



**2024-2026 Interactive Online Learning Grant, Cycle 1**  
**Informal Discretionary Competition (IDC) Due 11:59 p.m. CT, April 4th, 2024**

NOGA ID

Authorizing legislation **General Appropriations Act, Article III, Rider 90, 88th Texas Legislature**

This IDC application must be submitted via email to **competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov**.

The IDC application may be signed with a digital ID or it may be signed by hand. Both forms of signature are acceptable.

TEA must receive the application by **11:59 p.m. CT, April 4th, 2024**.

Application stamp-in date and time

Grant period from **May 17th, 2024 to April 30th, 2026**

Pre-award costs are not permitted for this grant program.

**Required Attachments**

- 1. Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)

**Amendment Number**

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

**Applicant Information**

Organization  CDN  Campus  ESC  UEI

Address  City  ZIP  Vendor ID

Primary Contact  Email  Phone

Secondary Contact  Email  Phone

**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 IDC application, as applicable, and that these documents are incorporated by reference as part of the IDC application and Notice of Grant Award (NOGA):

- IDC application, guidelines, and instructions
- Debarment and Suspension Certification
- General and application-specific Provisions and Assurances
- Lobbying Certification

Authorized Official Name  Title

Email  Phone

Signature  Date

**Shared Services Arrangements** Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are not permitted for this grant program.**Statutory/Program Assurances**

The following assurances apply to this program. In order to meet the requirements of the program, the applicant 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 IDC 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 the Statutory and TEA Program requirements as noted in the 2024-2026 Interactive Online Learning Grant, Cycle 1 Program Guidelines.
- 4. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2024-2026 Interactive Online Learning Grant, Cycle 1 Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.
- 5. The applicant assures that any Electronic Information Resources (EIR) produced as part of this agreement will comply with the State of Texas Accessibility requirements as specified in 1 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 206, 1 TAC Chapter 213, Federal Section 508 standards, and the WCAG 2.0 AA Accessibility Guidelines.
- 6. The applicant provides assurances to select or develop an effective interactive online learning model(s) that meets the statutory requirements listed in General Appropriations Act, House Bill 1, Article III, Rider 90, 88th Legislative Session Regular Session, 2023.
- 7. The applicant provides assurances that program funds will be used to implement with fidelity an effective interactive online learning model(s) in middle school and/or high school for cross-curricular instruction in English language arts and U.S. history and/or Texas History. The effective interactive online learning model(s) must: align with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for middle school and/or high school U.S. history, Texas history, and English language arts, as applicable; include tools to monitor the progress of each individual student; include quarterly benchmark assessments that are automatically scored; include both audio narration and video components; and be offered for use in both English and Spanish.
- 8. The applicant provides assurances that the implemented interactive online learning model(s) must include cross-curricular instruction in social studies and English language arts aligned to the TEKS.
- 9. The applicant provides assurances that the interactive online learning model(s) has been reviewed and determined to comply with the requirements of the Texas Education Code (TEC) §28.002(h) and §28.0022.
- 10. The applicant provides assurances that the teachers implementing the interactive online learning model(s) will receive adequate professional development to ensure successful implementation of the program.
- 11. The applicant provides assurances to support student learning in the interactive online learning model(s).
- 12. The applicant provides assurances to provide the necessary support to help students accelerate in the learning model(s) if they fall behind or are failing in the cross-curricular learning model(s).
- 13. The applicant provides assurances to make a sustainability plan to ensure that the interactive online learning model(s) can continue to be offered after the grant ends.
- 14. The applicant provides assurances to provide a status report by August 1, 2025, and a final report by February 1, 2026.

**Statutory Requirements**

1. Describe the process the local education agency (LEA) will use for choosing/developing an effective interactive online learning model(s) that aligns with the TEKS in middle school and high school for instruction in U.S. history and/or Texas history and English language arts, including a description of the program, grade levels at which the program will be implemented, the selection/development criteria, and how the LEA will ensure TEKS alignment.

The initial step in the Mercedes Independent School District (MISD) leadership team's process for selecting and developing effective online learning models involves a comprehensive review of campus and district needs assessments. This entails analyzing longitudinal STAAR/EOC data alongside campus-specific assessment data to pinpoint areas requiring instructional enhancement. Upon identification of these needs, the team will proactively engage with other school districts that have successfully implemented blended learning initiatives across various subjects. By studying the factors contributing to the success of these programs, MISD aims to glean valuable insights and best practices.

