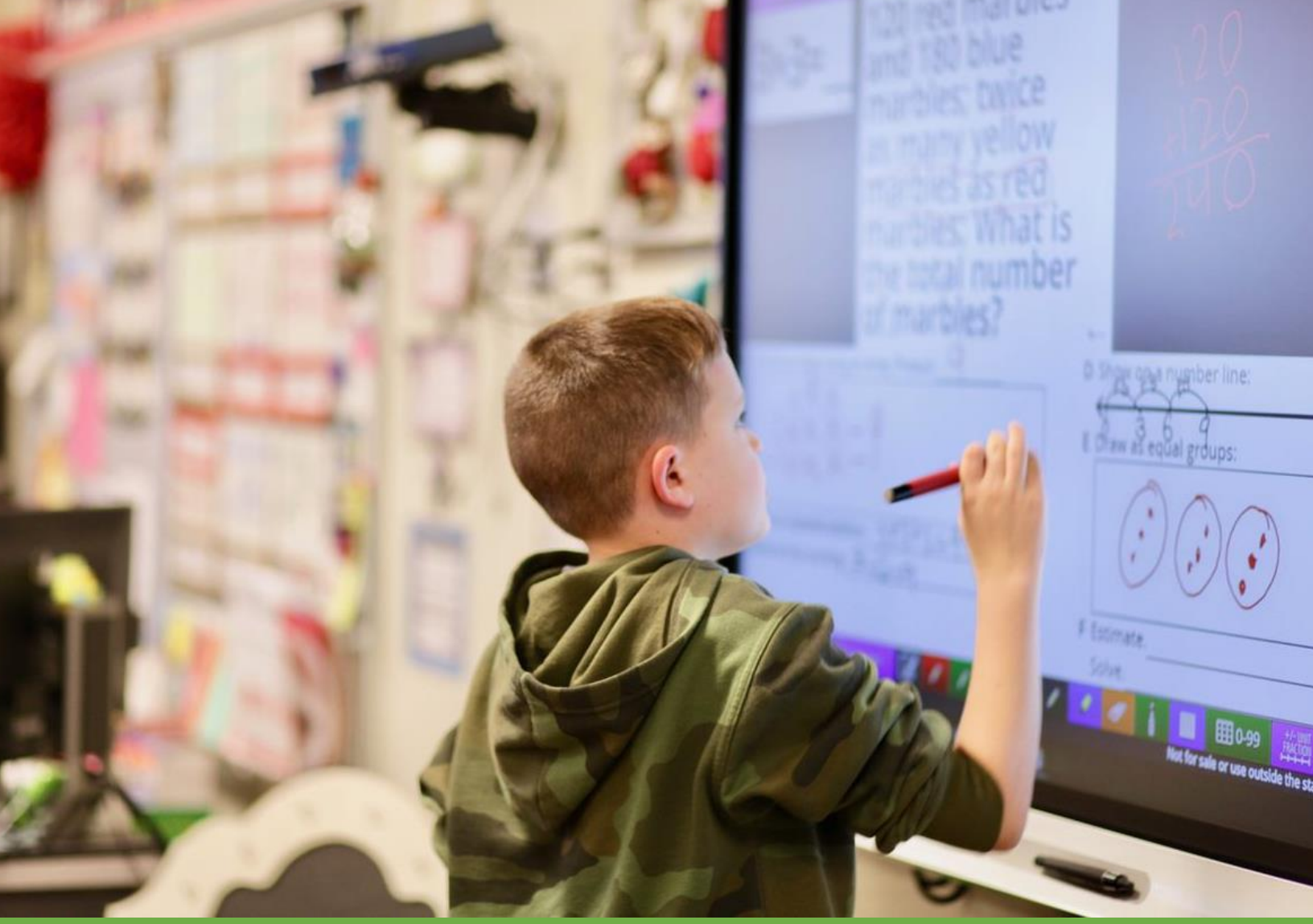

Virtual & Hybrid Program Accelerator

LEA Application

SUBMISSION DEADLINE:
FRIDAY, November 12 – 5 PM CT

Texas Education Agency

Introduction:

Virtual & Hybrid Program Accelerator Overview

In the wake of COVID-19, LEAs across Texas have reimagined schools, upending traditional thinking about how schools "should" operate. For the overwhelming majority of students, the best place to learn is in the classroom, and we encourage school systems to support more families returning to learning in the classroom as quickly as possible.

