

1 **A. Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies (LEAs)**
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3 **7. School Transitions (ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(D)): Describe how the State will support LEAs receiving**
4 **assistance under Title I, Part A in meeting the needs of students at all levels of schooling (particularly**
5 **students in the middle grades and high school), including how the State will work with such LEAs to**
6 **provide effective transitions of students to middle grades and high school to decrease the risk of**
7 **students dropping out.**
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9 **A. Meeting the Needs of Students at All Levels of Schooling**

10 Ohio is committed to supporting districts and schools in meeting the needs of students at all levels of schooling.
11 To realize this commitment, the state has established a cohesive and aligned set of general strategies and supports
12 that include the following key components:

- 13 • Cohesive and aligned framework of standards, assessments, graduation requirements and accountability
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15 Standards and Model Curriculum: The state provides rigorous content learning standards in the areas of
16 English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, world languages, fine arts, technology,
17 financial literacy and physical education. Ohio’s Learning Standards are designed to support deeper
18 content knowledge and promote application in authentic ways at all cognitive levels. The content
19 standards in each area are supported by model curriculum developed to provide additional detail to the
20 learning standards through content elaborations and expectations for learning, as well as instructional
21 strategies to support the teaching and learning of Ohio’s Learning Standards. Information and resources
22 related to standards and model curricula can be found at [http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-](http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio)
23 [Ohio](http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio).
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25 Assessments: Ohio has a system of assessments that measure students’ acquisition of the knowledge and
26 skills defined by the state’s standards. Ohio’s assessment system is compliant with federal requirements,
27 including testing of math and English in grades 3-8 and once in high school, and testing of science in one
28 grade each in elementary, middle and high school. Tests are designed to reflect the standards and
29 performance levels are set to identify “limited,” “basic,” “proficient,” “accelerated” and “advanced”
30 levels of learning.
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32 Graduation Requirements: Ohio’s graduation requirements include required high school coursework and
33 three options for earning a diploma. These are aligned to Ohio’s standards and leverage the state’s
34 assessments. Students are required to take 20 units of courses in English (4 units), mathematics (4 units,
35 including Algebra II), science (3 units), social studies (3 units), physical education (1/2 unit), and
36 electives (5 units). Students may earn a diploma in one of three ways: 1) Earning a minimum threshold of
37 points on seven high school end-of-course exams; 2) earning an approved in-demand credential or group
38 of credentials combined with a minimum threshold score on the WorkKeys exams; or 3) scoring college
39 and career ready on the ACT or SAT exam. (Note: A recent graduation requirements workgroup has
40 recommended transitional changes to these requirements for the class of 2018. Additional changes for
41 future classes are being examined.)
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43 Accountability: Ohio has an accountability system that provides essential information measuring the
44 performance of each school and district. Detailed information about the state’s accountability system can
45 be found in Sec. A(4) of this application. The accountability system drives the identification of schools

46 and districts for targeted support and comprehensive support and serves as an important source of data to
47 inform improvement planning.
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49 *In all of these areas – standards, assessments, graduation requirements and accountability – Ohio*
50 *periodically revisits and modifies policies and specifications. Currently, academic standards in science,*
51 *social studies and financial literacy are under review, an assessment advisory committee is reviewing the*
52 *state’s assessments configuration, and the state’s strategic planning process is exploring modifications to*
53 *the accountability systems and long-term graduation requirements. Any changes made as part of these*
54 *processes will be communicated to the U.S. Department of Education.*
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56 • Ohio Improvement Process (OIP), Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Planning (CCIP), and
57 School Climate/Conditions Resources
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59 These resources provide a strategy-neutral approach for districts and schools to use in planning
60 improvement, aligning resources and creating a culture for success. For each district, the OIP involves the
61 creation of a district leadership team, building leadership teams and teacher-based teams. Each of these
62 planning groups use a needs analysis and the Decision Framework to analyze data and develop an
63 integrated and aligned approach to school improvement. Using the CCIP, districts are able to submit an
64 integrated plan for improvement that is supported through aligned and comprehensive allocations of
65 federal and certain state grant funds. Training on the use of these tools is provided through Ohio’s state
66 support teams and educational service centers. Effective use of these tools can create strong cultures of
67 improvement implementing focused strategies based on evidence.
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69 A longer discussion of Ohio’s support for effective school conditions can be found in Sec. A(6) of this
70 application.
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72 • State-level supports, directly and through regional state support teams
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74 The Department of Education provides a robust set of programmatic supports through its various offices
75 and in support of various initiatives. These supports generally include online resources, webinars and
76 other training events, and opportunities for direct technical assistance. An important component of the
77 state’s technical assistance plan is the 16 regional state support teams.
78

