

Schools Need More: institutional questions, strategic options and accountable next steps

Historical review of school-owned problem framing and decision preparation.

The current editorial-first publication model was not evaluated.

Research by Education Angel Group. Last substantive review: September 19, 2026.

Education Angel Group is developing Schools Need More and has an interest in the proposed product. This review does not establish its effectiveness.

Historical research scope. This September 19, 2026 report examines the earlier Schools Need More guidance proposition. The current entities are editorial-first publications: Education Needs More is the editorial umbrella within Education Angel Group, and the individual Need More publications sit beneath it. This report does not evaluate the newer editorial model. The findings, proposed mechanisms and prior tagline below belong to the earlier research scope, not a claim about current product effectiveness or availability.

Prepared by Education Angel Group (EAG), with AI-assisted research and drafting. Research date: September 19, 2026. EAG is developing Schools Need More and has an interest in its success. This is a focused research report about its proposed role, not an independent evaluation or evidence of district endorsement.

1. Proposition, audience and present limits

In the earlier proposal, Schools Need More was intended to help an authorized school or district role clarify an institution-wide problem, understand relevant evidence, compare strategic options and prepare a safe next step for an accountable owner. Its defining question is what an institution needs to decide, and who can decide it. Funding navigation is one possible use case. The proposition is broader than a grant directory and narrower than a consultancy that diagnoses schools or implements strategy.

The intended readers include school administrators, district program leaders and department leads whose concerns cross classroom boundaries. A principal may recognize a recurring instructional disruption without controlling the capital budget. A program coordinator may know that a service is underused without knowing whether access, staffing, scheduling or its design is responsible. A team lead may need to distinguish a classroom workaround from a problem requiring a district process. These are hypothetical situations that illustrate the audience; no school interviews or institutional cases were collected for this report.

The canonical EAG definition keeps institutional decisions with the school or district. Public orientation must not reveal private student, staffing, vendor, finance, incident or facility information. It must not create outreach, a school case or an EAG referral automatically. Teachers Need More remains the first proof child of

the related editorial family; Schools Need More's activation depends on that accepted proof. The EAG product definition defines intent, not implemented capability. EAG proposition authority, A0

Overview. The evidence supports treating institutional problem framing and implementation capacity as serious subjects. It does not establish demand for this service or demonstrate that its proposed briefs improve decisions. A credible first contribution would be a question that an authorized leader can use within an existing process. A polished plan, a completed form or an onward click would not establish that a school received a useful service or improved student outcomes.

2. Research questions and standards of inference

Five questions organize this review:

1. What distinguishes a school-wide problem from an individual request or a proposed solution?
2. What do institutional evidence and capacity constraints imply for comparing options?
3. Which existing sources and institutional routes already perform the job?
4. How might guided orientation help without duplicating work or displacing authority?
5. What evidence would justify continuing, changing or abandoning the proposed service?

These questions require different kinds of support. Descriptive surveys establish how respondents or estimated populations characterized a problem during a stated period. Administrative guidance describes an expected process. An evaluation can estimate effects for a tested intervention and population. None automatically establishes that Schools Need More will improve institutional decisions.

The distinction between a symptom, an explanation and an intervention is especially consequential. "A service is not reaching intended participants" describes a concern. "The timetable makes participation difficult" is a possible explanation. "Buy a new scheduling system" is a proposed response. An orientation service should help a reader keep these propositions separate until relevant local evidence and authorized judgment connect them. That is EAG's proposed reasoning method, not a finding from a test of this product.

A second distinction concerns scope. A cross-school concern may have a district owner even when first noticed by a teacher. Conversely, an issue affecting several classrooms does not necessarily require a new district initiative. This report therefore asks whether the proposed product can clarify responsibility and uncertainty before it encourages action. It does not use the number of people affected as a substitute for formal authority.

