



2024-25 Federal Programs Procedural Manual Table of Contents

Purpose of This Handbook	
Monitoring Process and Procedures	
LEA Communication and Monitoring of Title I Program	
Onsite Monitoring Procedures	
Identification of High-Risk School	
Timeline for Monitoring of Title I School	
Schedules	
Data Review	
Reporting and Corrective Action Process (Audit and Monitoring Findings)	
Technical Assistance	
Needs Assessment Process Calendar	
Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP)	
Guidance to School/Departments	
Review and Approval Process	

CLIP Schedule/Timeline	
Resolution for Unapproved Plans	
Pre-Kindergarten Programs	
Family-School Partnership	
Parent and Family Engagement Policy Overview	
Parent Notification and Communication in an Understandable and Uniform Format	
Notifications to Parents of English Learners	
Parents' Right to Know Teacher and Paraprofessional Qualifications	
Professional Qualifications	
Parent and Family Engagement Policies	
Distribution of Completed Plans	
School-Parent Compacts	
Annual Title I Meeting	
Annual Evaluation	
Parent Information and Resource Center	
School Improvement (1003a) Interventions	
Monitoring of School Improvement	
Review and Approval of School Improvement and School Wide Plans	
Professional Development, Analyzing Data, Technical Support and Assistance	
Monitoring of Use of Funds	
School Improvement 1003(g)(SIG)	
ESEA Public School Choice	
School wide Programs	
LEA Guidance	
School wide Program Plan Development	
Plan Consolidation	
Consolidation of Funds	
Target Assistance Programs	
Accountability	
Audits and Cross Functional Monitoring Findings	
Fiduciary Responsibility	
Maintenance of Effort	
Attendance Area Determination	
Allocations and Carryover	
Allocations	
Carryover	
Reservation of Funds	
Expenditure of Funds	

Payroll	
Reasonable and Necessary Use of Funds	
Allowable and Unallowable Costs	
Budget Approval Process	
Periodic Certification	
Split-Funded Personnel.....	
Capital Expense Funds	
Consultants, Contracts, Purchased Services for Federal Funds	
Travel Expenses	
Internal Controls	
Supplement vs. Supplant	
Comparability of Services	
Equipment and Real Property	
Lease of Equipment	
Use of Equipment in Targeted Assistance School	
Equipment Disposition Procedure	
Cash Management	
Internal Control Procedures	
Pre-Approval of Purchases	
Drawdown Procedures	
Reporting Procedures	
Services for Homeless Children and Youth	
Identification	
Program Procedures	
School Selection	
Enrollment	
Program Training and Information Dissemination	
Transportation	
Disputes (Complaint Procedures)	
Services for Children in Foster Care	
Services for Neglected and Delinquent Children	
Class Schedules and Calendar	
Title V, Part B – Rural Education Initiative	
Purpose	
Use of Funds	
Procedures for Evaluation Reporting.....	
Pre-Kindergarten Programs	
Title II, Part A – Supporting Effective Instruction	

Purpose	
Equity Belief Statement	
Annual Needs Assessment Process	
Equity Plan	
Prioritization of Needs	
Authorized Use of Funds	
Professional Development	
Title II-A Effectiveness Evaluation	
Internal Controls	
Professional Qualifications	
Recruitment, Placement, and Retention of Highly Qualified, Effective Teachers and Leaders	
Teacher Experience and Effectiveness Equity	
Class Size Equity	
Meeting the Diverse Needs of Students	
Procedures for Principal's Periodic Certifications	
Procedures for Parent Notification of Professional Qualifications or Out-of-Field	
 Title III: English to Speakers of Other Languages	
Purpose	
Student Identification and Enrollment Procedures	
Exit Guidelines	
Funding	
Professional Learning	
Records and Maintenance	
Academic and Assessment Records	
Program Evaluation and Accountability	
 Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE)	
Purpose	
LEA Assurances of Funding Allocation	
Transferability	
Documentation for Participation	
Identification of Participants.....	
Finance	
Evaluation	
Equipment	
Academic Achievement Awards Program	
 Title I, Part C - Migrant Education Program (MEP) Services	
Complaint Procedures	
Reporting Suspicion of Fraudulent Activities	
Fraud Prevention Policy	
Assessment Security	

Appendix A: Complaint Procedures

Appendix B: Ethics and Fraud, Waste, Abuse, Conflicts of Interest and Corruption

Appendix C: Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Funds.....

Purpose of This Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a systematic approach to managing the rules and guidelines of all federal programs to ensure consistent compliance. Staff may use the provided information to ensure that all Federal programs are being implemented accurately and effectively.

The information contained in this handbook will promote uniformity, effectiveness, and efficiency of operations as federal program staff seeks to carry out official Title duties and responsibilities. The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) provides Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) extensive guidance on the overarching requirements for all federal programs with the on-site monitoring document that is used to ensure that LEAs are meeting all statutory requirements of these programs. These specific requirements from the GaDOE document were used to create this handbook. It is hoped that this handbook will be useful in assisting faculty and staff to comply with all federal programs' statutory requirements.

Monitoring Process and Procedures

The U.S. Department of Education mandates that the content and performance standards for all students reflect the same expectations generally held for all children. School reform is encouraged to support school wide projects. Federal programs are monitored by the state to determine the effectiveness of the entire program as well as individual student progress.

The Georgia Department of Education requires that Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School monitor the implementation of federal programs and the expenditure of all funds associated with the program. The specific requirements are as follows:

- (a) LEA/Program Director will conduct self-monitoring of its school and programs sufficient to ensure compliance with Title Program requirements, including Title I, Part A Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged; Title I, Part A Academic Achievement Awards; Title I, Part A School Improvement; Title I, Part A Foster Care Program; Title I, Part A Family-School Partnership Program; Title I, Part C Education of Migratory Children; Title I, Part D Neglected & Delinquent; Title II, Part A Supporting Effective Instruction; Title III, Part A Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students; Title IV, Part A Student Support and Academic Enrichment; Title V, Part B Rural Education Initiative; Title IX, Part A McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act; American Rescue Plan – Homeless Children and Youth, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- (b) The Federal Programs Director will undergo training from GaDOE and other sources to maintain proficiency in federal programs compliance requirements.
- (c) The Federal Programs Director will provide technical assistance to all faculty and staff.
- (d) Federal Program self-monitoring will include monitoring all program expenditures to verify that all program expenditures comply with Federal Program requirements.

- (e) The Federal Programs Director will maintain all documentation LEA may need for future auditing/monitoring per the LEA Monitoring Form, which is issued annually by GaDOE.
- (f) In years when LEA does not receive an on-site visit, The Federal Programs Director will complete the Self- Assessment Checklist and submit it to the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE).
- (g) LEA will undergo monitoring by GaDOE on a four-year cycle. LEA/Program Director(s) will participate in training and technical assistance updates as provided by GaDOE prior to monitoring visit.
- (h) After the on-site monitoring visit, the LEA will receive a comprehensive monitoring report, which will contain recommendations, findings, and required actions that together provide an analysis of the implementation of the LEA's federal programs. If a Corrective Action Plan is required, the LEA/Program Director(s) will respond in a timely manner with a Corrective Action Plan, which must be approved by GaDOE. The Federal Programs Director will monitor implementation of the Corrective Action Plan.

Monitoring is an essential component of ensuring that all facets of federal programs are being implemented as prescribed by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Act (ESSER). It is a process of systematically providing technical assistance and collecting data to provide information that can guide program implementation. Monitoring of federal programs is conducted to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education. Monitoring emphasizes accountability for using federal resources wisely.

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School Federal Programs makes use of monitoring as a means of regular observation and recording of activities taking place in the LEA. Critical to this process is the feedback that can assist in improving student academic achievement. School monitoring addresses the following:

- Ensuring that all activities are carried out in accordance with federal compliance guidelines
- Monitoring inventory and equipment usage
- Attainment of academic achievement goals
- Compliance with budgetary guidelines

Monitoring by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) consists of four major components:

1. Monitoring of Expenditures – Local educational agencies (LEAs) must submit for approval an annual budget through the Consolidated Application process. Federal Program Staff review each application and budget to ensure that expenditures are appropriate for the program area before approving LEA budgets. Once budgets are approved, Federal Program Staff track how well LEAs are requesting funds for expenditures to ensure that LEAs are likely to meet the expenditure requirements for federal funds.
2. Single Audit – LEAs with single audit findings are flagged for technical assistance.

3. On-site Monitoring – A SEA on-site Cross-Functional Monitoring Team visits an LEA to apply the criteria included in the *LEA Monitoring Form*.
4. Self-Monitoring Checklist – LEAs not receiving an on-site visit complete a self-assessment.

The following procedures are followed for the on-site monitoring visit:

- Selection of LEAs to be monitored.
- LEAs are monitored on a four-year cycle. Approximately one-fourth of the LEAs are monitored each year.
- LEAs with audit or monitoring findings requiring a return of monies or receiving a high number of complaints from parents and other stakeholders are monitored within the year of the LEA audit or monitoring report and the written complaint. For example, if an LEA is audited in FY21 and the Division receives the report of findings in FY22 before the end of the monitoring cycle, the LEA would be included in the LEAs to receive an on-site monitoring visit. In addition, on-site monitoring outside of the scheduled cycle may be arranged as needed if an LEA evidences serious or chronic compliance problems.

Federal Program Specialists must follow the Division protocol when conducting an on-site monitoring of an LEA. A copy of all documentation is maintained with the SEA.

LEA Communication and Monitoring of All Federal Programs

Monitoring of Federal Programs by the LEA is a critical component of ensuring that compliance is taking place at each school. During the summer prior to the beginning of the new school year and after the Annual Title I Conference in June, the school Federal Programs Director convenes a meeting of all Title I principals for an orientation. Principals receive training on policies, procedures, and guidance for operating a Title I program.

Principals are given detailed information on expectations and copies of program guidance. Specific training is provided in all facets of Federal Programs. A handbook is provided for the principal and discussed in detail by the Federal Programs Director. This notebook includes information related to timelines, budget forms, inventory information, school wide implementation, parental involvement, internal controls, fraud policy and other areas of Federal Programs as appropriate. Monthly Principal, Governing Board and Team meetings are also held. Specific budget information is given out at these meetings. Phone calls and emails are a daily occurrence between Federal Programs staff and Title I school staff. The Federal Programs Director notes corrections to plans for the principal and Leadership Team. Once the corrections have been made, the corrected copy is submitted to the Federal Programs Director.

In addition to meeting with the principal, the Federal Programs Director meets with the Parent and Family Engagement Director at the beginning of each year. These meetings are an opportunity to discuss Title I in detail and an opportunity to discuss content specific information with each of the above. Phone calls and emails are a daily occurrence between Federal Programs Director and Title I Parent and Family

Engagement Director. All Title I services are supplemental. This process is monitored through on-going technical assistance, site visits, and through the budgeting process.

Onsite Monitoring Procedures

The Title I school is subjected to on-going monitoring by the Federal Programs Director throughout the school year. The Federal Programs Director will conduct ongoing on-site monitoring of the school throughout the year to ensure compliance with Title I guidelines. The primary method that Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will use for a meaningful consultation with parents and family members will be an In-Person meeting at the LEA. The secondary method that Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will use to ask parents and family members for their input will be an online survey that will be placed on the school's Facebook page. Feedback will be provided to the principal via checklists and descriptive information (See Appendices A-C). In addition, emails, staff meetings, and phone conversations take place throughout the year as a means of providing on-going monitoring and communication with the school.

Identification of High-Risk School

If Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School is identified as High-Risk, the school will work to clear this rating. The school will use technical assistance as needed.

Timeline for Monitoring of Title I School

Date	Procedures/Event	Person(s) Responsible
June -July	Provide training in June to update principal and assistant principal on any new guidelines and to provide guidance for any "new" Title I principals. Workshops will include the following topics: budgets, ordering, compliance, parental involvement, school wide programs, monitoring, academic achievement, inventory, scheduling, internal controls, ethics, fraud, waste, abuse and corruption.	Federal Programs Director
July	Distribution of LEA/School Parent and Family Engagement Policy and School-Parent Compact (In-Person/ Parent Conference)	Federal Programs Director
July -August	Using CCRPI information determine if the LEA will need to offer additional instructional services and work with principal and assistant principal on requirements.	Federal Programs Director, Principal
August -September	Work with principal and assistant principal on annual revision of plans. The Federal Programs Director, Parent and Family Engagement Director, and Principal will review plans and budgets to ensure that funds are being spent according to plans and that plans have all the necessary components.	Federal Programs Director, Parent & Engagement Director, Principal
October	Annual Title I Meeting (In-Person)	Federal Programs Director
August – June	Monthly meetings with principal and assistant principal. Additional training as needed.	Federal Programs Director
August – June	Monitors Homeless and N&D programs.	Federal Programs Director, Homeless Liaison
March or TBD	Attends GCEL conference	Federal Programs Director
March -April	Send the Annual Survey of Parent and Family Engagement to parents to provide information as a means of gauging the effectiveness of parental involvement activities. Federal Programs Director will compile data to determine needs for the following year.	Federal Programs Director

March /April	Spring Title I Input Meeting (In-Person)	Federal Programs Director
Year-Round	Budgets and purchase orders are reviewed monthly by the Federal Programs Director to assist the school in spending funds as planned.	Federal Programs Director, Principal
Year-Round	On-going review of school improvement data and plans in conjunction with other central office staff.	Federal Programs Director, Principal, Assistant Principal
Year-Round	The Federal Program Director will provide technical assistance and meet regularly with the principal and assistant principal.	Federal Programs Director
July/August October/November January/February April/May	School Staff Capacity Building Events will be held twice per semester in the form of in-person meetings.	Principal/Federal Programs Director

Schedules

The school is monitored according to the timeline provided above.

Data Review

Data is compiled, reviewed, and discussed during leadership meetings and governing board meetings. The teams will meet and analyze data with the intent of improving instruction. Principal and assistant principal will review data with their leadership team to identify and address areas in need of improvement. The school will provide data, paper or electronic, as well as post data that are used during the data analysis process. School leaders discuss this information with all staff to ensure they fully understand the data presented.

Reporting and Corrective Action Process (Audit and Monitoring Findings)

Corrective action from previous monitoring is discussed with the principal to assist with understanding the critical need for compliance with all Federal Programs. Professional learning is provided based on needs. In addition, professional learning is used as a preventive measure to ensure that all Title staff have a clear understanding of all expectations for every facet of the applicable Federal Programs. The Federal Programs Director, along with school level staff, and outside consultants, provide on-going training as a means of ensuring that all Federal Programs staff always comply.

Technical Assistance

Technical Assistance is offered always through email and phone communication as well as school visits to assist the LEA in analyzing data to identify priorities in instruction, professional learning, and effective budgeting. Prior to the school start, a meeting with the principal is held that reviews the purpose of all federal programs, as well as expectations and procedures related to allowable use of funds. A second meeting is held mid-Spring to remind the principal of end of the year information and to provide preliminary information related to the upcoming budget year. The Federal Programs Director maintains a file of all training conducted throughout the year. This file contains all staff training, handouts, meeting agendas, meeting notes, etc. Ongoing monitoring after training is conducted by the Federal Programs Director to ensure compliance.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment Process

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School utilizes a variety of data sources to make decisions that will affect student learning and teacher effectiveness. Our needs assessment process includes examining student achievement data, perception data from stakeholder surveys, professional learning plans, teacher recruitment and retention data, professional qualification and in-field data for certified and classified staff, class size data, peer walkthrough data, TKES data, and verbal input from stakeholders. In March, each school conducts a Comprehensive Needs Assessment Stakeholder meeting that includes parents, teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, community members, and other support staff. Once the input is collected from the LEA, a series of meetings are held at the school to consider all the prior stakeholder input and data to make decisions regarding prioritized needs and equity concerns. Stakeholders participating in our needs assessment process include all members of the school administrative team, administrators and teachers from each school level, paraprofessionals, instructional coaches, counselors, parents, community members, and higher education representatives. The results of this needs assessment determine any prioritized areas of need/inequity and guide the development of plans and expenditure of funds.

