



**2020–2021 School Action Fund- Planning**  
**COMPETITIVE GRANT Application Due 11:59 p.m. CT, July 14, 2020**

NOGAID

Authorizing Legislation **P.L. 107-110, ESEA of 1965 as amended by NCLB of 2001, Section 1003(g); CARES Act, Section 18003, ESSER**

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)

Application stamp-in date and time

Grant period from **September 9, 2020 – July 31, 2022**

Pre-award costs are not permitted.

**Required Attachments**

Applicants must submit the TEA-supplied attachment that corresponds to their selected school action. See pg. 29 of the Program Guidelines.

**Amendment Number**

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

**Applicant Information**

Organization  CDN  Vendor ID  ESC  DUNS   
 Address  City  ZIP  Phone   
 Primary Contact  Email  Phone   
 Secondary Contact  Email  Phone

**Certification and Incorporation**

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

I further certify my acceptance of the requirements conveyed in the following portions of the 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
- General Provisions and Assurances
- Application-specific Provisions and Assurances
- Debarment and Suspension Certification
- Lobbying Certification
- NCLB Provisions and Assurances requirements

Authorized Official Name  Title

Email  Phone

Signature  Digitally signed by Dr. Mary L Thomas Date: 2020.07.13 17:33:00 -05'00' Date

Grant Writer Name  Signature  Digitally signed by Lindsey Stuart Date: 2020.07.02 13:32:44 -05'00' Date

Grant writer is an employee of the applicant organization.  Grant writer is not an employee of the applicant organization.

**Shared Services Arrangements**

SSAs are **not permitted** for this grant.

**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
Sadler Means has struggled the last two years to move students above 65% in all subject areas. Campus is currently in its second year as IR. On 19-20 MOY, 12% of all students met standards in math and reading.	Implement data-driven culture and instructional methods. Develop school-wide data system that articulates goals, high expectations, and benchmarks to determine student progress. Plan for BL redesign to remediate and accelerate mastery of standards. Instructional team to develop scope and sequence, inc. campus-wide rubrics, assessments, and pacing guides. (ESF 4.1, 5.3, 1.2)
Low student engagement + lack of relevance: 38% report enjoying doing schoolwork; 32% of students like coming to school; 45% report teachers connect learning to 'real world;' 41% report having fun learning	Plan to launch redesigned school model with standard-based blended lessons and SEL practices that promote student choice, project-based learning, and real-world applications. AVID and community partners provide experiences directly tied to work and college. Master schedule built based on student interest.
Build greater staff capacity: 54% of teachers report differentiated PD; 52% report effective process for group problem-solving; 60% report shared vision, and 46% say school leadership consistently supports them.	Redesign PLC structure to support review of individual student data, work with department on regrouping; provide opportunity to reflect and integrate PD; develop curriculum plans aligned to new instructional model. Shared vision developed with all stakeholders. (ESF 2.2, 3.1)

**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.

The goal is to plan for the implementation of a district-designed, ESF-aligned blended learning model across a group of four high-need middle schools in AISD, including Sadler Means MS, that will at its heart, accelerate personalization and elevate student identity and agency through the implementation of high-leverage strategies that tailor learning for each student's strengths, needs, and interests—inc. enabling student voice and choice in what, how, when and where they learn—to provide flexibility and supports to ensure mastery of standards. Teachers will engage in ongoing professional learning aligned to the model. Means MS's entrepreneurial school leader will engage stakeholders to inform the best-fit BL model for their campus that inc. high-dosage tutoring, wraparound SEL and mental health supports, and an extended school day/year.

**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. See pg. 18 of the Program Guidelines for detailed instructions for identifying benchmarks.

