



# 2024-2025 Stronger Connections Grant

Competitive Grant Application: Due 11:59 p.m. CT, July 18, 2023

NOGA ID

Application stamp-in date and time

TEA will only accept grant application documents by email, including competitive grant applications and amendments. Submit grant applications and amendments as follows:

Competitive grant applications and amendments to competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov.

The application MUST bear the signature of a person authorized to bind the applicant to a contractual agreement

Authorizing legislation: PL 117-159 Bipartisan Safer Communities Act Title II School Improvement Programs, BSCA

Grant period: From 11/15/2023 to 09/30/2025

Pre-award costs: ARE NOT permitted for this grant

Required attachments: N/A

## Amendment Number

Amendment number (For amendments only; enter N/A when completing this form to apply for grant funds):

## 1. Applicant Information

Name of organization La Vega ISD

Campus name La Vega ISD -all campuses

CDN 161906

Vendor ID 1746000340

ESC 12

UEI 1DWD4

Address 400 E. Loop 340

City Waco

ZIP 76705

Phone 2542996700

Primary Contact Dr. Peggy Johnson

Email peggy.johnson@lavegaisd.org

Phone 2542996700

Secondary Contact Dr. Charla Rudd

Email charla.rudd@lavegaisd.org

Phone 2542996700

## 2. Certification and Incorporation

I understand that this application constitutes an offer and, if accepted by TEA or renegotiated to acceptance, will form a binding agreement. I hereby certify that the information contained in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, correct and that the organization named above has authorized me as its representative to obligate this organization in a legally binding contractual agreement. I certify that any ensuing program and activity will be conducted in accordance and compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

I further certify my acceptance of the requirements conveyed in the following portions of the grant application, as applicable, and that these documents are incorporated by reference as part of the grant application and Notice of Grant Award (NOGA):

Grant application, guidelines, and instructions

Debarment and Suspension Certification

General Provisions and Assurances

Lobbying Certification

Application-Specific Provisions and Assurances

ESSA Provisions and Assurances requirements

Authorized Official Name Dr. Sharon Shields

Title Superintenden

Email sharon.shields@lavegaisd.org

Phone 2542996700

Signature

Date 07/17/2023

Grant Writer Name Dr. Peggy Johnson

Signature

Date 07/17/2023

Grant writer is an employee of the applicant organization.

Grant writer is not an employee of the applicant organization.

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**3. Shared Services Arrangements**

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are not permitted for this grant.

**4. Identify/Address Needs**

List up to three quantifiable needs, as identified in your needs assessment, that these program funds will address. Describe your plan for addressing each need.

Quantifiable Need	Plan for Addressing Need
LVISD students live in poverty-93.14% (5 priority pts). LVISD leadership needs training to understand mental health issues, recognize signs of distress, and how to equip staff with strategies and resources to support students' mental well-being.	LVISD in partnership with ESC 12 and Texas Center for Student Support will receive job-embedded training and develop a training team on each campus that will support systemic change to complement the innovative models that are presently in place.
LVISD needs training on how to develop and implement a process to identify and document support services delivered and to monitor students' progress after service delivery.	LVISD will use expertise learned from the ESC 12 and TCSS to select, implement, and monitor the new processes.
LVISD needs additional resources and tools for working with our most at-risk students who are adversely impacted academically due to social and emotional challenges they experience.	LVISD will use resources and tools learned from the ESC12 and TCSS to provide support to our unique student population. We will also evaluate and rank the effectiveness of resources and tools to create an effective toolkit of resources that will continue to be used after the life of the grant.

**5. SMART Goal**

Describe the summative SMART goal you have identified for this program (a goal that is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely), either related to student outcome or consistent with the purpose of the grant.

After receiving high-quality professional development, just-in-time technical assistance, relevant resource materials, research-based practices and strategies, the school climate and culture will improve by decreasing disciplinary referrals by 5% and attendance will increase by 3% in the 2024-25 school year. This SMART goal will ultimately have a positive impact at school, in students' homes, and in the Bellmead community at-large.

**6. Measurable Progress**

Identify the benchmarks that you will use at the end of the first three grant quarters to measure progress toward meeting the process and implementation goals defined for the grant.

