



2024-2025 Stronger Connections Grant

Competitive Grant Application: Due 11:59 p.m. CT, July 18, 2023

NOGA ID

Application stamp-in date and time

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.

The application **MUST** bear the signature of a person authorized to bind the applicant to a contractual agreement

Authorizing legislation:

Grant period: **Pre-award costs:**

Required attachments:

Amendment Number

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

1. Applicant Information

Name of organization

Campus name CDN Vendor ID ESC UEI

Address City ZIP Phone

Primary Contact Email Phone

Secondary Contact Email Phone

2. 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
- Debarment and Suspension Certification
- General Provisions and Assurances
- Lobbying Certification
- Application-Specific Provisions and Assurances
- ESSA Provisions and Assurances requirements

Authorized Official Name Title Email

Phone Signature Date

Grant Writer Name Signature Date

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

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Adjustments on this page have been confirmed with _____ by _____ of TEA by phone / fax / email on _____.

3. Shared Services Arrangements

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) **are not** permitted for this grant.

4. 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
Students are vaping and fighting on and off campus.	With guidance from the Texas Center for Student Supports, SMSD will create a Stafford Student Support Team to provide PD for school staff to include openly discussing mental health. We will improve the implementation of our PBIS systems with CHAMPS, Restorative Practices, and MTSS. Training for students will include conflict resolution and vaping prevention lessons.
Students are absent from classes.	With guidance from the TCSS, the SSST will provide ongoing job-embedded PD and coaching to educators to support relationship-building and trauma-informed practices using evidence-based strategies. SMSD will employ a social worker to assist with home visits
Students require increased mental health support.	SMSD will partner with TCSS and with organizations such as Community in Schools. Interventions and support will be provided through MTSS or the Threat Assessment/Safe and Supportive Schools Program (SSSP) at the school/district level. SMSD will provide intensive trauma-informed training for SSSP members and key personnel within the next 18 months.

5. 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.

With guidance from the Texas Center for Student Supports, during the 2023-2024 school year Stafford MSD will develop a Stafford Student Support Team (SSST) to establish a comprehensive mental health system with the overarching goal of a decrease in student vaping and fighting incidents by 20% as determined by disciplinary referral data. To meet this goal SMSD will hire a full-time social worker, examine disciplinary responses to student infractions, and provide professional development in student mental health and support, building trusting relationships between staff and students, and trauma-informed training.

6. 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.

First-Quarter Benchmark

Receive NOGA and ensure the SMSD Board Agenda item is submitted to accept the grant; Build Grant Account with Business Office; Form a partnership with the Texas Center for Student Supports and Region 4; Form the Stafford Student Support Team (SSST) Begin meeting with the Texas Center for Student Supports; Send surveys to stakeholders for input and feedback; Hire FTE social worker; Begin professional development for SSST Team with the Texas Center for Student Supports; Develop a case management system that will support and monitor student MTSS interventions with the guidance of the Texas Center for Student Supports; Parent University classes on mental health awareness, locating community resources, and examining staff/ parent/ student relationships.

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6. Measurable Progress (Cont.)

Second-Quarter Benchmark

Continue SSST meetings to examine successes, progress, and needs of students; SSST will continue meeting with the TCSS to ensure that we are following the guidelines; Collect MOY attendance and disciplinary data; Deep dive into data collected from SSST to focus on progress toward SMART Goal; Continue job-embedded professional development and coaching for administrators and staff in building trusting relationships with students; Meet with students, staff, and administrators to determine successes, progress, and needs; Ensure that students are attending school and are educated in a trusting and positive school climate; Surveys to stakeholders, including students and families

Third-Quarter Benchmark

Follow up on professional development services that have been provided through this grant ; Meet with the Texas Center for Student Supports for guidance and to ensure that deliverables have been submitted; Deep dive into needs data and determine ways to braid our current mental health supports with additional supports to scaffold the program; Ensure that students are attending school by examining attendance reports; Students and parents will state that they feel safer at school by a 10-point increase (post-climate survey); Ensure that students and families have increased mental health and wellness through surveys and qualitative data from SSST representatives; Ensure that students feel comfortable in school by examining any data from bullying and looking at trends and survey results; Create Implementation Plan for the 2024-2025 school year

7. Project Evaluation and Modification

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

To make progress toward SMSD's SMART goals if awarded this grant, the Stafford Student Supports Team (SSST) will monitor and evaluate the progress and implementation of the program. To ensure that our goals are accomplished, campus administrators, counselors, the social worker, the LSSP, and the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Coordinator will monitor attendance, discipline, and grade reports every three weeks for review at SSST monthly meetings. Parent communication will be ongoing and logged by teachers, counselors, and administrators and reviewed by the SSST. The SSST will monitor the fidelity of the program at monthly meetings. Based on the data reviewed and with guidance from the Texas Center for Student Supports, the program may be modified to achieve success toward Stafford MSD SMART goals and ensure sustainability for the program.

