The Institute for Performance Improvement — EDUCATION

CSIS™ CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

for

Evidence-Based Certification

January 2023

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The Institute for Performance Improvement
www.TIfPIedu.org

Table of Contents

CSIS™ Introduction

Purpose   The purpose of the CSIS™ Candidate Handbook is to provide information to prospective candidates of the evidence-based School Improvement Specialist certification program.

The document consists of definitions, descriptions, and procedures. It is cross-referenced to help users locate information that is addressed in more than one section.

Each section stands alone.

Overview   The CSIS™ Candidate Handbook consists of two sections:

1. CSIS™ Overview
2. Application Process

1. CSIS™ Overview

Philosophy Statement

The Certified School Improvement Specialist (CSIS™) designation recognizes professionals, schools, and systems that have demonstrated the ability to use a systematic process to add value and produce measurable results while collaborating with stakeholders and working within the constraints of a school system.

The CSIS™ designation is the education industry's premiere certification and is far more rigorous than most professional credentials. It recognizes people that have contributed to sustainable improvement of students, teachers, school leaders, and school systems.

Why Certification?

The education sector is faced with the daunting challenge to equip all students with the skills required for the 21st century. This need has opened the door for people and groups professing to have solutions. Those solutions may have limited effectiveness; however, sustainable improvement at all levels requires a more systemic and systematic approach using multiple interventions.

Until the development of the CSIS™ designations, anyone could claim to be a specialist in improving the performance of students, teachers, school leaders, schools, and school systems.

At the same time, accomplished education improvement practitioners had been asking for a credential that would help them assess their ability, focus their professional development efforts better, and recognize their capabilities.

In response to this need, in 2011 the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI) launched the CSIS™ designation, the first and only proficiency-based credential for education improvement specialists. The CSIS™ designation is now awarded by The Institute for Performance Improvement. The standards on which the designation is based, recognizes practitioners vested with the supervisory authority to lead improvement, and other professionals who work as consultants or otherwise work to achieve improvement without supervisory authority.

What is Certification?

Certification is a credential or designation for professionals who have demonstrated worthy performance achieved through a systematic process.

The CSIS™ designation is distinctive in that it is both proficiency and competency based. It is about delivering service that school systems value and doing it in a way that can be measured and replicated.

Requirements   To become certified, you must:
- Have demonstrated evidence of improvement through a minimum of three years of performance data within the last five years.
- Complete the required CSIS™ Orientation program online or as a one-day session by contracted group or complete the *LAUNCH!* ™ Leaning and Performance Experience
- Demonstrate proficiency in the ten (10) CSIS™ standards.
- Complete and submit the application.
- Submit a letter of attestation that the information in the application accurately reflects the work, what you did and how the work was accomplished.
- Commit to the Code of Ethics.

About the CSIS™ Standards   The CSIS™ standards are rooted in the principles and practices of Human Performance Improvement:
1. Focus on results
2. Take a systemic view
3. Add value
4. Collaborate with partners/stakeholders
5. Apply a systematic process
   a. Do a needs or requirements assessment
   b. Do a cause analysis
   c. Design the solution set
   d. Develop the solution elements
   e. Implement the solution set
   f. Evaluate the effectiveness of the solution set

The ten (10) CSIS™ standards are:
1. Analyze and Apply Critical Judgment
2. Facilitate Deriving Meaning and Engagement
3. Focus on Systemic Factors
4. Plan and Record
5. Organize and Manage Efforts and Resources
6. Guide and Focus Collaborative Improvement
7. Build Capacity
8. Demonstrate Organizational Sensitivity
9. Monitor Accountability and Adoption
10. Implement for Sustainability

You can download a complete copy of the CSIS™ standards by visiting TIfPIedu.org.

Who Developed the CSIS™ Standards?

A special Certification Task Force was convened to develop the credentialing standards. The group was comprised of accomplished school improvement specialists, representatives from the Georgia Department of Education (DOE), school superintendents, assistant superintendents, the executive director of Regional Education Service Agency (RESA), principals, deputy superintendents, associate directors of the Southern Association of Colleges & Schools-Advanced ED (SACS CASI), and program managers of professional learning. The consultants nominated had to have successfully improved school performance and sustained that improvement for three or more years.

Twenty-eight people participated in a structured group interview using the Nominal Group Technique (NGT). The participants were asked the following questions:

Assume the effective school improvement specialist is a consultant, is assigned by the state, or works in the county office.
1. What do the school improvement specialists do that makes them effective in their role?
2. What is different if the school improvement specialist is a principal?
3. What do specialists in school improvement do that others who are less effective in that role fail to do or do not do well?
4. What do specialists in school improvement know that makes them effective – what is their knowledge and expertise?
5. What would you expect and accept as evidence of successful practice by an effective school improvement specialist?

To validate the results of the structured individual interviews, additional interviews were conducted nationally using the Critical-Incident Technique. The group included superintendents, university faculty, principals, state and community school leaders, school improvement consultants, policy directors, and other stakeholders.

In addition, ISPI put the CSIS™ standards and a summary of the results of the interviews and focus groups on its website for public review and comment.