That being said, when designed effectively, virtual or hybrid learning can be transformative for students and educators, opening new opportunities for personalization, data-driven instruction, and "anytime, anywhere" learning. Further, with the passage of Senate Bill 15 on September 9, 2021, LEAs now have the opportunity to receive remote ADA for instruction meeting requirements outlined in SB 15.

TEA is offering resources to support virtual instruction, including the Virtual and Hybrid Program Accelerator (VHPA). For LEAs interested in partnering with a Technical Assistance (TA) provider and learning alongside other LEAs launching virtual or hybrid programs in SY22-23, we invite you to join the VHPA.

Participating LEAs will receive customized technical assistance to design, implement, and continuously improve their virtual or hybrid program. These supports include, but are not limited to, model design, strategic staffing, academic strategy, family engagement, supporting diverse learners, developing teachers, and other topics related to virtual and hybrid school programs.

**Note – for LEAs who applied and were admitted to the Virtual and Hybrid School Accelerator (VHPA) in SY21-22, please email us to express LEA interest in VHPA at vhpa@tea.texas.gov before completing this application.*

Eligible Applicants All Texas LEAs that commit to running a virtual or hybrid program through SY22-23 and meet the LEA eligibility criteria outlined in SB 15 may apply to join the VHPA. Please refer to SB 15 TAA and SB 15 FAQ for more information.

**Note – To partake in VHPA, TEA requires LEAs to meet the LEA eligibility requirements of SB15(see below). LEAs may partake in VHPA regardless of if all students enrolled in the LEA's virtual or hybrid program qualify for remote ADA funding under SB 15.*

LEA requirements per SB 15

To be eligible for funding for local remote learning, LEAs must:

- Have an overall district-wide performance rating of C or higher in school year 2018-19, or the year the latest performance rating was given.
    - LEAs that do not have a prior performance rating, for example, LEAs established in school years 2019-20 or 2020-21, are eligible to launch local remote learning under SB 15 but will be subject to the performance rating constraint once a rating is assigned in a future school year.

- Include at least one STAAR-assessed grade level among the grade levels for which local remote learning is offered or include a complete high school program, including each course for which an end-of-course assessment is required to be administered.

- Provide families an on-campus option. Local remote learning may not be the sole option offered to families, in general or for any given day that remote instruction is offered.
- Administer assessments to students enrolled in local remote learning in the same manner as students learning on campus. LEAs must also periodically assess students in the remote learning program to assess progress.
- Provide students enrolled in remote learning the ability to participate in any extracurricular activity sponsored or sanctioned by the LEA or by the University Interscholastic League in the same manner as other students.
- Meet the needs of and comply with all relevant federal and state law and policy with respect to students with disabilities and English learners who are enrolled in a remote program.
- With respect to teachers delivering instruction, LEAs must:
    - Provide professional development on virtual instruction to all teachers delivering instruction in a local remote learning program.
    - Ensure that teachers delivering instruction in a full-time remote program have not been coerced in any way to take their full-time remote learning instruction position.
    - Ensure teachers are not delivering instruction concurrently; concurrent instruction is instruction delivered to both on-campus and remote learners during the same class period, at the same time.
- LEAs may only enroll up to **10% of their total LEA-wide enrollment** in a local remote learning program. Any students enrolled for at least a portion of the year in local remote instruction count toward this cap. Additionally, any student that receives remote instruction under an alternative to local remote instruction for a majority of their instructional time during the year would count toward this cap, which could include students who are:
    - Medically fragile;
    - Placed in a remote learning setting by an admission, review, and dismissal committee;
    - Receiving accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973;
    - Served via remote conferencing.

