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School Improvement and Related Provisions

Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965

Non-Regulatory Guidance





School Improvement and Related Provisions under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)

Non-Regulatory Guidance

January 2025

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INTRODUCTION

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) requires each State to establish a methodology for identifying schools for support and improvement, based on data from the statewide system of annual meaningful differentiation. These school identifications result in targeted resources and supports for at least the lowest-performing five percent of Title I, Part A (Title I) schools, high schools with low graduation rates, and schools where student groups are falling behind. The ESEA empowers State and local decision-makers to refine their own systems for evidence-based support and improvement that are responsive to the particular needs of schools.

Systems of continuous improvement[1] are a critical component of increasing educational opportunity and academic achievement, ensuring that all our children are equipped to compete in the 21st century. This guidance provides technical assistance on the school support and improvement requirements under Title I of the ESEA to promote academic excellence for every learner and better prepare our nation for global competitiveness.

This guidance is designed to support State educational agencies (SEAs), local educational agencies (LEAs), and schools as they implement school improvement requirements such as identifying schools for improvement, developing support and improvement plans, selecting interventions and monitoring and improving on their effectiveness, determining when identified schools have demonstrated sufficient improvement (exit criteria), investing school improvement funds under ESEA section 1003, and delivering direct student services under ESEA section 1003A. In addition to describing statutory requirements, this document provides recommendations based on the U.S. Department of Education's (Department's) work with States. In developing this document, the Department also sought to answer frequently asked questions posed by teachers, school and LEA leaders, SEA representatives, civil rights organizations, education advocates, and policymakers. Nothing in this document should be construed to proscribe a particular approach or limit or prohibit SEA, LEA, or school flexibility permitted in the ESEA.

The Department has determined that this document is significant guidance under the Office of Management and Budget's *Final Bulletin for Agency Good Guidance Practices*, 72 Fed. Reg. 3432 (Jan. 25, 2007). See https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/granule/FR-2007-01-25/E7-1066. Except for any statutory or regulatory requirements described in this document, significant guidance is non-binding and does not create or impose new legal requirements, nor does it create or confer any rights for or on any person.

SEAs, LEAs, and schools must comply with Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and age. These laws include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974. SEAs, LEAs, and schools must also comply with the requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities

[1] The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) define continuous improvement as "using plans for collecting and analyzing data about a project component's implementation and outcomes (including the pace and extent to which project outcomes are being met) to inform necessary changes throughout the project. These plans may include strategies to gather ongoing feedback from participants and stakeholders on the implementation of the project component." (34 C.F.R. § 77.1)

Education Act (IDEA), including Part C for infants and toddlers with disabilities receiving early intervention services and Part B for children with disabilities in preschool through high school. SEAs, LEAs, and schools must also comply with the requirements to protect the privacy of student education records under section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), commonly known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, and the requirements governing the administration to students of a survey, analysis, or evaluation under section 445 of GEPA, commonly known as the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA).

This document contains resources that are provided for the user's convenience. The inclusion of these materials is not intended to reflect their importance, nor is it intended to endorse any views expressed, or products or services offered. These materials may contain the views and recommendations of various subject matter experts as well as hypertext links, contact addresses, and websites containing information created and maintained by other public and private organizations. The opinions expressed in any of these materials do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the Department. The Department does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of any outside information included in these materials.

The Department provided a 30-day opportunity for the public to comment on a draft of this document and received comments from 17 entities. We have taken those comments into consideration in revising the draft document. If you are interested in commenting further on this document, please email your comments to OESE.Titlei-a@ed.gov, or write to the following address: Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Attention: Title I, Part A, 400 Maryland Ave, SW, Washington, DC 20202.

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A. IDENTIFICATION OF SCHOOLS

A-1. What categories of schools must be identified for support and improvement?

A State must identify schools in each of the categories described in Table A.1, below, for support and improvement. This table is an excerpt from the full table located in Appendix A: School Identification and Improvement Plan Requirements.

Table A.1 School Identification Categories and Definitions

Required Categories	Description
Comprehensive support and improvement (CSI): Low Performing *ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(I)*	Not less than the lowest-performing five (5) percent of all Title I, Part A (**Title I**) schools. These schools must be identified at least every three years.
Comprehensive support and improvement (CSI): Low Graduation Rate *ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(II)*	All public high schools in the State (**Title I and non-Title I**) failing to graduate one-third or more of their students. These schools must be identified at least every three years.
Comprehensive support and improvement (CSI): Not Exiting additional targeted support and improvement (ATSI) Status *ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(III)*	**Title I** schools that were previously identified for additional targeted support and improvement (ATSI) and that did not meet the statewide exit criteria for ATSI schools within the number of years determined by the State. These schools must be identified at least every three years.
Targeted support and improvement: Consistently Underperforming Student Group(s) (TSI) *ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(C)(iii)*	Public schools (**Title I and non-Title I**) with one or more student groups that meet the State's definition of "consistently underperforming" (see question A-13). These schools must be identified annually.
Targeted support and improvement: Additional targeted support and improvement (ATSI) *ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(C)*	Public schools (**Title I and non-Title I**) with one or more student groups performing as poorly as the low-performing Title I schools identified for CSI. The State determines the frequency with which these schools are identified.

(A State may use different labels when referring to these required school improvement categories. In such cases, a State should include information on State and local report cards required under ESEA section 1111(h) as to how the State label aligns with the Federal school identification categories defined above.)

A-2. When must a State identify schools for CSI, TSI, or ATSI?

The ESEA does not provide a deadline by which a State must run its annual accountability system and identify schools for CSI, TSI, or ATSI. However, because school identification is an essential aspect of the ESEA requirement, the Department expects States to identify schools for CSI, TSI, or ATSI and notify LEAs of their identification no later than the fall of the subsequent school year.

For example, if a school is identified for CSI based on data from the 2023-2024 school year, the LEA should be notified of its CSI identification no later than the fall of the 2024-2025 school year. Timely identification and notification are essential to provide individual schools and the public information about school and student group performance and to provide additional support and resources to schools to improve student achievement.

A-3. Must a State notify each LEA that serves one or more schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI?

Yes. A State must notify each LEA of any school served by the LEA that is identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI. To provide ample time for the development of support and improvement plans, the Department encourages a State to notify each LEA that serves one or more identified schools as soon as possible, which the Department expects to be no later than the fall of the subsequent school year. Timely notification enables LEAs and their schools to promptly begin developing support and improvement plans (see Appendix B for an example of a timeline of required school improvement activities).

When a State notifies an LEA that a school has been identified for CSI, the Department strongly encourages the State to communicate to the LEA the reason for identification (low performance, low graduation rate, or an ATSI school that has not met exit criteria within the State-determined number of years).

When a State notifies an LEA of any school served by the LEA that is identified for TSI or ATSI, the State must communicate to the LEA the reason(s) for identification so the school may develop its TSI or ATSI plan to improve outcomes for those student group(s).

ESEA sections 1111(d)(1)(A) and 1111(d)(2)(A)(i)

A-4. Must an LEA notify each school that it has been identified for CSI?

Yes. To meet the requirements for developing and implementing a CSI plan, including that the principal and school leaders be involved, an LEA must notify each school of its identification for CSI as soon as possible so that the LEA and school may begin collaborating to meet these requirements.

ESEA section 1111(d)(1)(B)

A-5. Must an LEA notify each school that it has been identified for TSI or ATSI?

Yes. ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(A)(ii) requires an LEA to notify each school that is identified for TSI or ATSI of such identification, including the reason for identification. In cases where the State directly notifies schools of TSI or ATSI identification status, each LEA must ensure that its schools understand their identification status and related requirements so that the schools may begin developing their support and improvement plans as soon as possible.

ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(A)(ii)

A-6. What are the responsibilities of a State or LEA regarding parent and family notification when a school has been identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI?

While the ESEA does not require parent and family notification, the Department strongly encourages a State or LEA to notify parents and families when a school is identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI and provide a description of how the LEA and school plan to collaborate with parents and families in the development of the support and improvement plan, including how parents and families may be a part of the team developing the support and improvement plan (see question B-6). The Department encourages the State and LEAs to update parents and families throughout the improvement process including providing information about where to access the approved support and improvement plan and updates on the school's progress in implementing the CSI, TSI, or ATSI plan and in improving student outcomes. Partnering with parents and families and engaging the community in the development of the support and improvement plan is critical to understanding the needs of the school and to making decisions that are responsive to those needs and promote continuous improvement. For more information see the Department's *Family Engagement Learning Series Briefs*, available at https://www.ed.gov/about/ed-initiatives/raise-bar/raise-bar-resources-parents-and-families/family-engagement-learning.

A-7. What are the requirements for identifying a school for CSI – Low Performing?

A State must identify a school for CSI – Low Performing by determining at least the lowest-performing five percent of *all Title I* schools using its system of annual meaningful differentiation. Specifically, a State must identify schools for CSI – Low Performing based on all indicators in the State's accountability system (i.e., the Academic Achievement, Other Academic for public elementary schools and secondary schools that are not high schools, Graduation Rate, Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency (ELP), and School Quality or Student Success (SQSS) indicators). The CSI – Low Performing methodology must be based on the performance of all students; a State may elect to also include the performance of student groups. A State may, at its discretion and if approved in its ESEA consolidated State plan, choose to identify more than five percent of Title I schools for CSI – Low Performing (see question A-11).

ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(I)

A-8. What are the requirements for identifying a school for CSI – Low Graduation Rate?

A State must identify any public high school (Title I *and* non-Title I) for CSI – Low Graduation Rate that has an adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) at or below 66.67 percent of students. A State may use the four-year ACGR and/or one or more extended-year ACGRs (e.g., five-year, seven-year). A State may use the most recent available graduation rate data or elect to average data over multiple years, but a State may not require a school to meet the identification criteria for consecutive or multiple years (e.g., the State may not require that a school is only identified for CSI – Low Graduation Rate if it fails to graduate 66.67 percent of its students in two of the past three or for two or more consecutive years).

ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(II)

A-9. What are the requirements for identifying a school for CSI – Not Exiting ATSI?

A Title I school identified for ATSI (see question A-16) that does not meet the State's exit criteria must be identified for CSI – Not Exiting ATSI. See Section D for more information on exit criteria. A State may choose to identify non-Title I ATSI schools that do not meet the State's ATSI exit criteria for CSI – Not Exiting ATSI. Such schools are eligible to receive ESEA section 1003 school improvement funds, provided they do not meet the exit criteria for ATSI schools (see question E-4).

ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(III)

A-10. How frequently must a State identify schools for CSI?

A State must identify schools for CSI (Low Performing, Low Graduation Rate, and Not Exiting ATSI) at least once every three years, though it may elect to do so more frequently. A State may choose to identify these categories of CSI schools on different timelines (e.g., CSI – Low Graduation Rate once every two years and CSI – Low Performing annually) as long as all categories of CSI schools are identified at least once every three years.

ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)

A-11. May a State identify more schools for CSI – Low Performing or CSI – Low Graduation Rate than statutorily required?

Yes. The ESEA requires a State to identify *not less than* the lowest five percent of Title I schools for CSI – Low Performing. After identifying the lowest-performing five percent of all Title I schools for CSI – Low Performing, a State may choose to identify additional low-performing schools for CSI, including non-Title I schools. If a State identifies more than the lowest five percent of Title I schools for CSI – Low Performing (e.g., the lowest eight percent of Title I schools), all of the Title I schools that are identified for CSI – Low Performing are eligible to receive ESEA section 1003 school improvement funds. Non-Title I schools identified for CSI – Low Performing are not eligible to receive ESEA section 1003 school improvement funds (see question E-4).

In addition, while a State must identify any public high school (Title I *and* non-Title I) for CSI – Low Graduation Rate that has an ACGR at or below 66.67 percent of students, a State may also elect to identify any public high school (i.e., Title I *and/or* non-Title I) for CSI – Low Graduation Rate that has an ACGR *above* 66.67 percent. For example, a State may choose to identify any public high school for CSI – Low Graduation Rate with an ACGR at or below 70 percent. However, only those public high schools identified for CSI – Low Graduation Rate with an ACGR that meets the statutory definition (i.e., a Title I or non-Title I school with a graduation rate at or below 66.67 percent of students) may receive ESEA section 1003 school improvement funds.

A-12. What student groups must be included when identifying schools for TSI and ATSI?

As it relates to identifying schools for TSI and ATSI, the term "student groups" refers to the groups of students identified in ESEA section 1111(c)(2), including students identified as economically disadvantaged, students from major racial and ethnic groups, children with disabilities, and English learners. In addition, a State may define additional student groups in its approved ESEA consolidated State plan. For example, some States have chosen to define a combined group of

students that includes those who have been historically underserved, defined by the State as the three major racial and ethnic student groups who score the lowest on the statewide assessments

ESEA section 1111(c)(2) and (c)(4)(C)(iii)

A-13. What are the requirements for identifying a school for TSI?

The State must identify for TSI any public school (Title I *and* non-Title I) with one or more student group(s) who meet the State's definition of consistently underperforming based on all of the indicators in the State's system of annual meaningful differentiation.

A-14. What is the definition of a consistently underperforming student group?

A State determines its definition for a consistently underperforming student group. Under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(C)(iii), a State's definition of a consistently underperforming student group must be based on all indicators in the statewide accountability system. In addition, a State's methodology must define a consistently underperforming group of students in a uniform manner across all LEAs in the State. For example, several States identify a school for TSI if a student group in the school performs at or below the lowest 10 percent of schools based on the performance of all students on the statewide accountability system for two consecutive years. This definition allows a State to use TSI status as a signal prior to identifying a school for ATSI.

A student group need not be underperforming on every indicator in order to meet a State's definition of a consistently underperforming student group. A State has discretion to define a consistently underperforming group of students based on low performance on one or more indicators as long as the methodology does not exclude consideration of any of the required accountability indicators. For example, a State may define consistently underperforming as a student group earning the lowest rating on at least three indicators using the average of three years of data. Some States choose to use the statutory methodology for ATSI to define a consistently underperforming student group for TSI (see question A-17).

A State should also consider how its approach to continuous improvement is responsive to the root causes of consistent underperformance and designed to facilitate improvement for those student groups that are consistently underperforming.

A-15. How frequently must a State identify schools for TSI?

A State must *annually* identify any school for TSI based on having one or more consistently underperforming student group, including any school that may have been identified for TSI in a prior year (see question A-20).

ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(C)(iii)

A-16. Must non-Title I schools be included in a State's methodology for identifying schools for TSI and ATSI?

Yes. Both Title I *and* non-Title I schools must be included when a State identifies schools for TSI and ATSI.

ESEA sections 1111(c)(4)(C)(iii) and 1111(d)(2)(C)

A-17. What are the requirements for identifying schools for ATSI?

Any public school (Title I *and* non-Title I) in which one or more group(s) of students, on its own, performs as poorly as the low-performing Title I schools identified for CSI (i.e., using the same methodology to identify schools for CSI – Low Performing under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(I)) must be identified for ATSI. A State may choose to identify schools for ATSI from among all schools or from among schools identified for TSI.

ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(C)

A-18. How frequently must a State identify schools for ATSI?

A State determines the frequency with which schools are identified for ATSI, as set forth in the State's approved ESEA consolidated State plan. The Department recommends that a State identify ATSI schools at the same time it identifies CSI schools to provide timely and actionable support to both types of identified schools.

A-19. May a State exclude currently identified schools when identifying a new cohort of CSI schools?

A State may exclude schools currently identified for CSI when identifying schools for CSI, TSI, or ATSI in a subsequent year (because the CSI school is already identified for the most intensive category (see question A-21)). A State may not exclude ATSI or TSI schools when identifying schools for CSI.

A-20. May a State exclude currently identified schools when identifying a new cohort of TSI or ATSI schools?

A State may not exclude schools currently identified for TSI from annual consideration for TSI or ATSI identification (see question A-15). However, a State may choose whether to exclude schools currently identified for CSI or ATSI when identifying schools for TSI or ATSI in a subsequent year. If a State includes currently identified schools when identifying a new cohort of ATSI schools, the number of years a school has to meet exit criteria is based on the point of initial identification.

A-21. Can a school be identified for more than one category of school identification?

Yes. A State has discretion to identify schools for more than one category of school identification. However, the more intensive category takes precedence. For example, if a school meets the criteria for CSI and, either in the same year or in a subsequent year, TSI (e.g., if the State includes CSI schools when identifying schools for TSI), the school must, at a minimum, be identified for CSI (i.e.,

a State may not remove TSI and ATSI schools from the pool of schools when identifying schools for CSI) and develop a CSI plan that meets all requirements (see question B-1). Similarly, if a school meets the criteria for ATSI and, either in the same year or in a subsequent year, TSI (e.g., if the State includes ATSI schools when identifying schools for TSI), the school must, at a minimum, be identified for ATSI (i.e., a State may not remove TSI schools from the pool of schools when identifying schools for ATSI) and develop a support and improvement plan that meets ATSI requirements (see question B-2).

A-22. Must a State use data from the preceding school year for purposes of identifying schools for CSI, TSI, and ATSI?

Yes. A State must use data from the statewide system of annual meaningful differentiation from the preceding school year, with the exception of the Graduation Rate and certain SQSS indicators, such as postsecondary education enrollment, which may lag, to inform identification of schools for CSI, TSI, and ATSI. As an example, data from the 2023-2024 school year must inform identification that occurs in the fall of the 2024-2025 school year. A State may choose to average that data with data from school years prior to the preceding school year (e.g., average of the three preceding years' data in the statewide system of annual meaningful differentiation) but must, at a minimum, use the preceding year's data.

A-23. May a State identify additional categories of schools?

Yes. ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(ii) permits a State to identify additional categories of schools beyond CSI, TSI, and ATSI for support and improvement after it has identified the required categories of CSI, TSI, and ATSI. For example, a State could identify schools that have demonstrated significant growth and/or closed achievement gaps for underserved students. These schools can serve as models for other identified schools.

The Department does not recommend that a State identify additional categories of schools for support and improvement unless it ensures that it has sufficient resources and capacity to effectively support all schools identified for CSI, TSI, and ATSI.

Schools identified solely in additional State-defined categories, including Title I schools, are not eligible to receive ESEA section 1003 school improvement funds (see question E-4).

A-24. May a State provide LEAs and schools the opportunity to appeal identification status?

Yes. A State may implement a formal appeal process that affords LEAs and schools an opportunity to appeal an identification status due to inaccurate data and related procedural errors during school identification. However, these are the only criteria for an appeal. A State may not, for example, remove the identification status of a school because the school believes its assessment results do not accurately reflect student performance.

A-25. How does a school closure or consolidation impact identification status?

An identified school that closes may be removed from the State's list of CSI, TSI, or ATSI schools. However, in a case where an identified school closes and a large percentage of students who

attended the closed school transfer to another identified school, the Department encourages the State and LEA to evaluate the school support and improvement plans of both the closed school and the receiving school to help ensure that the needs of incoming students are met (e.g., by revising the receiving school's support and improvement plan, if necessary).

In instances of consolidation, a State has the discretion to look at the totality of the circumstances to determine whether the newly formed consolidated school retains sufficient characteristics of the identified school. For example, factors that a State may consider include the percentage of the student population that comes from the originally identified school; the reason for identification (e.g., lowest-performing five percent, low graduation rate, performance of student group(s)); and the academic performance of the students at the non-identified school that is consolidating with the originally identified school. Based on relevant characteristics, a State may determine whether the newly created, consolidated school is an extension of the originally identified school and retain the originally identified school's identification status, or conclude that the newly created consolidated school is substantially different in student composition, and academic performance (e.g., due to the increased academic performance of the newly formed school) in which case the school would not be identified. In a case where a large percentage of students in the closed school transfer to a school that is not identified for support and improvement, the Department encourages the State to consider what additional supports the receiving school may need from the State in the absence of support and improvement activities.

A-26. What are the reporting requirements related to the identification of schools for CSI, TSI, and ATSI?

There are annual ED*Facts* and State and local report card requirements for reporting schools identified for support and improvement. ED*Facts* file 206 collects annual data on which schools are identified for CSI, TSI, and ATSI and ED*Facts* file 212 collects information on the reason(s) for identification. More information is available at https://www.ed.gov/data/edfacts-initiative.

ESEA sections 1111(h)(1)(C)(i)(V) and 1111(h)(2)(C) require State and local report cards (which must include information for each school served by the LEA) to annually report the number and names of all public schools in the State and LEA, as applicable, identified for CSI, TSI, and ATSI. For more information on State and local report cards, see the Department's 2019 guidance, available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/2020/03/report-card-guidance-final.pdf

A-27. How must schools that are identified for more than one category of school identification be reported?

If a State chooses to identify schools for multiple categories, a school identified for CSI must be reported as a CSI school even if it is also identified for TSI or ATSI. A State may choose to report both identifications (e.g., CSI and ATSI), as applicable. Similarly, a school identified for ATSI, even if it is also identified for TSI, including if a State identifies ATSI schools from among its TSI schools, must be reported as an ATSI school. A State may choose to report ATSI schools also as TSI schools, as applicable (see question A-21).

B. SUPPORT AND IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Requirements for Support and Improvement Plans

B-1. What must be included in a CSI plan for an identified school?

Each LEA must develop and implement a CSI plan, in partnership with stakeholders (including principals and other school leaders, teachers, parents and, as applicable, Indian Tribes or Tribal organizations (Tribes))[2] (see question B-6), to improve student outcomes that:

- Is informed by all indicators in the statewide accountability system, including student performance against State-determined long-term goals (see question B-9);
- Includes one or more evidence-based intervention(s) (see questions B-10 through B-18);
- Is based on results of a school-level needs assessment (see question B-8); and
- Identifies and addresses resource inequities, which may include a review of LEA and school-level budgeting, to be addressed through implementation of the plan (see questions B-20 through B-26).

The Department encourages a State to require each CSI plan to describe how the LEA and school will conduct periodic reviews of data, including student outcomes, student educational and other opportunities, funding and resources, community input, and other feedback, to continuously improve implementation of the CSI plan.

ESEA sections 1111(d)(1)(B) and 8538

B-2. What must be included in a TSI or ATSI plan for an identified school?

Each TSI and ATSI school must develop and implement a support and improvement plan, in partnership with stakeholders (including principals and other school leaders, teachers, and parents) (see question B-6) to improve student outcomes based on the indicators for each student group that was the subject of the notification that:

- Is informed by all indicators in the statewide accountability system, including student performance against State-determined long-term goals, for each student group that was the subject of the notification (see question B-9); and
- Includes one or more evidence-based intervention(s) (see questions B-10 through B-18).
- ***For ATSI only***, the ATSI plan must also identify and address resource inequities, which may include a review of LEA and school-level budgeting, to be addressed through implementation of the plan (see questions B-20 through B-26).