Needs Assessment Process Calendar

January

- Principals' meeting - Overview of stakeholder planning process
- Receive stakeholder survey links from the school
- Administer stakeholder surveys
- Email date for the March school-level stakeholder planning meeting to PIC

February

- Invite school staff, parents, students and community to the school-level stakeholder planning meeting using an automated phone system, flier, email, website, newsletter, newspaper, translated notices, etc.
- PowerPoint and templates for the agenda, sign-in sheet, and minutes are provided from the school for use in school-level stakeholder planning meeting
- Parent survey remains open for to enter responses from paper surveys
- Receive stakeholder survey data from the school office

March

- Hold school-level stakeholder planning meeting
- Use PowerPoint from school to guide the planning process
- Discuss and respond to questions in the PowerPoint
- Solicit input from stakeholders for addressing identified needs
- Document the meeting:
- Sign-in sheet, including each attendee's role (parent, para, student, teacher, etc.)
- Agenda
- Copies of data reviewed as well as other handouts
- Minutes (must include details of the discussion)

April

- Scanned copies of the following documentation:
- Documentation of parent, faculty and staff, student, and community invitations to the school-level stakeholder planning meeting

- Documentation of invitations to stakeholders to participate in the appropriate survey for that group (teachers, paras, administrators, parents)
- Documentation of school-level stakeholder planning meeting
- Sign-in sheet, including each attendee's role (parent, student, teacher, etc.)
- Agenda
- Copies of data reviewed as well as other handouts
- Minutes
- Stakeholder input (responses to the questions in the PowerPoint)
- Work on updating School Improvement Plans with leadership team

May

- Continue to work on and finalize School Improvement Plans

June

- Leadership Team reviews the school program plan
- School Improvement Plan completed and shared in Google Drive and available to the Leadership Team.

July-August

- Federal Program Director along with School Improvement Team will approve/request changes

September

- At School Administrative meeting, review and approve school plan

Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP)

Section 1112 of the Title I, Part A of every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) specifies that local educational agencies (LEAs) may receive funds under ESSA if the LEA has an approved plan on file with the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE).

Guidance to School/Departments

All components of the CLIP (System Comprehensive Needs Assessment, District Improvement Plan, Foster Care Transportation Plan, Parent and Family Engagement Policy, and Title I, Part C Identification & Recruitment Plan) are required prior to the school receiving funding from state and federal programs. CLIP revisions take place annually using prior year data and needs assessment information. The CLIP serves as the plans detailing coordination of various federal programs and identification of needs which in-turn assists budgeting for such needs with federal funds. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School federal programs director, principals, instructional coach, school leaders, as well as community and parent stakeholders are involved in the revision process. Parents are sent information inviting them to participate via mail, email, telephone, newspaper, social media, flyers, website, and newsletters. The LEA conducts an annual survey each year that allows parents to provide input on school policies and procedures. Parent input is examined and considered from these surveys. Documentation includes signing sheets, agendas, meeting minutes, emails, survey responses and returned plans with comments. Copies of comments are kept on file and put in meeting minutes. Several subsequent meetings are

arranged to garner input from all stakeholders. For example, input is solicited from school leaders at monthly administrative and curriculum meetings. The federal programs Director, Directors, and specialists gather all input and update the CLIP. The plan is submitted to the Superintendent for final approval.

Review and Approval Process

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School designated administrators are responsible for conducting an annual review of the CLIP, at which time revisions are made. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School is committed to cultivating and sustaining partnerships with parents and community stakeholders, and encourages their participation in the development, implementation, review and evaluation of its Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP), including all received documents. All parents of Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School students are provided multiple opportunities to be involved in the development and revision of Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School CLIP. These opportunities include access to the CLIP and a feedback survey on the school's web page, at a school wide parent meeting held in the Fall, and at spring school-based Title planning meetings. Once all the documents required as a part of the CLIP have been uploaded in the GaDOE portal, all school directors, including the following programs: Title I, Part A Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged; Title I, Part A Academic Achievement Awards; Title I, Part A School Improvement; Title I, Part A Foster Care Program; Title I, Part A Family- School Partnership Program; Title I, Part C Education of Migratory Children; Title I, Part D Neglected & Delinquent; Title II, Part A Supporting Effective Instruction; Title III, Part A Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students; Title IV, Part A Student Support and Academic Enrichment; Title V, Part B Rural Education Initiative; Title IX, Part A McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act; and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are provided the opportunity to review and make any final changes before CLIP documents are submitted for approval by the GaDOE by the Federal Programs Director.

CLIP Schedule/Timeline

To ensure timely submittal to the GaDOE, the following timeline must be followed:

- August-July – The newly approved CLIP is made available to parents in a parent information notebook at the Federal Programs Directors Office. A printed feedback form is provided in the notebook.
- August-October – The current CLIP is made available during a school parent meeting.
- February-April – The current CLIP is made available during school Title I Planning Meetings and opportunities will be provided via paper and online formats for feedback. Survey responses will be collected as part of the annual Comprehensive Needs Assessment.
- March-May - A system wide parent meeting is held for final input into the CLIP.
- May-June – Changes are made to the CLIP based on feedback obtained from multiple means and stakeholders.
- June – The CLIP is uploaded for GaDOE approval.

Resolution for Unapproved Plans

If the GaDOE requests revisions, the Federal Programs Director retrieves the requested changes from the GaDOE portal. The Federal Programs Director then communicates with the appropriate school personnel to ensure that requested changes are completed in the CLIP documents. The Federal

Programs Director provides technical assistance as appropriate, makes corrections and/or approves corrections in the CLIP, and then resubmits the CLIP. This process is continued until the system's CLIP has been approved by GaDOE.

Pre-Kindergarten Programs

The school does not reserve funds for pre-kindergarten programs. Policies and procedures will be put in place if the school determines that this is a need in the future.

Family-School Partnership

Parent and Family Engagement Policy Overview

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School has an on-going commitment to our parents. Parent and family engagement are defined as the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities. The school recognizes that parents are an integral part of a child's success in school, starting with the concept of being the child's first teacher. As a conduit for their children's success, the school will assist parents of all socioeconomic levels solidify their ongoing commitment to their child's success. The Family-School Partnership Program ensures that Title I, Part A parent and family engagement regulations are met with meaningful and strategic actions to build parent and school staff capacity as mandated by every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The LEA must ensure that strong strategies are in place to: 1) build capacity to engage parents/stakeholders in an effective partnership with the school; and 2) share and support high student academic achievement. The Family-School Partnership Program believes that parents, school, families, and communities working together can create meaningful partnerships that ultimately lead to significant gains across the board in student achievement.

Parent Notification and Communication in an Understandable and Uniform Format

When parents mark on the enrollment form that they need correspondence in another language, to the extent practical, efforts are made to provide either written support or support through an interpreter. The Title III Director supports these efforts as well as school staff who are fluent in multiple languages.

Furthermore, all parent communication is written in a format so that the content is easily understandable.

Notifications to Parents of English Learners

Previously stated in both Title I and Title III under every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the overarching parent and family engagement law regarding notices to parents of English Learners (ELs) receiving supplemental language support is now under Title I, Part A, Section 1112(e)(3) in every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Local educational agencies (LEAs) are required to send notification, in

a language and format appropriate for the reader, to parents of ELs who have been selected to participate in the LEA's Title III or Title I supplemental language program. This notice also permits the parent to waive participation in the Title-funded services.

Parents' Right to Know Teacher and Paraprofessional Qualifications

In Georgia, in accordance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the LEA is required to provide timely notice to parents when students have been assigned or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet applicable state certification or licensure requirements (*including professional qualifications developed by the LEA in alignment with an approved charter or strategic waiver application*) at the grade level and subject level in which the teacher has been assigned. *ESSA Sec. 1112 (e)(1)(B)(ii)* In Georgia, notification requirements apply to all teachers in the LEA school/programs. Notifications must be made within 10 business days following the four consecutive weeks.

Parents are informed of their rights to know the qualifications of their children's classroom teacher and paraprofessionals in accordance with Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This information will be sent home to every parent at the beginning of the year in each student's agenda. This notice will occur within the first week of school. The notice will include the specific contact person and telephone number and email address. Parents will sign and date an acknowledgment form of receipt of the student handbook. This information is also made available through the school websites and other newsletters sent home with students.

In compliance with the requirements of every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School would like to inform you that you may request information about the professional qualifications of your student's teacher(s) and/ or paraprofessional(s). The following information may be requested:

1. Whether the student's teacher—
 - has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
 - is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
 - is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.
2. Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

If you wish to request information concerning your child's teacher's qualifications, please contact the school's principal.

Professional Qualifications

At the beginning of each year and when preparing set-asides for the Consolidated Application, the Federal Programs Director contacts the Director and Director of Human Resources to obtain information

regarding the status of professional qualifications of teachers. This information is then used to determine the professional learning set-aside amount to support professional qualifications. All teachers who are paid with Title I funds are required to meet professional qualifications.

Parents are informed of their rights to know the professional qualifications of their children's teacher. This information is made available through the student handbook and school website. If a student has been assigned to or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher of a core academic subject who does not meet professional qualifications, parents are provided information upon request. This is to support effective parent communication.

All notices and information required must be in a uniform and understandable format, including alternative formats upon request and, to the extent practicable, in a language that parents understand. Parents may request and receive information regarding:

- Whether the student's teacher—
 - has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
 - is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
 - is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.
- Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

Parent and Family Engagement Policies

School parent and family engagement policies are reviewed and revised annually with parents and other stakeholders (teachers, principals, administrators, other school personnel, and community members). The school will hold a meeting for review of the school parent and family engagement policies. All Title I parents, teachers, administrators, and other school personnel in the school will be invited to the meeting to provide input. A notice will be put in the paper of the meeting dates. Parents and other stakeholders (community members) will be notified by invitation sent to each individual school. Meeting notices will be sent home from the school and posted on the school website. The parents that cannot attend the meeting will be given the opportunity to obtain a copy from the school and submit input before the final revisions are approved. The Parent Involvement Director will be responsible for collecting the required information (agenda, meeting notes, and sign in sheets) and submitting to the Federal Programs Director. The school will hold the meeting in the spring to revise plans for the next school year. The parent and family engagement policy checklists will be applied to school policies. Revision dates will be clearly marked on each policy. The Federal Programs Director will review policies during on-site monitoring visits. Plans include activities/workshops that have been identified and requested through the previous year's annual parent involvement survey. School improvement and parent and family engagement policies are posted on the website, available at the school, and hard copies are either in the student handbook, sent home with the beginning school packets, or with the first month of school with signed papers.

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School holds an annual open house. These meetings give parents the opportunity to review and provide feedback on system-wide student data, parent activities, school parent and family engagement plans, Comprehensive Needs Assessment, and Comprehensive Improvement Plans. Parents are notified about this opportunity through advertisements in local media,

school-level flyers, social media websites, the automated calling system, and the system website. The school uses the comments provided by parents during the annual review/revision of. After the school system review/revision process, school parent and family engagement policies are made available to parents on the school website and on the school's website. Copies are also available in the Parent Resource Center. Parents are also given the opportunity to provide feedback about Title I programs by completing annual parent surveys. These comments are used by the school when planning parenting programs.

Distribution of Completed Plans

Several plans are shared with faculty, staff, students, parents and community members on the school Federal Programs Directors office located at:

185 Pecan Street, Shellman, GA 39886

Plans include school continuous improvement plans, parent and family engagement policies, school compacts, comprehensive needs assessments, parents' right to know, complaint procedures, and policy on ethics and fraud, waste, abuse, and corruption. Parental input into the content of each plan is solicited during multiple meetings throughout the school year but especially at the annual Title I meeting conducted each fall.

School-Parent Compacts

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School is required to have school-parent compacts. It is the responsibility of the Federal Programs Director in coordination with each school's stakeholder's (administrators, teachers, school staff, parents, students) to make sure that all compacts are reviewed and revised annually. The review and revision will occur in the spring of the year at the annual Parent Involvement meetings, governance meetings, school leadership retreats, and parent workshops. Revision dates (month, day and year) will be clearly marked on each compact. Invitations for parent input will be sent home to all parents in the school and meeting dates will be given in school newsletters and through the school's website. The Parent and Family Engagement Director will be responsible for setting up meetings and collecting required information (agenda, meeting notes, and sign in sheets). School parent compacts will include responsibilities for the teacher, parent, and students. Compacts will be distributed to all parties involved for signatures in the fall of the year prior to November 1st. Copies of the signed parent receipt of the compact are kept on file at the school. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School believes that the public charter school belongs to the people who create them and that student educational goals should reflect the goals of the community. We affirm and assure the rights of parents to participate in the development of the goals and objectives of the public school and encourage involvement in all areas of their children's educational experiences. The Federal Programs Director and Parent and Family Engagement Director chair a Parental Involvement Committee that includes parent representation from the school.

The Parent and Family Engagement Director meets in the spring of each year with the principal, assistant principals, school leadership teams, teachers, parents, and students to provide training on developing effective compacts for achievement. Specific compact compliance handouts are provided to all stakeholders during training. The Parent and Family Engagement Director works collaboratively with the school to develop specific academic improvement goals and strategies including activities or

strategies for parents and students to achieve the defined goals for academic success. The achievement goals for the compact are determined by the comprehensive needs assessment and data analysis.

Parents and additional stakeholders will be trained at input meetings in the spring on the specific student/school needs determined as the goals on the effective and compliant compact. Opportunity to give additional input on the school's improvement goal(s) and concrete activities/strategies parents can do to build and develop a partnership to help their child(ren) achieve the goals for academic success. Parents will be invited to each school's leadership retreat to collaboratively develop the compact. Students will also have the opportunity for input as to their responsibility in achieving the improvement goals at the evening input meetings as well as a special spring meeting held during the school day for middle school and high school students.

Annual Title I Meeting

The Title I LEA is required to hold an annual meeting at the beginning of school. It is the responsibility of the principal in coordination with the Federal Programs Director to arrange meeting times and invite all stakeholders to the meeting. The Federal Programs Director will be responsible for collecting and submitting documentation of the required Title I annual meeting, including a copy of the invitation to parents, sign in sheet, agenda, and minutes. The Annual Title I Meetings are held before or after our open house event or Welcome Back Family Fun Night event. Meetings are also announced via paper copies to parents, website, and announcement boards at the school as Title I Meetings.

Parent Input

Parents will be provided opportunities for input as to how the school "...shall educate teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, and other school leaders, and other staff, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between parents and the school". The primary method that Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will use for a meaningful consultation with parents and family members will be an In-Person meeting at the LEA. The secondary method that Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will use to ask parents and family members for their input will be an online survey that will be placed on the homepage of the LEA's website at www.sowegastemcharter.org. Compliance documents that will be used to record evidence of the input will include invitations, meeting agendas, handouts, sign in sheets, and copies of feedback forms. Feedback will be provided to the principal via checklists and descriptive information. In addition, emails, staff meetings, and phone conversations take place throughout the year as a means of providing on-going monitoring and communication with all stakeholders.

