Blended Learning Grant Program

Program Application for Approved Vendors

Table of Contents

Blended Learning Grant Program

Program Application for Approved Vendors

Overview Document

1. ## Purpose

    The purpose of this program application is to establish a list of approved vendors for use by school districts and open enrollment charter schools participating in the Blended Learning Grant Program (BLGP). The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has identified several barriers to a high-quality implementation of blended learning and seeks to provide districts and charters with a vetted list of vendors to support the removal of these identified barriers.

    Vendors who will be approved through this program application will provide evidence of experience, expertise, and results delivering products and/or services associated with one or more of the categories detailed within this application. Approved vendors will provide evidence of a positive impact on student achievement outcomes, cost savings, improved efficiencies, and other metrics, where applicable. Supporting evidence should be both quantitative and qualitative in nature.

    This application process does not represent a procurement action by TEA and approval does not guarantee vendors will be awarded contracts from districts. Eligible respondents are nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, private or public companies, and individuals.

2. ## Background

    Blended Learning: Students arrive in classrooms with varying levels of prior academic knowledge. For teachers, diagnosing what each student knows is tough. Once diagnosed, building differentiated academic plans for all students is time-intensive, especially given that most teachers teach multiple classes or subjects. Even if teachers can create differentiated academic plans, adjusting in real-time based on in-the-moment student needs is unsustainable. The result is often "teaching to the middle" where some students are limited, and others are left behind.

    Blended learning combines online learning with face-to-face teacher instruction to help teachers effectively differentiate instruction for all students. A strong blended learning model equips teachers with diagnostic information to help identify gaps in understanding. Based on these diagnostics, online programs can assist teachers in developing plans to differentiate instruction for all students while adjusting in real-time based on student understanding. When implemented with fidelity, blended learning helps teachers meet the needs of all students in a sustainable way.

    Blended learning is formally defined by the Clayton Christensen Institute as:

    A formal education program in which a student learns:

    > A.   at least in part through online learning, with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace;

    > B.   at least in part in a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home;

C. and the modalities along each student's learning path within a course or subject are connected to provide an integrated learning experience.

Blended Learning Grant Program: The BLGP is a four-year process to design, launch, and scale a high-quality blended learning program. Beginning with a planning year in year 0, districts and charters will grow the blended learning program from a subset of grades in year 1 to a full feeder pattern implementation in 4 years. BLGP is managed with a focus on fidelity of implementation (FOI) in both planning and execution, with the goal of designing and implementing a sustainable and high-quality program. The two current program options within the BLGP are MIZ and non-math blended learning pilots. Both program options engage in the same FOI process.

Fidelity of Implementation: The primary focus of the BLGP is to support districts and charters in a high-fidelity implementation of blended learning. TEA has built a framework called the BLGP FOI Framework which is divided into two sections: Fidelity of Planning (FOP) - a roadmap to design and implement the program - and Fidelity of Execution (FOE) - a performance management system focused on monitoring student data and making continuous improvement.

Fidelity of Planning: The BLGP FOP stage begins upon district acceptance into the cohort. Shortly after receiving BLGP Planning Grants, districts and charters will attend the BLGP Kickoff Summit and select a BLGP Design and Implementation vendor to engage with through the FOP process in the spring.

The core of the BLGP planning year is the development of the BLGP Strategic Plan. This in-depth planning process has been created so that all participating districts, and schools consider the many elements of designing and launching a new instructional model. Program participants begin by identifying a problem to be solved through blended learning, defining a program vision, setting SMART goals to guide implementation, and outlining other key academic and operational elements of their blended learning program.

The BLGP Strategic Plan Template can be [found at this link](#).

Upon submission of the plan, all participating districts, charters, and participating campuses are evaluated by a third party on planning detail and alignment with blended learning best practices and the district vision. TEA will approve all plans meeting quality expectations.

Fidelity of Execution: To manage program performance in the execution phase of implementation, TEA has designed five FOE indicators to inform school, district, and state-level decisions.

- **Weekly Student Software Progress**: Research-backed measures of weekly student progress on the chosen online curriculum program necessary to lead to significant academic gains; *Note: This metric will be proposed by online curriculum vendors with K-8 Math products that are approved through this program application*.

- **Weekly Teacher Software Usage**: Baseline formative metric on frequency of usage of the software program by each participating teacher

- **Weekly Data Driven Instruction (DDI) Time**: Weekly checkpoint on the extent to which teachers are engaging with and planning from student academic data as an individual or in teams

- **Monthly Meaningful Learning Experiences (MLE)**: Monthly (semi-monthly in first three months) evidence of the degree to which teachers are being developed within the blended learning instructional model

- **Three Times per Year Interim Assessment**: Approved interim assessment administered at beginning, middle, and end of year providing evidence of student growth in academic achievement

MIZ Designation: Official MIZ Designation is a status built into the statute establishing MIZ. After meeting FOP requirements, MIZ sites will become "Provisional MIZ" sites, indicating that the sites have achieved part of the MIZ FOI requirements. If FOE requirements are met, MIZ sites will recognized as "Designated MIZ" sites. MIZ designation earns districts additional benefits such as ongoing participation in the MIZ Collective Impact Network, access to the MIZ Resource Center, and a campus pause in Commissioner interventions.