Moreover, our collaborative team will actively seek support from key educational resources, including our regional service center, Region One, and the academic expertise available at the University of Texas - Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV). This collaboration will extend to technical assistance, aiding in the meticulous selection or development of the online learning program itself. The proposed program will initially target seventh-grade Texas History and eleventh-grade U.S. History. To ensure its efficacy, the selection and development criteria for the program will be rigorous, focusing on key elements. These include alignment with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards for relevant subjects such as United States History, Texas History, and English Language Arts. Additionally, the program will incorporate tools for individual student progress monitoring, quarterly benchmark assessments with automated scoring capabilities, audio narration, video components, and bilingual accessibility in both English and Spanish.

Mercedes ISD's commitment to quality assurance will be sustained through bi-annual curriculum reviews. These reviews will ensure ongoing alignment with TEKS standards and facilitate continuous improvement based on insights gleaned from STAAR/EOC assessments and local performance data. By integrating these systematic evaluation processes, MISD endeavors to maintain a dynamic and responsive online learning environment that effectively supports student achievement and mastery of essential knowledge and skills.

2. Describe the progress monitoring tool(s) included with the interactive online learning model(s) and how the LEA will use the monitoring tool(s) to ensure adequate student progress. Include how the LEA will use the progress monitoring tool(s) to support struggling learners and students who may be off track. What interventions will be implemented to help struggling learners?

The chosen online learning program will undergo continuous monitoring to ascertain its effectiveness in meeting the academic needs of all students, ensuring they achieve grade-level expectations and make substantial academic progress. A comprehensive assessment framework comprising formative and summative evaluations will be integrated into the program. These assessments will provide valuable insights for teachers and campus/district administrators to gauge student progress consistently throughout the academic year.

To maintain a proactive approach, district and campus leaders will conduct thorough data reviews at the culmination of each grading period. These reviews serve as critical checkpoints to assess progress and evaluate the overall efficacy of the program. Moreover, teachers will diligently utilize data trackers to record and analyze student performance data. This systematic approach enables swift identification of students encountering difficulties or falling behind their peers. Upon identification of struggling students, collaborative efforts between teachers and campus instructional leaders will ensue to devise targeted interventions. These interventions will be meticulously crafted to address the specific Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards and individual student needs, thereby fostering an environment conducive to student success. In addition to teacher-led monitoring, students themselves will be empowered with data tracking tools to monitor their progress and take ownership of their learning journey. By actively engaging in monitoring their own academic performance, students are encouraged to set goals and track their achievements, thereby fostering a sense of accountability and autonomy.

By intertwining teacher-led data tracking with student-centered monitoring tools, the program ensures a holistic approach to student academic success. These robust data tracking measures serve as a cornerstone in ensuring that the online learning program remains dynamic and responsive to the evolving needs of its student body, ultimately driving positive outcomes in academic achievement.

**Statutory Requirements (Cont'd)**

3. Describe the quarterly benchmarks included in the interactive online learning model(s) and how the school(s) will use this data to support student learning and to evaluate the effectiveness of the interactive online learning model(s) that was implemented.

The quarterly benchmarks integrated into our interactive online learning model will encompass both Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) that have been covered and those that have yet to be addressed. This comprehensive approach serves a dual purpose: enabling teachers to gauge student progress across various content areas while also empowering them to make informed instructional decisions based on data-driven insights derived from these assessments. Delivered online, these benchmarks are designed for automatic scoring, ensuring swift and accurate feedback for students. This immediate feedback loop not only provides students with valuable insights into their progress but also equips teachers with timely access to student performance data. Such accessibility enables educators to swiftly identify areas of concern and implement targeted interventions to address any identified needs promptly.

At the administrative level, school and district leaders engage in regular reviews of this data to ensure that appropriate interventions are readily available to support student success. Moreover, this data serves as a vital tool for monitoring the effectiveness of our online learning program. By analyzing student performance trends and outcomes, leaders can identify areas for improvement and develop action plans to enhance program efficacy as needed. This commitment to ongoing assessment and refinement underscores our dedication to maintaining the highest standards in our online learning program. Through continuous monitoring and iterative improvements informed by robust data analytics, we ensure that our educational offerings remain dynamic, responsive, and aligned with the evolving needs of our students and educators alike. By prioritizing data-driven decision-making and a relentless pursuit of excellence, we lay the foundation for sustained academic achievement and growth within our learning community.