Annual Evaluation

Process to Collect: The annual survey is provided to the school after parent advisors have reviewed and made suggestions for improvement of the survey. The parent survey is conducted in the spring. Both surveys are conducted online. However, parents are informed of the availability of a paper survey if they so desire. Advertisement of the surveys and requests for completion occur through the newspaper, newsletters, web site, phone calls. The surveys are collected and compiled, and the following year's parent involvement activities are built from the responses.

Process to Review: The results of the surveys are shared among several groups of stakeholders, including, but not limited to, parents, school administration, Parent Involvement Director, teacher advisors and those attending the annual Title I meeting.

Stakeholders review the results of the surveys while reviewing and revising the school wide and parent involvement plans and components.

Actions Taken by LEA to Improve the Quality and Effectiveness of Parent Involvement Policies and Practices: Federal Programs Director and Parent Involvement Director review the annual spring survey as well as the results from the previous spring surveys. Additions/deletions/revisions are discussed and agreed upon during this meeting. Formatting and revisions are made after the meeting and then sent back to advisors for comment. If no further suggestions are made, the surveys are sent to the school to print and send to parents without being embedded in other materials.

Parent engagement workshops and activities are planned for the following year from the annual spring survey results. Materials are also purchased for the parent resource center from expressed needs. Many opportunities are provided for building strong parent capacity to support academic achievement. The purpose is to ensure effective engagement of parents and to support a partnership among the the school, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement through, at minimum, the following activities: Annual meetings; Conferences; E-mail communications; Phone calls; Parent workshops and activities; Family nights; Volunteering; Parent advisory meetings; Open Houses; Annual notification of CCRPI status; Newsletters/flyers/brochures; Website information; and Governing Board meetings.

Capacity for Parent Engagement

Information is provided to school personnel and parents on how to build parent capacity through presentations made during meetings, through response to parent needs on surveys, through information received from the GADOE Parent and Family Engagement department, and through student handbooks, newsletters/flyers.

The Federal Programs Director and Parent and Family Engagement Director considers and plans based on the six requirements for building capacity by answering the following questions:

1. What strategies/materials have been offered to parents on understanding academic content standards?
2. What training has been offered to parents related to literacy and the use of technology?
3. How have faculty and staff been encouraged to communicate with and involve parents in their child's education?
4. What efforts have been made to foster parental involvement in Pre-K programs?
5. What attempts have been made to communicate parental involvement information to parents using language parents can understand?
6. What other support do parents receive for parental involvement activities?

Webinar sessions are shared with the School Parent and Family Engagement Director, who is responsible for sharing and planning parent involvement initiatives and information for all the school.

School Improvement (1003a) Interventions

Monitoring of School Improvement

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School has a School Wide Program. This allows all children and all parents an opportunity to have equal access to all related Title I assistance. Currently, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School does not require School Improvement (1003a) Interventions, but the LEA will utilize School Improvement Specialists when necessary to build capacity and support the school improvement process in the, as applicable. The school will be involved in school improvement efforts through the work of the LEA, RESA, and GaDOE. School Improvement Specialists will work with the school to implement practices that have proven effective for improving the school. School Improvement Specialists, along with the GaDOE, will establish clear expectations for personnel as they systematically support continuous improvement in all the schools.

Review and Approval of School Improvement and School Wide Plans

School Improvement/School wide Plans are updated each spring for the following school year. The school leadership team conducts a review which representatives from each grade level, content area, and parents meet to develop a plan. During school training, instructional strategies, parental involvement initiatives, and professional development activities are planned after a careful analysis of various data. Assistance is also provided to the school in their use of school improvement funds to accomplish initiatives in their school improvement and school wide plans.

Professional Development, Analyzing Data, Technical Support and Assistance

School leaders support the school in developing, revising, implementing and coordinating school improvement/school wide plans. During the meetings, data is analyzed to identify and develop solutions to challenges related to instructional strategies, parent involvement, professional learning, and budgets.

Monitoring of Use of Funds

The Federal Programs Director will meet with the monitoring team monthly to review and provide recommendations for budgeting decisions.

Remediation

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will provide services to students in order to meet the educational needs of all students in the school, particularly those who are not meeting State standards and upgrade the overall educational program provided for the school. In order to effectively provide services for establishing higher academic achievement, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will use annual data from state assessments to determine the students most in need of educational assistance through remediation.

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School does not currently participate in this grant.

ESEA Public School Choice

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School is a school of choice spanning the following grades: Pre-K thru 11.

School wide Programs

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School has a School Wide Program. This allows all children and all parents an opportunity to have equal access to all related Title I assistance. School Improvement Plans/School wide Plans are updated and verified each year after receiving feedback at Annual Title I Parent Meetings. The school will notify stakeholders in multiple ways. Notice of the meeting dates will be placed on the school's message board, in school newsletters, on the website and by phone. Parents that cannot attend the meeting will be given the opportunity to obtain a copy from each school and submit input before the final revisions are approved. Revision dates will be clearly marked on each plan. The Federal Programs Director will be responsible for collecting the required information (agenda, meeting notes, and sign in sheets). At these meetings, parents and other stakeholders are given an opportunity to provide input on the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP)/School wide Title I Plan, Parent/Student/Teacher Compacts, Parent and Family Engagement Plans/Policies, and the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP).

LEA Guidance

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School is one school and its own LEA.

School wide Program Plan Development

School Improvement/School wide Plans are updated each spring for the following school year. The school leadership team conducts an assessment in the spring along with representatives from each grade level, content area, and parents to develop a plan. During training and meetings, instructional strategies, parental involvement initiatives, and professional development activities are planned after a careful analysis of various data.

Plan Consolidation

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School does utilize the consolidated School wide and School Improvement plan template provided by the GaDOE.

Consolidation of Funds

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School does not consolidate federal funds.

Target Assistance Programs

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School does not have any target assistance programs.

Accountability

Audits and Cross Functional Monitoring Findings

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School undergoes regular audits as scheduled by the Georgia Department of Audits. Corrective action plans are created to correct any findings received. The school will maintain the appropriate documentation to indicate that corrective actions have been completed and any findings have been cleared.

Steps to Audit/ Monitoring Resolutions:

- Once the audit/ Cross-Functional Monitoring report is received, the Federal Programs Director will review all items. The Cross-Functional Monitoring report will be pulled from the GaDOE website under the Consolidated Application.
- Each item will be examined carefully, and a team of school level staff will determine the best means of corrective action.
- Items are gathered, and a report is written by the Federal Programs Director.
- The report is submitted to the Superintendent.
- The completed report is then sent to the GaDOE/ state auditors as a means of resolution.
- The school has 30 days from the receipt of the findings to respond to the GaDOE.
- The monitoring process and the resolution process are both used as a learning resource.

Fiduciary Responsibility

Maintenance of Effort

GADOE compares the fiscal effort of the preceding year to the second preceding fiscal year and makes the maintenance of effort determination available to the system through a marked “met” or “unmet” on the consolidated application. Documentation for MOE is only required for districts that do not meet the required maintenance of effort. The Federal Programs Director will pull the MOE information from the Consolidated Application each school year for documentation purposes (ESSA Sections 1118 and 8521).

Attendance Area Determination

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School only has one school. Therefore, attendance area determination is not needed to establish rank order.

Allocations and Carryover

Allocations

After receiving notification of the Title I, Part A grant and other federal amounts from GADOE, reservations in each budget are set aside for required components such as parent involvement, professional learning, neglected and delinquent, private school per pupil and equitable services, and homeless students. Administrative costs are also part of the reservations but are not part of the per pupil amounts for the school. Typically, requests for lesser amounts are submitted for professional learning for teachers to meet professional qualifications.

Carryover

Typically, carryover funds are allocated in one of two ways: (1) to the school by increasing the per pupil amount or (2) the funds are allocated back to the school on an equal basis, giving each school an opportunity to spend the funds. Either way, the school must submit a written description of the expenditure requests. Equitable services are also recalculated depending on an allocation of funds for school level activities.

Monthly budget sheets are monitored regularly throughout the year and calculations are made from these near the end of the school year to determine that no more than 15% will be carried into the following year. The Federal Programs Director tracks the spending of each program/school through the year via budget sheets. At the end of the school year, carryover information is updated and reviewed. Parent involvement and professional development for the identified school designated as needs improvement are taken into consideration.

Reservation of Funds

Professional Development: Georgia's Flexibility Waiver no longer requires 10% set aside for professional learning. To promote continuous school improvement, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will continue to pursue professional development to strengthen best practices in all classrooms.

Homeless Children and Youth: The Title I schools are required to set aside funds within their budgets to meet the needs of homeless children and youth. The Federal Programs Director, who is also the Homeless Liaison, annually determines the amount of funds needed to adequately meet the needs of homeless students. The Federal Programs Director trains school personnel including: counselors, Parent Involvement Director, as well as clerks, teachers, and the principal to identify children in homeless situations. A home survey is also used to identify homeless students. The Federal Programs

Director is consulted if any staff member suspects that a student qualifies for homeless services. The Federal Programs Director or designee then investigates the situation and makes the ultimate

determination on whether students qualify. When a student does qualify, notes related to the situation are maintained, and a memo/email is sent to the Student Information Director.

Neglected and Delinquent Children: The reservation amount provided by GADOE in the Title I, Part A allocation letter and worksheet is the amount set aside for neglected and delinquent children. The Annual Survey of Local Institutions for Neglected and Delinquent Children is completed each year and is based on the number of children residing at the home for 30 consecutive days with at least one day being in October.

Private Schools: Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School currently has no Private Schools that have chosen to participate in federal programs. If Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School ever has any Private School that chooses to participate all Title I and other federal regulations for private school participation and equitable services will be followed. The private school worksheet would be completed and attached to the Consolidated Application to ensure that all reservations related to parental involvement, instructional lead teachers, professional learning, and paraprofessionals have been reserved.

The school uses the information provided by the GaDOE to determine reservations for parental involvement, Private Schools, indirect cost, and Neglected/Delinquent.

Expenditure of Funds

Upon receiving allocations, each school will use a spreadsheet titled for the budget and complete narratives to develop a budget for the use of federal funds and share it with the Federal Programs Director. Upon completion of the budgeting approval process with school and Federal Program funds, the budget will be entered in the consolidated application system. Once approved at the state level, the budget into the financial system software. . Any discrepancies between the entered budget in the local system and the consolidated application must be corrected prior to spending and draw-down of funds related to spending.

Spending will follow the pre-approval process throughout the spending period. The Finance Department will generate monthly reports from the Finance Department. Monthly reports will be analyzed for expenditures against budgeted funds.

Payroll

After the September payroll has been posted, the Federal Programs Director has a report pulled that shows the name of the personnel paid with Federal funds. This report should match the personnel names submitted on the budget sheet by the Principal. If the names do not match, an investigation occurs and the matter is resolved, if necessary, through journal entries. The payroll report is pulled and checked several times throughout the year.

The Federal Programs Director ensures that the number of staff on payroll is consistent with the approved Federal funded budget. if there are any employees paid through their funds.

Reasonable and Necessary Use of Funds

Federal Programs expenditure of funds must meet the clause of “reasonable, necessary and allocable.” When considering a purchase with federal funds, ask:

- (a) Do I really need this?
- (b) Do I need to spend these funds to meet the purposes and needs of the program?
- (c) Do I have the capacity to use what I am purchasing?
- (d) Did I pay a fair rate and can I prove it?
- (e) Would I be comfortable defending this purchase?
- (f) Is the proposed cost consistent with the underlying needs of the program?

Allowable and Unallowable Costs

Any purchases made with Federal funds must follow the guidelines for allowable costs. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School Federal Programs will follow guidelines as detailed in EDGAR, state laws, local laws, and the Title I Handbook for Georgia. Federal Program purchases will also adhere to any memos, letters, and/or communication regarding allowable/unallowable purchases. The Federal Programs Director will direct any questionable expense to the Area Program Specialist for further clarification.

Federal funds cannot be used to purchase incentives for students, teachers, or participation in professional learning activities. Food for parent involvement must be considered “light refreshment”. “Light refreshments” has been defined as donuts, fruit, muffins, juice, coffee, chips, pretzels, popcorn, raw vegetables and dip, nuts, cookies, brownies, punch, soda, and water. “Light refreshments” does not include pizza, sandwiches, or anything that could be considered any part of a meal. Federal funds can only be expended for those events that “build capacity.” This means you can fund a snack for a *workshop teaching parents a specific skill*, but could not give snacks to parents volunteering.

The Federal Programs Director will prepare a written report of the preliminary Federal Programs budget once this information becomes available from GaDOE. The report is submitted to the superintendent, and the superintendent’s leadership team. The Federal Programs Director presents this information to the Board for approval. The Federal Programs Director will present all approved Consolidated Application budgets for all federal programs to the Board once the GaDOE approves them. Copies of the meeting agenda, minutes, PowerPoint presentation and approval will be maintained in the Federal Programs office.

The Governing Board must adopt all federal grant budgets and the CLIP after GaDOE approves the final submitted budget application. Additionally, any significant amendments must be adopted by the BOE. Each federal program must be identified and budget details must be listed.

Budget Approval Process

- Funding amounts are approved by the GaDOE Board of Education
- Award letters are sent to school

- The budget is entered into the GaDOE Consolidated Application (electronic grant application process) by the program Director or authorized staff
- The budget is approved by the program Director
- The budget is approved by the program specialist at the GaDOE (budget may be rejected at this level and requests for revisions may be made) • The budget amount is approved by GaDOE Accounting
- The budget is approved by the superintendent (budget may be rejected at this level and requests for revisions may be made)
- The budget is adopted by the school governing board.

Finance Department works with Federal Program Director:

- The Federal Program Director prepares the budget. The Federal Program Director ensures that all funds budgeted are allowable per funding source.
- The budget is forwarded to the Finance Director. The Finance Director and/or designee enter the budgets into the system financial system software after the DOE's approval. The Consolidated Application Budget is used as the source for entering financial system software.
- The Finance Director and/or designee emails or prints the system financial system software Summary Report and Detail Report as requested and presents to the Federal Programs Director.
- Federal Program Director and /or designee calculates current expenditures per school/facility using the Summary Report. If discrepancies are found, a Detail Report is requested. The Federal Program Director meets with Finance to correct any discrepancies. • The Finance Director and or designee files a disbursement that is processed through GAORS website.
- The Federal Program Director will receive a report to verify the funds being requested in the drawdown. The Federal Program Director will sign off on the form.
- The Federal Programs Director signs off on the form thereby requisitioning funds on the GAORS system.
- Once the requisition is processed, the Grant Payment Advice is compared to the electronic bank transactions to ensure that all funds have been received.
- The funds are recorded on the financial records to the proper fund and program as specified on the Grant Payment Advice.

Requesting products through a Purchase Requisition/Order:

- Purchase requisitions are completed by trained, designated employees using the requisition form.
- Purchase requisitions are then sent to purchasing to obtain a PO number.
- The approved purchase order is then ordered.

Receipt of Invoice:

- The created purchase form and a copy of the invoice is submitted for payment.

Payment of Invoice:

- The CFO charges the expenditures to the proper fund/program in the system financial system software.

- If invoices received that are charged to a Federal Program exceed the amount of purchase orders, the Finance Department alerts the Director and the Federal Programs Director. They work together to determine a solution.
- Disbursement is not made until the invoice is validated as owned by the school.
- Open purchase orders at year end are reviewed by the Federal Programs Director and/or designees, the Director to determine if goods or services have in fact been received but not invoiced by the vendor. Contact is made with the vendor to secure an invoice if such instances are noted.

