THE SGS BULLETIN (No. 1)

BUILDING SYSTEMS OF GREAT SCHOOLS ACROSS TEXAS

FROM THE SGS TEAM!

Thank You for Making the SGS Summit a Success

Thank you all for your active participation at the SGS Kick-off Summit. We hope that you found the experience to be valuable. We wanted to make sure that you had access to presentation materials for the major breakout sessions. While all the materials can be found on the SGS webpage, we have provided direct links to two presentations below:

- Commissioner's Call to Action: Aggressive Action to Ensure Great Schools in Every Neighborhood

- Keynote Conversation with Denver's Tom Boasberg: What Does a Successfully Implemented System of Great Schools Look Like?

Maintaining Momentum: SGS Implementation Roadmaps

What comes next? We encourage you to maintain the momentum coming out of the SGS Summit by working closely with your Executive Advisors on crafting your SGS Implementation Roadmaps over the next couple of months. Your Roadmap, which is one of the few required deliverables of SGS member districts, should lay out the SGS Levers that you intend to tackle first. **The Roadmaps will 1) focus district efforts, 2) help inform the SGS team how to support district's efforts, and 3) support the further development of the SGS professional learning community**. Please submit your Roadmaps to TEA by **Friday 10/6**. Contact Mike Herschenfeld if you have any questions or concerns

Important SGS Deadlines

Note: Deadlines are listed by date (with topic & point of contact in parentheses). Only important upcoming deadlines are listed here. Longer-term deadlines are listed in the division updates on the following pages.

August 18th
(SGS; Mike Herschenfeld)
All districts and advisors should submit invoices for reimbursement from the Kick-off Summit as soon as possible

August 25th
(SGS; Mike Herschenfeld)
Executive advisors submit the District/EA relationship document of behalf of the districts

October 6th
(SGS; Mike Herschenfeld)
SGS implementation roadmaps due to TEA

Other Important TEA Deadlines

August 25th
(Grants; Cory Green)
IDEA Consolidated Applications due to TEA

September 1st
(Grants; Cory Green)
ESSA Consolidated Applications due to TEA

What are the System of Great Schools levers of change?

Executing the SGS strategy requires districts to build new or strengthen existing capacities in the following six levers of change:

Establish and Administer
1 Establish and administer portfolio review and planning processes;

Develop and Expand
2 Develop and expand great schooling options;

Help
3 Help families understand and navigate their school and program choices;

Build
4 Build an ecosystem of effective school support and talent providers;

Reimagine
5 Reimagine central services to support school based decision making; and

Align and Engage
6 Align civic partners and engage the community.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

There is More Than One Way to Grow Great Schools

The SGS Network is focused on building system-wide capacity to understand the performance of your system of schools and take thoughtful action to provide families with more and better options. This requires defining what a great school is, building regular processes to evaluate schools against that definition, and creating the capacity to explore and pursue multiple paths to providing families with the types of schools they want, need, and deserve. Two resources describing the multiple pathways can be found in a [blog post from the Center on Reinventing Public Education](#) (CRPE) and a recent report titled ["Pathways to Success"](#) released by Education Cities, a national non-profit dedicated to supporting cities to increase the number of students with access to high quality schools. **Have you considered all potential options? Have you built the capacity necessary to pursue those options?**

TIMELY TOPICS

Leverage Your ESSA Consolidated Application for SGS Related Activities

→ **ESSA Consolidated Applications are Due on September 1**
All districts are required to submit to TEA their ESSA Consolidated Application. This application combines multiple Title programs. See TEA's ["Transition to ESSA"](#) webpage for a description of the ESSA Consolidation Application.

Districts in the SGS Network should strongly consider how they can use this application and its associated funds to catalyze SGS related activities. To support your thinking and planning, TEA has developed [a web-based resource](#), which presents a non-exhaustive list of recommended uses of Title funds associated with the ESSA Consolidated Application.

You could also use portions of these Title funds for contracted services related to developing school level needs assessments (ex. school performance frameworks and review processes) and to develop the internal or external capacity, through Innovation, Improvement, or New Schools offices, to support Title schools, create new schools, and transforming struggling schools.

While the SGS Network has limited funds to support such activities, we strongly encourage you to make use of the resources you have at hand.