4. Describe the audio and video components included in the interactive online learning model(s) and how the school(s) will use these tools to engage students in the effective interactive online learning model(s).

Students within our educational framework will have multifaceted opportunities to interact with dynamic learning models, utilizing both video and audio mediums to enrich their educational experiences. Through these platforms, students will not only consume educational content but actively engage with it, fostering a deeper understanding and connection to the material.

Video-based learning modules will empower students to watch instructional videos while simultaneously interacting with the content. This interactive element allows for a more immersive learning experience, enabling students to engage with concepts in real-time, ask questions, and explore related materials. Moreover, our approach extends beyond solitary learning experiences. Students will have the opportunity to engage with both peers and instructors through audio and video channels, fostering a sense of connectivity and community within the learning environment. This collaborative aspect ensures that students feel supported and valued as integral contributors to the collective learning journey. In leveraging interactive videos, our schools prioritize active student participation and comprehension. By incorporating audio and video components, we create dynamic spaces where students can engage in peer instruction, collaborate on projects, and collectively tackle assignments. This collaborative learning approach not only enhances academic performance but also cultivates a supportive ecosystem where students feel connected and empowered.

By providing these diverse options for engagement, we ensure that students remain actively involved in the learning process, leading to greater academic achievement and personal growth. This comprehensive approach not only equips students with the necessary knowledge and skills but also nurtures a sense of belonging and community within our educational ecosystem.

**Statutory Requirements (Cont'd)**

5. Describe the components of the interactive online learning model(s) that are provided in Spanish. Explain how your LEA will use the interactive online learning model(s) with English- and Spanish-speaking students.

In consideration of the diverse linguistic backgrounds within our student body, the interactive learning models adopted by Mercedes ISD must incorporate components provided in Spanish, catering to the needs of the 31% of students identified as emergent bilingual learners. It is paramount to ensure that these students receive instruction in English while benefiting from Spanish supports, such as auditory and visual aids in their native language, to facilitate their academic growth effectively.

Mercedes ISD is committed to utilizing interactive learning models that deliver instruction primarily in English, catering to both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking students. However, the interactive nature of these models enables seamless integration of Spanish supports for students who require them. This approach ensures equitable access to educational content while addressing the diverse linguistic needs of our student population. Furthermore, our approach extends beyond mere comprehension support. Both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking students will be provided ample opportunities to engage in written and oral communication in English. These opportunities not only foster academic language development but also serve as invaluable practice sessions for emergent bilingual students, aiding in their acquisition and mastery of English language skills.

By integrating Spanish supports within the interactive learning models and providing opportunities for English language practice, Mercedes ISD aims to not only support emergent bilingual students in their academic progress but also facilitate their English language development. This comprehensive approach not only addresses immediate academic needs but also fosters a supportive and inclusive learning environment conducive to long-term linguistic growth and academic success.

**TEA Program Requirements**

1. Provide an overview of how the effective interactive online learning model(s) will be implemented with grant funds. Include the overall mission, goal(s), and desired student outcomes of the implementation. Describe how this grant will help support the LEA's overall mission.

Located along the Mexico border in southern Texas, Mercedes Independent School District (MISD) is deeply committed to its mission of providing exemplary education to approximately 4,400 students. Our student body predominantly comprises a 98% Hispanic demographic, with 92% categorized as economically disadvantaged, 31% emergent bilingual, and 76% at-risk of not graduating. Recognizing the diverse and evolving needs of our students, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, MISD is dedicated to offering versatile and innovative educational experiences. These experiences are instrumental in addressing the multifaceted academic requirements of our student body.

Our interactive online learning program represents a pivotal initiative aimed at enabling students to meet grade-level standards in core subjects such as U.S. history, Texas history, and English language arts. Designed to foster cross-curricular engagement, this program will provide students with a dynamic online learning environment conducive to comprehensive academic growth. Aligned closely with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards, this learning program incorporates robust tools for monitoring student progress, including quarterly benchmark assessments. These assessments serve as vital checkpoints, allowing teachers to tailor their instruction based on real-time data insights and implement targeted interventions where necessary. By leveraging these data-driven strategies, we ensure that every student receives the individualized support needed to thrive academically. Moreover, the online learning program serves as a beacon of high-quality instruction, ensuring equitable access to educational opportunities for all students. It stands poised to set a precedent for future expansions into additional subjects, further enriching our curriculum and enhancing student outcomes.

