This document explains the background, purpose and requirements for school improvement, and provides the timeline and instructions for completing the FY2023 Condensed Application.

BACKGROUND

Under Alaska’s ESSA Plan, three categories of schools are designated for additional support based on the State’s standards and expectations, selected accountability measures, and weighted formulas for rating school performance.

1) CSI (5%) - Comprehensive Support and Improvement due to an index value in the lowest five percent of schools

2) CSI (Grad Rate) - Comprehensive Support and Improvement due to a four-year graduation rate under 66²/₃ percent

3) TSI - Targeted Support and Improvement due to student subgroup(s) performance at or under the CSI (5%) threshold

- Districts with designated CSI or TSI schools are eligible for 1003(a) school improvement grant funds.
- Linked is a list of the designated schools eligible for FY2023 funds. (This list is the same list of schools designated in 2019 due to the COVID pandemic and the development of a new state accountability assessment.)
- For FY2023, listed CSI and TSI schools will submit a condensed 1003(a) grant application as they begin working toward a three-year plan using the State’s new school improvement planning tool and process.
PURPOSE AND REQUIREMENTS

The 1003(a) school improvement grant is available to designated schools for implementing initiatives to transform school leadership and instruction, develop educator capacity, and build a culture of learning at the school. The process for developing a school improvement plan includes these steps:

Establish Representative School and Community Leadership Team (SCLT)

The importance of stakeholder involvement in the school improvement process is required under ESSA statutes, and is fundamentally important to informing school efforts and community buy-in. To support community representation on the SCLT, all designated schools are required to include the following goal within their FY2023 condensed application:

• “Increase diverse stakeholder representation on the School and Community Leadership Team.”

Conduct Situational Analysis (Needs Assessment)

The Situational Analysis begins with a close analysis of the reasons/indicators that led to CSI or TSI designation. With this analysis, data on student achievement and behavior, staff strengths and needs, school processes, programs, climate, and the local culture and context, including the infrastructure of the site, are considered.

Develop School Improvement Plan based on Evidence-based Practices

The School Improvement Plan addresses the root cause(s) for the school designation with specific initiatives to improve student achievement. The school improvement plan establishes goals for improvement and the timeline, milestones, actions, and responsible parties for the achievement of these goals. This plan must be developed in partnership with stakeholders (school leaders, teachers, district and/or school-level advisory board members, parents, students, community members and tribal representatives, etc.), and must incorporate evidence-based practices with proven effect.

Provide Budget for 1003a Grant Award

Funding school improvement initiatives is where 1003a grant funds come in. Budget monies allocated for school improvement must support (not supplant) regular school funds and provide direct support for implementation of the evidence-based initiatives and interventions identified in the school improvement plan and endorsed by both school and community.

In summary, a school improvement plan must be designed to address these critical elements:

• Targets the reason for school designation
• Is founded on a comprehensive school situational analysis
• Incorporates evidence-based initiatives and interventions for improvement
• Is developed in partnership with stakeholders (school leaders, teachers, district/school board members or staff, parents, students, and community members, tribal representatives, etc.)
PROCESS FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF FUNDS

Upon district review and approval of the condensed 1003a grant application, the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) reviews 1003a grant requests for alignment of needs, goals, and expenditures. As necessary, DEED meets with district and school staff to help refine the plan to improve alignment or clarity (this support often focuses on addressing the specific area of need or adding detail to the budget narrative). After DEED review and approval, allocated funds are released.

Each designated school is eligible for the following grant award amounts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Designation</th>
<th>Grant Award Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSI 5%</td>
<td>Up to $50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSI Graduation Rate</td>
<td>Up to $25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSI</td>
<td>Up to $25,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPLICATION TIMELINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Grant Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2022</td>
<td>Grant Management System (GMS) updated and available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2022</td>
<td>FY23 condensed 1003a grant application with updated situational analysis, plan, goals, and assurances and the 1003a grant budget due. (School designations from 2019 carry forward through FY23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 30, 2022</td>
<td>All FY22 funds must be expended, as no carryover will occur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2022</td>
<td>FY23 allocation loaded to GMS and available for approved plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 15, 2022</td>
<td>Final Expenditure Reimbursements for FY22 1003(a) grants due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall/Winter 2022</td>
<td>FY24 designated schools identified and eligible for planning grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1, 2022- June 30, 2023</td>
<td>Fund availability window for FY23 1003a grant awards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INSTRUCTIONS
To apply for 1003(a) school improvement funds for FY23, districts must:

1. Gather school data on student achievement and performance.
2. Complete all sections of the condensed application (this requires updating the school’s data, situational analysis (needs assessment), plan, goals, Intervention/Activity and Estimated Costs Table and assurances).
3. Load the condensed application as a Related Document to GMS.
4. Load the 1003a budget to GMS.
5. Make sure the school’s district and fiscal representatives approve the submitted grant in GMS.

