LETTER OF INTEREST (LOI) PROGRAM GUIDELINES: 2020–2021 SERVICES TO STUDENTS WITH AUTISM, CYCLE 2

LOI Application Due Date
5:00 p.m. Central Time, December 20, 2019

Program Authority
Authorized by the General Appropriations Act, Article III, Rider 76, 86th Texas Legislature; Texas Education Code (TEC) Section 29.026

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INTRODUCTION

The Texas Education Agency (TEA), as the pass-through entity[1], is the grantee[2] from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and TEA awards subgrants to non-federal entities[3] such as local educational agencies (LEAs), including school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, and education service centers, and to a lesser degree institutions of higher education (IHEs), and nonprofit organizations (NPOs) who are the agency's subgrantees[4]. These guidelines apply to all subgrantees of TEA, regardless of whether referenced herein as subgrantee or grantee. For purposes of this document, TEA may use the terms grantee and subgrantee synonymously for its subrecipients.

This document MUST be used in conjunction with the General and Fiscal Guidelines and the specific program instructions. The Adobe Acrobat Standard Application System (SAS) consists of all forms to be completed in order for the applicant to be eligible for funding.
For applicants selected for funding, all guidelines and instructions will be incorporated by reference into the Notice of Grant Award (NOGA).

REFERENCE TO THE GENERAL AND FISCAL GUIDELINES

The Program Guidelines provide information specifically relevant to this grant program. The General and Fiscal Guidelines provide information relevant to all TEA grant programs.. Throughout the Letter of Interest (LOI) Guidelines, cross-references are given to applicable sections of the General and Fiscal Guidelines. **It is critical that you review all referenced sections of the** General and Fiscal Guidelines **when preparing your application.**

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[1] Pass-through entity is defined as a non-Federal entity that provides a subaward to a subrecipient to carry out part of a federal program. (2 CFR 200.74)

[2] Grantee is defined as the legal entity to which a grant is awarded and that is accountable to the federal government for the use of the funds provided. The term "grantee" does not include any secondary recipients, such as subgrantees and contractors that may receive funds from a grantee. (34 CFR 77)

[3] Non-federal entity is defined as a state, local government, Indian tribe, institution of higher education, or nonprofit organization that carries out a federal award as a recipient or subrecipient. (2 CFR 200.69)

[4] Subgrantee is defined by TEA to be the same as a subrecipient which is defined as a non-federal entity that receives a subaward from a pass-through entity to carry out part of a federal program; but does not include an individual that is a beneficiary of such program. (2 CFR 200.93) Subgrantee is defined in 34 CFR 77 as the legal entity to which a subgrant is awarded and that is accountable to the grantee for the use of the funds provided.

OVERVIEW OF LOI PROCESS

The following steps provide a high-level overview of the process for responding to a letter of interest (LOI), including submitting an LOI application, and being selected for funding:

1. TEA publishes LOI application and supporting documents on the TEA Grant Opportunities webpage.
2. Eligible applicants submit LOI application, and any required attachments to TEA by the specified deadline.
3. LOI applications reviewed and scored. Note: The highest scoring applicants may be required to attend an oral interview or respond to questions regarding their LOI application.
4. TEA announces applicants selected for funding on the TEA Grants Awarded Data webpage.
5. *For LOI applicants selected for funding, the LOI application will serve as the grant application. This eliminates the need for selected applicants to submit a separate grant application.*
6. TEA staff conducts budget negotiations on the LOI application.
7. Notice of Grant Award (NOGA) issued upon successful completion of the negotiation process.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND/OR STATE APPROPRIATIONS

The following is provided in compliance with the U.S. Department of Education Appropriations Act:

Category	Amount
Total funds available for this project	$10,000,000
Percentage to be financed with federal funds	0%
Amount of federal funds	$0
Percentage to be financed from nonfederal sources	100%
Amount of nonfederal funds	$10,000,000

APPLICANT ASSISTANCE

The following types of assistance are available to applicants for this grant program.

Contact for Clarifying Information

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, *TEA Contacts*.
The following TEA staff member should be contacted with questions about the LOI:

Carol Trautman
Office of Special Populations and Monitoring
carol.trautman@tea.texas.gov
Phone: (512) 463-9414

Errata Notices

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, *Errata Notices*.

LOI TIMELINE
Dates, except the grant ending date, may vary slightly as conditions require.

