

Intensive Assistance Grant (IAG) FY26 Overview

May 21, 2025

Overview: what is the purpose of IAG?

- Close educational achievement gaps for historically marginalized students
- An opportunity for districts to pilot/more fully commit to initiatives with a school on implementation of their identified district instructional priority.
- Give the district a roadmap on how to drive improvement at other schools
- Helping to create the opportunity for schools to deliver high quality instruction in every classroom, every day for every student.

Overview: big picture details

- Competitive grant for 12 schools across 2 cohorts
 - Competing against a standard, not with other schools. There is enough for all schools to be funded.
- Applications will include a written section (both cohorts)
- Applications will include an interview (for the new cohort only)

Eligible schools, renewal cohort

➤ Year 1 in 2024-25

➤ 7 schools

➤ 5 districts

Athol Royalston	Athol Community Elementary School
Boston	Ellis Elementary School
Boston	Higginson-Lewis K-8
Boston	Young Achievers K-8
Fall River	Talbot Middle School
Pittsfield	Reid Middle School
Springfield	South End Middle School

Eligible schools, new cohort

➤ Year 1 in 2025-26

➤ 5 schools

➤ 5 districts

Brockton	Arnone Elementary
Chelsea	Clark Avenue Middle School
Framingham	Harmony Grove Elementary
Springfield	Lincoln Elementary
Worcester	North High School

Eligibility

- Schools with an overall performance in the 1-3 percentiles for at least the past five consecutive years that are not identified as Underperforming.
- Underperforming schools eligible for FY25 Rural School Aid.
- The school needs to reside in a district within the current SSoS caseload (not including charter schools or OST-supported schools).

Funding for Renewal Cohort

- \$1,000,000 total for each school
- ~\$333,000/year/school for 3 years
 - Year 1 2024-25 (this year)
 - Year 2 2025-26
 - Year 3 2026-27
- Annual renewal process

Funding for New Cohort

- \$900,000 total for each school
- ~\$300,000/year/school for 3 years
 - Year 1 2025-26
 - Year 2 2026-27
 - Year 3 2027-28
- Annual renewal process

Overview: how does IAG align with other DESE efforts?

- Aligns with the district's identified instructional priority
- Aligns with DESE's strategic objectives in Educational Vision
- Aligns with efforts to better serve our most historically marginalized students

Timeline

- RFPs were posted in the past few days!
 - Renewal: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/2026/0539/>
 - New: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/2026/0511/>
- June 9: Applications due
- June 9-June 23 applications reviewed
- June 10-17 Interviews conducted (new schools only)
- June 23-June 27 Follow-up as needed, decisions made
- Early to Mid July: award letters go out

What gets submitted?

- By June 9: IAG application submitted in GEM\$
 - The application narrative (a Word document)
 - Complete the budget (in GEM\$)

What is in the application narrative?

- The application narrative aligns closely to the district prioritization submission in both look and questions being asked.
- Many of the same categories are present. We will ask questions centered around:
 - Overview, analysis of strengths and challenges, stakeholder engagement, outcomes, role clarity, etc.

What do I need to write the Application?

Note: this is for both cohorts

- Observe a *representative* sample of at least 10 classrooms
- Analyze a *representative* sample of student work
- Using the data from above (and other relevant data points), discern what are the biggest barriers to effective instruction in every classroom
 - And how can this grant support removing those barriers

What are the difference in the applications?

New cohort will have an interview in addition to the written application.
The renewal cohort will just have the written application

New Cohort Big Question: what are the barriers to effective instruction in every classroom and how can this grant address them?

Renewal Cohort Big Question: How does instruction at the end of year 1 compare with instruction in spring of 2024?

- What went well? Why?
- What did not go as well as expected? Why?
- How do you know?

