**Frequently Asked Questions Regarding FY22 SOA Plan Amendments**

## **My district is receiving only the minimum amount of additional per pupil chapter 70 funding. Do we need to submit a 3-year SOA plan and annual amendments/updates?**

**Yes.** The legislative requirement to develop 3-year plans and provide annual updates to DESE describing progress in implementing programs and in closing identified gaps for student groups *is not* tied to the amount of additional chapter 70 funding districts receive. At the policy level, the SOA legislation charges DESE, and every district and school in the state with working to close gaps in learning opportunities and outcomes for our students of color, students with disabilities, English learners, and students from economically-disadvantaged communities.

While Massachusetts continues to lead the nation in outcomes on some achievement measures for students overall, we don’t measure up nearly as well when our state data are disaggregated to look at the types of learning experiences and environments we are providing to the student groups, nor do we measure up when we look at their student achievement and postsecondary outcomes.  (See the Massachusetts Education Equity Partnership’s report, [#1 for Some: Opportunity and Achievement in Massachusetts](https://number1forsome.org/#section-0)) *It is our shared work to be intentional about closing these gaps in the coming years, while also continuing our efforts to improve educational experiences and outcomes for all our students.*

## **If our district’s evidence-based program areas aren’t changing, do we need to complete the FY22 SOA Amendment Template?**

**Yes.** The amendment template does not exclusively collect information about changes to the evidence-based program areas in district’s SOA plans. Among other things, the template also asks districts to:

* Provide updated budget information describing how FY22 funds from multiple funding sources (*e.g., chapter 70, federal ESSER funds, Title Funds*) are being used this year to support the implementation of the evidence-based program activities described in their plans.
* Identify the specific student group(s) each evidence-based program area targets, as well as the key metrics that it is using to assess progress in closing gaps in learning experiences and outcomes for them
* Share their progress to date in implementing activities and strategies associated with each evidence-based program areas in their plans through a combination of closed-ended items and brief narrative

The [Guidance for Developing and Submitting FY22 SOA Plan Amendments](https://www.doe.mass.edu/soa/guidance.docx) includes a copy of this year’s template.

## **Why are we being asked to provide information about multiple funding streams in this year’s budget template?**

The budget template has been updated to better reflect the budget information the SOA Legislation requires districts to provide in their 3-year plans:

*The 3-year plan shall be submitted in a form and manner prescribed by the department and shall include, but not be limited to:*

1. *A description of how funds received pursuant to chapter 70 will be allocated among schools in the district, by foundation category, to be used in support of the plan, including how other local, state, federal and grant-based funding sources will be used in conjunction with chapter 70 funds.*

## ***Doesn’t the information we are providing in our SOA plan amendments duplicate the* information we provided in our ESSER III applications?**

The information districts are asked to provide in the FY22 SOA amendment template is aligned with, but not identical to, information districts provided in their ESSER III plans.

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|  | **ESSER III** | **SOA Plan**  |
| **Evidence-based program areas** | Districts complete a checklist indicating **all** evidence-based program areas that their ESSER III funds will support | Districts focus on a limited number of key evidence-based program areas  |
| **Budget**  | * Expenditures bucketed into relatively broad grant categories
* Budget details are not available for specific evidence-based program areas
* Provides funding information for ESSER III only
 | * Describes spending by foundation category
* Specific budget information is available for individual evidence-based program areas
* Budget reflects how districts use multiple funding streams to support implementation
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## **How can we develop a budget if we don’t know how much additional chapter 70 funding our district will be receiving for FY23?**

The FY22 SOA Plan Template asks districts to report on their anticipated **FY22** fund use, so you will already be well into the FY22 budget year by the time you report on your anticipated budget for the year.

## **When will my district know how much we will receive to address aid-related impacts due to enrollment loss in FY22?**

DESE will release information about the distribution of the $40 million the state set aside to address pandemic-related disruptions in their enrollment that negatively affect their chapter 70 aid for fiscal year 2022, or which have significantly increased their transportation needs in fiscal year 2022 [(7061-0011)](https://budget.digital.mass.gov/summary/fy22/enacted/education/education-k-12/70610011) when the governor’s budget is released in January, 2022.  The governor’s budget will also include preliminary information about proposed FY23 chapter 70 aid increases.

If your question isn’t answered here, please write to us at SOAplans@mass.gov.