Date	Event
Oct. 25, 2019	LOI available
Nov. 13, 2019	Last date to submit FAQs to TEA; Submit all questions to: sped@tea.texas.gov; See General and Fiscal Guidelines, *Frequently Asked Questions*
Dec. 2, 2019	FAQs posted to TEA Grant Opportunities page
Dec. 4, 2019	Due date for the Notice of Intent to Apply, Intent to Apply Form
Dec. 20, 2019	Due date for the LOI application, which may be submitted via email to **loiapplications@tea.texas.gov** or in hard copy by mail or hand delivery. Whichever delivery method is used, the LOI application must be received by the TEA by 5:00 p.m., Central Time. See General and Fiscal Guidelines
Jan. 6, 2020– Mar. 6, 2020	LOI review period See General and Fiscal Guidelines
Mar. 4, 2020	Oral interviews, as needed. May be conducted via teleconference.
Mar. 9, 2020	Anticipated award announcement
June 1, 2020	Beginning date of grant (if selected for funding) See General and Fiscal Guidelines, *Grant Period*
March 2, 2021	Final date to submit an amendment (if selected for funding)
May 31, 2021	Ending date of grant (if selected for funding) See General and Fiscal Guidelines, *Grant Period*

For all dates related to the grant, including reporting dates, see the TEA Grant Opportunities page. If a due date falls on a weekend or holiday, the date will be on the following business day. All dates except the grant ending date may vary slightly as conditions require.

LOI AT A GLANCE
This section provides fundamental information pertinent to the grant program.

Authorizing Legislation
This LOI is authorized by the Texas Education Code (TEC) Section 29.026, as added by Article III, Rider 76, 86th Texas Legislature.

Where to Submit the LOI Application
See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#)

Number of Copies
See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#)

Purpose of Program
This initiative will provide funding for Texas local education agencies (LEAs) to implement innovative services that improve functional and/or academic outcomes for students with autism ages three to nine. The project will result in effective, scalable models that can be replicated in other areas of the state.

Eligible Applicants
See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#)
All Texas LEAs may apply. An eligible program must operate as an independent campus within the district or as a separate program from the campus in which the program is located, with a separate budget.

APPLICATION ATTACHMENTS
This section describes the required attachments that must be included with the application.

Required Attachments
See the following section of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#): *Required Program-Related Attachments*

There are no required program-related attachments.

LOI APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS AND ASSURANCES
This section describes the types of requirements that applicants must assure adherence to in order to be eligible to be considered for funding:
- Statutory requirements (requirements defined in the authorizing statute)
- TEA program requirements (requirements defined by TEA program staff)

Statutory Requirements
See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Statutory Requirements*.

Per TEC §22.0834, any person offered employment by any entity that contracts with TEA or receives grant funds administered by TEA (i.e., a grantee or subgrantee) is subject to the fingerprinting requirement. TEA is prohibited from awarding grant funds to any entity, including nonprofit organizations, that fails to comply with this requirement. For details, refer to the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Fingerprinting Requirement*.

The following requirements are defined in the statute that authorizes this program. The applicant must address each of these requirements in the application to be considered for funding:

1. The applicant must describe how the program will incorporate evidence-based practices and research-based design and how the program will include effective use of technology.
2. The applicant must describe how the program will collect empirical data on student achievement and improvement and use that data to support effective program

implementation. The applicant should describe the process by which baselines for these metrics will be established.
3. The applicant must describe how the program will incorporate meaningful inclusion and opportunities for appropriate interaction with non-disabled peers.
4. The applicant must describe how the program will incorporate parental support and collaboration.

TEA Program Requirements
See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, *Program Requirements.*

In addition to the statutory requirements, TEA has established the following program requirements. Applicants must address within the application how they will achieve the following:

1. The applicant must identify specific evidence-based practices to be incorporated in the program and describe methods to ensure fidelity of implementation. Strong evidential support must be provided for the practices and methods to be employed in the program.
2. Strong applicants will include robust plans for staff training that incorporates ongoing coaching and feedback for fidelity of implementation and continuous improvement.
3. Selected applicants will demonstrate a coherent plan that addresses the structure of the learning environment and instructional strategies related to communication, social competence, and independence. Plans must address all components in a comprehensive and well-integrated model with consideration for sustainability.
4. If the proposed program will coordinate services with private or community-based providers, the applicant must describe coordination of such services.

Program-Specific Assurances
See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, *Provisions and Assurances*.