The Department strongly encourages a TSI or ATSI school to collaborate closely with its LEA on the development and implementation of its plan. Additionally, while not required, the Department strongly encourages a school identified for TSI or ATSI to conduct a school-level needs assessment to help inform the selection of interventions and implementation of plans tailored to the school's particular context (see question B-8 for more information on conducting a needs assessment). For a school operating a Title I schoolwide program under ESEA section 1114, it may be helpful to utilize

[2] See the Department's *Frequently Asked Questions: ESEA, Section 8538, Consultation with Indian Tribes and Tribal Organizations*, available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/policy/elsec/leg/essa/faq/essafaqtribalconsultation.pdf.

the needs assessment required under ESEA section 1114(b)(6). Guidance on Title I schoolwide programs can be found in *Supporting School Reform by Leveraging Federal Funds in a Schoolwide Program*, available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/2020/02/essaswpguidance9192016.pdf.

The Department also encourages an LEA to require each TSI and ATSI plan to describe how the TSI or ATSI school intends to conduct periodic reviews of data, including student outcomes, student educational and other opportunities, funding and resources, community input, and other feedback, to inform implementation and progress of the support and improvement plan.

ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(B) and (C)

B-3. How do the requirements differ for CSI, TSI, and ATSI plans?

As further discussed in this section, requirements for support and improvement plans differ based on whether a school is identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI. Table B.1 below provides an overview of the different school improvement activity requirements under the ESEA and indicates how a requirement applies to each specific category of school identification. After four general questions, the remaining questions in this section follow the order of the topics shown in Table B.1.

Table B.1 Support and Improvement Requirements, by School Identification Category

Support and Improvement Plan Requirements	**CSI**	**TSI**	**ATSI**
Entity Responsible for Developing Plan	LEA (for each CSI school)	School	School
Developed in Partnership with Stakeholders, including Principals and Other School Leaders, Teachers, Parents, and, as applicable, Tribes	Required	Required	Required
Based on a Needs Assessment	Required	Recommended	Recommended
Informed by All Indicators	Required	Required	Required
Includes Evidence-Based Interventions	Required	Required	Required
Identifying and Addressing Resource Inequities	Required	Recommended	Required
Approval	Required (by school, LEA, and State)	Required (by LEA only)	Required (by LEA only)
Monitoring the Implementation	Required (by State)	Required (by LEA)	Required (by LEA)

B-4. When should an LEA and school begin developing and implementing the CSI, TSI, or ATSI plan?

Upon receiving notification from the State regarding a school's identification for CSI, TSI, or ATSI, an LEA or school, as applicable, should begin developing a support and improvement plan (e.g., conducting a needs assessment, reviewing all available data, beginning outreach). It is essential that a

State notify each LEA of any school served by the LEA that is identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI as soon as possible so that the LEA or school may begin this process.

A CSI, TSI, or ATSI plan should be implemented in the school year for which the school is identified; however, a State may allow the LEA or school one planning year. An LEA or school that uses a planning year must begin implementing interventions by the beginning of the school year following the school year for which the school was identified (e.g., a school identified in fall 2024 based on data from the 2023-2024 school year may use the 2024-2025 school year as a planning year and must begin implementing interventions not later than the start of the 2025-2026 school year) (see question B-5). The Department encourages a State and LEAs to consider the timeline for implementation of support and improvement plans to ensure supports are provided to schools and students as soon as possible. A State can help LEAs and schools more quickly develop school improvement plans by providing examples of needs assessments, a list of evidence-based interventions, including identifying the underlying issues the interventions are intended to address and their relative effectiveness compared to other interventions, and a forum for LEAs and schools (e.g., office hours with State support specialists, communities of practice that include LEAs and schools that have shown significant growth in the narrowing or elimination of student group achievement gaps) to connect with one another and ask questions. See the Department's School Improvement Needs Assessment resources on the *State Support Network Resources* webpage, available at https://www.ed.gov/teaching-and-administration/lead-and-manage-my-school/state-support-network/ssn-resources, and example timeline in Appendix B for more information. See question B-17 for more information about the Department's resources available to support States, LEAs, and identified schools when developing support and improvement plans.

B-5. May an LEA or school have a planning year when developing and implementing the CSI, TSI, or ATSI plan?

Yes. A State may allow one planning year to develop and begin implementing the CSI, TSI, or ATSI plan. If the LEA or school uses a planning year, it should develop its support and improvement plan and complete other activities necessary to prepare for successful implementation of interventions required under the plan during the planning year. An LEA or school that uses a planning year must begin implementing interventions by the beginning of the school year following the school year for which the school was identified (e.g., a school identified in fall 2024 based on data from the 2023-2024 school year must begin implementing interventions not later than the start of the 2025-2026 school year).

B-6. What partner engagement requirements must an LEA or school meet with respect to the development and implementation of a CSI, TSI, or ATSI plan?

An LEA or school must develop and implement a CSI, TSI, or ATSI plan in partnership with stakeholders, including the school's principal and other school leaders; teachers; parents; and, as applicable, Tribes. The Department recommends that an LEA or school describe in the support and improvement plan how:

- Stakeholder input was solicited and considered in the development of the plan, including any changes made as a result of that input; and
- Stakeholders will participate in an ongoing manner in the plan's implementation, including amendments based on State monitoring or other feedback.

The Department recommends that an LEA or school also engage other partners who may assist in implementation of the school improvement plan, such as students, paraprofessionals and other school-based staff, non-profit community-based organizations, public health and health care professionals, organizations representing the interests of specific student groups (e.g., students with disabilities, children and youth in foster care), local government (including housing and other service agencies), institutions of higher education (IHEs), teachers' unions and other organizations representing educators, and intermediary organizations (e.g., regional educational service agencies).

The Department strongly encourages States, LEAs, and schools to design processes that provide a broad range of partners the opportunity to provide meaningful input and feedback throughout the development and implementation of the school improvement plan. Such partnerships are critical to decision-making that promotes continuous improvement and strengthens the effectiveness of education investments. An LEA or school may want to identify a specific project manager for the development of the CSI, TSI, or ATSI plan who can serve as a key contact to facilitate engagement efforts within the school, LEA, and broader community. Each LEA or school should ensure the team developing and implementing the CSI, TSI, or ATSI plan includes a variety of LEA and school staff with content expertise, analytic skills (including data collection and sharing expertise), and facilitation and presentation skills, representing the organizations and individuals (e.g., teachers, principals, parents and families, students) most affected by any school improvement strategies and, therefore, most critical to ensuring strong, ongoing implementation.

LEAs and schools can enhance prospects for meaningful and continuous input and feedback by:

- Holding meetings, hearings, or focus groups at varying times during the day, including after the work or school day or on the weekends and, if possible, offering childcare and virtual options, so that working parents, teachers, school leaders, and other professionals are best able to participate;
- Ensuring meetings, committees, or focus groups include a broad range of voices (e.g., students, parents and families, organizations representing historically underserved communities);
- Making available the name and contact information of the team member(s) or project manager who will be leading development and implementation of the CSI, TSI, or ATSI plan;
- Providing accommodations and supports to ensure effective communication and accessibility, including making informational materials, meetings, hearings, or focus groups accessible (e.g., translators, interpreters, materials in alternative formats for use by persons with disabilities, utilizing accessible locations and technologies), consistent with Federal civil rights law; and
- Providing transparent information on the process, timeline, and opportunities to engage at different key points during plan development and implementation including by providing advance notice and clear descriptions of opportunities for input and feedback and sharing information on opportunities to provide input and feedback in the parental notice of school identification, on the LEA and school website, and/or other channels.

Meaningful engagement also includes the voices of parents with limited English proficiency (LEP). LEAs and schools must provide language assistance, consistent with their obligations under Title VI

of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, in order for LEP individuals to participate meaningfully in the needs assessment and development of the support and improvement plan.

ESEA sections 1111(d)(1)(B), 1111(d)(2)(B), and 8538

B-7. Must an LEA or school make CSI, TSI, or ATSI plans publicly available?

The ESEA does not require an LEA or school to make CSI, TSI, or ATSI plans publicly available. However, the Department strongly encourages schools and LEAs to post support and improvement plans in an accessible location on its website to increase transparency and strengthen the partner engagement process. For example, SEAs should post links to CSI, TSI, and ATSI plans on its State and local report cards. A State or LEA should also update parents and families throughout the improvement process, including providing information about where to access the approved support and improvement plan and updates on the school's progress in implementing the CSI, TSI, or ATSI plan and in improving student outcomes.

B-8. What should be included in the needs assessment for a school identified for CSI?

For each school identified for CSI, an LEA must conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to inform the selection of interventions, and the development and implementation of a CSI plan tailored to the school's particular context. The Department recommends that the needs assessment examine for all students and for each student group, as appropriate:

- Academic achievement and growth data (including growth in student proficiency and growth across performance levels) from the statewide assessments in reading/language arts, mathematics, science, and any other subject the State includes in its statewide assessment system;
- The school's performance measured against the State's long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for Academic Achievement, Graduation Rate, and Progress in Achieving ELP;
- Data from each indicator in the statewide accountability system;
- The school's needs, including with respect to:
    - School leadership and instructional staff, such as:
        - Teacher and school leader certifications and licenses and student access to fully certified and in-field teachers;
        - Teacher and school leader experience, and student access to experienced teachers and leaders;
        - Educator and school staff retention;
        - Time provided for evidence-based professional development, including principal and teacher opportunities for professional learning communities, access to math, literacy, or other coaches, support for and the percentage of teachers who are nationally board certified);
        - Working conditions, including planning time, and career ladder and leadership opportunities;
    - Chronic absenteeism;
    - Student access to high-quality, research-backed instructional materials;
    - Breadth, quality, and rigor of the instructional program and access to a well-rounded education, including: Student access to and completion of advanced coursework

including Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), dual enrollment, and early college programs;
    - Student access to and participation in high-quality career and technical education (CTE), and work-based or service-learning programs; and
    - Student access to afterschool, expanded, and summer learning and enrichment programs;
    - Student access to and participation in high-quality preschool and full-day kindergarten programs;
    - Student access to school-based mental health professionals and other services provided to students and families;
    - Family and community involvement;
    - School climate and environment, including school discipline; and
    - Distribution of resources (e.g., based on the State's periodic review of resources under ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A)(ii)).
- A community's needs and assets, in a similar manner to a needs assessment for full-service community schools, in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a school or LEA to inform improvement (see question E-34). See also the National Center for Community Schools' (NCCS') *Assets and Needs Assessment Toolkit*, available at: https://www.nccs.org/publication/asssets-needs-assessment-toolkit/, which includes actionable resources organized around key steps of the needs assessment process.

ESEA section 1111(d)(1)(B)

B-9. How must a CSI, TSI, or ATSI plan be informed by all indicators in the statewide accountability system, including student performance against State-determined long-term goals?

For a school or LEA to ensure that its support and improvement plan is informed by all indicators in the statewide accountability system, the support and improvement plan must consider, as applicable, the school's or student group's performance on each indicator and may also consider any growth in performance with respect to each indicator. For example, the CSI plan should (1) examine the school's current score on each indicator and set goals to improve each low-performing score over a specified period of time; (2) indicate strategies or activities, including evidence-based interventions, that the school will use to meet its goals; (3) describe how the school will measure progress towards its goals; and (4) explain any funding and other resources necessary to provide for those activities.

Similarly, a TSI or ATSI school must examine the accountability indicator performance for the student group(s) that led to the school's identification in its support and improvement plan.

ESEA sections 1111(d)(1)(B)(i) and 1111(d)(2)(B)(i)

Evidence-Based Interventions

B-10. What are the requirements for evidence-based interventions in support and improvement plans?

All support and improvement plans must include one or more evidence-based interventions that are implemented to improve student outcomes that meet the definition of "evidence-based" under ESEA section 8101(21). The definition of "evidence-based" in ESEA section 8101(21) includes four levels of evidence from which interventions may be selected:

- **Strong evidence** from at least one well-designed and well-implemented *experimental study*;
- **Moderate evidence** from at least one well-designed and well-implemented *quasi-experimental study*;
- **Promising evidence** from at least one well-designed and well-implemented *correlational study* with statistical controls for selection bias; or
- **Demonstrates a rationale** based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes and includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such activity, strategy, or intervention.

The definition specifies that the strength of an intervention is established based on the quality and design of the research supporting that intervention (in the case of strong, moderate, and promising levels of evidence), or based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluations (in the case of evidence based on "demonstrating a rationale"). Additionally, we note that an LEA or school that selects an evidence-based intervention based on "demonstrating a rationale" must also engage in "ongoing efforts to examine the effects" of the intervention. For more information on evidence-based interventions and the important role they play for effective school improvement, see the Department's non-regulatory guidance, *Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments*, available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/fund/grant/about/discretionary/2023-non-regulatory-guidance-evidence.pdf, which also includes suggested criteria for the four levels of evidence provided in the statutory definition. Note that the *Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments* guidance references 34 CFR Part 77, which defines evidence-based and related terms; however, those definitions apply only to direct Department grants and do not apply to State-administered programs.

The evidence an LEA or school will rely on to support the use of a specific intervention will likely be drawn from external research studies and evaluations of that intervention (i.e., research or evaluations conducted outside of the LEA and school to be served). Accordingly, it is important for an LEA or school to consider the context in which those external studies and evaluations were completed and the relative impact compared to other interventions to determine whether the intervention is relevant and likely to be successful in the context of the school to be served. The Department recommends that interventions be supported, to the extent practicable: by evidence from a sample or setting that overlaps with that of the school to be served; and by the strongest level of evidence (e.g., strong evidence, as opposed to moderate evidence or promising evidence) that is available and appropriate to meet the school's needs.

LEAs, schools, and partners should also consider whether there is evidence that an intervention has substantially improved a specific outcome (e.g., chronic absenteeism, credit accumulation and high

school graduation) that is related to the school's identified needs. For more information about selecting evidence-based interventions to meet local needs, see the Regional Educational Laboratory at WestEd's (REL West) infographic, *Applicability of Evidence-Based Interventions*, available at: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/infographics/pdf/REL_WE_Applicability_of_Evidence_Based_Interventions.pdf.

In addition, the Department funds Regional Comprehensive Centers (available at https://compcenternetwork.org/) and Regional Educational Laboratories (available at https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/), both of which may be available to support LEAs and schools in identifying and selecting appropriate evidence-based interventions.

B-11. How can a State support LEAs and schools in identifying and selecting appropriate evidence-based interventions?

The Department encourages States to provide LEAs and schools with a list of evidence-based interventions that meet the definition of "evidence-based" under ESEA section 8101(21), along with information to help the LEA or school select interventions that meet its needs and local context and the relative effectiveness of the intervention (see question B-17 for resources to utilize when creating such a list). A State may not limit an LEA or school to only select interventions from the State-developed list. When selecting an appropriate evidence-based intervention, LEAs and schools should consider the context in which those external studies and evaluations were completed and the relative impact compared to other interventions as described in question B-10. States may also contact one of the Department's Regional Comprehensive Centers (available at https://compcenternetwork.org/) or Regional Educational Laboratories (available at https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/) for support in identifying and selecting appropriate evidence-based interventions.

ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(B)(ii)

B-12. How should an LEA and school select interventions for a support and improvement plan?

Before selecting an intervention for each school identified for CSI, an LEA must conduct a needs assessment (see question B-8). For each school identified for TSI or ATSI, such a school may choose to conduct a needs assessment; although it is not required, it is strongly encouraged. An LEA or school should then use this needs assessment; input from partners that the LEA or school received when developing its support and improvement plan for each identified school; and relevant data (e.g., data identified in question B-8) to inform selection of interventions. In selecting interventions, an LEA or school should consider how it can use a combination of evidence-based interventions that work together to address the various needs of the identified school. An LEA or school should also consider how its selected intervention(s) relate to the activities funded by ESEA section 1003, if applicable (see question E-17 for more information on aligning the section 1003 application and support and improvement plan).

When selecting evidence-based interventions, an LEA or school should consider the relevance of the evidence to the setting and population to be served, the evidence's rigor and strength (see question B-10), and local capacity and community assets to implement the evidence-based interventions and activities. After it has selected interventions, an LEA or school should support the

intervention by: creating a robust implementation and evaluation plan; identifying technical assistance needs and ways to meet those needs; providing adequate resources; engaging in cycles of continuous improvement by regularly gathering information from relevant parties to examine the approach and possible refinements; and analyzing outcome data to determine the effectiveness of the intervention.

Finally, an LEA or school should design interventions that are of sufficient intensity and reach to ensure that students most in need of assistance are receiving support in a sufficient dosage to have an impact.

As noted in Table B-1, the LEA is responsible for developing the CSI plan, including the selection of evidence-based interventions. For TSI and ATSI schools, the school is responsible for developing the plan; however, LEAs are strongly encouraged to support TSI and ATSI schools in selecting and implementing evidence-based interventions aligned with the identified needs. Through this process, an LEA can also ensure that it understands the breadth of resources schools will need to implement support and improvement plans and identify avenues for securing and sustaining those resources.

B-13. How can a State ensure that its LEAs implement interventions in TSI or ATSI plans in a manner that meets the requirements of ESEA and civil rights laws?

Each TSI or ATSI plan must be designed to improve student outcomes based on the indicator(s) for the student group that led to the identification of the school. In meeting this requirement, however, a State continues to be obligated to comply with civil rights laws, including laws that prohibit discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability and age and laws that require the provision of a free appropriate public education to eligible children with disabilities.

This means that although schools identified for TSI and ATSI are identified based on the performance of a particular student group(s), the school must implement interventions based on educational needs (e.g., low academic outcomes), as opposed to membership in a particular student group with protected status, to ensure an LEA complies with relevant civil rights laws.

B-14. What evidence-based interventions could an LEA or school consider implementing to support learning acceleration as part of CSI, TSI, and ATSI plans?

The Department encourages LEAs and schools to implement evidence-based interventions that accelerate learning through integrated and targeted supports, instructional approaches, evidence-based tutoring, acceleration as part of core academic instruction, and high-quality out-of-school time programs, and to do so with enough breadth and intensity to effectively serve students most in need of support.

Evidence-Based Tutoring

Evidence-based tutoring programs have been shown to be an effective approach to accelerating student learning[3] and should include each of the following components:

- **Use well-prepared and supported tutors,** which may include teachers, paraprofessionals, teaching candidates, retired teachers, AmeriCorps members, volunteers, and others. When possible, tutors should consistently support the same students.
- **Provide tutoring in small groups.** 1:1 is best, but groups of 2-4, for example, can also drive improvements.
- **Provide at least three sessions per week.**
- **Whenever possible, conduct tutoring during the school day**, so that the students are better able to consistently attend. Tutoring programs that take place during the school day during a time such as a student's study hall, rather than during core academic classes or as part of a pull-out, in-class, or afterschool approach, have the largest effects.
- **Align with an evidence-based, structured curriculum** that emphasizes strong core instruction and is aligned with in-classroom teaching and learning. Tutoring programs should prepare and develop tutors to take specific actions to support student learning in meeting classroom expectations and the State's challenging academic standards, including through using formative and diagnostic assessments, asking deep explanatory questions, scaffolding and spacing learning over time, connecting and integrating abstract and concrete representations of concepts, and combining graphical representations — like figures and graphs — with verbal descriptions.

As part of this approach, the Department also encourages LEAs and schools to continually assess student attendance, engagement, and performance to evaluate and improve on program quality. In addition, the Department encourages LEAs and school to integrate and prioritize the social, emotional, and academic needs of all students both during the school day and through out-of-school time learning experiences (before and after school and during the summer).

Acceleration as Part of Core Academic Instruction

As described in the Department's *COVID-19 Handbook*, available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/documents/coronavirus/reopening-2.pdf, accelerating learning provides opportunities for students to learn at grade level rather than through tracking or remediation, which can narrow educational opportunities for students and might lead them to become disengaged. Acceleration builds on what students already know as a way to access new learning and focuses on quickly diagnosing gaps in critical skills and concepts that may impede students from accessing grade-level coursework. In addition, acceleration provides instruction in prior knowledge and teaching prerequisite skills that students need to learn at a pace that allows students to stay engaged in grade-level content and lays a foundation for new academic vocabulary.

[3] See *A Blueprint for Scaling Tutoring and Mentoring Across Public Schools*, available at: https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mkraft/files/kraft_falken_2021_blueprint_for_scaling_tutoring.pdf and Andre Nickow, Philip Oreopoulos, and Vincent Quan, *The Promise of Tutoring for PreK-12 Learning: As Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of the Experimental Evidence*, Sage Journals, Volume 61, Issue 1, November 27, 2023, available at https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312231208687.

To support school improvement, teacher leaders and district instructional leaders should identify critical content (e.g., "priority" or "power" standards) on which to focus. To avoid overwhelming students, educators should focus on the most essential knowledge and skills, particularly the content that is foundational to subsequent grade levels. Educators should be supported in using approaches to acceleration that prioritize engaging students and peer collaboration, including through project-based learning and opportunities for students to support each other in their learning.

Diagnostic and formative assessments can also be used as a strategy to help teachers identify students' specific knowledge, skills, and understanding in order to identify gaps and inform their teaching and instructional design. Tailored acceleration strategies can be based on information from these assessments to help teachers explicitly address learning gaps associated with skills that students should be able to demonstrate. These assessments should be aligned to grade-level concepts to help students make faster progress, include performance tasks, and provide timely and useful information on student progress.

Out-of-School Time

As described in the Department's *COVID-19 Handbook*, available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/documents/coronavirus/reopening-2.pdf, high-quality before-school, afterschool, expanded, and summer learning time and enrichment opportunities can increase student achievement while also providing access to a well-rounded education that improves their overall well-being. To best accelerate learning, these programs should include evidence-based approaches that target students needing additional support (including using information provided by diagnostic assessments); have certified teachers deliver the academic instruction; and engage the students in using experiential instruction that incorporates hands-on activities, project-based learning, enrichment, and field trips.

Summer learning programs can offer another opportunity to accelerate learning and should ideally be provided for a full day and for five to six weeks. The programs should include three hours of language arts and mathematics taught by a certified teacher each day and include enrichment activities and experiences. Summer learning programs should also be designed to meet the social and emotional needs of students and provide them with engaging and enriching experiences. Local leaders should identify and reduce barriers (e.g., transportation, enrollment process) to attendance. For older students, these opportunities can include a work-based learning, community service, or a mentorship component.