3. Need and context: recognized needs are not completed responses

GAO's September 2026 facilities report provides a recent illustration of an institutional problem with several response stages. Its Table 1 estimates that 58% of districts needed renovation or expansion and 70% needed major building-system replacement. Among districts reporting each respective need, 25% and 40% had work budgeted or underway; 30% and 16% had no plan yet. These conditional percentages have different denominators from the prevalence estimates. The survey ran November 2025 to January 2026, with 427 responses and a weighted response rate of 62%. Certain district types were excluded. The estimates describe reported needs and plans, not independently inspected conditions or causal effects. GAO, S3, Table 1 and Appendix I

Figure 1

Capital needs have different response stages

Among districts reporting each specific need | Survey November 2025 to January 2026

Renovation or expansion

Budgeted or underway: 25%



No plan yet: 30%



Zero baseline | Shared scale: 0-100%

Major building systems

Budgeted or underway: 40%



No plan yet: 16%



Zero baseline | Shared scale: 0-100%

95% margins no greater than 7 percentage points for these cells; bounds are not exact cell intervals. No error bars shown.

Selected Table 1 cells. Planning shares omitted from bars are 45% and 44%. Need categories overlap. Source chronology discrepancy remains unresolved.

Selected Table 1 cells. Planning shares omitted from bars are 45% and 44%. Need categories overlap. Source chronology discrepancy remains unresolved.

- S3

These equivalents accompany the reader figures. Source IDs refer to the report references. A0 identifies EAG's product definition reviewed for the original report, not an external study or proof of availability. Other source IDs resolve to this report's reference and access record.

Figure 1. Capital needs have different response stages

Selected Table 1 cells. Planning shares omitted from bars are 45% and 44%. Need categories overlap. Source chronology discrepancy remains unresolved.

Measure	Budgeted or underway	No plan yet
Renovation or expansion	25%	30%
Major building systems	40%	16%

Separately, districts identifying renovation/expansion need and districts identifying major building-system replacement need

95% margins no greater than 7 percentage points for these cells; bounds are not exact cell intervals. No error bars shown.

Direct Table 1 transcription; common zero-based 0-100% scale; no prevalence/conditional denominator mixing.

Sources: S3.

Figure 1. Budgeted or underway versus no plan yet, among districts reporting each need. The omitted planning-stage shares are 45% and 44%; the two displayed bars are not the whole distribution. These selected estimates have margins of error no greater than 7 percentage points. Appendix I leaves the separate September 2026 feedback and revision sequence unclear; interpretation is provisional. No product effect is shown. Text and data alternative

EAG's interpretation is that "needs help" is too imprecise a starting category. A known problem without a plan requires different questions from an approved project waiting for qualified staff. The chart cannot say why an individual district lacks a plan, whether that choice is unreasonable, or whether a new website would help. It should prompt a stage-of-decision question, never a league table of institutional competence.

Arkansas evidence illustrates a second denominator problem. The November 2025 principals survey received responses from 496 of 1,035 public-school principals, or 47.9%. In the conditional facility-problem item, 216 respondents could select multiple issues; 63% identified building age, 35% appearance, 32% design and 21%

HVAC inadequacy. These are not percentages of all Arkansas schools. The field period was April 14 through June 22, 2025, despite the report's placement in the 2026 adequacy cycle.

Arkansas Bureau of Legislative Research, S4, printed pages 1 and 20

For Schools Need More, this means the unit of a statement belongs beside the statement. A respondent subgroup, school count, district estimate and budget total cannot become interchangeable evidence of "school need." Public research may help a leader formulate questions without exposing their own school's operations. It cannot determine the severity, priority or remedy for that school.

Facilities are a concrete context, not the service's entire remit. The same reasoning distinction could apply to instructional coordination, service access or planning continuity. Transfer to those domains is a hypothesis. This report has not established that one question structure works equally well for all institutional problems.

4. Existing alternatives and the proposed gap

A school leader is not starting from an absence of guidance. Federal evidence guidance, agency information and district processes already offer substantial support. The relevant comparison is the route a user would otherwise take, not an invented baseline of confusion.