79 The 16 regional state support teams work with districts to improve climate and learning outcomes for all
80 students. In doing so, the state support teams assist districts in the review of their data and facilitate
81 conversations with districts concerning data trends and patterns specific to the performance of various
82 subgroups of students, dropout rates, chronic absenteeism and other areas of identified need. Through
83 review of district data, the state support teams assist districts in the development of needs assessments and
84 identify evidence-based strategies to address those needs, as well as provide professional development
85 and other supports. State support teams also train districts and provide support and coaching in the
86 development of a schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports framework, which builds a
87 welcoming, supportive environment. The state support teams provide coordination and support to help
88 districts develop effective parent, teacher and community partnerships to strengthen and support student
89 learning and success.
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91 • Educational Service Centers
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93 The state also leverages the 53 regional educational service centers (ESCs). Funded through both state
94 and district contributions and contracts, these organizations are a geographically proximate source of
95 training and resources to support improvement activities. They are frequently involved in the roll-out of

96 state improvement initiatives. Ohio will use the ESCs to roll out new initiatives and technical assistance
97 related to the state’s programming of federal funds.
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99 • Career-Focused Instructional Practices and Programs

100 Ohio believes that a strong focus on careers can help more students succeed in their academic pursuits.
101 Career-focused learning provides relevance that fosters greater engagement among students. Ohio has had
102 a strong focus on expanding opportunities for students to experience career-focused education
103 opportunities. This work has been informed by a number of strategies being deployed statewide. These
104 include:
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107 Career Pathways: A Career Pathway is a collective look at education and training, wage and outlook
108 information for related occupations. These pathways offer an overview of the various career options along
109 with education and training that can begin as early as grade 7. Whether a student is interested in going to
110 college, getting an industry credential or working right after high school, career pathways can be
111 customized for any ambition or plan. Ohio has developed career pathways for more than 70 occupational
112 clusters. Pathways can be found at [http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Career-Tech/Career-
113 Connections/Career-Pathways](http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Career-Tech/Career-Connections/Career-Pathways).
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115 Career Field Technical Content Standards: Ohio has developed career field technical content standards in
116 18 career areas. These standards constitute specifications for what students should know and be able to do
117 in each career-technical program. These standards often are accompanied by specially design
118 examinations (e.g., WebXams) that measure student knowledge and skills at various points during the
119 career-technical program.
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121 Career Connections: The state has developed resources for teachers and educators that facilitate making
122 connections between the core academic standards and competencies required for students to successfully
123 complete technical coursework and industry credentials. These resources are vital to the transformation of
124 Ohio’s education system and help students to consider careers in the context of academic pursuits. Ohio is
125 currently involved in an effort to integrate career-focused resources into its academic content standards.
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127 OhioMeansJobs K-12: OhioMeansJobs.com allows students to learn more about their career interests and
128 in-demand jobs, build résumés, search for college and training programs, create budgets based on future
129 expenses, and develop meaningful academic and career plans for high school and beyond. More than
130 300,000 students in grades 6-12 have created “backpacks” in OhioMeansJobs.com.
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132 Career-Technical Credit Transfer: Ohio has developed Career Technical Articulation Guides (CTAGs) in
133 35 career-technical fields. These guides allow students who take and complete career-technical programs
134 to earn transcribed credit for the comparable courses at Ohio’s community colleges upon admission to
135 the college. This work reflects one of the strongest articulations of courses between high school and
136 college career-technical education programs in the nation.

