

## 31aa FAQ – 2023-2024

For questions, please email [MDE-31aa@michigan.gov](mailto:MDE-31aa@michigan.gov)

[31aa Legislation](#) (31aa can be found on pages 63-64)

### Definitions

Application/applying/apply: The process of providing the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) plan for expending the funds awarded.

District: a public school, PSA, and ISD/RESA, non-public school, Michigan School for the Deaf

### Funding

#### What are the requirements for this funding?

To receive funding, districts will need to submit an application illustrating how the funds will be used by completing the 31aa Funding Application housed in NexSys. All applicants will need have an approved account in NexSys prior to being able to apply. The process for approval, and technical assistance, can be found on the [NexSys website](#).

#### Is this a competitive grant?

This is not a competitive grant; however, this is a formula grant that you must opt-in/apply to be eligible to receive funding. An application will need to be submitted to receive funds and funding will be determined on a per pupil basis.

#### Is coordination between the district and Intermediate School District (ISD) required?

Coordination between districts and the ISD is not required, however, districts receiving funds under this section must coordinate with the ISD to avoid duplication of services and to streamline delivery of services to students.

#### Are ISDs required to apply only for ISD specific programming or is it allowed for ISD as a whole programming (serving all students within the ISD)?

ISDs can only apply for funding for specific programming. Examples would be early childhood programming, career and technical education (CTE) programming, etc. Per pupil funding would be based on the student enrollment in these programs.

### Applying

#### How will information about this funding stream be communicated to the field?

Communication regarding this funding stream will be communicated through the weekly Thursday Communication sent by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). Also, information can be found on the [MDE School Health and Safety website](#).

#### Can private schools apply?

Non-public schools are eligible for this funding. Prior to applying, non-public schools will need to have an approved account within NexSys. The process for gaining that approval can be found on the NexSys website. Non-public schools also need to ensure that they are

registered in SIGMA for payment and that their annual Nonpublic School Membership Report (NSRM) required registration is complete.

**Is there a deadline for districts to submit their application?**

Yes, there will be an **application** portal in [NexSys](#). The deadline will be determined after the application process is set, communicated to the field, and development of the application is complete.

**What is the process for reviewing submitted applications?**

MDE will review submitted **applications** to ensure they meet the requirements of the legislative language. If MDE sees something in the **application** that does not meet legislative intent, MDE may ask for further clarification or adjustments and applicants will be notified in NexSys to make those modifications. An email may also be sent to the contact person(s) indicated in the completed application. The applicant will have 10 business days to make the necessary modifications, or the application may be denied.

**Can districts contract through a third party with these funds?**

Yes.

**How long do districts have to expend the funds?**

Districts have the fiscal year that the funds are awarded and one additional year, if requested, to spend all the funds. Funds for this grant will need to be spent by September 30, 2025; any unspent funds must be returned.

**A district is considering using these funds along with other funding sources to braid fund (split fund) initiatives. Is this allowable?**

Yes, however, these funds cannot supplant funds that are currently in use, they can only supplement.

**What if a district contracts through the ISDs/RESAs for initiatives? Do they apply for the funding and hire?**

Districts can join ISDs in a consortium to fully fund initiatives. This will be done by the ISD forming a consortium and inviting local districts to join the consortium. If a district applies as a consortium with their ISD, they are not eligible to apply on their own.

**Does MDE expect to be able to fully fund all the applications that are submitted?**

MDE cannot anticipate the number of applications, or the amount of funding districts will be requesting. Per the legislation, the funding will be per pupil. Therefore, exact award amounts will not be known until after the final pupil count. The initial award will be an estimate based on current pupil counts. The final pupil counts will be determined at the end of the 2023-2024 school year and award will be adjusted accordingly at this time.

**How should applicants budget for these funds in the NexSys application?**

Applicants should use an estimate award when filling out their budget in the NexSys application. Applicants can get their estimated award by multiplying their current pupil count by \$220. It is the intent of the legislature that recipients will use at least 50% of the funds on activities related to improving student mental health. Please make sure your budget reflects this intent.

## **Disbursement of Funds**

### **Is there a deadline to award districts the money if they meet the application standards?**

After the **application** deadline, official Grant Award Notices (GANs) and funding disbursements will be made to districts in Winter 2023 or Spring of 2024.