Current Scale: In the spring of 2020, 48 districts and charter schools are implementing MIZ in over 190 schools. 35,000 students are currently participating in MIZ although the districts participating in MIZ represent over 750,000 students. An additional 9 districts are in the planning phase of a non-math blended learning pilot. TEA plans to increase the number of MIZ districts and schools by roughly 40% each academic year.

MIZ was authorized by Section 28.020 of the Texas Education Code as established by Senate Bill 1318 and funded by the General Appropriations Act, Article III, Rider 41, 85th Texas Legislature (2017). The BLGP is authorized by Section 29.924 of the Texas Education Code and was established by HB3 in the 85th Texas Legislature (2019).

Pay-for-Success Contracting: For MIZ, TEA is actively engaging with Social Finance to develop an outcomes-based contracting model in which school districts or charter school networks pay vendors based on student achievement outcomes resulting from a high-fidelity implementation of the product or services from the vendor. This "Pay for Success" funding model will allow school districts and charters to adopt promising products and services with reduced financial risk and ties vendor payments, either at a discount or a premium, to student outcomes. Two types of Pay-for-Success models are currently being explored by TEA:

- **Outcomes-based contracting:** A results-based contracting method that makes at least a portion of a service provider's contract contingent on achieving pre-defined outcomes. For this contract, outcomes are specified by TEA and agreed upon by all participating parties.

- **Outcomes-contingent payments:** A type of payment where the specifics of the payments to a vendor, such as the full payment amount, depend upon the achievement of pre-defined outputs.

Any MIZ districts adopting a pay for success funding model will be required to meet implementation targets agreed upon by TEA, the vendor and the district to ensure an effective implementation of the contracted product or service.

For the purposes of this solicitation, TEA will prioritize vendors providing evidence of a willingness to participate in a Pay-for-Success financing model.

3. Project Description

TEA is seeking to approve vendors showing experience, expertise and results in providing products and/or services that support a high-fidelity implementation of blended learning. Given the cross-functional complexities of an effective blended learning implementation for schools and districts, TEA has identified several categories of support. Through this program application, vendors will apply for TEA approval in one or more of the following categories:

1. Design & Implementation
2. Online Curriculum – *PK-8 Math only for 2020 Application*
3. Interim Assessments
4. Job-Embedded Professional Development
5. Technology Infrastructure Planning
6. Master Scheduling
7. Rostering & Single Sign On
8. Financial Sustainability

In response to this program application, applicants will provide evidence of experience, expertise, and results in delivering products and/or services aligned with each of these categories and will be evaluated accordingly. Each of the above categories have been further detailed into corresponding subcategories below.

All participants in the BLGP are required to contract with an approved BLGP Design and Implementation Vendor. All other supports are suggested but not required to be used by program participants. Additionally, Math Innovation Zones (MIZ) participants are required to select an approved K-8 math online curriculum program resulting from this program application. Non-math blended learning pilot participants are required to gain TEA approval of their online curriculum program but do not have an approved vendor list. TEA reserves the right to require the use of additional supports by program participants in the future.

3.1. Design and Implementation

Overview: A strategic design and implementation process ensures that districts and schools develop a blended learning model that meets the unique needs of students within the district. A high-quality design process focuses on the experience of an end user, develops a clear understanding of a problem to be solved through blended learning, and aligns the BLGP Strategic Plan with the needs of the end user in mind. TEA is seeking to approve a group of Design and Implementation vendors who will support districts and schools in a design-thinking approach to program planning. This vendor will serve as the primary resource for districts and schools as they complete the district-specific BLGP Strategic Plan and other planning requirements of the BLGP. *Note: The use of an approved Design and Implementation Vendor is required for all BLGP participants awarded a BLGP Planning Grant.*

Sub-Category Criteria: Successful respondents will provide evidence of experience, expertise, and impact in delivering the following sub-category criteria:

- **User Experience-focused Design Process**: A defined process to guide district and school-based personnel through a design-thinking approach. Process builds a deep understanding of the current student experience and engages stakeholders (i.e. teachers, school leaders, community members, etc…) to fully understand the problem to be solved through blended learning. Process may include assessing school and district needs through interviews, focus groups, surveys, and working sessions. Needs assessment and user experience should identify problems and root causes and should serve as the basis for the district BLGP Strategic Plan.

- **BLGP Strategic Planning Support**: Support for district and school leaders in the creation of a blended learning implementation plan. This plan must comprehensively account for all academic and operational elements included in a high-quality implementation of blended learning. Support should specifically offer guidance on blended learning model selection and online curriculum review, adoption, and alignment. Evidence of planning support must align with planning components defined in the [BLGP Strategic Plan Template](#).

- **District Capacity Building and Implementation Support**: Implementation support should build knowledge of blended learning models, socialize the district blended learning vision, and build skill in designing and implementing blended learning models within classrooms. Implementation support should include guidance in the review and adoption of approved online curriculum programs and the alignment of those programs with the core curriculum (if supplemental). Additionally, implementation support should be tailored to the specific online curriculum being used in classrooms. All workshops should minimize direct learning (i.e. "sit and get" training), maximize hands-on and job-embedded learning experiences, and include a plan for follow-up support.