**First-Quarter Benchmark**

November- Share grant goals during at least five stakeholder events. Plan TCSS training for identified staff.  
 December - Establish roles and responsibilities for Advisory Committee, (2) develop meeting timelines to outline the plan of action as outlined by the Texas Center for Student Supports (TCSS) and the Education Service Center, Region 12 (ESC12).  
 January - District Quality Improvement Committee (DQIC) and Advisory Committee collaborates with TCSS, ESC12 to determine how to incorporate resources and supports to implement an effective student support team structure at each campus and at the district level. Campus leadership and support teams will provide feedback and finalize implementation plans. Begin job-embedded training from TCSS and ESC12.

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**6. Measurable Progress (Cont.)****Second-Quarter Benchmark**

February-April: Advisory and Student Support Teams will meet monthly and review the following data: Baseline benchmark data (number of student referrals disaggregated by referral, type of need, type of support, level of support, length of support provided, student attendance, behavior referrals, removals from class, and disciplinary outcomes). Student Support Teams will review additional updates on the grant and share progress of grant implementation at their respective campuses. Continue with job-embedded training from TCSS and ESC12. Each month the team makes suggested modifications to the implementation plan. In April, the DQIC hears implementation plans, reviews data and makes suggestions to the superintendent and board of trustees.

**Third-Quarter Benchmark**

May - July: LVISD Advisory Teams, ESC 12, TCSS, and Leadership make edits to implementation plan after reviewing the data. Dates are placed on the calendar for training during the 2024-25 school year. Technology systems and software to track are purchased, updated and/or installed. The following data will be reviewed: behavioral threat referrals; outcomes from threat assessments, discipline, and chronic absenteeism. School culture and climate by using perceptual data received from the Comprehensive Needs Assessment, Teachers as Leaders Survey, Principal Advisory Council survey. Additional data reviewed will include mental health using nurse/counselor referral data and campus tele-health for mental support, CIS support, Student Success Team student meetings and academic growth as measured by academic progress based on interim data review of essential state standards.

**7. Project Evaluation and Modification**

Describe how you will use project evaluation data to determine when and how to modify your program. If your benchmarks or summative SMART goals do not show progress, describe how you will use evaluation data to modify your program for sustainability.

Advisory and Campus Student Support Teams will meet monthly to review progress in the design, the planning, and the implementation of the training received to determine if changes are needed. Advisory teams review data results with faculty and staff to engage all stakeholders in problem-solving ideas to meet the needs of our identified students. We will meet with our partners, ESC12 and TCSS quarterly to review data, modifications needed, and areas of success as well as challenges using the following data:

Discipline (referrals, type, removal from class, "reset room" placements, disaggregated by referral type, type of support needed, level of support, length of support provided). Attendance (truancy cases, attendance contracts, external partner supports provided, wrap-around services provided). Behavioral threat referrals (referrals for harmful behavior, violent behavior, threat assessments conducted, facility safety audits). Decisions to address these areas will be based on the outcomes from threat assessments. Where appropriate, LVISD will coordinate with external partners to provide outside wrap-around services for identified students. This process will enable leadership teams to make informed decisions quickly if changes are needed. Three times a year, climate and culture assessments in the form of surveys are reviewed. These surveys are reviewed by La Vega Leadership as a data subset to inform actions to improve school climate. Additional data reviewed will include mental health services provided using nurse and counselor referrals support, CIS support, Student Success Team student meetings. Academic growth will be measured by progress on interim assessments to review student growth towards mastery of essential state standards. Annual reports on parent and family engagement using the Comprehensive Needs Assessment will provide perceptual data on progress towards collaboration and partnership with families and the Bellmead Community at large.

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**8. Statutory/Program Assurances**

The following assurances apply to this grant program. In order to meet the requirements of the grant, the grantee must comply with these assurances.

Check each of the following boxes to indicate your compliance.