Periodic Certification

Fully-funded federal personnel must submit an assurance (Periodic Certification Form) yearly documenting that they spent 100% of their time on federal program-related activities (2 CFR §200.430(l)(1) (I, vii)). Principals are provided a hard copy of the periodic certification form(s) as well as the due date when the form(s) are to be sent to the Federal Program Directors. Periodic certifications for all federally funded staff takes place after-the-fact. Time and effort records are maintained for all employees whose salaries or other compensation are paid in whole or in part with federal funds, not to exceed 100%. The process takes place yearly in May. The forms are kept on file in the office of federal programs by the Federal Programs Director.

Split-Funded Personnel/PARS (Time Logs):

There are no split-funded personnel paid with Title I or other federal funds in Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School. The following are the procedures if split-funded positions exist in the future:

- Split-funded personnel will be required to maintain time logs. If individuals who are paid less than 100% from federal funds and whose schedule changes from day to day complete and submit a monthly time log depicting the amount of time spent on Federal Programs duties matched, at minimum, the portion of their salary funded through Federal Funds.
- Monthly time logs will be collected from split-funded personnel. These personnel are instructed to monitor their own time throughout the month and submit it to the principals who verifies the contents and then routes them to the appropriate federal program director at the end of each month.
- The appropriate federal program director approves the monthly time log via a signature and date. The Finance Department will submit time logs to the Federal programs director. The director's periodic certification or time log is kept on file. The Federal Programs Director, Principal, and Finance Department will meet as needed yearly to complete payroll reconciliations. This will ensure that the final amount charged to the Federal award is accurate, allowable, and properly allocated.

Capital Expense Funds

When federal funds are budgeted and expended under object code 700 (capital expense), Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School ensures all required documentation is submitted and approved and purchases will be added to the district's inventory. In the event of a single item costing \$5,000 or more, a pre approval request will be submitted to the Georgia Department of Education.

Consultants, Contracts, Purchased Services for Federal Funds

Contracts are required for all consultants and purchased services. Agreements are entered between Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School and the consultant. Each contract contains the following:

- Contracts are generated by the Federal Programs Director.
- Specific duties are specifically spelled out for each contract.
- The person must also submit to be fingerprinted if they are working with students.
- The contract includes the number of hours to work and the rate of pay.
- Principals must submit the tutoring time logs based on the payroll deadlines from the Payroll Department.

Each contract is signed by the following: Contractor, Superintendent, and Federal Programs Director. The Federal Programs Director provides oversight in ensuring that all contractors' work is complete. Artifacts, daily sign in sheets, and completion of all workshops are kept on file in the federal programs office. The Federal Programs Director signs off on all invoices/contracts prior to the issuance of payment for services. These contracts must be maintained and kept in the Title I or other federal files.

Travel Expenses

All travel reimbursements are made according to state travel regulations. For more information, see Internal Controls.

Internal Controls

Internal controls are updated annually by the Federal Programs Director. The Federal Programs Director maintains the Internal Controls procedures. Federal program purchasing follows, at minimum, all Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School purchasing procedures.

Segregation of Duties: Duties are segregated within the fiscal management of the school. As part of this segregation of duties, multiple signatures are required to process any requests for payment or purchase requisitions. Requisitions are initiated by school personnel, approved by the Director and the school leader, and forwarded to the finance department for the assignment of the PO numbers and account numbers. Once approved, the director faxes or emails the purchase orders to the vendors. For purchases from school set-asides, the same process is followed. Contracted vendors are paid through the Finance Department after an invoice or time sheet has been approved by the director, a completed PO form turned in and approved by the appropriate personnel has been processed, including pre-approved PO signed by the Federal Programs Director, and Principal is submitted (2 CFR §200.303(a)).

Payroll entries, stipends, and additional salary from service contracts are processed by the Finance Department based on Personnel Activity Reports, memoranda, and timesheets approved by the Federal Programs Director and verified by the employee's immediate supervisor. As with state and local funds, federal stipends are paid in accordance with the school's established procedures regarding the number of Professional Learning Units earned and hours worked beyond the contract day or year (GaDOE Rule 160-3-3-.04).

Allowability of Costs / Appropriate Authorizations to Ensure Compliance: Any purchases made with Federal funds must follow the guidelines for allowable costs. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School Federal Programs will follow guidelines as detailed in EDGAR, 2 CFR Part 200, and the Title I LEA Handbook for Georgia. All federal program purchases will also adhere to any memos, letters, and/or communication regarding allowable/unallowable purchases. The Federal Programs Director will forward any questionable expense to the GaDOE Area Program Specialist for further clarification prior to granting approval for the expenditure. All federally funded activities must follow the process below to ensure that the Program Director, who has firsthand knowledge of federal and state program implementation requirements, examines each request for allow ability (2 CFR §200.302(b)(7), 2 CFR §200.403, 2 CFR §200.432, 2 CFR §200.421, 200.454(a-b), 2 CFR §200.94, 2 CFR §200.453).

As part of ongoing technical assistance, the Federal Programs Director provides training and guidance through emails, meetings, and phone calls with school principals on allowability principles, including the requirement that all expenditures must be aligned with needs identified in the School Wide Plan and the program's purposes for improving the achievement of the school's lowest performing pupils. Training is documented through sign-in sheets. The principal will develop, with the leadership teams, CIP/School-wide Plans, which are reviewed by the Federal Programs Director as a component of the school's monitoring. Additionally, once developed, the Federal Programs Director reviews the school-level budgets to ensure all items were included in the CLIP and CIP/School-wide Plans.

- 1) The Principal will submit requisitions to the Federal Programs Director.
- 2) Federal Programs Director reviews the expenditure for allow ability, reasonableness, necessity, allocability, adherence with period of performance, avoidance of conflict of interest, and compliance with cost principles and system procurement methods. After double-checking the account number with the approved school budget and the descriptions within the approved budget on the Consolidated Application, the Federal Program Director approves the requisition.
- 3) The Federal Programs Director forwards the requisition to the Principal for the final review and signature.
- 4) The Federal Programs Director will then submit a request for a PO number and once the PO number has been assigned and returned, the ordering process may proceed.

Supporting Source Documentation: Appropriate source documentation for time and effort, travel, equipment, and other purchases is maintained in the business office and federal programs office. Included are the following:

- Time and Effort: Fixed schedules, Personnel Activity Reports, sign-in sheets, agendas, Annual Periodic Certifications, split-funded time logs, memorandum for approval of payment
- Travel: Travel and Leave Requests with prior approval, conference agendas, receipts, Travel Expenditure Reports

- Equipment: Requisitions, Requests for Pre-Approval of Federal Purchases, invoices, packing slips, receipts
- Contracted Services: Service contracts, time sheets, requests for payment, sign-in sheets from trainings, agendas from trainings
- Software: Requisitions, Requests for Pre-Approval of Federal Purchases, invoices/receipts

Purchases made with federal funds must fall within the grant period of performance. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will work to use funds within the 15-month grant period but will follow the Period of Performance Flexibility (2 CFR §200.77, 200.309, 200.403(g); 34 CFR §76.707) to allow for an extension for the following:

- Purchases may extend beyond one year to take advantage of cost reductions, IF the students, teachers and school leaders in the current fiscal year receive benefit from the purchase.
- Leases and licenses – If instructional software subscriptions are purchased after January, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will provide explanation within the budget description indicating how students in the current fiscal year will benefit from the purchase. Professional learning and/or recruitment software and/or licensing do not require an explanation within the budget description.
- PL Registration – To maximize cost efficiency, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School May take advantage of early bird professional development registration where early bird registration occurs in the original grant period and the actual professional development occurs in the carryover period. Supporting documentation should be kept on file with the Federal Programs Director and C.

If costs are shared with another federal or state program, the expenditure total must be prorated according to the percentage of use by each program. Likewise, purchases that encompass multiple periods of performance must be prorated accordingly, as are leases and subscriptions that begin before or end after a grant's defined period of performance. Such proration must be clearly labeled on the invoice or Request for Pre-Approval of Federal Purchases.

Program Accounting and Reconciliation: Program expenditures are monitored monthly, with the submission of Attestations for Federally Funded Paraprofessionals and Teachers as well as Personnel Activity Reports and split-funded time logs. These time and effort reports are signed by the employee or the Principal as the employee's supervisor and then forwarded to the Program Director for approval and maintenance.

Likewise, monthly drawdown reports are scrutinized by the Federal Programs Director, with time and effort and purchasing documentation checked against expenditures recorded in the electronic accounting system to ensure that funding is used appropriately during each grants period of performance. If discrepancies are discovered, the Federal Program Director investigates and resolves the issue with the Finance Department . All transfer funds will be drawn down first with back up detail of verified expenditures. The expenditure documentation will be on file with the drawdown report for each federal program. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will follow drawdown procedures requested by the State Board of Education and

use the drawdown worksheet provided on the federal programs website to support drawdown requests. This sheet will be kept on file by the Federal Programs Director and the Finance Department . After the sub-grant's period of performance, the Finance Department and the Federal

Programs Director will review the Program Completion Report for submission to the GaDOE (2 CFR §200.302(b)(5)).

Cash Management / Periodic Drawdown of Funds: Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School requests monthly drawdowns of federal funds based on actual, rather than anticipated expenditures; thus, a reimbursement method is applied, and advance payments are not requested. The Finance Department prepares the drawdown report to include payroll expenditures, contracted services, and other purchases. The Federal Programs Director reviews the report, notes in writing any revisions needed, and returns the signed report to the Finance Department for correction. Once any discrepancies are resolved, the Finance Department requests the drawdown electronically from the Georgia Department of Education (2 CFR §200.302(b)(6) and 2 CFR §200.305) and, when approved by the GaDOE, funds are electronically transferred to the system's designated bank account.

Travel: All federal programs follow Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School's written procedures, available to employees on the school website, related to travel. All Travel and Leave Requests, including lodging requests, meals, mileage, and other anticipated expenses, must have the written prior approval of the Federal Programs Director (who is responsible for checking allow ability of the participant and activity, (ESEA Sec. 2123(a), 2 CFR 2 CFR §200.404(a)) and the Principal. Upon return, the employee must submit the Travel Expense Form and all required documentation such as dated hotel receipts and conference agendas. The Federal Programs Director and the Superintendent must approve the request for reimbursement for any travel-related expenses, according to the state travel policy, which must not exceed the Travel and Leave Request total without written explanation from the employee and pre-authorization of the Federal Programs Director. Once approved, the Finance Department processes a check for reimbursement to the employee upon final review by the Finance Director (2 CFR §200.474(b)).

Professional Development (PD) Stipend Procedures: Stipend pay is for staff members receiving professional development outside his or her regular scheduled work hours. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will adhere to the following according to SBOE Rule 160-3-3-.04:

Funds awarded by an LEA to certified personnel and paraprofessionals for having successfully completed learning opportunities that have occurred at any time during the fiscal year outside of the employee's normal contract/work hours. Compensation for work on an award for performance for allowable activities. It must be reasonable and necessary to the federal program.

Stipends may be awarded only if the following conditions exist:

There is evidence that the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions gained from the professional learning activity are aligned to an approved individual plan, or a school or LEA initiative and/or product, and/or specific goals; and

There is evidence that the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions developed through participation in or facilitation of professional learning have been implemented/ demonstrated in the classroom/work setting; and

Participation occurs beyond regular contract hours, days, or school year.

State and federal funds designated for professional learning shall not be used to pay stipends to school board members or to school council members who are not employees of the LEA.

Prior to the professional development training:

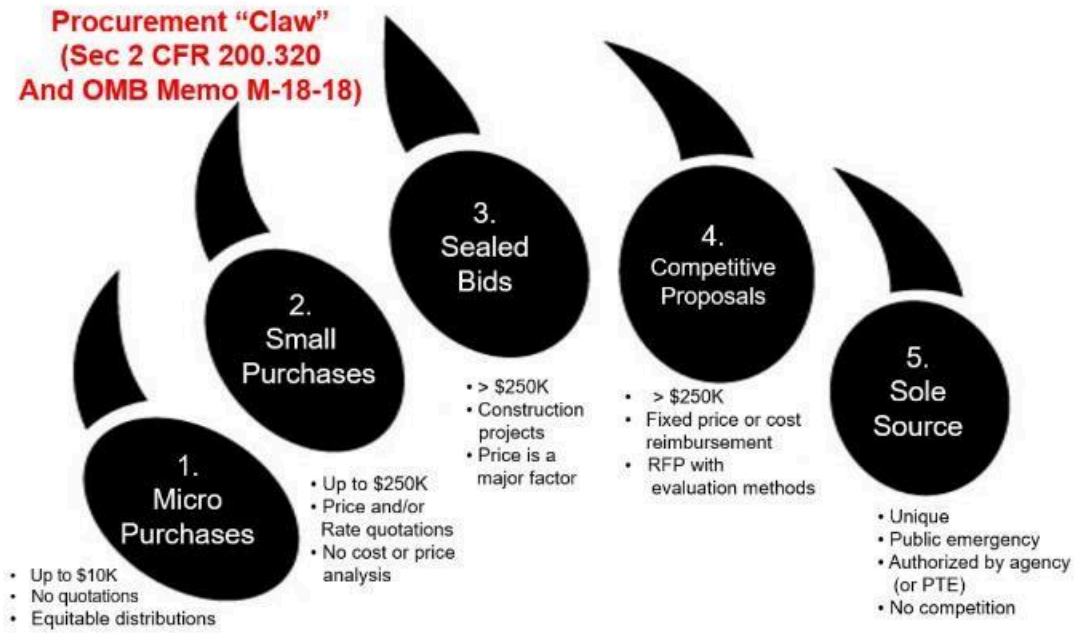
- 1) The school will submit a copy of the proposed agenda or purpose of the training on school letterhead to the Federal Programs Director, or Special Education Director, at least 30 days prior to the training.
- 2) The agenda or purpose must include the start and end time as well as the facilitator. The Federal Programs Director will determine if the PD is approved, requires modification or is not allowable.
- 3) Prior approval by the Director is required or payment will not be rendered.

After the professional development training:

- 1) Upon completion of the PD, the school is required to submit the agenda, sign in sheet, and documentation from the Principal of completion of the training. The sign in sheet must include the participant's name, title, signature, time-in, and time-out).
- 2) Upon receipt of the completion documentation, The Federal Programs Director will determine if the PD is approved, requires modification or is not allowable.
- 3) Once approved, the forms will be submitted by the Federal Programs Director to the Finance Department .

Procurement: For the purpose of procurement Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will employ the methods prescribed by 2 CFR 200. The school will use the procurement claw as a reference in all transactions regarding federal funds.

**Procurement "Claw"
(Sec 2 CFR 200.320
And OMB Memo M-18-18)**



Procedures for Micro purchases:

- Purchases shall not exceed \$10,000.
- If the price is reasonable, no quotation is required.
- Purchases will be distributed among qualified suppliers, where practicable.

Procedures for Small Purchases:

- Purchases shall not exceed \$250,000
- Rate quotations are required from an adequate number of qualified sources. To meet this expectation Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School must obtain at least two rate quotations.
- Price or rate quotes may be obtained from vendors, phone calls or internet searches.
- No cost or price analysis shall be required.

Procedures for Seal-Bids/Competitive Proposals over \$250,000:

- For any purchase over \$250,000 a cost or price analysis MUST be done before selecting a method of procurement.
- For Sealed-Bids, written specifications are to be provided to the bidder to include definition of the items or services in order for the bidder to respond appropriately.
- Clear instructions are to be provided to all bidders in writing. No changes are to be made to specifications or instructions verbally unless followed up with a written amendment to the original information to all known bidders.
- Bids will be opened publicly at a specified time and place indicated in invitation for bids.
- A fixed price contract award will be made in writing to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder.