The Department of Education's September 2023 non-regulatory evidence guidance describes an improvement process covering needs, selection, implementation and reflection. It asks readers to consider context, evidence relevance, staffing, resources and sustainability. It also directs attention to evidence clearinghouses, including the What Works Clearinghouse. This is a process resource, not an evaluation of third-party guidance. Department of Education, S1, printed pages 5-11

Grants.gov lists independent school districts among potential applicant categories, while making clear that the individual notice determines eligibility. It is a direct alternative when the actual question concerns a federal opportunity. A category match cannot verify an open award, permitted spending or the user's authority to apply. Grants.gov, S6

Arkansas's November 2024 AR App notice ties that fiscal year's authorizations to submitted LEA applications and budgets. Its date matters: the notice is an example of an institutional approval route, not current FY2026-27 permission or a current contact directory. Arkansas Department of Education, S7

Figure 2

Existing routes answer different questions

Evidence guidance | S1

How should options be appraised?

Official process guidance and source pointers; no local decision or product-effect estimate.

Grants.gov | S6

Who might apply?

Current notice controls actual eligibility. A broad organization category is insufficient.

Institutional process | S7

Who can authorize the next step?

Historical Arkansas notice illustrates application and budget ownership. Current rules require verification.

Source-described routes compared by EAG. This is a role comparison, not an effectiveness ranking.

Existing routes answer different questions

Source-described routes compared by EAG. This is a role comparison, not an effectiveness ranking.

- S1
 - S6
 - S7
-

Figure 2. Existing routes answer different questions

Source-described routes compared by EAG. This is a role comparison, not an effectiveness ranking.

Evidence guidance | S1: How should options be appraised? Official process guidance and source pointers; no local decision or product-effect estimate.

Grants.gov | S6: Who might apply? Current notice controls actual eligibility. A broad organization category is insufficient.

Institutional process | S7: Who can authorize the next step? Historical Arkansas notice illustrates application and budget ownership. Current rules require verification.

Sources: S1, S6, S7.

Figure 2. Source-described alternatives and EAG's comparison of their roles. None is rated for effectiveness. Schools Need More would have to demonstrate value beyond these routes. Text and data alternative

The proposed gap is preparation before using an existing route: a leader arrives with a broad concern, recognizes which decision is actually pending, and leaves with a bounded question and the right institutional owner. That contribution could be small and still useful. It could also be unnecessary if an existing district meeting, coordinator or official guide already does the job more quickly.

The product should therefore retain direct routes prominently. A person who knows the relevant office should be able to leave immediately. Someone seeking a specific program notice should reach the source rather than complete a generic workup. EAG's commercial or organizational interest in an onward relationship must not make the user pass through unnecessary steps. The evidence does not justify a preferred EAG destination simply because it belongs to the same portfolio.

5. Evidence, counterevidence and transfer limits

GAO's 2024 review of initial COVID relief spending combines national spending data with visits to 17 districts in six states. Officials in 10 visited districts described difficulty finding staff, contractors or vendors; officials in 10 described heavy vendor solicitation. Fourteen intended to sustain at least one funded activity. These observations concern selected districts and a historical emergency program. They show that money, delivery capacity and continuation can be separate questions, but do not estimate how common these problems are today. GAO, S2, printed pages 18-19 and 23-25

EAG draws a design caution from this evidence: providing more options can increase the work of evaluating them. A resource list may appear helpful while shifting vendor screening and coordination back to an already busy administrator. An institutional brief should therefore explain why an option belongs in the comparison and what work it would require, rather than equating volume with usefulness. That remains a proposed response to the evidence, not a measured benefit.

Counterevidence also challenges the assumption that adopting a recognized improvement model is sufficient. The 2017 School Improvement Grants evaluation reported no significant overall impacts on mathematics, reading, graduation or college enrollment. AIR's summary limits the causal interpretation to schools near the eligibility cutoff. The IES summary describes administrative data and a 2013 survey from nearly 500 schools across 22 states. This review accessed the original institutional summaries, not the full evaluation tables; it reports no effect sizes or confidence intervals. IES, S5, AIR, S5b

The result does not show that funding is ineffective in general. It does undermine an easy narrative in which resources plus an approved intervention label guarantee better outcomes. For Schools Need More, the implication is to keep implementation assumptions and disconfirming evidence visible. A model can be well documented and still fit a local setting poorly. Completing its activities is different from demonstrating its intended result.

Three evidence gaps remain central. No retained study evaluates this service. No local research measures the time or decision quality it would change. No source demonstrates that school leaders want another external orientation channel. The proposition should be judged against those gaps, rather than borrowing confidence from research about different interventions.

