

# CSIP Review: Creating a Strong, Approvable Budget

version 1 - April 2026

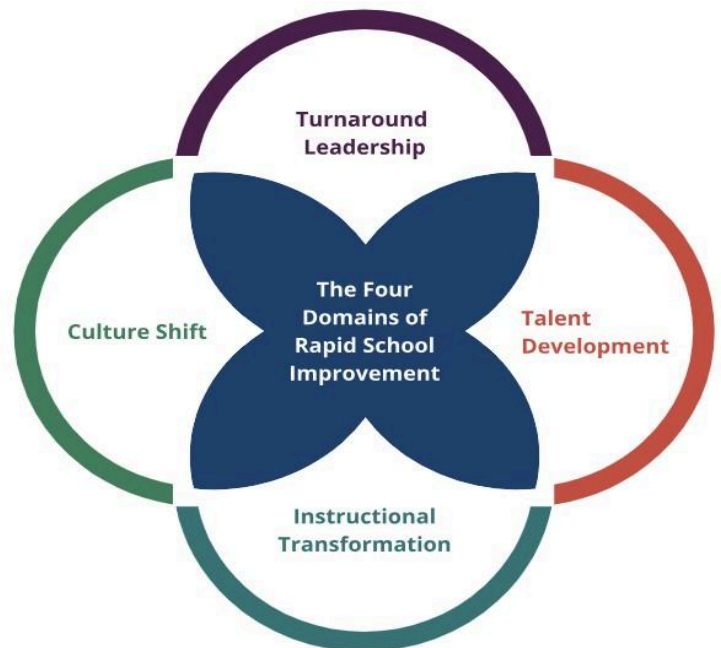
This document serves to provide LEA and school leaders guidance on impactful and allowable expenditures and resource allocation for the Title I, Part A 1003 School Improvement Grant (SIG). Section 1003 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) requires SEAs to allocate funds to LEAs for schools identified as in need of Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI). This grant is designed to improve outcomes for students within the lowest performing schools in the state. Funds are awarded to LEAs on behalf of the identified school(s), with the LEA serving as the fiscal agent. SIG funds may not be used for activities in non-identified schools.

## Supplement Not Supplant

To ensure that students realize the intended benefits of federal funds, the ESEA requires Title I, Part A funds to supplement, and not supplant, state and local funds<sup>1</sup>. ***Purposeful budgeting focuses on investing grant funds in sustainable, capacity-building efforts that positively impact student outcomes over time, rather than in materials with minimal lasting benefits.***

## Step 1: Aligning Activities to the Center for School Turnaround & Improvement

The Center for School Turnaround and Improvement (CSTI)<sup>2</sup> emphasizes leveraging [The Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement](#)—**Turnaround Leadership, Talent Development, Instructional Transformation, and Culture Shift**—to drive successful and sustainable school improvement. These domains provide a comprehensive framework and practices for systemic change for state, district, and school leaders. An effective Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) and supporting budget must prioritize these domains. By integrating these domains into a cohesive strategy, schools can address challenges holistically, promote equity, and establish a foundation for long-term improvement.



The Center on School Turnaround. (2017). *Four domains for rapid school improvement: A systems framework*. WestEd. <https://www.wested.org/resources/four-domains/>

<sup>1</sup> [Non-regulatory Informational Document](#)

<sup>2</sup> The Center on School Turnaround. (2017). *Four domains for rapid school improvement: A systems framework*. WestEd. <https://www.wested.org/resources/four-domains/>

## Step 2: Aligning Activities to RIDE’s Strategic Priorities

Below is an overview of RIDE’s key priorities and high-leverage strategies to improve student outcomes. The CSIP activities, the initiatives or action steps, should be aligned to one RIDE priority area.



## Step 3: Determining How to Use Funds

SIG funds must be used to support identified priorities, SMART+E goals, and evidence based initiatives identified in the school’s CSIP. Initiatives supported with these federal funds must be based on strong, moderate, or promising evidence (Tier I, II, or III) of a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes. For additional information on selecting evidence based initiatives reference [CSIP Review: Creating a Strong, Approvable Plan](#) pg. 8-9. All line items requested within the budget must be reasonable, necessary, and allocable to support allowable activities within the CSIP.