- For competitive proposals, criteria will be developed and documented prior to issuing the proposals.
- The requests for proposals will be made public and will identify all of the evaluation factors and the importance of each.
- Proposals will be solicited from an adequate number of qualified sources, more than one.
- Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will assemble a committee to review proposals.
- The award will be made and specify all details, including time of completion.

Unlike the bid process, the lowest cost proposal does not have to be taken. In conducting the evaluation, if the high proposal is judged to be a better value than all other proposals, that proposal can be accepted. For example, if Vendor "B" proposed the entire project at an amount 5% greater than Vendor "A", Vendor B can be selected if it is found through the proposal analysis that the offered services, or their lead times, or for whatever legitimate reason, the proposal is a better value to the school.

Procedures for Sole Source Vendors:

Sole source vendors are those individuals or companies that possess specialized knowledge, skills, or products for which there is no comparable measure. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will use this method if:

- The item is available only from a single source.
- A public emergency for the requirement will not permit a delay resulting from competitive solicitation.
- The Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity expressly authorizes noncompetitive proposals in response to written requirements from Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School.
- After soliciting several sources, competition is determined inadequate.

For purchases of goods and services up to \$5,000 (individually or in aggregate) where there is no sole source vendor, the Director has discretion to recommend the purchase without soliciting additional quotations or Internet searches (2 CFR §200.67, 48 CFR Subpart 2.1)

Verification for Suspension Debarment

- The Federal Programs Director ensures that no vendors from whom Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School federal funds are spent are listed on the website sam.gov as being suspended, debarred or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in Federal assistance programs or activities. (2 CFR §180.25(a) and 2 CFR §200.213).
- 2 CFR 180.220 Procurement contracts included as covered transactions include any contract or subcontract expected to equal or exceed \$25,000 must be checked against the System for Award Management (SAM) for suspension or debarment (includes contracted tutors). Evidence of the verification can be in the form of a date/time stamped print screen or other digital method that is readily available and include who checked, when it was checked and the query criteria.

Consultants, Contracts, Purchased Services for Federal Funds

Contracts are required for all consultants and purchased services. Agreements are entered between Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School and the consultant or contracted vendor. Each contract contains the following:

- Contracts are generated by the Federal Programs Director. They also must be signed by the Principal.
- Specific duties are specifically spelled out for each contract. The contract includes the number of hours to work, the rate of pay, and timeline for payment.
- The person must also submit to a criminal background check and sign the mandatory reporting acknowledgment if he/she is working with students. A copy of the vendor's driver's license or other photo ID must be provided with the initial contract.
- Before any payment can be made the Finance Department must have a signed agreement or contract on file specifying the number of hours to be worked, rate of pay and timeline for payment. The agreement must also include duties to be performed.

Contract Administration: The Federal Programs Director will maintain oversight of contracted vendors. Source documentation such as time sheets, sign-in sheets, agendas, invoices, or evidence of satisfactory completion of the terms of the contract must be verified and signed by the Program Director prior to the payment for goods or services. Artifacts, daily sign in sheets, and completion records of all workshops are kept on file with the Federal Programs Director. The Federal Programs Director signs off on all invoices/contracts prior to the issuance of payment for services. These contracts and invoices must be maintained and kept in the federal program files.

Conflicts of Interest: The purpose of this conflict of interest procedure is to protect Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School's interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of a Governing Board Member, Director, or Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School Employees in a way that might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. A conflict of interest occurs when an entity or individual has an incongruence between personal (or self-serving) interests and professional duties or responsibilities. Governing Board Members, Director, or Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School Employees are to maintain integrity in relation to students, parents, and other stakeholders, when accepting gifts, gratuities, and/or favors. The financial interest of such gifts shall not be substantial, and the gift must be unsolicited and of nominal value no more than \$25. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflict of interest applicable to non-profit organizations.

Employees of Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School who are engaged in the selection, award and administration of contracts shall abide by the following:

- No employee, officer, or agent may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by a federal award if he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest (2 CFR §200.112).
- Such a conflict of interest would arise when the employee, officer, or agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about

to employ any of the parties indicated herein, has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for a contract.

- Officers, employees, and agents of Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School May neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors or parties to sub- contracts.

Definitions

1. Interested Person - Any director, employee, governing board member, or committee of the governing board with delegated powers, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below is an interested person.
2. Financial Interest - A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:
 - a. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School has a transaction or arrangement.
 - b. A compensation arrangement with Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School or with any entity or individual with which Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School has a transaction or arrangement, or
 - c. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.

Violation of these standards will result in reporting of said personnel to the Superintendent, and if appropriate, local authorities. Any misconduct could result in suspension, loss of employment, and any other consequences that are applicable by law. All violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the federal award will be reported to the Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School Superintendent as well as the Georgia Department of Education (2 CFR §200.113).

The school requires vendors to disclose potential conflicts of interest with current or former Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School Governing Board members and employees when signing contracts (2 CFR§200.318(c)). Additionally, the school reviews the Georgia Department of Audits list of suspended and debarred suppliers as part of the Internal Controls process.

Superintendent's Attestation: Annually, on the final fiscal report or voucher requesting payment, the Superintendent will submit the required certification attesting that cash receipts, expenditures, and disbursements are compliant with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (2 CFR§200.415).

Supplement vs. Supplant

The ESSA Section 1118(b)(1) statute includes significant changes to supplement, not supplant requirements for Title I, Part A. A Resource Allocation Methodology Plan (RAMP) is an individualized and a locally developed document that explains how an LEA plans to equitably allocate its state and local funds to operate all the schools in the district. For practicality, only expenditures that directly affect instructional practices in a school will be included. In order to allow the system to demonstrate that it is meeting all supplement not supplant regulations, no federal funds will be included in these calculations. Gilmer County Schools are not required to complete a RAMP. Title V, Part B funds must supplement and not supplant all local, state, and other federal funds. As related to the federal grants where the supplement not supplant rule is observed, the director of federal programs reviews and approves all federally funded purchase orders and professional learning requests to ensure that federal purchases are supplemental and in accordance with aforementioned plans. The director of finance does a final check of each purchase order to ensure compliance with board policies. Administrators are trained on how to coordinate the use of state, local, and federal dollars for school improvement each year. The director of federal programs reviews all plans prior to entering budgets into the console-dated application to ensure that all items are approved in the plans and do not supplant state and local funds. Supplement not Supplant is not applicable to the ESSER grants.

Title I and other federal programs use the follow questions to ensure that programs are supplementing, not supplanting:

Respond “NO” to the following questions:

1. Would other monies from the state, local or other federal resources have been used to pay for the item or service?
2. Was the item or services provided with non-federal funds in the previous year?
3. Was the item or services provided to participating children with Title I funds and to non-participating children with non-federal funds.

Title funds are not to be used to provide services that would, in the absence of Title dollars, be supported with state or local resources. To test yourself, ask:

- Does federal, state, or local law require this program?
- Did the school provide the program with non-Title I funds in prior years?

If the answer to either of these questions is “Yes” then Title funds cannot be used. Title I/IDEA funds in a School Wide Program are expected to demonstrate that they are *over and above* the amount provided to the school. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School Federal Programs Director will train all parties in Supplement vs. Supplant annually as part of the budgeting process.

Methodology to Allocate State and Local Funds to Each School. To ensure that the school receives all state earned, during its annual budget cycle, the school uses projected enrollment as well as the number of certificated and non-certificated staff members earned with state and local funds to serve the anticipated enrollment for the coming year. The school provides instructional materials including technology, instructional software, supplies, and consumable materials as needed for successful implementation of programs.

Comparability of Services

The school is a School Wide Title I School. Therefore, it is not necessary to complete comparability of services.

Equipment and Real Property

Federal Programs inventory is maintained on a spreadsheet by the school and the IT contracted company that identifies the item, serial/identification number, description, source of funding, Federal Award Identification Number (FAIN), vendor, date of purchase, cost, location, and condition. Equipment purchased with Federal Funds is permanently marked with the appropriate program by a label. Physical inventories are conducted annually. The school receives the “General Guidelines for the Use of Title I Equipment” provided by the Georgia Department of Education, and the information provided within the document is discussed with school staff, who manage the actual disposition of equipment inventory.

An electronic inventory database is maintained at the school-level by the IT Contractor that is secured by the Principal and the Federal Programs Director. The database that is updated by the school Principal or designee each time new equipment is purchased. All Federal Programs property must be aligned with the program purpose (2 CFR 200.453 (a)) and is identified by permanent markings on the equipment that signify appropriate federal program and the fiscal year the equipment was purchased. The database includes the item name, a description of the property, serial/identification number, source of funding (including the FAIN), who holds title, acquisition date/date of purchase, cost of property, percentage of federal participation if costs were shared, vendor name, school, equipment location, use/purpose, current condition, and disposition of equipment (2 CFR 200.313 (d)). School personnel must annually verify the location and condition of the equipment, and the physical inventory must be signed and dated by the person conducting the inventory twice each year, once in December and May. Each item must be checked/noted on the inventory record specifically for condition and location. Principals attest that the equipment is as identified on the inventory record submitted to the Federal Programs Director.

Technology personnel help determine the condition of electronic equipment. All Federal Programs items are checked out through the school’s records/computer room to ensure accurate location and security. Pilferable items such as electronic equipment (iPads, tablets, Chromebooks, laptops) are stored in locking sync and charge carts when not in use. The school Principal and/or federal programs director is responsible for training staff on the intended use of federally purchased property and for ensuring usage is aligned with the program’s purpose and the CIP/School-wide Plan. Property purchased with federal funds is to be used only for the purposes outlined in the grant and may not to be used off-campus without prior written permission from the Program Director (2 CFR 200.313(a) (1,3), (c)). Materials must be checked out from the school’s records/computer room. System personnel maintain equipment whenever possible, as electronic work orders and technology requests are filtered to the central office, where the Maintenance Department manages these requests. All reports of loss, theft, or

damage are made in writing to the Federal Programs Director, who investigates them with the school Principal.

When a piece of equipment needs to be disposed of, disposal forms are completed and kept on file. Disposal occurs according to Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School disposal procedures. In keeping with 2 CFR §200.313 (e), property purchased with federal funds is first offered to another federal program if no longer needed for the original program's purposes. Electronic and hard copies of the inventories are filed with the Federal Programs Director. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School LEA Equipment Disposition Policy, along with applicable state and federal laws, will be followed for the disposition of equipment and real property purchased with Title I, Part A and other federal funds (2 CFR §200.313(d)). Disposed items must remain on inventory for a period of five years.

Lease of Equipment

The school system does not lease equipment using Title funds.

Use of Equipment in Targeted Assistance School

The school system is not a targeted assistance school.

Equipment Disposition Procedure

When computer equipment is no longer operational, it will be recycled or disposed of.

Equipment purchased with federal grants that is no longer needed for the original program may be dispositioned as long as the equipment is not needed by another federal program. Furthermore, equipment valued at less than \$5,000 and is more than three years old can be retained, sold, or disposed of with no obligation to the Georgia Department of Education. Equipment valued at \$5,000 or more may be retained or sold and the Georgia Department of Education has rights to ten percent of the sales.

In the event, Federal Programs equipment or technology is stolen the following procedure will be followed:

1. File an incident report with the local authorities
2. Attach the incident report to the Technology Disposal Form and send it to the Federal Program Director's office.
3. Make corrections to the Federal Programs inventory.
4. Send the updated inventory to the Federal Programs Director. The principal must sign and date the inventory spreadsheet.

Any item is classified as surplus when it is no longer economically and educationally feasible to maintain and operate within the school system. Any property considered a capital asset, as defined by board policy DIB, must be submitted and approved by the superintendent for surplus. Any property not considered a capital asset must be submitted and approved by the superintendent and/or the superintendent's designee for surplus and disposal.

The Board expects reasonable value for all disposed property. Surplus items may be sold by sealed bid, public auction, private sale, or donation to a governmental agency or nonprofit group, whichever is in the best interest of the school system. In certain situations, value may mean a financial savings to the district in time, labor, space and equipment.

In the event no bid is received and/or there is no buyer on any item, the superintendent and/or designee shall dispose of the item(s) in a manner most beneficial to the school system. Sales will be advertised according to state requirements in advance of sale date. All proceeds from sales shall be deposited in the appropriate fund.

The Board of Education must report all property, meaning vendor and payroll checks, presumed abandoned that is held or owed in the ordinary course of the Board's business and has remained unclaimed by the owner (vendors, employees, contractors, etc.) for more than the specified period of time after it became distributable.

The dormancy period on vendor checks is five (5) years. For unclaimed payroll checks, the dormancy period is one (1) year. The Board recognizes its responsibility to make a good faith effort to determine the whereabouts of the owner of the property, and also recognizes that there are limits to what can be done to locate the rightful owner of the property. Where possible, the owner of the unclaimed check is notified via phone, e-mail, or letter to the last known address. Respondents to the notification will receive a replacement check if they request a replacement. If there is no response to the letter by the designated deadline, the unclaimed property will be remitted to the Georgia Department of Revenue's Unclaimed Property Program.

The superintendent and/or the superintendent's designee shall be authorized to establish a procedure for surplus and disposal of property.

Guidelines for Care and Use of Southwest Georgia STEM Charter Schools System Devices

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter Schools' devices are the property of Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School and are intended for the educational mission of the board of education. Devices and network resources purchased by Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School should not be considered "personal computers" and should not be used for personal gain or entertainment.

The use of the system's devices and networks are governed by the policies of the board of education.

- Devices will be assigned utilizing inventory control as determined by the principal or building supervisor in accordance with district inventory controls.
- Devices assigned to employees are for employee use only and it is the employees' responsibility to care for the device he/she has been assigned.
- Portable devices (Chromebooks, iPads, etc.) should be secured by lock and key when not in use.
- Software beyond the pre-installed software necessary for the educational mission of the school system should not be installed, downloaded, or transferred to a system computer without the approval of the technology director or his or her designee.
- Students and parents acknowledge the district's procedures related to the 1:1 Chromebook initiative via the Student-Parent Handbook.

Pre-Approval of Purchases

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School has procedures in place for purchases made with Federal Funds to maintain internal controls and to avoid fraud, waste and abuse, and corruption of federal

funds. All purchases must be pre-approved prior to an order being placed. This includes orders from RESA and other companies where orders can be placed online.

Reporting Procedures

Copies of completion reports for the previous fiscal year will be kept on file with the Finance Department . Accounting records to support the results of outlays (expenditures indicated in the completion report will be kept on file in the Finance Department Office. Copies of expenditure (cumulative through) reports for the respective quarter for total expenditures reported to GaDOE will be kept on file in the Federal Programs office and Finance Department. The Federal Programs Director will run a budget summary and detailed expenditure reports for all funds. Federal Programs Director discusses budget summary reports with the administrator at monthly meetings and ongoing communication/feedback through phone calls, electronic feedback, and emails.

Services for Homeless Children and Youth

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School homeless liaison works to assure students receive needed services. The school submits, through the Consolidated Application's Coordination Tab and Student Record, information about the number of homeless children and reports educational and related support needs through an annual survey in the GaDOE portal.

Identification

The Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School Federal Programs Director works with appropriate agencies, social workers, and DFACS to identify homeless children. The school will assess related needs of the homeless children and youth in an effort to plan strategies to meet those needs. To identify the educational needs of homeless children, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School uses attendance data, discipline data, grades, and achievement test results. Available data and information are used to produce a summary of needs. The LEA is required to make a statement providing guidance/direction to teachers about not isolating or stigmatizing homeless children in their individual teacher handbooks.