VHPA Program Options

- Eligible LEAs could consider a virtual or hybrid program, as defined below:
    - **Virtual Program** – one virtual program set up to support all remote learners in the LEA; other students attend school on campus
    - **Hybrid Program** – hybrid grade(s) with learners who are on-campus part of the day or week and remote for the rest of the day or week
- LEAs may apply under either option:
    - Individual LEAs establishing a virtual or hybrid program
    - "Consortiums" of multiple LEAs that are committed to standing up a single virtual program to serve their collective student populations. A consortium of multiple LEAs should apply to this program as a single applicant with a single application

- The consortium option may especially be a fit for smaller LEAs looking to pool resources into a common virtual school and/or LEAs with a small number of expected remote learners in the coming school year and beyond
- A consortium could also function such that one or more LEAs is/are contracting with and sending their remote learners to a virtual program operated by a different LEA

What Districts Participating in VHPA Will Receive

The VHPA will select up to 24 applicants (with a single consortium of multiple LEAs counting as a single applicant) to support starting in spring 2022 through fall 2023. Selected LEAs will receive support from a technical assistance provider with expertise in virtual school models and innovation. A technical assistance provider, in partnership with TEA, will support LEAs to reimagine their virtual and hybrid program delivery in alignment with the Effective Schools Framework in the following ways:

- Program model design support for a high quality virtual or hybrid program, including, but not limited to:
  - Designing a dynamic and highly effective student learning experience
  - Building aligned staffing models
  - Crafting a strong school culture and family engagement strategy
  - Enabling strong decision-making on technology and operations systems (e.g., learning management system, attendance, etc.)
- Virtual or hybrid program launch and continuous improvement support, including but not limited to:
  - Ongoing training and development of teachers and leaders
  - Implementing proactive and responsive student support services
  - Analyzing data to ensure that all students can access high-quality, grade-level instruction
- Understanding of emerging best practices and providing opportunities to directly network and learn from other LEAs doing similar virtual or hybrid programs
- Providing a direct line to TEA support and resources
- If of interest to the LEA – Support in developing a strong plan for the TEA new CDCN approval process for eligible hybrid or virtual schools

Through this program, TEA will support LEAs in continuously improving their virtual and hybrid programs through SY22-23. TEA reserves the right to modify the program or supports.

Selected LEAs must commit to making the VHPA a cabinet-level priority. A cabinet member must make this a yearlong priority and be willing to make significant improvements throughout the year.

Selection Process

TEA will select LEAs based upon the strength of their application and interview, objective measures of need, and evidence of willingness of the LEAs to implement significant improvements during the school year.

Virtual and Hybrid Program Accelerator Application Process and Timeline

Date	Event
October 21, 2021	**Applications Release:** The application will be available on the Remote Learning webpage.
November 2, 2021	**Information Webinar:** Interested LEAs may learn more by registering for and attending a webinar. Link here to register.
November 12, 2021	**Application Due:** LEAs submit completed applications to vhpa@tea.texas.gov . These will be processed on a rolling basis until the application deadline.
November 8-19, 2021	**Zoom Interviews:** Zoom Interviews: TEA staff will conduct zoom interviews with LEA Program leaders to add context to the written application and make an acceptance decision. You will receive an invite to interview upon your submission of your application.
November 30, 2021	**Acceptance:** Accepted applicants will be invited to join the program.
December 3, 2021	**Cohort Launch:** All accepted LEAs will participate in a cohort launch webinar.

Please email **vhpa@tea.texas.gov** *with any questions regarding the program.*

How to Submit:

Email your completed application (saved as a Word doc) to vhpa@tea.texas.gov

- Consortiums of LEAs should submit only **one** application that includes the information for all participating LEAs.
- Late or incorrectly formatted applications will not be accepted.

Virtual and Hybrid Program Accelerator Application

Section 1: LEA Information

1. LEA Name:
2. LEA Number:
3. Region Number:
4. Key Contact Information (enter in table below):

Note: Each LEA is required to select a Project Lead for the VHPA. This person will serve as the primary contact for both the TEA and technical assistance providers, and will be responsible for project management and coordination within the LEA. For consortiums – all information for each LEA participating needs to be included in this section. Each LEA in the consortium must have a designated VHPA Project Lead.