B-15. What evidence-based interventions could an LEA or school consider implementing to address chronic absenteeism as part of CSI, TSI, and ATSI plans?

Making sure students are in school and fully engaged throughout the school day is an essential precursor to improving students' academic performance. When designing a school support and improvement plan, the Department encourages the LEA and school to evaluate school attendance data to identify any challenges and causes of low attendance. Further, the Department encourages LEAs and CSI, TSI, and ATSI schools to implement evidence-based interventions designed to improve student attendance and engagement. The adoption of early warning intervention systems and effective use of data (for more information, see the Institute of Education Sciences' (IES) *A Practitioner's Guide to Implementing Early Warning Systems*, available at: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/regions/northwest/pdf/REL_2015056.pdf) can help identify and

address root causes of student absenteeism. Low-cost informational interventions, like sending supportive letters and texts to parents, including with attendance information and resources, can also help reduce absenteeism. When implementing strategies to address chronic absenteeism, LEAs and identified schools should:

- **Develop and implement a communication plan** that reinforces the importance of routine, daily, in-person attendance at school and increases the frequency and quality of interactions between schools and families, and allows for real-time communication with parents and families to alert them through texts or phone calls that their child is absent.
- **Strengthen relationships with students' families,** including through home visiting programs and mentoring programs.
- **Use a multi-tiered system of support and intervention, including an early warning intervention system** to identify students for increased support based on attendance, grades, assignment completion, credit accumulation, and discipline.
- **Create a positive, safe, and inclusive school climate** including through the use of school climate surveys and strategies such as supporting student social, emotional, and mental health and well-being; the adoption and implementation of equitable and evidence-based school discipline policies, including restorative discipline strategies, conflict resolution, and community building; and creating positive developmental relationships with caring adults, including through smaller learning communities, looping, advisory systems[4], student-centered staffing models, and culturally responsive practices.
- **Provide rigorous and engaging learning opportunities,** including opportunities for project-based, work-based, and service learning, and dual enrollment, early college, and CTE programs.
- **Adopt a Continuity of Instruction plan** to keep students on track when absent (e.g., due to unforeseen school closures or health).
- **Identify and provide additional supports needed by highly mobile students,** including establishing a process for quickly securing a student's records and connecting with admissions staff, a counselor, registrar, or teacher from the sending school to ensure the student is quickly enrolled, placed in the correct grade, awarded credits for work already completed, and provided with the services and supports they need.

The State and LEAs should also collect and use data on student transitions from elementary school to middle school and middle school to high school to improve those transitions and identify and provide interventions to students who should have but have not yet enrolled in middle or high school after leaving an elementary or middle school.

The State, LEAs, and schools should continually assess student attendance and performance to evaluate the outcomes of evidence-based interventions designed to support increased student attendance in schools implementing CSI, TSI, and ATSI plans.

[4] Advisory systems are a form of distributed counseling to ensure students have a point of contact at the school from whom they are getting attention on a regular basis and can include advisory teachers, who are advocates for their students and often serve as the main adult point of contact for their advisees, gathering information from other teachers about what the young people need and spearheading efforts to support them.

B-16. Is a school identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI required to implement interventions over a particular number of years?

A school that is identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI must implement interventions aimed at improving student outcomes in the school for as long as it remains identified in such status. The nature and intensity of those interventions may change over time. As noted in question B-33, schools and LEAs should regularly evaluate their school improvement efforts and amend support and improvement plans if a change may more effectively improve student outcomes based on the reason for identification. After a school has exited such status, the LEA and school should work to ensure that it sustains the improvements made. See section D for additional information regarding what must happen for a school to exit CSI, TSI, or ATSI status.

ESEA sections 1111(d)(1)(B), 1111(d)(2)(B), 1111(d)(2)(C), and 1111(d)(3)(A)(i)

B-17. What Departmental resources are available to support States, LEAs, and schools when developing support and improvement plans?

The Department has several resources for States, LEAs, and identified schools to utilize when developing support and improvement plans:

- *Comprehensive Center Network*: The Comprehensive Centers are Department grantees that provide capacity-building services to States, regional educational agencies (REAs), LEAs, and schools that improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, and improve the quality of instruction. For more information, see: https://compcenternetwork.org. The Comprehensive Centers Network, which includes the Regional Centers, the National Center, and four content centers, can offer resources to assist in the development of support and improvement plans. For example, the National Center created the resource *School Spending and Outcomes Snapshot: Supporting Conversations on Equity and School Improvement*, a tool that allows users to view and print data visualizations that can foster thoughtful conversations to improve fairness and outcomes in their school communities. This resource is useful for schools, LEAs, and States in identifying resource inequities based on per-pupil expenditure information and is an example of how to identify other resource inequities. Available at: https://compcenternetwork.org/ssos.
- Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs): The 10 RELs partner with LEAs, States, and other education stakeholders to help generate and apply evidence, with the goal of improving student outcomes. REL partnerships are designed, developed, and executed to improve long-term student success. Partnership activities are intensive, focused on a high-leverage topic within a specific State, and characterized by effective communication, genuine cooperation, and a mutual understanding of the context, content, and intended outcomes of the work. The REL Program is administered by the Institute of Education Sciences' (IES) National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE). For more information, see: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/.
- *What Works Clearinghouse (WWC):* The WWC uses rigorous standards to review evidence of effectiveness on a wide range of interventions and summarizes the settings and populations in the studies. This resource is useful for locating interventions based on "strong" evidence, "moderate" evidence, or "promising" evidence. Available at: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/.
- *Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments*: This guidance is designed to help States, LEAs, schools, educators, partner organizations, and others successfully choose and

implement interventions that improve outcomes for students. Available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/fund/grant/about/discretionary/2023-non-regulatory-guidance-evidence.pdf.

- *Office of Special Education Programs Technical Assistance Network*: The Technical Assistance and Dissemination (TA&D) program funds centers to improve results for children with disabilities from birth through 21 and their families by promoting the use of evidence-based practices. The TA&D centers build the capacity of States and local programs to implement evidence-based practices by (a) identifying emerging needs, (b) developing high-quality products, (c) providing effective technical assistance, and (d) widely disseminating useful information. Available at: https://sites.ed.gov/idea/topic-areas/ and https://sites.ed.gov/idea/osep-technical-assistance-centers/#TAD.
- *COVID-19 Handbook Volume 2*: The COVID-19 Handbook was intended to support the education community as schools reopened for in-person learning. While originally focused on COVID-19, this resource includes evidence-based strategies for addressing students' social, emotional, mental, and physical health, and academic needs; ensuring students' opportunity to learn; and supporting educator and staff well-being and stability. Available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/documents/coronavirus/reopening-2.pdf.
- *Strategies to Address Lost Instructional Time*: This document outlines evidence-based strategies States, LEAs, and schools should consider when addressing lost instructional time because of COVID-19. It complements the Department's COVID-19 Handbook: Volume 2 (listed above) by focusing on strategies to support State and local efforts in effectively using American Rescue Plan (ARP) Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds to address the impact of lost instructional time on underserved and disproportionately impacted students. The resource makes recommendations that are generally applicable for reengaging students in learning, providing information and assistance to families as they support students, and using high-quality assessments to inform teaching and learning and target resources and supports. Available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/documents/coronavirus/lost-instructional-time.pdf.
- *Strategies to Improve Student Achievement*: This resource provides information on key actions that partners at all levels can take to increase academic success through evidence-based strategies in three key areas: (1) addressing chronic absenteeism, (2) providing high-dosage tutoring, and (3) providing summer and expanded/afterschool learning programs. Available at: https://www.ed.gov/about/ed-initiatives/raise-bar/raise-bar-strategies-improve-student-achievement.
- *Supporting Child and Student Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Mental Health Needs*: This resource was intended to supplement the information in the COVID-19 Handbooks by providing strategies to promote mental health and well-being among students. Many students continue to struggle with mental health challenges that impact their access to and participation in learning. While originally focused on COVID-19, the resource provides recommendations that are generally applicable for providing school- or program-based mental health support across early childhood, K-12 schools, and higher education settings. Available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/documents/students/supporting-child-student-social-emotional-behavioral-mental-health.pdf.

B-18. What Federal funding is available for an LEA or school to use to pay for evidence-based interventions or other activities included in support and improvement plans?

ESEA section 1003 school improvement funds are the primary source of Federal funds available to support LEAs serving schools implementing CSI, TSI, or ATSI activities (see section E for additional information). An LEA serving schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI should consider how it may use other Federal funding intended to support improved student academic achievement, in addition to section 1003 funds, to support implementation of its support and improvement plan. For example, an LEA might reserve Title I funds under 34 C.F.R. § 200.77(f) to support school improvement in schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI that are also Title I schools. Similarly, other Federal funds may be able to be used, consistent with applicable requirements, to support and supplement school improvement activities in identified schools, such as funds under Titles II, Part A; Title III, Part A; and Titles IV, Parts A and B of the ESEA, as well as funding from the IDEA and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 and other relevant Federal programs, provided the LEA and school meet all applicable statutory and regulatory requirements for each program.

To support the coordination of Federal, State, and local funds for school improvement activities, the State or LEA may consider including a table in its support and improvement plan templates for the LEA or school to indicate the amount and source of funds that will be used to support each school improvement activity.

Please note that if section 1003 funds are used to fund evidence-based interventions, such evidence-based interventions must meet the definition of "strong evidence," "moderate evidence," or "promising evidence" (ESEA sec. 8101(21)(B)) (see question E-27).

B-19. May a State use funds from IDEA, Part B to support school improvement, including for evidence-based interventions?

Yes, in accordance with IDEA Part B requirements. Except as specifically noted to the contrary, the purpose of grants under IDEA, Part B is to assist States "to provide special education and related services to children with disabilities." (20 U.S.C. 1411(a)(1); 34 C.F.R. § 300.700(a).) A State, under 34 C.F.R. §300.704(b)(4)(xi), can use a portion of the funds it reserves for other State-level activities under 34 C.F.R. § 300.704(b)(1) to provide technical assistance to schools and LEAs and direct services, including services to children with disabilities in schools identified for support and improvement, under ESEA section 1111(c)(4). The funds may also be used to provide direct student services described in section 1003A(c)(3) of the ESEA (see Section F of this guidance), to children with disabilities, in schools or LEAs implementing CSI, TSI, or ATSI plan activities focused on improving the achievement of children with disabilities. This could include providing professional development to special and regular education teachers who teach children with disabilities, based on scientifically-based research to improve educational instruction, in order to improve academic achievement.

Identifying and Addressing Resource Inequities

B-20. Which support and improvement plans are required to identify and address resource inequities?

Both CSI and ATSI plans must identify resource inequities, which may include a review of LEA and school-level budgeting, to be addressed through implementation of the plan, as required by ESEA section 1111(d)(1)(B)(iv) and (2)(C). When identifying and addressing resource inequities within CSI or ATSI plans, an LEA or school should consider all available data, including, for example:

- *Per-pupil expenditures from Federal, State, and local sources*, either as reported on the State and local report cards under ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C)(x) and (h)(2)(C) or in more detailed data collected by the State or LEA, which may include:
    - The characteristics of students served by the school and their impact on per-pupil funding needs (e.g., students with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, and other students who may need additional services and supports) and whether the State funding formula takes into account those additional needs; and
    - Teacher-related data such as actual personnel expenditures and actual non-personnel expenditures and the impact of teacher qualifications and experience on personnel expenditures.
- *Rates at which "low-income students and minority students [are] taught… by ineffective, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers*" as determined by the State and the LEA under ESEA sections 1111(g)(1)(B) and 1112(b)(2), respectively. For example, "out-of-field" teachers may include those teaching in an area without the proper certification; "inexperienced" may refer to teachers with less than three years of teaching experience; and "ineffective" may be defined by the State's criteria.
- *Access to specialized instructional support personnel*, such as those defined in ESEA section 8101(47), including school counselors, school nurses, school social workers, school psychologists, school librarians, and other qualified professional personnel, and the ratio of students to these staff.
- *Access to and participation in comprehensive and rigorous coursework*, including:
    - Advanced or accelerated coursework and dual or concurrent enrollment in postsecondary coursework, such as those reported on State and local report cards under ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C)(viii)(II)(bb) and (h)(2)(C), and
    - Work-based learning opportunities and opportunities to attain industry-recognized credentials, foreign language coursework, career advising and planning (starting in middle school), and other preparation for postsecondary education transition, as collected by the State or LEA.
- *Rates of access to and participation in preschool and full-day kindergarten programs for elementary school students*, using either required State and local report card information on preschool enrollment under ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C)(viii)(II)(aa) and (h)(2)(C) or other data collected by the State or LEA, including dual language and dual-immersion programs.
- *Any other educational resource information* (e.g., access to experienced, effective school leaders; access to out-of-school time programs, including high-quality before-school, afterschool, and summer learning and enrichment programs; access to arts education; access to instructional materials or technology, including multilingual materials; instructional time, including the amount and how it is used; access to technology, including access to devices and high-speed internet in schools and students' homes; information on school facilities; disparities in

discipline practices; measures of school climate; availability of student support services; and teacher and leader information such as compensation, retention, access to mentoring/induction programs) available to the LEA or school that would be helpful to examine as part of its review.

If a State has recently conducted a resource allocation review consistent with the requirements in ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A)(ii), the LEAs and schools included in that resource allocation review should use the results of the State's review to inform the LEA's or school's identification of resource inequities, as applicable (see questions C-3 through C-10 for additional information on requirements for State resource allocation reviews).

For more information, see the Department's dear colleague letter on State and local resource equity requirements under Title I, available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/2023/07/DCL-Title-I-Resource-Equity-for-posting.pdf.

B-21. What are ways an LEA or school could address resource inequities with respect to per-pupil expenditures of Federal, State, and local funds?

Under ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C)(x), a State must annually publish on its State report card information on per-pupil expenditures of Federal, State, and local funds, including actual personnel and non-personnel expenditures, disaggregated by the source of funds, for each LEA and school in the preceding year. Consistent with ESEA section 1111(h)(2)(C), each LEA report card also must include this information, for the LEA and each school served by the LEA. The Department strongly encourages LEAs to engage partners (e.g., principals and other school leaders, teachers, parents and families and, as applicable, Tribes) in LEA funding decisions by using school spending information, which may also be used to identify and address resource inequities in CSI and ATSI plans. The National Comprehensive Center, a Department grantee, has developed the *School Spending & Outcomes Snapshot: Supporting Conversations on Equity and School Improvement*, available at: https://compcenternetwork.org/ssos. This tool allows users to view and print data visualizations that can foster thoughtful conversations to improve fairness in educational opportunities and outcomes in their school communities. In addition to the visualizations, the tool also includes "Questions to Explore" for LEA leaders, school leaders, parents and families, and other partners.

In addition to the design of school funding formulas and the degree to which they are based on local property tax contributions, variation in school-level per-pupil school funding can also be driven by school size, personnel compensation, and imprecise school staffing, and inequitable and inadequate resource formulas or ad hoc exceptions to such formulas. Depending on the specific drivers of the inequities that an LEA identifies and other relevant factors, an LEA, or school in partnership with its LEA, might address resource inequities by:

- Targeting all or the vast majority of any new State and local funding to schools currently underfunded on a per-pupil basis;
- Moving State and local funding to schools serving students with the greatest needs, either through a weighted student funding system or by improving the targeting of a staffing and supplies resource allocation formula;
- Improving working conditions and salaries (including closing the pay gap between the LEA's schools and other schools in the State, as applicable) in schools disproportionately staffed by

inexperienced and underpaid educators to incentivize educators to work and remain in previously hard-to-staff schools;
- Tracking and minimizing deviations from districtwide resource allocation formulas when those deviations lead to lower spending in high-need schools; and
- Identifying and correcting inefficiencies in spending to free up additional State and local funding to target to under-funded schools.

B-22. What flexibilities exist in Title I to modify budgets or allocation of Title I funds to address resource inequities?

An LEA may, at its discretion, modify LEA- and school-level budgets or allocation of Title I funds with respect to any of the resource inequities identified as a result of its budget review. Modifying its current Title I allocation processes may be one way an LEA can effectively address identified inequities. In doing so, an LEA must continue to meet all fiscal and program requirements that apply to Federal funds, including Title I.

Specifically, an LEA must allocate Title I funds consistent with ESEA requirements and accompanying regulations, which provide certain flexibilities for (1) reserving Title I funds for other authorized activities such as early childhood education, school improvement, and coordinated services; (2) determining Title I school eligibility within grade spans among schools with a poverty percentage of 75 percent or less; and (3) allocating Title I funds on a per-pupil basis. For example, under 34 C.F.R. § 200.78(c), an LEA is not required to allocate the same per-pupil amount to each participating school.

If an LEA allocates different per-pupil amounts to participating schools, the LEA must allocate a higher per-pupil amount to schools with higher poverty rates than it allocates to schools with lower poverty rates. The flexibility to allocate more funds on a per-pupil basis to a higher-poverty school represents an opportunity for an LEA to distribute Title I funds in a manner that may be more equitable than allocating the same amount of funds per-pupil to every school. For additional information, please see the Department's non-regulatory guidance *Within-District Allocations Under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as Amended*, available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/2022/02/Within-district-allocations-FINAL.pdf.

B-23. What are ways an LEA or school could address resource inequities with respect to differences in rates at which low-income and minority students in Title I schools are taught by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers?

To address inequities with respect to the rates at which low-income and minority students are taught by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers, an LEA or school could utilize strategies, such as:

- Examining teacher recruitment and retention data, including by teacher demographics, and policies to address disproportionalities in rates of ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers (For more information, see the resources section of the Title II, Part A webpage: https://www.ed.gov/grants-and-programs/formula-grants/school-improvement/supporting-effective-instruction-state-grantstitle-ii-part-a#recruitment-and-retention and question B-20);
- Creating or expanding comprehensive, evidence-based preparation programs for prospective

teachers and principals. Comprehensive preparation programs, like teacher and leader residencies and "grow your own" programs, pair intensive student teaching under the supervision of an expert mentor teacher or leader with coursework in children's learning and development, as well as curriculum and teaching and leadership methods, which may include supporting paraprofessional staff in programs that enable them to secure the credits, credentials, and/or experiences they need to become fully-certified teachers.

- Improving working conditions in schools, particularly those that serve a disproportionate number of low-income and minority students, to create the conditions where effective, in-field, and experienced teachers want to work, including by:
    - Providing high-quality mentoring for all first- and second-year teachers. Strong mentoring and induction for novice teachers can be a valuable strategy to retain new teachers and improve their effectiveness;
    - Providing high-quality professional development for teachers and school leaders. Research shows that teachers become more effective and are more likely to stay in the profession if they can continue learning in collegial environments and if they can share their skills and expertise with others.[5] These opportunities should also include increased time for collaboration and participation in professional learning communities designed to share educator expertise, and be readily available, content-rich, collaborative, and job-embedded; and
    - Expanding leadership opportunities that allow highly effective teachers to lead beyond their classroom and to be compensated for these additional responsibilities. This could include providing opportunities for highly effective teachers to serve as a coach or otherwise support new or struggling teachers and providing highly effective teachers and coaches incentives to work in schools identified for support and improvement.
- Coupling improved working conditions with improved compensation systems such that teachers earn a livable and competitive wage, and which may include:
    - Providing additional monetary benefits such as loan forgiveness and service scholarships or housing incentives in exchange for a commitment to serve in the identified school for a minimum number of years; and
    - Providing financial and other support for educators to earn additional or advanced credentials (e.g., special education, bilingual education, Advanced Placement, National Board Certification) in exchange for committing to serve in the identified school for a minimum number of years. LEAs can help schools increase the number of and retain expert, experienced teachers who can provide teaching and mentoring in high-need schools.
- Recruiting, developing, and retaining principals and other school leaders with the capacity to provide collaborative leadership and effective instructional support to create high-quality teaching and learning conditions.

An LEA or school may be able to use Title I funds to implement one or more of these strategies, consistent with relevant requirements. Additionally, the Department encourages States and LEAs to consider using Title II funds, including the State-level funding under ESEA section 2101(c)(3), to

[5] Susan Moore Johnson, Jill Harrison Berg, and Morgan L. Donaldson, *Who Stays in Teaching and Why?: A Review of the Literature on Teacher Retention*, The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2005; Ken Futernick, *A possible dream: Retaining California's teachers so all students can learn*, The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning, California State University, 2007.

support these strategies, as allowable. For additional information about when State and local Title II funds may be used to support such strategies, see *Non-Regulatory Guidance for Title II, Part A: Building Systems of Support for Excellent Teaching and Learning*, available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essatitleiipartaguidance.pdf. In addition, the Department publishes an annual report on State and LEA uses of Title II funds, which can be found under the "Resources" tab at: https://www.ed.gov/grants-and-programs/formula-grants/school-improvement/supporting-effective-instruction-state-grantstitle-ii-part-a.

B-24. What are ways an LEA or school could address resource inequities with respect to access to advanced coursework?

ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C)(viii)(II)(bb) and (2)(C) require State and local report cards to include information from the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) on the number and percentage of students enrolled in coursework that provided them with the opportunity to earn postsecondary education credit while still in high school, such as AP and IB courses and examinations and dual or concurrent enrollment or early college programs.

To help address any identified inequities in schools identified for CSI or ATSI, an LEA or school may, for example, use funds under Title IV, Part A of the ESEA for efforts to raise student academic achievement through rigorous learning programs, including by:

- Covering or reimbursing, for students from low-income backgrounds in identified schools, all of the costs of AP, IB, or other postsecondary education credit-bearing program examinations;
- Increasing the availability of, and enrollment in, AP or IB programs and dual or concurrent enrollment or early college high school programs (defined in ESEA section 8101(15)) for all students in identified schools;
- Providing college and career counseling programs and services to help students in identified schools make better-informed educational and career choices, including information (starting in middle school) about preparing for college and choosing rigorous high school course offerings and preliminary coursework that will prepare them for those courses, choosing from among career options, how to enroll in and receive federal financial aid through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and how to pursue academic and occupational training needed to succeed in the workplace;
- Offering high-quality work-based learning experiences that apply academic learning to real-world settings and expose students to career fields and which may include opportunities to attain industry-recognized credentials for students who choose to work and learn simultaneously; and
- Supporting the implementation of an early college high school (defined in ESEA section 8101(17)), a strategy that has been effective in increasing high school graduation and college-

entrance rates, including for racial and ethnic minority students and students from low-income background.[6]

More information on funds available under Title IV, Part A of the ESEA can be found in the Department's non-regulatory guidance on *School Support and Academic Enrichment Grants*, available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essassaegrantguid10212016.pdf. In addition, Title I funds may also be used to support advanced coursework in a school operating a Title I schoolwide program. Based on its needs assessment, Title I funds may support activities designed to increase access to and prepare students for success in high-quality advanced coursework to earn postsecondary education credit while in high school (e.g., AP, IB, early college high schools, and dual or concurrent enrollment programs). Guidance on schoolwide programs can be found in *Supporting School Reform by Leveraging Federal Funds in a Schoolwide Program*, available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/2020/02/essaswpguidance9192016.pdf.