The Special Education Director collaborates with other agencies to appropriately identify homeless children in need of special education and related services through Child Find activities.

Program Procedures

- The school is responsible for identifying a homeless liaison.
- Homeless students will be identified based on the definition prescribed by McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and via a numeric code in the school's student information system. All staff in the school will be trained in the identification and recruitment of homeless students.

- The homeless liaison will provide annual training for all school staff having contact with homeless students.
- Principals will receive annual training on the identification and needs of homeless students.
- The school will display flyers, brochures, and posters that identify the Homeless Liaison contact information.
- Services for homeless students (tutoring, etc.) will be evaluated based on student academic achievement.

School Selection

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School is one school. Therefore, school selection is not an issue.

Enrollment/Withdrawal

Enrollment of Homeless students occurs at the appropriate school (middle or high) to which they are assigned based on their grade level. School registrar is trained and attentive to the identification of homeless students during the enrollment process. Any identification of a “homeless” student/family will be immediately submitted to the Homeless Liaison for further investigation.

Homeless students often leave school without officially withdrawing. If the school is contacted by another district for a homeless student’s records, requested information shall be provided and school records sent within 15 days to the receiving school district.

Program Training and Information Dissemination

The Homeless Liaison or designee annually conducts training and sensitivity/awareness activities each fall to heighten the awareness of the following personnel of the specific needs of unaccompanied and homeless youth: principals, assistant principals, federal program administrators, registrars, school secretaries, school counselors, custodians, school nurses and teachers. Homeless liaison will lead and coordinate the school’s compliance with this policy and will receive training annually. Meeting documentation includes the PowerPoint presentation, agenda, and sign-in sheets. The Homeless Liaison or designee distributes posters and brochures throughout the school and the Parent Involvement Resource Center in the lobby. Posters and brochures are also distributed to the community at various locations including but not limited to the following: Department of Family and Children's Services, Community Centers, Local Churches, Health Department, Fire Department, Hospital, Soup Kitchen, Local Law Enforcement, Safe Haven, and Local Doctor Offices.

Transportation

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will put into place a transportation plan for any identified homeless students. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will meet with the parent and the student to determine the specific transportation needs. Once the family’s transportation needs have been identified, the school will assign a schedule of transportation for the student for

pick-up and drop-off. The school will assign a driver to the student's particular plan and route using the Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School mini-bus.

Academic Credit

A student's homeless status shall not be a barrier to receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School Federal Programs Director in conjunction with the school principal at each step of the process will:

- waive specific courses required for graduation for students experiencing homelessness if similar coursework has been satisfactorily completed in another school district; or the SSA will provide an alternative process of obtaining required coursework so the student may graduate on time.
- SSA will consolidate partial credit, unresolved or incomplete coursework and provide students experiencing homelessness with opportunities to accrue credit to eliminate academic and nonacademic barriers for the student.
- For students who have been unable to complete an academic course and receive full credit due to withdrawal or transfer, SSA will grant partial credit for coursework completed before the date of the withdrawal or transfer. When SSA receives a transfer student in these circumstances, it will accept the student's partial credits, apply them to the student's academic progress or graduation or both, and allow the student to earn credits regardless of the student's date of enrollment.
- If a student is transferring at the beginning of or during their junior or senior year of high school and is ineligible to graduate after all alternatives have been considered, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will work with the sending district to ensure the awarding of a diploma from the sending district if the student meets the graduation requirements of the sending district.
- If a student enrolled in three or more school districts as a high school student, has met state requirements, has transferred to Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School, but is ineligible to graduate from the school after all alternatives have been considered, SSA will waive its local requirements and ensure the student receives a diploma.
- If a student transfers to another school or district, the federal programs Director in conjunction with the registrar and the principal will ensure that records are transferred to the receiving school. The school will also provide course work level data to allow the receiving school to grant partial or full credit as appropriate according to the receiving district's requirements.

Disputes (Complaint Procedures)

Any individual, organization, or agency ("complainant") may file a complaint with Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School if that individual, organization, or agency believes and alleges that is violating a federal statute or regulation that applies to a program under the Title I, Part A of every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015. The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date the complaint is received, unless a longer period is reasonable because the violation is considered systemic or ongoing. To file a complaint that a violation of federal regulation has occurred

with the Flexible Learning Program, an individual should follow the procedures in Appendix A: Complaint Procedures.

Services for Children in Foster Care

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requires LEAs to describe the steps the it will take to ensure collaboration with the State child welfare agency to ensure the educational stability of children or youth in foster care, including assurances that:

- Foster youth are enrolled or remain in their school of origin, unless a determination is made that it is not in their best interest.
- The determination will be based on best interest factors, including consideration of the appropriateness of the current educational setting, and the proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement.
- When a determination is made that it is not in the child's best interest to remain in the school of origin, the child will be immediately enrolled in a new school.
- The LEA will designate a point of contact for child welfare agencies, who will oversee implementation of the LEA responsibilities.
- The Federal Programs Director will set up meetings with the local child welfare agency to develop plans of service for children under care.
- The Assistant Principal will be the point of contact for the local child welfare agency.
- LEAs are not required to provide school of origin transportation, if there are additional costs, unless they are reimbursed by the child welfare agency or agree to provide it.

Foster care is defined as 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the State agency has placement and care responsibility. This includes, but is not limited to, placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, childcare institutions, and pre-adoptive homes.

Services for Neglected and Delinquent Children

The purpose of Title I, Part D is to improve educational services for children and youth in local and State institutions for neglected or delinquent children and youth. So that such children and youth can meet the same challenging State academic content standards and challenging State student academic achievement standards that all children in the State are expected to meet. The purpose is also to provide such children and youth with the services needed to make a successful transition from institutionalization to further schooling or employment. It is also to prevent at-risk youth from dropping out of school, and to provide dropouts, and children and youth returning from correctional facilities or institutions for neglected or delinquent children and youth, with a support system to ensure their continued education.

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will serve these students using funds set aside in the Title I budget for neglected institutions, if there are students identified. These funds provide after school tutors, as well as supplies and computers as needed. No staff members, other than after school tutors, are funded using Title I funds.

- (a) The Federal Programs Director will work directly with appropriate institutions to ensure that students are receiving needed services by meeting with house parents at least annually, more often as needed.
- (b) Meeting minutes, agendas, collaborative planning, emails, phone logs will be maintained by the Federal Programs Director.
- (c) Equipment must be inventoried annually. (d) All staff will be trained annually on meeting the needs of neglected students.

Class Schedules and Calendar

Students residing in neglected institutions attend school on the campus of Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School and follow the same academic calendar and schedules as all students in the school.

Parental Engagement

Students residing in neglected institutions attend school on the campus of Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School. Therefore, the Parent and Family Engagement Plan at each school serves as the plan for the families that house neglected students. In addition, house parents of neglected students receive the same invitations to Parental Involvement activities as all other students in the school.

Title V, Part B – Rural Education Initiative

Purpose

The Rural Education Initiative is designed to assist rural school districts in using federal resources more effectively to improve the quality of instruction and student academic achievement. Title V, Part B funds must supplement other local, state, and federal dollars. Title V, Part B provides resources above all other resources.

Use of Funds

An eligible LEA may use Title V-B funds for activities authorized under:

- Title I, Part A (Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged)
- Title II, Part A (Supporting Effective Instruction)
- Title III, Part A (English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement and Academic Achievement Act)
- Title IV, Part A (Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants)

- Parental Involvement activities

Procedures for Evaluation Reporting

As the primary recipient of TitleV, Part B federal grants, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School is responsible for monitoring the activities of its sub recipients to ensure the sub award is used for authorized purposes and is in compliance with federal and state statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the grant, pursuant to 2 CFR § 200.332. Annually, [SDE] staff performs a series of activities that are applicable to all LEAs as part of the universal monitoring activities. NCSI 2023 | The following is a list of monitoring activities that are performed annually and serve as the first line of oversight of all grant recipients: • annual budget review • quarterly submission of Expenditure Reports for fiscal team • annual review of maintenance of effort (MOE) compliance data • monitoring of excess cost requirements • monitoring of timely obligation of funds • annual risk assessment • review of evaluation reports completed by federal programs. This monitoring will be written up and kept with the monitoring evidence of all other Federal Programs

Pre-Kindergarten Programs

The school does not reserve funds for pre-kindergarten programs.

Policies and procedures will be put in place if the school determines that this is a Title I need in the future.

Title II, Part A – Supporting Effective Instruction

Purpose

Title II, Part A grant funds are obtained by a State based on the United States Department of Education's (USDE) approval of either (1) an individual State plan or (2) a consolidated application that includes the program. Through the program, state and local educational agencies (SEAs and LEAs) receive funds using a USDE provided formula based on poverty and population.

The purpose of the Title II, Part A grant is

- to increase student achievement consistent with challenging State academic standards,
- to improve the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals and other school leaders,
- to increase the number of teachers, principals and other school leaders who are effective in improving student academic achievement in the school, and
- to provide low-income and minority students greater access to effective teachers, principals and other school leaders.

Equity Belief Statement

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School believes all students should have equitable access to academic instruction by effective teachers. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School strives to recruit, prepare, train and support high effective teachers, paraprofessionals and leaders in our school system. We are

also focused on developing school level improvement plans with measurable objectives that will ensure that all teachers and paraprofessionals maintain professional qualifications.

Annual Needs Assessment Process

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School completes an annual Comprehensive Needs Assessment (ESSA Sec. 2122(c)(1), Sec. 2122(b)(7), Sec. 2122(c)(2)) in the spring of each year that addresses each of the following areas:

- *Professional Learning*
 - Student Supports and Interventions
 - Teacher Development
 - Leader Development ○f Professional Growth
- *Personnel*
 - Recruitment
 - Retention ○f Effectiveness
- *Factors Affecting the Learning and Work Environments*
 - Climate
 - Support Programs & Interventions
- *Title II, Part A Administration*
 - Prioritizing Funds
 - Needs Assessment/Consultation
 - Internal Controls

The survey is open to all administrators, teachers, certified support faculty, staff, paraprofessionals, parents, and community members. In addition, input on areas in need of improvement is solicited from school leaders by email and during monthly Governing Board meetings. Feedback is also solicited from parents during the annual Title I meetings and from community stakeholders through social media and civic groups.

Information gathered from these various sources is discussed and decisions made on areas of focus by school leaders at stakeholder meetings. Supporting documentation is kept on file by the Federal Programs Director and the Parent Involvement Director for each required component in support of the data summary and needs analysis provided. This data is gathered, reviewed and used to determine the needs that will be reported in the CLIP and Equity Action Plan, which will guide the selection of strategies to be included in the budget.

Equity Plan

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School Equity Plan for Title II-A is revised each May/June using needs assessment surveys and other forms of current data. The Equity Plan serves as the plan detailing professional learning and effective equitable access to effective teachers. Department Directors, school and system leaders, as well as community and parent stakeholders are to be involved in the revision process as a part of the needs assessment. As the Equity Plan is revised, it is shared with middle and high committees. The principal seeks input from governing board and school team members (administrative staff, teachers, community business partners, and parents) and then gives feedback for revisions.

Meeting agendas and sign-in sheets will be maintained as evidence and documentation of stakeholder involvement in the revision process. Documentation supporting the Equity Action Plan initiatives is maintained at the central office by the Title II Director (ESSA Sec. 1111(g)(1)(B), 1112(b)(2), 2101(d)(2)(E), 2103 (b)(3)(B)).

Prioritization of Needs

Internal and external stakeholders are involved in the planning process by assisting with the prioritizing of needs. Prioritization of needs is accomplished by analyzing the percentage of responses to various questions on the annual needs assessment. In addition, prioritization is discussed with stakeholders during meetings. Information gathered from various meetings is discussed by the school governance board, consisting of the Superintendent, and principals. The Governing Board then combines the feedback from various stakeholders and creates a final prioritized list of needs.

Authorized Use of Funds

Title II funds can be used for recruitment, retention, professional development, and class size reduction. Title II-A funds must be used to *supplement, and not supplant*, non-Federal funds that would otherwise be used for activities authorized under Title II-A. It is presumed supplanting has occurred in the following circumstances:

- Title II-A funds for services that are required under other federal, state, or local laws
- Title II-A funds for services provided with non-Title II-A funds in the previous year.

Expenditures of Title II-A funds must be necessary to implement an activity designed to meet one or more of the annual prioritized needs, reasonable in cost, and allocable to the Title II-A program.

Professional Development

The term “professional development” means activities that:

- A. are an integral part of school and local educational agency strategies for providing educators (including teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel) with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable students to succeed in a well-rounded education and to meet the challenging
State academic standards; **and**
- B. are sustained (not stand-alone, 1-day, or short-term workshops), intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data- driven, and classroom-focused, and may include activities that (I) improve and increase teachers’ —
 - (I) knowledge of the academic subjects the teachers teach;
 - (II) understanding of how students learn; and
 - (III) ability to analyze student work and achievement from multiple sources, including how to adjust instructional strategies, assessments, and materials based on such analysis;
- (ii) are an integral part of broad school wide educational improvement plans;
- (iii) allow personalized plans for each educator to address the educator’s specific needs identified in observation or other feedback;
- (iv) improve classroom management skills;

- (v) support the recruitment, hiring, and training of effective teachers, including teachers who became certified through State and local alternative routes to certification; (vi) advance teacher understanding of
 - (I) effective instructional strategies that are evidence-based; and
 - (II) strategies for improving student academic achievement or substantially increasing the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers;
- (vii) are aligned with, and directly related to, academic goals of the school or local educational agency;
- (viii) are developed with extensive participation of teachers, principals, other school leaders, parents, representatives of Indian tribes (as applicable), and administrators of the school to be served under this Act;
- (ix) are designed to give teachers of English learners, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to those children, including the appropriate use of curricula and assessments;
- (x) to the extent appropriate, provide training for teachers, principals, and other school leaders in the use of technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy), so that technology and technology applications are effectively used in the classroom to improve teaching and learning in the curricula and academic subjects in which the teachers teach;
- (xi) as a whole, are regularly evaluated for their impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student academic achievement, with the findings of the evaluations used to improve the quality of professional development;
- (xii) are designed to give teachers of children with disabilities or children with developmental delays, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and academic support services, to those children, including positive behavioral interventions and supports, multi-tier system of supports, and use of accommodations;
- (xiii) include instruction in the use of data and assessments to inform and instruct classroom practice;
- (xiv) include instruction in ways that teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, and school administrators may work more effectively with parents and families;
- (xv) involve the forming of partnerships with institutions of higher education, including, as applicable, Tribal Colleges and Universities as defined in section 316(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1059c(b)), to establish school-based teacher, principal, and other school leader training programs that provide prospective teachers, novice teachers, principals, and other school leaders with an opportunity to work under the guidance of experienced teachers, principals, other school leaders, and faculty of such institutions;
- (xvi) create programs to enable paraprofessionals (assisting teachers employed by a local educational agency receiving assistance under part A of title I) to obtain the education necessary for those paraprofessionals to become certified and licensed teachers;
- (xvii) provide follow-up training to teachers who have participated in activities described in this paragraph that are designed to ensure that the knowledge and skills learned by the teachers are implemented in the classroom; and
- (xviii) where practicable, provide jointly for school staff and other early childhood education program providers to address the transition to elementary school, including issues related to school readiness.

