
Name of LEA

Name of Non-Public School or Agency

Stronger Connections Grant Affirmation of Meaningful Non-Public School Consultation & Final Agreement

Combined Affirmation & Agreement forms with non-public schools are due in ePlan by Sept. 1.

Overview

On June 25, 2022, President Biden signed the [Bipartisan Safer Communities Act \(BSCA\)](#) into law. This legislation expands mental health services and provides additional support for states and local educational agencies (LEAs) to design and enhance initiatives that will promote safer, more inclusive, and positive school environments for all students, educators, and school staff.

The BSCA includes \$1 billion through Title IV, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) for state educational agencies (SEAs) to award competitively subgrants to high-need LEAs to establish safer and healthier learning environments, and to prevent and respond to acts of bullying, violence, and hate that impact school communities at individual and systemic levels, among other programs and activities. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) has designated this component of the BSCA the Stronger Connections Grant (SCG) program.

Under Stronger Connections, a SEA must make subgrant awards on a competitive basis to high-need LEAs, as determined by the SEA, and funds may be used only for activities authorized under ESEA Title IV, Part A § 4108 (i.e., Safe and Healthy Students). All SCG funds must be obligated by Sept. 30, 2026.

As funding for the SCG program is provided through ESEA Title IV, Part A, LEAs receiving grant funds must, after timely and meaningful consultation with appropriate non-public school officials, provide eligible non-public school students and educators services and other benefits that are equitable in comparison to services and other benefits provided with SCG funds to public school students and educators. More information about the SCG, including information about the four SCG areas of focus and the allowable use of funds can be found in the [SCG Technical Guide](#).

The requirement of providing equitable services is achieved through timely and meaningful consultation between the LEA and non-public school officials. The consultation process must occur prior to any decision that affects the opportunities of eligible non-public school students, teachers, and other educational personnel for equitable services. This consultation must be ongoing, continuing throughout the implementation and assessment of these activities. Further, LEAs are required to finalize all SCG equitable service agreements with non-public school officials. An Affirmation of Meaningful Non-Public School Consultation and Agreement form shall be signed by the LEA and non-public official(s) and uploaded in ePlan with the Stronger Connections Grant application. LEAs that have uploaded consultation agreements for each participating non-public school will have satisfied the ESEA requirement that consultation agreements be forwarded to the ombudsman.

State Ombudsman

To help ensure equitable services and other benefits are being provided for eligible non-public school students, teachers, and other educational personnel, the state must designate an ombudsman to monitor and enforce the requirements under the SCG. Tennessee has designated the department's Title II and equitable services coordinator as the ombudsman for SCG equitable services requirements. If there has been no consultation or agreement between the LEA and the non-public school, a complaint may be filed on behalf of the non-public school by completing the Complaint to the Ombudsman [form](#) found in [ePlan.tn.gov > TDOE Resources > Equitable Services to Non-Public Schools > ESSA Non-Public Schools Information > Equitable Services Complaint to the Ombudsman](#). Complaints must be signed by the individual(s) or organization(s) filing the complaint and copied to the LEA. Complaints must be sent to the department to the attention of the ombudsman via email to Brinn.Obermiller@tn.gov.

Part I: Meaningful Consultation

Part I of this form documents the ESEA §§ 1117, 8501 requirement that timely and meaningful consultation between the LEA and non-public school officials:

1. occurs prior to making any decision that affects the opportunities of eligible non-public school students, families, teachers, and other educational personnel for equitable services and;
2. shall continue throughout the implementation and assessment of these activities.

At a minimum, the ongoing consultation process must cover the topics below for the SCG program. Check <i>Yes</i> , <i>No</i> , or <i>N/A</i> to indicate that the following topics were discussed during the consultation:	Yes	No
How the proportion of funds allocated under the SCG for equitable services is determined		
A description of the four SCG areas of focus and what is allowable under each area.		
The size and scope of equitable services to be provided to eligible non-public school students, families, teachers, and other educational personnel and the amount of funds available for those services		
Whether the LEA will provide the services directly, or through a third-party contractor		
Whether to provide equitable services to eligible non-public school students by pooling funds or on a school-by-school basis		
How students' needs will be identified		
What services will be provided, including how, when, where, and by whom		
How decisions about the services will be made, how the services will be assessed, and how the results of the assessment will be used to improve those services		

The non-public school or agency official affirms:	Yes	No
That timely and meaningful consultation has occurred.		
The program design is equitable for eligible non-public school students, families, teachers, and other education personnel.		
This agreement applies to the _____ school year. (Enter applicable school year)		

Part II: Agreement

Part II of this form represents the agreement of equitable services between the LEA and the non-public school. This is not an exhaustive list and may not cover the entire agreement between the LEA and non-public school officials as each school may have individual or unique needs that could be defined as allowable for equitable services. LEAs should modify and add topics to this form as needed to reflect the actual consultation process and agreement between the LEA and the non-public school.

The non-public school agency/school official and LEA agree on the terms below for the SCG program.

Describe the size and scope of equitable services to be provided to eligible non-public school students, teachers, and other educational personnel and the amount of funds available for those services.

Example: “ ___ teachers and students are being provided services through a SCG allocation of \$___.”

Describe how the needs of the students, teachers, or other educational personnel, in regard to the four SCG program areas of focus, are identified:

Describe what services will be provided, including:

- 1. How,**
- 2. When,**
- 3. Where,**
- 4. By Whom, and**
- 5. What SCG area of focus the services connect to (REQUIRED).**

Describe:

- 1. How decisions about the SCG services/programs will be made,**
- 2. How SCG services/programs will be assessed and monitored for progress and effectiveness, and**
- 3. How the results of the SCG assessment will be used to improve services/programs.**

Describe how the LEA will ensure oversight (for issues including allowability, compliance with program requirements, inventories of equipment and materials, etc.):

For the program indicated and described above, the non-public school agency/school official and the LEA affirms this consultation agreement for the _____ school year.

Name of LEA

Name of Non-Public School or Agency

Signature of LEA Representative

Date

Signature of Non-Public School or
Agency Representative

Date