6. Proposed mechanism: a question owned by the institution

The proposed mechanism begins with a non-sensitive problem description. The visitor identifies the decision stage and the role that owns it, examines relevant source context, compares a small number of options and prepares a question for an existing process. The institution may choose to investigate, revise, pause or take no action. Those are legitimate endings.

The critical intermediate outcome is not agreement with EAG. It is a clearer distinction between what is observed, what is assumed, what remains unknown and who may act. The product hypothesis is that this distinction improves the next institutional conversation enough to justify the user's effort. Subsequent changes in services or school outcomes would require separate evidence.

Figure 3

An owner-led question is the first outcome

Conceptual only. Every link is proposed.

Normal orientation

1. Name a non-sensitive problem
↓ proposed link
2. Separate observation from explanation
↓ proposed link
3. Compare context and options
↓ proposed link
4. Prepare a question for the institutional owner

Unknown: added usefulness and effort relative to the existing route.

Pause or exit

1. Authority or evidence is unclear
↓ proposed link
 2. Use the existing institutional channel or stop
- No account, article or model grants school/district authority.
-

EAG conceptual mechanism. No automatic case, outreach, procurement decision or referral.

An owner-led question is the first outcome

EAG conceptual mechanism. No automatic case, outreach, procurement decision or referral.

- A0. EAG product definition
-

Figure 3. An owner-led question is the first outcome

EAG conceptual mechanism. No automatic case, outreach, procurement decision or referral.

Normal orientation. Name a non-sensitive problem → Separate observation from explanation → Compare context and options → Prepare a question for the institutional owner. Unknown: added usefulness and effort relative to the existing route.

Pause or exit. Authority or evidence is unclear → Use the existing institutional channel or stop. No account, article or model grants school/district authority.

Sources: AO.

Figure 3. EAG conceptual mechanism, not an evaluated causal chain. Public orientation creates no authorization, institutional record, procurement approval or automatic referral. Text and data alternative

A hypothetical example makes the boundary concrete. A district role is reconsidering a recurring program whose participation is lower than expected. The brief could help distinguish access barriers, timing, relevance and communication as competing explanations. It could identify which aggregate evidence categories might help and who controls the existing review. It should not request participant records, diagnose motivation or recommend a vendor before the institution understands the problem. If the district already has a suitable evaluation process, the best output may be a question for that process.

Institutional ownership also affects handoffs. A resource route should specify who receives the question, what the visitor should expect and what remains undecided. EAG, Runstr and sibling products are possible secondary destinations only where fit and authority have been established. A signed-in account is not proof that the holder can approve spending, see private records or represent a district. Anonymous editorial reading should not require that authority in the first place.

7. Design concepts worth testing

The first candidate is a short institutional field brief. Its opening would state the problem category and the question it can help answer. The body would distinguish known context, competing explanations, options, implementation demands and source limits. The ending would prepare one owner-led question. This is a content concept, not an approved interface or production feature.

A second candidate is an option comparison organized around decisions rather than solution brands. Each option would state the circumstance in which it could fit, the evidence behind it, staff or resource assumptions, dependencies and a reason not to choose it. "Use the existing process" and "obtain better information first" belong beside more active alternatives. An option should remain understandable when detached from a vendor's claims.

A third candidate is a question-preparation sheet. It could ask: What is happening? What is the current explanation? What would distinguish that explanation from another? Who owns the next decision? What source or local fact would change the choice? The sheet's usefulness must be tested without assuming a saved workspace, account system or private data collection. A public example can teach the method without soliciting operational detail.

The smallest meaningful trial would focus on one bounded institutional problem. It would compare the proposed brief with a credible existing route and inspect whether users understand the authority and evidence boundaries. Starting with many topics would make it harder to tell whether the structure is useful or merely repeats general advice.

A facility-related example requires particular care. An article can explain how needs, planning and funded work differ; it should not invite school-specific vulnerabilities or substitute for maintenance and safety procedures. Urgent operational concerns belong to the institution's established channels. The product should never make a reader finish an editorial exercise before using those channels.

