



2021-2023 Title I, 1003 ESF-Focused Support Grant
Letter of Interest (LOI) Application Due 11:59 p.m. CT, April 21, 2021

NOGA ID [Redacted]

Authorizing legislation **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), P.L. 114-95, Section 1003, School Improvement**

This LOI application must be submitted via email to **loiapplications@tea.texas.gov**.

The LOI application may be signed with a digital ID or it may be signed by hand. Both forms of signature are acceptable.

TEA must receive the application by **11:59 p.m. CT, April 21, 2021**.

Grant period from **July 8, 2021-September 30, 2023**

Pre-award costs permitted from **Award Date**

Required Attachments

1. Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)
2. Pathway 1: Pathway 1 Supplemental Pathway Attachment
3. Pathway 2: Pathway 2 Supplemental Pathway Attachment

NOTE: All applicants MUST submit an appropriate Supplemental Pathway Attachment for EACH CAMPUS on behalf of which the applicant is applying.

Amendment Number

Amendment number (For amendments only; enter N/A when completing this form to apply for grant funds): [Redacted]

Applicant Information

Organization **Nixon-Smilely CISD** CDN **089903** Campus **089903-101** ESC **13** DUNS **118905363**

Address **800 N. Rancho Rd.** City **Nixon** ZIP **78140** Vendor ID **1742275054**

Primary Contact **Jane Dwyer** Email **dwyerj@nixonsmiley.net** Phone **830.582.1536**

Secondary Contact **Dawn Bergquist** Email **bergquisd@nixonsmiley.net** Phone **830.582.1536**

Certification and Incorporation

I understand that this application constitutes an offer and, if accepted by TEA or renegotiated to acceptance, will form a binding agreement. I hereby certify that the information contained in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, correct and that the organization named above has authorized me as its representative to obligate this organization in a legally binding contractual agreement. I certify that any ensuing program and activity will be conducted in accordance and compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

I further certify my acceptance of the requirements conveyed in the following portions of the LOI application, as applicable, and that these documents are incorporated by reference as part of the LOI application and Notice of Grant Award (NOGA):

- LOI application, guidelines, and instructions
- Debarment and Suspension Certification
- General and application-specific Provisions and Assurances
- Lobbying Certification

Authorized Official Name **Cathy Lauer, PhD** Title **Superintendent**

Email **lauer@nixonsmiley.net** Phone **830.582.1536**

Signature *Cathy Lauer PhD* Date **4.21.21**

Shared Services Arrangements

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are NOT permitted for this grant.

Number of Campuses Included in this Application

Pathway 1	<input type="text" value="1"/>
Pathway 2	<input type="text" value="0"/>

Statutory/Program Assurances

The following assurances apply to this program. In order to meet the requirements of the program, the applicant must comply with these assurances.

Check each of the following boxes to indicate your compliance.

- 1. The applicant provides assurance that program funds will supplement (increase the level of service), and not supplant (replace) state mandates, State Board of Education rules, and activities previously conducted with state or local funds. The applicant provides assurance that state or local funds may not be decreased or diverted for other purposes merely because of the availability of these funds. The applicant provides assurance that program services and activities to be funded from this LOI will be supplementary to existing services and activities and will not be used for any services or activities required by state law, State Board of Education rules, or local policy.
- 2. The applicant provides assurance that the application does not contain any information that would be protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) from general release to the public.
- 3. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Statutory and TEA Program requirements as noted in the 2021-2023 Title I, ESF-Focused Support Grant Program Guidelines.
- 4. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2021-2023 Title I, ESF-Focused Support Grant Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.
- 5. The applicant provides assurance that they accept and will comply with the requirements of Every Student Succeeds Act Provisions and Assurances.
- 6. The applicant assures that any Electronic Information Resources (EIR) produced as part of this agreement will comply with the State of Texas Accessibility requirements as specified in 1 TAC 206, 1 TAC Chapter 213, Federal Section 508 standards, and the WCAG 2.0 AA Accessibility Guidelines.
- 7. Title I served Federally Identified campuses awarded this grant will engage in the Effective Schools Framework (ESF) continuous improvement process and create a plan to be submitted to TEA that addresses the selected pathway aligned to the Essential Actions (EA) from the ESF.
- 8. The applicant ensures it will notify the Vetted Improvement Program provider of intent to apply and, if awarded, will work in good faith with the Vetted Improvement Program.
- 9. For all pathways, the applicant will budget at least the minimum amount indicated in the Budget Object Code 6200 - Profession and Contracted Services.

Statutory/Program Assurances, cont'd.

- 10. The applicant will identify a campus leader, on each awarded campus, who will be responsible for managing the grant project.
- 11. The applicant will provide access to TEA and its Vetted Improvement Partners for on-site visits to the district and campus(es) as appropriate.
- 12. The applicant will attend and participate in grant orientation meetings, technical assistance meetings, other periodic meetings of grantees, and sharing of best practices through the TEA program office.
- 13. The applicant provides assurance it will participate in all grant requirements including but not limited to an ESF Self-Assessment, and ESF Diagnostic, developing a web-based improvement plan, submission of funding and pathway progress reports.