1. The applicant provides assurance that program funds will supplement (increase the level of service), and not supplant (replace) state mandates, State Board of Education rules, and activities previously conducted with state or local funds. The applicant provides assurance that state or local funds may not be decreased or diverted for other purposes merely because of the availability of these funds. The applicant provides assurance that program services and activities to be funded from this grant will be supplementary to existing services and activities and will not be used for any services or activities required by state law, State Board of Education rules, or local policy.
2. The applicant provides assurance that the application does not contain any information that would be protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) from general release to the public.
3. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all Statutory Requirements, TEA Program Requirements, and Performance Measures, as noted in the 2024–2025 Stronger Connections Grant Program Guidelines, and shall provide the Texas Education Agency, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the grant program.
4. The applicant will formally establish a Student Support Program at three district campuses (one elementary, one intermediate/middle school, one high school) to address school climate and establish a student support team structure aligned to the training and support provided by the Texas Center for Student Supports and the regional ESC. If the applicant has few than three campuses or does not have three of the listed types of campuses, the applicant will establish the Student Support Program and the student support team structure at all campuses, up to three, served in the district.
5. The applicant will allocate 6% of awarded funds for contracted services for technical assistance provided by the regional ESC. Complete the transaction with the regional ESC in a timely manner. Time is of the essence in completing the transaction to ensure that the program is implemented efficiently and effectively to successfully achieve the goals of the program.
6. The applicant will allocate 10% of awarded funds for professional and contracted services with a partner approved by the Texas Center for Student Support and TEA. Complete the transaction with the regional ESC in a timely manner. Time is of the essence in completing the transaction to ensure that the program is implemented efficiently and effectively to successfully achieve the goals of the program.
7. The applicant will use the family engagement playbook developed by the Texas Center for Student Supports to partner and build support with parents and families prior to a student support team assessment, and during the student support implementation process to facilitate a student support partnership with families.
8. The applicant will establish a parent, student, and staff advisory committee to provide input on the establishment of the Student Support Program.
9. The applicant will engage in Student Support Program planning activities from the beginning of the grant program through implementation at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year.
10. The applicant will establish and implement at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year, the Student Support Program aligned to the content and training provided by the Texas Center for Student Supports.
11. The applicant will incorporate a case management system into the student support team structure aligned to the training and support provided by the Texas Center for Student Supports.
12. The applicant will align the student support team structure with behavioral threat assessment team operation and outcomes to ensure that students are well supported and that the effectiveness of interventions are monitored.
13. The applicant will implement the data collection and reporting system developed by the Texas Center for Student Supports to gather and analyze data to monitor efficacy of the implementation of the Student Support Program, including student support team structure, quality of support leading to positive outcomes, and data related to increases in desired outcomes (e.g. increase in student support team referrals for nonacademic needs, increase in effective supports received by students, reduction in disciplinary incidents, reduction in bullying and harassment, increase in referrals for mental health services, reduction in removals from class, etc.).
14. The applicant will provide timely response to requests from TEA for information and data regarding program development, implementation, and performance and evaluation measures.

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**9. Statutory/ TEA Program Requirements**

1. Describe how the LEA will identify the campuses that will participate in the establishment of the Student Support Program described in the program description? Include the criteria or considerations that will influence the determination by the LEA.

The Texas Education Agency identifies the five La Vega campuses as either elementary or secondary based on the grade spans at each campus. There is no grade level overlap among the five campuses. Each La Vega ISD campus is in need of supports with each of the quantifiable needs outlined in section 4, Identify/Address Needs. Therefore, all five La Vega ISD campuses will be included.

2. Describe how the LEA will ensure that campus leaders and staff are committed to the success of the Student Support Program.

La Vega ISD leadership (Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, Executive Directors, and Principals) meet weekly. Monthly meetings will occur with campus principals and the Grant Coordinator to review grant progress and assistance needed or suggestions for implementation improvements.

The Grant Coordinator will meet monthly with the Campus Advisory Teams to review planning, design, and progress of implementation. The Campus Liaisons will meet as needed with advisory team members to ensure fidelity to the program design.

Each campus will have two Campus Liaisons to monitor implementation and fidelity to the grant program. At the beginning of the year, the Campus Liaisons will present the plan to the campus faculty and staff and will provide information to campus leaders about the goals of the grant. As the year goes on, Campus Liaisons continue to review data and monitor grant implementation on their respective campus. Weekly meetings with leadership provide time for review of progress and clarification of program goals. During this time, campus leaders will have the opportunity to identify how the grant goals align with and will enhance current systems to address these needs.

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**9. Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)**

3. Describe how the LEA will engage parents and families to solicit support for the program.

The year begins with a well attended "Meet the Teacher" night. This August event provides an opportunity for every campus to put before their parents the events that will be held for them and their children each month. In September, each campus hosts a "Parent University " in which parents are provided information and connection with the campus members. During this initial event, campus leaders will share the goals of this grant and opportunities for parents to sign up to participate. Recruitment of parents for participation on the Student Support Advisory Committee will continue each month in all print form as well as placed on social media sites and the campus website in English and in Spanish.