The program-specific assurances are listed on the application.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS
This section provides detailed information about the LOI.

Description of Program
The 86th Texas Legislature passed Article III, Rider 76 authorizing a second cycle of funding for a grant program to support innovative school-wide models to provide exceptionally effective services to students with autism. The grant program allows for ten grants to be awarded for an amount up to $1,000,000 per grant. Grants will be awarded to Texas LEAs. Grant recipients are eligible to renew the grant for one year resulting in up to $2,000,000 in total funding.

The grant program is intended to provide funding to individual grantees and collaborations that seek to implement innovative programs that effectively address the unique academic and functional needs of students with autism. Successful applicants may focus on new and innovative practices, or new and innovative ways to remove barriers to effective implementation of accepted practices, or both.

Strong applications will demonstrate the integration of feedback from stakeholders, including parents, educators, and community members. Preference will be given to applications that include collaborations among school districts, and/or open enrollment charter schools. Applicants are encouraged to engage in collaborative activities with regional educational service centers (ESCs) and institutions of higher education (IHEs).

At the end of the project, TEA will submit a report to the Texas State Legislature including recommendations for continued funding and replication of successful projects.

Supplement, Not Supplant
For supplement, not supplant guidance, see the Supplement, Not Supplant Handbook on the Grants Administration Division's [Administering a Grant](#) page.

The supplement, not supplant provision **applies**.

PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION MEASURES
The applicant agrees to collect data and report on the following mandatory performance and evaluation measures:

Applicants will develop student outcomes-based metrics related to the core features of autism on which their program will affect positive impacts. Applicants will describe methods of data collection on specified metrics, including baseline data, and processes for using the data to support effective program implementation and decision making. These metrics may be subject to revision based on TEA review.

By submitting this application, the applicant agrees to comply with evaluation requirements that may be established by TEA and agrees to submit the required evaluation reports in the format and time requested by TEA. Grant awardees will make mid-year reports to TEA on program requirements and identified outcomes-based formative measures, with summative measure reporting at the end of the grant period.

Limits on Contracted Evaluators
Applicants should make every effort to ensure that contracted evaluators be independent and objective.

APPLICATION FUNDING
See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#): *Continuation Funding, Fund Management, and Use of Funds*

It is anticipated that approximately 10 grants will be awarded ranging in amounts up to $1,000,000.

Selection of Applicants for Funding
Applicants will be selected in rank order.

Cost Share or Matching Requirement
See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Cost Share/Match Requirement*.
There is no cost share or matching requirement.

Limitation of Administrative Funds
See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, *Administrative Costs*.

NOTE: Administrative funds include **both** direct administrative costs **and** allowable indirect costs.

Direct Administrative Costs
TEA limits the amount of direct administrative costs to no more than 15% of the total award. costs.

Indirect Costs
For this state-funded grant, the grantee may claim a maximum for indirect costs equal to **the lesser** of its current, approved restricted indirect cost rate or 15%.

To calculate the maximum indirect costs that can be claimed for a grant, complete the Maximum Indirect Costs Worksheet, posted on the Administering a Grant page, under the Handbooks and Other Guidance section.

Pre-Award Costs
See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, *Pre-Award Costs*.

Pre-award costs **are** permitted. Pre-award costs are permitted from the award announcement date to the start date of the grant.

Activities and Use of Funds
See the Administering a Grant page for general guidance on allowable activities and use of funds.

Allowable activities and use of funds may include but are not limited to the following:

Advisory Council
An advisory council may be funded under the grant program. Only the following types of advisory councils are allowable:
- Advisory councils designed to gather stakeholder input toward program planning and goal setting.

General Allowable Activities and Use of Funds
- Teacher credentialing, training, and/or professional development specifically related to best practices in providing instruction to students with autism
- Salary for a dedicated program director/administrator
- Salaries for dedicated staff
- Instructional resources necessary for implementation of best practices in instruction for students with autism
- Technology necessary to provide instruction aligned with research and best practices for students with autism
- Curriculum development
- Transportation for students
- Transportation to enable parents to participate in parent training and collaboration
- Capital outlay

- Relevant services provided by private or community-based providers
- Materials that support academic and functional goals
- Equipment necessary to establish an independent program
- Interpreter or translation services for parent training, collaboration, and materials
- Food and beverages for parents limited to refreshments and light meals for training activities that occur at mealtimes
- Staff stipends or extra duty pay for childcare during parent training
- Community Based Instruction (CBI): CBI is a model for delivery of instruction in which IEP goals are taught in a "natural" age-appropriate setting, and not considered a field trip. The primary purpose of CBI is to teach and generalize skills in natural settings so that students may live, work, and recreate in their communities as independently as possible. The following is an example of CBI: Math, sequencing, travel, and social skills goals may be addressed during a trip to the grocery store.

