**System of Great Schools Network**

**Application: Cohort 2 - 2018**

The System of Great Schools (SGS) Network exists to support school districts across Texas interested in pursuing the [SGS strategy](http://www.tea.texas.gov/sgs). This is an optional technical support program designed for districts that have the determination to pursue this work with or without the support of the Network. A comprehensive program description can be found on the [SGS webpage](http://www.tea.texas.gov/sgs) along with other resources and information. **Please thoroughly review the program description prior to and during the completion of this application.**

Districts that pursue the SGS strategy will design and implement a continuous improvement process that annually evaluates school quality, parent demand, and neighborhood needs to take strategic action to both improve schools and provide parents with the schools and programs they desire. The goal of the SGS strategy is to ensure that every student has access to a high-quality learning environment which meets their needs.

All Texas districts are welcome to apply to the SGS Network, though TEA will select no more than 6 districts to join Cohort 2. Members will be selected on their need and willingness and commitment to pursue elements of the SGS strategy, including evidence that they have explored or have already begun implementation of key SGS components. An identified set of commitments can be found below.

The application process will include multiple phases. Phase 1: complete this application; Phase 2: respond to a set of questions based on local data which will be compiled and sent to applicants; and Phase 3: interview with the superintendent and other leadership. Following Phase 3, TEA will send invitations to up to 6 districts.

The primary purpose of this application is to determine the will of district stakeholders to adopt a System of Great Schools strategy as the foundation of its theory of action. It is expected that participating districts will also have the interest and capacity to provide TEA’s Division of System Support and Innovation with critical feedback on how to improve network services and programing.

**Prior to completing this application, please thoroughly review the SGS Program Description.** This can be found on the TEA website at [www.tea.texas.gov/sgs](http://www.tea.texas.gov/sgs)

Contact mike.herschenfeld@tea.texas.gov, Manager of District Strategy, if you have any questions.

1. **Contact Information**:

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| **District** |       |
| **Mailing Address** |       |
| **Superintendent Name** |       |
| **Superintendent Email** |       |
| **Superintendent Phone** |       |
| **Administrative Assistant Name** |       |
| **Administrative Assistant Email** |       |
| **Primary District Contact for SGS Related Work** |       |
| **Primary Contact Email** |       |
| **Person Completing Application** |       |

1. **District Leadership**: List all positions that report directly to the superintendent**. Please attach a current organizational chart when submitting your application.**

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| **Name** | **Role/Title** | **Email** |
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1. **Current Strategy:**

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| **3a) Does the district have a published strategic plan? If yes, include a link below. If no, are there any plans to begin the strategic planning process?** | **YES** | [ ]  | **NO** | [ ]  |
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| **3b) Write 5 – 7 sentences summarizing the district’s theory of action underpinning the strategic priorities above.** |
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| **3c) Strategic Plan: Write 5 – 7 sentences below that summarize the districts high-level strategic priorities. In addition, Include the duration of the current plan.** |
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| **3d) Does the district have any in-district charters (Subchapter C) or partnership schools? If yes, please describe the schools.** |
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| **3e) Aside from any in-district charters, does the district have any innovative or unique school models or programs (ex. Academies/magnets, New Tech, IB, etc.)? If yes, list the schools.** |
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| **3f) Does the district allow for students to enroll in schools outside their attendance boundaries? If so, is this limited to specific schools? Or is there a broader choice policy?** |
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| **3g) Does the district devolve autonomy to schools? If this doesn’t exist for every school, how are the schools selected? Which aspects of operations do principals have autonomy over?** |
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1. **Self-Assessment of Internal Capacity:**

