



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

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**Summary Response to Public Comments on
*School Improvement and Related Provisions under Title I, Part A
of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)***

On September 4, 2024, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) published a draft document, *School Improvement and Related Provisions under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)*, 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 evidence-based interventions, 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. The Department sought public comment on the draft guidance, and considered the resulting 17 comments in finalizing the document. A summary of the comments and a description of changes that the Department made to the draft guidance follow.

Many commenters expressed appreciation for the clarity the draft guidance brings to the school improvement process and noted that it will help meet critical goals outlined in the ESEA. Multiple commenters asked for additional information on key topic areas including identification of schools, timeline for identifying schools, and defining student groups. In response, the Department made several revisions to further explain statutory requirements, highlight flexibilities, and offer recommendations. For example, in response to comments, the Department provided additional examples of allowable definitions of “consistently underperforming” for the purpose of identifying schools for targeted support and improvement due to consistently underperforming student groups (TSI). The Department clarified language with respect to the requirements around identifying schools for comprehensive support and improvement (CSI), TSI, and additional targeted support and improvement (ATSI). We also further emphasized the importance of timely identification (and notification of identifications) and added language encouraging States and LEAs to continuously update parents and families throughout the school improvement process.

The Department received several suggestions regarding support and improvement plans. Several commenters suggested that the Department include additional language with respect to continuous improvement, review, and monitoring of support and improvement plans. The Department revised the guidance to further explain how States, LEAs, and schools can ensure that support and improvement plans are appropriately evaluated, including through regular monitoring, periodically reviewing data and student outcomes, and gathering community input and other feedback. In response to comments, the Department also clarified that LEAs and schools should work in close collaboration to develop support and improvement plans. Commenters provided feedback on the kinds of technical assistance and evidence-based interventions LEAs and schools might select for school improvement. As a result, in the final document, the Department clarified that LEAs and schools could seek support from Federally-funded technical assistance centers, including new Comprehensive Centers, and should carefully consider whether the evidence-based interventions were effective in improving student

outcomes in a comparable context to the school. Several commenters also suggested ways that LEAs and schools might implement the requirement to identify resource inequities to be addressed through implementation of the CSI and ATSI plan, and the related requirement for each State to periodically conduct a resource allocation review. In response, the Department integrated suggestions of types of resources to include in both types of reviews. The Department also added new examples of State actions based on comments.

Several commenters suggested the Department expand its discussion of TSI exit criteria, given that the ESEA does not require States to establish exit criteria for TSI, unlike for CSI and ATSI. The Department provided recommendations and examples of what additional actions an LEA or school might take if a TSI school is determined to have not successfully implemented its support and improvement plan.

In addition to revising the discussion of ESEA section 1003 school improvement requirements based on several comments, the Department made revisions that reflect its recently completed targeted monitoring of five States on this topic. Specifically, the Department further clarified section 1003 eligibility requirements, including with respect to entities such as educational service agencies, as well as schools identified for support and improvement based on factors beyond those required by the statute. In several places, the Department added examples of factors States can consider to ensure the sustainability of section 1003-funded interventions and resulting improvements. The Department also clarified timelines for awarding and implementing 1003 subgrants, including for States that allow a planning year. In response to multiple commenters, the Department added more information on how a State might use its processes and the results of its resource allocation review to inform section 1003 school improvement and provided recommendations for States to support an LEA's rigorous review of external providers and process for selecting evidence-based interventions. Finally, the Department added a new question that clarifies that the Title I carryover limitation in ESEA section 1127(a) does not apply to section 1003 school improvement funds.

The Department values the public's helpful and insightful comments on the draft guidance document and thanks those who commented.