Summary of Program

1. Describe how the LEA will support campus(es) in carrying out school support and improvement activities, including how the LEA will develop a web-based improvement plan for the eligible campuses selected for this grant.

Nixon-Smiley CISD is committed to supporting school improvement by aligning the ESF framework priorities with the work at the Nixon-Smiley Elementary (NSE) campus. As a seamless transition from the SIP Grant work, the District will continue to utilize the District Coordinator for School Improvement (DCSI) for guidance, improvement efforts, and monitoring. The District has recently purchased and supported the implementation of reading and math programs (Amplify and Dreambox) that evaluate student mastery, provide teachers with reteach lessons and scripts, and monitor goals and growth for students. Additionally, the DCSI meets monthly with campus leaders and other District support staff to evaluate student growth, mastery, and to monitor program implementation effectiveness. This allows the campus leaders to determine adjustments that might be necessary based on observation and data outcomes. These meetings provide for continuous progress monitoring that is evaluated against cycle goals in the NSE Targeted Improvement Plan.

The Targeted Improvement Plan, including progress monitoring and campus goals, is currently housed in Plan4Learning, a web-based program that provides a platform for tracking the ESF work and outcomes. Nixon-Smiley was part of the pilot group that set up all components of the Targeted Improvement Plan for comprehensive identified campuses into Plan4Learning. The District currently uses that platform to monitor and update Essential Actions of the Plan, as well as track performance goals and outcomes. Cycle Reviews are conducted quarterly and reported through this platform. For the 2020-2021 school year, this has been a concise, efficient avenue for planning, documenting, and monitoring the ESF work being done.

Continuing the ESF work with the DCSI and the established Plan4Learning web-based framework will allow for consistency, not only in support from the District, but also in maintaining and monitoring the specific plan and its components. This ensures that work done through the School Improvement Plan Grant transitions smoothly to the work to be done through the ESF Focused Support Grant.

2. Describe how the LEA will monitor schools receiving the ESF-Focused Support Grant, including how the LEA will: (a) Monitor a web-based improvement plans upon submission and during implementation, and (b) Implement additional action following unsuccessful implementation of such plan after the first year of the grant cycle.

Currently, the DCSI meets with the NSE campus administrators on a monthly basis to conduct reviews of the Targeted Improvement Plan Essential Actions and progress monitoring data, updated in Plan4Learning. The team looks at the current Essential Action steps and evidence dates to ensure the plan is adhered to or adjusted. Furthermore, the information gathered from these reviews is used to evaluate progress toward the HB3 Board Goals for 3rd grade reading and math. By aligning both the Targeted Improvement Plan with the HB3 Board Goals, the District is able to help the campus connect the initiatives, which ultimately, keeps the focus on utilizing data to drive instruction and improve school outcomes.

For the first year of grant implementation, ESF 5.3 (Data-Driven Instruction) will be the prioritized focus area (based on ESF Diagnostic outcomes). The Improvement Plan will be closely monitored and if the district and campus leaders determine, at the end of the first year, that goals were not met or expected outcomes were not achieved, the team will request an updated ESF Diagnostic that is available through the grant program and conduct a self-evaluation to help determine adjustments to be made. Based on the work that has been done during the SIP Grant period on ESF 5.1 (Objective-driven daily lesson plans) and the anticipated work to be done with the Texas Instructional Leadership training, the District has great confidence that 5.3, Data-Driven Instruction, is appropriate and timely. If the campus has not seen full success or substantial growth by the end of the first half of the grant period, we will spiral back to the work done in 5.1 and continue to apply the new strategies learned through the TIL. We are confident with more practice and feedback, we will obtain desired results.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies, Performance and Evaluation

1. Describe how the LEA will modify, as appropriate, practices and policies to provide operational flexibility to the awarded campus, that enables full and effective implementation of the Effective Schools Framework Essential Actions aligned web-based Improvement Plan.

Nixon-Smiley CISD will provide support and flexibility to the NSE campus in an effort to continue to improve practices that will further impact district/campus leader growth, teacher growth, and, ultimately, student growth. The support and flexibility the District will provide include 1) District-level training and coaching through the partnership with the ESC Region 13 TIL program. This will require a substantial time commitment by the DCSI and may require other district-level staff to take on new responsibilities. Additionally, during this first half of the grant period, Nixon-Smiley will be transitioning leadership with a new superintendent. This will be a short-term challenge as roles and responsibilities are revised. The District is committed to the growth of the Elementary campus and is prepared to make the adjustments necessary to support the work. 2) Time will be required for campus leaders and lead teachers to participate in the TIL program, including attending training, travel, planning, and collaborating. Adjustments to the current schedule may be necessary to fully engage with the TIL work. 3) In addition to time for training district-level staff, such as the DCSI, additional time will be required for the district-level staff to support the campus with the new practices and strategies gained through the TIL training. Collaboration, practice, and calibration of new practices and procedures will require additional dedicated time. 4) Finally, the District will provide an avenue of ongoing communication that allows for monitoring and adjustments of current practices based on TIL trainings and recommendations.