- **Ongoing Support for District and School Leaders**: A defined service offering for district and school leaders during implementation including check-ins with implementation leaders to reflect on progress, challenges, and solutions, classroom walkthroughs with or without district and school leaders to understand quality of implementation, and continuous improvement protocols to ensure high quality implementation and continuous program improvements.

3.2. Online Curriculum – PK-8th GRADE MATH ONLY FOR 2020 APPLICATION

Overview: Students engaging with high-quality online curriculum in a cohesive learning environment is foundational to a successful blended learning model. Through this application process, TEA will select online curriculum vendors with the ability to create differentiated pathways for all students to master grade level content and adapt as needed to fill gaps in prior knowledge and skill. Additionally, selected vendors will provide evidence of a definition of high-fidelity implementation and tools for teachers and leaders to manage implementation throughout the school year.

Category-specific Notes:

- **Core and Supplemental Program Selection:** Proposed online curriculum may be either core or supplemental in nature and applicants will indicate if the product is core, supplemental or both in the category-specific application form. Through this application process, TEA will

establish a list of core and supplemental online curriculum vendors. Core curriculum is a full course design for a given content area that covers all of the grade level standards and skills and is the primary curriculum used for teaching and learning. A supplemental curriculum is designed to enhance and align with the core curriculum used for instruction by targeting a specific set of content, skills, and/or goals, but does not replace the core curriculum.

- **Reporting Requirements:** Approved software vendors (K-8 Math only for 2020 program application) must comply with the BLGP Reporting Standards ([Attachment A](#)) and Process in the format and cadence determined by TEA.
- **Product Demo:** As a requirement of this application process, TEA may solicit a demo from applying vendors of the proposed online curriculum program.

NOTE: Through this program application, TEA is approving PK-8th grade online math curriculum only.

Sub-Category Criteria: Successful respondents will provide evidence of experience, expertise, and impact in delivering the following sub-category criteria:

- **TEKS Alignment**: Alignment with TEKS in proposed subject area and grade levels and provides evidence of high percentage of time focusing on [TEKS Focal Areas](#).

- **Approach to Math Instruction:** A well-defined, research-backed, and results-supported approach to delivering math instruction for students. Approach may include the development of conceptual understanding, computational fluency, problem-solving skills, a combination of these approaches or an alternative, vendor-supplied approach supported by independent research.

- **Research-Supported Fidelity of Implementation Targets**: A clear, research-backed student usage target for the online curriculum program that, if met, will lead to significant gains in student achievement. This target must be supported by research confirming the impact on student achievement when the target is met. Examples of student usage metrics include:
  - 90 minutes per week
  - 2 lessons completed per week
  - 65 questions answered per week

  Additionally, the program includes one or more teacher usage targets including logins or a more rigorous measure of impact on teacher practice.

- **School-Level Dashboards and Reporting Tools**: A method by which students, teachers, school leaders, and other school-level stakeholders can access data and manage the fidelity of implementation of the online curriculum program. Program data, including student progress to the target metric, should be collected and presented in an organized and user-friendly way that allows necessary stakeholders to manage program implementation with ease.

- **District and School Board Dashboards and Reporting**: A method by which district administrators and school board members are provided district-level program implementation data and insights including identified areas of growth, comparative benchmarks of school or district success, and proposed next steps for program governance.

- **Product-Specific, Job-Embedded Professional Development:** A process for identifying teacher PD needs, proposing relevant teacher learning experiences, and delivering relevant PD to

teachers in a curriculum-aligned, job-embedded manner. Product-specific PD opportunities limit the amount of direct learning for teachers. Examples of quality professional development offerings include:

- o **Program-embedded learning experiences** for teachers available within the product at common trouble-spots.

- o **Self-guided learning experiences** with clear goals, timelines, and interactive and relevant activities for teachers. Self-guided courses include a way for school and district leaders to manage teacher participation, mastery, and follow up.

- o **Observation tools** to provide an organized and effective way for observers to evaluate and support teachers implementing the online curriculum program.

- o **Administrator or facilitator training** to effectively equip school and district-based personnel to deliver timely and relevant feedback and learning to teachers.

- **Online Curriculum Product Features**: A high quality product will provide evidence of the following features:

  - o **Developmental Appropriateness:** Product is developmentally appropriate for the end user including a pleasant interface and design with seamless functionality for target students. Teachers and students find the experience interacting with the product to be simple and enjoyable.

  - o **Drives and Manages Engagement for All Learners**: Product is designed to intentionally drive high student engagement and does not include features detracting from student learning. Additionally, the product automatically manages - or provides teachers a method to manage – on task student engagement and learning by preventing click-throughs and other solutions.

  - o **Adaptable Pathways**: Students progress on a unique, adaptable pathway based on ongoing student assessment. If a student answers a question incorrectly, the online curriculum program should assess student understanding, identify the root cause of the misunderstandings, build the necessary knowledge or skills, and reassess student understanding.

  - o **Personalized Pathway to Grade Level Mastery**: Product provides diagnostic of student subject knowledge which informs scaffolded student pathway to mastery of grade level TEKS, either through the creation of a prescriptive student pathway or by providing teachers with guidance and training to create or edit the pathway themselves.