How is the Credentialing Process Managed?	The program is managed under the direction of Judith Hale, PD and Jean Quigg Ed.D. on behalf of The Institute for Performance Improvement. Practice Leaders participate in governance decisions related to the CSIS™ standards. Practice leaders represent school superintendents and certified school improvement specialists.
How Much Does It Cost?	The certification costs $695 (CSIS™) plus $300 for an individual online orientation or as a contracted group rate.
How Is Proficiency Assessed?	Applicants' proficiency is assessed through a combination of the following: ▪ Attestations by clients or school system leaders who are employers, ▪ A review of the information contained in the application by trained reviewers, and ▪ A further review, where advisable, by the Certification and Accreditation Governance Committee of Applications deemed certifiable by Reviewers.
Who Are the Qualified Reviewers?	Reviewers are people deemed qualified through experience or education and trained in how to conduct the assessments.
How Do I Prepare?	The CSIS™ Orientation to the standards allows individuals, school leaders, and system leaders to judge readiness for applying and directs development.
What Happens After an Individual Earns Certification?	Once the certification is achieved, an individual will have a credential that distinguishes him or her in the community, state, and global marketplace. The individual earning the CSIS™ will receive a digital badge and engraved plaque. He or she will be entitled to use the prestigious CSIS™ logo (within guidelines). In addition, the individual becomes a part of a national network of CSIS™ designees
What Happens After a School or System Earns Certification?	Once the certification is achieved, the school or system will have a credential that distinguishes the school or system in the community, state, and global marketplace. An engraved plaque will be given to the school or system that can be displayed. A digital badge for the website will be provided.
What if the Application is Rejected?	There are two circumstances under which an individual, school, or system might not become certified: ▪ The application is improperly completed or is missing information. ▪ The application and supporting materials are reviewed and CSIS designation is denied. **Improper, Incomplete, or Denied Application** The application will not go through the review process if the submitted application is incomplete. Feedback will be given explaining what missing should be provided. Applicants will have 3 months to submit the missing information. Applicants whose application is read and the CSIS designation is denied will receive developmental feedback explaining why the complete application (with all required materials) is not accepted after going through the review process. Applicants will have 3 months to resubmit the application at no extra charge. At the time the corrected application is received, it will go through another review process.

If the CSIS™ credential is denied after resubmission of the revised application, the individual, school, or system will have the right to appeal the decision within 30 days. Information about how to appeal would be sent to applicants at that time.

How Is the Effectiveness of the Program Measured?

TIfPI measures:
- The number of employers asking for certified professionals
- The number of organizations funding pursuit of the credentials
- The number of people pursuing it
- The number of participants in TIfPI training related to the CSIS™ standards that pursue the CSIS™ designation.
- The perceptions of certificants that it helped their career or the work of systemic and sustained improvement in the school or school system
- Its service level to candidates and certificants

Where Can I Learn More?

Continue to check TIfPI's web page www.TIfPIedu.org for more details.

2. Application Process

How to Apply for the CSIS™ Designations	To apply for the CSIS™ designation:

1. Download the CSIS™ standards, and the appropriate application that contains the Code of Ethics by going to TifPiedu.org

2. Study the CSIS™ standards.

3. Complete the CSIS™ Orientation to the standards or *LAUNCH*!™ courses to determine readiness or to identify areas for development.

4. Read the entire application packet.

5. You will need to:
   - Read the requirements for applying in the application.
   - Identify a client or supervisor who will attest that the work you described was done by you, and that it was of value to the school or school system.
   - Attach data containing the metrics (student achievement metrics and metrics of two other types) used to measure improvement.
   - Data must include the actual baseline data, the leading indicators tracked to measure adoption, and the final performance data such as:
     Examples: (Also listed in Standard 9, Question 2 in application)

     I. Student Academic Achievement data such as:
       A. Formative data
          1. Non-standardized Constructed Response
             a. Open-ended assessments- essays, science projects, short answer exams
          2. Non-standardized Selected Response
             a. Multiple Choice, True/False Unit Assessments
             b. School or system benchmark assessments
             c. Self-assessments
             d. State practice test banks
       B. Summative data
          1. Standardized Constructed Response
             a. State or national writing assessments
             b. SAT 2
             c. SAT Writing Test
             d. ACT Writing Exam
             e. Advanced Placement Exams
             f. College Admission Portfolios
             g. New Standards Reference Test (more open –ended questions)
          2. Standardized Selected Response
             a. Multiple Choice Criterion Referenced Tests
             b. National Standardized Achievement Tests
             c. SAT Critical Reading, English, Math Exams
             d. ACT Critical Reading, English, Math, Social Studies, Science
          3. Non-Standardized Constructed or Selected Response
             a. Course Final Exams

     II. Systemic school data such as:

A. Dropout rate
B. Absenteeism/Attendance rates
C. Graduation rates
D. Discipline referrals
E. Gang-related incidents
F. Student transiency
G. College completion
H. School partnerships
I. Class size
J. Others