Budget Narrative

1. Describe how the proposed budget will meet the needs and goals of the program, including for staffing, supplies and materials, contracts, travel, etc. If applicable, include a high-level snapshot of funds currently allocated to similar programs. Include a short narrative describing how adjustments will be made in the future to meet needs.

Funds available through this awarded grant will allow Nixon-Smilely to secure resources in an effort to strengthen campus systems, build staff capacity, and improve school outcomes, that might otherwise be a challenge to access. Work to improve campus systems includes the recent transition to a uniform lesson plan template and corresponding rubric for feedback. This newly implemented format guides teachers in creating lessons that are objective-driven (recent work completed in ESF 5.1). Funds from the grant would allow the District to take the next steps in using data collected from instruction delivered using targeted lessons and assessments (future work in ESF 5.3). These steps include utilizing reading and math programs to monitor student growth and mastery with components that provide intervention lessons, scripts, and activities that are designed to close learning gaps. The grant funds would also support building staff capacity with the engagement and commitment to the TIL program, in partnership with ESC Region 13. The NSE campus cohort has already participated in a half-day workshop with Megan Cruz and her team that introduced the TIL 吧 Data Driven Instruction framework. Additionally, the District would like to seek contracted services support that would assist in strengthening PLC facilitation and outcomes using a PLC consulting team, evaluating student data, improving math small group work, and improving writing instruction in NSE classrooms. Depending on the final allotment, these contracted services could also support fifth grade at Nixon-Smilely Middle School.

Learning gaps that have been created as a consequence of COVID-19, could be addressed by adding instructional staff to our NSE after-school program (RISE). Providing more access to this program allows teachers to work with students after-school. RISE provides transportation home, which is often a challenge for families and prevents students from staying after school. Access to small group intervention in an after-school setting will close learning gaps and improve student outcomes for this campus.

Currently, the District is utilizing the grant funds from the School Improvement Program Grant to provide programs, such as Amplify and Dreambox that were put in place this spring, as well as contracted services with ESC Region 13 for the newly implemented lesson plan format with feedback rubric. Additionally, the District has the RISE program in place, but the grant funds would allow for expansion. There are limited funds currently allocated for staff development, but the targeted training through the TIL would be more impactful. Without funds from the ESF grant in place for the next school year, it will be a challenge to find a place in the budget for many of these resources.

Adjustments that might need to be made as the work is continued include implementing recommended systems and procedures based on the TIL trainings. When deficits within our current systems are uncovered through the TIL training process and plans for improving them are made, it may require additional resources to meet those needs. The allocation of funds will be monitored closely to ensure that funds are committed to the highest priorities with the most impact potential as determined by the DCSI and leadership. As the training of best practices occurs against evaluations of current practices, the District will adjust the budget as necessary to meet the needs of the campus to ensure systems and processes are in place that lead to student growth and mastery.

Budget Narrative, cont'd.

2. Describe how the LEA will align other Federal, State, and local resources to carry out the activities supported with funds received under this grant.

Funds provided by the ESF-Focused Support Grant will align and enhance the resources provided through other federal, state, and local sources. Title I funds provide instructors and some allocated time for a supervisor in the after-school RISE program. Funds from the ESF Grant would allow NSE to expand the enrollment of the RISE program to reach additional students with identified learning gaps. Title II funds provide instructional technology just-in-time support for NSE teachers. This will help support the implementation and use of new programs purchased as part of the ESF Grant funding, that both teachers and students utilize. Title IV funds provide for a student support specialist that directly impacts student attendance and engagement which is imperative for the success of the grant goals. State Compensatory Education funds are currently used to provide support for RtI and classroom aides where the need is identified. These funds aid in low students per teacher ratios. SCE funds are also used to provide enrichment opportunities in the RISE program as well as online programs that promote student engagement and monitor growth. A small amount of these state funds is committed to continued PD to support current campus initiatives. The valuable resources that will be added with ESF Grant funds align with the programs and initiatives already in place through federal, state, and local funding sources and provide access to training and support that might otherwise be a challenge to secure.

Equitable Access and Participation

Check the appropriate box below to indicate whether any barriers exist to equitable access and participation for any groups that receive services funded by this program.

- The applicant assures that no barriers exist to equitable access and participation for any groups receiving services funded by this program.
- Barriers exist to equitable access and participation for the following groups receiving services funded by this grant, as described below.

Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
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Appendix I: Amendment Description and Purpose (leave this section blank when completing the initial application for funding)

An amendment must be submitted when the program plan or budget is altered for the reasons described in the "When to Amend the Application" document posted on the Administering a Grant page. The following are required to be submitted for an amendment: (1) Page 1 of the application with updated contact information and current authorized official's signature and date, (2) Appendix I with changes identified and described, (3) all updated sections of the application or budget affected by the changes identified below, and, if applicable, (4) Amended Budget Request. Amendment Instructions with more details can be found on the last tab of the budget template.

You may duplicate this page

Amended Section

Reason for Amendment

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