  - o **Dual Language Model Support:** Product has embedded features, automated student pathways, and proven results to support schools and teachers implementing a dual language model.

  - o **Core Curriculum Alignment** (Supplemental Programs Only): Product includes alignment with multiple core math curricula either as a standalone crosswalk or as an embedded feature within the program.

3.3. Interim Assessments

Overview: The use of high-quality interim assessments provides students, teachers, school leaders, district leaders, and school board members with helpful information to inform district decisions, resource allocations, and school level support. Interim assessments are typically administered at the beginning, middle, and end of year and provide a holistic view of student growth, achievement, and predicted success on STAAR. TEA requires participants of the BLGP to administer approved interim assessments three times annually and to share score reports with TEA to inform program improvements. Interim assessment must be accessible to all students.

Category-Specific Notes:

- **Working Definition**: For the purposes of this application, the following definition will be used for interim assessments:

    o An interim assessment is a form of assessment that educators use to (1) evaluate where students are in their learning progress and (2) determine whether they are on track to performing well on future assessments, such as standardized tests or end-of-course exams. Interim assessments are usually administered periodically during a course or school year (for example, every six or eight weeks) and separately from the process of instructing students. (https://www.edglossary.org/interim-assessment/)

- **Pre-Approved Interim Assessments**: The following interim assessments are pre-qualified for use by BLGP participants:

    o **TEA STAAR Interim Assessments**

    o **Commissioner's List of Approved Assessment Instruments**

        ▪ Pre-Kindergarten: [Linked Here]

        ▪ Kindergarten: To be made available in March 2020

- **Reporting Requirements:** Approved interim assessment vendors will be required to submit beginning, middle and end of year reports to TEA on classroom and grade level progress. Score reports must be delivered to TEA as an Excel spreadsheet and in a FERPA-compliant manner. Reports must be delivered to TEA within two weeks of test administration. TEA will align with each vendor to determine the appropriate report and format to be shared with TEA.

- **Product Demo:** As a requirement of this application process, TEA may solicit a demo from vendors applying to this category

Sub-Category Criteria: Successful respondents will provide evidence of experience, expertise, and impact in delivering the following sub-category criteria:

- **TEKS Aligned**: Interim includes opportunity for TEKS alignment and predictability of student performance on STAAR. Interim is neutral from adopted curriculum and provides insight into TEKS mastery beyond the grade level of record. Interim reporting provides student-level predicted performance on STAAR testing and provides educators with useful information to fill gaps in student mastery of TEKS.

- **Norm-Referenced Scoring**: Interim is either nationally or regionally normed to allow for analysis and comparison of students, classrooms, schools, and districts to inform support. Interim may be linked to a third-party framework such as the [Lexile](#) or [Quantile](#) Framework.

- **Growth Measurement**: Interim meets students where they are by including a growth measurement to assess student progress beyond assigned grade level

- **Dashboards and Usability of Data:** Reports and dashboards must include sufficient depth and breadth to inform teacher, school, and district plans and actions to improve learning.

  - **Depth:** Reporting includes sufficient granularity of data and provides useful information about individual students, student groups, TEKS, Student expectations, etc…

  - **Breadth:** Reports and dashboards are customized by user including students, teachers, school leaders, district leaders, and school board members.

3.4. Job-Embedded Professional Development

Overview: Blended learning job-embedded professional development builds educator capacity to plan and execute a blended learning model. PD may include knowledge building of a blended learning model, managing a blended learning classroom, and planning, rehearsing, executing, and refining blended learning lessons. Blended learning PD should also build teacher capacity in using data to drive instruction including knowledge building in data driven planning and instruction, building skill in collecting, organizing, analyzing, and planning based on available classroom data, and the development or sharing of high-quality systems, templates, and structures for DDI. Blended learning-related PD should be tailored to the specific online curriculum program(s) used in the teacher's classroom to maximize relevance to teacher.

Sub-Category Criteria: Successful respondents will provide evidence of experience, expertise, and impact in delivering the following sub-category criteria:

- **Defined PD Offering**: Defined product offering including expected price, availability, target users, scope and sequence and timeline for participation (i.e. not "on-call" PD). PD will also define the intended outcomes (teacher or student) resulting from an effective implementation of the PD and may be either onsite, virtual, or both.

- **Incorporation of Adult-learning Theory**: PD provides modules, training materials, assessments, and other learning experiences that limit direct learning and maximizing collaborative, job-embedded development for educators. PD provides opportunity for follow up from an observer to ensure implementation of intended improvements and provide necessary support.

- **Integration with Curriculum**: PD offering is planned to be adapted to include the online curriculum program in use by PD participants. Integration with online curriculum ensures high relevance to PD participant.

Reimbursements for Blended Learning Professional Development: BLGP districts and charter schools engaging with PD vendors selected in this category will be eligible for reimbursements for participating educators.

Funded by Rider 53 of the General Appropriations Act of the 86th Texas Legislature, TEA will directly reimburse school districts and open enrollment charter schools for educators who complete qualifying programs.

3.5. Technology Infrastructure Planning and Support

Overview: Sufficient technology infrastructure is the foundation of a high-quality blended learning model. In advance of launching a blended learning model, districts and schools must identify and supply the necessary network, hardware, software, and IT support to ensure a seamless, high-quality program implementation.

