TEA
Texas Education Agency®

2020-2021 Lone Star STEM Cycle 3 Year 1
Letter of Interest (LOI) Application Due 11:59 p.m. CT, September 7, 2020

NOGA ID

Authorizing legislation	US Department of Ed Federal Grant P.L. 114–95 IV ESSA EDUCATION INNOVATION AND RESEARCH 84.411B

This LOI application must be submitted via email to **loiapplications@tea.texas.gov.**

The LOI 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, September 7, 2020.**

Application stamp-in date and time

Grant period from	**October 1, 2020 - August 31, 2021**
Pre-award costs permitted from	**September 30, 2020**

Required Attachments

1. Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)
2. Applicants must submit the additional attachments as detailed in the Required Attachment section on p. 6 on the Program Guidelines found on TEA's Grant Opportunities page.

Amendment Number

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

Applicant Information

Organization	Lasara Independent School District	CDN	245-901	Campus	Lasara HS	ESC	01	DUNS	794756143

Address	6160 East 6th Street	City	Lasara	ZIP	78561	Vendor ID	74-6001591

Primary Contact	Alejos Salazar	Email	asalazar@lasaraisd.net	Phone	956-642-3598

Secondary Contact	William Bardwell	Email	wbardwell@lasaraisd.net	Phone	956-642-3271

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

- [x] LOI application, guidelines, and instructions
- [x] Debarment and Suspension Certification
- [x] General and application-specific Provisions and Assurances
- [x] Lobbying Certification

Authorized Official Name	Alejos Salazar	Title	Superintendent

Email	asalazar@lasaraisd.net	Phone	956-642-3598

Signature		Date	8/6/20

Shared Services Arrangements

☐ Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are permitted for this grant. **Check the box below if applying as fiscal agent.**

☐ The LEA or ESC submitting this application is the fiscal agent of a planned SSA. All participating agencies will enter into a written SSA agreement describing the fiscal agent and SSA member responsibilities. All participants understand that the "Shared Services Arrangement Attachment" must be completed and signed by all SSA members, and submitted to TEA before the NOGA is issued.

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 LOI 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 2020-2021 Lone Star STEM Cycle 3 Year 1 Program Guidelines.

☒ 4. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2020-2021 Lone Star STEM Cycle 3 Year 1 Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.

☒ 5. The applicant provides assurance that they accept and will comply with [Every Student Succeeds Act Provisions and Assurances](#) requirements.

☒ 6. The applicant assures they understand that 2020-2021 Lone Star STEM Cycle 3 Year 1 applicants cannot request to be placed in the treatment or control group and should apply with the intent to complete the treatment requirements outlined in the LOI.

☒ 7. The applicant assures that the district plans to develop or expand a computer science or cybersecurity Program of Study.

☒ 8. The applicant assures the T-STEM blueprint components and artifacts as described in the Program Guidelines will be followed.

Budget Narrative

Describe how the proposed budget will meet the needs and goals of the program, including for staffing, supplies and materials, contracts, travel, etc. If applicable, include a high-level snapshot of funds currently allocated to similar programs. Include a short narrative describing how adjustments will be made in the future to meet needs.

Lasara ISD developed a budget that WILL MEET THE NEEDS AND GOALS of the program. This was accomplished by first meeting to discuss the goals and milestones that would ensure the program progressed as intended. The district determined the number of students to participate in the program and then if funds would be needed for staffing, supplies, materials, contracts, travel, professional development training, and program management. This process provided the district with an accurate understanding of how best to utilize grant funds. Because the district is financially stable, as determined through fiscal review by the TEA's Division of Financial Audits, the district can ensure they have the knowledge and capabilities to organize a successful budget.

The district will have a focus on implementing a program of study that will help students gain the skills, post-secondary credentials, and experience necessary to embark on well-paying careers in STEM fields under the Cybersecurity program of study.