137 Beyond these general strategies and supports, the state also is committed to specific strategies to support the needs
138 of certain defined populations of students. Specifically:

- 139 • Students with Disabilities: Ohio’s State Systemic Improvement Plan focuses on early literacy and
140 language, explained in greater detail below. Additional information regarding the State Systemic
141 Improvement Plan can be found at <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Special-Education/Early-Literacy>.
- 142 • Migratory Youth: See Section B of this application.
- 143 • Neglected and Delinquent Youth: See Section C of this application.
- 144 • English Language Learners: See Section E of this application.

145 • Homeless students: See Section I of this application.

146 **Two other areas of support for LEAs and strategies for students not otherwise addressed elsewhere in this**
147 **application are as follows:**

148 **1. Supports for Children Ages Birth to Eight**

149 Ohio is proud of its emerging system of educational supports for children ages birth to eight. Ohio has expanded
150 its public preschool program during the last four years by tripling its investment and available slots for high-
151 quality education programs for children from low-income families. Additionally, the state is implementing a birth
152 to grade 3 system of supports to ensure children enter school with the skills they need to be successful and reach
153 third grade with the skills needed to read proficiently.

154 Key components of this work include the following:

155 • Early Learning and Development Standards

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157 In 2012, the State Board of Education adopted Ohio’s Early Learning and Development Standards in all
158 domains of school readiness to reflect the comprehensive development of children beginning at birth to
159 kindergarten entry. Additionally, Ohio maintains Kindergarten Through Grade 3 Learning and
160 Development Standards. The development of these early childhood education standards represented a
161 collaboration between state agencies serving young children, as well as national experts and writing teams
162 made up of Ohio-based content experts and stakeholders to revise and expand the standards. The
163 standards may be found at [http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Early-Learning/Early-Learning-Content-](http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Early-Learning/Early-Learning-Content-Standards)
164 [Standards](http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Early-Learning/Early-Learning-Content-Standards).

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166 • Common Program Standards and Expectations

167 Ohio has established common program standards and expectations for licensed settings within a tiered
168 quality rating and improvement system called Step Up To Quality. This work was supported by a federal
169 \$70 million Early Learning Challenge Grant awarded to Ohio in 2011. The Step Up To Quality rating
170 system ensures that participating programs are held to the same quality standards no matter the setting
171 (i.e., public districts, child care, community-based programs). Publicly funded early learning and
172 development programs (i.e., child care, preschool special education and public preschool) are required to
173 be rated in Step Up To Quality, and publicly funded preschool programs in districts and other settings
174 must be highly rated in that system to maintain funding. Highly-rated programs must meet particular
175 program standards related to learning and development, staff education and qualifications, administrative
176 and leadership practices, and family engagement. Programs must have comprehensive research-based
177 curricula that is aligned to Ohio’s Early Learning and Development Standards in all domains. The state’s
178 regional professional development system, provided by the Ohio Departments of Education and Job and
179 Family Services, gives early learning teachers access to quality professional development in these
180 standards at no cost.

181 • Preschool Expulsion Prevention Program

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183 The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services has partnered with the Department to
184 provide a preschool expulsion prevention program across the state. Funded using state dollars, early
185 childhood mental health consultants are highly trained and licensed professionals who are available to any
186 educator faced with challenging behavior in his/her classroom between preschool and grade 3. Teachers
187 can call one statewide number to be connected with professionals in their areas who will consult on-site

188 for free with the goal of supporting the teachers in helping to reduce behaviors that can lead to high-needs
189 children being suspended or expelled from early education settings.

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- Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

Ohio uses a comprehensive Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA), which was implemented beginning in fall 2014. The KRA is administered statewide annually by classroom teachers across the essential domains of school readiness for all kindergarten children entering public and community schools. Recently passed legislation will expand the use of the assessment to private kindergarten programs as well. With three years of statewide assessment data collected, Ohio's districts have access to critical data to inform how best they support our youngest learners as they enter school.

200 As with other state assessments, Ohio periodically revisits assessment forms and approaches. The state
201 plans to examine the KRA for possible improvements with the goal of refining and improving its
202 functionality and usefulness. To accomplish this, Ohio will engage kindergarten teachers and elementary
203 school administrators during regional focus groups to collect input on improvement recommendations and
204 resource needs. Additionally, Ohio will reconvene the Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment
205 Advisory group to advise and assist the Department in continuous improvement activities for Ohio's
206 KRA and early learning assessment.