Leverage New Law for SGS Related Activities

→ **Senate Bill 1882: District/Charter Partnerships**
[SB 1882](#) amends the [Texas Education Code](#) to establish that a board of trustees of a district may 1) partner with an open-enrollment charter school; or 2) grant a charter to an eligible entity with the intent to partner with the entity to operate a district campus. Eligible partnership campuses will qualify for a two-year exemption from certain state accountability interventions and a potential increase in state funding.

To be eligible for partnership under SB 1882 the open-enrollment charter school may not have been previously revoked and must have received acceptable academic and financial accountability ratings for the three preceding school years.

Eligible partnership campuses are entitled to receive, for each student in average daily attendance at the campus, the greater of the amount to which the district would be entitled under the foundation school program or the amount of state funding to which the open-enrollment charter school would be entitled.

Contact Bibi Katsev for more information: bibi.katsev@tea.texas.gov

SGS DISTRICT UPDATES

El Paso ISD

→ **Cabinet Workshop**
EPISD held a Cabinet Workshop that included discussion and alignment of the following: EPISD 2020 Strategic Plan, EPISD Theory of Action, System of Great Schools, Collective Impact, and Lone Star Governance goals.

→ **Campus and Neighborhood Review**
Cabinet review of area and campus STAAR/EOC data. This is the first step in the development of the Student Performance Framework (SPF). EPISD reviewed its current tiering system, and discussed options for aligning the tiers with the TEA ranking system.

Fort Worth ISD

→ **School Authorization**
The district is interested in authorizing, this fall, for schools opening in the 2018-19 school year, and are at the early stages of designing an authorization process.

→ **School Tiering System**
The district has an internally used school tiering system that they are building consensus on as a tool moving forward, and are looking for feedback on what is currently in place

Galveston ISD

→ **GISD Strategic Plan**
GISD's Board of Trustees approved its Strategic plan, which will form the foundation and anchor for its work as a SGS district going forward. The plan incorporates critical work on educator attraction, placement and retention -- a core part of GISD's SGS implementation roadmap.

→ **Towards Developing a School Performance Framework**
GISD is in the process of creating action plans for the development of both a refined School Performance Framework and the annual, decision-making review cycle that will create clarity and momentum within the system and among the community.

Manor ISD

→ **School Effectiveness Framework**
Developing a school effectiveness framework as pre-work for the school performance framework. This step will ensure there is a normed understanding of how an effective school functions, the conditions necessary to build an effective school, and how leadership should leverage available resources.

→ **Regional Analysis**
Digging into regional analysis resources shared by DPS to build in additional data and information into MISD's own neighborhood analysis of schools.

Midland ISD

→ **New MISD Superintendent**
Superintendent Riddick has entered the district with a clear focus on listening and learning from the Midland community and building a shared vision of student success.

→ **Laying the Groundwork**
Important ground work for SGS is underway with the board. Central office design is one initial focus of SGS efforts. Key team members and structures are being identified to activate SGS Lever 1 and 2 work in the district in the 2017-18 school year.

San Antonio ISD

→ **Common Enrollment System**
The District has created and filled a new position to manage district enrollment. This position will be responsible for developing a common enrollment system for SAISD.

→ **Demographic Analysis**
The District is interested in pursuing a demographic analysis, similar to the process at Denver Public Schools, to assess neighborhood needs and school types throughout the SAISD.

South San Antonio ISD

→ **Constituent Feedback**
SSAISD seeks to build broad understanding and buy-in into their SGS work and is therefore creating a plan to present and get feedback from a range of constituents on it.

→ Schools of Choice

SSAISD has begun to plan for the launch of a new Schools of Choice process. They intend to prototype a new model for designing and opening schools of choice within the district.

SSAISD will work during the 2017-18 school year to support 3 middle schools in designing theme-specific small schools that will open in 2018-19. They are now project planning next steps, designing trainings, and starting to work with currently seated principals to begin early thinking on school designs.

Spring Branch ISD

→ SPF Design and Alignment

Spring Branch ISD is currently focused on designing a performance framework that aligns with their focus on personalized learning. They are hoping to design a system that comprehensively measures and displays student learning, classroom learning and overall school-wide quality. They envision the performance framework serving as the foundation for many other systems, including performance management, school improvement, processes, and school decision making.