### Guiding Questions:

When determining if expenditures are appropriate, use the following questions to guide a discussion with the CSIT:

- Does this expenditure align with RIDE’s Priority Areas?
- Does this expenditure align to a domain with the Center for School Turnaround and Improvement?
- Does this expenditure align with the goals, initiatives, and/or action steps of the CSIP?
- How does this expenditure serve to improve student learning outcomes?
- How does this expenditure directly support increasing staff capacity?
- How does this expenditure increase the participation of parents in school activities or assist parents to support student achievement?
- How does this expenditure improve the climate and culture of the school?
- How does this expenditure improve student attendance?

- Does this expenditure meet the following criteria: Is it necessary, reasonable, and allocable?
  - Necessary: Is the activity required to carry out the intent and purpose of the CSIP?
  - Reasonable: Is the cost of the activity consistent with prudent business practice and comparable current market value? Are activity costs reasonable in relation to expected outcomes and likely to have an impact on the stated priority areas within the CSIP?
  - Allocable: Are the activities aligned to the purpose of the grant? (i.e. Professional learning specific to a school’s CSIP initiatives are allocable. Professional learning for teachers in a non-CSI school would not be an allocable cost, as the grant must be spent on CSI schools or LEA initiatives that benefit students in CSI schools above and beyond what the district provides to all schools.)
  - Note: An allowable expenditure is not always reasonable or necessary. LEAs must consider whether the expense is necessary to achieve the CSIP goals.

See Appendix for additional information on allowable grant expenditures.

#### Step 4: Creating the Budget

Linked here is a [sample School Improvement Grant Budget](#) for quick reference when preparing the draft budget to submit to RIDE.

How to review the sample budget:

- The Ocean School District has two schools identified as CSI. Using the *Allocations for SY26-27* tab, the OSDI team has provided recommended allocations for each school.
- The *Budget Summary* tab provides an overview of the expenditures at each identified CSI school within the LEA.
- The *Budget Detail* tab lists each activity to potentially be funded by the SIG. A complete budget must include:
  - The specific activity to be purchased which directly aligns to a SMART+E Goal and evidence based initiative within the CSIP.
  - A description of the proposed expenditure (i.e. number of staff, hours, hourly rate, and frequency).
  - A vendor estimate for all contracted services.
  - The proposed expenditure (column G) and the detailed cost justification (column I) must align.
  - The expenditure must be classified as support for the LEA or school-level.
  - All expenditures must be classified using the Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement.
    - Turnaround Leadership, Talent Development, Instructional Transformation or Culture Shift

LEAs will submit one budget template that includes all identified CSI schools. If an LEA also has a school in Redesign, the LEA must submit a separate budget template that includes all Redesign schools. SIG budgets are



created using a template provided by RIDE's OSDI team in Google Sheets. This can be found in the shared Google folder with the OSDI team. *The allocations tab and the budget summary tab are auto-populating and should not be directly modified in any way.*

### **Step 5: Submitting Budget for Review & Approval**

The budget template should be reviewed by the CSI principal(s) and supervisor(s) of CSI schools and then submitted to the LEA Business Manager for approval. Once approved by the Business Manager, the LEA supervisor of CSI schools should email the OSDI team to notify that the budget is ready for review.

The application for SIG funding follows a two-part process. First, the OSDI team reviews and programmatically approves the CSIP and budget by June 30th. Next, OSDI submits the draft budget to RIDE's Office of Finance and Accounting for fiscal review and approval. Once the budget is approved, by both offices, a Grant Award Notification (GAN) will be issued to the LEA. OSDI's goal is to ensure all LEAs and CSI schools have a GAN by the first day of school.

LEAs are unable to begin using the SIG funds until the GAN has been received. If the LEA expends funds prior to receiving the GAN and items are not approved within the submitted budget, the LEA risks having to cover the expenses with local funds.