Through the implementation of this online learning model, MISD is poised to narrow achievement gaps and cultivate a culture of academic excellence where every student has the opportunity to succeed. By empowering our students with access to versatile educational experiences, we reaffirm our commitment to their holistic development and lifelong success.

**TEA Program Requirements (Cont'd)**

2. Specify three student needs that would be met by the interactive online learning grant and describe how the interactive online learning model(s) will address those needs. What activities/strategies will be implemented to ensure student success?

The Interactive Online Learning Grant has been strategically designed to address three critical student needs: learning acceleration, high-quality instruction, and English-language learner support. Each aspect of the grant is meticulously crafted to ensure that every student, regardless of background or circumstance, has the opportunity to thrive academically. Learning acceleration stands as a paramount objective within our educational landscape, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The disruptions caused by the pandemic have underscored the need for targeted interventions to address learning gaps, especially in core subjects like reading and math. While the district has implemented various initiatives to mitigate these deficits, the Interactive Online Learning Program offers an additional layer of support. By providing supplementary learning opportunities, tailored resources, and innovative teaching methods such as peer instruction and project-based learning, the program aims to expedite the process of learning recovery while ensuring students meet current grade-level expectations.

Furthermore, the program addresses the critical need for high-quality instruction. In light of staffing shortages and other challenges faced by districts nationwide, the Interactive Online Learning Model offers a flexible solution. Through creative staffing arrangements and the integration of proven instructional programming, the program guarantees that all students have access to the highest caliber of teaching. Moreover, it provides opportunities for instructional staff to enhance their pedagogical practices through exposure to best practices and innovative instructional techniques.

Central to the program's success is its commitment to supporting English-language learners (ELLs). By providing comprehensive instructional supports in Spanish, the program ensures that emergent bilingual students receive the scaffolding necessary for academic success. Additionally, the program facilitates English language development through structured opportunities for reading, listening, writing, and speaking in an academic context. These initiatives not only enhance language acquisition but also empower ELLs to excel in all facets of their educational journey.

In essence, the Interactive Online Learning Grant represents a holistic approach to addressing the diverse needs of our student population. Through targeted interventions, innovative instructional strategies, and robust language supports, the program endeavors to foster a learning environment where every student can thrive and reach their full potential.

3. How will the LEA select and support teachers and other support staff to implement the interactive online learning grant? How will (1) the LEA ensure teacher commitment and (2) ensure they have all the necessary tools and professional development to implement the interactive online learning model(s) effectively?

Mercedes ISD is committed to a transparent and inclusive process for selecting teachers who will play pivotal roles in the development of our online learning program. We recognize the importance of fostering collaboration and empowering educators to contribute to the program's success.

To ensure transparency and inclusivity, MISD will conduct meetings to clearly outline the expectations of the program and address any questions or concerns that teachers may have. Through these sessions, teachers will have the opportunity to become fully informed about the program's objectives and their roles within it. Subsequently, an application process will be initiated, inviting all eligible teachers to express their interest in participating. District and campus leaders will then convene to carefully review and select candidates based on their qualifications, expertise, and commitment to the program's objectives. Selected teachers will benefit from ongoing professional development opportunities throughout the grant process. These sessions will be tailored to provide support and empowerment, equipping educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively navigate the realm of online learning.

To ensure that our professional development efforts align closely with the evolving needs of our teachers, MISD will employ various feedback mechanisms. Regular surveys and feedback sessions will be conducted to solicit input from teachers and their campus supervisors. This feedback will enable us to provide just-in-time support and targeted professional development opportunities that address specific areas of need. Furthermore, we recognize the importance of student input in shaping the online learning experience. Therefore, district leaders will also seek feedback directly from students, ensuring that their voices are heard and their perspectives are incorporated into program development and refinement. In essence, MISD is dedicated to fostering a culture of collaboration, transparency, and continuous improvement in the development of our online learning program. By engaging teachers as partners and prioritizing their professional learning needs, we are poised to create an online learning environment that meets the diverse needs of our students.

**TEA Program Requirements (Cont'd)**

4. Describe how the proposed budget will meet the needs and goals of the program, including staffing, professional development, and resources needed to support the implementation of the effective interactive online learning model(s).