4. Describe how the LEA will ensure that there is adequate staff to support the establishment and implementation of the Student Support Program.

After La Vega ISD receives information about resources and supports from the Texas Center for Student Supports and ESC12, faculty and staff will have the opportunity to serve on the Student Support Advisory Team. Members of the District Quality Improvement Committee (DQIC) are automatically involved as well. Each campus will have a minimum of seven staff members. Additionally, there will be seven district staff members, and seven members of the district police officers. The broad spectrum of members will not only ensure adequate staff support, but will ensure collaboration of stakeholders with a variety of skills to enhance the grant goals.

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**9. Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)**

5. Describe how each of the campuses will be supported by the grant program, if awarded, currently conduct behavioral threat assessments and how the campus will incorporate current systems into the student support team structure.

Currently, each campus participates in drills and threat assessment audits. The collaboration between La Vega ISD and both Waco and Bellmead Police Departments ensure instinctive behaviors by staff and students in drill practices in preparation of potential life-threatening events. La Vega ISD is a leader in safety and security measures and training. Our district police department staff provide training for other Districts' school police departments on using a virtual active shooter simulator. LVISD police teams have also provided trainings for campus safety teams on narcan and epi-pen use. AED, Stop-the Bleed and CPI trainings have been provided as well. Every campus is equipped with metal detectors and safety aides to monitor traffic in and out of the campuses. Each campus leader has identified campus safety teams that communicate, train, and plan safety drills. Staff who are part of the safety teams are a natural fit to incorporate with the student support team structure. LVISD partners with ESC 12 to conduct safety audits, thus incorporation of the existing system with requirements from the grant will be a natural fit.

6. Describe how the LEA currently identifies student support needs and how it identifies and establishes partnerships with external mental health and behavioral health providers to meet student needs.

Students expressing stress or trauma is demonstrated in a multitude of ways. Teachers, as the first line of support, are provided with coaching from campus administrators in classroom management strategies, and building relationships with students. A second means of support comes from the counselor on the student's campus. Students may reach out to the counselor for assistance. Parents may also reach out for help. The third area of support is found in the campus administrators. Most campuses have a "cohort" assistant principal. This model allows for a lasting relationship to be built between an administrator and student. The cohort principal knows the student academically and behaviorally and loops with the student for as long as the student resides on the campus. Campus principals in concert with faculty will reach out to the nurse or "Communities In Schools" personnel, our Parent Engagement Team, Student Success Team, Special Education and/or the Attendance and Behavior Team to seek outside additional support for students. The district partners with several mental health organizations such as (Unbound, Voice, Klaras Center) to provide professional support. Partnerships with external organizations are established by sought by LVISD to satisfy student needs. Initial partnerships begin by establishing governance documents such as memorandums of understanding, participating in periodic program reviews, serving on board of directors. The Parent Engagement Team also supports families by providing information on where to access services needed.

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**9. Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)**

7. Describe how the LEA currently partners with the regional ESC to support improvement in student mental health, behavioral and emotional health, physical health and wellbeing, and improving academic outcomes for students.

La Vega ISD currently partners with the ESC 12 for multiple supports based on student needs. As a cooperating member of the counseling team, the district has received grief support from ESC 12 and neighboring counselors after suffering the death of students and educators throughout the past three years. LVISD partners with the ESC12 for Coordinated School Health services for campus nurses. LVISD partners with ESC 12 for support for the innovative staffing model, Opportunity Culture. The ESC 12 is partnering with the district to provide Teachers as Leaders (TIL) Observation Feedback coaching and support as well as Instruction Practices Inventory (IPI) training and support. LVISD partners with ESC 12 for CTE, Emergent Bilinguals, and Superintendent Leadership.

8. Describe how the LEA will use this grant program to supplement current work to improve services and supports for the mental health, behavioral and emotional health, and physical health and wellness of students.

