

Single Plan for Student Achievement

Part I: A Guide for Developing the Single Plan for Student Achievement



A Resource for the School Site Council

Suggested Resources for the Development of a Single Plan for Student Achievement

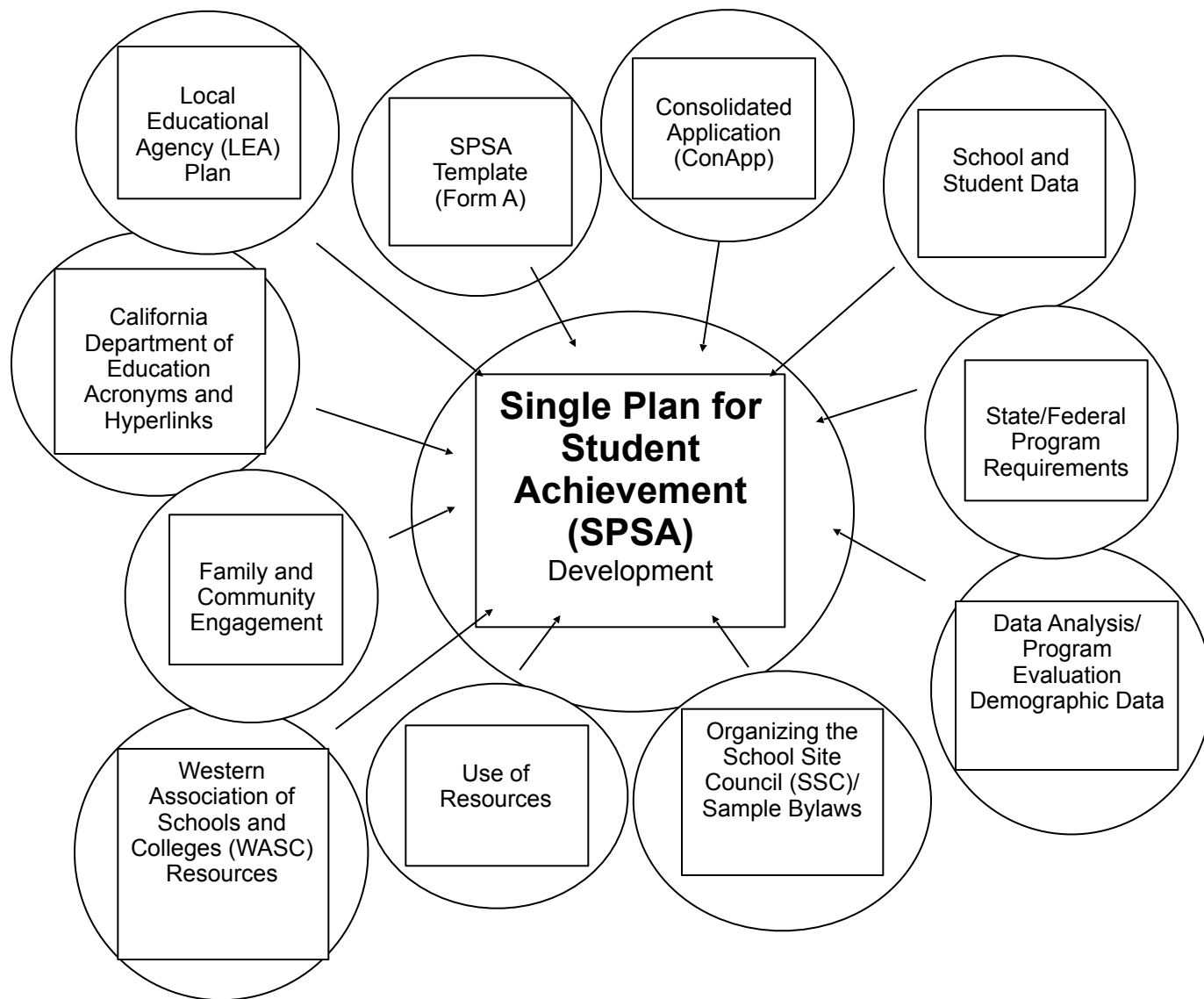


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Introduction

This document provides guidance on how to develop and update the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA). Although districts and schools in California may call the school plan by different names or integrate other key plans (e.g., Western Association of Schools and Colleges [WASC]), this guide provides details about the necessary content of the SPSA. This guide also provides tools for writing and updating the SPSA, including a new Budget Planning Tool (Form F) to help align expenditures with categorical funds allocated to the school and an Annual Evaluation form (Form G) to help the School Site Council (SSC) and school assess the effectiveness of the SPSA.