First-Quarter Benchmark

-Hire Project Manager to facilitate cross-campus collaboration and manage grant across four middle school campuses. - Formalize process for approving school design plan and parameters for granting school operating autonomies. -Develop communication plan. - Hold stakeholder meetings with faculty, students, parents, community partners, and campus and district administration to solicit feedback on model. - Collect data and feedback from faculty and administration re: BLEND (AISD's learning management system for middle schools) usage, instructional practices and gaps in services. - Begin providing professional development to faculty on high-leverage, personalized learning strategies (and any other gaps identified) via district-wide and campus-specific opportunities, including using PLC time to prepare for a blended learning model. -Conduct analysis of progress and next steps indicated by 19-20 Targeted Improvement Plan

**Measurable Progress (Cont.)**

**Second-Quarter Benchmark**

-TEA reviews and provides feedback on draft school design plan. -School leader finalizes school design plan that meets TEA requirements. -TEA reviews and approves school design plan. -Superintendent and board approves school design plan and finalizes campus performance agreement and operating autonomies. -Create and finalize student recruitment and retention plan and timeline. -Procure curricular materials aligned to new educational model. - Collect and analyze mid-year student academic indicators and feedback from faculty. -Complete CIP in alignment with local and state policy, taking into consideration progress toward this grant’s goals.- Provide professional development to faculty on high-leverage, personalized learning strategies (and any other gaps identified)

**Third-Quarter Benchmark**

-Finalize campus budget for the 2021-22 school year  
 -Meet eligibility requirements for continuation grant funding and submit continuation grant application  
 -Complete staff recruitment and selection, if applicable  
 -Plan and conduct summer professional development for campus staff in advance of Fall 2021 opening

**Project Evaluation and Modification**

Describe how you will use project evaluation data to determine when and how to modify your program. If your benchmarks do not show progress towards meeting your summative SMART goal, describe how you will use evaluation data to modify your program for sustainability.

AISD will utilize an evaluation process that evaluates the efficacy of this planning period using appropriate indicators of accomplishment while continuing to implement the actions indicated in the Targeted Improvement Plan. With each iteration of the developing school action plan, stakeholder input will be solicited from faculty, students, parents, community partners, and campus and district administration. Understanding the needs of the student population and the campus culture at Means MS will be critical as we develop the lens through which we assess the models of personalization via blended learning. The iterative, data-driven, and feedback-driven process taking place during the Planning Grant phase will be a tremendous asset moving forward toward choosing a School Action Model and embarking on implementation.

Data will be collected in four focus areas:  
 Administration and management of this planning process;  
 Student academic outcomes at Means MS;  
 Academic and non-academic indicators related to campus climate and identification of student needs, and  
 Teacher instructional practices

The Principal of Means MS and the District Coordinator of School Improvement will be responsible for creating, collecting and sharing, as applicable, all documentation, including aggregate student data, meeting agendas and minutes and stakeholder feedback.

**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 2020–2021 School Action Fund- Planning 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 work in good faith with the TEA vetted and matched school action technical assistance provider and agency-provided technical assistance.
- 5. For all actions, the applicant will budget at least the amount indicated in budget guidance as "Matched School Action Technical Assistance Provider" on schedule 6200 (part 2 of the application). For Create a New School as a District Managed Campus, the applicant will also budget the amount for technical assistance for the District Administrator/Chief Innovation Officer on Schedule 6200. Both amounts will be subtracted from the total grant award and used by TEA and ESC 13 to establish a contract with the matched provider.
- 6. The applicant will identify a project manager for this grant. The applicant may use other funds for this position.
- 7. Applicants pursuing a partnership-managed model must perform a financial spending analysis in accordance with TEA requirements.
- 8. The applicant assures all fidelity of implementation revisions with the matched school action technical assistance provider will be completed on or before October 15, 2020.
- 9. The applicant will provide access to TEA and contractors for on-site visits to the district and campus.
- 10. The applicant will attend and participate in grant orientation meetings, technical assistance meetings, other periodic meetings of grantees, and sharing of best practices through the TEA program office.
- 11. The applicant's board must commit to Lone Star Governance (LSG) training and coaching.
- 12. The applicant assures partners operating campuses under the partner-managed option will commit to TEA-identified board training.
- 13. The applicant assures Pre-K "New Schools" will designate a feeder Comprehensive or Targeted campus by April 1, 2021.
- 14. The applicant assures enrollment at a new school will prioritize students attending or zoned to a 2018-2019 Comprehensive and/or Targeted School (2019 rating).
- 15. For applicants selecting the partner-managed model, the ISD must commit to the adoption of TEA's model authorizing policy and participate in the Texas Authorizer Leadership Academy.

