

Math Innovation Zones
Request for Letters of Interest for 2019-2020 Planning and Execution Grants
Questions and Responses



1. Does TEA have a minimum percentage to consider for “a large percentage of students at Approaches Grade Level or Above?” TEA does not have a minimum percentage for the percent of students at Approaches Grade Level or Above.
2. Will a district be required to submit time and effort reports on the Math Innovation Zones (MIZ) Project Manager position? Time and effort reports will not be required for the MIZ Project Manager. The MIZ Project Manager will be responsible for all fidelity of implementation requirements.
3. Is the MIZ Project Manager required for all three or four years of implementation? The MIZ Project Manager is required for the life of the Math Innovation Zone. Districts should leverage the MIZ Technical Assistance Network to ensure sustainability of this position.
4. Can a district contract with an experienced educator (e.g., a retiree) as the MIZ Project Manager (or does it have to be an FTE)? The MIZ Project Manager must be a full-time district employee, an ESC employee, or an open position that will be posted and hired for in the spring of 2019.
5. Does every school in the feeder with 10% students matriculating to middle school have to participate in the feeder pattern? It is not required for all schools feeding into a middle school to participate in the selected feeder pattern for MIZ.
6. If a district is already using an approved math software program in some of the feeder pattern schools, do they only purchase the software for campuses and/or grade levels that do not have it? In year one, software usage (at the student and teacher level) is evaluated only within the grade levels proposed to be included in MIZ in year one. The requirements will include all participating in MIZ grade levels as the school scales the program to new grade levels. A state approved software program must be in implementation in these proposed grades in the proposed schools.
7. Are the TEA-approved software vendors required to provide professional development for their program as part of the cost? All contracted products and services between the districts and the software vendors are decided solely between the districts and the software vendors. The state approved software vendors are not required by TEA to provide professional development for their programs.
8. May funds be used for training, coaching, and any other professional development from the Planning award? Funds from the planning grant may be used for the following reasons:
 - a. Ensure sufficient personnel (including 50% time of the **MIZ PM**) are dedicated to the planning and execution of MIZ (*required*)
 - b. Attend the **MIZ Kickoff Summit** from December 10th and 11th in Dallas, TX (*required*); Attendees may include district personnel (MIZ Project Manager (PM), Assistant

Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, Chief Financial Officer, Head of Technology, etc...) and school personnel (School-based MIZ PM, Principal, etc...)

- c. Contract and begin work with a **MIZ Design and Implementation (D&I) Vendor** (and other MIZ TAN vendors) in the spring of 2019 (*Use of MIZ D&I vendor required*); *Funds may be used to continue services into the academic year.*
 - d. Other approved costs associated with fulfilling the **FOP** requirements of MIZ (*required*)
9. Is the Execution award an annual renewal or is it for the entire implementation period? The one-time execution grant will be determined in the late spring of 2019. Funds from both the planning and execution grants must be exhausted by May 31, 2021. In the event that future appropriations exist for MIZ, TEA may award additional outcomes-based funds to MIZ participants.
 10. Can hardware be purchased from both Planning and Execution awards? Hardware may be purchased from the execution grants. If a planning grant recipient provides evidence that hardware is necessary in order to fulfill the fidelity of planning requirements for MIZ, hardware may be purchased from the planning grant with TEA approval.
 11. Can a local university center (e.g., Texas Center for Educational Technology/TCET) be involved in this project? If so, what are the restrictions? In what roles or capacity can a university center be involved? A university center may be involved in MIZ as a provider of technical assistance (Professional Development, Budget & Financial Planning, Tech Infrastructure). In order for MIZ districts to fulfill the requirements related to technical assistance, the district must receive a waiver from TEA to work with a provider other than a member of the MIZ Technical Assistance Network for supports other than Design and Implementation. If a district receives this approval, they may work with a university center.
 12. Do you have to use a currently approved online vendor or can other programs be used that include blended learning? As a requirement of the fidelity of implementation of MIZ, all participating grade levels must use a state approved software vendor.
 13. Is there a list of state-approved software vendors available online? The MIZ State Approved Software Vendors are: Imagine Math (formerly Think Through Math), IXL Math, Reasoning Mind, and ST Math.
 14. Regarding D&I - do we have to partner in all of those areas, or if we have a strong technology infrastructure & SSO, can we just partner for PD, planning, and financial? All MIZ sites are encouraged to use MIZ TAN vendors for financial planning and budgeting, professional development, and technology infrastructure support but may submit a waiver for approval if a strong rationale for not using a vendor exists. A Design and Implementation Vendor is required for all districts.
 15. Is there anything special that needs to be written into our LOI if our district has a standalone Pre-K/K campus? MIZ seeks to improve academic outcomes in math for students in Pre-Kindergarten (PK) through 8th Grade, with a focus on 8th grade Algebra I preparedness for students and financial sustainability for school districts. If a district has a standalone pre-k/K campus, the LOI should provide sufficient evidence that an eventual PK/K-8 implementation is feasible.

