



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:

Grant period:

Pre-award costs:

Required attachments:

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

Campus name

CDN

Vendor ID

ESC

UEI

Address

City

ZIP

Phone

Primary Contact

Email

Phone

Secondary Contact

Email

Phone

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

Title

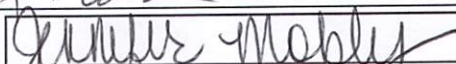
Email

Phone

Signature 

Date

Grant Writer Name

Signature 

Date

Grant writer is an employee of the applicant organization.

Grant writer is **not** an employee of the applicant organization.

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Adjustments on this page have been confirmed with _____ by _____ of TEA by phone / fax / email on _____.

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 |
|---|--|
| Attendance for students has declined since the return to in person learning post COVID. | By establishing a Student Support Program and monitoring of student support team referrals and subsequent student supports, students will feel more engaged with their campus thereby increasing attendance. |
| Discipline referrals have increased over the past 2 years at all grade levels with a higher increase in the primary grades. | The student support team structure will be aligned with the behavioral threat assessment team to ensure that students are well supported, and that the effectiveness of the interventions are monitored and adjusted. |
| Students report feeling disconnected from their peers, campus, and teachers since returning to in person learning post COVID. | By establishing a parent, student and staff advisory committee and utilization of the family engagement playbook students will increase engagement with their peers, campus, and teachers because of strategies/activities implemented over the course 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.

Selected campuses will see a 5% decrease in disciplinary incidents including a reduction in disciplinary removals from class.

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

Student discipline reports will be analyzed by campus and grade level and then reviewed by the Student Support Team to monitor student supports, and adjust support strategies if necessary. Discipline reports will be compared with previous year's incident report to look for an overall reduction of 1%.

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

Student discipline reports will be analyzed by campus and grade level and then reviewed by the Student Support Team to monitor student supports, and adjust support strategies if necessary. Discipline reports will be compared with previous year's incident report to look for an overall reduction of 2%. In addition student surveys will be analyzed to look for an increase in student's reporting feeling engaged with their campus.

Third-Quarter Benchmark

Student discipline reports will be analyzed by campus and grade level and then reviewed by the Student Support Team to monitor student supports, and adjust support strategies if necessary. Discipline reports will be compared with previous year's incident report to look for an overall reduction of 3%. In addition student surveys will be analyzed to look for an increase in student's reporting feeling more engaged with their campus from the previous survey.

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.

Student data will be monitored monthly by the Student Support Team to determine the effectiveness of implemented strategies resulting in the desired outcomes. Modifications to student supports will be adjusted on a student-by-student basis and follow up with parents, staff and other student supports will be conducted. As program adjustments are made other campus data will be reviewed to determine the sustainability of the program at other district campuses with slightly different student demographics. Opportunities will be provided for other campus leaders to visit and be part of the identified campuses Student Support Team implementation.

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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 district reviewed all campuses and focused on campuses with changing demographics, increases in economically disadvantaged students, identification of homeless and foster care students as well as demographics of campus staff including the percentage of 1st-3rd year teachers. Campus discipline, attendance and academic data were reviewed. Student survey results from Panorama were reviewed to determine the level of engagement and feeling valued for students at campuses. The campuses selected are in the same feeder pattern so that systemically students will move through grade levels with the same student support structure in place.

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

Campus leaders and staff will be an integral part of the success of the program. By offering a high level of support for the implementation of this program, campus leaders will not feel an extra "burden" of implementing another program. Over the course of time as campuses leaders and staff see positive results of the program implementation by the reduction of discipline referrals, removal of students from class and increased attendance they will not only be our best spokespeople for the program, but will influence other campus leaders to engage in the process.

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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 district will use our Department for Parent and Community Engagement as well as our Title I Parent Engagement Facilitators to utilize the family engagement playbook developed by the Texas Center for Student Supports to engage with parents and caregivers at the selected campuses. The district's Coordinator for Student and Family Support will also support implementation of the program. Parent meetings will be held in person and via ZOOM to communicate the student support program to parents and caregivers with special focus on engaging parents and caregivers of homeless and foster care students.