**Statutory Requirements**

1. Describe how the ISD will carry out its school support and improvement activities, including how the ISD will develop a school improvement plan for the eligible campuses selected for this grant.

Austin ISD will carry out its school support and improvement activities at four high-need middle school campuses, including Burnet, Webb, Martin and Sadler Means Middle Schools, in accordance with all requirements for Comprehensive Support campuses. The District Coordinator of School Improvement and Professional Service Provider have been working with district and campus staff to develop school improvement plans. The DCSI, Principal, and Executive Director of Middle Schools have attended Continuous Improvement Training and participated in developing a vision statement, data analysis, root cause analysis, aligned strategy identification, and implementation planning and fidelity. The resulting Targeted Improvement Plan and Campus Improvement Plan have been instructive as action plans to follow and monitor.

2. Describe how the ISD will monitor schools receiving the School Action Fund-Planning Grant, including how the ISD will: (a) Monitor school improvement plans upon submission and implementation, and (b) Implement additional action following unsuccessful implementation of such plan after a number of years determined by the district.

Each campus receiving Title I funds is assigned a professional staff member in the Department of State and Federal Accountability who assists the campus and oversees use of Title funds. This includes monthly monitoring visits and budget reviews to ensure funding is being spent and spent correctly. Oversight of allowable expenditures and staffing is completed through review of supplemental pay, requisitions, and other instruments for requesting funds. Expenditures are monitored for alignment with strategies outlined in each campus's Campus Improvement Plan.

District and campus improvement plans must address all elements required by federal law for receipt of Title I, Part A funds, including elements pertaining to parent and family engagement. The district-level and campus-level committees involve parents and family members of district students in the development of these plans and in the process for campus review and improvement of student academic achievement and campus performance. Plans are continuously monitored by district-level staff and campus leadership as indicated by the guidelines for each type of plan (targeted improvement, campus improvement, orturnaround).

3. Describe how the ISD will use a rigorous review process to recruit, screen, select, and evaluate any external organizations with whom the ISD will work with to support the campus(es) selected for this grant.

The AISD Contract and Procurement Services Office will oversee the process for recruiting, screening, selecting, and evaluating any external partners for this project. This office may begin the process by publicly posting a Request for Proposals (RFP). Competitive solicitations such as Invitation for Bids (IFB) and RFPs are advertised under Texas Education Code 44.031. The RFP will contain Background Information and a detailed Scope of Service and Performance Requirements. The RFP requests the following be included in a response to the RFP: (1) Summary of Experience; (2) Scope of Service; (3) Financial Proposal; and (4) References. Austin ISD will evaluate each Contractor's proposal in the areas of the proposed plan, experience/service capabilities, and best value on the following pre-determined criteria: (1) Proposed Plan; (2) Contractor's Capabilities; (3) Proposed Products; and (4) Financial Proposal. The Evaluation Team generally includes three to five members. A representative from Contract and Procurement Services will be available as a non-voting member to facilitate communications with the vendors who submitted proposals, advise on procedural matters, and ensure the process complies with statutory and policy requirements.



**Statutory Requirements (Cont'd)**

4. Describe how the ISD will align other Federal, State, and local resources to carry out the activities supported with funds received under this subsection.

AISD will align other federal, state and local resources to carry out the activities supported with funds received under this grant to support the needs assessment, provide professional learning and instructional coaching, and continue district initiatives with Means MS students. For example, the four middle school campuses will have access to the district’s team of technology design coaches. These coaches partner with teachers and principals to “design blended learning that elevates individual breakthroughs, collaborative experiences, and positive classroom culture.” They empower teachers to be designers of learning experiences and help them set goals and work with them in their classrooms. Through collaboration and peer support, teachers are encouraged to try new strategies and build on existing innovation successes. This method connects teachers at Means MS with teachers on campuses and throughout the district. This district level technology team has been working diligently to support the needs of remote learning throughout the COVID-19 health crisis. They are and will continue to coach campus teachers and staff on how to personalize learning for students and how to ensure all students are able to access learning in which there are positive and purposeful interactions, authentic student choice, meaningful feedback, the use of data to inform a student’s learning progression, choice, and experience, student goal-setting and metacognitive routines is essential regardless of where or how that learning takes place.

