



## To the Administrator Addressed

Commissioner Mike Morath

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<b>DATE:</b>	<b>January 28 2021</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>System of Great Schools Application Process</b>
<b>CATEGORY:</b>	<b>System of Great Schools</b>
<b>NEXT STEPS:</b>	<b>Attend informational webinar and submit application</b>

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is excited to announce the Spring 2021 application process for Texas school districts to join the System of Great Schools (SGS) Network.

### **SGS Theory of Action and Network Overview:**

The SGS Network gives districts the tools and support to provide the schools that families want and need. The SGS Strategy is a district-level problem solving approach that seeks to understand school performance and community demands and use that information to ensure that all students have access to a high-quality, best-fit school. SGS Network districts participate in a 4-year program that provides district leaders with technical assistance, professional learning opportunities, and tools and resources to apply for grants or other support.

### **SGS District Results:**

The SGS Network consists of 16 districts serving 480,000 students. Network districts vary in size. Eleven districts have less than 50 campuses, but the Network also includes Aldine (82 campuses), San Antonio (100 campuses), and Ft. Worth (143 campuses). These districts have designed and launched numerous new schools, including early childhood centers, innovative district schools, and district-charter partnerships. Districts executing the SGS Strategy have seen impressive academic gains. SGS Network districts that joined in 2017 have increased A and B seats by 52% and decreased D and F seats by 36%. Other district highlights include:

- San Antonio ISD increased A and B seats by 467% and decreased D and F seats by 50% between 2017-2019. Through San Antonio's 4x increase in A and B seats, more than 10,000 students now attend great schools.
- Fort Worth ISD increased A and B seats by 11% and decreased D and F seats by 34% between 2017-2019.
- Edgewood ISD increased A and B seats by 47% and decreased D and F seats by 17% between 2018-2019.

### **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 campuses, and the desire to pursue system transformation in service of creating high-quality best-fit schools.

## What Do SGS Districts Do?

Set the Right North Star Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set a primary goal of more students in coherent, high-quality, best-fit schools every year, year over year.</li> </ul>
Conduct an Annual Portfolio Planning Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct an annual analysis of school performance and community need/demand.</li> <li>Use analysis to decide which campuses should be improved, redesigned, restarted, and which new schools should be created.</li> </ul>
Take Bold Action to Create and Expand Great Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build talent pipelines and support for internal educator teams and external partner operators to plan and execute school actions.</li> <li>Conduct an annual systematic process to rigorously vet plans, people, and partners for <i>school actions</i>, which include restarting a campus, creating a new campus, redesigning a campus with a blended learning model, or reassigning students from a struggling campus to higher performing campuses and closing the campus.</li> </ul>
Empower Families through School Choice & Access Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase school choices in districts and support families to understand, enroll, and access great schools.</li> </ul>
Build an Office of Innovation to Drive the SGS Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SGS Districts create a dedicated office and cabinet-level position to drive this work forward.</li> </ul>

## Network Benefits:

The SGS Network is a dynamic professional learning community of like-minded district leaders throughout the state. Districts selected to join the SGS Network are provided:

- Strategic Advising:* Each SGS district is matched with a TEA-vetted executive advisor (EA) firm that has deep expertise to support districts in implementing the SGS Strategy.
- 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:* The TEA provides districts with templates, exemplars, and reference materials developed by leading districts and national experts to help districts operationalize the processes above and design and launch school actions.

## SGS Application Process and Timeline:

Date	Event
Jan. 27	<b>Applications Released:</b> The application will be available on <a href="#">the SGS webpage</a> .
Feb. 5, 12, and 19	<b>Informational Webinar:</b> Interested districts may learn more by attending a webinar on 2/5 at 2:00 pm, 2/12 at 1:00 pm, or 2/19 at 9:30 am. <a href="#">Please sign up here</a> .
Mar. 9	<b>Application due:</b> Please submit applications to <a href="mailto:SGS@tea.texas.gov">SGS@tea.texas.gov</a> .
Mar. 22-31	<b>Phone Interviews:</b> TEA staff will conduct phone interviews with District leaders to add context to the written application and make an acceptance decision.
Apr. 4	<b>Acceptance:</b> Accepted applicants will be invited to join the 4-year program.
April 26 – May 13	<b>Readiness Assessment:</b> TEA staff will interview district staff and leaders to help identify the key priorities as the accepted district begins to implement the SGS Strategy.
Starting June 10	<b>EA Firm Match &amp; Onboarding:</b> New Network districts interview, select, and hold planning kick-off meetings with the EA firm that will support SGS implementation.

For more information, please visit the [SGS webpage](#) or email [SGS@tea.texas.gov](mailto:SGS@tea.texas.gov).