General Unallowable Activities and Use of Funds
In general, refer to the Budgeting Cost Guidance Handbook on the Administering a Grant page for unallowable costs.

Cost of Membership in Any Civic or Community Organization
The cost of membership in any civic or community organization may not be funded under the grant program.

Hosting or Sponsoring of Conferences
Hosting or sponsoring conferences may not be funded under this grant program.

Out-of-State Travel
Out-of-state travel costs may not be funded under this grant program.

Field Trips
Field trips may not be funded under the grant program.

Travel Costs for Officials such as Executive Director, Superintendent, or Board Members
Travel costs for officials such as the executive director, superintendent, or board members may not be funded under the grant program.

In addition, unallowable activities and use of funds for this grant may include but are not limited to the following:
- Debt service (lease-purchase)
- Audit services for state-funded grants
- Souvenirs, memorabilia, or promotional items
- Purchase of vehicles

Maintenance of Effort
See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, *Maintenance of Effort*.

This requirement **does** apply to this state funded program.

Oral Interviews for Funding
See the General and Fiscal Guidelines

Oral interviews may be required based on rank ordering on the scoring rubric. If required, interviews may be conducted via teleconference.

LOI SCORING AND REVIEW
This section provides information on the scoring and review of LOI applications.

LOI Review and Funding Criteria
See the General and Fiscal Guidelines

See scoring rubric beginning on page 10 of these Program Guidelines.

Application Scoring Rubric:

Up to 10 priority points will be added for proposed programs that are collaborations between multiple school districts, multiple charter schools, or school districts and charter school.

Evidence-Based Practices (up to 20 points) Reviewers will consider the following application information when evaluating for Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs).

	Needs Improvement 0-2 points	Meets Expectations 3-5 points	Exceeds Expectation 6-8 points	Clearly Outstanding 9-10 points	Score
Strength of the selection process	The proposed program mentions evidence-based practices in the program description. Sources are cited, but do not include recognized organizations that review intervention literature targeting individuals on the autism spectrum.	The proposed program specifies evidence-based practices that address the core features of autism, align with the target population, and serve as the basis for program development. Sources of peer-reviewed evidence are cited, including recognized organizations that review intervention literature targeting individuals on the autism spectrum.	The proposed program specifies a group of high-leverage evidence-based practices that address the core features of autism, align with the target population, and serve as the basis for program development. Sources of peer-reviewed evidence are cited, including recognized organizations that review intervention literature targeting individuals on the autism spectrum.	The proposed program is based on a group of high-leverage evidence-based practices that address the core features of autism, are described in depth, and are strongly aligned with the program's target population. High quality sources of peer-reviewed evidence are cited, including nationally recognized organizations that utilize rigorous inclusion/exclusion criteria in conducting systematic reviews of intervention literature targeting individuals on the autism spectrum.	/10

Evidence-Based Practices (continued)

	Needs Improvement 0-2 points	Meets Expectations 3-5 points	Exceeds Expectation 6-8 points	Clearly Outstanding 9-10 points	Score
Fidelity of implementation	Plans to collect baseline data do not adequately address alignment of EBPs with student need and outcomes. Plans for staff training, implementation, ongoing monitoring, and feedback lack specificity.	Plans are described for collecting baseline data to align EBPs with student need and desired outcomes. Plans for staff training and implementation are described, to include tools such as fidelity of implementation rubrics, implementation checklists, coaching, and ongoing monitoring and feedback.	Clear plans are described for collecting baseline data to align EBPs with student need and desired outcomes. Proposed schedules and methods for staff training and implementation are described, to include tools such as fidelity of implementation rubrics, implementation checklists, coaching, and ongoing monitoring and feedback for program adjustment.	Clear and specific plans are described for collecting baseline data to align EBPs with student need and desired outcomes. Proposed schedules and methods for training designated staff on EBPs and their implementation are described. Plans include necessary resources and/or tools such as practice guides, fidelity of implementation rubrics, implementation checklists, coaching, and ongoing monitoring and feedback. Plans include proposed schedules for data collection, ongoing monitoring, and program adjustment as needed.	/10

Metrics (up to 10 points) Reviewers will consider the following application information when evaluating for Metrics.