Sub-Category Criteria: Successful respondents will provide evidence of experience, expertise, and impact in delivering the following sub-category criteria:

- **Technology Audit & Readiness Assessment**: Technology infrastructure readiness criteria for blended learning implementation and evidence of successfully leading districts through an audit of readiness standards.

- **Infrastructure Improvement Planning**: Defined process to understand district vision of technology implementation, define necessary infrastructure improvements to accomplish district vision, and establish plan and support to adopt technology infrastructure improvements for program.

- **Technical Support Capacity Building**: Defined process to build strategy for capacity development within district to ensure high quality ongoing technical support and information technology function across district and schools.

- **Information Security Planning**: Defined process to assess districts in strengthening information security systems. Process may include needs analysis, information security system planning, and ongoing support in strengthening information security systems.

- **Additional Supports as Identified**: Vendor may propose alternative, innovative solutions to support participating districts in infrastructure development.

3.6. Master Scheduling Support

Overview: A blended learning model provides an opportunity for a significant optimization of the master schedule of a school. With an intentional re-design of a master schedule, districts can reduce costs while simultaneously providing teachers with more opportunities for collaboration, planning, and breaks in leading direct instruction.

Sub-Category Criteria: Successful respondents will provide evidence of experience, expertise, and impact in delivering the following sub-category criteria:

- **Master Schedule Optimization Software Tool**: Software tool that can be used to assist districts and schools in optimizing master schedules. This tool provides opportunities for district and school leaders to view resources (people and places) available to the school and district, adjust class sizes, align teacher planning and collaboration time, and optimize the use of district resources.

- **Self-Guided Process for Schedule Optimization**: Defined process for districts to support master schedule development. Program pathway includes needs assessment, initial design consultations, master schedule design support, and ongoing implementation support (virtual or in person). Proposed processes may or may not include a software or online component.

- **Master Schedule Expertise**: Evidence of successful engagements with school districts including examples of master schedules before and after engaging with vendor and the resulting impact on the school district. Evidence is also provided to demonstrate cost savings and resulting academic impact resulting from engagement with vendor.

- **Additional Supports as Identified**: Vendor may propose alternative, innovative solutions to support participating districts in master schedule optimization.

3.7. Rostering & Single Sign On

Overview: The adoption of multiple online curriculum programs within a school creates a challenge in enabling students to sign up and sign on to a particular program. Rostering and single sign on tools allow schools to expedite the process of enabling students to engage with the online curriculum at the beginning of the school year and on an ongoing basis.

Sub-Category Criteria: Successful respondents will provide evidence of experience, expertise, and impact in delivering the following sub-category criteria:

- **Single Sign On**: Tool provides seamless pathway for students to engage on any device with multiple platforms in one place (i.e. Single Sign On) with one password without multiple log-ins.

- **Rostering Support**: Service provides evidence of timely mass-rostering of students participating in the blended learning program with minimal effort from district and school personnel. Vendor provides evidence of a timely resolution of customer services issues related to student rostering.

- **Integrated Applications**: Tool includes robust library of integrated and available applications and includes all current MIZ approved software vendors (Imagine Math, IXL Math, and ST Math).

- **Customer Support**: Vendor provides evidence of sufficient support to customers including time to resolved action, customer feedback, and responses to customer challenges.

- **Innovative Pricing**: Vendor provides innovative pricing options (i.e. charging integrated vendors rather than districts) to support district and school usage at low or no cost.

- **Additional Features**: Additional innovative features including analytics platform, application usage audit to determine ROI, student achievement impact analysis, parent engagement tools, etc…

3.8. Financial Sustainability

Overview: Sustaining blended learning implementation requires long term financial planning which accounts for the unique budgetary impact of the model. Additionally, a blended learning model provides opportunities for maximizing staffing patterns to better align expenses with student achievement.

Category-Specific Notes:

- **Financial Planning Requirements**: As an ongoing program requirement in both planning and execution phases, districts must engage in a series of financial sustainability workshops, one-on-one check-ins, and third-party feedback to support the development and ongoing refinement of a long-term blended learning budget. This BLGP financial plan must gain annual TEA approval for districts to fulfill program requirements.

Sub-Category Criteria: Successful respondents will provide evidence of experience, expertise, and impact in delivering the following criteria:

- **Blended Learning Budget Development Series**: Defined scope and sequence of engagements with school districts to build financial plan supporting blended learning beyond external funding. Vendor experience should include leading districts through a budget development process to develop knowledge in introductory financial sustainability concepts specific to blended learning including both sources and uses of funds. These uses of funds may include personnel, hardware and infrastructure costs and develop expertise in the use of state technology and instructional materials allotment funds. Development series should lead to the creation of a sustainable blended learning financial plan. All workshops or working sessions should minimize direct learning (i.e. "sit and get") with a focus on deliverables (i.e. draft budget, engagement plan, next steps, etc…) resulting from each engagement.

- **Academic and Finance Leadership Check-Ins**: Experience leading budget planning check-ins with academic and finance leadership to facilitate cross-functional approach. Check-ins focus on the development and refinement of the blended learning financial plan including sources and uses of funds at scale.

