



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
- General Provisions and Assurances
- Application-Specific Provisions and Assurances
- Debarment and Suspension Certification
- Lobbying Certification
- 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
There has been a decrease in school climate.	Promote relationship building among students, staff, and families; utilize school climate data to identify areas of need and develop action plans; involve students and families in the process; increase two-way communication channels; provide trauma-informed training for all staff.
There has been an increase in threats and school violence.	Foster positive relationships among students, staff, and families; add case managers to facilitate monthly progress monitoring of intervention plans developed from behavior threat assessment (BTA); update intervention plans as needed; provide outreach to families to promote student support plan.
There has been an increase in mental health and substance use referrals.	Enhance Tier 1 interventions to increase student capacity in self-regulation, growth mindset, and trust. Provide Tier 3 interventions through mental health counseling.

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.

By September 30, 2025, 100% of SISD students at the three targeted campuses who receive a substance use related referral and/or a Behavior Threat Assessment for indicated harm to self or others will receive case management support services. Strategies identified will increase self-regulation & growth mindset skills which contribute to holistic mental, emotional, behavioral, and physical health & wellness. Service logs, decreased behavioral incidents, and increased scores on the strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) will be monitored to measure progress towards the goal.

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

By April 30, 2024, Project Administrators will be hired, goals/expectations will be established with TSSS & the Service Center, campuses will begin holding stakeholder meetings (students, parents, staff) at each campus, project admin will establish data tracking & case management system and program staff will hold the first quarterly meeting with campus administration.

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

By October 15, 2024, Quarterly meeting w/ campus admin. Establish MOUs with community partners. Direct staff hired (case managers). Program & campus staff training. Begin service implementation August 2024. Monthly internal campus program reports due 9/15 & 10/15. Data to be reviewed will be BTA data, attendance reports, bullying reporting data, mental health referrals, and behavior data specifically looking at out of school placements and substance use. Initial school climate surveys completed and ready for review. Data from the Student Support Teams will be reviewed as well to track the interventions and fidelity of the interventions that are put in place for students needing extra support.

Third-Quarter Benchmark

By March 30, 2025, Quarterly meeting w/ campus admin. Data reporting out to stakeholders, monthly Data to be reviewed will be BTA data, attendance reports, bullying reporting data, mental health referrals, and behavior data specifically looking at out of school placements and substance use. Initial school climate surveys completed and ready for review. Data from the Student Support Teams will be reviewed as well to track the interventions and fidelity of the interventions that are put in place for students needing extra support.

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.

Campus case management data will be due to the project director on or around the 20th of each month. Project meetings will be held on the 4th Friday of each month in order to analyze data and problem solve for the month ahead. Monthly items of discussion will include staff sharing of successes/challenges, case analysis, data compliance, progress monitoring, relationships with stakeholders, vertical alignment, district initiative alignment, updates from the TSCC, and other items of discussion necessary for successful implementation.

By implementing a systemic reporting timeline and progress monitoring, each case manager will be responsible for maintaining and sharing benchmark data. This collaborative problem-identification and solving process will allow for mutual accountability, alignment of resources, and program feedback from all program staff. Monthly monitoring will ensure that problems are addressed in a timely manner and staff receive real-time technical assistance and coaching, as needed.

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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.

Jefferson Elementary's current student enrollment is 440; 87.05% of students are classified as EcoDis. School climate at Jefferson has been an issue and has resulted in high turnover rates for both administrators and staff. Data from Panorama surveys show a steady decrease in school climate at Jefferson: 8% for students, 26% for staff, and 2% for our families when comparing Fall 2022 to Spring 2023. The average number of referrals for elementary schools in the 2022-23 school year was 96; Jefferson had 214, and the Behavior Threat Assessments (BTA) increased from 0 in 2021-22 to 9 in 2022-23. Bullying reports have also increased. Attendance for the last two years was 91.14% in 2021-2022 and 91.25% in 2022-23, which is below the state average.

Barnes Middle School's current student enrollment is 774 students; 74% of students are classified as EcoDis. School climate at Barnes has been an issue. Data from Panorama surveys show a steady decrease in school climate, specifically 6% for students, 10% for staff, and 7% for families when comparing Fall 2022 to Spring 2023. Barnes had 1,236 referrals for the year compared to 727 referrals at the other middle school, and increased from 3 BTAs in the 2021-22 school year to 9 in the 2022-23 school year. Bullying reports have also increased. Attendance for the last two years was 89.57% in 2021-22 and 91.06% in 2022-23.

Seguin High School's current student enrollment is 1,937; 71.06% of students are classified as EcoDis. School climate at SHS has been an issue and has resulted in high staff turnover. When reviewing the Panorama surveys that are administered at each campus twice a year for students and staff and sent to families to complete, we have seen a steady decrease in school climate, specifically, 5% for students, 3% for staff, and 2% for our families when comparing Fall 2022 to Spring 2023. Seguin High School had 1,672 referrals for the year, and increased from 1 BTA in the 2021-22 school year to 5 in the 2022-23 school year. Bullying reports have also increased. Attendance for the last two years has been 87.2% in 2021-2022 and 89.47% in 2022-23.

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

On-going school climate training for campus leaders and staff will be provided to emphasize the importance and value of the Student Support Program. The team will meet monthly and be involved in the planning process of the Student Support program. They will utilize data and resources for decision making and for coming up with a clear vision and plan. Decisions will be campus driven with the help of additional staff such as case managers and district personnel. The work will enhance the Rtl process, which is already in place.

It is expected that, with strong leadership and fidelity of implementation, campus teams will see an increase in attendance, and decrease in behavior referrals, an increase in academic achievement, and improved school climate.