The proposed budget has been meticulously crafted to align with the needs and goals of the program, ensuring that all aspects of the effective interactive online learning model(s) are adequately supported.

First and foremost, staffing requirements have been carefully considered to ensure the successful implementation of the program. Adequate funding has been allocated for qualified teachers and instructional paraprofessionals who will play pivotal roles in delivering high-quality instruction within the online learning environment. Additionally, provisions have been made to support the professional development of these educators, equipping them with the necessary skills and expertise to excel in their roles. This includes funding for ongoing training sessions and workshops focused on effective online teaching methodologies and technology integration as well as partnerships with technical assistance providers with expertise in the field of online learning. Furthermore, the budget includes provisions for essential resources needed to support the implementation of the interactive online learning model(s). This encompasses investments in software platforms and instructional materials tailored to facilitate engaging and interactive learning experiences for students. Funding has been allocated for the procurement of digital learning tools, multimedia resources, and interactive content to enrich the online learning program.

Overall, the proposed budget reflects a strategic investment in staffing, professional development, and resources essential to support the successful implementation of the effective interactive online learning model(s). By allocating resources in a manner that aligns with the goals and objectives of the program, we ensure that students have access to high-quality education delivered through innovative and engaging online platforms.

5. Describe how the LEA will ensure successful cross-curricular implementation of the program in the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years.

Our district is steadfast in its commitment to ensuring the seamless and effective cross-curricular implementation of the program throughout the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years. This commitment is underpinned by a comprehensive approach to data collection, monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement.

Over the course of these two implementation years, our educators, alongside campus and district leaders, will engage in rigorous data collection and analysis. This process will encompass a diverse array of assessment methods, including formative and summative assessments, benchmarks, and STAAR/EOC tests. These assessments will serve as critical touchpoints for measuring student progress and proficiency in alignment with grade-level expectations outlined in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for U.S. history, Texas history, and English language arts. In addition to quantitative assessments, qualitative data will be gathered through the review of lesson plans and student work samples. This holistic approach enables educators to evaluate the extent of cross-curricular instruction and the coverage of TEKS standards on a bi-weekly basis. By correlating assessment and lesson plan data, district and campus leaders can ascertain the effectiveness of instructional practices and identify areas for improvement. Crucially, the data-driven insights gleaned from these assessments will inform the development of targeted action plans designed to address any areas of concern or opportunity for enhancement. These action plans will be thoughtfully crafted to leverage the strengths of our educators while addressing areas requiring additional support or refinement.

Through this systematic and iterative process of data collection, monitoring, evaluation, and revision, our district remains steadfast in its pursuit of excellence in cross-curricular implementation. By fostering a culture of continuous improvement, we ensure that our students receive the highest quality education, empowering them to thrive academically and beyond.

**TEA Program Requirements (Cont'd)**

6. How does the LEA plan to sustain the interactive online learning model(s) after the end of the grant period?

After the conclusion of the grant period, our district is poised to leverage a blend of funding streams to sustain and advance the interactive online learning program. This strategic investment aims not only to maintain the program's momentum but also to bolster the capacity of our campus teachers and instructional technology team. By equipping them with the requisite skills and resources, our district is primed to not only sustain but also expand the program across diverse grade levels and subject areas.

Central to this sustainability plan is the cultivation of expertise among our educators and technology specialists. Through targeted professional development initiatives and ongoing support, we aim to empower our instructional team with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the evolving landscape of online learning effectively. This investment in human capital ensures that our district remains at the forefront of educational innovation, equipped to meet the diverse needs of our student body. Moreover, our district recognizes the transformative potential of the interactive online learning program in enhancing instructional practices. By fostering a culture of innovation and adaptability, we ensure that our educators are equipped with versatile tools and strategies to engage students effectively across various learning modalities. This commitment to innovation not only aligns with our district's mission but also underscores our unwavering dedication to providing a high-quality education that meets the needs of every student.



**Appendix I: Amendment Description and Purpose** (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. The following are required to be submitted for an amendment: (1) Page 1 of the application with updated contact information and current authorized official's signature and date, (2) Appendix I with changes identified and described, (3) all updated sections of the application or budget affected by the changes identified below, and, if applicable, (4) Amended Budget Request. Amendment Instructions with more details can be found on the last tab of the budget template.

*You may duplicate this page*

**Amended Section**

**Reason for Amendment**