- **District-Facing Budgeting Resources and Tools**: Comprehensive set of materials and tools developed to support district leadership in an effective budgeting process specific to blended learning. Tools account for various sources and uses of funds and include multiple years of implementation.

- **Budget Planning Rubric and Evaluation**: Clear rubric defining budget components necessary to maintain, scale, and sustain new instructional models (i.e. blended learning). Rubric may be used to evaluate and approve participant budgets.

- **Budget Evaluation Process**: Defined process to review, evaluate, and deliver feedback on district-submitted financial plans to district leaders.

- **Additional Supports as Identified**: Vendor may propose alternative, innovative solutions to support participating districts in financial sustainability.

4. **Approved Vendor Requirements and Evaluation**

TEA will monitor the quality and effectiveness of the BLGP Approved Vendors List on an ongoing basis to maximize the impact on student achievement and district success.

As such, approved vendors must comply with all reporting and communication requirements as determined necessary by TEA. These requirements include:

- **All Categories: Monthly Check-ins with TEA**: Approved vendors may be requested to engage in monthly check-in meetings with TEA to understand district progress,

implementation barriers, and overall vendor impact on student achievement. Check-ins will serve as a problem-solving opportunity between vendors and TEA to improve support to districts and schools.

- **Online Curriculum Vendors Only: Reporting Requirements**: Approved software vendors (K-8 Math only for 2020 program application) must comply with the BLGP Reporting Standards (Attachment A) and Process in the format and cadence determined by TEA.

- **Interim Assessment Vendors Only: Reporting Requirements**: Approved interim assessment vendors will be required to submit beginning, middle and end of year reports to TEA on classroom and grade level progress. Score reports must be delivered to TEA as an Excel spreadsheet and in a FERPA-compliant manner. Reports must be delivered to TEA within two weeks of test administration. TEA will align with each vendor to determine the appropriate report and format to be shared with TEA.

As detailed above in the Background section, participating districts and schools must meet pre-determined quality requirements in both planning and execution stages. The purpose of the approved vendor list is to support participating districts and schools in successfully meeting these requirements. To evaluate vendor success, therefore, TEA will evaluate the extent to which districts and schools engaging with each vendor meet program planning and execution requirements. TEA reserves the right to remove a vendor from the BLGP Approved Vendors List at any time for an inability to meet vendor requirements or a lack of demonstrated results as determined by TEA.

5. General Instructions and Response Requirements

5.1. Response Submission Deadline and Timeline

The respondent should read the information contained in this document carefully and submit a complete application, including all required attachments, to be considered.

RESPONSES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE TIME AND DATE PUBLISHED IN THIS DOCUMENT.

Receipt of Responses: To be considered for award, responses must be sent to **MIZ@tea.texas.gov by 5:00PM CT on April 15, 2020**. The timeline for this program application is as follows:

Date	Event
3/16/2020	**Program Application Process Opens:** Application posted to MIZ webpage on tea.gov.
4/1/2020 at 11am CT	**Program Application Webinar:** https://zoom.us/j/395343065
4/2/2020	**Notice of Intent to Apply Due:** Applicants are requested, but not required, to submit a notice of intent to apply to MIZ@tea.texas.gov
4/2/2020	**Applicant Questions Due** to MIZ@tea.texas.gov
4/8/2020	**TEA Response to Questions Posted** on MIZ Webpage
4/15/2020 by 5pm CDT	**Program Application and Attachments Due** to MIZ@tea.texas.gov
4/20/2020-4/21/2020	**Phone Interviews:** TEA may request phone interview for clarification on application
4/30/2020	**Target Date to Announce BLGP Approved Vendor List**

5.2. Standard Response Requirements

Responses that address only part of the requirements of this document and the associated application document may be considered non-responsive. TEA reserves the right to reject any and all responses. The respondent shall furnish clarifying information to TEA if requested. Failure to provide requested material or information may disqualify the response.

5.3. Conflict of Interest

An entity will not be selected if it has a conflict of interest that will or may arise during the performance of its obligations under the document. The respondent must disclose any existing or potential conflicts of interest or possible issues that might create appearances of impropriety relative to the submission of a response by the entity and its proposed subcontractors. The respondent must complete the Disclosure of Interested Parties Form (Linked Here). TEA will not accept information provided in other areas of the response as satisfaction in lieu of full completion of the form with required attachments. TEA recommends the completed form and responsive attachments be incorporated into a separate and distinct file in the response. Failure to furnish this information will result in disqualification from further consideration.

As part of this disclosure requirement, each response must include all past and present contractual, business, financial, or personal relationships between the respondent or respondent's staff and TEA and between the Respondent's planned subcontractors or such subcontractor's staff, if any, and TEA.

For purposes of this disclosure requirement: (i) "past" is defined as within the two calendar years prior to the deadline for submission of responses in response to this document; (ii) TEA is defined as the statewide elected official who heads TEA, as well as TEA's employees or recent former employees; (iii) "recent former employees" is defined as those TEA employees who have terminated TEA employment within the two calendar years prior to the deadline for submission of responses in response to this document; (iv) "personal relationship" is defined as a current or past connection other than a clearly contractual, business, financial, or similar relationship and includes family relationships or other connections outside simply providing a response to this document; and (v) for this purpose, "family relationship" means a relationship within the third degree of consanguinity or second degree of affinity (see TGC Chapter 573) which defines these degrees of consanguinity and affinity.

