DATE:	**June 26, 2020**
SUBJECT:	**System of Great Schools Application Process**
CATEGORY:	**System of Great Schools**
NEXT STEPS:	**Attend Informational Webinar and Submit Application**

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is excited to announce the launch of the application process for Texas school districts to join the 2020 cohort of the System of Great Schools (SGS) Network.

SGS Theory of Action and Network Overview
It's now more important than ever to understand what schools your families want and need. SGS gives districts the tools and support to understand make these important strategic decisions.

The System of Great Schools theory of action is a district-level problem solving approach that seeks to understand school performance and community demands and use that information to make sure all students have access to the high-quality, best fit schools. SGS network districts choose to participate in a 4-year program that provides district leaders with technical assistance, professional learning opportunities, and tools and resources in applying for grants and other financial resources.

SGS District Results
Since its establishment in 2017, eighteen districts, serving over 500,000 students, have participated in the SGS network. SGS districts range in size from Galveston ISD (13 schools) to Lubbock ISD (51 schools) to San Antonio ISD (94 schools) and Fort Worth ISD (146 schools).

SGS districts have designed and launched numerous new schools, including early childhood centers, innovative district schools, and district-charter partnerships. Also, the first cohort of SGS districts has generated impressive academic gains, seeing a 47% increase in the number of A/B campuses and a 34% reduction in the number of D/F campuses since joining the network.

What do SGS Districts Do?

Set the Right North Star Goal	• Set a primary goal of more students in coherent, high-quality, best-fit schools every year, year over year.
Conduct an Annual Portfolio Planning Process	• Conduct an annual analysis of school performance and community need/demand. • Use analysis to decide which campuses should be improved, redesigned, restarted, and which new schools should be created.
Take Bold Action to Create and Expand Great Options	• Build talent pipelines and support for internal educator teams and external partner operators to plan and execute school actions. • Conduct an annual systematic process to rigorously vet plans, people, and partners for school actions – define/list actions here

Empower Families through School Choice & Access Supports	• Increase school choice and support families to understand, enroll, and access great schools.
Build an Office of Innovation to Drive SGS	• SGS Districts create a dedicated office and Cabinet-level position to drive this work forward.

Districts selected to the join the SGS Network will receive:

The SGS Network is a dynamic professional learning community of like-minded district leaders throughout the state. SGS Network districts are provided with the following:

- *Technical Assistance:* Each SGS district is matched with a TEA-vetted organization with deep expertise to support districts in implementing the System of Great Schools theory of action. Technical assistance providers, known as Executive Advisor Firms, provide SGS districts with significant strategic consulting support.
- *Professional Learning Opportunities:* The TEA requires District participation in regular workshops and professional development opportunities for Superintendents, Chief Innovation Officers, and other Cabinet members.
- *Tools and Resources*: TEA provides districts with templates, exemplars, and reference materials developed by leading districts and national experts. These tools and resources can help you operationalize the processes above and design and launch school actions.

Eligible Applicants

All Texas districts interested in pursuing the goals listed above are eligible to apply to join the SGS Network. Ideal districts have over 7,500 students, 10 or more schools, and the desire to pursue system transformation in services of creating high-quality best fit schools.

Application Process and Timeline

Date	Event
July 1	**Informational Webinar and Applications Released:** Interested Districts d should attend the informational webinar on Wednesday, July 1 at 10am. Please complete this online form to receive an invitation and video link.
August 7	**Application due:** Submit applications to SGS@tea.texas.gov.
September 1 - 11	**Phone Interviews:** DSSI staff will conduct phone interviews with District leaders to add context to the written application.
September 14-30	**Virtual Readiness Assessment:** DSSI staff will conduct in-depth interviews with district staff and school leaders to develop a deeper understanding of the district's readiness to implement SGS.
Oct. 8	**Invitation to Join Network:** Accepted applicants will be invited to join the 4-year program via email.

For more info, please visit systemofgreatschools.org.

For additional information or assistance, please contact the SGS team at SGS@tea.texas.gov.