NEEDS OF THE PROGRAM: To meet the expected 20% increase of STEM jobs in Texas and increase the number of minorities (female, minority, etc.) earning computer qualifications.

SNAPSHOT OF FUNDS CURRENTLY ALLOCATED TO SIMILAR PROGRAMS: Currently, funds are allocated from local funds to purchase varied software programs, computer equipment, and professional development training.

HOW ADJUSTMENTS WILL BE MADE IN THE FUTURE: To make adjustments in the future, the district will utilize local funds, if needed, to continue staff development in the future, as well as, to pay for any material fees that are needed in Cybersecurity. The Leadership Team that was developed for this grant will also be tasked with working on sustainability and and the continuous monitoring and improvement of the Lone Star STEM Academy. Therefore, the team will be responsible for ensuring that the correct adjustments are made in the future. (1 Point)

Statutory/Program Requirements

1. What type of College Career Readiness School Model (CCRSM) is the campus currently? (T-STEM, P-TECH, ICIA, or ECHS) If not a CCRSM, what model do you plan to operate during the Implementation Year?

Lasara High School is currently classified as a T-STEM campus (1 Point). During the grant program, the district plans to follow the T-STEM blueprint artifacts. By doing so, the district would be able to align with the grant goals and objectives, as well as follow all T-STEM Benchmarks 1 through 6 (School Design, Target Population, Strategic Alliances, etc.).

Because the district serves a student population that has a three-year average economically disadvantaged rate greater than 40% (1 Point), being able to offer students the opportunity to obtain college credits and industry-based certifications at no cost to them is a great benefit.
Lasara High School is classified as a rural school. (1 Point). This classification limits the students' ability to obtain postsecondary experience. However, by being designated as a Lone Star Academy, the district will be able to develop partnerships with local businesses and IHE's to create a crosswalk that includes college credit, industry certifications, and real-world job experiences.

Statutory/Program Requirements, (cont.)

2. What CCRSM designation does your district plan to pursue through the Lone Star STEM grant?

During the grant program, the Lasara ISD plans to continue to operate its T-STEM College Career Readiness School Model (1 Point). As a T-STEM campus, the district is already familiar with and has prepared all documentation required to be available for students, parents, and other stakeholders to access.

This documentation will include:
• Annual Training Calendar;
• Mentor/Induction Program Plan;
• Written Admission Policy;
• Enrollment Application;
• Recruitment Plan;
• Marketing Brochures (English and Spanish);
• Marketing Material;
• Written Communication Plan;
• MOU's;
• Master Schedules; and
• Testing Calendar.

This knowledge and experience will help to ensure the district will be aligned with the grant goals and objectives.

3. What process and information was used to determine which pathway was selected for the 2020-2021 Lone Star STEM Cycle 3 Year 1 grant? Please include any relevant labor market data or documentation.

Lasara ISD selected Cybersecurity (1 Point) as the STEM pathway to develop during the 2020-2021 Lone Star STEM Cycle 3, Year 1 grant.

The following process and information were utilized to determine which pathways to select (1 Point):
• Local businesses and organizations were evaluated in order to determine if they could serve as a partner and provide real-world experience through Project or Problem Based Learning (PBL) challenges in any of the eligible STEM pathways.
• Conversations were held with the partnering IHE to determine which POS could be supported.
• Discussions were held with campus and administrators (Counselor, Principal, teachers, etc.) to determine which courses would have a high student demand based on students' interest.
• Local and State workforce needs were researched in order to identify which POS had the highest demand, growth rate, salaries, and potential for advancement.

In fact, the district reviewed Texas Career Check, 2019, and noted Computer System Analysts ($61,705) and Network Computer Systems Administrator ($64,883) are high-demand, high-wage occupations. Computer System Analysts is expected to grow by 14.59% and Network Computer Systems Administrator is expected to grow by 13.25%. This data helped the district staff determine the correct STEM pathway to select.