16. What is meant by Teacher Usage? As a requirement of the MIZ FOI criteria, each teacher participating in MIZ will be required to use the selected software program. Currently, TEA requires each participating teacher to log-in to the selected software program on a weekly basis.
17. Do you anticipate that this grant will be available again next year if we decide not to apply this year? Pending appropriations from the Texas Legislature, MIZ will continue to award grants for the foreseeable future.
18. Who is the best person to submit the proposal - teacher, principal? Or can the person be from a higher education institution in collaboration with someone from the K12 school? Each district should determine the person best suited to submit this Letter of Interest. In the past, the most common writer of this submission has been the intended MIZ PM.
19. Is research allowed in this project? Interested parties should reach out to MIZ@tea.texas.gov for all research inquiries.
20. Does this involve sending teachers to PD sponsored by the vendors (specifically for PD) or will the PD be delivered in district? Each district will make the decision as to what types of meaningful learning experiences are most appropriate for their teams.
21. Can you clarify whether or not this includes Algebra 1? Can you clarify whether this means 8th grade Math or 8th grade period, as we have a good handful of 8th graders in Algebra 1. MIZ includes PK/K – 8th grade math, regardless of whether or not the 8th grade math class follows 8th grade math TEKS or Algebra I TEKS.
22. Is this funding geared towards the school district with students mostly from lower social economic families? Campuses with at least 50% of students eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Program are a strong fit for MIZ.
23. Who would be required to attend the MIZ Kickoff Summit? Based on an understanding of the FOI requirements, each school district should determine the most appropriate personnel to attend the MIZ Kickoff Summit. Attendees may include district personnel (MIZ Project Manager (PM), Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, Chief Financial Officer, Head of Technology, etc...) and school personnel (School-based MIZ PM, Principal, etc...)
24. Can I please receive a copy of the recorded webinar to share with my district math department? A copy of this webinar along with all questions and responses will be posted on the MIZ webpage.
25. For the project manager, could the school use a person from the planning and implementation vendor since using someone within the district may not be possible in a small district? Or can you share some possible ideas for finding a project manager? The MIZ PM should be a person that can be sustained by the district budget beyond the life of these funds. If it is not viable for the district to support the MIZ PM over time, the district should consider pairing with an Education Service Center for support as a MIZ PM.

26. Is this slide deck going to be emailed out? Also, will the Q and A be emailed out also? A copy of this webinar along with all questions and responses will be posted on the MIZ webpage.
27. We would need to add the PM position. Can the project manager's role include implementing blended for subject areas as well (as time progresses?) The MIZ PM is required to spend at least 50% of his or her time on the MIZ project. Each district should determine the most appropriate use of this person beyond this 50%.
28. If our district wants to submit a different feeder pattern, should we just include our justification with the LOI? TEA encourages respondents to propose an alternative feeder pattern approach to PK or K-8th grade implementation, if justifiable. If a school district or open enrollment charter school chooses a feeder pattern approach that is different than feeder patterns described in the Request for Letters of Interest, the district or charter school should justify the approach in the LOI where applicable.
29. Will successful applications be posted? Parties interested in reviewing successful applications should contact MIZ@tea.texas.gov. The MIZ team can work with previous successful applicants to share winning applications.
30. Are the page limit suggestions the space for responses only, or does that include the TEA questions? For example, should it only be 5 1/2 pages? The page limit suggestions are for responses only. A respondent should ignore all TEA provided text when estimating the total pages of text in the LOI.
31. Can we still offer the blended learning program to the students not included in the data collection (as part of the grant) if we want to use the program across all grades; This approach would enable us to do PD for our entire faculty and encourage the collaboration across all grade levels, even those not included in the original planning. Fidelity of execution will only be evaluated within the grade levels proposed to be included in MIZ. Beyond these grade levels, a district may decide whether or not to include other grade level personnel in any MIZ related activities.
32. Can you please delineate the duties of the Project Managers? We want to select the right people for the job. The duty of the district MIZ Project Manager is to ensure that all fidelity of implementation requirements are fulfilled by the district and participating schools. The school-level MIZ PM (usually an assistant principal or master teacher) will be the point person between the district MIZ PM and the teachers at the MIZ site.
33. While filling out the forms and reading through the documents I noticed that districts without blended learning success needs to submit current results attributable to blended learning of the proposing district or one of a nearby district or charter. Does this nearby district or charter have to be one that currently participates in as a MIZ Pilot Site or an Exploratory Site or can it be any district or charter school using a blended learning model? Also, is it applicable if blended learning is being implemented in the GT program only at our charter as an example of implementation if we are using examples from our own charter or would it be best to use the in lieu of option and seek support from a nearby district or charter? If a district partners with a nearby district or charter to leverage current successes in blended learning, the school chosen to partner with does not need to be a current MIZ site. If blended learning is currently being

implemented within a certain program within the school (such as GT), the school may use that experience as an example of implementation of blended learning.