RESOURCE ROUND UP

Learning From SGS Districts Across the Country

→ Baltimore City Public Schools

"At City Schools, we recognize students' differences. Instead of a "one size fits all" approach, the district offers a "portfolio" of schools with different structures and programming. Students and families have the option to choose a school inside or outside of neighborhood boundaries. School leaders work with students, families, school staff, partners, and other stakeholders to decide how best to meet the needs of each school's unique students."

Each year, Baltimore City Public Schools reviews all of its schools to ensure that they are meeting the needs of students, families and communities. The review is an annual opportunity for the district **to report on and make recommendations** to strengthen the system of schools in several areas.

*Information above has been taken from the Baltimore City Public School's website

TEA DIVISION UPDATES

System Support and Innovation

→ Transformation Zone Grant

In mid-September, the Texas Education Agency will launch a new grant competition to create Transformation Zones with priority schools. This innovative approach provides flexibility for governance, budget, staffing, and curriculum. Check the Division of System Support and Innovation website for more details soon.

→ Replicating Great Options Pilot Program

An appropriations rider in the last regular Legislative session provided TEA with funds to pilot the replication of existing high performing district schools. Our team is currently developing this pilot program and will seek to support 3-5 districts that want to create a new Subchapter C school management organization to manage the replication of existing successful campuses. More details will be provided in forthcoming SGS Bulletins.

→ School Redesign Grant

The purpose of the school redesign grant competition is to provide districts with resources to develop and implement aggressive school redesign initiatives in Title I low-performing schools. The school redesign plans will provide an opportunity for districts to create new and improved learning environments that can substantially increase the likelihood of improved student achievement.

For questions regarding these competitive grants, contact Doug Dawson: doug.dawson@tea.texas.gov

Grants Compliance and Oversight

➔ **Specialized Application Negotiation and Technical Assistance (SANTA)**
TEA's Department of Grants Compliance and Oversight recently reached out to several targeted districts to participate in a new, year-long specialized technical assistance project with the goal of supporting a more effective and intentional use of ESSA funds through analyzing the district's historical use of the funding along with the district's current and future strategic priorities. The project will involve extensive collaboration between districts and TEA's SANTA team.

The SGS and SANTA teams have decided to partner on the piloting of this project as we believe the goals of each initiative are inherently aligned. By supporting districts to better understand the possibilities of their current funding districts will be able to build capacity and engage in sustainable reform efforts. Four of eight of the SGS Cohort 1 districts were invited by the grants department to join the pilot of this project. The SGS and grant teams are working to design a set of SANTA supports for all SGS Cohort 1 districts.

Contact Mike Herschenfeld for more information: mike.herschenfeld@tea.texas.gov

➔ **3 Month Grants Calendar**

School Improvement

➔ **A Coordinated Approach to Supporting IR and Priority Campuses Across Texas**
The Division of School Improvement recently hosted partners from all 20 Education Service Centers (ESC) and the Professional Service Provider Network in preparation for the 17-18 school year. The agency is excited about the collaboration among partners in developing a coordinated approach to supporting IR and Priority campuses across the state. Districts and campuses can expect to see some enhancements to our required intervention processes when they are released at the end of August. Please visit TEA's School Improvement webpage for updates and the most current information.

Contact Lizette Ridgeway for more information: lizette.ridgeway@tea.texas.gov

Educator Support

➔ **Texas Equity Plan Toolkit**
Under ESSA all districts receiving Title I funding will be required to submit an Equity Plan to better understand and address the challenges they face in providing equitable access to excellent teachers for low income and minority students. Submissions for Texas Equity Plans will be from 9/1/17-11/1/17. The TEA has developed a Texas Equity Plan Toolkit as a resource, and all ESCs have trained staff available to provide support. The Texas Equity Toolkit has been designed to fit within a district's annual continuous improvement process.

Contact Brenda Garcia for more information: brenda.garcia@tea.texas.gov

Office of Academics

➔ **Teacher Institutes**
Over two weeks this summer, TEA hosted two Teacher Institutes to develop online interim and formative assessment items that align to the grades 3-8 math and reading State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®). Approximately 100 teachers attended each of the two meetings in Austin. These assessments will reduce district's need to purchase commercially-based test-prep materials by providing state-developed instructional materials that are fully aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) at no cost.

Contact Julie Guthrie for more information: julie.guthrie@tea.texas.gov