Superintendent Name	
Superintendent Email	
Superintendent Phone	
VHPA Project Lead (Primary Contact) Name	
VHPA Project Lead (Primary Contact) Title	
VHPA Project Lead (Primary Contact) Phone	
VHPA Project Lead (Primary Contact) Email	

Section 2: Current State

General Information about the Virtual or Hybrid Program

Model Type (Pick all that apply)	☐100% Virtual ☐Hybrid ☐Asynchronous only ☐Synchronous only ☐Both asynchronous and synchronous
How long does your LEA intend to run the virtual or hybrid program?	☐Through SY22-23 ☐Through SY24-25, contingent on the extension of relevant legislation ☐LEA would like to adopt this program as a viable option for families long term, beyond SY24-25
Current or anticipated student enrollment number	
Please describe how your LEA calculated the enrollment number above (i.e. current number of students enrolled, number of interested students via family survey)	

Grade levels in the program	
Which best describes where your LEA is in the virtual/hybrid program journey?	☐We are in the planning phase and currently do not have a virtual or hybrid program, but intend to launch in SY22-23 ☐We have a plan and will be ready to launch a virtual/hybrid program this school year (SY21-22) with some additional support ☐We are currently running a virtual and hybrid program and would like feedback and support to build on it
Is your LEA partnering with a third party vendor or partner to run the virtual or hybrid program? (ex. Pearson, K-12, Stride K12) **If yes, name the partner.** **LEAs must have the flexibility to iterate the virtual and hybrid programs even when working with an outside vendor. What are the limitations, if any, set by the vendor for your LEA's virtual or hybrid program?**	

Place an "x" for each topic to describe the current state of your LEA's virtual/hybrid program. Note that the answers you provide will not limit the type of support your LEA will receive if accepted into the program. Instead, this information will be used to better understand your LEA's key areas of need.

Virtual or Hybrid Program: Critical Implementation Elements	Have not started developing	In development	In implementation, but would like support to improve	We've got this, and it's running well
1. Aligned, effective virtual program vision and model that is responsive to family and student needs				
2. Family engagement, communication, and/or recruitment plan				
3. Staffing and/or teacher/staff recruitment plan				

4. Plan for communicating clear administrator, teacher, student, and family roles within a virtual/hybrid program (and wherever needed, support for shifting mindsets)				
5. Student attendance and engagement plan				
6. Culture, mental health, and student wellbeing plan and supports				
7. Student onboarding sessions, including learning strategies and support for cultivating mindsets rooted in the science of learning, self-directed learning skills, how to use digital tools, and help-seeking during asynchronous and/or synchronous instruction				
8. Teacher development (PD and ongoing job-embedded coaching) to deliver high-quality instruction and learning experiences in a virtual/hybrid model				
9. High-Quality Instructional Materials (for core curriculum and adjusted for virtual/hybrid learning)				
10. Data collection and progress monitoring systems				
11. Learning Management System (LMS) selected and implemented that effectively meets key needs				
12. Master schedule that is appropriately set up for virtual or hybrid learning				

2. What curriculum are you currently using or planning to use for virtual learning for core courses? Please simply note "N/A" if you have not yet selected curriculum for your virtual/hybrid program or school [200 words max]

3. In the table below, please place an X in the appropriate column to indicate any areas where you are **considering adopting new instructional materials or curriculum for virtual learning**. Note that curriculum adoption is not a requirement of the program, but rather an optional support; your response to this question will help us better understand your LEA's needs.

Grade Levels	ELAR	Math	Science	Social Studies
K-2				
3-5				
6-8				
9-12				

Section 3: Proposed Project Focus

1. What is your vision for your virtual or hybrid school? Include:
   - **a.** Overview of the student experience
   - **b.** Areas of focus (grades and/or content levels)
   - **c.** Any specifics of the model that your team has decided upon, including the online platform, curriculum, scheduling, and staffing models, etc.
   - **d.** Short term and long-term plans: Do you plan to phase in additional grades or grow this program? What else should we know about your long-term vision and plans for your school / program? [350 words max]

2. Describe how you plan to approach social and emotional supports and relationship building in a virtual environment. [200 words max]

3. Describe what you hope to gain from the VHPA in each of the following areas:
    a. Student outcomes
    b. Student learning experience
    c. Teacher capacity-building
    d. Family engagement
    e. School culture and community [350 words max]

4. **[For consortiums ONLY – please mark "N/A" if you are not submitting an application as a consortium of LEAs]** How do you envision your group working together to design and implement a virtual or hybrid school? [200 words max]

Section 4: LEA Commitments to VHPA

1. Team Commitment: As part of the VHPA, LEAs will be asked to form a VHPA Team that regularly partners with VHPA technical assistance providers and meets as a central LEA team to develop and improve upon your virtual/hybrid program leveraging VHPA supports. To the best of your current understanding, please fill in the last column in the table below with the names of the individuals who would be on your LEA's VHPA team:

*Note for consortiums: Each LEA must designate a Senior Project Sponsor and VHPA Project Lead / Primary Contact. For the other roles listed below, only one person needs to be designated as the lead and resources can be shared across the LEAs. *Team members may fulfill more than one role.*

Team Role	Key Responsibilities	Name(s) & Title(s)
Senior Project Sponsor [Required] (Superintendent, Chief Academic Officer, or Executive level administrator recommended)	• Ensures VHPA initiatives are sufficiently resourced and prioritized across the LEA • Sets vision and strategy for VHPA initiatives • Steers team toward project outcomes, works to remove barriers to team progress	
VHPA Project Lead / Primary Contact [Required] (Virtual Program Leader, Principal)	• Serves as primary point of contact with TEA and VHPA technical assistance provider • Project manages VHPA internally • Coordinates across LEA teams to execute project to meet outcomes • Plans for and facilitates VHPA internal LEA coordination meetings • Escalates arising issues	
Curriculum & Instruction Lead [Required]*	• Ensures effective execution of VHPA-related C&I action steps and coordination • Provides C&I perspective as needed	
Technology Lead [Required]*	• Ensures effective execution of VHPA-related technology action steps and coordination • Provides technology perspective as needed	
Virtual/Hybrid Program Leaders(s) [Required]* (We recommend including 2-3 potential leaders of the virtual or hybrid program)	• Actively partners with VHPA team to set vision and strategy • Ensures strong implementation of VHPA goals and objectives • Provides feedback on strategies to facilitate adjustments when needed	
Teacher Leader Advisory Group [Required] (Recommend including at least 2-3 faculty members)	• Provide periodic educator perspective and feedback to ensure effective translation of VHPA plans, training, and tools to the classroom; bring teacher voice into process • *Possible role* – Run early pilots and tests of new tools and practices	
Data Lead [Optional]	• Ensures effective execution of VHPA-related data action steps and coordination • Provides data perspective as needed • Supports Project Lead in data reporting	
Diverse Learner Lead [Optional] (Special education or multi-tiered system of supports lead recommended)	• Ensures effective execution of VHPA-related action steps and coordination • Consistently brings diverse learner lens to proposed plans, tools, and training to advance access for all students	

Other *(optional)*:		

2. Commitments: In the last column, **bold** "Yes" or "No" to indicate your ability to commit to each type of VHPA support or commitment listed

Commitment	**Content**	**Frequency** (suggested)	**Duration** (suggested)	**Team members** (required members bolded, others included as needed)	**LEA VHPA team able to meet this commitment?** (Please **bold** your answer)
VHPA Kickoff	**TA Providers and Project Lead** partner to facilitate an VHPA project kickoff, clarify next steps and team roles	Once, start of year	90-120 mins	**Senior Project Sponsor** **VHPA Project Lead** **C&I Lead** **Technology Lead** **Data Lead** Diverse Learner Lead Faculty Advisory Group	No
LEA VHPA collaboration meetings	**Project Lead** facilitates VHPA team meetings to make decisions, review deliverables, and align on coordinated action to move the work forward	Biweekly (may be weekly at the start)	60 min	**Senior Project Sponsor** **VHPA Project Lead** **Virtual / Hybrid Program Leader(s)** **C&I Lead** **Technology Lead** Data Lead Diverse Learner Lead Faculty Advisory Group	No
Technical assistance provider collaboration meetings	**TA Providers** share tools, resources, plans, or collateral for feedback; provide consultation to VHPA team members	Weekly	60 min	**Senior Project Sponsor** (can move to biweekly after launch) **Project Lead** **Virtual / Hybrid School Leader(s)** C&I Lead Technology Lead Data Lead Diverse Learner Lead Faculty Advisory Group	No
Improvement Review	**TA Providers Partner with Project Lead, Data Lead** to facilitate a data-backed progress review to inform next steps or pivots	Four times over the course of the VHPA	90 min	**Senior Project Sponsor** **Project Lead** **Virtual / Hybrid School Leader(s)** **C&I Lead** **Technology Lead** **Data Lead** Diverse Learner Lead Faculty Advisory Group	No
TEA Progress Check-in	**TEA Representative** facilitates brief check-ins to ensure LEA needs are being supported,	Once every 1-2 months	45 min	Senior Project Sponsor **Project Lead** Virtual / Hybrid School Leader(s)	No

	relevant learning is being shared across LEAs			C&I Lead Technology Lead Data Lead	