8. Risks, equity and institutional burden

Authority drift. Confident language can make an external resource appear to approve a strategy. The remedy is not a dense disclaimer beneath an actionable recommendation. Each option should name the decision that remains with the school or district and identify missing local information. If ownership is unknown, the useful next step is to establish it.

Unequal capacity. Institutions with more specialist staff may extract more value from research summaries. Those with fewer staff may face greater translation and coordination work. A brief that assumes a grants writer, evaluation analyst or facilities specialist could deepen that difference. The relevant fairness question is whether readers can use the material with their actual capacity, not whether everyone can open the same page.

Hidden workload. Source checking, meetings, approvals, evidence collection and follow-up can exceed the time spent reading. Evaluation should count total effort across roles. A principal's apparent time saving may simply shift work to another employee. An attractive output that adds a parallel planning process may be a net burden.

Privacy and public inference. Even apparently ordinary combinations of school name, staffing issue and timetable can expose operations. Public examples should remain non-identifying and avoid unnecessary detail. This research used public sources and no private institutional records. Any future private workflow requires its own authorization and safeguards; its existence cannot be inferred from the proposed editorial service.

Commercial bias. EAG has an interest in its ecosystem. A fair comparison must include official and local alternatives, including an ending with no EAG relationship. Source selection and option order should be reviewable. An outward route should not be framed as failure merely because it does not generate a lead.

False certainty from benchmarks. Aggregate research can lend unwarranted authority to an individual recommendation. The GAO and Arkansas figures use different populations, questions and methods. They cannot be joined into a school score or translated into an institution's funding gap. The report uses them to clarify questions, not diagnose particular schools.

9. Evaluation and criteria for changing direction

Evaluation should begin with comprehension and usefulness, then examine real decision support only if those foundations hold. No trial has been conducted. The following is a proposed evaluation approach that would require separate approval, recruitment and privacy decisions.

Use a small set of realistic, non-identifying scenarios with authorized institutional roles. Compare the proposed brief with an existing source or process that a user could reasonably choose. Where feasible, counterbalance task order so familiarity with the first scenario does not automatically favor the second format. Include people with different responsibilities and institutional capacities; a sample of enthusiastic early supporters would provide weak evidence about general usefulness.

Before reviewing outputs, define what a good answer contains: a bounded problem, a distinction between observation and explanation, a relevant source limitation, the appropriate owner, and a reversible next step. Reviewers should assess both correctness and dangerous overconfidence. A confident but unauthorized recommendation is worse than an honest decision to obtain clarification.

Measure reading time and the additional work required to use the result. Ask whether the output duplicates a current institutional artifact. Record whether users can reach the original source and identify its date and population. Observe whether they mistake a conceptual model for an evaluated intervention or treat a federal eligibility category as an award promise. Satisfaction alone cannot resolve these questions.

Figure 4

What would change the product decision

Continue

Useful preparation with justified effort

Users identify the owner, source limits and a reversible next step better than with the comparison route. This has not been tested.

Revise or narrow

Understanding does not become usable action

Outputs duplicate work, confuse the decision or help only already well-supported roles. Criteria are proposed.

Stop or reconsider

Burden or authority errors outweigh value

Existing routes work as well with less effort, or useful personalization requires prohibited sensitive data. No observed scores exist.

Proposed evaluation criteria, not trial results. Thresholds and study design require separate research decisions.

What would change the product decision

Proposed evaluation criteria, not trial results. Thresholds and study design require separate research decisions.

- A0. EAG product definition
-

Figure 4. What would change the product decision

Proposed evaluation criteria, not trial results. Thresholds and study design require separate research decisions.

Continue: Useful preparation with justified effort. Users identify the owner, source limits and a reversible next step better than with the comparison route. This has not been tested.

Revise or narrow: Understanding does not become usable action. Outputs duplicate work, confuse the decision or help only already well-supported roles. Criteria are proposed.

Stop or reconsider: Burden or authority errors outweigh value. Existing routes work as well with less effort, or useful personalization requires prohibited sensitive data. No observed scores exist.

Sources: AO.