La Vega ISD will continue to partner with external agencies to secure programs and services that support our students with mental and behavioral health needs. All staff who are involved in supporting students with challenges identified in this grant will continue to support students using the resources that exist. It is our hope this grant will provide LVISD staff with additional strategies and resources, specifically in addressing traumatic health issues. With over 93% of LVISD students living in poverty, the lack of mental health stability is great. Professional staff find themselves at a loss of understanding cutting edge practices on dealing with mental health challenges. The training, tools, and resources will enable LVISD to improve services, which will provide opportunities for our students to better cope with or manage their challenges. La Vega ISD will use funds and resources from this grant to not only align our practices with research-based practices learned from the ESC 12 and the TCSS, but to create a systemic process that is sustainable after the life of the grant.

9. Enter the LEA Total Enrollment: 3,017

10. Enter the Regional Educational Service Center that serves the LEA: 12

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**10. Equitable Access and Participation**

Check the appropriate box below to indicate whether any barriers exist to equitable access and participation for any groups that receive services funded by this grant.

- The applicant assures that no barriers exist to equitable access and participation for any groups receiving services funded by this grant.
- Barriers exist to equitable access and participation for the following groups receiving services funded by this grant, as described below.

Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>

**11. PNP Equitable Services**

Are any private nonprofit schools located within the applicant's boundaries?

- Yes  No

*If you answered "No" to the preceding question, stop here. You have completed the section. Proceed to the next page.*

Are any private nonprofit schools participating in the grant?

- Yes  No

*If you answered "No" to the preceding question, stop here. You have completed the section. Proceed to the next page.*

**Assurances**

- The LEA assures that it discussed all consultation requirements as listed in Section 1117(b)(1) and/or Section 8501(c)(1), as applicable, with all eligible private nonprofit schools located within the LEA's boundaries.
- The LEA assures the appropriate Affirmations of Consultation will be provided to TEA's PNP Ombudsman in the manner and time requested.

**Equitable Services Calculation**

1. LEA's student enrollment	<input type="text"/>
2. Enrollment of all participating private schools	<input type="text"/>
3. Total enrollment of LEA and all participating PNPs (line 1 plus line 2)	<input type="text"/>
4. Total current-year grant allocation	<input type="text"/>
5. LEA reservation for direct administrative costs, not to exceed the grant's defined limit	<input type="text"/>
6. Total LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 4 minus line 5)	<input type="text"/>
7. Per-pupil LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 6 divided by line 3)	<input type="text"/>
<b>LEA's total required ESSA PNP equitable services reservation (line 7 times line 2)</b>	<input type="text"/>

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**12. Request for Grant Funds**

List all of the allowable grant-related activities for which you are requesting grant funds. Include the amounts budgeted for each activity. Group similar activities and costs together under the appropriate heading. During negotiation, you will be required to budget your planned expenditures on a separate attachment provided by TEA.

**Payroll Costs**

1.	Extra Duty Pay	\$146,050
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

**Professional and Contracted Services**

6.	Required 6% of funds for technical assistance provided by the regional ESC	\$25,633
7.	Required 10% of funds to the Texas Center for Student Supports	\$42,723
8.	Non-employee stipends	\$12,500
9.		
10.		

**Supplies and Materials**

11.	General Supplies	\$70,000
12.	Tech software	\$25,000
13.		

**Other Operating Costs**

15.	Travel	\$124,500
16.	Food for school related events	\$25,000
17.		

**Debt Services**

18.		0
19.		

**Capital Outlay**

20.		0
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Direct administrative costs:

Indirect administrative costs:

**TOTAL GRANT AWARD REQUESTED:**

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**Appendix I: Negotiation and Amendments**

Leave this section blank when completing the initial application for funding.

An amendment must be submitted when the program plan or budget is altered for the reasons described in the "When to Amend the Application" document posted on the Administering a Grant page of the TEA website and may be mailed OR faxed (not both). **To fax:** one copy of all sections pertinent to the amendment (including budget attachments), along with a completed and signed page 1, to either (512) 463-9811 or (512) 463-9564. **To mail:** three copies of all sections pertinent to the amendment (including budget attachments), along with a completed and signed page 1, to the address on page 1. More detailed amendment instructions can be found on the last page of the budget template.

*You may duplicate this page.*

For amendments, choose the section you wish to amend from the drop down menu on the left. In the text box on the right, describe the changes you are making and the reason for them.

Always work with the most recent negotiated or amended application. If you are requesting a revised budget, please include the budget attachments with your amendment.

**Section Being Negotiated or Amended      Negotiated Change or Amendment**

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