Connections other than such family relationships fall within this definition and must be disclosed, if a reasonable person could expect the connection to diminish the respondent's independence of judgment or effectiveness in the performance of its responsibilities to TEA or the State under the contract; OR if a reasonable person could expect the connection, within the overall context of the respondent's submission of a response, possible selection for an award, or its performance of the contract, to create an issue for TEA's consideration relative to a potential appearance of impropriety or conflict of interest.

For each item, respondent must provide a detailed explanation as to why the entity does or does not believe such item poses a conflict of interest, potential conflict of interest, or appearance of impropriety relative to submission of a response, possible selection as contractor, or its performance of the contract.

5.4. DISCLOSURE OF APPLICATION CONTENT

After application is approved, applications are subject to release under the TGC, Chapter 552, Public Information Act. The applicant should indicate on the application if their submission contains proprietary information and identify the specific sections within the application that are proprietary.

Applicants are required to make any information created or exchanged with the State pursuant to this application, and not otherwise exempt from disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act, available to the public if requested under the Texas Public Information Act.

6. Response Format and Content

6.1. Response Format and Content

The required response should include all of the attachments listed below and must be submitted electronically to **MIZ@tea.texas.gov by 5:00PM CT on April 15, 2020**. Responses must be submitted in a manner which does not carry any benefit, keepsake, or value for members of the evaluation team.

Response Checklist: Responses should be organized and clearly labeled according to the contents in the table below. This checklist is provided to assist the respondent in ensuring that all required information is included in their response and to assist the evaluation team during their review of the response. The respondent should refer to the appropriate section of this document for detailed information on the items listed in the checklist. **Failure to provide the required information may result in disqualification of the response from consideration.**

All submissions must include the following completed attachments:

#	Title	How Many?	Naming Convention
1	Cover Page	1 per application	BLGP.CoverPage.(VendorName) *Example: BLGP.CoverPage.ACME*
2	Category-Specific Response Form(s)	1 per proposed category (i.e. 1 for Design & Implementation, 1 for Online Curriculum, if proposed)	BLGP.(CategoryName).(VendorName) *Example: BLGP.OnlineCurriculum.ACME*
3	Vendor-Supplied Attachments including: research studies, process documents, resumes, references, etc…	Dependent on Application; Attachments should be linked, if possible.	BLGP.Att.(VendorName).(AttachmentName) *Example: BLGP.Att.ACME.ResearchStudy*
4	Conflict of Interest Form	1 per application	BLGP.ConflictOfInterestForm.(VendorName) *Example: BLGP.ConlfictOfInterestForm.ACME*

6.2. Understanding of the Program and Methodology

The response must communicate a clear description of the organization and evidence of experience, expertise, and results in carrying out a specific category defined in this program application overview.

Description of Required Attachments:

6.2.1. Cover Page

TEA-provided form requesting information relevant to the overall expertise, experience, and impact of each applying organization along with contact information to be used in this application process. Each applicant for the BLGP Approved Vendor List must complete this cover page and will submit one category-specific response for each category for which the applicant is proposing.

- Cover Page Template ([Linked Here](#))

6.2.2. Category Specific Response Form

TEA-provided template requesting category-specific information about the ability of the vendor to successfully provide the product or services solicited through this program application. In addition to the cover page, each applicant for the BLGP Approved Vendor List must submit this category-specific response for each category for which the applicant is proposing. The category-specific response form template is unique to each category and can be found using the links below:

- Design & Implementation: ([Linked Here](#))
- Online Curriculum – PK-8 Math only for 2020 Application: ([Linked Here](#))
- Interim Assessments: ([Linked Here](#))
- Job-Embedded Professional Development: ([Linked Here](#))
- Technology Infrastructure Planning: ([Linked Here](#))
- Master Scheduling: ([Linked Here](#))
- Rostering & Single Sign On: ([Linked Here](#))
- Financial Sustainability: ([Linked Here](#))

6.2.3. Vendor-Supplied Additional Attachments

With submission of the cover page and associated category-specific response forms, vendors must attach additional materials providing evidence of experience, expertise, and impact in delivering the proposed product or service.

6.2.4. Conflict of Interest Form

A signed conflict of interest form is required by all applicants.

- Conflict of Interest Form: ([Linked Here](#))

6.3. What Should Vendors Submit as Evidence?

Within the Category-specific Response Form, applicants must submit evidence confirming experience, expertise, and results in providing the identified product or service. Applicants should submit any form of evidence that most clearly and succinctly confirms the vendor ability to carry out the listed category as defined in this overview. Although the type of evidence submitted is the choice of each applicant, TEA has identified several potential options for vendor submissions:

- **Independent research studies** affirming the quantitative or qualitative impact of the product or service

- **Overview materials or one-pagers** providing high level details of the process used to carry out requested product or services

- **Tools and other resources** used to support school systems through identified services

- **Rubrics or needs assessments** to diagnose current state and progress of school systems

- **Screenshots of relevant features** from online curriculum programs or other tech tools

- **Detailed scopes and sequences** and agendas of engagements with school systems and system to assess implementation of desired actions

- **Timelines** to identify scope of work, timing of milestones or deliverables, and responsibility of actions

- **Overview of previous customers** and surveys confirming customer satisfaction, increased customer effectiveness, and alignment with school system vision

- **Any other artifact** that includes evidence of expertise and impact in delivering the requested product or service

Failure to provide any of the required information may result in disqualification of the response from consideration.