Figure 4. Conceptual evaluation decisions. Criteria are proposed, with no observed scores, invented thresholds or claimed outcomes. Text and data alternative

Continue only if the brief contributes something users cannot get as readily from the comparison route, while preserving authority and avoiding disproportionate effort. Revise if users understand the sources but cannot produce a usable question, or if benefits accrue only to already well-supported roles. Narrow the scope if one problem category works and another requires specialized judgment the service cannot provide.

Stop or reconsider the proposition if the normal district route performs as well with less work, if users repeatedly infer approval that the site cannot grant, or if useful personalization depends on collecting sensitive records outside the intended role. These are product decisions, not failures to complete a funnel. Longer-term outcome research would need to distinguish the site's contribution from subsequent institutional choices, staffing, resources and external conditions.

10. Methods, limitations, references and corrections

This is a focused, question-led review completed September 19, 2026. It is not a systematic review, exhaustive program inventory or legal analysis. Selection favored original government statistics, primary institutional guidance, original evaluation summaries and existing first-party alternatives. The EAG product definition supplied product scope; it did not count as evidence of effectiveness.

The research included national and Arkansas sources, but no district-specific needs assessment. Seven external source groups were retained. The full GAO reports, federal guidance and Arkansas survey were accessible. For the SIG evaluation, accessible IES and AIR summaries supported a bounded description; unavailable full-table access prevents detailed effect appraisal. Current Arkansas federal-program pages were unavailable during the preceding earlier source search. The historical AR App memo does not fill that gap.

The 2026 GAO report's Appendix I describes July 2025 questionnaire pretesting, November 2025 through January 2026 administration, and separate September 2026 feedback followed by revision wording. The later sequence remains unclear. A limited October 2, 2026 source recheck corrects the earlier conflation of initial pretesting with that later feedback; it does not substantively refresh the whole report. Figure 1 retains published Table 1 values without repairing the dataset. These values are not a basis for individual school action.

No pooled effects, inflation adjustments, imputed values, market-size estimate or product-impact forecast were calculated. The first figure compares two response stages with the same conditional denominator within each need. Other figures organize source roles or proposed reasoning. They are not outcome data.

Publication dates, measured periods and retrieval dates are maintained separately.

Corrections should identify the specific statement, figure or source locator and the replacement evidence. A correction to a source date, denominator or access status should update the corresponding text and figure together. Absence of a visible correction notice is not proof that a source has never been corrected. No comprehensive retraction database search was performed.

Retained references

- **A0.** Education Angel Group, Schools Need More product definition, reviewed September 19, 2026 for this report. Defines intended scope, not implementation or effectiveness.
- **S1. U.S. Department of Education.** *Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments*, revised September 28, 2023, especially printed pages 5-11. Full guidance.
- **S2. GAO.** *K-12 Education: School Districts Reported Spending Initial COVID Relief Funds on Meeting Students' Needs and Continuing School Operations*, September 23, 2024, GAO-24-106913. Full report.
- **S3. GAO.** *Facility Issues Led About One in Five Districts to Cancel School in 2024-25, Affecting 2 Million Students*, published September 9, publicly released September 14, 2026, GAO-26-107970. Full report and tables.
- **S4. Arkansas Bureau of Legislative Research.** *Principals Survey Report*, November 3, 2025, 2026 adequacy cycle. Full report.
- **S5/S5b. Dragoset and colleagues.** *School Improvement Grants: Implementation and Effectiveness*, January 2017, NCEE 20174013. IES summary; AIR evaluator summary. Full evaluation tables not accessed.
- **S6. Grants.gov.** *Grant Eligibility*, undated live page, retrieved September 19, 2026. Eligibility guidance.
- **S7. Arkansas Department of Education.** *AR App Approval and LEA Strategic Plans*, COM-25-030, November 1, 2024, FY2024-25. Historical notice.

Figure text and data alternatives

Complete semantic alternatives accompany each figure in this reader and its text download. Source IDs refer to the references in this report. A0 identifies EAG's product definition reviewed for the original report, not an external study or proof of availability. Other source IDs resolve to this report's reference and access record.

Corrections and entity context

Readers identifying an error can contact EAG with the section, disputed statement and supporting source. Schools Need More provides the public entity context, not an external citation for EAG's product claims.