Once the grant is awarded, the district will begin the process required to implement the selected STEM pathway. This includes ensuring TEA-required documents are created and, once approved, are posted on the campus website. Information that will be posted on the district website include: Leadership Committee Roster; Meeting Agendas and Minutes; Student Application; Marketing Information; and more.

Statutory/Program Requirements, (cont.)

4. Describe plans for creating strategic alliances with industry partners and IHEs. What is the anticipated role for each IHE, business, and/or community partnership?

The district plans to expand STRATEGIC ALLIANCES with an industry partner, an IHE, an Informal STEM provider, and its local workforce board. The district will be partnering with a total of four (4) organizations. The four organizations would include Workforce Solutions of the Rio Grande Valley, Texas State Technical College, VTX1, and STEM experience provider. The required partners have signed and submitted a letter of commitment and are open to signing a Memorandum of Understand (MOU) that will be reviewed annually and clearly articulate the requirements outlined in this LOI.

Below is a list of the partnering organizations and their ANTICIPATED ROLES for the grant program (1 Point):
• Workforce Solutions of the Rio Grande Valley - Will identify, create, and maintain a list of in-demand STEM occupations and programs of study that lead to these occupations to be used as a resource in creating structured pathways for students and updated as local needs change;
• Texas State Technical College – Will allow a student to combine high school courses and college-level courses towards credentials and certifications, including an associate degree in Cybersecurity. Texas State Technical College will work with the district to develop a four-year crosswalk detailing how students will progress towards this goal including alignment of high school and college-level courses;
• VTX1 – Will provide real-world experiences to students through Project or Problem Based Learning (PBL) challenges. Teachers will also visit with employers to gain insight on teaching strategies to be implemented in the classroom. Additionally, VTX1 will provide documentation of entry-level knowledge, skills, and abilities of a student, as well as capture and monitor student growth throughout the grant program; and
• International Museum of Art and Science (IMAS) – Will provide support and guidance to the district by promoting a deeper appreciation of science through its exhibitions, cultural events, and educational programs.
Moreover, the district will work with each organization above and include a list of each member's title and role on the district's website.

5. Identify the type of advanced courses (dual credit/AP/IB) currently implemented on the campus. Has the district identified what postsecondary credit will be available to students through the computer science, cybersecurity, and engineering programs?

Lasara ISD currently has a partnership with Coastal Bend College (CBC). This partnership has been established for numerous years and assisted the district in providing students dual credit core courses. (1 point)

The following dual credit and AP courses are currently available at Lasara High School (1 Point) through CBC:
• Math – Dual Credit – Community College Professor;
• English – Dual Credit – Community College Professor;
• Psychology – Dual Credit – Community College Professor;
• Sociology – Dual Credit – Community College Professor;
• US History – AP – High School (H.S.) Teacher;
• World History – AP – High School (H.S.) Teacher; and
• Literature English Language– AP – (H.S.) Teacher.

However, for this grant, Lasara ISD plans to partner with Texas State Technical College to serve as its dual credit provider to students in the Cybersecurity program at Lasara High School. TSTC presently offers an associate of applied science in Cybersecurity.

Statutory/Program Requirements, (cont.)

6. Describe any planned STEM-focused informal activities (field experiences, clubs, competitions, summer STEM camp, etc.) that will be offered to students, whether they are offered by the school or by a community partner.

The school will provide the following STEM-focused informal activities:
• Visits to Science Museums to allow participants to gain an understanding of how technology has changed throughout history and how it may still progress;
• Guest speakers that will provide students with information pertaining to Cybersecurity to include pay, job growth, the potential for advancement, benefits, etc.;
• Career fairs which will allow students to meet with an array of employers in the targeted POS;
• Job shadowing which will allow students to follow employees and observe them completing duties that will be aligned to their POS; and
• Internships will provide students the opportunity to practice processes learning in the classroom and address real-world problems. (1 Point)

These planned STEM-focused informal activities will ensure students understand the connection with their work-based learning and academics.

