

# School Improvement Planning FAQs

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This document is a compilation of frequently asked questions and answers on the School Improvement Planning process. This resource is designed to accompany the [Education Accountability Act Guidance document](#) and the resources located within the Strategic Planning System (SPS) via [RIDE's Portal](#). 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) by July 1st each year.

## **3. Are there required updates to the school's current SIP?**

Per the EAA, SIPs must be updated throughout the year to include progress monitoring data (see FAQ 12 for more details on progress monitoring) and updates to budgets and action steps. Schools may also wish to make revisions to their SMART+E goals, initiatives, and action steps as new accountability results and assessment data is released. An additional resource can be found within the SPS Resource tab for [technical guidance on updating a current SIP within the SPS](#).

## **4. How do schools begin planning for SY24-25?**

SIPs are a continuous work in progress. A plan with superintendent approval must be submitted each year to RIDE's SPS by July 1. All schools must continue to update their current plan within the SPS (see FAQ 3 & 12 for more information on required updates). There are two options for how to submit a plan for SY 24-25:

- (1) *Start a new plan* within the SPS **or**
- (2) Continue to update the plan for SY23-24 and then choose to *make a copy*.

Schools are encouraged to type their school's name and the school year the plan is targeting in the *title* text box within the SPS (e.g. *Oceanside Elementary School SY24-25 SIP*)

## **5. What are the requirements for establishing a School Improvement Team and the membership requirements?**

The school committee or board must develop procedures for election and appointment of School Improvement Team (SIT) members. The principal must serve on the SIT, not a designee. SIT members must be selected by their peers in a fair and equitable manner. SITs must be composed of the principal and an appropriately balanced number of teachers, support staff, students, families, and other business and community members. Additional information on SITs and required members can be found [here](#), then click *School Improvement Planning*.

## **6. 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 school improvement process, 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.

## **7. 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, and moves into setting priorities, creating SMART+E goals, conducting a root cause analysis to determine critical roots, identifying evidence-based initiatives to address the critical roots and action planning to achieve SMART+E goals. Furthermore, the continuous improvement process calls for frequent progress monitoring of the initiatives and action steps. Additional mandatory fields following the needs assessment have been provided within the SPS for schools completing a Resource Allocation Review. (see FAQ 13 & 14 for more details on Resource Allocation Reviews). RIDE offers a suite of tools for each component available on the Office of School and District Improvement [webpage](#), then click *School Improvement Planning > Continuous Improvement Process*.

## **8. Which data should I use to conduct a needs assessment and write goals?**

It is recommended to use current and available data to conduct the needs assessment. [State Assessment Data Portal](#), [Report Card](#), [SurveyWorks](#), [RIDE's Attendance Leaderboard](#) and [additional attendance data tools](#), and other local data sources 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.

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

This is a local decision. RICAS, DLM, and PSAT/SATs are assessments that feed into the accountability and report card system and thus are the ways 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 may update or 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).

**10. How should a school use accountability data to inform planning?**

SITs should review the [Report Card](#) data and ensure existing plans incorporate any focus areas, low performing subgroups, and TSI and/or ATSI student subgroups. SITs should also make sure there is alignment between LEA and school plans, including identified needs/gaps. SITs should consider if the data affirms the plan or challenges it, and make adjustments, as necessary.

**11. Should a SIP now include a goal and supporting initiative(s) for science?**

Yes, SIPs should include a goal and supporting initiative(s) for science. Per the EAA, science is considered a *core subject* and plans must include an analysis of student and subgroup achievement gaps in core subjects. This year, RIDE added Science Proficiency to the accountability system. This measure lives within the Achievement & Growth row of the accountability chart. The measure is worth 3 points and follows the same calculation rules and cut scores as the ELA and math achievement measures.

**12. What are the requirements for progress monitoring?**

LEAs and schools address progress monitoring in their plans to be sure that they are making sufficient progress and that the EAA’s Annual Action Plan requirements are met. LEAs and schools will be able to monitor progress toward their goals by setting annual targets and measuring ongoing progress throughout each school year. Schools should also monitor the progress towards attaining the action steps to ensure they are on track and to determine if revisions are needed. For technical guidance on entering progress monitoring data into the SPS, click the resources tab within the SPS to access *Progress Monitoring Guidance version 1*.

**13. What is a Resource Allocation Review (RAR)? Who is required to complete one?**

A Resource Allocation Review is a team-based inquiry process for LEAs and schools to understand the current state of how their educational resources are being utilized as part of the continuous improvement process. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires LEAs to ensure schools identified as CSI and/or schools with student subgroups identified for ATSI undertake a process to identify resource inequities and a plan to address them are entered in the CSIP or SIP within the SPS for LEA approval. The RAR satisfies the ESSA requirement. Additional information on RARs can be found [here](#), then click *Resource Allocation Review*.

**14. 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 should articulate their plan for supporting 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. This information can be found within the school report card by clicking the *Accountability* tab.

**15. Are early childhood centers or Pre-K school sites required to submit a SIP?**

If the Pre-K school site or Early Childhood Center constitutes its own school, with its own School Improvement Team, the principal should work with the SIT to create their own SIP 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 school, should include goals, initiatives, or action steps to support Pre-K as part of their SIP as needed.

**16. 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., federal, state, local, other) of funding sources and total amounts from each category are sufficient to meet this requirement. At this time, RIDE does not expect detailed budgets to be entered into the SPS.

**17. 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 offers a suite of tools for selecting Evidence Based Initiatives on the Office of School and District Improvement’s [webpage](#), then click *School Improvement Planning > Continuous Improvement Process*.

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

RIDE has developed a SIP sample plan to guide schools located within the “Resources” section of the SPS. Additionally, there are tools and protocols for each component of the continuous improvement process on the Office of School and District Improvement’s webpage. A newly added course to [BRIDGE-RI on School Improvement Process](#) is also available. Finally, the OSDI team can provide additional support to school principals and SITs by emailing: [osdi@ride.ri.gov](mailto:osdi@ride.ri.gov)

**19. 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 their website. A downloadable PDF or Word version of a school’s SIP is available from the SPS. Schools can also utilize the *SIP at a Glance slide deck template* to create a more user-friendly presentation for stakeholders. This template is available on the Office of School and District Improvement’s [webpage](#), then click *School Improvement Planning*.

**20. 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 within the SPS. For support with the development of your SIP, please contact the OSDI team: [osdi@ride.ri.gov](mailto:osdi@ride.ri.gov)