CONDENSED APPLICATION - Form 05-22-039
- Mandatory requirement for 1003(a) grant application.
- Complete and load to GMS as a “Related Document.”

ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE - Form 05-22-041
- Optional, but strongly recommended to support designated schools’ plan implementation and monitoring.
- Complete and load to GMS as a “Related Document.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Sue Forbes, School Improvement Specialist & Program Manager
Office: 907-269-4553
Email: susan.forbes@alaska.gov
Appendix A – Evidence-Based Interventions (EBI)

ESSA Framework for EBIs
(The following excerpt is from the U.S. Department of Education’s Non-Regulatory Guidance: Using Evidence to Strengthen Investments, page 4-5.)

SELECT RELEVANT, EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTIONS

Once needs have been identified, SEAs, LEAs, schools, and other stakeholders will determine the interventions that will best serve their needs. Using rigorous and relevant evidence and assessing the local capacity to implement the intervention (e.g., funding, staff, staff skills, stakeholder support), SEAs and LEAs are more likely to implement interventions successfully. Those concepts are discussed below (also see Part II of this guide for more information on evidence-based interventions):

- While ESEA requires "at least one study" on an intervention to provide strong evidence, moderate evidence, or promising evidence, SEAs, LEAs, and other stakeholders should consider the entire body of relevant evidence.
- Interventions supported by higher levels of evidence, specifically strong evidence or moderate evidence, are more likely to improve student outcomes because they have proven effective. When strong evidence or moderate evidence is not available, promising evidence may suggest that an intervention is worth exploring. Interventions with little to no evidence should at least demonstrate a rationale for achieving their intended goals and be examined to understand how they are working.
- The evidence's relevance, specifically the setting (e.g., elementary school) or population (e.g., students with disabilities, English Learners), may predict how well an evidence-based intervention will work. (For more information, also see Part II and endnotes).
- SEAs and LEAs should look for interventions supported by strong evidence or moderate evidence in a similar setting and/or population to the ones served. The What Works Clearinghouse™ (WWC) uses rigorous standards to review evidence of effectiveness on a wide range of interventions and summarize the settings and populations in the studies.
- Local capacity also helps predict an intervention's success, so the available funding, staff resources, staff skills, and support for interventions are considerations when selecting an evidence-based intervention. SEAs can work with individuals and groups of LEAs to improve their capacity to implement evidence-based interventions.

Some questions to consider about using evidence:

- Are there any interventions supported by strong evidence or moderate evidence?
What do the majority of studies on this intervention find? Does the intervention have positive and statistically significant effects on students or other relevant outcomes, or are there null, negative, or not statistically significant findings?

Were there studies conducted in settings and populations relevant to the local context (e.g., students with disabilities, English Learners)?

If strong evidence or moderate evidence is not available, is there promising evidence?

Does the intervention demonstrate a rationale that suggests it may work (e.g., it is represented in a logic model supported by research)?

How can the success of the intervention be measured?

Some questions to consider about local capacity:

What resources are required to implement this intervention?

Will this intervention's potential impact justify the costs, or are there more cost-effective interventions that will accomplish the same outcomes?

What is the local capacity to implement this intervention? Are there available funds? Do staff members have the needed skills? Is there buy-in for the intervention?

How does this intervention fit into larger strategic goals and other existing efforts?

How will this intervention be sustained over time?

Resources for Exploring EBIs

The following websites can help find evidence-based educational interventions and explore interventions that have successfully addressed identified needs. These sites use varying criteria for determining which interventions are supported by evidence and distinguish between randomized controlled trials and other types of supporting evidence.

- Intervention Central
- RTI Action Network by the National Center for Learning Disabilities
- National Center for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- National Center on Response to Intervention (pdf)
- What Works Clearinghouse by the USDOE Institute of Education Sciences
- Social Programs That Work by the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy
- Practical Intervention in the Schools Series Book Series
- Results First Clearinghouse Database by Pew Charitable Trusts as rated by eight national databases
- Roadmap to Evidence-Based Reform for Low Graduation Rate High Schools by the Every Student Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University