**FY24 Targeted Assistance Grant (TAG)**

**Fund Use Recommendations**

**Context**

The grant-funded activities that districts and schools engage in are expected to support the implementation of the [district instructional priority](https://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/guidance.html), with specific attention paid to schools that are identified by the accountability system as requiring assistance.[[1]](#footnote-2) For those districts which did not participate in the district prioritization sessions, TAG activities should align to a major priority the district is focusing on to drive improvement.

Funded activities should build the district’s capacity to support their schools in delivering strong core instruction. Districts are encouraged to consider the structures, systems, and alignment needed to ensure any funded activities can be sustained in future years. Alternately, funds can be used to jump-start efforts that the district can fund with other sources in subsequent years.

* SSoS-supported districts: Any TAG-funded activities should be reflected in the ***role clarity*** aspect of the prioritization plan, as well as aligning to the identified benchmarks and outcomes.
* Other districts with at least one school in the lowest 10th percentile: TAG funded activities should align with an identified district priority for improvement.

DESE has recently released a new resource called [DESE’s Educational Vision and Catalog of Aligned Supports](https://www.doe.mass.edu/commissioner/vision/2023-jun-vision-supports.pdf) that captures how to support equitable learning experiences for students across the Commonwealth. This can be a valuable support for schools and districts as they identify elements of how to best support the needs of all our students. Districts may wish to reference the catalog and accompanying supports while determining how TAG funds can best be leveraged to advance improved outcomes for students who are least well-served.

Finally, districts are encouraged to strategically align grant expenditures with other key funding sources like [SOA](https://www.doe.mass.edu/soa/), [ESSER](https://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/esser/default.html), and other [federal Title funding](https://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/default.html).

**Examples of TAG Fund Use**

The examples below are excerpts from district prioritization submissions from across the Commonwealth. Please keep in mind these are intended to be illustrative, not exhaustive. These examples are intended to demonstrate how TAG funds can be used to support districts with effective implementation of their district instructional priority, with particular focus on schools that require the most assistance.

If you have any questions about planned expenditures that do not appear in these examples, please feel free to contact Michael Seymour michael.j.seymour@mass.gov, a member of your Statewide Systems of Support (SSoS) Regional Assistance Team, or your CSDP support team.

*Example priority from a district submission:* Culturally responsive, grade appropriate, Tier 1 literacy instruction through high quality instructional materials (HQIM):

District Level:

* Funding to support the District Leadership Team to:
	+ Research and select high-quality curriculum that support culturally responsive instruction
	+ Develop instructional leadership skills to support educators’ understanding of the instructional approach of those materials and how they align to the district’s instructional vision
	+ Develop a calendar/assessment schedule that supports educators with the skillful use of materials
	+ Provide PD on differentiated supports for students to ensure all students can access Tier 1 instruction.
	+ Purchase high-quality curriculum and associated materials

School Level

* School Leadership Team stipends (could include stipends for data analysis to regularly assess if student needs are being met, particularly students who have historically been least well served, if the new curriculum is being implemented with fidelity, or to provide professional development for providing differentiated supports to students)
* Support for a coaching position(s) (or expand an existing one) to facilitate planning, support instruction, ensure implementation with fidelity
* Literacy PD on new curriculum, including for teachers of English Learners and students with disabilities
* Stipends to support implementation and analysis of student surveys that capture levels of student belonging and engagement and how culturally responsive teaching and learning is enacted in classrooms
* Library materials that ensure students have access to resources where they can see themselves reflected

*Example priority from a district submission*: Support transitioning 9th graders to foster a greater sense of belonging and prepare them for high school coursework.

District Level

* Funding to build partnerships with local universities and work placement organizations for students, including local MassHire Workforce Investment Boards

School Level

* Implement My Career and Academic Plan (MyCAP) to support student identification of individual interests, skills, and talents for students to make connections and better align high school experiences with future plans
* Stipends for common planning time for 8th and 9th grade teachers to best support student instructional needs and leverage their strengths as they enter high school
* Stipends for the creation of more in-depth orientation for incoming 9th graders, including summer transition programs
* Provide opportunities for middle school students to understand options, opportunities, and the structure of high school prior to their high school orientation
* Stipends to implement a revamped schedule to better leverage 9th grade students strengths and meet their needs
* Stipends to build partnerships with local universities and work placement organizations, especially the MassHire Workforce Investment Board
* Provide additional staff to ensure counseling is available to all students
* Create a Family Engagement Specialist position to ensure positive family connectedness
* Stipends for staff to increase outreach and build relationships with families
* Providing interpreters and translation for family engagement activities and communications

*Example priority from a district submission*: All students will have access to high-quality, grade-level instructional materials in every class to lead to a student demonstration of mastery.

District Level

* Funding to support the District Leadership Team to:
* Support team of district educators to assess district curriculum to ensure it meets high quality standards.
* Develop effective systems of coaching, collaboration, and evaluation that support educators’ skillful use of high-quality materials.
* Develop effective data systems that support educators to provide the correct supports for all students
* PD for educators (such as special education and ESL teachers) on how to ensure all students can access Tier 1 instruction.

School Level

* Stipends for Instructional Leadership Team (ILTs) to focus on HQIM implementation and the monitoring and collection of data (this can include the design, scheduling, and participation in the meetings required to accomplish the implementing and monitoring)
* Stipends to teachers to pilot curriculum
* Stipends to teachers to implement, analyze, and respond to student survey data
* Family engagement activities centered around gathering feedback to inform school decisions related to the district’s instructional priority
* Design, schedule, and implement Professional Learning Communities (PLC’s) focusing on instruction and HQIM
* PD for student-centered strategies and differentiating based on student strengths, learning needs and experiences
* Stipends to support school and district leader walk-throughs to ensure fidelity with HQIM implementation
* Stipends to implement and respond to diagnostic and formative assessments
* Stipends to support peer observations, focusing on student tasks, assignments, standards, etc.
* Contract with a vendor to deliver playground support for students at recess so educators have more time for common planning.
1. Districts should use TAG funds for district systems that support all schools, however, as per state and federal funding requirements, schools that had a designation of broad/comprehensive or targeted/focused support based on 2022 Massachusetts Accountability System determinations should directly benefit from TAG funding. A list of these schools is provided for context in the **District Allocation** document. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)