III. Organizational effectiveness data such as:
   A. Evidence of best practice instructional strategies
   B. Student Intervention strategy data
   C. Teacher retention data
   D. Percentage of highly qualified teachers
   E. Teacher attendance in professional learning
   F. Teacher participation in teams
   G. Use of time
   H. Alternative education options
   I. Collaborative instruction planning meetings
   J. Effective bell-to-bell instruction
   K. Students opting to eat school lunch
   L. Extra-curricular opportunities
   M. Community Service requirements/participation
   N. Use of technology to support instruction
   O. On time bus delivery
   P. Transportation supporting additional instruction
   Q. Others

IV. Student and stakeholder engagement such as:
   A. Measures of student engagement (Clubs, service projects, etc.)
   B. Measures of parental engagement
   C. Measures of teacher student
   D. Measures of community engagement and support
   E. Measures of communication effectiveness
   F. Measures of perceptions (students, teachers, parents, community)
   G. Others

V. Team growth and performance improvement such as:
   A. Participation in self-directed groups
   B. Participant in peer observations
   C. Frequency of involvement or coaching
   D. Professional growth plans
   E. Quality and frequency of feedback
   F. Changes in individual teacher, staff, administrator, and group
      performance data
   G. Other

VI. Financial and budget data such as:
   A. Measures of expenditures vs. performance
   B. Performance against budget

C. Savings
D. Efficient and effective use of federal funds
E. Grant money pursued for supplemental funding
F. Voter-approved state or local optional funding
G. Others

VII. Demographic data such as:
A. Student demographics
B. Changes in community demographics
C. Changes in free and reduced lunch rates
D. Team and staff match to student demographics
E. Others

VII. Other data factors
A. Response To Intervention services
B. Access to student and family counseling
C. Access to mental health services
D. Access to food banks
E. Access to clothes closets
F. Access to and use of public library services
G. Number of books checked out in school media center
H. Services for homeless families
I. Others

6. Discuss the application with those you have selected to be Attesters.

7. Complete and sign all forms in the application.

8. Note your orientation or *LAUNCH*!™ completion date in the application.

9. Complete Attester Summary Form

10. Complete the Project and Standard Identification Form

11. Complete a Work Description Form explaining how the work done met each of the CSIS™ standards. Answer the questions listed under each standard's description.

12. Complete the Attestation Form for the project you describe; submit the form and a copy of your Work Description Form to the client or supervisor who, by signing the form, will attest that the work described was done.

13. Send the scanned signed attestation forms by email with the completed application. PDF format is accepted for signature documents only. The application should be submitted in Word.

14. Complete the application, save it in a Word format and email it to Dr. Jean Quigg, National CSIS™ Director, at Jean@TIfPI.org.

For questions about payments or to generate a Purchase Order, contact TIfPI Operations Director, Pam Henderson, at Pam@TIfPi.org.

Reminder: CSIS™ applications are processed throughout the year.

Tips for Success	These Tips for Success will help you with your application.
	- Review past work and think about work that met the following criteria: - Has initial metrics of student, teacher, and school performance - Resulted in an improvement in multiple (at least three) measures of school improvement, including student academic performance - Has data proving sustained improvement of at least three years - Sit with a colleague and discuss work or initiatives that might be included in the submission. Provide the colleague with the CSIS™ standards and talk about each. Be specific and take notes about the specific roles and tasks performed. - Invite the potential Attester to a preliminary discussion about the CSIS™ standards and the project. Listen for their perspectives, the value they believe the project had, or even ask for evaluation data or post implementation data that may not have been reviewed. - Ask Attester to tell the story of the improvement work. Often it will be viewed in a different light and help the applicant(s) determine how the CSIS™ standards were demonstrated. - Ask the Attester(s) if they would support the submission. - Take time to have a colleague proofread the application. Spell check is not adequate for a professional certification that is equivalent to graduate work. - Make sure each of the questions for each CSIS™ Standard are answered completely. - Applicant(s) will be asked to explain the role(s) in the work as a whole and for individual CSIS™ standards. Examples of significant roles include: - Conducting interviews to get information for the creation of performance standards or ideas for successfully implementing a solution - Developing assessment tools used to measure the changed behavior - Being the project lead or lead designer
	In general, how the individual or school or system leadership team's actions directly contributed to the work meeting a specific standard must be explained.
Application Tips	- CSIS™ Applicants- Use "I" as you describe what you, as an individual, did to guide the collaborative process of school improvement, compared to each standard. - Do not use acronyms. If applicants are speaking of a test, define the type of test, such as a test of writing ability on grade level. Readers may not be familiar with your local/state context. - Use tables, bullets, and other organizing devices to keep answers concise and clear. - Think, "This is a report – not a dissertation!" - Answers should reflect practice of the HPI standards, as well as how each respective CSIS™ standard is met at the element level. - Working with someone who was on the same team with an individual developing the CSIS™ application can help the applicant get feedback and reflect on practice effectively. - Local reform or improvement work, done by the people you or the school or system leadership team guides is the "What" of school improvement. - How the work is guided is the "How" of school improvement facilitation. **You are evaluated on the "How" and the results, not the "What."**
Application Calendar	Applications will be accepted at any time.