### **How will funds be disbursed?**

Funds will be disbursed through the State Aid Management System (SAMS). For non-public schools the funds will be dispersed through the SIGMA system via check or direct deposit. Non-public schools must be registered in SIGMA to receive funding.

### **How do non-public schools register in SIGMA?**

Please check with your business office if you do not know your registration status. If your organization needs to register in SIGMA go to [Michigan.gov/SIGMAVSS](http://Michigan.gov/SIGMAVSS). If you have questions about registering and or verifying if your information in SIGMA is accurate, please contact the State of Michigan (SIGMA VSS) Support Center at [SIGMA-Vendor@Michigan.gov](mailto:SIGMA-Vendor@Michigan.gov) or by calling 517-284-0550. The State of Michigan SIGMA VSS Support Center office hours are 7:00 AM until 5:00 PM EST, Monday - Friday.

## **What Funds Can be Used For**

### **Is there a set amount of funding that needs to be spent on each piece of approved initiatives (mental health and school safety)?**

It is the intent of the legislation that at least 50% of the funding must be spent on mental health initiatives.

### **What mental health initiatives can funds be spent on?**

Allowable mental health expenditures of funds under Section 31aa include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Hiring or contracting for support staff for student mental health needs, including, but not limited to, school psychologists, social workers, counselors, and school nurses
- Purchasing and implementing mental health screening tools
- Providing school-based mental health personnel access to consultation with behavioral health clinicians to respond to complex student mental health needs
- Any other mental health service or product necessary to improve or maintain the mental health of students and staff

### **What school safety initiatives can funds be spent on?**

- Coordination with local law enforcement
- Training for school staff on threat assessment
- Training for school staff and students on threat response
- Training for school staff on crisis communication
- Safety infrastructure, including, but not limited to,
  - Cameras
  - Door blocks
  - Hardened vestibules

- Window screening
- Technology necessary to operate buzzer systems
- Firearm detection software that integrates to existing security cameras
- Age-appropriate training for students and families on responsible gun ownership
- School resource officers
- Any other school safety service or product necessary to improve or maintain security in buildings
- Student Safety Management System
- A secure platform, administered by the Department of Michigan State Police for partners to house all school safety-related items
  - EOP templates
  - EOP guidance
  - Reference documents
  - Security assessments

**Are there restrictions on what funds can be used for?**

If there are questions about allowable expenses for these funds, please submit those questions to [MDE-31aa@michigan.gov](mailto:MDE-31aa@michigan.gov) for support.

**Can funds be used for infrastructure?**

Funds can be used to [improve infrastructure](#) as it relates to school safety.

**Can these funds be used for personnel?**

Funds can be used to hire [mental health support staff](#), including, but not limited to, school psychologists, social workers, counselors, and school nurses. Funds can also be used to hire school resource officers.

**Can these funds be used for playground equipment?**

The monitoring of the use of 31aa funds will happen through your required annual single audit, so recipients of the funds will have to justify to their auditor how the funds were used for their intended purpose, which is for activities to improve or maintain school safety and/or the mental health of students and staff. In addition, there is also a requirement to use community input to guide expenditure of the funds. In other words, recipients of the funds will ultimately be responsible for providing evidence how that was taken into consideration to determine expenditures during the audit.

The key to expenditures is what's allowable versus what's justifiable. The boilerplate language is vague and may be interpreted as meaning that almost anything is allowable, but when it comes to being justifiable, what evidence-based research will support the impact on how it improves or maintains school safety and/or the mental health of students and staff? Recipients of the funds are ultimately responsible for determining how to expend the funds according to the requirements above. MDE guidance is that using funds for playground equipment does not follow the intent of the legislation.

If you have specific questions around what can be funded, please email [MDE-31aa@michigan.gov](mailto:MDE-31aa@michigan.gov).

**Does this funding affect the School Resource Officer (SRO) funding that districts may have received through Michigan State Police grants?**

As these are separate grants, the FY24 31aa funding does not affect the FY23 SRO grants.

## **Further Information**

**Further information can be found at:**

<https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/health-safety/topics/school-safety> or  
<https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/health-safety/topics/mental-health>

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