5. Describe how the ISD will modify, as appropriate, practices and policies to provide operational flexibility that enables full and effective implementation of the school action.

The Planning Grant period will be utilized for determining the extent and ways in which operations at Means MS should be modified in order to best serve our students under an ESF-aligned blended learning model that includes high-dosage tutoring, extended day and/or year, and social and emotional supports. As part of the Planning Grant, AISD and the matched TA Provider will take part in stakeholder meetings and be receptive to the recommendations developed through focus groups, surveys, and other forms of feedback that may suggest modifications to instructional practices, assessments, and ongoing academic and non-academic data collection and analysis among other operational areas. Depending on stakeholder feedback and recommendations, the district will support additional initiatives and changes that will increase the likelihood of effective implementation of the new school model, such as a robust family and community engagement initiative, which will be critical to engaging parents, students, and staff in the future plans for Means MS.

6. Describe how the selected school action model will incorporate one or more evidence-based strategies during the implementation phase.

Under the leadership of Principal Roby, Means MS will plan for the implementation of a best-fit, high-quality blended and personalized learning model, based on the Christensen Institute’s definitions that integrates high-dosage tutoring and extended day/school year. There is evidence pointing to the positive impact of blended learning on student engagement (Jacobs, 2014) and student academic achievement (Means et al, 2013), especially for those with lower skill level (Ahn, 2016) and those with disabilities (Bottge et al, 2014). One study of personalized learning (Pane et al, 2017) found small positive effects (about 3 percentile points) on students’ math and reading scores. The same study concluded that tutoring “does not work due to individualization alone. It works due to individualization plus nurturing and attention,” underscoring the role of teachers as designers, mentors and facilitators in the BL model. Providing professional development to teachers implementing new approaches and using new platforms is also identified as important in the research (Rasheed et al, 2020).

**Program Requirements**

1. Identify one of the following eligible school action models:

- Restart a struggling school as an ACE campus
- Restart a struggling school with a district-designed model
- Restart a struggling school as a partner-managed campus
- Create a new school as a district-managed campus
- Create a new school as a partner-managed campus
- Reassign students from a struggling school to higher performing schools
- Redesign a campus for blended learning

2(a). Describe the evaluation process and criteria utilized for selecting the school action model for the specific campus to be supported with this grant.

District and campus leaders chose the redesign model with blended and personalized learning in order to build on the Targeted Improvement Plan in process as well as increase the number of Means MS students meeting academic standards. Low academic results, most recently indicated in Means MS 2020 middle-of-year (MOY) results (Reading, 12%, Math 12%) will likely be compounded with COVID-19-related learning loss. A new study (May 2020) from the Annenberg Institute at Brown University projects that students are likely to return in fall 2020 with approximately 63-68% of the learning gains in reading relative to a typical school year and with 37-50% of the learning gains in math.

Means MS has been exploring integrating more personalized and blended learning as a means to improve student achievement and engagement over the last two years as a Verizon Innovative Learning School (VILS) campus to begin rolling out one-to-one devices. Strategically planning with a TA provider and district leaders will accelerate a school-wide redesign with blended learning, high-dosage tutoring and extended day/year.

2(b). Describe how the school action aligns with the ISD's overall strategy for support and intervention in low-performing schools and/or the ISD's strategy for expanding high-quality school choices for students and families.

AISD's Strategic Plan 2015-2020 includes the following Core Beliefs: (1) All students will graduate college-, career-, and life-ready. (2) We will create an effective, agile, and responsive organization. (3) We will create vibrant relationships critical for successful students and schools. The district's Values include "Whole Child, Every Child." To achieve AISD's vision, commitments, and desired student outcomes in accordance with the district's core beliefs, the Board adopted Managed Instruction as the district's Theory of Action for teaching and learning. Managed Instruction promotes the alignment of curriculum, instruction, assessment, intervention, and professional development. The District facilitates the alignment of resources to provide differentiated levels of services to campuses and to close student achievement gaps, graduate students on time, and prepare them for college, career, and life. Additionally, the District's Managed Instruction Theory of Action is aligned to support students' development of social and emotional learning competencies.

