

May 5th, 2017

TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSED:

SUBJECT: School Redesign Fund (SRF) Grant Opportunity

The Texas Education Agency is committed to relentlessly focusing on the students in struggling schools by transforming these schools and creating better options. To support local education agencies in accomplishing this goal, the Division of System Support and Innovation is creating new competitive grant opportunities.

This letter is to announce the School Redesign Fund's pilot grant competition and provide district leadership teams with high-level information regarding eligible applicants, purpose of the grant program, and timelines. Districts should consult the Request for Application and Program Guidelines available on the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#) page for final and complete information.

2017 – 2019 School Redesign Grant, Pilot Cycle

Eligible Applicants

TEA will seek applications from local education agencies (LEAs) on behalf of eligible campuses. Eligible campuses are current 2016-2017 Title I Priority and Focus schools that are not currently receiving Texas Title I Priority Schools (TTIPS) Cycle 4 or 5 grant funds. An LEA with multiple eligible campuses will be asked to submit individual applications for each campus that it is seeking competitive funds for.

Purpose of the Program

The purpose of the school redesign grant competition is to provide districts with resources to design and implement aggressive campus redesign plans in Title I low-performing schools. The school redesign plans will provide an opportunity for districts to create new and improved learning environments that can substantially increase the likelihood of improved student achievement.

Project Funding

The funds for this grant competition are made available through state-reserved school improvement funds under Title I Section 1003 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Applicants will be allowed to apply for a planning and implementation grant or an implementation grant. TEA will award grants ranging in amounts from \$250,000 to \$1.5 million. The grant term will be up to 23 months with a possible continuation grant at the end of the original grant term. The number of projects funded will depend on the number of eligible applicants and the strength of those applications. The total amount of funding available for this project will be approximately \$15 million.

Program Description

School Redesign is a *comprehensive* and *bold* approach by districts to increase the number of students in highly rated campuses through a supported implementation of a school redesign program in eligible campuses.

Exceptional applicants will present a strong plan for bold, evidence-based school redesigns that provide campus leadership with the operational flexibility necessary for a successful implementation.

Applicants will be required to describe how the district will use school improvement funds in its eligible campus to plan and/or effectively implement the school redesign program in alignment with one of the following school redesign elements:

School Redesign Model

- *Restart* - Close the low-performing campus and open a new school in its' place as an in-district campus charter that is managed by a charter school operator, charter management organization (CMO), or an education service provider (ESP).
- *Turnaround* – Identify a new school principal/leader and make comprehensive changes in the staff and instructional model. A new school principal or leader is defined as a candidate who either is newly appointed to the campus or has lead the campus for two academic years or fewer. Turnaround models that are supported by an external school redesign partner with evidence of success in similar schools will receive priority points.
- *Closure & Consolidation* – Close a low-performing campus and subsequently enroll students in higher-rated campuses.

Implementation Plan

- *Phase-in Redesign* - The implementation of the school redesign is phased in one or several-grades-at-a-time, until the original campus has been replaced by the new model.
- *Whole-School Redesign* - The implementation of the school redesign takes place across all grade levels at once and completely and immediately replaces the original campus.

Operational Flexibility Plan

- *Alternative Management* – The applicant partners with a managing entity, such as a charter management organization, to operate the campus under terms of a performance contract.
- *In-District Campus Charter* – The applicant, according to the district's campus charter authorization policy, authorizes an in-district campus charter. The campus charter will include a performance contract between the district and the principal, equivalent chief operating officer, or independent governing body of the charter campus.
- *District of Innovation* – In accordance with TEC Chapter 12, as amended by H.B. 1842, applicants may create an innovation plan which, if approved, would outline exemptions from requirements imposed by the TEC that inhibit a full and effective implementation of the school redesign. The applicant will provide assurance that exemptions will be extended to the campus developing and implementing a school redesign.
- *Applicant Assurance* – The applicant provides assurance that the necessary operational flexibility will be provided to campus leaders and to the school redesign partner to fully develop and implement the school redesign program.

Timeline

TEA will release the RFA on May 5, 2017. The application will be due on July 13th, 2017 at 5pm. TEA intends to announce grant winners in mid-August 2017. The beginning date of the grant will be August 28, 2017 and the ending date of the grant will be July 31, 2019.

Ultimately, these grants seek to empower districts to redesign eligible low-performing campuses into high-quality campuses with strong redesigns and the operational flexibility necessary to provide better educational opportunities to students who would otherwise continue in low-performing schools.

If you have questions regarding the content of this letter, please contact the [Division of System Support & Innovation](#) at (512) 463-2617 or by email at DSSI@tea.texas.gov.

Sincerely,

Joe Siedlecki
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Division of System Support and Innovation