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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.

During the first quarter, the identified campuses will hold informational meetings for families to solicit support for the program. Focus groups will be formed that will include parents/guardians, community members, students, staff, and administrators who will all work collaboratively to meet a common goal. On-going communication will be an integral part of engaging families in the program. Newsletters will be sent out and monthly meetings will be held to communicate the vision and plan, to share positive outcomes of the program, and to solicit feedback about ways to improve. Family and student voices will be valued and will be an important part throughout the process.

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

A project director will be hired to manage the establishment and implementation of the Student Support Program. Case managers will be hired for each identified campus to ensure there is adequate support for the students. Currently there are three mental health counselors within Seguin ISD. Their contracts will end in June 2024. They could start in July 2024 supporting the implementation of the Student Support Program at each of the designated campuses. An administrator on all three campuses will be dedicated to support implementation efforts as well.

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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 the process of a BTA is to screen the case by gathering information about the individual to determine if a full threat assessment inquiry is warranted. This is conducted by members of the BTA team on each campus.

The next step would be to analyze the information obtained and continue with the eleven interview questions determining: Motive, Communications, Inappropriate Interests, Planning, Capacity, Desperation/Despair, Protective Factors, Violence, Consistency, Concerned Others, and Stressors.

The BTA team will review the information gathered and make an assessment to whether the person/situation poses a threat of violence.

If needed, the team determines a case management plan for the individual to assist in keeping them off the pathway to harm/violence. Resources and supports are listed and added as needed and should be followed up on for a determined amount of time.

Due to the large increase in BTA's this school year, progress monitoring will be done monthly with teachers present during the RTI process. The resources, supports, and interventions decided on during the case management section of the BTA will be put in place and monitored for fidelity, implementation and interventions can/will be updated as needed. This will be important due to the amount of follow up and information that is needed to support the individual as needed and keeping them off the pathway to harm/violence. Families will be involved in the entire process as well.

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.

Student needs can currently be identified in a number of different ways. Requests for support can be initiated by a student's parent/caregiver reaching out to a campus staff member, a peer reaching out to express concern, self-initiated by the student to a trusted adult, such as a teacher, counselor, or social worker, or by a school staff member making observations about areas of need. SISD also utilizes P3 (Participate, Protect, and Prevent), the anonymous reporting tip line, where anyone can report anything of concern. Likewise, the district utilizes Gaggle, which alerts administration of many keywords or phrases that a student uses in any of the Google Suite products when using their school Google account. Once a need for support is identified, Student Support Teams which consist of campus administrators, counselors, and additional support staff, are available to staff student needs and come up with a plan of action for supporting the student. A student can be referred to have a mentor, to receive behavioral health support through the district Behavior Specialists, or for mental health counseling services through grant-funded personnel, SISD employed mental health counselors, or through one of the established community mental health providers. All referrals for mental health services go through a centralized system at the Central Office level, and are assigned based on provider availability and specific needs of the student.

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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.

Currently SISD partners with Region 20 for contracted services to receive training in various areas such as academic support, SEL skill development, Restorative Practices, and MTSS practices. Likewise, SISD is a part of the Counseling Coop and the Safety Coop offered through Region 20, which provides additional resources and support to staff. Region 20 supports SISD implementation initiatives assigned by the legislature or the commissioner as well as helps in attaining the missions, goals, and objectives set forth by the Texas Education Agency. Central Office Administration, in various Departments, benefit from strong working relationships with staff from 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.

Having a case manager at each of the identified campuses will ensure that the work of improving school climate and the mental health, behavioral and emotional health, and physical health and wellness of students is a priority. Having more resources to improve school climate and ensure the health and wellness of our students and staff, will also help build relationships and increase attendance and academic success. Currently Seguin ISD has three mental health counselors. Each mental health counselor has a caseload of about 30 students. The waitlist of students that need this intervention as extra support was about 35 students at the end of the 2022 - 2023 school year. Continuing to have these mental health counselors will help increase the number of students referred for & receiving mental, behavioral, emotional, and physical health/wellness supports. On-going support and follow-up for these students would also be a positive improvement to the work we are currently doing.

9. Enter the LEA Total Enrollment:

6,998

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

20

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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" value="6,998"/>
2. Enrollment of all participating private schools	<input type="text" value="284"/>
3. Total enrollment of LEA and all participating PNPs (line 1 plus line 2)	<input type="text" value="7,282"/>
4. Total current-year grant allocation	<input type="text" value="974,327"/>
5. LEA reservation for direct administrative costs, not to exceed the grant's defined limit	<input type="text" value="19,500"/>
6. Total LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 4 minus line 5)	<input type="text" value="954,826"/>
7. Per-pupil LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 6 divided by line 3)	<input type="text" value="131"/>
LEA's total required ESSA PNP equitable services reservation (line 7 times line 2)	<input type="text" value="37,238"/>

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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.	Project Director	\$170,000
2.	Secretary	\$45,000
3.	Case manager (4)	\$315,000
4.	Mental health counselors/substance abuse educators	\$261,250
5.		

Professional and Contracted Services

6.	Required 6% of funds for technical assistance provided by the regional ESC	\$48,645
7.	Required 10% of funds to the Texas Center for Student Supports	\$81,075
8.	Professional development registration	\$5,000
9.		
10.		

Supplies and Materials

11.	Office supplies	\$1,500
12.	Technology and office equipment	\$8,000
13.		

Other Operating Costs

15.	Professional development travel	\$5,000
16.		
17.		

Debt Services

18.		
19.		

Capital Outlay

20.		
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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
<input type="text"/>	
<input type="text"/>	
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