	Needs Improvement 0-2 points	Meets Expectations 3-5 points	Exceeds Expectation 6-8 points	Clearly Outstanding 9-10 points	Score
Metrics	Limited information is provided regarding how the proposed outcome metrics are related to the core features of autism. Plans for how and when baseline, progress, and outcome data will be collected lack specificity.	The applicant proposes high-quality quantifiable metrics to evaluate student outcomes related to the core features of autism. Proposed metrics are connected to the program design and implementation. A clear plan is included for how and when baseline, progress, and outcome data will be collected.	The applicant proposes high-quality, quantifiable metrics to evaluate student outcomes related to the core features of autism. A clear explanation is provided for how proposed metrics are connected to the program design and implementation. Metrics are aligned with the target population and a well-defined plan is included for how and when baseline, progress, and outcome data will be collected.	The applicant proposes high-quality, quantifiable metrics to evaluate student outcomes related to the core features of autism. A clear explanation is provided for how proposed metrics are strongly connected to the program design and implementation. Metrics are aligned with the target population. A well-defined plan is included for how and when baseline, progress, and outcome data will be collected, utilized for program adjustment and improvement, and reported to TEA and other stakeholders.	/10

Staff Training (up to 10 points) Reviewers will consider the following application information when evaluating for Staff Training.

	Needs Improvement 0-2 points	Meets Expectations 3-5 points	Exceeds Expectation 6-8 points	Clearly Outstanding 9-10 points	Score
Staff training	A plan for staff training is provided that does not clearly specify who will participate, and when and where training will occur. The plan does not adequately describe how training is aligned with program goals metrics, and designated EBPs. Training plans do not include descriptions of fidelity of implementation rubrics, checklists, or follow-up coaching.	A plan for staff training is provided that clearly specifies who will participate, and when and where training will occur. The plan describes how training is aligned with program goals, metrics, and designated EBPs, and how the proposed training addresses staff and student needs. Training plans include strategies to support students with autism in inclusive settings, as well as descriptions of fidelity of implementation tools such as rubrics, checklists, follow-up coaching, and ongoing feedback.	A clear plan for comprehensive staff training is provided that specifies who will participate (e.g. special education & general education teachers, related service providers, paraprofessionals administrators), and a schedule that includes when and where training will occur. The plan describes how training is aligned with program goals, metrics, and designated EBPs, and how training addresses staff and student needs. Training plans include strategies to support students with autism in inclusive settings, as well as fidelity of implementation tools (e.g., practice guides, rubrics, checklists), follow-up coaching, and ongoing feedback.	A clear plan for comprehensive staff training is provided that specifies who will participate (e.g. school teams that include special education & general education teachers, related service providers, paraprofessionals administrators), and a schedule for when and where training will occur. A variety of training formats (e.g., in person, on-demand) will be provided. The plan describes how training is aligned with program goals, metrics, and designated EBPs, and how training addresses staff and student needs. Training plans include strategies to support students with autism in inclusive settings, as well as fidelity of implementation tools (e.g., practice guides, rubrics, checklists), follow-up coaching, ongoing feedback, and sustainability.	/10

Inclusion (up to 10 points) Reviewers will consider the following application information when evaluating for Inclusion.

	Needs Improvement 0-2 points	Meets Expectations 3-5 points	Exceeds Expectation 6-8 points	Clearly Outstanding 9-10 points	Score
Inclusion	The proposed program does not overtly incorporate methods and practices that support meaningful inclusion with nondisabled peers. Systems of support show limited consideration for a culture of inclusion.	The proposed program incorporates specific methods and practices that support meaningful inclusion with nondisabled peers. Designated EBPs, schedules, environmental structure, and systems of support demonstrate consideration for a culture of inclusion.	The proposed program incorporates specific methods and practices designed to support meaningful inclusion with nondisabled peers. Designated EBPs (e.g., social skills training, structured play groups, antecedent-based interventions) and student schedules reflect consideration for authentic inclusive opportunities. Staff training, environmental structure, and systems of student support demonstrate clear expectations for a culture of inclusion.	The proposed program incorporates specific methods, practices, and plans to provide meaningful inclusion with nondisabled peers. Staff and student schedules, and targeted EBPs (e.g. social skills training, structured play groups, antecedent-based interventions, peer-mediated instruction and intervention), are selected to support experiences with peer models in the course of authentic inclusive opportunities. Staff training, environmental structure, and systems of student support demonstrate clear expectations for a culture of inclusion.	/10

Parent Support and Collaboration (up to 10 points) Reviewers will consider the following application information when evaluating for Parent Support and Collaboration.