Role of the SSC

California *Education Code (EC)* Section 64001 requires that an SSC develop the SPSA. The SSC's responsibilities include approving the plan, recommending it to the local governing board for approval, monitoring its implementation, and evaluating the effectiveness of the planned activities at least annually. For specific details on the SSC, see Appendix E.

Legal Specifics for the SPSA

EC Section 64001 specifies that schools and districts that receive state and federal or other applicable funding through the district's Consolidated Application (ConApp) process prepare a SPSA for any recipient school. The SPSA is a blueprint to improve the academic performance of all students. SPSA specifics are also included in the Federal Program Monitoring process.¹

Note: a direct-funded charter school may prepare either a SPSA, a Local Educational Agency Plan (LEAP), or a Single School District (SSD) plan.

EC Section 64001 establishes the following specifics for school plans:

1. School districts must assure that SSCs have developed and approved the SPSA for schools participating in programs funded through the ConApp process and any other school program they choose to include.²
2. Any plans required by programs funded through the ConApp and subject to Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Program Improvement (PI) requirements must be consolidated into a single plan.³ Schools may add other funding sources.

¹ *EC* Section 64001(g)

² *EC* Section 64001(a)

³ *EC* Section 64001(d)

3. The SSC must annually review and update the plan, including proposed expenditures of funds allocated to the school through the ConApp.⁴
4. School goals must be based upon “an analysis of verifiable state data, including the API...and the California English Language Development Test (CELDT),” and may include any data voluntarily developed by districts to measure student achievement.⁵ In addition, schools should include an analysis of school progress on the AYP and other measures of student achievement.
5. The content of the plan must be aligned with school goals for improving student achievement.⁶
6. School plans must be developed with the review, certification, and advice of any applicable school advisory committees.
7. The SPSA must address how ConApp funds will be used to "improve the academic performance of all students to the level of the performance goals, as established by the API."
8. The SPSA must align with the LEA Plan and be submitted for approval to the LEA governing board. The board may return it to the SSC for revisions, as deemed necessary.⁷
9. The SPSA must be reviewed and approved by the governing board of the LEA whenever there are material changes that affect the academic programs funded through the ConApp.⁸

SPSA Purpose

The purpose of the SPSA is to coordinate all educational services at the school. The SPSA shall, at a minimum, address how funds provided to the school through any of the sources identified in *EC* Section 64000 will be used to improve the academic performance of all pupils to the level of the performance goals, as established by the API. The SPSA must integrate the purposes and requirements of all state and federal categorical programs in which the school participates.

The SPSA serves as the organizer for an individual school’s improvement process. The plan should be developed with a deep understanding of root causes of student academic challenges and identify and implement research-based instructional strategies to raise the achievement of students who are not yet proficient by state standards. A well-developed SPSA can ensure that students are better equipped to

⁴ *EC* Section 64001(g)

⁵ *EC* Section 64001(f)

⁶ *EC* Section 64001(f)

⁷ *EC* Section 64001(h)

⁸ *EC* Section 64001(g)

meet the Common Core State Standards in English and math. It is critical that each school's SPSA:

- Builds on a premise that students are capable of learning with effective instruction.
- Includes school goals aligned with activities and goals included in the LEA Plan to maximize school reform efforts.
- Is based on verifiable data analysis.
- Focuses on student achievement and academic interventions.
- Implements high leverage school improvement actions.
- Directs resources where they will most directly improve student academic achievement.
- Ensures that all resources are aligned to serve identified students' needs.
- Uses research-based strategies.
- Implements strategic coordination of resources.

To set school goals, the SSC should carefully review district priorities as stated in the LEA Plan, and assess both state and local quantitative and qualitative student achievement data to evaluate the effectiveness of the instructional program.

Role of the Consolidated Application

The Consolidated Application (ConApp) is used by the California Department of Education (CDE) to distribute categorical funds from various state and federal programs to county offices, school districts, and direct-funded charter schools throughout California. Annually, in June, each local educational agency (LEA) submits the spring release of the application to document participation in these programs and provide assurances that the district will comply with the legal requirements of each program. Program entitlements are determined by formulas contained in the laws that created the programs.