Professional development activities are evidence-based or based on evidence of program success resulting in increased program success (ESSA Sec. 2122(b)(1)(B)). This documentation is maintained by each school. It must also address one or more of the annual LEA prioritized needs. Finally, professional learning must focus on increasing the ability of the teaching staff to help all students achieve high academic standards, or the school administrative staff to lead their school's efforts to increase student academic achievement. Professional contracts require certificated employees to participate in professional learning annually. Annually, the principal submits professional learning spreadsheets indicating whether the teacher has participated in high-quality professional learning. The LEA uses these spreadsheets to calculate the percentage of teachers participating in high quality professional learning. Additionally, requests for professional learning expenditures (conferences, books, seminars) are evaluated by the central office for alignment with the school Professional Learning Plan, and the principal also submits each spring a list of professional learning topics, derived from comprehensive needs assessment data, and proposed funding sources. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School coordinates all Federal, State, and Local professional learning activities and supporting funds (ESSA Sec. 2122(b)(4), Sec. 2122(b)(6)).

Title II-A Effectiveness Evaluation

The Federal Programs Director will draft the annual Effectiveness Plan based on current planned budget expenditures in accordance with SEA requirements. The Effectiveness Plan is revised and uploaded if a budget amendment is submitted due to a change in needs and/or a significant change in budgeted strategies. Effectiveness of federally funded activities is evaluated annually using available student achievement results, process data, and stakeholder perception data (ESSA under Title I, Part A) Historical and longitudinal data are reported and compared to evaluate the impact of interventions. Artifacts and evidence of implementation are collected from the school as part of the ongoing monitoring process. This summary of program effectiveness is included in the subsequent year's Comprehensive Needs Assessment and is used to guide the development of the following year's program.

Internal Controls

All written internal controls, procurement standards, and inventory/property management outlined in the Title I section of this handbook apply for Title II as well. The supplement not supplant test resides at the expenditure level for Title II.

Professional Qualifications

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School systematically monitors professional qualifications of its teachers based on demographics and a written remediation plan is created for each teacher who meet the LEA Professional Qualification requirement but are NOT "In-Field" and teachers who do not meet the LEA

Professional Qualification Requirements. In compliance with ESSA, under Title I, Part A, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School requires that the school principals have a remediation plan and monitor the progress of field teachers and teachers who do not meet professional qualifications. These logs must be kept on file for periodic review. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will ensure that data is reported accurately in each reporting platform.

Recruitment, Placement, and Retention of Highly Qualified, Effective Teachers and Leaders

The School Leadership Team discusses the recruitment, placement, and retention of highly qualified, effective teachers and leaders during monthly meetings as necessary. The topic is also discussed as part of a review of data from the system annual needs assessment during the system leadership retreat held each June. Specifically, the principal is required to report the level of retention from the previous school year and improvement with the placement of highly qualified, effective teachers for the upcoming school year. System and school goals are then created or adjusted for the next school year.

Teacher Experience and Effectiveness Equity

Teacher effectiveness is measured using two methods. First, informal focus walks are conducted at each school by administration and instructional coaches to gather data that can be used to guide professional learning activities. Secondly, administrators conduct formal observations as part of the Teacher Keys Evaluation System (TKES).

Identified inequities in teacher experience will be addressed at the school and classroom level by re-assigning personnel and students as necessary to ensure that all students have equitable access to experienced teachers.

A list of inexperienced and ineffective teachers will be maintained at the school level. Rosters will be maintained for students assigned to any teacher on the lists. These rosters will be used the following school year to ensure that students are not assigned to an inexperienced and/or ineffective teacher two years in a row.

Class Size Equity

The LEA will address inequities in class size across and within the school by re-assigning students as necessary to achieve equity.

Meeting the Diverse Needs of Students

School personnel conduct focus walks (administrators and instructional coaches) as part of a system initiative to ensure that all classrooms follow the guidelines of a standards-based classroom. One of the items on the observation checklist with the evaluation program is the use of differentiation to meet the diverse needs of students. The data from any focus walks is compiled at the school and system level, examined by the system Curriculum Advisory Committee and used to plan professional learning initiatives.

Procedures for Principal's Periodic Certifications

The Federal Programs Director will prepare periodic certification forms that will be signed at the end of May and submitted and maintained for compliance and recordkeeping.

The Federal Programs Director will maintain a list that includes the status of all Title I paid staff. At Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School, all staff paid from Title I funds must meet professional qualification requirements.

Procedures for Parent Notification of Professional Qualifications or Out-of-Field

ESSA requires LEAs to ensure that teachers meet state certification requirements (ESSA Sections 111(g)(2)(J), 112(c)(6)). In Georgia, in accordance with Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB), all LEA schools are required to provide timely notice to parents when students have been assigned or taught for 4 or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet applicable state certification or licensure requirements at the grade level and subject area in which the teacher has been assigned (ESSA Sec. 1112(e)(1)(B)(ii)). Principals will adhere to parent notification requirements for teachers who meet the LEA Professional Qualification requirement but are NOT “In-Field” and teachers who do not meet the LEA Professional Qualification Requirements. Copies of the parent letters will be given to the Federal Programs Director or the Special Education Director as appropriate.

Title III: English to Speakers of Other Languages

Purpose

The goal is to prepare students for success in school and in society through the development of cultural awareness and English language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Currently, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School does not have any students in this category.

Student Identification and Enrollment Procedures

During the registration process, a Home Language Survey is collected for each student.

- A potential English learner is identified when one or more of the responses to three language questions on the Home Language Survey include a language other than or in addition to English.
- The ESOL teacher at the student’s school receives notification when a potential English learner enrolls.
- The ESOL teacher is responsible for determining eligibility and ensuring language assistance services are scheduled for all eligible students.
- An immigrant student is identified when through the Home Language Survey, the place of birth is identified as a location outside of the United States and Puerto Rico, and the date that the student entered U.S. schools is less than three years ago. When a student was born outside of the U.S. and Puerto Rico and entered U.S. schools more than three years ago, interviews and student records are utilized to further identify eligible immigrant students in instances in which the student has completed less than three full years in U.S. schools.
- A registration staff member contacts the Federal Programs Director when the parent or guardian of a student who meets the Title III definition of an immigrant student arrives at the school to register.
- The appropriate ESOL teacher makes personal contact and supports the family through the registration and enrollment process as needed and checks in with the family periodically to assist with any arising needs that may be unique to immigrant families.

Student participation and progress in the ESOL program is measured using the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) for kindergarteners or the WIDA Screener for grades 1-12 and the ACCESS for ELLs exam for students in grades K-12. All students enrolling in Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School are surveyed to determine language background other than English. ESOL instructional support is provided after a student qualifies according to the WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) or the WIDA Screener. English Learners (ELs) are assessed annually on the state-adopted English proficiency measure (ACCESS) to determine continued eligibility. (ACCESS=Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State).

Parents have the right to select ESOL program services, remove their child from the ESOL program upon request, or decline ESOL services. After parents have received notification of student eligibility for enrollment in the ESOL program, they may request a waiver of services. Upon their request the ESOL teacher will contact the parents to ensure a clear understanding of the services offered. If the parents continue to refuse services, the school will provide a parental waiver of ESOL services form for parental completion.

Exit Guidelines

As ELs reach proficiency and ready to exit language assistance services, it is imperative to ensure these students have attained a degree of proficiency that will enable them to achieve academic success at levels equal to those of their native English-speaking peers. When Georgia joined the WIDA Consortium, the GaDOE ESOL / Title III Unit initiated discussions with the Office of Assessment and district ESOL / Title III representatives across the state to determine the appropriate level of proficiency necessary to ensure ELs' success upon exiting ESOL services.

Students in grades 6-12

The student must be administered all components of the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 assessment. Placement decisions are based on the student's overall performance on the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 assessment:

- If the student scores an Overall or Composite Proficiency Level (CPL) score of 4.3, the student will be deemed English proficient and will be exited from language assistance services. The student will be coded EL-M and his/her academic progress will be monitored for four years.

If the records on a newly enrolled student indicate that the student previously received language assistance services in another state or in a private school setting and was formally exited in accordance with exit criteria utilized in the other state or private school, Georgia Department of Education considers the student as "exited", despite the fact that the criteria may not match that of Georgia's guidance. The federal four-year monitoring requirement remains in place. If the exit criteria from the other entity are different from that of Georgia, particularly diligent monitoring of the student's progress is recommended.

Graduating seniors who are eligible to exit language assistance services should be exited according to normal procedures. Documentation of existing services must be completed for compliance with state

and federal regulations. Proper coding, documentation and records ensure accuracy for computing district graduation rates, EL graduation rates, and existing ELs.

Funding

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School does not receive funding. We currently do not have students from this population. If there is a status change, we would follow the procedures outlined in the manual.

Professional Learning

ESOL teachers will meet with every regular education teacher of ELL students and administrators to ensure understanding of the WIDA standards and Can Do Descriptors. ESOL teachers will also provide WAPT for Kindergarteners and the WIDA Screener for Grades 1-12 along with ACCESS scores for every student and assist teachers with understanding appropriate expectations based on these scores and the student's level of language acquisition. The results of the annual needs assessment will also be used to determine agenda items for the teacher training. An ESOL professional learning plan has been developed and is updated annually. Two meetings will be held yearly with parents of ELL students to inform them of ways to assist their students academically, as well as make them aware of school programs and activities.

Records and Maintenance

An individual folder is maintained for each student who has been identified as eligible to receive EL services. Each folder contains the following documentation: Home Language Survey, Notification of Services, ACCESS reports, Parent communication in home language and English, Monitoring of student progress both EL and EL M's, Placement records in home language and English, and TPC documentation. These folders are maintained by the ESOL teachers through the two-year monitoring phase and then housed in a secure storage area, the permanent record, and in an electronic record. Registrars provide parents with a HLS upon registration. If any language other than English is indicated on this form, the registrar shall notify the ESOL teacher and the student will then be assessed with the WAPT for Kindergarteners and the WIDA Screener for Grades 1-12 to determine placement.

Academic and Assessment Records

Student participation and progress in the ESOL program is measured using the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test for kindergarteners. For kindergarteners, a listening and speaking score totaling a combined 29 points or higher are not eligible for language assistance services. For grades 1-12, students scoring a grade level adjusted of 4.3 or higher are not eligible for language assistance services. The ACCESS exam is given to students in grades K-12. A student scoring a composite score of 1.0-4.2 in Tier A, B or C is coded EL-Y and will be provided with ESOL services and assessed annually with ACCESS. If the kindergarten student scores at or above 4.3 on the literacy assessment on ACCESS and a CPL of 4.3 or higher, the student will be coded as EL-M and exited from ESOL services. If a student in grades 1- 12 scores a CPL of 4.3 or higher, the student will be coded as EL-M and exited from ESOL services. The student will be monitored using academic progress for the next two years. These results will be used to determine the types of testing and classroom accommodations that each student will require and will be indicated on their TPC form and approved by the Testing Participation Committee. ESOL teachers administer the assessments and maintain a record of the assessment results in each student's personal file. ESOL teachers monitor academic progress through Infinite Campus, teacher communication, and Milestone

ELA scores. ESOL teachers meet with regular education teachers to review the results and to discuss expectations based on the WIDA Can Do Descriptors.

Program Evaluation and Accountability

The success of the ESOL instructional program will be measured by analyzing the results of ACCESS and other state mandated tests. Because of this analysis, differentiated instructional decisions will be made for individual students, including adjusting services if indicated. An annual Title III program evaluation will be conducted, and a report of findings completed. The report will describe the progress EL students have made in language acquisition and meeting specified annual content goals for EL subgroups. The report will also include the number and percentage of EL students attaining English proficiency. Finally, the report will include content area mastery of monitored students.

Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE)

Purpose

Title IV, Part A, Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) grants are intended to improve students' academic achievement by increasing the capacity of States, LEAs, schools, and local communities to: (ESSA section 4101)

1. provide all students with access to a well-rounded education,
2. improve school conditions for student learning, and
3. improve the use of technology in order to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students.

Use of Funds

The school system makes a determination of how funds will be spent following a needs assessment process in which a variety of stakeholders participate. Needs are then prioritized and funded depending upon the availability of funds.

Ongoing Consultation and Progress Monitoring

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will consult with stakeholders and community-based partners with relevant and demonstrated expertise in on-going consultations for the purposes of improving implemented activities and programming supported by Title IV, Part A funding.

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School School District will conduct, collect and organize the evidence of continued collaboration that extends beyond the initial consultation and includes stakeholders outside of the LEAs internal organization with the specific intent to improve activities and/or coordinate community-based programming supported by Title IV, Part A. Stakeholders and community-based partners will be engaged in collaboration with the LEA by participating in-person meetings that will be held once per session. Sign in sheets, agendas, and feedback questions will be the evidence that reflects the specific collaboration of stakeholders and community-based partners as it pertains to the current and/or evolving condition of all

activities funded by Title IV, Part A funds. Sign-in sheets will be titled and dated containing the names, positions, organization, and signatures of involved stakeholders.

Title IV, Part A Plan

LEAs will submit a plan to receive a Title IV.A allocation. An LEA may apply for funds in consortium with one or more surrounding LEAs. During the design and development of its plan, an LEA or consortium of LEAs must engage in consultation with stakeholders in the area served by the LEA. Such stakeholders must include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Parents;
2. Teachers;
3. Principals;
4. Students;
5. School leaders;
6. Charter school teachers, principals, and other school leaders, when applicable;
7. Specialized instructional support personnel;
8. Local government representatives;
9. Others with relevant and demonstrated expertise; and
10. Community-based organizations.

An LEA or consortium of LEAs must continue to consult with the stakeholders identified above to improve the activities it conducts and coordinate implementation with other related activities conducted in the community.

LEA Assurances of Funding Allocation

LEAs must prioritize the distribution of funds to the school based on one or more of several factors, including: (section 4106(e)(2) of the ESEA)

- are among those with the greatest needs, as determined by the LEA;
- have the highest numbers of students from low-income families;
- are identified for comprehensive support and improvement under Title I, Part A of the ESEA; • are implementing targeted support and improvement plans under Title I, Part A of the ESEA; and/or
- are identified as a persistently dangerous public school under section 8532 of the ESEA.

Based on the results of the comprehensive needs assessment, the LEA or a consortium of LEAs must use:

(section 4106(e)(2)(C)-(E) of the ESEA)

- At least 20 percent of funds for activities to support well-rounded educational opportunities;
- At least 20 percent of funds for activities to support safe and healthy students; and
- A portion of funds for activities to support effective use of technology.

Transferability

Under ESSA, LEAs may transfer funds they receive by formula under certain programs to other programs to better address local needs. The ESSA amended the transferability authority by changing the programs from and to which an LEA may transfer funds and removing limits on the amount of funds that may be transferred.

An LEA may transfer funds, to better address local identified needs, from the following programs ESEA section 5103(b)(2):

- Title II, Part A – Supporting effective instruction state grants
- Title IV, Part A – Student support and academic enrichment grants

An LEA may transfer funds, to better address local identified needs, to the following programs ESEA section 5103(b):

- Title I, Part A – Improving basic programs operated by LEAs
- Title I, Part C – Education of migratory children
- Title I, Part D – Prevention and intervention programs for children and youth who are neglected, delinquent, or at-risk
- Title II, Part A – Supporting effective instruction state grants
- Title III, Part A – State grants for English language acquisition and language enhancement
- Title IV, Part A – Student support and academic enrichment grants
- Title V, Part B – Rural education

An LEA does not have to apply for transferability authority; it already has that authority (ESSA section 5103(b))

- Funds transferred into a program become subject to all rules and regulations of the receiving program
- Equitable services requirements are not waived, and timely and meaningful consultation must occur prior to transferring funds from one program into another program

An LEA must notify the state, in writing (email), of its intent to transfer funds, including the amount, to another program at least 30 days prior to the transfer and prior to submitting the budget for approval. Please send the notification to originating program's manager or designee, receiving program's manager or designee, and GA Doe's Grants Accounting Department. If the transfer modifies any aspect of the LEA's approved CLIP, the CLIP modifications must be submitted no later than 30 days after the transfer is made.

