

School Improvement Planning FAQs

Version 2 - released April 29, 2023

The School Improvement Planning FAQs document is a compilation of frequently asked questions and answers on RIDE's School Improvement Planning process. This resource is designed to accompany the Education Accountability Guidance document and the School Improvement Plan template and sample. Reference this document while drafting district-level school improvement plans. RIDE will update this document as new questions are received.

1. What is the School Improvement Plan, and why is my school required to complete one?

All schools are required to submit an annual School Improvement Plan (SIP) under [the Education Accountability Act of 2019](#) (EAA). The SIP should be created with the goal of improving student outcomes. In the SIP, schools must set priorities and goals for student performance and describe how they will fund initiatives to achieve these goals. SIPs follow the continuous improvement process, are based on school data, and should include a plan to monitor progress.

2. What plans are required for a single-school LEA?

Single-school LEAs may write one LEA Strategic Plan that serves as both a school improvement plan and a strategic plan. The stakeholders participating in the development of the strategic plan must meet the requirements of the School Improvement Team. Annual reflection on the strategic plan will satisfy the annual submission of the School Improvement Plan. Suppose a single-school LEA needs Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI). In that case, the additional requirements for a Comprehensive Support and Improvement Plan (CSIP) will be communicated by the Office of School and District Improvement (OSDI). Single-school LEAs can submit their LEA Strategic Plan to RIDE via the Strategic Planning System (SPS) on July 1, 2023.

3. What are the responsibilities of School Improvement Teams as it relates to the SIP?

School Improvement Teams (SITs) are integral to developing the SIP. Principals should utilize their SIT to establish their SIP. Although it is recommended to have SIT members participate in all components of the continuous improvement process used when creating a SIP, according to the EAA, principals must, at minimum, include SIT members in conducting a needs assessment to prioritize needs and set goals. RIDE's legal counsel has advised that SITs are likely not considered "public bodies" subject to the requirements of the Open Meetings Act; however, schools or LEAs may elect to follow these provisions.

4. What is the continuous improvement process?

RIDE recommends the use of a continuous improvement process, which begins with a comprehensive needs assessment rooted in different sources of data, setting priorities, creating SMART+E Goals, conducting a root cause analysis, identifying critical roots, identifying evidence-based initiatives to address the essential roots and action planning to achieve SMART+E Goals. Definitions for each term can be found in the [School Improvement Plan template](#) on pages 6-7. Furthermore, the continuous improvement process calls for frequent progress monitoring of the initiatives and action steps. RIDE offers a suite of tools for each component available on the Office of School and District Improvement webpage (coming soon).



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5. Which data should I use to conduct a needs assessment and write goals?

It is recommended to use current and available to conduct the needs assessment. [State Assessment Data Portal](#), [Report Card](#), [SurveyWorks](#), and other local data should be considered. The suggested timeline document breaks down how SITs can utilize meeting times to look at different data points as they become available. Goals can be updated based on the most currently available data.

6. Should a school use accountability measures or local assessments to set SMART+E goals?

This is a local decision. RICAS and PSAT/SATs are assessments that feed into the accountability and report card system and thus is the way in which academic growth and achievement is determined in Rhode Island. However, RIDE is encouraging SITs to think about the SIP as a consistent work in progress. Thus, once a school receives their results, the SIT would revisit their plan and likely create a new goal based on their results. This would also be a time to consider whether any initiatives or action steps need to be adjusted. Schools can use accountability measures to set their SMART+E goals and progress monitor using local measures (e.g. STAR, iReady).

7. How should schools address identified Targeted Support & Improvement (TSI) and/or Additional Targeted Support & Improvement (ATSI) subgroups in their SIP?

Schools identified for having TSI and/or ATSI student groups must ensure their SIP is created and implemented to improve the outcomes for these student populations. Schools could articulate how they will support the identified subgroup(s) by including targeted goals, initiatives, and/or action steps within their SIP. As a reminder, State law also requires all schools with subgroups of students that have fewer than 80% meeting expectations on the state assessments to incorporate goals, initiatives, and/or action steps that address these areas of performance.

8. Are early childhood centers or Pre-K school sites required to submit a school improvement plan?

If the Pre-K school site or Early Childhood Center constitutes its own school, with its own school improvement team, the principal would draft their own plan and then submit it to the superintendent of the district in which the program is located/otherwise a part of. Schools with grade spans which include Pre-K, for example, Pre-K thru grade 5, should include goals, initiatives, or action steps to support Pre-K as part of their SIP.

9. Once a school implements its SIP, is there an opportunity to update goals or action steps?

As a part of the continuous improvement process, schools should continually review and update their plans based on new data and feedback from stakeholders.

10. What level of detail is required when listing the funding sources of initiatives?

The EAA requires schools to include the sources of funding for the initiatives in the SIP. Broad categories (e.g., Title 1, Perkins, Local, etc.) of funding sources and total amounts from each category are sufficient to meet this requirement. At this time, RIDE does not expect detailed budgets entered into the SPS.



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11. Are schools required to provide supporting research for initiatives?

For CSI schools, if the initiative is being supported in whole or in part by 1003a grant funds, at least one source of evidence must be Tier I, II, or III, as defined by ESSA. [RIDE's Evidence-Based Intervention Resource Guide](#)

12. How often are schools required to complete a SIP?

Schools are required to submit a SIP annually. SIPs must be approved by the superintendent and entered into the Strategic Planning System by July 1st

13. Can I use this template if my school is identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement?

Yes, all required components for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) Schools have been noted in the template's footnotes.

14. What types of assistance does RIDE provide for writing our SIP?

RIDE has developed a SIP template and a sample plan to guide schools. Additionally, there are pre recorded modules, tools, and protocols for each component of the continuous improvement process on the Office of School and District Improvement's website. The office can provide additional support to school principals and SIPs by emailing: osdi@ride.ri.gov

15. Are schools required to make their SIP available to the public?

A school must ensure its SIP is accessible to the public, ideally posted on its website. It is strongly suggested that schools update their current SIP using the template provided by RIDE. Once plans are housed within the Strategic Planning System, a downloadable PDF version will be available. The school will have the ability to suppress specific fields within the Strategic Planning System so confidential information would not become part of the downloadable PDF version. Schools can utilize the [SIP at a Glance slide deck template](#) to create a more user-friendly presentation to stakeholders.

16. With the launch of the SPS, should SITs continue to use the template?

The template and SIP at a Glance slide deck are meant to serve as planning resources as SITs develop and get feedback on their SIP. At the discretion of the SIT, decisions can be made to work within the template or SPS.

17. What should SITs do if they find they need assistance with their SIP?

For technical support with the SPS, please reference the Technical Manual and/or submit a Help Desk ticket. For support with the development of your SIP, please contact the OSDI team: osdi@ride.ri.gov