The fall release is submitted in October of each year. This will be an opportunity for the various CDE program offices to collect data that is needed before the winter release is due.

The winter release of the application is submitted in January of each year and contains the district entitlements for each funded program. Out of each state and federal program entitlement, districts allocate funds for indirect costs of administration, for programs operated by the district office, and for programs operated at schools.

When the LEA submits its ConApp for State Board of Education (SBE) approval, it is assuring that the contents are verified as correct and complete. LEAs are responsible for using the funds as specified in the ConApp and the SPSA. The SSC needs to ensure that the activities and expenditures in the SPSA match the amounts allocated to the school through the ConApp. Additional information regarding the ConApp can be accessed on the CDE Consolidated Application Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/co/>.

Seven Recommended Steps for Developing the SPSA

In addition to meeting the requirements common to all school plans, the SPSA must meet the specific requirements of each categorical program operated at the school. (Appendix A: Chart of Requirements for the SPSA lists the content for school plans required by state and federal programs operated at the school.)

The SPSA involves a continuous development, implementation, and monitoring cycle. The starting date of the annual planning cycle is a local decision. However, every school needs to have an approved plan guiding the work of the school. The SSC should develop a calendar of tasks and meetings to seek input from applicable advisory committees to develop the plan. The seven steps of this continuous cycle are:

1. Analyze student achievement data, summarize conclusions, and identify needs.
2. Measure effectiveness of current improvement strategies to determine critical causes of student underachievement.
3. Identify a limited number of achievement goals, key improvement strategies to achieve goals and fiscal resources. Verify that the ConApp allocations match SPSA Form C.
4. Attach timelines, personnel responsible, proposed expenditures, and funding sources to implement the plan.
5. Recommend the SPSA to the local governing board.
6. Receive local governing board approval and implement the plan.
7. Monitor and evaluate effectiveness of the implementation.

For high schools, refer to the WASC resources in Appendix G.

Step One: Analyze Student Achievement Data

The SPSA must be based on an analysis of verifiable state and local student achievement data, which could include results of the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) assessments, California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE), CELDT, API, AYP, and other local benchmark and curriculum embedded assessments. Appendix B contains sample tables for state- and local-level data on student performance. Using such measures of student academic performance, the SSC can identify significant patterns of low performance in particular content areas, student groups, and individual students. The SSC then decides which data summaries to include in the plan as most informative and relevant to school goals.

Academic achievement data for schools and districts are available online:

- STAR data can be accessed on the CDE STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/>.
- LEA Accountability Reports of Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) for English learners can be accessed on the CDE Title III Accountability Technical Assistance Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/t3/t3amaotargets.asp>.
- CAHSEE Accountability Reports can be accessed on the CDE CAHSEE Web Page at <http://cahsee.cde.ca.gov/>.
- CELDT Accountability Reports can be accessed on the CDE CELDT Web page at <http://celdt.cde.ca.gov/>.
- API Reports can be accessed on the CDE API Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ap/>.
- AYP Reports can be accessed on the CDE AYP Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ay/index.asp>.

School and student level data may include local benchmark assessment scores, curriculum embedded assessments, and reading and mathematics diagnostics. Such data conversations can occur at the site level to deepen understanding of students' needs and to drive instructional goals that will be developed in Step Three.

Step Two: Measure Effectiveness of Current Improvement Strategies Using State Tools to Determine Critical Causes of Student Underachievement

Schools must conduct a needs assessment of the effectiveness of the school instructional program with the input of stakeholders. School goals must be based on a comprehensive needs assessment of student academic achievement toward grade level standards, using multiple measures of student performance.

The SSC next considers the relationship between the current instructional program as informed by recommended tools such as the Academic Program Survey (APS) and District Assistance Survey (DAS) and conclusions reached from the analysis of student data. This analysis will help the SSC determine specific program activities that need to be implemented to raise the performance of students not yet meeting state academic standards. Although developed and mandated specifically for LEAs in Program Improvement (PI), the tools provide valuable data for schools seeking to enhance programs. The State Program Assessment Tools, including the APS, DAS, Inventory for School Services and support for students with disabilities (ISS), and English Learner Subgroup Self-Assessment (ELSSA) are located at the CDE State Program Assessment Tools Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ti/stateassesspi.asp>.

