for-profit corporations and other public or private entities are eligible for the 21st CCLC grant.

- The Summer Learning and Afterschool Opportunities Grant creates and expands out-of-school time services that address the academic needs of students as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Monitoring Improvement Plan Implementation

The Office for Improvement and Innovation designed the Support Schools Tool to help districts and schools track the implementation of their One Plans. The Support Schools Tool contains questions that help district and building leadership teams reflect on and adjust the implementation of their One Plan. The tool can be accessed and used by all districts and schools and is required for identified districts and schools at the mid-point of their One Plan implementation.

Improvement Review:

In January 2023, the Department launched a pilot for a new improvement review, which includes on-site reviews for identified districts and schools. A systematic assessment of practices, processes, and systems assists leadership in determining needs, examining their nature and causes, and setting priorities for future action. The assessment consequently guides the development of a meaningful improvement plan and suggests benchmarks to guide improvement evaluation. Research supports that school districts that undergo a careful analysis of data and information make better decisions about what to change and how to institutionalize systemic change. The Improvement Review process provides a framework for conducting this work.

For information and eligibility regarding the review process, contact the Office of Intensive Supports.