

## Support for Improvement (SFI) Grants

Accountability for a Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow (AQuESTT) is designed to help the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and partners focus supports with the ultimate goal of ensuring all students across backgrounds and circumstances have equitable access and opportunities for success. As a result of this data, the NDE will be able to identify schools for different levels of support tailored to their unique needs.

One level of support provided to schools is comprehensive support and improvement (CSI), as required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Identification of CSI schools must take place at least once every three school years and include not less than the lowest-performing 5% of all schools receiving Title I funds in the State and all public high schools (whether or not providing Title I services) in the State with a graduation rate below 67%. Schools included in this application have been identified for comprehensive support and improvement.

Upon receiving such information from the State, the Local Educational Agency (LEA) shall, for each school identified, in partnership with stakeholders (including principals and other school leaders, teachers, and parents), locally develop and implement a comprehensive support plan that (i) is informed by all required indicators, including student performance against State-determined long-term goals; (ii) includes evidence-based interventions; (iii) is based on a school-level needs assessment; (iv) identifies resource inequities, which may include a review of LEA and school level budgeting, to be addressed through implementation of such comprehensive support and improvement plan; (v) is approved by the school, LEA, and State Educational Agency (SEA); and (vi) upon approval and implementation, is monitored and periodically reviewed by the SEA.

A LEA may (but is not required) provide all students enrolled in a school identified for comprehensive support and improvement with the option to transfer to another public school served by the LEA. In providing students the option to transfer to another public school, the LEA shall give priority to the lowest-achieving children from low-income families, currently attending a CSI school. A student who uses the option to transfer to another public school shall be enrolled in classes and other activities in the public school to which the student transfers in the same manner as all other students at the public school. A LEA shall 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. A LEA may spend an amount not to exceed 5% of its annual Title I allocation to pay for the provision of transportation for students who transfer to another public school.

A district may apply for the amount of funds needed for each eligible school to fully and effectively implement identified interventions/strategies. The grant funds will be awarded initially for a two-year period, with an option for renewal for one additional year. Each action plan must contain an estimated cost for every year of the three-years of the grant, for each eligible school. When budgeting for the three-year period, NDE would expect to see the budgets decrease for the final year of the grant. Keep this in mind when planning for sustainability after the grant period comes to an end. The NDE will award grants based on the proposals by school(s) within a district. This means a district applying for funds for more than one school may or may not be funded for all schools included in the application. The amount requested may also be reduced based on funds available.

## Continued Funding:

While the plan will be approved for three years, it must be reviewed and approved for continued funding. The initial application is for 2018-19 and 2019-20, and will be closed-out following the 2019-20 school year. A continuation application will need to be submitted for the final year (2020-21) of the grant funding availability. There are four considerations for approval for continued funding that will be applied on a school level basis: (1) the school is making progress toward improving student achievement, (2) the school is implementing evidence-based interventions in the school with fidelity to applicable requirements and to the LEA's application. (3) the school is on target, or close to, meeting the timelines identified in the action plans, and (4) the school is spending and requesting reimbursement of the approved funds in a timely manner. Each year's budget must reflect the amount of funds needed in that year. The budget submitted with this application is for a two-year period (2018-19 & 2019-20). The action plans include estimated amounts for the three-year period.