The California School Climate Survey (CSCS) for school staff, located on the WestEd Web site at <http://cscs.wested.org/> is an important component of a comprehensive, coordinated effort by the CDE and WestEd to help schools foster positive learning and

teaching environments that promote academic achievement and well-being for youth. The survey helps identify fundamental learning barriers and assess the need for learning and teaching supports. The California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) for students, also located on the WestEd Web site at <http://cal-schls.wested.org/> enables districts and schools (school-level reports available on request) to compare both student and staff data. The survey is supported by a wide range of technical assistance, guides, and trainings for administering the survey and using the data.

The 24-question Special Education Supports Module (SESM), a portion of the CSCS, is designed to be answered by all staff with responsibility for teaching or providing related support services to students with an individualized education program (IEP). It provides data about the perceptions and concerns of school special education personnel to guide program and service improvement, particularly in (1) understanding how to effectively meet the needs of students and staff and (2) recruiting, training, and retaining special education staff. Five main content areas are surveyed. The SESM is located on the WestEd Web site at <http://cscs.wested.org/>.

After analyzing quantitative and qualitative data, it is the work of the SSC and LEA administration to identify academic challenges and the source of student underachievement. An accurate assessment and thoughtful analysis of the current instructional program is essential to raising academic performance among identified students through improved academic programs and increased teacher content matter knowledge.

LEAs must ensure that SPSAs were developed with the review, advice, and certification of applicable school advisory committees.⁹ It is critical to the implementation of the plan that seamless communication exists between the categorical program office and the cabinet level decision makers. Examples of school advisory committees may include:

- English Learner Advisory Committee
- School Advisory Committee (Economic Impact Aid–State Compensatory Education)
- Gifted and Talented Education Advisory Committee
- Special Education Advisory Committee
- WASC/CDE Leadership Team
- Other committees established by the school or district
- District/School Liaison Team for schools in PI

The SSC seeks the input of applicable advisory committees. The advisory committees may wish to present their recommendations to the SSC in writing to facilitate communication. Advisory committee recommendations should be reflected in SSC meeting minutes.

⁹ EC sections 41507, 41572, 64001(a)

Step Three: Identify Achievement Goals and Key Improvement Strategies that Align with the District LEA Plan

LEA Plan goals articulate the district priorities and expectations. School-level goals should be aligned with LEA Plan goals while reflecting the specific needs identified at the school site. Schools need to determine limited key achievement goals (suggested number: two to five). These goals should form the basis for the improvement strategies in the plan that are:

- Derived from conclusions of the needs assessment
- Prioritized by student need
- Realistic and attainable in the period specified in the plan
- Specific to the assessed academic needs of students
- Measurable by frequent formative assessments

School-level goals are precise, measurable statements identifying what will be accomplished in the short-term to support the attainment of the longer-term and more broadly stated LEA program goals. School-level goals should specify the audience (on whom is the goal focused, i.e., student subgroups); behavior (what is expected); conditions (under what circumstances the expectation will be met); and degree (specific criteria that must be met [i.e., percentage of students meeting a target]). The term SMART Goal is really another way of defining an objective: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-bound.

Developing these school-level goals involves:

1. Reviewing LEA Plan goals to ensure a clear understanding of district priorities.
2. Developing a limited number of school-level measurable goals that are aligned with LEA Plan goals that address barriers to student achievement as determined by the assessment of the current instructional program, based on an analysis of student achievement data.
3. Identifying improvement strategies, i.e., describing the methods/practices that will be used to reach the goal.
4. Identifying specific actions under each strategy that will lead to the implementation of the strategy and achievement of the goal. This includes beginning and ending dates, persons responsible, and costs and budget sources for each action itemized for each funding source.

5. Defining tasks, i.e., specific small steps needed to complete an action, under each action step. Tasks have specific due dates and persons responsible. Each action step may have multiple tasks.

General Rule for Integrating Plans

Most categorical programs require specific planning elements. Integrating or merging two or more planning processes does not eliminate any of these requirements. Any combined processes must include the requirements of each of the programs included in the plan.

For more information, see Appendix A: Chart of Legal Specifics for the SPSA, which lists the planning specifics for state and federal categorical programs.

Step Four: Define Timelines, Personnel Responsible, Proposed Expenditures, and Funding Sources to Implement the Plan

For each goal set, the SSC must specify the actions to be taken to accomplish the goal, dates by which actions are to be started and completed, persons responsible, expenditures needed to implement the action, and each funding source budgeted for the goal.