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- Third Grade Reading Guarantee

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Ohio's Third Grade Reading Guarantee, which began in 2012, requires districts to annually assess all kindergarten children by Nov. 1, and all children in grades 1 through 3 by Sept. 30, using an approved reading assessment tool to determine if they are on-track for reading proficiently by grade 3. If children are not reading on grade level, districts must work with families to create a reading improvement and monitoring plan (RIMP), which establishes instructional reading supports for the child's needs over the course of the year. Children must remain on a RIMP throughout the year and continue to be progress monitored and assessed annually. All children are then assessed in reading and writing at grade 3. If children do not meet a state-approved score on the reading assessment and are not otherwise exempt from retention, they are not promoted to grade 4 and must receive intensive intervention and supports until they achieve grade 3 proficiency.

- Ohio's Early Literacy Plan

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The goal of the Ohio Early Literacy Plan (the State Systemic Improvement Plan) is to have more students, including students with disabilities, reading proficiently by the third grade in order to increase the likelihood that students, including students with disabilities, will be ready for college, careers and/or independent living. The plan aims to increase student achievement in reading by focusing on five critical components: shared leadership, teacher capacity, multi-tiered systems of support, family partnerships and community collaboration. The plan is guided by a theory of action and comprehensive logic model created in collaboration between the Department and key stakeholders. Ohio's Early Literacy Plan leverages and modifies the state's infrastructure, including increasing regional supports, continues to utilize and enhance the existing Ohio Improvement Process framework and supports local school districts with the implementation of Ohio's Early Literacy Pilot. Ohio's Early Literacy Pilot provides partner districts with professional development, coaching and ongoing support in evidence-based language and literacy practices to ensure teachers in preschool through grade 3 have the capacity and support to provide high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction and intervention.

236 The Department assigned an early literacy project manager and hired an early literacy administrator to
237 oversee the early literacy strategy. A Department cross-agency team, including representatives from the
238 Offices for Exceptional Children, Early Learning and School Readiness, Curriculum and Assessment, and
239 Federal Programs works to ensure the state’s infrastructure will support local school districts in
240 implementing high-quality early literacy professional development and evidence-based language and
241 literacy instruction with fidelity. To support this work, Ohio has hired 18 early literacy specialists across
242 the 16 regional state support teams to assist pilot districts with implementation of Ohio’s Early Literacy
243 Pilot;

244 **Ohio expects to take the following actions related to the use of federal title funds to continue to support**
245 **early childhood learning, including effective transitions from early childhood to early grades:**

- 246 • Ohio will provide guidance on the use of district federal title dollars for early childhood through the early
247 grades
- 248 • Ohio will help districts share evidence-based research strategies used locally and regionally to support the
249 early childhood to elementary transition
- 250 • Early learning and school readiness will be added as an element of the district local needs assessment.
- 251 • If a district has fewer than 75 percent of students demonstrating and approaching readiness score bands of
252 the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (i.e., top two KRA score bands), the district will be asked to
253 include strategies for increasing early learning and school readiness in their local improvement plans.
- 254 • Districts with wide achievement gaps in vulnerable populations at grades kindergarten and grade 3 will be
255 asked to include strategies for reducing the gaps in early learning and school readiness in their local
256 improvement plans.
- 257 • If districts fail to meet certain gap-closing thresholds, the Department may ask districts to use their federal
258 title funds (including Title I, Title II, Title III, Titles IVa and IVe) to support early learning and early
259 grades including, but not limited to, support for preschool education, family engagement and professional
260 development for teachers and principals/administrators of the elementary building, including preschool
261 within the district and for feeder early childhood program staff (i.e., child care or community centers).

262 **2. Supporting Military Families**

263 Military families frequently face unique social-emotional and logistical challenges due to service-related
264 relocation and other realities of military family life. Ohio is committed to addressing the special educational needs
265 of military families and students. To better serve these families:

- 266 • The Department will create the Ohio Network for Military Families to serve as an online hub for a range
267 of resources. The network will work in conjunction with the Ohio Inter-Service Family Assistance
268 Coalition (ISFAC) that serves as a statewide “safety net” by connecting military families with national,
269 state, regional and community resources, as well as volunteer support services.
- 270 • As a member of the Interstate Compact for Educational Opportunities for Military Children (MIC3), Ohio
271 is working to ensure that military children are properly enrolled in schools, have eligibility for school
272 activities and have assistance in meeting graduation requirements when they move to new districts. The
273 Ohio MIC3 State Council and Wright-Patterson Air Force Base will partner with the Military Child
274 Education Coalition to host workshops for stakeholders to strengthen support for Ohio’s Military K-12
275 students and families.