B-25. What are ways an LEA or school could address resource inequities with respect to access in public schools to full-day kindergarten programs and to preschool programs?

ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C)(viii)(II)(aa) and (2)(C) require State and local report cards to include information from the CRDC on the number and percentage of students enrolled in preschool programs.

An LEA or school might address resource inequities with respect to access to full-day kindergarten or preschool in Title I elementary schools identified for CSI or ATSI by using Title I funds to support early learning for Title I students for whom those early learning opportunities would otherwise not be available. Consistent with its needs assessment and schoolwide or targeted assistance program plan, and as detailed in the non-regulatory guidance *Serving Preschool Children Through Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as Amended*, available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/2024/02/Title-I-Preschool-Early-Learning-Guidance-Revised-2023-FINAL.pdf, Title I funds may be used to support early learning programs in the following ways:

- **Kindergarten Programs**: Title I funds may be used to support eligible children by improving the quality and length/duration of kindergarten (e.g., by extending a half-day program to full-day), providing professional development, supporting transitions from early learning to kindergarten including summer programming, and expanding family engagement to partner on every day school attendance.
- **School-Operated Preschool**: A Title I school may use all or a portion of its Title I funds to operate a preschool program for eligible children.
    - Schoolwide Program: If a school operates a preschool program in a schoolwide program school, all preschool children who reside in the school's attendance area are eligible to be served. Non-regulatory guidance on schoolwide programs can be found

[6] Berger, Andrea, Lori Turk-Bicakci, Michael Garet, Joel Knudson, and Gur Hoshen. 2014. *Early College, Continued Success: Early College High School Initiative Impact Study*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. http://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/AIR%20ECHSI%20Impact%20Study%20Report-%20NSC%20Update%2001-14-14.pdf and Edmunds, Julie A.; Larry Bernstein; Fatih Unlu; Elizabeth Glennie; John Willse; Arthur Smith; and N. Arshavsky. 2012. *Expanding the Start of the College Pipeline: Ninth-grade Findings from an Experimental Study of the Impact of the Early College High School Model*. Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness, 5(2), 136–159. http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/19345747.2012.656182.

in *Supporting School Reform by Leveraging Federal Funds in a Schoolwide Program*, available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essaswpguidance9192016.pdf.

  - Targeted Assistance Program: A school may serve preschool children who reside in its attendance area and whom the school identifies as at risk of failing to meet the State's academic achievement standards when they reach school age.

- **LEA-Operated Preschool**: An LEA may reserve a portion of funds from its Title I allocation to operate a preschool program for eligible children in the LEA as a whole, or in a portion of the LEA. The latter strategy may, in particular, help address inequities in access to preschool in identified schools, as an LEA may serve preschool children who reside in specific Title I school attendance areas.
- **Coordination with Other Early Childhood Programs**: An LEA or school may use Title I funds to improve the quality or extend the day or number of days of State preschool, Head Start, childcare, or other community-based early learning programs for eligible children. Title I funds may be used to provide preschool services for Title I eligible children who:
  - Are not eligible for Head Start services based on income requirements;
  - Are eligible for Head Start but not served in a Head Start center due to an unmet need; or
  - Are enrolled in a State preschool, Head Start, childcare, or community-based early learning program and are in need of additional services (e.g., extending the day, increasing number of days).

  An LEA might also take steps to improve coordination between schools and other early learning programs in the community including:
  - Coordinated professional development between early educators and early elementary grade teachers to support instructional alignment and successful transitions; and
  - Programs and strategies to support effective kindergarten transition including summer programming, outreach efforts to encourage on-time early childhood vaccinations, early kindergarten enrollment, and every day school attendance.

Note in this regard that an LEA that receives Title I funds under the ESEA is required to coordinate with Head Start programs and, if feasible, other early learning programs that serve children who will attend the LEA, regardless of whether the LEA uses Title I funds to operate an early education program. States and LEAs, working with other professional development providers, can also use funds available under Titles I, II, and III to support high-quality teaching and learning in schools and other early childhood settings. More information on how funds available under the ESEA can be used to support early learners can be found in *Serving Preschool Children Through Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as Amended*, available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/2024/02/Title-I-Preschool-Early-Learning-Guidance-Revised-2023-FINAL.pdf and *Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act: Expanding Opportunities to Support our Youngest Learners*, available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essaelguidance10202016.pdf.

B-26. What are ways an LEA or school could address resource inequities with respect to access to specialized instructional support personnel, including school counselors, school social workers, school nurses, school psychologists, school librarians, and other qualified professional personnel?

Through the CRDC, each LEA submits information to the Department on the number of full-time equivalent school counselors, school psychologists, social workers, and other personnel, which can be reviewed to help determine how the availability of these specialized instructional support personnel in the LEA compare to other LEAs in the State. For more information, see https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov. An LEA or school should also analyze its own data to determine whether all student groups within the LEA or school – particularly in an identified school – have access to specialized instructional support personnel and, if not, work to identify root causes of inequities.

In Title I schoolwide schools, Title I funds can be used to help address any identified inequities in access to these personnel. Non-regulatory guidance on schoolwide programs can be found in *Supporting School Reform by Leveraging Federal Funds in a Schoolwide Program*, available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essaswpguidance9192016.pdf.

For example, based on a school's needs assessment required under ESEA section 1114(b)(6), Title I funds may be used to support staff who either directly provide or identify and establish partnerships with third parties to provide the following services:

- Counseling, school-based mental health services, specialized instructional support services, mentoring services, and other services;
- School climate interventions (e.g., anti-bullying strategies, positive behavior interventions and supports); and
- Providing tiered responses for students with learning or behavioral needs.

In addition, School Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) grants under Title IV, Part A of the ESEA may be used by an LEA for programs or activities that foster safe, healthy, supportive, and drug-free school environments, including hiring staff and providing direct student services and professional development and training for school staff. This can include provision of mentoring and school counseling, programs to prevent bullying and harassment, and school dropout prevention activities. Additional information on funds available under Title IV, Part A of the ESEA can be found in the Department's non-regulatory guidance on *School Support and Academic Enrichment Grants*, available at:
https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essassaegrantguid10212016.pdf.

Reviewing, Approving, and Monitoring Support and Improvement Plans

B-27. Which entities must approve a CSI plan?

A CSI plan must first be approved by the identified school and the LEA. The State must also approve the CSI plan after determining it meets all requirements for CSI plans. The State must approve it in a timely manner to ensure that the school and LEA can begin implementing its approved plan as soon as possible. See Appendix B for an example timeline for reviewing and approving a CSI plan.

Additionally, if a State determines that a CSI plan submitted by an LEA does not meet all requirements, a State should work cooperatively with the LEA and school, as well as relevant partners, regarding any necessary changes to the plan to ensure that it can be approved and implemented in a timely manner.

ESEA section 1111(d)(1)(B)(v)

B-28. What are a State's responsibilities regarding the monitoring and periodic review of an LEA's implementation of a CSI plan?

The State must monitor and periodically review an LEA's implementation of a CSI plan. A State determines how frequently these reviews occur. For example, a State may consider an annual review of implementation, particularly if the State is reviewing progress of identified schools annually to determine whether schools are meeting CSI exit criteria. A State may also want to align its timeline for these reviews with its other monitoring cycles, such as by including reviews of CSI plan implementation within its desk monitoring and monitoring reviews of LEAs that include comprehensive reviews of Title I and other Federal programs. Following a monitoring review, a State could require additional actions if necessary. For example, it could increase the frequency of monitoring, require the LEA to take certain actions related to implementation of its CSI plan, or require the LEA to revise its CSI plan.

ESEA section 1111(d)(1)(B)(vi)

B-29. What are an LEA's responsibilities with respect to the review and approval of a TSI or ATSI plan?

An LEA must review a TSI or ATSI plan to determine that the plan meets all statutory requirements and approve the plan. The LEA must approve TSI and ATSI plans in a timely manner to ensure that the school can begin implementing its approved plan as soon as possible. See Appendix B for an example timeline for reviewing and approving a TSI or ATSI plan.

To ensure that schools meet applicable requirements, an LEA could, for example, set a timeline and process by which a school develops its support and improvement plan and submits it to the LEA for approval. The LEA may also consider taking steps to be involved early in the planning process to make sure all steps are timely completed. LEAs are encouraged to work with the State if there are issues with a school not meeting its obligations with respect to the development and implementation of a TSI or ATSI plan.

ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(B)(iii))

B-30. How may an LEA meet the requirement to monitor a school's implementation of its TSI or ATSI plan?

An LEA is required to monitor a school's implementation of its TSI or ATSI plan. If a State monitors the implementation of TSI or ATSI plans (e.g., through the same process that it monitors the implementation of CSI plans) and includes the LEA in that process, such monitoring would satisfy the requirement for the LEA to monitor the implementation of TSI or ATSI plans.

There is no statutorily required frequency for an LEA to monitor implementation of TSI or ATSI plans. A State may require a certain frequency, or it may allow the monitoring frequency to be at an LEA's discretion. The Department encourages LEAs to annually review implementation, particularly in the case of schools identified for ATSI, if the State is reviewing the progress of identified schools annually relative to exit criteria (for oversight responsibilities of a State, see question B-31).

ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(B)(iv)

B-31. What responsibilities does a State have to ensure that an LEA reviews, approves, and monitors the implementation of each TSI or ATSI plan?

A State must ensure that each LEA with a school identified for TSI or ATSI reviews, approves, and monitors the implementation of each support and improvement plan. A State should provide guidance to LEAs and schools regarding the requirements for TSI and ATSI plans, which may include providing a plan template that meets all applicable requirements (see question B-2). Additionally, a State may require LEAs to submit TSI or ATSI plans with evidence of LEA review and approval (e.g., signature from an LEA official, signed assurance that the LEA reviewed and approved the plan). A State may consider encouraging or requiring LEAs to annually review the implementation of TSI and ATSI plans. The Department recommends that a State incorporate oversight of the LEA's responsibilities for TSI and ATSI schools into its overall monitoring of school improvement efforts (for oversight responsibilities of an LEA, see question B-30).

B-32. How may a State support the consolidation of different plans related to school support and improvement (e.g., CSI, TSI, or ATSI plan; Title I schoolwide plan)?

A State may choose to streamline the procedures, processes, and documentation required for different plans, provided the requirements for each are still met.

For example, a State may develop a template for a single needs assessment to meet the requirements in ESEA sections 1111(d)(1)(B)(iii) and 1114(b)(6) for a CSI plan and a Title I schoolwide plan. A CSI plan must be based on a school-level needs assessment and must be informed by all indicators within the statewide accountability system, including student performance against State-determined long-term goals. For purposes of a Title I schoolwide plan, a comprehensive needs assessment must take into account information on the academic achievement of students in relation to the challenging State academic standards, particularly the needs of those students who are failing, or at-risk of failing, to meet those standards—along with any other factors as determined by the LEA. In cases where a State has developed a template for a single needs assessment for a CSI plan and a Title I schoolwide plan, a newly identified CSI school should consider if it needs to carry out a new needs assessment or if it can reasonably rely on a previous needs assessment carried out before it was identified, depending on the length of time since the needs assessment was carried out and other pertinent characteristics (e.g., change in performance or student population).

As another example, an LEA or school could develop a single partner engagement process for a support and improvement plan and a Title I schoolwide plan that meets the requirements in ESEA section 1111(d)(1)(B) (CSI plans) or 1111(d)(2)(B) (TSI and ATSI plans) and ESEA section 1114(b)(2) (Title I schoolwide plans), provided the stakeholder engagement requirements for both plans are met. For a Title I schoolwide plan, an LEA or school would need to ensure that plan

development involves parents and other members of the community to be served and individuals who will carry out such plan, including teachers; principals and other school leaders; paraprofessionals; school and LEA administrators; if applicable, Tribes and Tribal organizations; if appropriate, specialized instructional support personnel; technical assistance providers; school staff; if the plan relates to a secondary school, students; and other individuals determined by the school. The CSI, TSI, or ATSI plan, on the other hand, must be developed by the LEA, or school, in partnership with principals and other school leaders, teachers, parents, and, as applicable, Tribes.

Alternatively, if the plans are not combined, a State could permit a school to reference or otherwise link to descriptions or information contained in other applications and plans.

B-33. May a school or LEA amend its CSI, TSI, or ATSI plan after it is developed and approved?

Yes. The Department encourages a State, or each LEA, to establish a process to allow a school or LEA to amend its approved support and improvement plan. A school or LEA may amend its support and improvement plan at any time, provided the process and timeline are consistent with State requirements and the plan continues to meet all requirements for support and improvement plans in ESEA section 1111(d) (see questions B-1 and B-2). The Department encourages schools and LEAs to regularly evaluate their school improvement efforts and amend a support and improvement plan if a change may better improve student outcomes based on the reason for identification.

The Department recommends that the State, LEA, and school use the same procedures for developing and approving amended support and improvement plans that were used in developing the initial support and improvement plan, including engaging partners and making the amended support and improvement plans publicly available, including to parents and families.

If a school must amend its support and improvement plan because it has been identified for a different status (e.g., TSI to CSI) or based on the performance of a different student group (see questions A-19 through A-21), the school must ensure that its amended plan meets all statutory requirements for its new status.

B-34. What flexibility does the ESEA provide regarding school improvement plans for high schools identified for CSI based on low graduation rates?

Certain factors may increase the likelihood that a high school is identified for CSI based on low graduation rates. ESEA section 1111(d)(1)(C) provides the State some discretion for certain high schools (described below) identified for CSI – Low Graduation Rate:

- A State may permit the use of additional "differentiated improvement activities" in high schools that predominantly serve students who are either returning to education after having exited secondary school without a regular high school diploma (i.e., a student who previously dropped out of high school) or who, based on their grade or age, are significantly under-credited (i.e., students who are two or more semesters behind in course credits based on their grade level/age).
- A State may permit an LEA to forgo development or implementation of a school support and improvement plan or any implementation of improvement activities that would

otherwise be required in a high school with a total enrollment of fewer than 100 students (i.e., "small" high schools). The State must still notify the school's LEA of the CSI – Low Graduation Rate identification, and the school's identification must still be made public on the State and LEA report cards, consistent with ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C)(i)(V).

For both types of high schools, the Department strongly encourages a State to notify parents and families of the identification; for more information about how to do so in a way that is accessible and understandable, see question A-6.

B-35. What oversight does the Department conduct with respect to school improvement and related requirements under the ESEA?

The Department conducts regular oversight of each State through a variety of activities including, but not limited to, targeted and consolidated monitoring of compliance with Title I requirements. With respect to accountability, school identification, and school improvement activities, this includes a review of evidence regarding how the State is carrying out its responsibilities to:

- Implement accountability systems consistent with approved ESEA consolidated State plans, including to identify schools for CSI, TSI, and ATSI;
- Publish State and local report cards, including SQSS indicator data and lists of identified schools;
- Provide oversight and approval of support and improvement plans for CSI schools, including ensuring that for each CSI school, the LEA conducted a needs assessment and reviewed all indicator data and that the support and improvement plan identifies evidence-based interventions and identifies the resource inequities to be addressed by implementation of the plan;
- Provide oversight of LEA review, approval, and monitoring processes of ATSI and TSI plans;
- Implement ESEA section 1003 to support school improvement in identified schools; and
- Establish and carry out general monitoring and technical assistance for LEAs and schools.

In addition, the Department reviews the support and assistance that the State provides to its LEAs. As part of the Department's monitoring process, we typically review evidence to determine if the State's technical assistance and oversight is effective in supporting LEAs and schools to meet requirements. Following our monitoring, the Department typically issues a report or letter with commendations, recommendations, and required actions. The State must resolve each required action; the Department does not close the required action until the State has provided sufficient information to demonstrate compliance with the requirement at issue. If the State does not resolve the issue in a timely manner, the Department may take additional action.

C. SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

General State Support

C-1. May a State establish additional requirements for schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI?

Yes. A State may establish additional rules, regulations, and policies related to Title I school improvement activities. Such rules, regulations, or policies must:

- Conform to the purposes of Title I;
- Be consistent with Title I statutory and regulatory requirements;
- Be submitted to the State's committee of practitioners (as described in ESEA section 1603(b)) for review and comment; and
- Be identified by the State as State-imposed requirements.

A State must minimize such rules, regulations, and policies to which LEAs and schools are subject, eliminate or modify State and local fiscal accounting requirements to facilitate the ability of schools to consolidate funds under schoolwide programs, identify any duplicative or contrasting requirements between the State and Federal rules or regulations, and eliminate the State rules and regulations that are duplicative of Federal requirements.

ESEA section 1603

C-2. Must a State provide technical assistance to LEAs serving a significant number of CSI schools or TSI and ATSI schools?

Yes. Under ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A)(iii), a State must provide technical assistance to each LEA serving a significant number of CSI schools or TSI and ATSI schools. The Department encourages, to the extent possible, States to meet this requirement by providing technical assistance to all LEAs serving CSI, TSI, and ATSI schools, though a State may differentiate its support to meet the varying needs of its LEAs. A State may also choose to use the same determination of what constitutes a "significant" number of schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI for purposes of its resource allocation review as described in question C-4.

Resource Allocation Review Requirements

C-3. Must a State conduct a resource allocation review for each LEA that serves a significant number of schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI?

Yes. In addition to the CSI and ATSI plan requirements to identify and address resources inequities described in question B-20, ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A)(ii) requires a State to periodically conduct a resource allocation review to support school improvement in each LEA in the State serving a significant number of schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI. A State has discretion in meeting this requirement, including in determining what it means to "periodically" conduct a resource allocation review (see question C-5), what resources to include in the review, and how to define whether an LEA is serving a "significant" number of identified schools. These reviews should identify resource inequities and the SEA should work to address any identified resource inequities. A State must also

describe how it will conduct this periodic review in its approved ESEA consolidated State plan as required under ESEA section 1111.

Please note that a process where the State requires an LEA to review resource allocation (e.g., completing a self-assessment protocol provided by the State or performing its own analysis for purposes of school support and improvement plans) without any further review by the State would not meet statutory requirements for a State resource allocation review (see question C-7).

ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A)(ii)

C-4. What is a "significant" number of schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI within an LEA for purposes of determining a State's responsibilities to conduct resource allocation reviews under ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A)(ii)?

A State has discretion to determine what constitutes a "significant" number of schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI to support continued improvement in such schools. The Department recommends that a State establish a definition of an LEA serving a "significant" number of identified schools by using a threshold that includes factoring in a percentage and a number. For example, a State may define an LEA with the greater of 10 percent or at least three of its schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI as having a significant number of identified schools. By using a percentage, the State ensures that it is including small or rural LEAs that have fewer numbers of schools but would still benefit from the State's resource allocation review. By also establishing a threshold where the State includes LEAs with at least three identified schools, it accounts for large LEAs with multiple identified schools.

As a State conducts resource allocation reviews in LEAs serving a significant number of identified schools, the Department recommends it consider the supports available to LEAs that do not meet its definition of "significant" that nonetheless could benefit from more transparent information about resource allocation within and among LEAs in the State.

A State may not limit its resource allocation review to LEAs serving a significant number of schools identified for CSI only and must also include LEAs serving a significant number of schools identified for TSI or ATSI. A State may either:

- Determine what constitutes LEAs serving a significant number of schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI; or
- Identify LEAs serving a significant number of schools identified for CSI and separately identify LEAs serving a significant number of schools identified for TSI or ATSI.

For more information, see the Department's dear colleague letter on Title I resource equity requirements, available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/2023/07/DCL-Title-I-Resource-Equity-for-posting.pdf.

C-5. How frequently should a State conduct resource allocation reviews in each LEA with a significant number of schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI?

A State must "periodically" review resource allocation in each LEA serving a significant number of identified schools but has discretion in setting this schedule. However, given that the purpose of

resource allocation reviews is to support effective implementation of support and improvement plans in schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI, a State should consider coordinating such reviews with its school identification timeline. For example, the Department encourages a State that identifies CSI schools every three years to conduct resource allocation reviews on the same timeline (at least every three years) to allow LEAs to use the results of the review to inform school support and improvement plans as described in Section B, particularly with respect to identifying and addressing resource inequities as required by ESEA section 1111(d)(1)(B)(iv) and (2)(C).

In addition, the State may use the results to inform technical assistance efforts and support for school improvement, including any actions taken by the State to ensure that schools have sufficient resources to attain and sustain their school improvement goals (see question C-8). Once a school meets the exit criteria, an SEA could continue to monitor their resource allocations for at least one year.

ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A)(ii)

C-6. What resources should a State consider during its periodic review of resource allocation in each LEA serving a significant number or percentage of schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI?

The Department recommends a State review resource allocation related to—at a minimum—the same resources recommended above with respect to school-level CSI and ATSI plans' identification of resource inequities (see question B-20), including:

- *LEA and school-level per-pupil expenditures*, including actual personnel and non-personnel expenditures, disaggregated by Federal, State, and local sources either as reported on the State and local report cards under ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C)(x) and (h)(2)(C) or in more detailed data collected by the State or LEA.
- *Rates at which "low-income students and minority students [are] taught… by ineffective, inexperienced, or out-of-field, teachers*" as determined by the State and the LEA under ESEA sections 1111(g)(1)(B) and 1112(b)(2), respectively. For example, "out-of-field" teachers may include those teaching in an area without the proper certification; "inexperienced" may refer to teachers with less than three years of teaching experience; and "ineffective" may be defined by the State's criteria.
- *Access to specialized instructional support personnel*, such as those defined in ESEA section 8101(47), including school counselors, school nurses, school social workers, school psychologists, school librarians, and other qualified professional personnel, and the ratio of students to these staff.
- *Access to and participation in comprehensive and rigorous coursework,* including:
    - Advanced or accelerated coursework and dual or concurrent enrollment in postsecondary coursework, such as those reported on the State and local report cards under ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C)(viii)(II)(bb) and (h)(2)(C) or in other data collected by the State or LEA.
    - Work-based learning opportunities and opportunities to attain industry-recognized credentials, foreign language coursework, career advising and planning (starting in middle school), and other preparation for postsecondary transition opportunities, as reported in other data collected by the State or LEA.