Form A: Planned Improvements in Student Performance provides for the recording of:

- School goal(s)
- Students who are the subject of each goal/anticipated annual performance growth target
- The data analysis used to identify the goal
- Process for evaluating progress toward the goal
- Action steps to be taken to reach each school goal
- Start and completion dates for each action
- Persons responsible
- Proposed expenditures, estimated costs, and funding sources for each action

Expenditures of state and federal categorical program funds are allowable if they:

- Provide an effective means of achieving the purposes of the program funding source
- Are a reasonable use of limited resources

- Are necessary to achieve the goals of the plan
- Provide supplementary services for eligible students
- Comply with individual program statutes
- Do not fund services already required by state law
- Do not pay for what, in the absence of these categorical funds, would be provided by the general fund

The list above addresses the federal requirement that expenditures of funds "supplement, and not supplant" state and local expenditures. For more information about this subject, see the U.S. Department of Education Non-Regulatory Guidance on Title I Fiscal Issues Web site at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/fiscalguid.doc>.

Step Five: Recommend the SPSA to the Local Governing Board

After applicable advisory committees have reviewed the proposed SPSA, the SSC must approve the proposed SPSA at a meeting for which a public notice has been posted.¹⁰ The SPSA is then presented to the district governing board for approval. The SPSA template provides a format for recommending the proposed SPSA to the board and for giving assurance that the SSC:

- Is properly constituted
- Reviewed its legal responsibilities
- Sought input from applicable school advisory committees
- Reviewed the content requirements for all programs included
- Based the plan on analysis of current practices and student academic performance
- Formally approved the plan before recommending it to the local governing board for review

The SPSA template provides signature lines for the SSC chairperson and school principal attesting to these assurances. Schools may add signature lines and assurance statements for each applicable school advisory committee, certifying committee review and advice. Advisory committee involvement may also be documented through correspondence, meeting agendas, and minutes.

If the local governing board does not approve the SPSA, specific reasons for disapproval of the plan must be communicated to the SSC.¹¹ The SSC and applicable

¹⁰EC sections 35147, 64001(a), 64001(g)

¹¹EC Section 52855

committee(s) must revise and resubmit the SPSA to the local governing board for its approval.

It is helpful for SSC members to be present when the local governing board reviews and approves the SPSA to answer questions and speak to issues raised. If the plan is not approved, SSC members in attendance can convey the board's objections to other SSC members. Until the local governing board has approved the plan, the activities and expenditures are not authorized for implementation.

Step Six: Implement the Plan

The district administration and site administration are responsible for implementing and evaluating the activities included in the SPSA as approved by the local governing board. Administration of the plan includes assigning, directing, and supervising project staff; purchasing materials and equipment; and accounting for project funds. The administration also may support the planning process by providing training and information to the SSC and applicable advisory groups, or by developing proposals for the SSC's consideration.

Step Seven: Monitor Implementation

Once the plan is approved and implemented, the SSC is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of planned activities and modifying those that prove ineffective. Monitoring will be made easier if the plan specifies actions, dates, estimated costs, and measurable anticipated student academic outcomes, as well as the persons involved and their responsibilities. A plan that is too general can minimize accountability and diminish results for student achievement.

Monitoring should follow the calendar of events established by the SPSA to verify timely implementation and achievement of objectives critical to the success of the plan, such as:

- Assignment and training of highly qualified staff to positions identified in the plan
- Identification of student participants
- Implementation of services
- Provision of materials and equipment to students
- Review of the calendar for initial and ongoing assessments to measure student performance against benchmarks indicated in the plan
- Verification of evidence of progress made toward SPSA goals

As the implementation of planned activities unfolds, the SSC should verify the success of each major event for identified students and share this information with advisory committees and other interested parties.

Mid-year Changes to the SPSA

Any of the following factors may indicate a need to amend the SPSA during the school year:

- A major service or activity proves ineffective, and students are at risk of not meeting achievement goals
- Staff, equipment, or materials essential to the plan cannot be procured (e.g., unfilled positions, or materials that could not be supplied)
- Material changes occur that affect the academic programs
- School boundaries or demographics suddenly change
- An activity is found to be non-compliant with state or federal law
- A planned activity is not supported by staff, parents, or students

The SSC may amend the plan at any time. Any revisions that would substantively change the academic programs funded through the ConApp must be reviewed and approved by the local governing board.