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8. 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 2024–2025 Stronger Connections Grant 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 formally establish a Student Support Program at three district campuses (one elementary, one intermediate/middle school, one high school) to address school climate and establish a student support team structure aligned to the training and support provided by the Texas Center for Student Supports and the regional ESC. If the applicant has few than three campuses or does not have three of the listed types of campuses, the applicant will establish the Student Support Program and the student support team structure at all campuses, up to three, served in the district.
5. The applicant will allocate 6% of awarded funds for contracted services for technical assistance provided by the regional ESC. Complete the transaction with the regional ESC in a timely manner. Time is of the essence in completing the transaction to ensure that the program is implemented efficiently and effectively to successfully achieve the goals of the program.
6. The applicant will allocate 10% of awarded funds for professional and contracted services with a partner approved by the Texas Center for Student Support and TEA. Complete the transaction with the regional ESC in a timely manner. Time is of the essence in completing the transaction to ensure that the program is implemented efficiently and effectively to successfully achieve the goals of the program.
7. The applicant will use the family engagement playbook developed by the Texas Center for Student Supports to partner and build support with parents and families prior to a student support team assessment, and during the student support implementation process to facilitate a student support partnership with families.
8. The applicant will establish a parent, student, and staff advisory committee to provide input on the establishment of the Student Support Program.
9. The applicant will engage in Student Support Program planning activities from the beginning of the grant program through implementation at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year.
10. The applicant will establish and implement at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year, the Student Support Program aligned to the content and training provided by the Texas Center for Student Supports.
11. The applicant will incorporate a case management system into the student support team structure aligned to the training and support provided by the Texas Center for Student Supports.
12. The applicant will align the student support team structure with behavioral threat assessment team operation and outcomes to ensure that students are well supported and that the effectiveness of interventions are monitored.
13. The applicant will implement the data collection and reporting system developed by the Texas Center for Student Supports to gather and analyze data to monitor efficacy of the implementation of the Student Support Program, including student support team structure, quality of support leading to positive outcomes, and data related to increases in desired outcomes (e.g. increase in student support team referrals for nonacademic needs, increase in effective supports received by students, reduction in disciplinary incidents, reduction in bullying and harassment, increase in referrals for mental health services, reduction in removals from class, etc.).
14. The applicant will provide timely response to requests from TEA for information and data regarding program development, implementation, and performance and evaluation measures.

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9. Statutory/ TEA Program Requirements

1. Describe how the LEA will identify the campuses that will participate in the establishment of the Student Support Program described in the program description? Include the criteria or considerations that will influence the determination by the LEA.

Stafford MSD has a family and small-school atmosphere, serving approximately 3,700 students in Fort Bend County. SMSD is a Title 1 school district in which 77.06% of the student population is economically disadvantaged. We have five campuses in our district: The Stafford Early Childhood Center, Stafford Elementary School, Stafford Middle School, Stafford High School, and the Stafford STEM Magnet Academy. Our Stafford Student Support Program (SSSP) will include Stafford Elementary School, Stafford Middle School, and Stafford High School campuses based on absenteeism and disciplinary referral rates.

2. Describe how the LEA will ensure that campus leaders and staff are committed to the success of the Student Support Program.

Stafford MSD is eager to work with the Texas Center for Student Supports if awarded this grant. We look forward to creating a Stafford Student Support Team (SSST) to decrease disciplinary referrals and build trusting relationships between staff and students. The goal of our campus leaders is for students to feel safe and welcome at school so that attendance is increased, peer and adult relationships are meaningful, and the use of substances is eliminated. Stafford MSD is a small school district and we do not have the funding to provide for the personal, psychological, and emotional needs of our students as larger districts may enjoy. Stafford MSD utilizes CHAMPS and Kagan strategies in our schools and classrooms. However, students continue to receive suspensions which means a further loss of academic instruction in addition to the learning loss that they still experience from the COVID-19 pandemic. Stafford MSD believes that our students deserve personalized instruction in a safe and supportive environment. Building trusting relationships with staff will encourage students to come to school, feel successful, and practice self-awareness. If students are engaging in behaviors that will lead to suspension, then they will be at home as they were during the COVID-19 shutdown. Stafford MSD school leaders and staff want our students at school to learn, socialize appropriately, and become successful members of the community.