The Planning Grant clearly aligns with AISD's strategic plan and theory of action. This grant will allow us to plan for a school redesign around a new instructional model in order to achieve academic growth and then align resources to meet those needs.

**Program Requirements (Cont'd)**

2(c). Describe how senior district leaders were involved in the decision to select the school action for the campus(es), and to apply for this School Action Fund Planning Grant.

Senior district leaders, including Chief of Staff, Dr. Jacob Reach and Executive Director for Middle Schools, Ty Davidson worked alongside Means MS and Principal Roby to evaluate school action models according to evidence of documented success in addressing the previously-identified issues and meeting the needs of a diverse group of students. This includes the ability within the model to tailor programs and models to fit the unique needs of students, rather than offering a one-size-fits-all model; the record of effectiveness in delivering core instruction and interventions that ensure the success of struggling students; the ability to apply research-based instructional strategies; and the model of engaging and collaborating with multiple stakeholders and planning partners, especially faculty at Means MS. The 2020 spring semester underscored the importance of a flexible model that can pivot to meet the needs of students in a crisis. We anticipate that this blended learning model will serve student needs of this school year as we continue to adjust school due to the COVID-19 health crisis, and also adjust to meet the many different needs of individual students in years to come.

2(d). Describe how the district has worked or will work with members of the school community to convey plans and solicit input into the school action planning process.

Regularly-scheduled opportunities for community engagement whose purpose will be twofold: (1) to collect information and feedback on what students, parents, and faculty view as strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth; and (2) to keep key stakeholders informed of the process in order to maintain and build trust in the process, increasing the likelihood of support from faculty and families for the school model chosen. Key stakeholders, including the Campus Advisory Council (CAC), will play an active role in the planning process. Grant funds will support contractual services to assist in strategic communication efforts and additional costs associated with community engagement events on campus.



**Program Requirements (Cont'd)**

2(e). Identify the ISD staff member who will manage the implementation grant. List the qualifications of the identified staff member.

AISD has prepared a job description for an Administrative Supervisor - Project Management who will serve as the district-level Project Manager, supporting the four target middle schools in their planning process with the TA provider, campus and district staff, and other key stakeholders. The job description requires that the candidate have a Master's degree and a minimum of five years of experience in education. The ideal candidate will have experience at the campus level and district level and possess extensive knowledge of ASD programs, central office procedures, and community systems in order to anticipate both district and campus operational considerations for school redesign models. AISD will seek a candidate with the ability to work in a self-directed manner within a fast-paced, deadline-driven, and complex environment.

This position will report directly to the Executive Director of Middle School Operations in the Office of School Leadership, and also will work closely with Dr. Jacob Reach, Chief of Staff of AISD, and the Associate Superintendents as he/she leads this project.

**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"/>
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**PNP Equitable Services**

PNP Equitable Services **does not apply** to this grant.

**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. See Program Guidelines, pages 21-27, for detailed instructions on use of grant funds.

**PAYROLL COSTS (6100)**

**BUDGET**

Project Manager	\$23,268
Extra Duty Pay	\$25,000
Fringe Benefits	\$10,972

**PROFESSIONAL AND CONTRACTED SERVICES (6200)**

Technical Assistance Provider	\$62,500
Strategic Communication	\$14,500
Professional Development	\$25,000

**SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS (6300)**

Instructional Materials	\$40,000
Other Materials/Supplies	\$29,920
Travel (no line available)	\$1,000

**OTHER OPERATING COSTS (6400)**

LSG Training	\$2,500
Community Engagement Events	\$5,000
Indirect Costs	\$10,340

**CAPITAL OUTLAY (6600)**


**TOTAL BUDGET REQUEST**

**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 emailed to [competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov](mailto:competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov) Include all sections pertinent to the amendment (including budget attachments), along with a completed and signed copy of page 1 of the application. More detailed amendment instructions can be found on the last page of the budget template.

*You may duplicate this page*

**Negotiated/Amended Section**

**For amendments: Choose the section you wish to amend from the drop down menu.**

**Negotiated Change/Amendment**

**For amendments: 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.**

FOR TEA USE ONLY  
Changes confirmed with \_\_\_\_\_ on this date \_\_\_\_\_  
Via phone/fax/email by TEA staff person \_\_\_\_\_

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