Furthermore, to ensure students have a personalized learning environment, the district will provide layered academic support, as well as layered social and emotional support. To provide layered academic support, the district will provide tutoring and/or Saturday school, college readiness and support time built into the program of study for all students, and dedicated student college application assistance. To provide social and emotional support, the district will provide parent outreach and involvement opportunities, a program of community service to promote community involvement, and skill-building instruction for students (i.e., time management, study skills, etc.).

Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

7. Describe the Academy's plans for implementing an interdisciplinary approach to learning where academic concepts are coupled with real-world experiences through Project or Problem Based Learning (PBL) and/or Engineering Design Challenges that are offered regularly throughout the school year. Please include how the Academy will support and develop teachers in offering this, including considerations for scheduling, professional development, and structures for cross-disciplinary collaboration.

Lasara ISD will implement an interdisciplinary approach to learning by utilizing VTX1 to provide real-world experiences to students through Project or Problem Based Learning (PBL) challenges. (1 Point) This is a student-centered approach in which students learn about a subject by working in groups to solve an open-ended problem. This problem is what drives student motivation and learning. Some examples of PBL may include: Working in teams; Managing projects and holding leadership roles; Oral and written communication; Self-awareness and evaluation of group processes; Working independently; Critical thinking and analysis; Applying course content to real-world examples; Researching and information literacy; and Problem-solving across disciplines.

Furthermore, to ensure each student is ready to take on more rigorous classes, the district will biannually implement a structured data review process designed to identify student strengths and weaknesses and develop instructional support plans. By strengthening each student's academics weaknesses, this would ensure that the students are ready to succeed in tests such as TSI, TSIA, SAT, and ACT. These tests would be included on a calendar posted on the district's website, and the students will be notified of when the test is scheduled.

The district will also implement an annual professional development plan for teachers and staff that focuses on research-based instructional strategies that teach about rigor, building college and career readiness, and STEM skills that are based on a needs assessment of student data. These strategies can come up in some of the following activities: an externship program, summer research experiences, regularly scheduled peer observations/collaborations with focus groups, industry partners, and IHE partners, etc. Teachers will also visit with employers to gain insight on teaching strategies to be implemented in the classroom.

8. Describe how the district plans to recruit, retain, and support historically underrepresented populations in STEM (e.g, females, economically disadvantaged, at-risk, etc…).

Marketing materials will be distributed to students, parents, & other stakeholders. Since 6-12 grade will be targeted, the Counselor will discuss the program with the incoming 6th grade students. Campus administration will meet with the guardians of the students, so they are aware of the commitment being made. If there are more applicants than available space, a lottery will be held that favors students who are part of the historically underrepresented populations in efforts to recruit more to the program. (1 Point) Students and guardians will be notified of their selection and asked to sign a contract.

9. Does the applicant plan to develop or extend an engineering program as well as a computer science or cybersecurity program?

Lasara ISD plans to develop its Cybersecurity program.

10. Does the applicant have at least one teacher certified to teach computer science?

Lasara ISD does not have a teacher certified to teach computer science.

11. Does the applicant have at least one teacher certified to teach cybersecurity?

Lasara ISD currently does not have a teacher certified to teach Cybersecurity.

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 program.

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

Group		Barrier	
Group		Barrier	
Group		Barrier	
Group		Barrier	

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.

○ Yes   ○ No

If you answered "No" to the preceding question, stop here. You have completed the section. Proceed to the next page.

5A: 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.

5B: Equitable Services Calculation

1. LEA's student enrollment

2. Enrollment of all participating private schools

3. Total enrollment of LEA and all participating PNPs (line 1 plus line 2)

4. Total current-year program allocation

5. LEA reservation for direct administrative costs, not to exceed the program's defined limit

6. Total LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 4 minus line 5)

7. Per-pupil LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 6 divided by line 3)

LEA's total required ESSA PNP equitable services reservation (line 7 times line 2)

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**