- *Rates of access to and participation in preschool programs and full-day kindergarten for elementary school students*, using either required State and local report card information on preschool enrollment under ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C)(viii)(II)(aa) and (h)(2)(C) or other data collected by the State or LEA, including dual language and dual-immersion programs.
- *Any other educational resource information* (e.g., access to experienced, effective school leaders; access to out-of-school time programs, including high-quality before-school, afterschool, and summer learning and enrichment programs; access to arts education; access to instructional materials or technology, including multilingual materials; instructional time, including the amount and how it is used; access to technology, including access to devices and high-speed internet in schools and students' homes; information on school facilities; disparities in discipline practices; measures of school climate; availability of student support services; and teacher and leader information such as compensation, retention, access to mentoring/induction programs) available to the State that would be helpful to examine as part of its review.

To support school improvement, it is important for a State to analyze resources alongside student outcome measures (e.g., indicators in its State system of annual meaningful differentiation) and other contextual factors (e.g., percentages of economically disadvantaged students, students from major racial and ethnic groups, children with disabilities, English learners, students experiencing homelessness, migratory students, and students in foster care) to best understand and meet the resource needs of schools. For example, schools serving high percentages of children with disabilities or English learners likely have different resource needs than schools serving lower percentages of such students. One example of how to conduct these analyses is the *School Spending & Outcomes Snapshot (SSOS): Supporting Conversations on Equity and School Improvement* tool launched by the National Comprehensive Center, a Department grantee, available at: https://compcenternetwork.org/ssos. This resource includes data visualizations for States, LEAs, schools, and education partners to explore questions relative to spending and outcomes data. This information can help advance thoughtful conversations among LEA and school communities about the equitable distribution of resources and how spending patterns may be related to student outcomes or school performance.

Additionally, because Federal funding typically only accounts for eight percent of public school funding nationally,[7] it is recommended that States include State and local funds in their resource allocation reviews.

Finally, the Department encourages States to compare financial and non-financial resource allocation data, such as those described above, both across and within LEAs, as part of its resource allocation review. For example, looking across LEAs, a State can examine how resources per-pupil or rates of access to resources differ for schools identified for support and improvement compared to all schools in the State. Additionally, looking within LEAs, a State can examine how resources differ for schools identified for support and improvement compared to other schools in the LEA to explore possible needs that exist among schools within the LEA. The State-level review of resource allocation permits State leaders to work both to address resource inequities that exist across LEAs

[7] Cornman, S.Q., Phillips, J.J., Howell, M.R., and Young, J. (2021) *Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education FY 19* (NCES-2021-302). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Available at: https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2021/2021302.pdf.

and to support LEA leaders in addressing resource inequities that exist within an LEA[8] as described in questions C-8 through C-10.

C-7. How might a State conduct its periodic review of resource allocation in each LEA serving a significant number of identified schools and in schools within such LEAs?

Resource allocation reviews provide an opportunity for a State to consider a broad definition of "resources" to incorporate local considerations. Please note that ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A)(ii) requires that the State conduct the review; a process where the State requires an LEA to review resource allocation (e.g., completing a self-assessment protocol provided by the State or performing their own analysis for purposes of school improvement plans) without any further review by the State would not meet requirements.

For resource allocation reviews to be meaningful, the Department recommends reviews be integrated into broader efforts or processes in a State. For example:

- A State may modify its annual monitoring process for all LEAs to include providing to each LEA: (1) a summary of resource allocation within each LEA serving a significant number or percentage of identified schools and (2) recommendations to support school improvement. The integration of monitoring and resource allocation reviews provides an avenue for a State or LEA to take meaningful actions based on the results of the review (e.g., an LEA may make changes to its support and improvement plan or consolidated application for Federal funds).
- A State may provide summaries or publish dashboards of data on resources, educational opportunities, and student outcomes described in question C-6 that it shares with each LEA serving a significant number or percentage of identified schools at the start of the school identification cycle. An LEA may use these data to inform a self-assessment using templates or discussion protocols that the State reviews and provides feedback on or facilitates, respectively.

Finally, the Department recommends that each State engage with LEA leaders, educators, community members, family members, students, and other partners during the resource allocation review process to support strong implementation.

C-8. How might a State take action based on the results of its resource allocation review?

In general, a State should work with an LEA with a significant number of schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI to take action based on the results of its resource allocation review to support effective implementation of strategies consistent with the guidance provided in questions B-10 through B-19 Depending on the nature of the results from the resource allocation review, State-level actions could include:

- Developing and implementing a weighted student funding system to allocate State funds that can help address disparities in per-pupil educational expenditures;
- Consistent with the requirements described in Section E, awarding ESEA section 1003 school improvement funds to LEAs with unmet needs based on the results of the resource

[8] The Department acknowledges that a number of States and LEAs are under court orders regarding the equitable distribution of funds or other resources across and within LEAs; this recommendation for a State's resource allocation review should not be construed to alter or otherwise impact these court orders.

allocation review that may use the funds, for example, to expand the availability of high-quality preschool, increase access to advanced coursework, or hire specialized instructional support personnel, consistent with their approved ESEA section 1003 applications;

- Increasing investments in high-quality, comprehensive educator preparation programs and principal development programs within the State and supporting strong partnerships between these programs and LEAs with a significant number of schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI to help build the pipeline of teachers and principals who are prepared to work in low-performing schools, which may include supporting paraprofessional staff in programs that enable them to secure the credits, credentials, and/or experiences they need to become fully certified teachers;
- Providing additional funds to support the recruitment and retention of teachers and school leaders in schools identified for support and improvement, which may include increased compensation, loan forgiveness or scholarships, housing incentives, or other monetary incentives and supports, mentoring and/or induction programs that are evidence-based, and development and implementation of high-quality professional development programs; and
- Using the State share of Title II, Part A funds under ESEA section 2101(c) to establish or expand teacher, principal, and other school leader residency programs (which may be in partnership with an institution of higher education or a nonprofit organization).

In addition to these examples, a State may take other actions based on the results of its resource allocation review in numerous other ways, including using funds from other Federal programs if such activities are consistent with programmatic and fiscal requirements.

C-9. How may a State share the results of a resource allocation review to encourage collaboration across LEAs and schools?

The Department encourages States to publicly post the results of resource allocation reviews to ensure that LEAs and school communities have access to data that can inform spending decisions and support the identification and addressing of resource inequities in CSI and ATSI plans, as described in question B-20. For example, a State may compile and post the results of its review on the same webpage as its State and local report cards. These results may also be compiled in an analytical tool that displays resource data (e.g., per-pupil expenditures disaggregated by source or educator data) with other school-level information (e.g., identification status, percentage of students receiving free and reduced-price lunch, percentage of English learners, staff experience, staffing levels, grade range, locale). A State may also provide professional development programs that invite an LEA or a school that was included in the resource allocation review to present on effective actions implemented in response to the results from the review or create professional learning communities focused on creating more equitable and adequate approaches to resource allocation.

Regardless of whether the State publicly posts results of resource allocation reviews, the Department strongly encourages that the State provide the results to the LEAs included in the review to enable them to take action to address the results, as described in question C-8.

C-10. How could a State use the results of resource allocation reviews when determining how to prioritize awards under ESEA section 1003(f) when allocating ESEA section 1003 funds for school improvement?

The ESEA requires a State to define a "significant" number of schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI for the purposes of conducting a resource allocation review (ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A)(ii), see question C-4). The ESEA also requires a State to prioritize allocation of section 1003 school improvement funds to LEAs serving high numbers, or a high percentage of, schools implementing CSI, TSI, or ATSI plans (ESEA section 1003(f)(1), see question E-20). The Department encourages a State to align these terms and use its definition of a "significant" number of CSI, TSI, or ATSI schools to prioritize allocation of section 1003 funds to LEAs.

Additionally, a State may use the results of its resource allocation review among and within LEAs serving a significant number of identified schools to support its determination of which LEAs demonstrate the greatest need for section 1003 funds under ESEA section 1003(f)(2). Resource allocation reviews are one method that a State may employ to identify variation of access to high-quality resources across its LEAs (e.g., differences in the vacancy rates for teaching positions resulting in fewer fully certified educators or course offerings (e.g., CTE, AP/IB) in an LEA, access to effective school leadership, access to before-school, afterschool, and summer learning and enrichment programs, differences in the rate of access to technology in an LEA, differences in per pupil funds available through State or local revenue to support an LEA). Similarly, a State may identify inequities that exist among schools within an LEA through its resource allocation review (e.g., differences in average teacher salaries, differences in per-pupil spending, the correlation between proficiency in mathematics and reading and per-pupil spending) and use these data to prioritize LEAs with larger inequities among schools when allocating section 1003 funds. For further discussion of allocation of section 1003 funds, please see questions E-18 through E-22.

More Rigorous State-Determined Actions

C-11. When is more rigorous State-determined action required for a school?

ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A)(i)(I) requires "more rigorous State-determined action" in a school identified for CSI that fails to meet the statewide exit criteria within the State-determined number of years, such as the implementation of additional interventions beyond the original strategies in the school improvement plan. The number of years that a CSI school has to meet exit criteria before more rigorous State-determined action cannot exceed four years from when the school was first identified (which includes the planning year, if applicable). For example, in a State that allows schools identified for CSI four years to meet exit criteria, for a school identified for CSI in fall 2024 that fails to meet the State's exit criteria by fall 2028 (i.e., year 1 was school year 2024-2025, year 2 was 2025-2026, year 3 was 2026-2027, and year 4 was 2027-2028), the "more rigorous State-determined action" must be implemented during the 2028-2029 school year.

ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A)(i)(I)

C-12. What additional State-determined action could be implemented in a school identified for CSI that does not meet exit criteria?

A State has discretion in determining the action in a school identified for CSI that does not meet exit criteria within the State-determined number of years, consistent with State law. Additional State-determined action:

- Must be more rigorous than the interventions previously implemented (e.g., meet a higher level of evidence than the interventions included in the original CSI plan or represent an increase in the intensity of effective interventions in the school's original plan, such as State-driven coaching or participation in high-dosage tutoring);
- May address school-level operations; and
- Must be described in a State's approved ESEA consolidated State plan under ESEA section 1111.

The State-determined action should also be supported, to the extent practicable, by evidence from a sample or setting that overlaps with the population or setting of the school to be served (see questions B-10 through B-13). In addition, the State should evaluate whether the design of the original support and improvement plan, including evidence-based interventions, contributed to the school not meeting the exit criteria and/or whether the implementation of the plan contributed to the school not meeting the exit criteria.

When choosing appropriate more rigorous action, a State should work, through the LEA, with similar partners who helped develop the original plan, including principals and other school leaders, teachers, parents and families, and, as applicable, Tribes. The State should also consider whether new or additional partners would result in an improved plan and/or more effective implementation. The Department encourages each State to evaluate the school-level needs assessment that was conducted during the initial development of the CSI plan to determine if it needs to be updated to inform decisions around more rigorous action. An LEA may need to complete a new school-level needs assessment to determine if new actions would more effectively meet the needs of the CSI school and if adjustments should be made to the currently approved interventions (see question B-8).

ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A)(i)(I)

C-13. Must a school identified for CSI replace its previously implemented evidence-based interventions after it does not meet exit criteria?

While more rigorous, additional State-determined action must be implemented in a CSI school that did not meet exit criteria within the State-determined number of years, the school is not required to replace the interventions that it was implementing previously. The new actions could be undertaken in addition to the previously implemented actions or include a modification of the intervention designed to increase its effectiveness. As noted in question B-33, the Department encourages schools and LEAs to regularly evaluate implementation of their school improvement efforts, and amend support and improvement plans if a change may better improve student outcomes based on the reason for identification. For example, the LEA and State may review relevant data and, if available, an updated needs assessment and determine that the previous interventions remain

appropriate and responsive to the reason(s) the school was identified. A State may consider increasing the intensity of these interventions or combining interventions to be more rigorous.

C-14. What resources are available to fund more rigorous State-determined action for a school identified for CSI that does not meet exit criteria?

Resources that can support more rigorous action for schools identified for CSI that do not meet exit criteria after the State-determined number of years include:

- ESEA section 1003 school improvement funds, as described in Section E;
- Title I funds under ESEA section 1113, as well as consolidated funds if the school participates in a Title I schoolwide program. Non-regulatory guidance on Title I schoolwide programs can be found in *Supporting School Reform by Leveraging Federal Funds in a Schoolwide Program*, available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essaswpguidance9192016.pdf;
- IDEA State-level funds, as described in question B-19;
- Funds under another Federal program (e.g., Title II, Part A, or Title IV, Part A) if the State-determined action is allowable under that program;
- Funding under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins V); and
- Other State and local funds.

Optional Public School Transfer

C-15. Is an LEA required to provide students enrolled in a school that is identified for CSI with the option to transfer to another public school that is served by the LEA and is not identified for CSI?

No; under ESEA section 1111(d)(1)(D), an LEA may, but is not required to, offer the option for a student enrolled in a CSI school to transfer to another public school served by the LEA that is not identified for CSI (unless transfer is prohibited by State law). This provision is specific to intra-district student transfers (between schools in the same LEA) rather than inter-district student transfers (between schools in different LEAs).

If students enrolled in schools identified for CSI are provided the option to transfer to another public school, the LEA must give priority to the lowest-achieving children from low-income backgrounds, as determined by the LEA for the purposes of allocating funds to schools under ESEA section 1113(a)(3). Students participating in the transfer program must be enrolled in classes and activities in the receiving school in the same manner as all other students in the school and must be permitted to remain at the receiving school until the student has completed the highest grade in that school.

C-16. If an LEA offers the option to transfer out of a CSI school into another school in the LEA in accordance with the requirements in ESEA section 1111(d)(1)(D), what Federal funds may it use to pay for costs of transporting students who transfer?

An LEA may use an amount equal to not more than five percent of the LEA's Title I allocation for transportation costs for students who transfer out of CSI schools into another school in the LEA under ESEA section 1111(d)(1)(D).

ESEA section 1003A provides the optional authority for a State to reserve funds to award to LEAs to provide direct student services, which could include transportation costs for students transferring out of CSI schools. If the State elects to reserve funds under section 1003A, the LEA may apply for section 1003A funds for the transportation costs for students transferring out of CSI schools (provided the LEA is not using its Title I allocation to fund transportation costs under ESEA section 1111(d)(1)(D)). For more information on funding for direct student services under ESEA section 1003A, see Section F.

ESEA sections 1111(d)(1)(D)(v) and 1003A(c)(3)(E)

D. EXIT CRITERIA

D-1. What are the requirements for a State in establishing exit criteria for CSI and ATSI schools?

Each State must establish, and describe in its ESEA consolidated State plan, statewide exit criteria for schools identified for CSI and ATSI, respectively. CSI and ATSI exit criteria must ensure continued progress to improve student academic achievement and school success. A school identified for CSI or ATSI exits such status when it meets the State's exit criteria.

A school identified for CSI cannot exit CSI status unless, within a State-determined number of years (not to exceed four), the school has improved student academic achievement from the point of identification.

Similarly, a school identified for ATSI cannot exit ATSI status unless, within a State-determined number of years, the school has improved academic achievement from the point of identification, for the student group or groups whose performance led to identification.

A State must have procedures to determine if a school that does not meet the State-determined minimum n-size may exit CSI or ATSI status. Such procedures must meet the requirement to ensure continued progress to improve student academic achievement and school success.

ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A)(i)

D-2. Is a State required to establish exit criteria for TSI schools?

Although not required, a State may establish exit criteria for TSI schools. If it does not, an LEA must establish criteria and a timeline to help it determine if a school identified for TSI has successfully implemented its TSI plan (see question D-9). Regardless of whether a State establishes exit criteria for TSI schools or an LEA establishes criteria to determine successful implementation of

a TSI plan, the LEA, or the school with LEA approval, must take additional action for each school identified for TSI following unsuccessful implementation of its TSI plan after an LEA-determined number of years.

ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(B)(v)

D-3. Must a State examine multiple years of data when determining if a school identified for CSI or ATSI has met exit criteria?

Although a State is not required to examine multiple years of data, exit criteria must meet the requirement to ensure continued progress to improve student academic achievement and school success from the point of identification, as described above and in ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A)(i). The Department strongly encourages States to examine multiple years of data (i.e., at least two years of data) to determine if a school has made sustained improvement.

ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A)(i)

D-4. When assessing the performance of a school identified for CSI or ATSI against exit criteria, what does it mean to have improved "student academic achievement"?

Statewide exit criteria used to evaluate the progress of a school identified for CSI or ATSI must ensure that a school, or the student group that led to identification, has improved student academic achievement from the year in which the school was identified. A State has discretion to determine which statewide academic achievement outcomes it will incorporate into its exit criteria. For example, a State might establish exit criteria that allows a school to exit status if it improves performance on its Academic Achievement indicator from the point of identification (e.g., increasing the percentage of students scoring proficient or above on both the reading/language arts and mathematics statewide assessments by 10 percent from the point of initial identification). A State may also choose to establish exit criteria that allows a school identified for CSI based on low graduation rate to exit status on the basis of improving its graduation rate above 66.67 percent. A State may also establish additional exit criteria that are based on, for example, improvements for students on other accountability indicators, including SQSS indicators.

A State may not establish CSI or ATSI exit criteria that would allow a school to exit its identification status based solely on its performance relative to that of other schools. For example, a State may not establish exit criteria that allows a CSI school to exit status if the school simply is no longer among the lowest-performing five percent of Title I schools. Such normative exit criteria will not ensure continued progress to improve student academic achievement and school success in the State.

ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A)(i)

D-5. What data must a State use when determining if a school has met exit criteria for CSI or ATSI?

ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A) requires that exit criteria be based on statewide data. Local data, including local assessment data, may not be used for purposes of determining whether a school

meets statewide exit criteria because it does not provide comparable information about the performance of schools.

ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A)

D-6. What must happen if a school identified for CSI does not meet exit criteria within the State-determined number of years?

If a school identified for CSI does not meet the exit criteria within the State-determined number of years (not to exceed four), more rigorous State-determined action is required in that school, such as the implementation of additional or more intensive interventions, which may include addressing school-level operations, as required by ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A)(i). See Section C for additional information regarding more rigorous State-determined action.

ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A)(i)(I)

D-7. What must happen if a Title I school identified for ATSI does not meet exit criteria within the State-determined number of years?

A State must identify for CSI any Title I school that is identified for ATSI and does not meet the statewide exit criteria for ATSI schools within a State-determined number of years, as required by ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A)(i)(II). See Section B and Appendix A for information on the requirements applicable to schools identified for CSI and ATSI.

A State may also, but is not required to, identify for CSI a non-Title I school that is identified for ATSI that does not meet statewide exit criteria. In instances where a State chooses to identify a non-Title I ATSI school as CSI, such a school would be eligible for ESEA section 1003 funds because it continues to meet the statutory requirements for identification as an ATSI school.

ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A)(i)(II)

D-8. When must a Title I school identified for ATSI become a CSI school if it has not met exit criteria?

Each State has the discretion to determine the number of years that a Title I ATSI school has to meet the statewide exit criteria before it becomes a CSI school. The State must include the number of years in its ESEA consolidated State plan. The Department encourages each State to align this timeline with others in its accountability system, such as the timeline the State uses to identify schools for CSI (at least once every three years). A State may want to establish exit criteria that determine whether Title I ATSI schools become CSI schools (or exit ATSI status) *prior* to identifying the next cohort of CSI and ATSI schools. A State may also want to consider the number of years established by the State for schools identified for CSI to meet exit criteria, which may not exceed four years.

ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A)(i)(II)

D-9. Must an LEA take action if a TSI school does not successfully implement its support and improvement plan or if a non-Title I ATSI school does not meet the statewide exit criteria?

Yes. While a State is not required to establish exit criteria for a school identified for TSI, ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(B)(v) requires additional action for each school identified for TSI following unsuccessful implementation of its TSI plan after an LEA-determined number of years. Similarly, while a State is not required to identify for CSI a non-Title I ATSI school that does not meet the statewide exit criteria, ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(B)(v) requires the LEA to take additional action for each non-Title I school identified for ATSI following unsuccessful implementation of its support and improvement plan after a State-determined number of years.

If an LEA determines that a TSI school has not successfully implemented its plan, or if a non-Title I ATSI school does not meet statewide exit criteria, the LEA must take additional actions to support the school or the school may determine what additional action is needed, with approval from the LEA.

When determining what additional action may be needed, an LEA or school should begin by reviewing its support and improvement plan. If it conducted a needs assessment, it should examine the original needs assessment, including its review of resource inequities, if applicable. The LEA or school may also want to conduct a new needs assessment, if appropriate, to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and consider whether to increase the intensity or replace the interventions in its original plan.

A State is responsible for ensuring that each LEA meets this requirement (e.g., through monitoring).

ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(B)(v)

D-10. May a Title I school identified for CSI that subsequently declines or is ineligible to receive Title I funds exit CSI status because it is no longer a Title I school?

No. Once a school is identified for CSI, the school must remain identified until it meets the State-determined exit criteria as required under ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A)(i)(I), regardless of whether it continues to receive Title I funds after identification.

Since a school identified for CSI must remain identified until it meets the State-determined exit criteria and continue to implement the interventions described in its CSI plan, a non-Title I CSI school that was initially identified when it was a Title I school may continue to receive ESEA section 1003 funds, consistent with the LEA's application for funds, for the duration of the subgrant (see question E-9).

E. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT FUNDS UNDER ESEA SECTION 1003

General Funding and Eligibility Requirements

E-1. What funds does ESEA section 1003 require each State to reserve?

For purposes of carrying out school improvement activities, including a statewide system of technical assistance and support for LEAs, ESEA section 1003(a) and 34 C.F.R. § 200.100(a)(1) require each State to reserve the greater of:

- Seven percent of the amount the State receives for Title I allocations to its eligible LEAs (i.e., seven percent of the funds it receives under Title I); or
- The sum of the amount it reserved for fiscal year 2016 for school improvement under section 1003(a) of the ESEA (as previously authorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)) and the amount it received for fiscal year 2016 for its School Improvement Grant allocation under section 1003(g) of the ESEA (as previously authorized by NCLB).