Continue the Cycle

At least annually, the SSC must evaluate the effectiveness of planned activities. In the cycle of continuous improvement of student performance, evaluation of the results of goals will provide data for the following year's plan.

The new Form G, SPSA Annual Evaluation, provides a suggested template for an SSC to evaluate the effectiveness of a school's SPSA.

Purpose and use of the SPSA Template (Part II)

This section contains the suggested template for the SPSA. **The use of the SPSA template is voluntary.**

The SPSA template has been designed to meet the content requirements of *EC* Section 64001 for a Single Plan for Student Achievement. Such a plan must be developed and approved by the SSC at each school that participates in any program funded through the ConApp and any programs the SSC decides to include.¹² Accordingly, the plan must:

1. Be reviewed and updated annually by the SSC, including proposed expenditures of funds allocated to the school.
2. Align with school goals for improving student achievement that are based on verifiable state and local data.
3. Describe how progress toward those academic performance goals will be evaluated.
4. Address how funds will be used to improve the academic performance of all students as indicated by the AYP, API, and other state measures.
5. Be consistent with federally required LEA plans, and identify how state and federal requirements will be implemented.
6. Consolidate all plans required for programs funded through the ConApp in which the school participates and, when feasible, other categorical programs.
7. Be developed with the review, certification, and advice of applicable school advisory committees.

¹² See Form C: Programs Included in this Plan. For information on programs in which your school participates, consult your district office.

8. Be reviewed and approved by the local governing board whenever there are material changes affecting the progress of students covered by these programs.

How to Use the SPSA Template (Part II)

The SPSA template provides a single, comprehensive school plan to improve the academic performance of students. Its use requires collection and analysis of student performance data, setting priorities for program improvements, rigorous use of effective solution strategies, and ongoing monitoring of results.

By following the Seven Steps for Developing the SPSA described in detail in Part I of this guide, the following forms (A through G) from the template can be completed. Collectively, these completed forms will make up the SPSA for a school:

- **Form A:** Planned Improvements in Student Performance—develops school goals, related actions, and expenditures that address the findings from the analysis of the instructional program and student performance data. Please note that for each funded goal or activity, a specific amount must be itemized for each funding source.
- **Form B:** Centralized Services for Planned Improvement in Student Performance—identifies direct services to students and educational support services to school staff that are provided by district office staff. These services are paid from categorical funds allocated to the school. The district needs SSC approval in order for these funds to be used for centralized services. The total amounts for each program listed in Form B must align with the amounts listed in the district's ConApp.
- **Form C:** Programs Included in This Plan—lists the state and federal categorical programs in which the school participates and, when applicable, allocations to the school. The totals and amounts listed in these pages should match the allocations to the school from the district's ConApp.
- **Form D:** SSC Membership—indicates the membership of the SSC to document its composition.
- **Form E:** Recommendations and Assurances—completes the SPSA for submission to the district governing board for approval.
- **Form F (updated):** Budget Planning Tool (in Excel format) — is a tool to help the SSC project costs and align resources with Forms A, B, C, and the ConApp.
- **Form G:** Annual Evaluation—is a tool to help the SSC evaluate the effectiveness of its SPSA.

If all applicable portions of the SPSA template are appropriately completed, school plan content requirements will be met for all categorical programs in which the school participates.

Notes on Using the SPSA Template

The template included in this Guide is a suggested format for completing the SPSA. Schools may use their own format as long as all of the federal and state requirements are fulfilled. An online template in the California Accountability and Improvement System (CAIS) is also available. Districts should contact Janice Morrison, Education Programs Consultant, District Innovation and Improvement Office, by e-mail at jamorrison@cde.ca.gov, to be activated on CAIS.

The SPSA template is formatted as a Microsoft Word document. The spaces provided for text and data are expandable and are intended to allow additional information. Form F, Budget Planning Tool, is available in Microsoft Excel on the CDE Single Plan for Student Achievement Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/nclb/sr/le/singleplan.asp>.

Charts of Requirements and cover sheets that can serve as checklists have been included in Appendix A of the Resource Index (Part III) to ensure the compliance requirements of various programs are met. Additional cover sheets/checklists will be placed in Appendix A as they become available.