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| **4a) Does the district have an office (or FTE) dedicated to regularly evaluating school performance and recommending high and medium stakes actions to ensure continuous school quality improvement. If yes, include the name of the office, the person who leads it, and what functions are subsumed by the office.** | **YES** | [ ]  | **NO** | [ ]  |
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| **4b) Does the district have an office (or FTE) dedicated to supporting and creating new school, program, and/or partnership options? (ex. Office of Transformation, Office of Innovation, Office of New Schools). If yes, include the name of the office, the person who leads it, and what functions are subsumed by the office.** | **YES** | [ ]  | **NO** | [ ]  |
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| **4c) Does the district have an office (or FTE) dedicated to streamlining student enrollment and reducing barriers to access to the district’s schools and programs? If yes, include the name of the office, the person who leads it, and what functions are subsumed by the office.** | **YES** | [ ]  | **NO** | [ ]  |
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| **4d) The System of Great Schools Network defines 4 levers that SGS Network districts work to continuously improve on. Please refer to the** [**SGS Program Description**](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CJoe.Siedlecki%5CDownloads%5Cwww) **to understand the type of work that exists within each lever and attempt to identify, in the tables below, who in your district would lead that work, what related work the district has engaged in over the past 2 years, and how you would rank your desire for support in that lever.** **Please note if there is not currently a position or office where that work would live.**  |
| **Lever 1: School Performance Management:** District dedicates capacity towards annually reviewing the performance of schools, and taking strategic and transparent actions based on schools’ performance with the goal of ensuring that more students are in higher performing classrooms every year. |
| **Who in your district would lead SGS work in this lever (Name and/or title)?** |
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| **What work has the district engaged in related to this lever over the past 2 years?** |
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| **Lever 2: Expanding Great Options:** District dedicates capacity towards executing strategic school actions such as replicating successful schools, taking aggressive action to improve existing schools, and launching new schools. |
| **Who in your district would lead SGS work in this lever (Name and/or title)?** |
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| **What work has the district engaged in related to this lever over the past 2 years?** |
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| **Lever 3: Access to Options:** District dedicates capacity towards supporting families to understand, navigate, and access best-fit school and program options. |
| **Who in your district would lead SGS work in this lever (Name and/or title)?** |
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| **What work has the district engaged in related to this lever over the past 2 years?** |
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| **Lever 4: School Autonomy:** District dedicates capacity towards empowering school leaders with increased autonomy over talent, budget, program, and schedule. |
| **Who in your district would lead SGS work in this lever (Name and/or title)?** |
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| **What work has the district engaged in related to this lever over the past 2 years?** |
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| **4e) Operationalizing the System of Great Schools strategy most often requires a district to rethink the schools, programs, and services it offers to students and families. While we understand that some school actions are difficult to actualize, we believe that district leaders have the responsibility to take any reasonable action to ensure that more students are in a high-performing seat every year. In the table below, please indicate district leaders’ willingness to pursue specific school actions.** |
| **Action** | **District has implemented** | **If yes, describe how the action was implemented and what campuses were affected.****If no, please explain why the district would, or would not, consider implementing this action.** |
| **Maximize impact of highest performing schools** |
| Ensure all high-performing campuses are fully enrolled | Yes [ ] No [ ]  |       |
| Expand grades to existing high-performing schools | Yes [ ] No [ ]  |       |
| Change attendance boundaries to ensure more students are zoned to high-performing schools | Yes [ ] No [ ]  |       |
| Form an office to oversee the district’s innovation and transformation work  | Yes [ ] No [ ]  |       |
| **School Autonomy** |
| Give campus leaders autonomy over talent, budget, program, and schedule | Yes [ ] No [ ]  |       |
| Convert an existing campus into an in-district (Subchapter C) charter to formalize contractual school level autonomies | Yes [ ] No [ ]  |       |
| **New Schools** |
| Launch a new district school | Yes [ ] No [ ]  |       |
| Authorize a new in-district charter school (Sub-C) | Yes [ ] No [ ]  |       |
| Conduct a “call for quality schools” to identify potential school management partners | Yes [ ] No [ ]  |       |
| **School Closure** |
| Close and consolidate a persistently low-performing campus | Yes [ ] No [ ]  |       |
| Close and replace a persistently low-performing campus | Yes [ ] No [ ]  |       |

1. **Desire for a New or Enhanced Improvement Strategy:**

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| **5a) Why is this the right time for your district to engage with the SGS Network and implement a SGS strategy as the district’s operating system?**  |
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| **5b) To what extent, if at all, would joining the network signal a new theory of action vs. an enhancement or acceleration of the current theory of action? Please explain how.** |
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| **5c) If your district is invited to join the SGS TA network what specific actions will you take to both educate and gain buy-in from local stakeholders (including the Board of Trustees) on the district’s membership in the network and its exploration of SGS related work that will be implemented?** |
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1. **Local Support:** Can the district demonstrate local support from philanthropic organizations for implementing the SGS strategy, specifically for raising funds to create new schools and/or build talent pipelines?

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1. **District Commitments**: TEA believes system ownership and a continuous improvement mindset is critical to the sustainable success of ensuring more students are in high-quality learning environments. Given our desire to work collaboratively with district leaders, we are seeking the following required commitments from districts applying to join the SGS network:

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| **Commitment** | **Superintendent Initial** |
| **Demonstration of commitment to making the SGS strategy a top priority and the base of the district’s theory of action** |       |
| **Dedication of capacity (FTE and/or office) to transformation and innovation work** |       |
| **Development and implementation of Lever 1: Performance Management** |       |
| **Development and implementation of Lever 2: Expanding Great Options** |       |
| **Development and implementation of Lever 3: Access to Options** |       |
| **Development and implementation of Lever 4: School Autonomy** |       |
| **Participation in a comprehensive District Readiness Assessment to assess current SGS strengths and opportunities**  |       |
| **Board and superintendent participation in a Lone Star Governance workshop** |       |
| **Sharing of knowledge and lessons learned throughout the process** |       |
| **Access to central office leadership and staff** |       |
| **Superintendent and leadership participation in SGS network summits and meetings** |       |
| **Sharing of all materials and tools created in the Network** |       |

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| **Are there any other topics or SGS related activities that the district is interested in learning more about, or receiving support around?** |
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