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9. Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

3. Describe how the LEA will engage parents and families to solicit support for the program.

Stafford MSD's Stafford Student Support Team will include two parents to ensure that families have input and meaningful participation. Our counselors, social workers, and licensed professional counselors (LPCs) will collaborate with SMSD parents by way of meetings and home visits where needed. Our program will include the EPB of parent-involved implementation as this is an essential component of producing positive behavioral outcomes for students. SMSD's SSST, including the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Coordinator, and with the assistance of the Texas Center for Student Supports will offer intentional training and meetings for parents. Bilingual interpreters will be provided. Parents will be encouraged to join SMSD's Parent University classes in the Fall and to visit the Parent Resource Center which provides families and caregivers with take-home information, including community programs for behavioral and emotional support. Parent attendance at programs, classes, events, and sessions will be recorded. Surveys will be completed by parents and caregivers for program feedback. School counselors are available to answer parent questions and provide support that is personalized to the family's needs.

4. Describe how the LEA will ensure that there is adequate staff to support the establishment and implementation of the Student Support Program.

Stafford MSD will form our Stafford Student Support Team (SSST) which will include our Chief of Schools, the Chief Academic Officer, the Director of Federal & State Programs and Special Education, the Grant Program Manager, the District Lead Nurse, an Administrator from each campus, a Counselor from each campus, the Behavior Specialist for each campus, a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology, the Parent & Family Coordinator (PFCE), at least one teacher from each campus, two secondary students, and two parents. All the members of the SSST are employed with the district at this time except for the students and parents who may volunteer for the team. If awarded this grant, then Stafford MSD will hire a full-time social worker for the district who will also be on the SSST. Stafford MSD will embrace the opportunity to work with the Texas Center for Student Supports and our SSST will be fully staffed to ensure the best outcomes for the program.

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9. Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

5. Describe how each of the campuses will be supported by the grant program, if awarded, currently conduct behavioral threat assessments and how the campus will incorporate current systems into the student support team structure.

Stafford MSD looks forward to working with the Texas Center for Student Supports if awarded this grant. Our participating schools will be Stafford Elementary School, Stafford Middle School, and Stafford High School. We want to provide campus environments that foster safe, stable, nurturing relationships between students and staff members. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) for our students. Stafford MSD would like to provide services and support to students to assist them in overcoming traumatic events. Many of our students also experience ACEs within the home environment due to socio-economic disadvantages, homelessness, and lack of proper nourishment, clothing, and shelter. Some of our students have experienced abuse within the home environment. They have witnessed substance abuse and physical abuse within their families. These adverse experiences add to the trauma from the pandemic, creating extreme childhood stress. Our school counselors are often responsible for coordinating MAP and STAAR testing, creating class schedules, and preparing special education referral packets. This creates difficulty in providing much-needed counseling services to students. Our counselors conduct Behavioral Threat Assessments from the Texas School Safety Center at Texas State University. Stafford MSD looks forward to scaffolding our program with the Texas Center for Student Supports so that our students have their emotional and mental health needs met to perform well academically.

6. Describe how the LEA currently identifies student support needs and how it identifies and establishes partnerships with external mental health and behavioral health providers to meet student needs.

Stafford MSD uses Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) model for Tier 1 universal and school-wide interventions. We use CHAMPS and Kagan strategies within schools and classrooms. Teachers are the primary identifiers of student behavioral difficulties. Our students who do not respond well to Tier 1 interventions will move to Tier 2. The campus counselor then creates an MTSS packet. The campus counselor will meet with the teacher to provide additional strategies to assist with behavior. If the Tier 2 interventions are not working, then the student will move to Tier 3 interventions. In cases when a student threatens to harm himself/ herself or others, then a Behavioral Threat Assessment is completed by the counselor. The counselor notifies the parent and often recommends that the parent take the child to a professional. Stafford MSD is a small school district with limited resources and community partnerships for mental health. Stafford MSD parents do not always have the means and/ or monetary resources to take the child to a professional and often the child is then taken to the emergency room. Our Parent, Family and Community Engagement Liaison can assist parents with finding outside providers, but time is of the essence in a crisis. Stafford MSD is in dire need of the support of the Texas Center for Student Supports for assistance. We have a partnership with Creative Minds to assist families with mental health and would like to expand on our outside services.

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9. Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

7. Describe how the LEA currently partners with the regional ESC to support improvement in student mental health, behavioral and emotional health, physical health and wellbeing, and improving academic outcomes for students.