	Needs Improvement 0-2 points	Meets Expectations 3-5 points	Exceeds Expectation 6-8 points	Clearly Outstanding 9-10 points	Score
Parent support and collaboration	The proposed program lacks a plan to identify specific parent support and training needs to be addressed. The proposed training model appears to be top down, with educators serving as the experts. Little consideration for partnerships and collaboration is evident. Information and resources may or may not be responsive to the population.	The proposed program includes plans to identify parent support and training needs, and specific methods to address those needs with consideration for cultural and linguistic diversity. Strategies that encourage partnerships and collaboration are described, with multiple entry points (e.g., face to face, on-line, individual, group) for parents to gain access to relevant information and resources. Strategies that facilitate ongoing communication and feedback loops are described.	The proposed program includes well-defined plans to identify parent support and training needs, and specific methods to address those needs with consideration for the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the population. Strategies that encourage partnerships and collaboration among parents and educators, as well as parents and other parents, are described. Training and support opportunities allow for multiple entry points (e.g., face to face, on-line, individual, group) for parents to gain access to relevant information and resources. Strategies that facilitate ongoing communication and feedback are described.	The proposed program includes well-defined plans to identify parent support and training needs, and specific methods and incentives to meet those needs. Strategies that encourage partnerships and collaboration (e.g., parents with educators, parents with other parents), are designed with consideration for the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the participants. Training and support opportunities provide multiple flexible entry points (e.g., variable timing, face to face, on-line, individual, group) for parents to access relevant information and resources. Strategies that encourage participation and facilitate ongoing communication and feedback are described. Provisions are in place to evaluate and adjust plans in response to changing needs.	/10

Quality of Program (up to 30 points) Reviewers will consider the following application information when evaluating for Quality of Program.

	Needs Improvement 0-2 points	Meets Expectations 3-5 points	Exceeds Expectation 6-8 points	Clearly Outstanding 9-10 points	Score
Learning environment	The proposed plan addresses general features of the learning environment but lacks specific elements that support students with autism and facilitate generalization of skills. Data collection methods and tools are not described.	The proposed plan addresses specific features of the learning environment such as: physical setting and/or layout; visual supports; behavioral strategies; systematic and explicit instruction; schedules and transitions; and naturalistic settings and strategies to facilitate generalization of skills across people and settings. Data collection methods and tools are described.	The proposed program includes well-integrated plans and empirical support for specific features of the proposed learning environment, such as: physical setting and/or layout; visual supports; behavioral strategies; systematic and explicit instruction; schedules and transitions; and naturalistic settings, interventions, and other strategies to facilitate generalization of skills across people and settings. Methods and tools for frequent individualized data collection are described.	The proposed program includes well-integrated plans and empirical support for specific features of the proposed learning environment, such as: physical setting and/or layout; visual supports; behavioral strategies; systematic and explicit instruction; schedules and transitions; effective use of technology; and naturalistic settings, interventions, and other strategies to facilitate generalization of skills across people and settings. The plan addresses the need for ongoing evaluation and adjustment of the learning environment in response to student needs. Methods and tools for frequent and individualized data collection are described.	/10

	Needs Improvement 0-2 points	Meets Expectations 3-5 points	Exceeds Expectation 6-8 points	Clearly Outstanding 9-10 points	Score
Communication	The proposed program lacks specificity about strategies that promote functional and spontaneous communication and initiation. Limited information is provided regarding communication systems, communicative functions, or communication partners and settings.	The proposed program includes strategies to promote functional and spontaneous communication and initiation (e.g., core vocabulary, visual supports, functional routines, behavioral strategies, responsive partners). Various communication systems (e.g., pictures, gestures, verbal) address a variety of communicative functions (requesting, protesting, greeting, commenting, etc.) with consideration for multiple partners and settings. Data collection methods and tools are described.	The proposed program emphasizes strategies that promote functional and spontaneous communication and initiation such as the use of a core vocabulary, visual supports, functional routines, the role of responsive communication partners, naturalistic intervention, and behavioral strategies such as antecedent-based interventions, functional communication training, and pivotal response training. Various communication systems (e.g., pictures, gestures, verbal) address the range of communicative functions (requesting, protesting, greeting, commenting, gaining attention, sharing thoughts and feelings) with consideration for multiple partners and settings throughout the school day. Methods and tools for frequent individualized data collection are described.	The proposed program includes well-integrated plans and empirical support for strategies that promote functional and spontaneous communication and initiation such as the use of a core vocabulary, visual supports, functional routines, the role of responsive communication partners, naturalistic intervention, and behavioral strategies such as antecedent-based interventions, functional communication training, and pivotal response training. Various communication systems (e.g., pictures, gestures, verbal) address the range of communicative functions (requesting, protesting, greeting, commenting, gaining attention, sharing thoughts and feelings) with consideration for multiple partners and settings throughout the school day. Methods and tools for frequent and individualized data collection are described.	/10