In the originating Budget, include from program as appropriate to program as appropriate using function 5000, object 930, amount of transferred funds, and the transferred amount will be displayed on the completion report. The completion report will show from where the transferred amount originated (Original, Carryover, Additional).

Since the transferred amount is not brought into the Grants Accounting Online Report System (GAORS), the amount transferred to another program will have to be drawn down from the originating program.

The school will track the drawdowns at the local level. Note: Transferred funds must be drawn down first after expenses have occurred.

Documentation for Participation

The private school must provide a copy of their 501(c)3 status. Charter schools do not have to provide equitable services to private schools.

Identification of Participants

Charter schools do not have to provide equitable services to private schools.

Academic Achievement Awards Program

The school is selected for the program based on the school's reward status as defined by the US Department of Education. The following are the two categories that the Reward School is eligible to be included to receive awards:

- (1) **Highest-Performing Reward School** –a Title I school among the Title I schools in the State that does not meet the definition of a Priority or Focus school and has a 3-year average of Content Mastery category performance and ranked in the highest 5% of ranked schools by 3- year average of category performance. The school must not have more red Performance Flags than a typical Title I School and must not have significant achievement gaps between subgroups. Achievement Gap score must be \geq state's average Achievement Gap score for Title I Schools; or
- (2) **High-Progress Reward School**– a Title I school among the Title I schools in the State that does not meet the definition of a Priority or Focus school and has a 3-year average of Progress scores and ranked in the highest 10% of ranked schools by 3-year average of Progress scores. The school must not have more red Performance Flags than a typical Title I School and must not have significant achievement gaps between subgroups. Achievement Gap score must be \geq state's average Achievement Gap score for Title I Schools or have improved their Achievement Gap score from the prior year.

Title I, Part C - Migrant Education Program (MEP) Services

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School uses the occupational survey provided by GaDOE. The school's liaison will contact any potential migrant family to determine case-by-case eligibility and needs. Migrant students are evaluated academically the same as other students in the system to determine academic needs. All migrant students are eligible for Title I services and receive appropriate Title I services. Additionally, specific activities to address the needs of migratory families are provided.

Such activities shall include informing children and families of, or helping such children and families gain access to other education, health, nutrition and social services. Parent outreach is provided in a language that is understood by the family, if possible. Parents are presented information on ESOL, special education, gifted, and other educational programs. Information on health, nutrition and social services is

presented using materials from the migrant educational agency. Presenters from local agencies such as the Health Department, DFCS, and any other necessary local agencies may be involved in helping these families.

Assessment Security and Accountability

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School conducts an assessment program as required by federal and state law. The successful implementation of the statewide student assessment program requires a concerted effort by many individuals at the school and system level.

The system assessment coordinator provides annual training to school test coordinators on the numerous mandated state testing instruments. In turn, each school test coordinator provides regular training for school test examiners and proctors according to established system procedures and the Georgia Department of Education regulations.

Checking out/in materials to and from the district office is the responsibility of the school testing coordinator. Packing slips are used to check the accuracy of the delivery. All testing materials are kept in a secure, locked room where only school administrators have access, unless being used for their designed purpose. The responsibility of the assessment program at the school level rests with the principal and designated school test coordinator. Sign-in and sign-out sheets are used with teachers to document who is responsible for each individual test booklet or ticket, the date, and number of test booklets/tickets received. Before testing documents are returned to the district office, the school coordinator carefully accounts for all materials. Materials are returned to the district office, where the materials are re-counted by the system testing coordinator.

The system assessment coordinator, principals and school test coordinators carefully monitor all state testing to ensure procedural guidelines are followed. System/school testing procedures are designed to be consistent with guidance provided in the Georgia Department of Education Student Assessment Handbook and in strict adherence to the Code of Ethics for Educators established by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.

Any action that compromises test security or leads to the investigation of an individual student's, or a group of students' test scores, will be reviewed by the local assessment department to determine if notification or further review is needed by the Georgia Department of Education. Security breaches and testing irregularities, by any personnel, can certainly produce far-reaching impacts on students, schools, and the system at large. Persons responsible for causing or contributing to any circumstance leading to a testing violation, will be reported to the building level assessment coordinator, the system assessment coordinator, and (when applicable) the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.

Assessment Security Consequences:

Releasing any test questions or other contents of a test or helping students cheat in any other way may result in: an invalidation of test scores, suspension of licenses, certificates and permits, termination of employment and/or prosecution.

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School must administer the annual ELP assessment to all English learners. The director of assessment and compliance will check the participation rate and collect the justification reasons from school testing coordinators if the participation percentage falls below 95%.

Please direct any questions about system testing, security, or procedures to:

Compliance and Assessment, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School provides public access to the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement’s district and school report cards. It is the responsibility of the assistant to the director of federal programs to ensure the links remain active on the district and school websites.

Fraud Prevention Policy

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School(“School”) shall not tolerate fraud of any kind and has an established system for the reporting of suspicious activities.

“Fraud” is defined as a false representation of a matter of fact, whether by words or by conduct, or by concealment of that which should have been disclosed, that is used for misappropriating property and/or monetary funds from federal, state, or local grants and funds.

Employees and parties maintaining a business relationship with the School who suspect fraud, whether it pertains to federal, state, or local programs, should report their concerns to the Superintendent or his/her designee. If fraud is suspected by the Superintendent, such allegations should be reported to the Governing Board Chair.

All reports of suspected fraud shall be handled under the strictest confidentiality allowed under the law. Informants may remain anonymous as allowed by law but are encouraged to cooperate with investigators and to provide as much detail and evidence of the alleged fraudulent act as possible.

All reports of suspicious activity and/or suspected fraud will be investigated. Results of an investigation shall not be disclosed to or discussed with anyone other than those individuals with a legitimate need to know until the results become subject to public disclosure in accordance with state and/or federal law.

Appendix A: Complaint Procedures

A formal complaint may be filed when an organization or individual believes that a recipient of funding has violated a requirement of a federal statute or regulation related to the administration of a program. The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date that the complaint is received, unless a longer period is reasonable because the violation is considered systemic or ongoing. The federal ESSA programs for which formal complaints may be filed and investigated are:

- Title I, Part A – Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies
- Title I, Part A – School Improvement Grants, referred to as 1003(a) and 1003(g)
- Title I, Part C – Education of Migratory Children 38 | P a g e
- Title I, Part D – Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or

At-Risk

- Title II, Part A – Supporting Effective Instruction
- Title III, Part A – Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students • Title IV, Part A – Student Support and Academic Enrichment
- Title IV, Part B – 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- Emergency Relief Funds CARES Act, CRRSA Act, ARP Act

Board Policy GAE: Complaints and Grievances outlines the procedures for filing a complaint.

Complaints may also be filed with the Georgia Department of Education.

Appendix B: Ethics and Fraud, Waste, Abuse and Corruption

The Federal Programs Director reviews the ethics and fraud, waste, abuse and corruption policies with all administrators during the fall seminar. An agenda and sign in sheets will be kept by the Federal Programs Director to document this has been completed. School leaders discuss the same information with their personnel. submits agendas and sign-in sheets to the Federal Programs Director to verify the policies have been reviewed with all staff. A signature, by the person reviewing the policies, verifies the completion of this procedure. The principal is expected to inform their faculties about policies and updates as they are approved throughout the year.

Ethics

(e) Standard 5: Public Funds and Property - An educator entrusted with public funds and property shall honor that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. Misusing public or school-related funds;
2. Failing to account for funds collected from students or parents;
3. Submitting fraudulent requests or documentation for reimbursement of expenses or for pay (including fraudulent or purchased degrees, documents, or coursework);
4. Co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts; and
5. Using school property without the approval of the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee.

Reporting Suspicion of Fraudulent Activities

Purpose: To ensure the reporting of suspicion of fraudulent activity, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School provides employees, clients and providers with confidential channels for such reporting.

Definitions: Fraud: A false representation of a matter of fact, whether by words, by conduct, or by concealment of that which should have been disclosed, that is used for the purpose of misappropriating property and/or monetary funds.

Statement of Administrative Regulations:

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School thoroughly and expeditiously investigates any reported cases of suspected fraud to determine if disciplinary, financial recovery and/or criminal action should be taken.

Confidentiality: All reports of suspected fraud must be handled under the strictest confidentiality. Only those directly involved in the investigation should be provided information regarding the allegation. Informants may remain anonymous but should be encouraged to cooperate with investigators and should provide as much detail and evidence of alleged fraudulent acts as possible.

Procedures and Responsibilities:

1. Anyone suspecting fraudulent activity should report their concerns to Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School Superintendent, or 229-679-5555.
2. Any employee with Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School (temporary staff, full-time staff and contractors) who receives a report of suspected fraudulent activity must report this information within the next business day.
3. Employees have the responsibility to report suspected fraud. All reports can be made in confidence.
4. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School shall conduct investigations of employees, providers, contractors, or vendors.
5. If necessary, the person reporting will be contacted for additional information.
6. Periodic communication through meetings should emphasize the responsibilities and channels to report suspected fraud.

Conflict of Interest

No employee, officer, or agent may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by federal funds if he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest.

An acknowledgement of the Conflict of Interest statement is required annually for all Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School employees. This acknowledgement is collected as a custom requirement during the district’s mandatory annual training during pre-planning.

Conflict of Interest Statement

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School ensures that employees, officers, or agents are not allowed to engage in the selection, award, and administration of a contract supported by a federal award if he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest.

Definition: Such a conflict of interest would arise when the employee, officer, or agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein, has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for a contract.

No employee, officer or agent may participate in selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by a federal award if he/she has a real or apparent conflict of interest (Board Policy DFC: Federal Funds).

Chain of Command for reporting potential conflicts is as follows: First reporting should be to the School Leader - Superintendent. Should the employee being reported be potentially involved in the conflict, the Assistant Principal shall be the alternate.

Officers, employees, and agents of Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School may neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors or parties to subcontracts. Nominal value is defined as less than \$25.

Violation of these standards will result in reporting of said personnel to the superintendent of schools and if appropriate, local authorities. Any misconduct could result in suspension, loss of employment, and any other consequences that are applicable by law.

Any violation of these procedures must be disclosed in writing, in a timely manner. All violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the federal award must be reported as failure to make disclosures can result in (remedies for noncompliance, including suspension and debarment).

The Conflict of Interest procedure is disseminated to all employees in the employee handbook. The information is also included in the district's Federal Programs handbook. It is the responsibility of each individual acting on behalf of Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School to consider whether there may be an actual conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest in any transaction or proceeding they participate in. If there is not an actual conflict of interest, but there are circumstances that would create the appearance of a conflict of interest, it is the responsibility of the individual acting for the school system in a transaction or proceeding to ensure that those circumstances are disclosed. Any such disclosures should be made promptly when an appearance of a conflict of interest is recognized.

Employees shall certify that:

1. they have read and understand this procedure;
2. to their knowledge they have not participated in any transactions or proceedings where there is an actual conflict of interest;
3. they have disclosed in accordance with this procedure the circumstances regarding any transactions or proceedings where they are aware that there may be the appearance of a conflict of interest.

When any appearance of a conflict of interest comes into existence after employees have made this certification, they are required to follow the disclosure steps in the administrative regulation that go with this procedure.

Any individual, organization or agency ("complainant") may file a complaint with the Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School ("Department") if that individual, organization, or agency believes this procedure has been violated. Please refer to Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School Complaint Procedures located in the district employee handbook.

Appendix C - Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Funds

In response to the economic outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States, Congress passed three bills that provided immediate and direct financial assistance to state and local educational agencies through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds. These funds were provided to support areas with the greatest need, where the academic and non-academic components of school districts had the most significant impact due to COVID-19. As additional funding was provided, the funds were intended to support state and local school districts' efforts to safely reopen schools, address significant gaps in learning, and support measures of implementation that will continue to reduce the effects of COVID-19 on students and families. Three funding sources were provided to the school district, including:

- Section 2001 of the ARP Act-American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act- Section 2001
- The LEA must reserve at least 20 percent of funds to address learning loss by implementing evidence-based interventions, ensure that those interventions respond to students' social, emotional, and

academic needs, and address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on underrepresented student subgroups.

- **Maintenance of Equity:** The ARP contains LEA maintenance of equity requirements for FYs 2022 and 2023. The ARP Act ensures that schools and LEAs serving large proportions of historically underserved students receive an equitable share of state and local funds as the nation continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact.
- **LEA Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan (LEA ARP Application):** An LEA that receives ARP ESSER funds must publicly make a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services on its website. Before making the plan publicly available, the LEA must seek public comment on the plan.
- **Six-Month Review:** The LEA assures, during the period of the ARP ESSER award established in section 2001(a) of the ARP Act, that the LEA will periodically, but no less frequently than every six months, review and, as appropriate, revise its plan. The LEA will seek public comment on the development of its plan; the LEA will seek public input and take such information into account in determining whether to revise its plan and, if it determines revisions are necessary, on the revisions it makes to its plan.

Personnel Compensation

Employees may receive hazard pay for a national or local emergency or to perform critical services. Instances When this may happen may include a pandemic or a natural disaster. Employees will be compensated for fully completing an objective from a supervisor related to the aforementioned conditions. If applicable.

Use of ESSER funds for minor or major construction, renovation, or modification projects

The Southwest Georgia STEM School District will ensure that school facility repairs and improvements are solely to reduce the risk of virus transmission and exposure to environmental health hazards, and to support student health needs and inspection, testing, maintenance, repair, replacement, and upgrade projects to improve the indoor air quality in school facilities, including mechanical and non-mechanical heating, ventilation, and air condition systems, filtering, purification, and other air cleaning, fans, control systems, and window and door repair and replacement.

The Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School District will ensure the required documentation is on file with GaDOE Facilities once all steps are completed for approval of projects by the ESSER Grants Team.

- Submit all required documentation complying with state law regarding Public Works Construction Projects. O.C.G.A. 36-91-20, 36-91-21, and 36-91- 22
- Revise or withdraw any state capital outlay funded projects where ESSER funding was utilized.
- Verify that the construction project will be completed by the end of the grant period
- Submit required documentation adhering to the Davis Bacon Wage Requirement for all federal contracts and subcontract over \$2,000 for construction, alterations, repairs, painting, and decorating.
- Submit applicable required documents that follow federal construction regulations. 34 CFR 75.600-617 The Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will ensure the required documentation is on file with GaDOE Facilities once all steps are completed for approval of projects by the ESSER Grants Team.
- Submit all required documentation complying with state law regarding Public Works Construction Projects. O.C.G.A. 36-91-20, 36-91-21, and 36-91- 22
- Revise or withdraw any state capital outlay funded projects where ESSER funding was utilized.
- Verify that the construction project will be completed by the end of the grant period
- Submit required documentation adhering to the Davis Bacon Wage Requirement for all federal contracts and subcontract over \$2,000 for construction, alterations, repairs, painting, and decorating.
- Submit applicable required documents that follow federal construction regulations. 34 CFR 75.600-617.