7. Review of Responses and Scoring

7.1. Review of Responses

Review of responses will begin as soon as practical after the response deadline. Respondents may be asked to participate in oral interviews as a part of the review process. If oral interviews are required, responses will be scored again following oral interviews. The evaluation team will consist of TEA staff knowledgeable in the content area with subject matter expertise and will include the same individuals if oral interviews are required. The recommendations of the evaluation team will be presented to TEA senior executive staff that will approve (in whole or in part), disapprove, or defer action for further evaluation.

TEA reserves the right to request more information prior to deciding on any proposal. TEA reserves the right to contact past clients. TEA reserves the right to conduct independent research on the organization.

7.2. Evaluation Criteria

TEA will base its selection on the ability of the applicant to demonstrate experience, expertise and results. From the list of respondents, TEA will select programs who meet or exceed the minimum qualification requirements. After initial selection, TEA will review and update the BLGP Approved Vendors List on an as needed basis. TEA will collect information from BLGP Approved Vendors and school systems to determine the continued status of an approved vendor.

The following scoring rubric will be used to evaluate applicants for the BLGP Approved Vendors List:

Scoring Rubric	Possible Points
Overall - Experience of Organization and Alignment to TEA Vision • Overall evidence of organization delivering services to state systems, school districts, and/or other relevant stakeholders. • Evidence of interest in or willingness to engage in outcomes-based pricing or other pay for success funding models.	20
Category-Specific – Experience and Personnel Delivering Product or Service • Evidence of prior engagement with school systems to deliver identified product or service. • Vendor-personnel to lead work with districts and TEA initiative-leads who exhibits sufficient experience, expertise, and positioning within the organization to successfully support the initiative.	20
Category-Specific – Impact on School Systems • Evidence of school or district wide impact on student academic achievement as validated by rigorous assessment (i.e. year over year improvement in campus or district level student performance based on standardized, objective outcomes); *Evidence should be supported by independent, third-party review if possible.* • Evidence of cost savings or increased return on investment (applicable categories only); *Evidence should be supported by independent, third-party review if possible.*	30
Category-Specific - Alignment with Sub-category Criteria • Availability of evidence confirming successful delivery of specified sub-category criteria.	30
TOTAL	100 points

8. Appendix

    8.1. Overview of All BLGP Approved Vendor List Categories and Sub-categories:

        8.1.1. Design and Implementation
- i. User Experience-focused Design Process
- ii. BLGP Strategic Planning Support
- iii. District Capacity Building and Implementation Support
- iv. Ongoing Support for District and School Leaders

        8.1.2. Online Curriculum – PK-8th GRADE MATH ONLY FOR 2020 APPLICATION
- i. TEKS Alignment
- ii. Approach to Math Instruction
- iii. Research-Supported Fidelity of Implementation Targets
- iv. School-Level Dashboards and Reporting Tools
- v. District and School Board Dashboards and Reporting
- vi. Product-Specific, Job-Embedded Professional Development
  - Program-embedded learning experiences
  - Self-guided learning experiences
  - Observation tools
  - Administrator or facilitator training
- vii. Online Curriculum Product Features
  - Developmental Appropriateness
  - Drives and Manages Engagement for All Learners
  - Adaptable Pathways
  - Personalized Pathway to Grade Level Mastery
  - Dual Language Model Support
  - Core Curriculum Alignment

        8.1.3. Interim Assessments
- i. TEKS Alignment
- ii. Norm-Referenced Scoring
- iii. Growth Measurement
- iv. Dashboards and Usability of Data
  - Reporting Depth
  - Reporting Breadth

        8.1.4. Job-Embedded Professional Development
- i. Defined PD Offering
- ii. Incorporation of Adult-learning Theory
- iii. Integration with Curriculum
- iv. Proven Impact on Student Outcomes

        8.1.5. Technology Infrastructure Planning and Support
- i. Technology Audit & Readiness Assessment
- ii. Infrastructure Improvement Planning
- iii. Technical Support Capacity Building
- iv. Information Security Planning
- v. Additional Supports as Identified

8.1.6. Master Scheduling Support
   i. Master Schedule Optimization Software Tool
   ii. Self-Guided Process for Schedule Optimization
   iii. Master Schedule Expertise
   iv. Additional Supports as Identified

8.1.7. Rostering & Single Sign On
   i. Single Sign On
   ii. Rostering Support
   iii. Integrated Applications
   iv. Customer Support
   v. Innovative Pricing
   vi. Additional Features

8.1.8. Financial Sustainability
   i. Blended Learning Budget Development Series
   ii. Academic and Finance Leadership Check-Ins
   iii. District-Facing Budgeting Resources and Tools
   iv. Budget Planning Rubric and Evaluation
   v. Budget Evaluation Process
   vi. Additional Supports as Identified