ESEA section 1003(a) and 34 C.F.R. § 200.100(a)(1)

E-2. May a State reduce an LEA's Title I allocation below the prior-year level when reserving funds for school improvement under ESEA section 1003?

No. ESEA section 1003(h) and 34 C.F.R. § 200.100(a)(2) prohibit a State from reducing an LEA's Title I allocation below the prior-year level when reserving funds for school improvement under ESEA section 1003. Therefore, only LEAs with increases in their Title I allocations over the prior school year's allocations will contribute to the State's school improvement reservation.

When this rule is applied, the result may be that some LEAs will not contribute funds to the school improvement reservation, even though the LEA may have identified schools and will receive a school improvement subgrant under ESEA section 1003. It also means that some LEAs will contribute more than seven percent of their allocations so that the State can reserve the full amount.

It is also possible that, due to the special rule in ESEA section 1003(h),[9] some States will not be able to reserve the full amount for school improvement under ESEA section 1003. In these States, any LEA with an increase in its Title I allocation will be reduced to its prior year's allocation to allow the State to reserve as close to the full amount as possible, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.100(a)(3).

ESEA section 1003(h) and 34 C.F.R. § 200.100(a)

[9] ESEA section 1003(h) requires an SEA, in reserving funds for school improvement, to ensure that it does not reduce an LEA's Title I allocation below the amount of the LEA's Title I allocation for the preceding fiscal year. This means that an SEA must only reserve funds from LEAs whose Title I allocations increase over the prior year. Among LEAs in a State with increases in their Title I allocations over the prior year, if the sum of those increases equals or exceeds the full amount for school improvement, the SEA will be able to reserve the full amount. If, however, the sum of those increases is less than the full amount for school improvement, the SEA will be unable to reserve the full amount.

E-3. What portion of funds reserved for school improvement under section 1003 does the ESEA require a State to allocate to LEAs?

ESEA section 1003(b)(1)(A) requires a State to allocate at least 95 percent of funds reserved under section 1003 to LEAs with schools implementing CSI, TSI, or ATSI activities under ESEA section 1111(d). This includes any school that has been notified that it is required to implement a support and improvement plan under section 1111(d), including a school that is using the first year as a planning year. See question E-4 for more information on section 1003 eligibility and question E-31 for an exception related to the State provision of school improvement services directly to eligible schools under certain circumstances.

ESEA section 1003(b)(1)(A)

E-4. Which LEAs are eligible for funds reserved under ESEA section 1003?

Under ESEA section 1003(b)(1)(A), an LEA is eligible for funds reserved under ESEA section 1003 if the LEA serves one or more schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI, regardless of whether the LEA has contributed to the reservation.

A State may only award section 1003 funds to an LEA that serves schools that meet statutory requirements for the identification of CSI, TSI, or ATSI schools in ESEA sections 1111(c)(4)(C)(iii), 1111(c)(4)(D)(i), and 1111(d)(2)(C). Some States have chosen to identify additional categories of schools for support and improvement beyond CSI, TSI, or ATSI (e.g., schools identified based on a State system of accountability that does not meet ESEA requirements) or used a different methodology for identification than what is required by statute (e.g., identifying non-Title I schools for CSI – Low Performing or high schools with a graduation rate below 70 percent, instead of 66.7 percent); the State may not award section 1003 funds to LEAs to serve these additional categories of schools.

Table A.1 provides details on the schools that an LEA may serve using section 1003 funds. This table is an excerpt from the full table located in Appendix A. School Identification and Support and Improvement Plan Requirements.

Table A.1 School Identification Categories and Definitions

Category	Description
CSI – Low Performing *ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(I)*	Not less than the lowest-performing 5 percent of all **Title I** schools. These schools must be identified at least every three years.
CSI – Low Graduation Rate *ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(II)*	All public high schools in the State (**Title I and non-Title I**) failing to graduate one third or more of their students. These schools must be identified at least every three years.
CSI – Not Exiting ATSI Status *ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(III)*	**Title I** schools that were previously identified for ATSI and that did not meet the statewide exit criteria for ATSI schools within the number of years determined by the State. These schools must be identified at least every three years.

TSI – Consistently Underperforming Student Group(s) *ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(C)(iii)*	Public schools (**Title I and non-Title I**) with one or more student groups that meet the State's definition of "consistently underperforming." These schools must be identified annually.
ATSI *ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(C)*	Public schools (**Title I and non-Title I**) with one or more student groups performing as poorly as the low-performing Title I schools identified for CSI. The State determines the frequency with which these schools are identified.

An LEA to which a subgrant may be made includes any entity that meets the definition of LEA in ESEA section 8101(30) (e.g., a statewide school district or an educational service agency) that serves schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI.

E-5. How long may an LEA receive a subgrant under ESEA section 1003?

Under ESEA section 1003(c), a State may award a subgrant and related continuation awards for section 1003 funds to an LEA for an identified school for up to four years. An LEA may receive new subgrants under ESEA section 1003 as long as the LEA has schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI. The Department recommends that a State consider how the duration of its subgrants may impact the sustainability of interventions funded by ESEA section 1003.

ESEA section 1003(c)

E-6. May an LEA have a planning year for its section 1003 award?

Yes. A State may award section 1003 funds to an LEA for an identified school for up to four years, which may include a planning year (i.e., of the four-year project period, the first year may be a planning year). For example, an LEA with a school identified for CSI in the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year could apply for and receive section 1003 funds to use the 2024-2025 school year as a planning year and would begin implementing activities in its section 1003 application no later than the beginning of the 2025-2026 school year. The four-year project period for an award made at the start of the 2024-2025 school year, with or without a planning year, would end after the 2027-2028 school year.

A State should consider the sufficiency of a grant amount for a planning year, as compared to the amount needed for implementation. For example, a State may award a smaller amount of planning year funds for an LEA to complete one or more specific school improvement requirements (e.g., conduct school-level needs assessment (see question B-8), identify resource inequities to be addressed in support and improvement plans (see question B-20), or otherwise develop support and improvement plans). (See question E-29 for more information on planning year activities.) An LEA may also choose to begin implementing interventions under section 1003 upon approval of its section 1003 application, at the start of the 2024-2025 school year (i.e., not use the first year as a planning year). Regardless of whether an LEA has a formal planning year, a State should ensure that

LEAs and schools have sufficient time to plan support and improvement activities before implementation.

ESEA section 1003(c)

E-7. May a school receive a section 1003 subgrant?

No, unless the school is a single-school LEA. ESEA section 1003(b)(1)(A) requires the State to allocate section 1003 funds to an LEA to serve schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI. A single-school LEA that is identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI may receive a section 1003 subgrant.

ESEA section 1003(b)(1)(A)

E-8. May a State use a portion of the school improvement funds it reserves under section 1003 to carry out its responsibilities with respect to those funds?

Yes. Under ESEA section 1003(b)(2), a State may set aside up to five percent of its section 1003 funds to carry out ESEA section 1003. Those responsibilities are, at a minimum:

- Establishing the method the State will use to allocate funds to LEAs, including ensuring that the LEAs receiving subgrants under ESEA section 1003 represent the geographic diversity of the State, and the subgrants are of sufficient size to enable LEAs to effectively implement the selected strategies as described in question E-14 (as a reminder, this method must also meet the priority requirements described in question E-20);
- Monitoring and evaluating the use of funds by LEAs receiving section 1003 subgrants as described in questions E-48 and E-49; and
- As appropriate, reducing barriers and providing operational flexibility for schools implementing CSI, TSI, or ATSI plans under ESEA section 1111(d) as described in question E-13.

For example, a State might use these funds to pay for school improvement support personnel to serve identified schools (see question E-32), a State-level evaluation of intervention outcomes for identified schools, or a contract with an external technical assistance provider to support LEAs and identified schools in implementing some of the support and improvement activities.

ESEA section 1003(b)(2)

E-9. If an LEA serves a non-Title I school with section 1003 funds, is that school obligated to comply with all Title I requirements?

No. The receipt of section 1003 funds does not convert a non-Title I school into a Title I school. A non-Title I school that is served with section 1003 funds must comply only with the applicable requirements for schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI in ESEA section 1111(d) and the requirements under ESEA section 1003. Please see Appendix A for categories of non-Title I schools that are eligible to be served with section 1003 funds (i.e., which CSI, TSI, and ATSI categories include non-Title I schools).

E-10. May a State award section 1003 funds to serve a school that feeds into a CSI, TSI, or ATSI school, but is not itself identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI?

No. Under ESEA section 1003(b)(1)(A), section 1003 funds may be used only to serve schools that are identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI, as defined by ESEA sections 1111(c)(4)(C)-(D) and 1111(d)(2)(C).

ESEA section 1003(b)(1)(A)

E-11. When a CSI, TSI, or ATSI school that is being served with section 1003 funds consolidates with another school that is not identified for CSI, TSI or ATSI, may the LEA use section 1003 funds to serve the newly formed school?

It depends. A State has the discretion to look at the totality of the circumstances to determine whether the newly formed consolidated school retains sufficient characteristics of the identified school to continue to be served with section 1003 funds. Factors that a State may consider include the percentage of the student population that comes from the originally identified school; the reason for identification (e.g., lowest-performing five percent, low graduation rate, performance of student group(s)); or the academic performance of the students at the non-identified school that is consolidating with the originally identified school. Based on relevant characteristics, a State may determine that the newly created, consolidated school is an extension of the originally identified school (i.e., that it would be appropriate for that newly formed school to continue to implement the relevant section 1003 activities supported by the LEA's subgrant) or conclude that the newly created consolidated school is substantially different in student composition and academic performance (i.e., the originally identified school has effectively ceased to exist or, due to the increased academic performance of the newly formed school, no longer needs the section 1003 subgrant) and the LEA should not continue to receive section 1003 funds to serve the newly created consolidated school.

E-12. If a school is no longer identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI prior to the completion of a multi-year award of ESEA section 1003 funds, may it continue to be served by those funds for the remainder of its award?

Yes. If the school continues to implement the interventions described in the LEA's application for the funds, a school that exits CSI, TSI, or ATSI status at some point during the subgrant period may continue to be served by section 1003 funds for the duration of the subgrant to enable the LEA and school to continue implementing interventions designed to improve student achievement and to ensure sustainability of such improvements. See question E-41 for more information on how a State may continue to fund an LEA's section 1003 subgrant award throughout the duration of the subgrant period if one or more of the LEA's previously identified schools exited support and improvement status.

E-13. What are some actions a State may take using section 1003 funds to reduce barriers and provide operational flexibility for schools implementing CSI, TSI, or ATSI activities?

A State may use the section 1003 funds it sets aside under ESEA section 1003(b)(2) to reduce barriers and provide operational flexibility, as appropriate and consistent with State administrative processes. A State may choose to, for example:

- Consolidate required application processes and needs assessments.
- Provide comprehensive, ongoing technical assistance to all schools implementing CSI, TSI, or ATSI activities and their LEAs on topics related to school improvement and the use of ESEA section 1003 funds (e.g., the application process for ESEA section 1003 funds, allowable uses of funds, outcomes from past support and improvement activities funded by ESEA section 1003).
- Assign each LEA a State point of contact to answer questions throughout the school improvement process on topics such as the LEA's notification of schools that are identified for support and improvement; developing and seeking approval of support and improvement plans; developing and seeking approval of section 1003 applications; and requirements related to monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on the use of section 1003 funds.
- Waive fees to participate in select professional development opportunities aligned with support and improvement activities.
- Facilitate data analysis or provide timely reports to LEAs and schools to reduce barriers in applying for section 1003 funds and in implementing support and improvement activities.
- Implement consistent and transparent State processes and timelines that allow for an LEA applicant to submit amendments to its application for section 1003 fund in response to updated needs assessments that inform support and improvement activities.
- Facilitate knowledge sharing (e.g., outcomes from implementation of support and improvement activities) among schools with similar needs and/or characteristics.
- Create a database or inventory of evidence-based practices that LEAs implemented with section 1003 funds with relevant details (e.g., short description of the intervention; the need the intervention addresses; the level of evidence, if it is an evidence-based intervention; and a description of any outcomes that demonstrate the intervention is effective in improving student outcomes).

Awarding Section 1003 Subgrants

E-14. Does the ESEA require a minimum subgrant size for section 1003 school improvement awards?

No. Under ESEA section 1003(b)(2)(A)(ii), a State must ensure that each subgrant award is of a sufficient size to enable the LEA receiving the funds to effectively implement proposed strategies. In determining the subgrant award size, a State may consider each identified school's identification category, enrollment, identified needs, selected evidence-based intervention(s), ability to sustain interventions, existing resources and capacity (e.g., based on the results of the State's resource allocation review or the identification of resource inequities to be addressed in each CSI and ATSI plan), and other relevant factors. A State should consider what a sufficient grant amount for a planning year is, as compared to what amount is needed for implementation.

A State should also require the section 1003 application to include a budget request and may base the subgrant award size on the proposed budget request for approved activities.

ESEA section 1003(b)(2)(A)(ii)

E-15. May a State choose to award section 1003 funds on either a competitive or formula basis?

Under ESEA section 1003(b)(1)(A), a State may award section 1003 funds on either a competitive or formula basis, or a combined approach. A State has discretion in determining its funding approach but, regardless of how it awards funds, must comply with the priorities in ESEA section 1003(f) (described in question E-20). In designing its approach, a State should consider factors that will promote equitable distribution of section 1003 resources and that each LEA receives adequate funds for its identified schools to carry out meaningful activities to improve academic achievement. For example, a State may wish to distribute funds based on the proportional share of Title I funds across LEAs with at least one school identified for CSI. If a State chooses to make awards on a formula basis, it must still require each LEA to submit an application that contains all statutorily required information under section 1003(e).

ESEA section 1003(b)(1)(A)

E-16. What are the application requirements for an LEA to receive section 1003 funds?

To receive school improvement funds, ESEA section 1003(e) requires an LEA to submit an application to the State in the form and at the time that the State requires that includes the following:

- A description (i.e., written explanation rather than an assurance) of how the LEA will carry out its responsibilities under ESEA section 1111(d) (i.e., with respect to CSI, TSI, and ATSI plans) for the schools it will serve with section 1003 funds, including how the LEA will —
    - Develop a support and improvement plan for each school identified for CSI for which the LEA receives section 1003 funds;
    - Support each school developing or implementing a TSI or ATSI plan for which the LEA receives section 1003 funds;
    - Monitor schools served by section 1003 funds, including how the LEA will monitor a school's submission and implementation of TSI or ATSI plans if funds are used to support these schools and will ensure additional action is taken following unsuccessful implementation of a TSI plan after a number of years determined by the LEA;
    - Use a rigorous review process to recruit, screen, select, and evaluate any external partners with which the LEA will partner in carrying out activities supported with section 1003 funds (see question E-23 for more information);
    - Align other Federal, State, and local resources to carry out the activities supported with section 1003 funds; and
    - As appropriate, modify practices and policies to provide operational flexibility, which may include flexibility with respect to school budgeting and staffing, that enables full and effective implementation of CSI, TSI, or ATSI plans.
- An assurance that each school the LEA proposes to serve will receive all of the State and local funds it would receive in the absence of section 1003 funds.

A State may require additional information as part of the application. For example, the Department encourages a State to require each LEA applying for section 1003 funds to propose a budget that describes, for each identified school the LEA is serving, how the section 1003 funds will be used and a description of how the LEA will sustain effective school improvement activities following the

completion of a section 1003 subgrant. A State might also require each LEA to include a narrative that describes, as appropriate, how the LEA and its identified schools will periodically review and continuously improve its support and improvement plan(s).

Additionally, an LEA that plans to use the first year of its section 1003 funds for planning activities in a school may also include in its application a description of the activities that will be supported with section 1003 funds during the planning year and how those activities will support successful implementation of the CSI, TSI, or ATSI plan.

ESEA section 1003(e)

E-17. How is an LEA's application for section 1003 funds related to the support and improvement plans required under ESEA section 1111(d)?

An application for section 1003 funds is separate from a school's CSI, TSI, or ATSI plan required under ESEA section 1111(d). A State may choose to develop options for coordinating or aligning the procedures, processes, and documentation required for CSI, TSI, and ATSI plans and section 1003 applications. For example, the section 1003 application and support and improvement plan may be combined into one template that meets the requirements in both ESEA section 1003(e) and 1111(d). However, because the LEA is responsible for the section 1003 application and CSI plan, while the identified school is responsible for the TSI and ATSI plan, a State should ensure that it considers how coordinating these applications and plans may be most useful for LEAs and schools depending on which entity is responsible for carrying out the respective requirements. Alternatively, if the application and support and improvement plan are not combined, a State could permit an LEA applying for section 1003 funds to reference or otherwise link to descriptions or information contained in a school's CSI, TSI, or ATSI plan. In general, the Department recommends that a State reduce administrative burden by integrating its various application, monitoring, and school improvement processes (e.g., definition of significant number of identified schools, timelines for developing support and improvement plans and section 1003 applications, multi-year section 1003 subawards) to support its identified schools. See Section B for more information on support and improvement plans.

E-18. When should a State award section 1003 funds?

To the maximum extent possible, a State should align its timeline for awarding section 1003 funds with the development and implementation of support and improvement plans required by ESEA section 1111(d). For example, if a State notifies each LEA that serves one or more schools identified for support and improvement at the beginning of the school year, it should also notify such LEA of the section 1003 application requirements and the deadline for submission at that time. This alignment ensures that the State is able to provide its LEAs with 1003 funds in a timely manner, allowing its LEAs to make these funds available to their schools as they implement the support and improvement plans. If a State chooses to have separate section 1003 application and support and improvement plan templates, the Department recommends similar deadlines for each submission. While State needs may result in varying timelines for section 1003 awards and the development and implementation of support and improvement plans, the Department encourages each State to consider how to best align the two timelines. The Department further recommends that a State communicate clear timelines for awarding section 1003 funds to LEAs to ensure that eligible LEAs can consider the availability of funds to develop, implement, and monitor school support and

improvement plans as well as the timing for implementing interventions aimed at improving student outcomes or school performance.

E-19. How should a State evaluate LEA applications for section 1003 funds?

The Department recommends a State develop a rubric or other transparent rating tool to promote consistent review of LEA applications; ensure that each application addresses the required elements; and support the evaluation of the quality of LEA applications. The rubric or other rating tool should be made available to applicants so that it is clear what standards they will be held to during the application review and how they can meet those standards.

The Department also recommends that a State consider how to involve a diverse group of State staff—including those who have specific academic content expertise; expertise in working with specific student populations, including children with disabilities and English learners; and school leadership experience—in the review of section 1003 applications.

E-20. If a State is unable to fund all eligible applicants for section 1003 funds in a given fiscal year, how must the State prioritize among applicants?

Under ESEA section 1003(b)(2)(A), a State must ensure that subgrants are of sufficient size, as determined by the State, to enable an LEA to effectively implement selected strategies (see question E-14) and that the LEAs receiving subgrants represent the geographic diversity of the State. If a State does not have sufficient section 1003 funds to make subgrants to each eligible LEA that submits an approvable application, ESEA section 1003(f) requires that a State give priority to an LEA that:

- Serves high numbers, or a high percentage, of elementary schools and secondary schools implementing CSI, TSI, or ATSI plans;
- Demonstrates the greatest need for section 1003 funds, as determined by the State (see questions C-10 and E-21); and
- Demonstrates the strongest commitment to use such funds to enable the lowest-performing schools to improve student achievement and student outcomes (see question E-22).

Generally, if a State awards section 1003 funds using a formula that considers school need (e.g., a formula based on per-pupil allocations, school identification status), it would meet the priorities described above.

ESEA sections 1003(b)(2)(A) and 1003(f)

E-21. On what basis might a State determine which LEAs have demonstrated the greatest need for section 1003 funds?

In determining which LEAs have the greatest need for section 1003 funds, a State might consider factors such as:

- The number and percentage of schools in the LEA implementing CSI, TSI or ATSI plans. The State may consider using the same threshold it uses to define which LEAs serve a "significant" number of schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI for purposes of determining a State's responsibilities to conduct resource allocation reviews under ESEA

section 1111(d)(3)(A)(ii) (see question C-4). Alternatively, as an example, a State could prioritize LEAs serving at least three schools (or at least 10 percent of the LEA's schools) implementing CSI plans.

- The number and percentage of students served by the elementary and secondary schools in the LEA identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI.
- The current academic achievement, including student growth (if available), and other student outcomes in the schools the LEA is proposing to serve. For example, a State could prioritize LEAs with schools in which students or one or more student groups are furthest from meeting the State's long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for academic achievement and showing the slowest rate of growth in meeting those goals.
- The State's review of resources among and within LEAs. For example, a State could prioritize applications that demonstrate a significant gap in access to in-field, experienced, and effective teachers (as defined by the State), school funding (e.g., lower per-pupil expenditures), access to effective school leadership, access to advanced coursework, preschool programs or full-day kindergarten (in the case of elementary schools), or access to specialized instructional support personnel (see question C-10).
- LEAs with high concentrations of poverty.

Additionally, a State may determine that LEAs with schools identified for CSI demonstrate the greatest need for section 1003 funds, and therefore prioritize funds to those LEAs for use in those schools (before awarding funds to LEAs to serve schools implementing TSI or ATSI plans).

E-22. What factors might a State consider in determining which LEAs have demonstrated the strongest commitment to use section 1003 funds to enable the lowest-performing schools to improve student achievement and student outcomes?

In determining which LEAs demonstrate the strongest commitment to using section 1003 funds to enable their lowest-performing schools to improve student achievement and student outcomes, a State might consider factors such as:

- The proposed use of evidence-based (as defined in ESEA section 8101(21)(A)) interventions that are supported by the strongest level of evidence available and responsiveness to the root causes leading to identification.
- The LEA's track record of successful implementation of evidence-based interventions for low-performing schools.
- Evidence that the LEA is willing and able to modify its practices or policies, if necessary, to enable it to implement the support and improvement plan fully and effectively.
- Evidence that the LEA will provide effective oversight and support for implementation of the support and improvement plan for each school.
- The external partner's track record of successful implementation of evidence-based interventions for low-performing schools, as applicable.
- Evidence of commitment to family and community engagement including evidence of support from the parents, families, and staff in schools to be served.
- Evidence of strong LEA support for implementation, such as targeting other ESEA formula grant funds to the schools that the LEA proposes to serve with section 1003 funds.
- Evidence of the commitment of the LEA staff or local school board to facilitate full and effective implementation of the support and improvement plan.