Stafford MSD partners with Region 4 to receive training in the areas of PBIS, MTSS, and CTE hours. Teachers, administrators, counselors, and other professionals attend training at Region 4 on an ongoing basis for updated information and best practices. Stafford MSD professionals also contact Region 4 staff by phone or email for assistance in the areas of early childhood education, special education, emergent bilinguals, gifted and talented, and at-risk students. Region 4 has helped Stafford MSD with TCLAS, CRIMSI, LASO, BLGP, TRI Coaching, Strong Foundations, and Early College High School grant implementation. Stafford MSD recently applied for and received the Innovation Services with Students with Autism grant, and we look forward to pairing with Region 4 to ensure proper grant implementation. Stafford MSD has applied for and is a preliminary recipient of the Title I, 1003 ESF-Focused Support Grant Effective School Framework (ESF EALS Pathway 2.) We have met with representatives at Region 4 regarding this grant application. We look forward to working with Region 4 on the ESF EALS Pathway 2 grant for Stafford Middle School.

8. Describe how the LEA will use this grant program to supplement current work to improve services and supports for the mental health, behavioral and emotional health, and physical health and wellness of students.

Stafford MSD has systems in place to support student mental health needs. Our overarching goal is to ensure that students feel comfortable, safe, and supported so that they can master the curriculum. Stafford MSD has professional school counselors at each campus. Students may request to see the school counselor at any time. Our counselors provide individual and group counseling for students using evidence-based practices. Stafford MSD utilizes school- and classroom-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and provides Multi-Tiered Systems of Support to track evidence-based behavioral interventions. Stafford MSD has a Safety and Security Committee which includes the Chief of Schools, a Stafford Police Department Sergeant, an administrator and counselor from each campus, our school nurses, a school board member, a parent, a Stafford Fire Dept/ Emergency Management representative, the Director of Maintenance and Operations, and teachers from each campus. Stafford MSD hopes to work with the Texas Center for Student Supports to strengthen our services to students. Our students deserve to feel safe and supported at school and Stafford MSD is eager to work with the Texas Center for Student Supports to ensure that our students have what they need to become life-long learners and productive members of society.

9. Enter the LEA Total Enrollment: 3641

10. Enter the Regional Educational Service Center that serves the LEA: 4

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10. 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"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>

11. 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.

Are any private nonprofit schools participating in the grant?

- Yes No

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

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.

Equitable Services Calculation

1. LEA's student enrollment	<input type="text"/>
2. Enrollment of all participating private schools	<input type="text"/>
3. Total enrollment of LEA and all participating PNPs (line 1 plus line 2)	<input type="text"/>
4. Total current-year grant allocation	<input type="text"/>
5. LEA reservation for direct administrative costs, not to exceed the grant's defined limit	<input type="text"/>
6. Total LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 4 minus line 5)	<input type="text"/>
7. Per-pupil LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 6 divided by line 3)	<input type="text"/>
LEA's total required ESSA PNP equitable services reservation (line 7 times line 2)	<input type="text"/>

12. 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.

Payroll Costs

1.	Project Management	\$130,000.00
2.	Social Worker (FTE)	\$80,000.00
3.	Extra Duty Pay	\$73,830.00
4.	Benefits	\$8400.00
5.		

Professional and Contracted Services

6.	Required 6% of funds for technical assistance provided by the regional ESC	\$60,000.00
7.	Required 10% of funds to the Texas Center for Student Supports	\$100,000.00
8.		
9.		
10.		

Supplies and Materials

11.	SEL Software - Branching Minds	\$47,950.00
12.	Other Supplies and Materials	\$152,050.00
13.		

Other Operating Costs

15.	Other Operating Costs	\$270,000.00
16.		
17.		

Debt Services

18.		N/A
19.		

Capital Outlay

20.		N/A
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Direct administrative costs: \$20,000.00

Indirect administrative costs: \$57,770.00

TOTAL GRANT AWARD REQUESTED: \$1,000,000.00

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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 mailed OR faxed (not both). **To fax:** one copy of all sections pertinent to the amendment (including budget attachments), along with a completed and signed page 1, to either (512) 463-9811 or (512) 463-9564. **To mail:** three copies of all sections pertinent to the amendment (including budget attachments), along with a completed and signed page 1, to the address on page 1. More detailed amendment instructions can be found on the last page of the budget template.

You may duplicate this page.

For amendments, choose the section you wish to amend from the drop down menu on the left. In the text box on the right, 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.

Section Being Negotiated or Amended	Negotiated Change or Amendment
<input type="text"/>	
<input type="text"/>	
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