	Needs Improvement 0-2 points	Meets Expectations 3-5 points	Exceeds Expectation 6-8 points	Clearly Outstanding 9-10 points	Score
Social competence and Independence	The proposed program lacks specificity about strategies that encourage social interaction with peers and adults, and opportunities to practice skills in natural settings. Limited information is provided regarding strategies to promote personal independence and self-management.	The proposed program includes strategies that encourage social interaction with peers and adults such as social routines, social narratives, and explicit social skills instruction with opportunities to practice skills in natural settings. Strategies to promote personal independence (e.g. picture schedules, visual supports) and self-management (e.g. identifying and labeling emotions, evaluating and monitoring behavior, solving problems) are included. Data collection methods and tools are described.	The proposed program emphasizes strategies that encourage social interaction with peers and adults such as social routines, social narratives, peer-mediated instruction and intervention, and explicit social skills instruction with opportunities to practice skills with non-disabled peers in natural settings. Strategies to promote personal independence (e.g. picture schedules, visual supports) and self-management (e.g. identifying and labeling emotions, evaluating and monitoring behavior, solving problems) are included. Data collection methods and tools are described.	The proposed program emphasizes strategies that encourage social interaction with peers and adults such as social routines, social narratives, peer-mediated instruction and intervention, structured play groups, and explicit social skills instruction with opportunities to practice skills with non-disabled peers in natural settings. Strategies to promote personal independence (e.g. picture schedules, visual supports, video modeling) and self-management (e.g. identifying and labeling emotions, evaluating and monitoring behavior, solving problems, technology-aided instruction and intervention) are included. Methods and tools for frequent individualized data collection are described.	/10

Sustainability and Replicability (up to 10 points) Reviewers will consider the following application information when evaluating for Sustainability and Replicability.

	Needs Improvement 0-2 points	Meets Expectations 3-5 points	Exceeds Expectation 6-8 points	Clearly Outstanding 9-10 points	Score
Sustainability and replicability	The proposed program includes general plans to build the capacity of LEA staff through training and credentialing related to critical program components. The proposed program may or may not be embedded within existing systems and/or campuses. Plans do not address replication.	The proposed program includes plans to build the capacity of LEA staff through training and credentialing related to critical program components, with the stated goal of sustaining ongoing training and support for current and future staff. The proposed program is embedded within existing systems and/or campuses to ensure that it becomes an integral part of the LEA and community culture. Plans are in place to demonstrate the ability to replicate the model, such as by expanding locally to additional classrooms and/or campuses.	The proposed program includes specific plans to increase the capacity of LEA staff through training and credentialing related to critical program components in order to sustain ongoing training and support for current and future staff. Geographically proximal districts are invited to visit program sites and participate in training opportunities as capacity allows. The proposed program is embedded within existing systems and/or campuses to ensure that it becomes an integral part of the LEA and community culture. Plans are in place to demonstrate the ability to replicate the model, such as by expanding locally to additional classrooms and/or campuses.	The proposed program includes specific plans to increase the capacity of LEA staff through training and credentialing related to critical program components in order to sustain ongoing training and support for current and future staff. Strategic outreach is demonstrated through invitations to educators in other districts to visit program sites and participate in training opportunities, as well as through invitations to parents in other districts to participate in parent support and training. The proposed program is embedded within existing systems and/or campuses to ensure that it becomes an integral part of the LEA and community culture. Plans are in place to demonstrate the ability to replicate the model, such as by expanding locally to additional classrooms and/or campuses and by providing support to other districts that show interest in building similar programs for students with autism.	/10