- Evidence of a plan for continuous improvement, including after section 1003 funds have been spent.
- The overall quality of an LEA's section 1003 application.

E-23. Must an LEA conduct a review of any external providers with which it will partner to carry out activities supported with section 1003 funds?

Yes. ESEA section 1003(e)(1)(D) requires an LEA, in its application for section 1003 funds, to describe the rigorous review process it will use to recruit, screen, select, and evaluate any external partners with which the LEA will partner. This review process should help an LEA ensure that the provider with which it contracts has a meaningful plan for contributing to the school improvement efforts in a particular school or across an LEA to support identified schools.

An effective screening process should include requiring a potential external provider to demonstrate its competencies through interviews, documentation, and analysis of contributions to school improvement efforts in LEAs facing similar challenges and in schools with similar student populations. In screening a potential external provider, an LEA should require the provider to demonstrate that it has experience and the capacity to implement the strategies it is proposing. As appropriate, the LEA should also consider the provider's experience implementing the strategies with the same student group(s) that are addressed in a school's support and improvement plans.

An LEA should be as specific as possible in its request for proposals or other documents made available to potential providers regarding its expectations for how the provider will perform and be held accountable. Once a provider is selected, the LEA should continue to make those expectations clear by including specific provisions in the signed memorandum of understanding, contract, or other agreement to hold the provider accountable for achieving the LEA's desired outcomes, including a right to terminate the agreement if the provider does not meet established goals.

In addition to screening external providers prior to selection and including clear performance requirements in the provider's contract, an LEA should review the performance of external providers regularly throughout the contract period to ensure that they are on track to meet contractual requirements and to inform any contract renewal decisions. For example, the LEA might request that the external provider prepare monthly or quarterly reports or briefings for the LEA that detail the provider's activities during that period or its progress toward achieving the outcomes for which it was hired (or its progress on the performance measures). Like all other uses of section 1003 and Federal funds, the LEA must ensure that the cost of the external provider is necessary and reasonable (see question E-26).

A State might choose to conduct a rigorous review of external providers and share a list of recommended providers to all LEAs. In doing so, the State should identify content expertise, the student populations supported, and other contextual factors for each recommended provider. An LEA should ensure that the provider has experience with LEAs facing similar challenges and in schools with similar student populations and has demonstrated success in improving outcomes for students.

ESEA section 1003(e)(1)(D)

E-24. Must a State make LEA section 1003 applications publicly available?

While the ESEA does not require a State to make section 1003 applications publicly available, in order to promote transparency, the Department strongly encourages States to post on its website approved LEA section 1003 applications and any associated technical assistance materials and review rubrics in a manner that is accessible to individuals with disabilities and individuals with limited English proficiency. See question E-46 for more information about the annual reporting requirements under ESEA section 1003(i).

E-25. Does the ESEA require an LEA to give a school that is served by section 1003 funds operational flexibility, including with respect to school budgeting and staffing?

No. Under ESEA section 1003(e)(1)(F), an LEA must describe in its application how it will modify practices and policies to provide operational flexibility that enables full and effective implementation of CSI, TSI, and ATSI plans "as appropriate." Accordingly, an LEA must provide this description only if it determines that doing so is "appropriate" to enable full and effective implementation of support and improvement plans. Further, an LEA has flexibility to determine the appropriate areas for operational flexibility – school budgeting and staffing are two areas of operational flexibility that an LEA might make available to a school implementing a support and improvement plan.

ESEA section 1003(e)(1)(F)

Uses of Funds Requirements

E-26. What are allowable uses of funds for an LEA receiving section 1003 funds?

The ESEA authorizes an LEA to use section 1003 funds for any activity that it determines will help a school identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI improve student outcomes and that is approved by the State as part of the LEA's application. For example, an LEA may use section 1003 funds to implement interventions aimed at improving school performance, such as by providing professional development or collaborative learning communities for educators in identified schools. In addition, an LEA could provide math and literacy coaches, academic acceleration opportunities, tutoring opportunities, before-school, afterschool, and summer programming for identified schools. An LEA might also consider activities that improve student engagement and attendance initiatives, including developing or enhancing early warning interventions systems, and community engagement activities that are implemented for identified schools.

Activities supported with section 1003 funds must be consistent with a school's CSI, TSI, or ATSI plan (see Section B for more information on support and improvement plans). For example, a CSI plan for an elementary school might include targeted professional development related to strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy to kindergarteners. Section 1003 funds could be used in that school to help increase the kindergarten school day from a half day to full day because that activity would, consistent with its support and improvement plan, be aimed at improving student outcomes in the school. Section 1003 funds may also be used to implement strategies to increase student access to effective, in-field, and experienced teachers in CSI, TSI, or ATSI schools where students of color and students from low-income backgrounds are taught at disproportionate rates by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers.

See questions E-26 to E-37 for additional suggestions on how an LEA may use section 1003 funds to support school improvement activities.

Additionally, section 1003 funds may be used for activities during a planning year if the State permits an LEA to have a planning year (see question E-6).

Finally, as with all Federal funds, an activity that ESEA section 1003 funds support must, among other things, meet the general standards in 2 C.F.R. 200, Subpart E – Cost Principles (§§ 200.400 – 476). These provisions include requirements that the use of funds for a specific purpose be necessary and reasonable in the view of a prudent person for the proper and efficient performance and administration of the Federal program and be consistent with policies and procedures that apply uniformly to both federally financed and other activities of the LEA.

E-27. What are the requirements for implementing evidence-based interventions using section 1003 funds?

If an LEA uses section 1003 funds to pay for an evidence-based intervention, activity, or strategy, ESEA section 8101(21)(B) requires that the evidence-based intervention, activity, or strategy meet the first three tiers of evidence outlined in question B-10 (i.e., be based on strong, moderate, or promising evidence of a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes). The funds may not be used for an evidence-based intervention, activity, or strategy with the lowest tier of evidence (requiring it only demonstrate a rationale that such intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes).

A State must ensure that evidence-based interventions funded with section 1003 funds meet one of the three required tiers. It may do so through the LEA application review and approval process and/or through monitoring the use of section 1003 funds. To ensure interventions implemented with section 1003 funds are effective and sustainable, a State should have a process for evaluating common interventions and sharing the results of such evaluations. This may include providing guidance on selecting interventions, publishing a database of interventions, implementing a process for proposing interventions to add to the database, and sharing resources on evidence-based interventions with identified schools and their LEAs.

For more information on evidence-based interventions, see the Department's non-regulatory guidance, *Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments*, available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/fund/grant/about/discretionary/2023-non-regulatory-guidance-evidence.pdf.

ESEA section 8101(21)(B)

E-28. May a school identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI stop implementing interventions described in its support and improvement plan when the LEA's award of section 1003 funds ends?

No. A school may only stop implementing its support and improvement plan when it is no longer identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI. A school identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI must continue to implement its approved support and improvement plan until it meets the exit criteria set by the State (or, in the case of a school identified for TSI, exits at the LEA's discretion) regardless of whether it

is served by section 1003 funds. A school may amend its support and improvement plan to modify or replace the interventions it implements if it must make changes to its plan because it no longer is served by section 1003 funds. See question B-33 for more information on amending a support and improvement plan.

E-29. What planning activities may be supported with section 1003 funds?

If a State chooses to permit a planning year consistent with ESEA section 1003(c) (see question E-6 for more information), some examples of planning activities that an LEA or school could carry out using section 1003 funds include:

- **Needs Assessment:** Facilitate school and LEA data collection and analysis with the school principal and LEA staff (see question B-8 for the Department's recommendations for the needs assessment). The needs assessment may include analyzing the results of the State-led resource allocation review to help LEAs and schools identify resource inequities to be addressed through implementation of support and improvement plans (see question B-20).
- **Family and Community Engagement:** Hold community meetings to review school performance; discuss the interventions to be implemented and develop CSI, TSI, or ATSI plans; survey students and parents to gauge needs of students, families, and the community; and communicate with parents and families and the community about support and improvement plans and 1003 funds through newsletters, announcements, parent and family outreach coordinators, hotlines, and direct mail.
- **Rigorous Review of External Providers:** Conduct a rigorous review process to recruit, screen, select, and evaluate any external providers (see question E-23) with which the LEA will partner to carry out activities supported with section 1003 funds.
- **Staffing:** Evaluate the strengths and areas of need of current staff. Consider whether the current staffing model is well aligned with the needs of the school and if additional staff or staff serving in different roles would support the school improvement activities.
- **Instructional Programs:** Plan and implement evidence-based academic acceleration, support, interventions, and enrichment programs for students; identify and purchase (or support teachers in developing) supplemental evidence-based instructional materials that are aligned with the State's challenging academic standards.
- **Professional Development and Support:** Develop staff on the implementation of new or revised instructional programs and policies that are aligned with the school's CSI, TSI, or ATSI plan and the school's interventions; or provide instructional support for staff members, such as classroom and instructional coaching, structured and significantly increased common planning time, mentoring, support for school leaders, consultation with outside experts (which may be in partnership between an institution of higher education or a nonprofit organization), effectively using formative and diagnostic assessments to inform teaching and learning, and supportive observations of classroom practice, that is aligned with the school's CSI, TSI, or ATSI plan and the school's interventions.

E-30. May an LEA use ESEA section 1003 funds for general LEA-level improvement activities?

No, LEA-wide activities are not permissible uses of section 1003 funds unless every school in the LEA is a CSI, TSI, or ATSI school. However, an LEA may use ESEA section 1003 funds to pay for LEA-level activities to serve multiple schools implementing CSI, TSI, or ATSI activities under

ESEA section 1111(d). For example, an LEA may establish an "early warning system" for identified schools that is used to identify and prioritize supports for students in identified schools who may be at risk of failing to meet the State's academic achievement standards or graduate, or support implementation of evidence-based interventions in identified schools. An LEA may not use section 1003 funds for general improvement activities that support schools in the LEA that are not identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI (see question E-4). Any use of section 1003 funds must also be consistent with supplement, not supplant requirements described in question E-43.

E-31. May a State directly provide school improvement activities or arrange for their provision through external partners?

Under ESEA section 1003(b)(1)(B), a State may provide, with LEA approval, school improvement activities directly or arrange for their provision through external entities such as school support teams, educational service agencies, or entities with expertise in using evidence-based strategies to improve student achievement, instruction, and schools. Under ESEA section 1003(b)(1)(B), a State may only retain funds to directly provide or arrange for school improvement activities if an LEA has identified a need in its section 1003 application, and the LEA gives explicit approval for the State to directly provide these school improvement activities (e.g., the approval may not be assumed based on applying for and receiving a subgrant). A State should communicate as complete information as possible when requesting LEA approval to directly provide for or arrange school improvement activities under ESEA section 1003(b)(1)(B). This should include information about the amount of funds in question and the planned uses of the funds.

ESEA section 1003(b)(1)(B)

E-32. May local or State-level school improvement support personnel paid with section 1003 funds serve multiple LEAs with schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI?

Yes. There are a few ways that local- or State-level school improvement support personnel paid with ESEA section 1003 funds may serve identified schools located in two or more LEAs. First, two or more LEAs may contribute towards the services of the same school improvement support personnel using their respective ESEA section 1003 funds. Second, the State may use all or a portion of its ESEA section 1003 State set-aside (up to five percent of the State's section 1003 reservation; see question E-8) to hire personnel who will provide support to identified schools throughout the State. Finally, a State may directly provide support to identified schools in one or more LEAs using funds it retains from the section 1003 allocation the LEA or LEAs are eligible to receive, as described in question E-31, if the LEAs have given approval for the State to do so.

E-33. May an LEA use section 1003 funds for transportation costs to increase school diversity?

Yes. An LEA may use ESEA section 1003 funds for the supplemental cost of transporting students (i.e., the cost of transportation over and above what the LEA would pay to transport students to their neighborhood school) to a school identified for CSI, TSI or ATSI in order to increase academic achievement through school diversity, such as socioeconomic diversity, if doing so is consistent with the LEA's section 1003 application.

It is generally not allowable to use section 1003 funds to transport a student out of a Title I school or a school identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI. There are limited exceptions where Title I funds may be used to transport a student enrolled in a CSI school to another public school served by the LEA that is not identified for CSI using optional public school transfer (see question C-15) and direct student services under ESEA section 1003A (see question F-18).

E-34. May an LEA use section 1003 funds to support a full-service community school approach as an evidence-based intervention strategy?

Yes. Full-service community schools are an evidence-based intervention strategy under the ESEA.[10] A full-service community school is a public elementary or secondary school that uses established partnerships between schools, families, and community organizations to provide well-rounded educational opportunities and that meets the social, emotional, physical, mental health, and academic needs of students. A full-service community school can also serve as a neighborhood center or hub by providing access to such critical programs and services as health care, mentoring, expanded learning programs, adult education, and other services that support the whole child, engage families, and strengthen the entire community.

Research shows that there are certain design features that are common across full-service community schools that improve teaching, learning, and student outcomes.[11] These evidence-based features (sometimes referred to as "pillars") include providing (1) integrated supports (e.g., social and emotional learning, access to health and nutrition services); (2) expanded and enriched learning time (e.g., after-school enrichment and summer school); (3) active family and community engagement; and (4) collaborative leadership and practices to support high-quality teaching. Evidence-based full-service community schools create and implement at least these strategies as part of a comprehensive set of strategies that are designed to reflect and be tailored to local contexts.

E-35. What are additional strategies an LEA may use section 1003 funds for to support identified secondary Schools?

With the caveats provided in question E-30 above about not using 1003 funds to support LEA-wide activities in non-identified schools, there are a number of additional strategies that an LEA may use funds for in secondary schools to support school improvement. These include:

- Supporting dual enrollment and early college high schools;
- Providing college and career pathways that integrate rigorous academic coursework, CTE, work-based learning, and support services. For more information, see: https://cte.ed.gov/; and
- Implementing or enhancing multi-tiered systems of support that typically include: (1) school-wide supports; (2) progress monitoring; (3) tiered systems of academic and behavioral interventions; and (4) the use of evidence-based instructional and behavioral interventions.

[10] Research has shown that comprehensive community school interventions have increased student attendance, on-time grade progression, and high school graduation rates. Maier, A., Daniel, J., Oakes, J., & Lam, L. (December 2017). *Community Schools as an Effective School Improvement Strategy: A Review of the Evidence.* Learning Policy Institute.

[11] Maier, A., Daniel, J., Oakes, J., & Lam, I. (2017). *Community Schools as an Effective School Improvement Strategy: A Review of the Evidence.* Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

E-36. May an LEA use section 1003 funds for staffing positions to support school improvement?

Yes. LEA may use section 1003 funds for staffing positions to support school improvement provided the staff are only providing supports to schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI. Such positions could include community school coordinators, a project manager or continuous improvement specialist, a student attendance and engagement coordinator, a liaison for highly mobile students (e.g., students experiencing homelessness, students in foster care, students who are migratory, and students involved in the juvenile justice system) or staff designated to work with external partners and community-based services to provide services and supports for students and families. These staff can serve to identify student and family needs in schools identified for improvement, establish and maintain relationships with community-based organizations, and connect students and families to services. If an LEA uses section 1003 funds for staffing, it is important for the LEA to consider its plan for such staffing after the section 1003 subgrant ends, to encourage sustained school improvement.

E-37. May a school operating a Title I schoolwide program under ESEA section 1114(a)(1) consolidate section 1003 funds with other Federal, State, and local funds to better address the needs of students in the school?

Yes. Consistent with ESEA section 1114(a)(1), a school operating a Title I schoolwide program may consolidate Federal, State, and local education funds, including funds awarded to the school's LEA under section 1003. The LEA must ensure that the school uses its consolidated funds for activities that are consistent with the LEA's section 1003 subgrant.

Some advantages of consolidating funds in a schoolwide program include:

- Enabling a schoolwide program to design and implement its comprehensive plan more effectively to upgrade the school's entire educational program without regard to the requirement to align specific Federal funds to allowable activities; and
- Not requiring the school to maintain separate fiscal accounting records by Federal program that identify the specific activities supported by each program's funds (e.g., simplified time and effort reporting).

For more information regarding operating schoolwide programs, see the Department's 2016 non-regulatory guidance, *Supporting School Reform by Leveraging Federal Funds in a Schoolwide Program*, available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essaswpguidance9192016.pdf.

ESEA section 1114(a)(1) and (3)

Fiscal Requirements

E-38. If a State wishes to award section 1003 subgrants for a period of four years, may it do so using funds reserved from a single year's Title I allocation?

No. Funds reserved under ESEA section 1003 carry the same period of availability as regular Title I allocations from which they are reserved—27 months from when they first become available (e.g., fiscal year 2025 Title I funds will first be awarded to States on July 1, 2025, and will be available for obligation until September 30, 2027). Although ESEA section 1003(c) authorizes subgrants for up to

four years, that provision alone does not extend the period of availability of section 1003 funds beyond 27 months. Therefore, if a State chooses to award a four-year subgrant, it must do so through continuation awards to LEAs. See question E-42 for more information on the 15 percent Title I carryover limitation in ESEA section 1127(a).

E-39. What should a State consider prior to making a continuation award to an LEA implementing a section 1003 subgrant?

Prior to issuing a continuation award to an LEA, with respect to a particular school, a State should consider whether the school is:

- Making progress on the State's long-term goals, measurements of interim progress, and accountability indicators; and
- Implementing interventions in accordance with the LEA's application for section 1003 funds and meeting the requirements for CSI, TSI, or ATSI under ESEA section 1111(d), as applicable, which may be evaluated by reviewing information from monitoring reports and site visits, assessment results, and other applicable data. (See questions E-48 and E-49 for more information on how a State may monitor and evaluate the use of section 1003 funds.)

If a State awards an LEA section 1003 funds to support a planning year for one or more schools, prior to continuing to fund an LEA's section 1003 award for any such school, the State should review the performance of the LEA in supporting the school during the planning year and determine that the LEA will be able to ensure that the school fully implements the activities and interventions that will be supported with section 1003 funds by the beginning of the school year following the planning year.

As noted above, the State might decide not to make a continuation award under certain circumstances. In the alternative, or in addition, the State may take other enforcement action with respect to an LEA that is not complying with the terms of its grant. In particular, if a State determines that an LEA is not complying with the terms of its award, such as failing to account properly for funds, using funds to support unallowable activities, or not carrying out all activities described in its application for the funds, the State may take one or more of the following enforcement actions:

- Compliance letter;
- Placing a condition on an LEA's grant award (2 C.F.R. § 200.208);
- Designation as "high risk" (2 C.F.R. § 3474.10) in relation to the specific conditions described above under 2 C.F.R. § 200.208;
- Disapproval of an LEA's application (GEPA section 440(b)(1));
- Suspension of funds (GEPA section 440(b)(2); 2 C.F.R. § 200.339(c));
- Withholding of funds (GEPA section 440(b)(3); 2 C.F.R. § 200.339(c));
- Termination of funds (2 C.F.R. § 200.339(c)); or
- Repayment of misspent funds (GEPA section 432(a)).

Pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.342 and GEPA sections 432 and 440(b), some enforcement actions may be taken only after the State has complied with all applicable procedural requirements related to the enforcement action, which may include an opportunity for a hearing, appeal, or other administrative proceeding to which the LEA is entitled under any applicable statute or regulation.

E-40. If an LEA's subgrant under section 1003 has ended, may the LEA receive a subsequent subgrant under section 1003 to serve the same identified schools?

Yes. An LEA may apply for and receive a subsequent subgrant award under section 1003 after its previous subgrant award has ended to continue serving the same schools, provided those schools still meet statutory identification criteria and have not yet met the State's exit criteria, or to serve newly identified schools. The LEA would still have to submit an application to the State that meets the requirements under ESEA section 1003(e) and include any other information the State requires in the manner, and on the submission timeline, determined by the State.

E-41. May a State continue to fund an LEA's section 1003 subgrant award if one or more of the LEA's previously identified schools has exited support and improvement status?

Yes. The Department encourages an LEA to continue to serve a school with ESEA section 1003 funds for the duration of the LEA's subgrant, even if the school exits support and improvement status during the section 1003 performance period to ensure sustained improvement. After considering the impact on the sustainability of a particular school's improvement, a State could choose to include, as part of its criteria for making continuation awards for an LEA, a requirement that an LEA may only receive a continuation award to serve a school if that school continues to be identified. If a State has such a requirement and a school exits status, the State would reduce the LEA's total section 1003 award by the amount allocated for the school(s) for which funding is not continuing, or allow the LEA to amend its application to redistribute the allocated funds to other identified schools that the LEA was serving with section 1003 funds, if the State agrees with the LEA's rationale for redistribution.

If a school exits support and improvement status prior to the completion of a single-year section 1003 subgrant award, the LEA serving that school would not be eligible to receive a new section 1003 award to serve that school in the subsequent year because the school has met the exit criteria. Thus, the LEA may not receive a *new* section 1003 subgrant to serve a school that has exited status.

E-42. How does the Title I carryover limitation in ESEA section 1127(a) apply to school improvement funds an LEA receives under section 1003?

ESEA section 1127(a) limits the amount of Title I funds an LEA may carry over from one fiscal year's allocation to not more than 15 percent of the total Title I, Part A funds allocated to the LEA for that fiscal year. The carryover limitation applies only to funds an LEA is allocated under Subpart 2 of Title I, Part A, plus any funds transferred into Title I, Part A under the authority in Title V, Part A. This limitation does not include ESEA section 1003 funds.

E-43. How does the Title I supplement, not supplant requirement in ESEA section 1118(b)(2) apply to school improvement funds an LEA receives under section 1003?

Under ESEA section 1003(e)(2), an LEA must assure that each identified school the LEA serves with section 1003 funds will receive all of the State and local funds it would have received in the absence of the section 1003 funds. Under ESEA section 1118(b)(2), each LEA must allocate State and local funds to each Title I school through a methodology that ensures the school receives all of the State and local funds it would otherwise receive if it were not receiving Title I funds (i.e., in a Title I-neutral manner). Assuming an LEA allocates State and local funds through its methodology

first, any school—whether Title I or non-Title I—that is served by section 1003 funds would already have received, through the LEA's methodology, all the State and local funds it would have received absent the section 1003 funds. Thus, the LEA would be complying with both ESEA sections 1118(b)(2) and 1003(e)(2).

For more information on compliance with the Title I supplement, not supplant requirement, see the Department's non-regulatory guidance, *Supplement Not Supplant Under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as Amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act*, available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/policy/elsec/leg/essa/snsfinalguidance06192019.pdf.

