



# 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](mailto:competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov).

The application **MUST** bear the signature of a person authorized to bind the applicant to a contractual agreement

**Authorizing legislation:** PL 117-159 Bipartisan Safer Communities Act Title II School Improvement Programs, BSCA

**Grant period:** From 11/15/2023 to 09/30/2025

**Pre-award costs:** ARE NOT permitted for this grant

**Required attachments:** N/A

### 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 Nova Academy Southeast

Campus name Nova Academy Prichard

CDN 057827

Vendor ID

ESC 10

UEI

Address 2800 Prichard Ln

City Dallas

ZIP 75228

Phone 972-808-7470

Primary Contact Nichole Ward

Email nichole.ward@novaacademy.org

Phone 214-679-0491

Secondary Contact Daniel Johnson

Email daniel.johnson@novaacademy.org

Phone 972-808-7470

### 2. Certification and Incorporation

I understand that this application constitutes an offer and, if accepted by TEA or renegotiated to acceptance, will form a binding agreement. I hereby certify that the information contained in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, correct and that the organization named above has authorized me as its representative to obligate this organization in a legally binding contractual agreement. I certify that any ensuing program and activity will be conducted in accordance and compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

I further certify my acceptance of the requirements conveyed in the following portions of the grant application, as applicable, and that these documents are incorporated by reference as part of the grant application and Notice of Grant Award (NOGA):

Grant application, guidelines, and instructions

Debarment and Suspension Certification

General Provisions and Assurances

Lobbying Certification

Application-Specific Provisions and Assurances

ESSA Provisions and Assurances requirements

Authorized Official Name Nichole Ward

Title Executive Direc

Email nichole.ward@novaacademy

Phone 214-679-0491

Signature

Date 7.18.2023

Grant Writer Name Nichole Ward

Signature

Date 7.18.2023

Grant writer is an employee of the applicant organization.

Grant writer is not an employee of the applicant organization.

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**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
Enhance school based mental health program	Provide resources for students and families that are experiencing mental health crisis with a campus counselor. Increase parent involvement to build a healthier and more positive school climate.
Implement a school wide behavioral intervention and support program	Provide support and strategies to teachers, students and families to ensure student safety and loss of instructional time through trauma informed care, early intervention and mentoring.
Provides socio-emotional and trauma informed care training to staff	Create classroom management training for staff to address student mental and behavior needs thus reducing office referrals and out of school suspensions by creating safe and healthy classrooms and preventing challenges.

**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 the end of the 2023-2024 school year, Nova Academy will develop a successful behavior and mental health program that will assist students, teachers and families with meeting the needs of students behaviorially and academically through parent involvement, staff training and student mental health support. Nova Academy will reduce the number of discipline referrals and out of school suspensions by 20%.

**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**

Teachers will use counselor referral forms in lieu of discipline referrals for students experiencing emotional and behavioral crisis. The counselor will track number of referrals, sessions conducted and frequency of student visits. The number of counselor referrals will increase and discipline referrals will decrease.

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**6. Measurable Progress (Cont.)**

**Second-Quarter Benchmark**

Parent involvement will increase through parent conferences and Safe & Supportive committee attendance.

**Third-Quarter Benchmark**

Teachers will implement positive behavior strategies and incorporate parental involvement to prevent students from missing instruction during emotional or behavioral crisis. Discipline referrals will decrease. Teachers will score Proficient and above on the TTESS Classroom Environment, Routines and Procedures dimension evaluation.

**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.

Disciplinary practices will be examined frequently to identify trends across student groups. Discipline referral reports and out of school suspensions will be monitored and reviewed monthly. If no improvement is shown, effective strategies and procedures to change practices, improve campus culture, and help teachers support students will be discussed and developed during the monthly stakeholder Safe & Support Team meeting to foster a safe, healthy, supportive school climate. The program will be modified to address the needs of all students using the campus data recognizing and addressing mental health risk factors. Regular professional development will be provided for staff using whole child approach.

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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.

Nova Academy will conduct a campus needs assessments related to safety, school culture, number of discipline referrals, in school and out of school suspensions. A staff and parent survey will also be developed and distributed to all stakeholders to guage campus culture and climate. Campuses will be prioritized according to the greatest needs based on assessment results.

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

Nova Academy will provide oportuntties for campus leaders and staff to be involved in the development of the Student Support Program. Campus leaders and select staff will serve on the Safe & Supportive committee. These stakeholders will assist with the development and implementation of strategies to increase school safety through crisis prevention, mitigation and prepardness. Ongoing professional development focusing on building strong and trusting relationships with students will be provided.

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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.

Partnerships with families are established to meet the needs of all students. Nova Academy will host regular parent informational meetings and ensure there is parent representation on the Safe & Supportive Team. The Safe & Supportive Team will meet monthly to develop, discuss and review policies and strategies to improve school safety.

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

Nova Academy ensures adequate staff to support the establishment and implementation of the Student Support Program by identifying student needs and reviewing and analyzing discipline data.

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**9. Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)**

5. Describe how each of the campuses will be supported by the grant program, if awarded, currently conduct behavioral threat assessments and how the campus will incorporate current systems into the student support team structure.

The Stronger Connections grant will support the two campuses in the district. Nova Academy will invest in high quality teaching and learning practices, use school climate surveys to gain a deeper understanding of the culture and climate and provide professional development. A behavioral threat assessment is conducted frequently and will be incorporated to increase student connections and a sense of belonging for a safe, healthy, supportive environment that supports student well being and academic success.

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.

Nova Academy currently identifies student support needs by analyzing campus behavior data and staff, student engagement and parent surveys. LEA partners with Dallas MetroCare to provide school based mental health services and social, emotional, and behavior support to students experiencing crisis through trauma informed practices.

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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.

Nova Academy partners with Region 10 ESC in conducting training and providing resources for staff members. Job embedded and ongoing professional development and coaching opportunities are provided to support the relationship between students and teachers.

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.

Nova Academy will use the Stronger Connections grant to provide counseling support and resources for families' needs. We will include stakeholders in the development and revision of policies and procedures by actively seeking input for improvement in school safety, climate and discipline. Training will be provided to staff on creating safe, healthy and supportive learning environments. Through this grant, Nova Academy will be able to provide interventions that support positive relationships to support and respond to student behavior.

9. Enter the LEA Total Enrollment: 331

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

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**10. Equitable Access and Participation**

Check the appropriate box below to indicate whether any barriers exist to equitable access and participation for any groups that receive services funded by this grant.

- The applicant assures that no barriers exist to equitable access and participation for any groups receiving services funded by this grant.
- Barriers exist to equitable access and participation for the following groups receiving services funded by this grant, as described below.

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

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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.	Counselor	80,000
2.	Increase the presence of Law Enforcement	70,000
3.		
4.		
5.		

**Professional and Contracted Services**

6.	Required 6% of funds for technical assistance provided by the regional ESC	12,000
7.	Required 10% of funds to the Texas Center for Student Supports	20,000
8.		
9.		
10.		

**Supplies and Materials**

11.	Professional Development Resources	25,000
12.	Family and Community Engagement	25,000
13.		

**Other Operating Costs**

15.		
16.		
17.		

**Debt Services**

18.		
19.		

**Capital Outlay**

20.		
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Direct administrative costs:

Indirect administrative costs:

**TOTAL GRANT AWARD REQUESTED: 200,000**

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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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