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

The district will utilize existing campus and district staff as well as hire additional staff through grant funding to facilitate the implementation of the program. This district currently has a social worker assigned to each feeder pattern in the district and a critical grant component will be hiring a campus based social worker for the three identified campuses.

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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.

The district uses the Secret Service model to conduct our behavioral threat assessments. The BTA team consists of expertise in counseling services, at-risk services, safety and security, district administration, campus administration, special education, and law enforcement. Campus teams collaborate and conduct threat screeners. When the threat meets a certain threshold, the campus will complete a full assessment. Once completed, the campus puts together a success plan for the student and the district team comes to the campus to provide any additional insight. The campus will continue this process and the Student Support TEam as well as supports provided by the Texas Center for Student Supports and Region 10 to improve the process.

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.

Often the identification comes from teacher, student, and administrator referral. Every staff member is trained in recognizing characteristics in students that may indicate a student in a mental health crisis. When those signs are recognized, staff will alert administration and/or counselors. Additionally, students will often share concerns about their peers which will end up leading us to help and intervene. The district operates our CARE Clinic Monday through Friday during the day and three evenings a week. The CARE Clinic is staffed with two full-time licensed counselors, two full-time licensed play therapists and a program supervisor and provides free counseling to students, families, and staff members. In addition, the district is in partnership with Texas A & M Commerce to provide opportunities for their master level students to gain their internship hours by providing supervised counseling at the CARE Clinic. In exchange the university pays half the salary of the Care Clinic Supervisor. District employees needing internship hours for certification in counseling and social work are also provided opportunities at the Care Clinic to gain internship hours.

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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.

The district utalizes program offerings and training by the regional service center to support the district's counselors and social workers. Campus staff members are encouraged to attend trainings and workshops in the area of behavios, emotional and mental health provided by the regional service center.

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.

As we have seen an increase in the number of students seeking or requiring support in the area of social emotional learning and mental health there is a need to increase not only the support options for student, but increased staff to support these students. A systemic approach to the overall student is critical to ensure not only academic success but to equip students to navigate the world beyond school.

9. Enter the LEA Total Enrollment: 39,000

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

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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 Barrier
Group Barrier
Group Barrier
Group Barrier

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

Table with 2 columns: Description and Value. Rows include LEA's student enrollment (39000), Enrollment of all participating private schools (117), Total enrollment of LEA and all participating PNPs (39117), Total current-year grant allocation, LEA reservation for direct administrative costs, Total LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services, and Per-pupil LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services. Summary row: LEA's total required ESSA PNP equitable services reservation (line 7 times line 2).

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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. | Social Workers (3) 2 years | 480000 |
| 2. | Program Facilitator Stipend (3) 2 years | 30000 |
| 3. | Supplemental Extra Duty | 20000 |
| 4. | | |
| 5. | | |

Professional and Contracted Services

| | | |
|-----|--|--------|
| 6. | Required 6% of funds for technical assistance provided by the regional ESC | 42614 |
| 7. | Required 10% of funds to the Texas Center for Student Supports | 71024 |
| 8. | Restorative Practices Training -3 campuses | 150000 |
| 9. | | |
| 10. | | |

Supplies and Materials

| | | |
|-----|--|-------|
| 11. | | 20000 |
| 12. | | |
| 13. | | |

Other Operating Costs

| | | |
|-----|--|-------|
| 15. | | 10000 |
| 16. | | |
| 17. | | |

Debt Services

| | | |
|-----|--|--|
| 18. | | |
| 19. | | |

Capital Outlay

| | | |
|-----|--|--|
| 20. | | |
|-----|--|--|

Direct administrative costs: 240

Indirect administrative costs: 34190

TOTAL GRANT AWARD REQUESTED: 858068

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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 |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="text"/> | |
| <input type="text"/> | |
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