ESEA sections 1003(e)(2) and 1118(b)(2)

E-44. What options are available to a State that has unused section 1003 funds after awarding funds to LEAs to serve its CSI, TSI, and ATSI schools in amounts that are sufficient to meet their needs?

If a State has unused section 1003 funds after awarding funds to support and meet the needs of all of its identified schools, including after awarding funds to LEAs with eligible schools that did not receive funds in a prior school year regardless of the year in which the schools were first identified, it could consider:

- Working with identified schools to reassess their support and improvement plans to intensify or otherwise modify interventions and award additional funds to support the modified interventions. Note that a State may assist LEAs with reassessing the schools' needs and effectiveness of the selected interventions at any time. A State may request support from the Comprehensive Center Network support for this work (see question B-17);
- Providing funds to LEAs with eligible schools that did not receive funds in a prior school year, regardless of the year in which the schools were first identified; or
- Re-allocating the remaining section 1003 funds after consultation with LEAs under ESEA section 1003(g).
    - Under ESEA section 1003(g), if a State determines, after consulting with its LEAs, that the amount of funds it is required to reserve under section 1003(a) is greater than the amount it needs for LEAs with identified schools to carry out improvement activities, the State may either: (1) allocate the excess funds in accordance with the relative allocations the State made to LEAs with Title I, Part A, subpart 2 formula funds; or (2) allocate the funds in accordance with ESEA section 1126(c) (i.e., a State may make the excess amount available to LEAs in the State that need the additional funds in accordance with criteria established by the State).

The Department expects that States will very rarely need to reallocate their section 1003 funds under section 1003(g). Because all States have schools that are implementing support and improvement plans and need support each year, there should be a sufficient number of identified schools that could benefit from the additional school improvement funds. As noted above, a State may only reallocate the section 1003 funds after consulting with all LEAs with identified schools, including those LEAs that may not have received a section 1003 award when determining that such funds (or a portion of those funds) are not needed to support school improvement. An SEA may not assume that funds are no longer needed if they remain unspent at the end of the grant award period.

State Reporting and Monitoring

E-45. What information must be included on the State report card with respect to section 1003 funds?

Under ESEA section 1003(i), a State must include on its annual report card:

- A list of all LEAs that receive section 1003 funds and a list of the schools that are being served with the section 1003 funds;
- The amount of section 1003 funds allocated to an LEA overall and the amount allocated to serve each identified school included in the LEA's application; and
- The types of strategies implemented in each school being served with section 1003 funds.

A State that provides, with LEA approval, school improvement activities directly or arranges for their provision through external entities under ESEA section 1003(b)(1)(B) must continue to report the required information on its State report card for each school that the State serves directly. See question E-31 for more information on when a State may directly provide school improvement activities or arrange for their provision through external partners. Similarly, a State that awards section 1003 funds to LEAs that serve multiple LEAs, such as educational service agencies (ESA) that serve schools identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI, must report the required information on its State report card for each ESA that received the section 1003 subaward and each school served by that entity (see question E-4).

For more information on State and local report cards, including requirements related to reporting lists of identified schools, please see the Department's non-regulatory informational document, *Opportunities and Responsibilities for State and Local Report Cards Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as Amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act Report Card Informational Document 2019*, available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/policy/elsec/leg/essa/report-card-guidance-final.pdf.

ESEA section 1003(i)

E-46. How may a State use reporting to increase transparency of its State-level reservation and use of ESEA section 1003 funds?

A State may choose to publicly report the amount of ESEA section 1003 funds it reserves to carry out school improvement activities. To increase transparency around its reservation and use of section 1003 funds, the Department recommends that a State report additional information on its State report card or website beyond the required information described in question E-45, including:

- The amount and percentage of section 1003 funds reserved by the State (see question E-1);
- The improvement strategies implemented by the State using the reserved funds; and
- A summary of the State's process for awarding section 1003 funds to eligible LEAs.

Additionally, the Department encourages States to publicly post approved LEA applications and any supporting materials for section 1003 funds as described in question E-24. Although the reporting requirements under ESEA section 1003(i) only apply to the State report card, a State could choose

to also publish this information, and any additional information, on local report cards for the LEA overall and for each school in the LEA, as appropriate.

E-47. What actions should a State take as part of its monitoring and evaluation of the use of section 1003 funds by its LEAs?

ESEA section 1003(b)(2)(B) requires a State to monitor and evaluate the use of section 1003 funds by the LEAs that receive such funds.

In monitoring the use of funds, a State should also review an LEA's implementation of each element included in its application for ESEA section 1003 funds as described in question E-16. To ensure monitoring is meaningful and efficient, the Department recommends a State consider evaluating the use of section 1003 funds during its broader monitoring efforts as described in questions B-28 through B-31.

In evaluating the use of funds, the Department encourages a State to analyze the outcomes associated with interventions, as well as the pace of growth on leading indicators, including the evidence-based interventions that are implemented using section 1003 funds. This analysis may consider qualitative descriptive information from monitoring reports and site visits as well as quantitative information regarding the extent to which the interventions have been implemented (e.g., the numbers of students served) and the outcomes achieved. Additionally, the Department recommends a State evaluate the use of section 1003 funds, at a minimum, by engaging in ongoing efforts to examine the outcomes associated with the evidence-based interventions implemented using section 1003 funds, including the sustainability of the interventions. If a particular intervention does not result in expected or desired outcomes, a State may recommend changes such as increasing the intensity of the intervention, modifying the intervention as appropriate, or selecting a new intervention that meets a higher evidence tier (see question E-27). The Department recommends that the State evaluation occur on a set, published schedule that aligns with its award timeline to ensure that the results of the evaluation can be used to inform subsequent selection of support and improvement activities.

The Department encourages the State to regularly disseminate to all LEAs its findings regarding the interventions it evaluates.

ESEA section 1003(b)(2)(B)

E-48. How frequently should a State monitor and evaluate the use of section 1003 funds?

A State may determine the frequency with which it monitors and evaluates the use of section 1003 funds by LEAs. However, the Department strongly encourages that each LEA subgrant be monitored frequently enough to determine whether each identified school served by the funds is making progress to improve student outcomes, to inform continuous improvement, and prior to issuing a continuation award to an LEA implementing a section 1003 subgrant.

F. DIRECT STUDENT SERVICES UNDER ESEA SECTION 1003A

F-1. What are "direct student services" under ESEA section 1003A?

ESEA section 1003A authorizes a State to reserve up to three percent of its Title I allocation to support "direct student services." The State awards the funds to LEAs that, under ESEA section 1003A(c)(3), may use them to pay for one or more of the following services:

- Enrollment and participation in academic courses not otherwise available at a student's school, including advanced courses and CTE coursework that is aligned to State standards and leads to industry-recognized credentials that meet the quality criteria established by the State under section 123(a) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102);
- Credit recovery and academic acceleration courses that lead to a regular high school diploma (as defined in ESEA section 8101(43));
- Activities that assist students in successfully completing postsecondary level instruction and examinations that are accepted for credit at IHEs, including AP and IB courses, which may include reimbursing students from low-income backgrounds to cover all of the costs of fees for such examinations; such activities may also include the costs of dual or concurrent enrollment in postsecondary coursework (see question F-16 for more information);
- Components of a personalized learning approach, which may include high-quality tutoring (see question F-17 for more information); and
- Transportation to allow a student enrolled in a school identified for CSI to transfer to another public school (including a public charter school) that has not been identified for CSI (i.e., public school choice), in the case of an LEA that does not reserve Title I funds as permitted under ESEA section 1111(d)(1)(D)(v) for this purpose (see questions E-33 and F-18 for more information).

A State may not restrict LEAs from implementing one or more of these allowable uses of 1003A funds for direct student services. However, a State may prioritize in the application process one or more direct student services listed under ESEA section 1003A(c)(3).

F-2. Does the ESEA require a State to reserve funds for direct student services?

No. Under ESEA section 1003A(a)(1)(A), a State may, but is not required to, reserve up to three percent of its total Title I allocation to support direct student services. For more information on this optional reservation in the within-State allocation process, see page 9 of the Department's non-regulatory guidance, *Fiscal Changes and Equitable Services Requirements Under the ESEA*, available at: https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essaguidance160477.pdf.

F-3. With whom must a State consult prior to reserving funds for direct student services?

Prior to reserving funds for direct student services, ESEA section 1003A(a)(1)(A)-(B) requires that a State consult with geographically diverse LEAs, including suburban, rural, and urban LEAs; LEAs serving a high percentage of schools identified for CSI; and LEAs serving a high percentage of schools implementing TSI or ATSI plans.

F-4. May a State reserve a portion of funds under section 1003A to pay the administrative costs of direct student services?

Yes, under ESEA section 1003A(a)(2), a State may use up to one percent of the total amount it reserves for direct student services under ESEA section 1003A to administer the direct student services program. For example, if a State receives a Title I allocation of $100,000,000, a State may reserve up to three percent, or $3,000,000, for direct student services under section 1003A, and, if it reserves the full amount, use up to $30,000 (i.e., one percent of $3,000,000) to administer the program.

F-5. How does a State reserve funds for direct student services from its LEAs' Title I allocations?

A State reserves funds by ratably reducing the Title I allocations of ***all*** LEAs (unlike the section 1003 reservation, which, starting in school year 2018-2019, only comes from LEAs with an increase over their prior year's Title I allocation, as required in ESEA section 1003(h) and described in question E-2).

F-6. What portion of funds reserved for direct student services under ESEA section 1003A does the ESEA require a State to allocate to LEAs?

The State is required to award at least 99 percent of its section 1003A reservation to LEAs through subgrants.

F-7. What are the requirements a State must meet when awarding section 1003A funds to LEAs?

ESEA section 1003A(b) requires a State that reserves funds for direct student services under section 1003A to award those funds to geographically diverse LEAs, including suburban, rural, and urban LEAs, and to prioritize awards to LEAs serving the highest percentage of schools that are identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI.

F-8. What must an LEA include in its application for section 1003A direct student services funding?

Under ESEA section 1003A(d), an LEA must submit an application for section 1003A funds to its State according to the timeline and method determined by the State. The application must include a description (i.e., written explanation rather than an assurance) of how the LEA will:

- Provide adequate outreach to ensure parents can exercise a meaningful choice of direct student services for their child's education;
- Ensure parents have adequate time and information to make a meaningful choice prior to enrolling their child in a direct student service;
- If an LEA proposes to use section 1003A funds to transport a student transferring from a school identified for CSI to another public school that is not identified (i.e., for public school choice), ensure sufficient availability of seats in the public schools the LEA will make available as public school choice options;
- Prioritize services to students who are lowest-achieving;

- Select providers of direct student services, which, in the case of high-quality academic tutoring, must be a provider on the State's approved list (see question F-13 for the types of entities that may provide direct student services);
- Monitor the provision of direct student services; and
- Publicly report the results of direct student service providers in improving relevant student outcomes in a manner that is accessible to parents.

A State may also require its LEAs to submit additional information in its application, as determined by the State.

F-9. May an LEA use funds awarded under section 1003A for anything other than to pay the costs of providing direct student services?

Yes. Under ESEA section 1003A(c), an LEA may use up to one percent of its total award under section 1003A for outreach and communication to parents about available direct student services in the LEA and in the State and up to two percent of its total award for the LEA's administrative costs related to such direct student services. ESEA section 1003A(c)(3) requires that the remainder of the LEA's section 1003A award be used to pay the costs of one or more direct student services.

F-10. How must an LEA prioritize the use of its section 1003A funds?

In using section 1003A funds, ESEA section 1003A(c)(4) requires that an LEA:

1. First, pay the costs for students who are enrolled in schools identified for CSI (i.e., pay for direct student services for any student enrolled in a CSI school, regardless of an individual student's achievement level);
2. Second, pay the costs for low-achieving students who are enrolled in schools identified for TSI or ATSI (i.e., pay for direct student services for only those students enrolled in a school implementing a TSI or ATSI plan who are low-achieving); and
3. Finally, with any remaining funds, pay the costs for other low-achieving students served by the LEA (i.e., pay for direct student services for any low-achieving student at any school served by the LEA, regardless of the school's Title I status or whether the school has been identified for CSI, TSI, or ATSI).

F-11. May an LEA use funds awarded under section 1003A for direct student services for students attending non-Title I schools?

An LEA may use section 1003A funds for direct student services for students in some non-Title I schools, as long as it prioritizes its uses of funds consistent with the requirements discussed above in question F-10. For example, an LEA may use section 1003A funds for direct student services for any student enrolled in a school identified for CSI, regardless of the school's Title I status (see Appendix A, for information about which categories of identified schools include non-Title I schools). If the LEA still has section 1003A funds available after providing direct student services to students in schools identified for CSI, the LEA may provide direct student services for any low-achieving student enrolled in a school identified for TSI or ATSI regardless of the school's Title I status. Subsequently, if an LEA still has section 1003A funds available after serving students enrolled in schools identified for CSI and low-achieving students enrolled in schools identified for TSI and

ATSI, it may use those funds to pay the costs of direct student services for low-achieving students in other schools served by the LEA, including non-Title I schools.

F-12. May an LEA support different direct student services based on the needs of each school?

Yes. An LEA may support different direct student services in individual schools based on the needs of students in each school, as described in its application. For example, an LEA might support enrollment and participation in academic courses not otherwise available at a student's school in one school and credit recovery and academic acceleration courses that lead to a regular high school diploma in another school.

F-13. What types of entities may an LEA select to provide direct student services?

Under ESEA section 1003A(d)(5), an LEA must describe in its application to the State for 1003A funds how it will select providers of direct student services, which may include one or more of the following:

- The LEA or other LEAs;
- Community colleges or other IHEs;
- Non-public entities;
- Community-based organizations; and
- In the case of high-quality academic tutoring, a variety of providers that are selected and approved by the State and appear on the State's list (see question F-14).

F-14. What are the requirements that apply to the State with respect to providers of high-quality tutoring that will be supported with section 1003A funds?

Under ESEA section 1003A(e)(2), a State that reserves funds for direct student services must compile and maintain an updated list of State-approved high-quality tutoring providers that:

- Is developed using a fair negotiation and rigorous selection and approval process;
- Provides parents with meaningful choices;
- Offers a range of tutoring models, including virtual and on campus; and
- Includes only providers that—
    - Have a demonstrated record of success in increasing students' academic achievement;
    - Comply with all applicable Federal, State, and local health, safety, and civil rights laws; and
    - Provide instruction and content that is secular, neutral, and non-ideological.

In addition, under section 1003A(e)(3), a State must ensure that each LEA that receives an award under section 1003A is able to provide an adequate number of high-quality tutoring options to ensure parents have a meaningful choice of services. The State has discretion to define "meaningful" in this context.

F-15. Must a State monitor the effectiveness of direct student service providers?

Yes. ESEA section 1003A(e)(4)-(5) requires a State to develop and implement procedures for monitoring the quality of services provided by direct student service providers and establish and implement clear criteria describing the course of action for direct student service providers that are not successful in improving student academic outcomes. For high-quality tutoring providers, this may include a process to remove the provider from the State-approved list. The Department recommends that States evaluate direct student service providers regularly (e.g., at least every three years) to align with other school improvement efforts. The Department also recommends that a State use the results of the monitoring and evaluation activities to provide feedback to providers to inform continuous improvement of services, as well as the State's system for administering section 1003A funds.

F-16. May funds awarded for direct student services be used to cover the costs of fees for AP or IB examinations?

Yes. Under ESEA section 1003A(c)(3)(C), section 1003A funds may be used to cover the costs of fees for AP or IB examinations, including reimbursement, for students from low-income backgrounds, consistent with the priorities described in question F-10.

F-17. What are "components of a personalized learning approach" that an LEA may pay for with section 1003A funds for direct student services?

Under ESEA section 1003A(c)(3)(D), direct student services may include "components of a personalized learning approach," which could include both in-school and out-of-school activities that help students learn real-world skills and competencies that are aligned to the State's challenging academic standards so that all students graduate college- and career-ready. As described in question F-14, this could include high-quality tutoring.

F-18. What requirements apply to an LEA using section 1003A funds to transport a student who has transferred from a CSI school to another public school that is not identified for CSI (i.e., public school choice)?

If an LEA does not use its Title I funds for transportation for public school choice as permitted under ESEA section 1111(d)(1)(D), then the LEA may use funds under ESEA section 1003A for the cost of transporting a student who has transferred from a CSI school to a school that is not identified. Under ESEA section 1003A(e)(1), a State must ensure that an LEA receiving an award under ESEA section 1003A that intends to provide public school choice with those funds can provide a sufficient number of public school options to provide a meaningful choice for parents. The State has discretion to define "meaningful" in this context. Additionally, an LEA that uses section 1003A funds for transportation for public school choice must permit a student who transfers to another public school to remain in that school until the student has completed the highest grade in that school.

APPENDIX A. School Identification and Support and Improvement Plan Requirements

Category	Description	Plan requirements
Comprehensive support and improvement (CSI): Low Performing *ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(I)*	Not less than the lowest-performing 5 percent of all **Title I** schools. These schools must be identified at least every three years.	For each identified school, the LEA must develop a plan that is reviewed and approved by the school, LEA, and State that: (1) Is informed by all indicators in the accountability system; (2) Includes one or more evidence-based interventions; (3) Is based on a needs assessment; and (4) Identifies resource inequities to be addressed through implementation of the plan. *ESEA section 1111(d)(1)(B)*
Comprehensive support and improvement (CSI): Low Graduation Rate *ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(II)*	All public high schools in the State (**Title I and non-Title I**) failing to graduate one third or more of their students. These schools must be identified at least every three years.	
Comprehensive support and improvement (CSI): Not Exiting additional targeted support and improvement (ATSI) Status *ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(III)*	**Title I** schools that were previously identified for additional targeted support and improvement (ATSI) and that did not meet the statewide exit criteria for ATSI schools within the number of years determined by the State. These schools must be identified at least every three years.	
Targeted support and improvement: Consistently Underperforming Student Group(s) (referred to as TSI) *ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(C)(iii)*	Public schools (**Title I and non-Title I**) with one or more student groups that meet the State's definition of "consistently underperforming." These schools must be identified annually.	The school must develop a plan that is reviewed and approved by the LEA that: (1) Is informed by all indicators in the accountability system; and (2) Includes one or more evidence-based interventions. *ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(B)*
Targeted support and improvement: Additional targeted support and improvement (ATSI) *ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(C)*	Public schools (**Title I and non-Title I**) with one or more student groups performing as poorly as the low-performing Title I schools identified for CSI. The State determines the frequency with which these schools are identified.	The school must develop a plan that is reviewed and approved by the LEA that: (1) Is informed by all indicators in the accountability system; (2) Includes one or more evidence-based interventions; and (3) Identifies resource inequities to be addressed through implementation of the plan. *ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(C)*

APPENDIX B. Example Timeline of School Improvement Activities for a School Identified based on Data from School Year 2023-2024

Date*	Topic	Activity
September- 2024	A. Identification of Schools and Notification of 1003 Application Requirements	• State notifies LEAs with schools identified for comprehensive, targeted, and additional targeted support and improvement. • State notifies LEAs of the section 1003 application requirements and the deadline for submission.
September 2024	C. Support for School Improvement	• State provides informational webinar for LEAs and identified schools regarding the school improvement process and timeline.
October 2024	B. Support and Improvement Plan	• Identified school and LEA, in the case of a school identified for CSI, determines the members of the team, including the principal and other school leaders, teachers, and parents, and, as applicable, Tribes, that will develop and implement the support and improvement plan.
November 2024	C. Support for School Improvement	• State conducts review of resource allocation to support school improvement in LEAs with a significant number of identified schools and provides the results of its review to LEAs.
November 2024	B. Support and Improvement Plan	• School improvement team completes needs assessment, engages with stakeholders, and identifies resource inequities, which may in the case of LEAs with a significant number of identified schools, be informed by the results of the State's resource allocation review.
December 2024	B. Support and Improvement Plan	• School improvement team finalizes its support and improvement plan and begins the process for seeking approval from the LEA.
January 2025	B. Support and Improvement Plan	• School approves support and improvement plans for schools identified for CSI. • LEA approves support and improvement plans for schools identified for CSI, TSI, and ATSI. • School improvement teams at schools identified for TSI and ATSI begin implementation. • LEA submits school- and LEA-approved CSI plans to the State for approval.
January 2025	E. School Improvement Funds Under ESEA Section 1003	• LEA submits application for school improvement funds, consistent with the requirements in ESEA section 1003(e), to the State. • State subgrants ESEA section 1003 awards to LEAs.
February 2025	B. Support and Improvement Plan	• State approves CSI plans. • School improvement teams at schools identified for CSI begin implementation.

March 2025 to October 2027**	B. Support and Improvement Plan	• LEAs monitor the implementation of TSI and ATSI plans. • State monitors and periodically reviews the implementation of CSI plans. • If a school identified for TSI or ATSI is unsuccessful in implementing its support and improvement plan after an LEA-determined number of years, the plan must result in additional action. • Identified schools review and, as necessary, amend their school improvement plans while ensuring that such plans remain consistent with ESEA requirements.
March 2025 to October 2027**	E. School Improvement Funds Under ESEA Section 1003	• LEAs implement section 1003 activities and monitor schools served by funds under ESEA section 1003.
March 2025 to October 2027**	C. Support for School Improvement	• State and LEAs support schools implementing support and improvement plans. • State provides technical assistance to each LEA serving a significant number of identified schools.
October 2027**	D. Exit Criteria	• State determines if schools identified for CSI and ATSI in fall 2024 met exit criteria. • LEA determines if schools identified for TSI in fall 2024 successfully implemented TSI plan. • If a school identified for CSI fails to meet its exit criteria, the State must take more rigorous State-determined action. • If a Title I school identified for ATSI fails to meet its exit criteria, the State identifies the school for CSI. • If a non-Title I school identified for ATSI fails to meet its exit criteria, the LEA must require additional action in that school. • If a school identified for TSI is determined to have not successfully implemented TSI plan, the LEA must require additional action in that school after an LEA-determined number of years.

*This example timeline represents a State that has chosen to not allow a planning year. If a State does allow for a planning year, an LEA using a planning year should begin implementing interventions by the beginning of the school year following the school year for which the school was identified (e.g., a school identified in fall 2024 would begin implementing interventions by the start of the 2025-2026 school).

**In the example timeline, schools identified for CSI and ATSI have three years to meet the exit criteria. This timeline will vary if the State-determined number of years to meet the exit criteria for CSI or ATSI differs.