District level guidance on instructional priority

On this webpage: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/guidance.html>



dese MASSACHUSETTS Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

English

Security Portal | School Profiles

Most Requested: Licensure Learning Standards MCAS Educator Evaluation

Statewide System of Support (SSoS)

How it Works

Broad/Comprehensive and Focused/Targeted Schools and Districts

Grant Funding

Official DESE Communication

- May 6, 2025 — SSoS District Communication
- September 26, 2024 — SSoS District Communication
- May 13, 2024 — SSoS District Communication
- March 1, 2024 — FY25 District Instructional Prioritization Submission Guidance
- January 5, 2024 — SSoS District Communication
- October 27, 2023 — SSoS District Communication

Application narrative

2. Stakeholder Engagement:

Please limit your response in this section to 300 words for fewer.

2025-2026 IAG: Intensive Assistance Grant NEW School Application

How did input from diverse and representative stakeholders (students, families, educators, and community) inform this this priority and the design of this plan?

How many stakeholders did you meet with? How did you ensure their input was representative?

What input did you get from stakeholders?

How will stakeholders be continuously engaged in implementation and monitoring?

3. Outcomes and vision for the future: Describe what your school will look like when you have successfully brought quality instruction to every classroom every day.

Application Narrative: Budget

2025-2026 IAG: Intensive Assistance Grant NEW School Application

Section II: Budget (this is also a written section)

2025-2026

Activity (e.g., Professional development to all teachers to support implementation of new curriculum.)	Connection to School Instructional Priority (one sentence per activity)	Description: Provide a brief explanation of what the activity entails (1-2 sentences per activity). Add more rows as needed.	Cost

Budget in Future Years: please provide a brief description of how IAG funds are tentatively planned to be used in FY27 and FY28. This section should be 1-2 paragraphs.

Scoring Rubric

Rubric has everything on which the application will be scored.

Sections I and II: The Schools Instructional Priority and Budget (the written application)				
Rubric Item	Weak -1	Marginal -2	Adequate -3	Strong -4
School Instructional Priority	There is no alignment discussed between the school's instructional priority and the district's instructional priority.	There is a weak alignment between the school's instructional priority and the district's instructional priority. The meaningful changes to educator practice are discussed on a superficial level.	The alignment between the school's instructional priority and the district's instructional priority is stated. The meaningful changes to educator practice are discussed, though more clarity could have been provided.	There is clear alignment between the school's instructional priority and the district's instructional priority. The school's priority is grounded in equitable opportunities and outcomes for students, particularly those that are historically marginalized. The meaningful changes to educator practice are clearly articulated.
Analysis of Strengths and Challenges	A data analysis and the underlying systemic factors contributing to the challenges are not described. The data analysis, if present, does not include disaggregating by student	While a data analysis is described, the explanation is vague and/or surface level. There is minimal discussion of the underlying systemic factors contributing to the challenges. The data analysis has little to no disaggregating by student groups.	A reasonable amount of data analysis is described. Underlying systemic factors contributing to the challenges are discussed. The data analysis includes disaggregating by student groups.	A clear data analysis is described. There is a clear articulation of the underlying systemic factors contributing to the challenges. The data analysis includes disaggregating by student groups.

Page 1 of 6 2183 words Text Predictions: On Accessibility: Investigate Focus

Interview Overview: Pre-work

Note: the interview is for new schools ONLY

- The interview will mostly focus on:
 - 10 (or more) classroom observations
 - Student work sample
 - Be prepared to discuss trends and patterns observed from analysis of the classroom visits and student work sample.
- This information is all in the application.

Interview overview

- The interview will include school and district leaders.
- I will reach out to schedule soon. Interviews to happen in mid-June.

Interview Questions (all in the application)

- Discuss the trends and patterns of classroom observations
- Discuss the trends and patterns of student work
- Where are the successes? How can they support improving areas for growth?
- Where are the largest gaps in student performance?
- What are the biggest barriers to effective instruction in every classroom?
- Discuss why your proposed approach is the right one.

Strategies for Success

- School and district leaders partner in this work!
- Work with SSoS team members
- Have a team score your own plan (use the rubric)
- Practice interview questions (use the rubric)
- (Renewal cohort) have your year 1 application open when you write year 2
- SSoS website: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/guidance.html>

Questions???

- Michael Seymour 781-338-3514 or michael.j.seymour@mass.gov
- Erica Champagne 781-338-3521 or erica.champagne@mass.gov
- Email is preferred for both of us!