## Appendix

The chart below serves as a sample to help LEAs and schools determine expenditures that would be allowable<sup>3</sup>. Note: Allowable with conditions(\*) will require a conversation with the OSDI team.

<i>Expenditure Type</i>	<i>Allowable</i>	<i>Allowable with Conditions (*)</i>	<i>Not Allowable</i>
Banquets/Award Programs/Luncheons/Brunches/Parties/Picnics			X
Base pay and/or stipends for principals or district level staff when the work falls within regular contractual responsibilities, even if it aligns with the priorities of the grant			X
Branding: Posters, Banners, Signs			X
Career and College Readiness Activities and Services	X		
Cell Phone Storage Devices (i.e. Yondr Pouches)			X
Coaching: Academic	X		
Coaching: Leadership	X		
Computers: Classroom, Student Use Only		X	
Computers: Adult Use			X
Compensation to Teachers: must be above and beyond the work day and to implement SIG activities	X		
Conference Costs: must meet state and federal guidelines		X	

<sup>3</sup> This is not an exhaustive list and activities are subject to a need for supporting documentation or justification. If you are unsure if an expenditure meets the SIG guidelines, please contact the OSDI team: [osdi@ride.ri.gov](mailto:osdi@ride.ri.gov).

<i>Expenditure Type</i>	<i>Allowable</i>	<i>Allowable with Conditions (*)</i>	<i>Not Allowable</i>
Construction/Repairs/Modifications			X
Copy Machine, Postage, Other Office Equipment			X
Credit Recovery or Academic Acceleration	X		
Decorations			X
Education Consultants	X		
Employee Incentives or Recognition/Gifts			X
Entertainment Activities (dances, field day, non-academic field trips)			X
Extended Day or School Year Programs (before or after school, summer)	X		
Field Trips: Educational		X	
Field Trips: College Campus		X	
Flat Screen TVs/Display Boards			X
Food			X
FTE Salary & Fringe		X	
Fundraisers			X
Furniture			X
Gift Certificates/Gift Cards			X

<i>Expenditure Type</i>	<i>Allowable</i>	<i>Allowable with Conditions (*)</i>	<i>Not Allowable</i>
Graduation Activities/Materials			X
Guest Speakers for family or school events		X	
Incentives/Rewards for students or families: (cash, passes, gift card, kindles, ipad, bicycles, etc)			X
Instructional Materials and Supplies		X	
Interventionist		X	
Lesson planning/Professional Learning Communities (above and beyond the school day, may not supplant regular duties)		X	
Lodging and per diem for conference travel		X	
Non-Academic Events			X
Non Classroom Furniture			X
Parent Engagement Supports (Coordinator, Stipend)	X		
Promotional Items or Branded Gear (tshirt, hat, water bottles, etc)			X
Parent Training or Educational Services (academics or attendance)	X		
Professional Learning (vendor, supplies, or materials)	X		
Progress Monitoring Materials		X	
Post-Secondary Efforts: CTE, Dual Enrollment, AP (books, fees, tuition)		X	
Redesign Support (vendor, research of RI approved models)	X		

<i>Expenditure Type</i>	<i>Allowable</i>	<i>Allowable with Conditions (*)</i>	<i>Not Allowable</i>
Restorative Practices (vendor, training)	X		
Stipends for staff outside of contracted hours		X	
School Based Mental Health Supports (mentoring, instructional support, to improve student skills outside the academic subject area)	X		
School Supplies/Educational supplies			X
Social Emotional Learning: (Restorative Justice, PBIS)	X		
Substitute Teachers to support PL efforts	X		
Summer School materials	X		
Technology			X
Translation Equipment		X	
Transportation (extended day, summer school, after school tutoring)	X		
Tutoring (hiring tutors, pay for staff)	X		
Vendor Support (professional learning, redesign) <sup>4</sup>	X		

<sup>4</sup> Preference given to those on RIDE's approved vendor list or Master Price Agreements (MPAs). For more information contact: [OSDI@ride.ri.gov](mailto:OSDI@ride.ri.gov) .