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- Districts will now identify and report military-connected students to monitor academic growth.
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- The Purple Star Award is a new Ohio initiative launched in coordination with the Month of the Military
- 278 Child that recognizes schools for a demonstrated commitment to creating a military-friendly environment
- 279 and supporting military families and students.

280 **B. Providing Effective Transitions of Students to Middle Grades and High School**

281 Students are particularly susceptible to transitions from one level of education to the next. If challenging or

282 difficult, these transition points, especially to middle school and high school, can have significant impact on a

283 student’s learning and may lead to dropping out.

284 The Department proposes multiple strategies to begin to close this gap, improve transitions into middle school and

285 high school, reduce the number of dropouts and improve the graduation rate for Ohio students. Initiatives include:

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- High School Courses in Middle School: As discussed in Section A(2), all Ohio middle school students
- 287 that are prepared for advanced coursework may take high school courses for credit and take the aligned
- 288 end-of-course assessment. This supports the student by aligning the assessment with the instruction the
- 289 student received during the year. This also supports students in meeting one of Ohio’s pathways to
- 290 graduation linked to high school end-of-course assessments.
- 291
- College Credit Plus: The College Credit Plus program permits students who are academically ready to
- 292 earn both high school and articulated college credit simultaneously. This program is available to middle
- 293 school and high school students who qualify for the program.
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- Middle Grades Career-Technical Education: Recently, Ohio expanded the reach of its career-technical
- 295 programming to include middle school grades. All school districts are now required to offer middle grade
- 296 career-technical education as part of each district's plan to provide comprehensive career-technical
- 297 education to students, unless the local school board requests a waiver from this requirement.
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- Student Success Dashboard and Student Success Resource Library: Ohio has developed a Student
- 299 Success Dashboard designed to provide schools and districts early warning indicators allowing them to
- 300 identify students who are at-risk for dropping out. Ohio will expand the number of districts participating
- 301 in the Student Success Dashboard pilot. Additionally, Ohio developed a Student Success Resource
- 302 Library that provides tools and resources to help schools keep all students engaged and on a clear path to
- 303 successfully graduate. Resources can help districts meet state policies around identification and
- 304 intervention for students at risk of dropping out. The resource library includes materials that support the
- 305 implementation of a strategic and sustainable career advising policy, from middle school through
- 306 graduation.
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- Alternative Education Challenge Grants: Leveraging the existing Alternative Education Challenge Grants
- 308 to improve outcomes for at-risk students including more aligned coordination with required school
- 309 improvement plans. The Alternative Education Challenge Grant Program was designed and funded to
- 310 have a positive impact on the life course of students at risk for school failure and related problems
- 311 (delinquency, drug and alcohol abuse, unemployment, and multiple mental health concerns). Focus areas
- 312 for these grants include, but are not limited to: improvement in student behavior and school climate, the
- 313 transition of students into alternative programs, the transition of students as they return to home schools,
- 314 strengthening collaborations with community-based agencies and organizations, school attendance and
- 315 truancy rates, and graduation and dropout rates.
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- *Dropout Recovery Schools*: Using recommendations from the State Superintendent’s Dropout Prevention and Recovery Advisory Committee, Ohio is working to develop a specifically-designed, evidence-based improvement protocol for Ohio dropout recovery charter schools (referred to as “community schools” in Ohio) identified for comprehensive or targeted support. The state will encourage and support the implementation of high-quality career-technical education pathways in in-demand industry sectors in dropout recovery charter schools. Ohio supports schools and districts in exploring ways to prevent students from dropping out of school by providing resources, opportunities and outreach that will ultimately help students stay in school and earn a high school diploma, indicating their readiness for college, career and life.

DRAFT