

Using Federal School Improvement Funds for Improvement Interventions

The federal government is dispersing an additional \$3 billion in Federal School Improvement (1003g) Title I funds to low-performing schools. The funds are targeted for intensive support, ranging from turnaround and reconstitution efforts to interventions such as improvements to curriculum, instruction, and professional development, for the bottom 5 percent of schools. The funding may also focus on support for middle and high schools.

Learning Point Associates has developed an approach that allows states to implement district reforms on a large scale. Our approach allows for a quick start and provides the key elements for long-term change:

- **Solid comprehensive data** is gathered at the beginning of the process.
- **Clear expectations** guide each phase of implementation.
- **Local buy-in** is fostered by providing flexibility and choice within the accountability system.
- **Capacity building** is achieved at the local level.
- **Ongoing support** is provided to monitor progress and course correct where needed.

Key Activities	Timeline
Set clear objectives for allocation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review federal priorities. • Determine state priorities. • Gather appropriate baseline data to focus decision making. 	July–August 2009
Identify and group schools based on needs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the schools/districts that require support. • Group the schools/districts based on severity of needs. • Communicate with the schools/districts about the process. 	August 2009
Create RFP and select vendors for needs assessment and implementation (state). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the volume and type of vendors needed. • Determine criteria for vendor selection, and issue the RFP. • Select list of vendors approved by the SEA to provide school/district-level services. 	August–October 2009 (may issue another RFP Spring 2010)
Develop school/district vendor selection process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold vendor conference for schools, matching process. 	November 2009– Spring 2010
Implement plans. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish an approval process to implement school plans. • Consider a cohort grouping of schools based on need. 	December 2009– August 2011
Monitor support. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide ongoing support to track progress against plans. 	December 2009– August 2011
Evaluate the initiative. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an evaluation plan upfront. • Include formative and summative components. • Evaluate both the program, as a whole, and specific interventions. • Use data to refine the process. 	Ongoing

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How Learning Point Associates Can Help

By using stimulus funds to establish this model of reform implementation, your state will be well positioned to win future grant funds to support these efforts. Through the course of the initial two years, Learning Point Associates can help you establish and refine metrics and test solutions. At the end of the two years, the state will have a strong structure in place for supporting and advising schools and districts on implementing interventions that work.

The model, which Learning Point Associates can help you put into place, targets improved student achievement within the selected schools and districts, by encouraging networks of schools and districts to work together on implementing research-based interventions for improved teaching and learning that are targeted to their specific needs. This approach provides district and school leaders with a greater capacity to sustain school improvement over the long term.

Learning Point Associates has a long, successful history of working with states and districts to analyze, develop, and implement programs and systems of support.

➤ **Program Design and Management**

Learning Point Associates can solidify the design of the SEA improvement plan; develop a project plan, budget, and timeline; identify key stakeholders; determine an approach for baseline data collection; establish metrics and reporting requirements; and develop a communication plan and protocols. In addition, we can assist in determining the decision-making rules, establishing escalation procedures, and monitoring plans.

➤ **Intervention Provider**

Learning Point Associates offers several interventions, both needs assessments and implementation services, to districts. Our curriculum audit leads the field in the richness of data collected and the level of buy-in from staff for improvement. We also offer needs-assessment tools and implementation services in the areas of educator quality, literacy, mathematics, data use, and extended learning programs. We work with strong and trusted partners to address English language learner and special education improvement needs.

➤ **Evaluator**

Because of the need to demonstrate impact of ARRA funds, it is critical that the evaluation for this initiative begin at the onset, with baseline data collection. The data will need to serve both formative and summative purposes—that is, they focus on program intention, design, context, and implementation as well as program outcomes and overall effectiveness. We design and conduct mixed-method evaluations that maintain rigorous standards while also serving client needs and accommodating constraints related to budgets, timelines, evaluation audiences, and evaluation conditions that a more traditional, academic approach may not allow for.

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