3. *(Optional)* Please include any relevant explanation or additional context for your answers above, if it would be helpful for the TEA's application review: [50 words max]

Section 5: Optional Section – Supplemental Information [250 words max]

1. Is there any additional information you would like to share, to inform our review of your application?

Section 6: VHPA Program Assurances

By completing this application, the Superintendent commits to the following VHPA assurances:

1. The LEA understands and commits to providing a virtual learning program through August 2023. The LEA understands that if their virtual learning program is discontinued at any time before August 2023, the TEA may revoke its membership in the Virtual and Hybrid Program Accelerator (VHPA). This will include discontinuation of technical assistance support for the LEA.

2. The LEA understands that joining the VHPA **is not a replacement for following compliance guidelines** set forth by legislature or TEA on virtual/hybrid options, including guidance on Senate Bill 15-funded remote instruction, remote conferencing, and other options for partially or fully funded remote learning. For more information on the requirements, please reference: SB 15 bill language, TAA, SB 15 FAQs; Remote Conferencing FAQs; Non-TXVSN guidance document

3. The LEA understands that the VHPA provides **in-kind services/technical assistance**, not monetary support for LEAs.

4. The LEA understands that **TEA will match LEAs with a technical assistance (TA) provider** and commits to fully engage in TA-supported work such as cohort workshops, 1-on-1 calls, step-backs, and planning- and implementation-specific deliverables.

5. The LEA commits to completing **deliverables and milestones** required by the VHPA, including:
    - Program diagnostic/readiness check with TA provider
    - Virtual/hybrid program plan
    - Goal setting for virtual/hybrid program and improvement cycles
    - Family and student onboarding plan
    - Professional development for virtual/hybrid program leaders
    - Teacher professional development
    - Three improvement reviews to reflect on data and potential pivots
    - Virtual/hybrid program plan – revision for SY22-23

6. The LEA commits to requested VHPA network events and supports, particularly:

Support/Event	Duration	Frequency
VHPA Launch Webinar	90 min	Once (start of program)
TA Partner Collaboration	60 min (minimum)	Weekly
LEA VHPA Team Collaboration	60 min (minimum)	Biweekly
Improvement Review	90 min	Four times
TEA progress Check-in	45 min	Monthly

7. The LEA commits to appointing an VHPA team as outlined in Section 4, noted below:

VHPA Team Role	Guidance
Senior Project Sponsor *Superintendent or Chief Academic Officer recommended	Required
VHPA Lead / Primary Contact	Required
Curriculum & Instruction Lead	Required
Technology Lead	Required
Virtual & Hybrid Program Leaders *While this may not be finalized, we recommend including 2-3 potential leaders of the virtual or hybrid school	Required
Teacher Leader Advisory Group *Recommend including 2-3 teachers	Required
Data Lead	Recommended

Diverse Learner Lead *Special education or multi-tiered system of supports lead recommended	Recommended

8. The LEA will collaborate with the TEA and TA partners, giving classroom, tool, data access as needed:
    a. TA Partners and the TEA will periodically need access to observe or join classrooms or internal meetings to gauge progress and better support LEAs. Note that this access is not for accountability purposes, but rather to inform how the TEA can improve technical assistance to the LEA and to better understand VHPA program successes and areas for improvement.
    b. TA Partners and the TEA may request specific data in order to monitor progress and assess program impact; any data collected will not be used for accountability purposes.
    c. TA Partners will collaborate with your team to establish and assess progress against data baselines periodically throughout the project.
9. The TEA intends to share helpful tools, training, and resources developed by VHPA participants across the VHPA network and Texas schools broadly. The LEA understands that if the above commitments are not met by the LEA or the LEA disengages with the VHPA, the TEA reserves the right to terminate the LEA's membership in VHPA.

To confirm your LEA's participation in the Virtual and Hybrid Program Accelerator and your understanding of and commitment to these program commitments, please type your names in below:

TEA commits to supporting LEAs in completing all VHPA Program Assurances.

Superintendent [Type in name above]	Date
Project Lead [Type in name above]	Date