



THE SGS BULLETIN (No. 3)

BUILDING SYSTEMS OF GREAT SCHOOLS ACROSS TEXAS

FROM THE SGS TEAM!

Check out the New SGS Website!

www.systemofgreatschools.org

Over the past several months, TEA and its partners have been working to build out a comprehensive website of resources and information to support our System of Great Schools Network districts in their implementation of the SGS strategy. Through the website, SGS Network superintendents and leadership teams will also have access to a community forum of their counterparts across the state and expert practitioners from across the country. This feature will allow districts to present problems of practice as they are unfolding and engage in discussions across the network.

The website and resources are now available to educators across the country who are interested in learning more about the SGS strategy. Features include access to over 200 curated resources (district created tools and documents, publications, research studies, etc.), quick start bundles to support districts in better understanding and implementing the 6 SGS levers, and information about the Texas SGS Network as it evolves and expands.

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.*

October 6th

(SGS; Mike Herschenfeld)

SGS implementation roadmaps due to TEA. See division updates for additional information

Other Important TEA Deadlines

November 30th

(DSSI; Bibi Katsev)

Transformation Zone Planning Grant applications due to TEA. See division updates for additional information.

System of Great Schools leaders believe in:



1) Supporting educators to design and lead high-quality schools;



2) Empowering families with quality options and informed choices; and



3) Focusing central office on creating the conditions to unlock innovation and support schools

IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Last week, Midland ISD hosted an [Innovation Partner Kick-off Meeting](#). The meeting included experts and practitioners from across the state and country who were introduced to [Midland on the Move](#), a student-centered transformation effort being led by Superintendent Orlando Riddick. **The goal of the meeting: to explore opportunities for MISD to engage with high-quality partners in delivering on a shared vision of success for all students.**

To better identify great potential partnerships Midland ISD will release a Call for Quality Schools (request for information). Through the Call for Quality Schools MISD will seek thoughtful and innovative ideas from partners (current educators within the district and outside organizations) to design new and reimagine existing district schools to support their most at-need students.

MISD's Guiding Principles for Partnership:

- 1) **QUALITY:** All partners will be measured against and held to the **same high standards** as any traditional MISD school via the School Performance Framework (SPF).
- 2) **EQUITY: All means all.** Partners must focus on meeting the needs of all students, particularly Midland's most at need populations
- 3) **COLLABORATION:** All partners must commit to **collaborating with MISD** to provide high-quality options for all of Midland's kids.

The MISD leadership team has also built out a great website, [Midland on the Move](#), to keep the community engaged and informed of the district's progress as it moves forward in its System of Great Schools implementation.

TIMELY TOPICS

[Blue Ribbon Schools](#)

The U.S. Department of Education announced that 26 Texas public schools have been awarded Blue Ribbon honors for 2017. 4 of those schools are in SGS Network districts. Congratulations!

El Paso: Green Elementary School, and Silva Health Magnet

Galveston: Austin Middle School

San Antonio: Travis Early College High School

All schools were selected as exemplary high-performing schools as measured by state assessments or nationally normed tests. Each school has an economically disadvantaged population of 25 percent or greater.

For more information about the national Blue Ribbon Schools program, visit the [U.S. Department of Education's website](#).

[Hurricane Harvey](#)

[Resources for affected districts](#)

Following Hurricane Harvey, many of our school districts along the Texas coast are in the recovery phase even as they work to educate the children in their communities. Working with our regional Education Service Centers in the areas most affected, we've established [a Harvey Help webpage](#) to connect the many offers of help with those districts that need it most.



SGS DISTRICT UPDATES

El Paso ISD

→ Goal Alignment

Board goals have been finalized and aligned with SGS goals. The EPISD cabinet met with SGS Executive Advisors to set an emphasis on SGS work and narrow the focus on active learning, literacy, SGS, building strong leaders, and graduation/higher education.

→ School Redesign

Began the planning phase for school redesign including the process of reviewing and mapping out key district priorities expectations, and data to inform school design parameters, community engagement plan, and messaging.

Fort Worth ISD

→ Strategic Plan 2.0

The FWISD team is vetting proposals and will be deciding on a planning partner by mid-October.

→ School Performance Framework

The development work is underway and the district leadership team has planned a half-day working session for later this month.

Galveston ISD

→ School Performance Framework

GISD has successfully concluded a first round of working sessions with the Board, teachers the district leadership team (including school leadership) on "the elements of great schools"? Parent and community perspectives are also being gathered. The output from these robust discussions will be used to help frame the district's SPF.

→ SGS Implementation Planning

District leadership has finalized decisions on SGS levers to prioritize in year 1, in alignment with GISD's new strategic plan. Highlights are: SPF, school management and human capital work will kick off this school year; the transformation of central administration to more fully align with the strategic plan and SGS will kick off in earnest in year 2.

Manor ISD

→ School Reviews

Manor ISD developed a process to review all schools using a standard school visit protocol. This protocol allows the team to: (1) norm on observations made; and (2) provide the same foundation for a more focused conversation on how support supports may be differentiated to campuses.

→ SGS Implementation Roadmap

Completed a first draft of Part 1 of its SGS Roadmap. It is organized into three major sub-levers: (1) School review, (2) School management and support; and (3) School accountability. It outlines the work needed over the next two years to meet its vision of having a comprehensive portfolio review, management, and accountability cycle.

→ Aligning Existing Performance Review Processes

MISD is currently working to align the existing performance monitoring cycles (i.e., principal checklists, formative assessment results, data reviews, team meetings, etc.) to systematically drive larger strategic decisions related to support and accountability.

Midland ISD

→ Listen and Learn

MISD has completed the first two Listen and Learn Tour sessions with parents, families, and the community while gearing up for 3 more sessions in October. Feedback from the Listen and Learn tour including "What a great school looks and feels like" is being incorporated into Midland SPF development.

→ Continued SPF Development

MISD's cross-functional Innovation Team is continuing to refine its shared values and measures as it builds a SPF. The Innovation Team will also support the Call for Quality Schools work including providing support to internal MISD teams interested in putting forward innovative new school proposals.

→ Learning Trip

MISD completed a very productive Learning Trip visiting Great Hearts, Basis, and IDEA Public Schools in San Antonio to learn more about their instructional models.

South San Antonio ISD

→ Middle School Design

After a community-wide survey, SSAISD has begun the process of designing three new middle school programs, one each focused on health sciences, fine arts and STEM. Deeper design will launch in the coming weeks.

→ Learning Trip

To learn from great practices underway in other systems, a group of SSAISD leaders will engage in a multi-day learning trip to study high performing and innovative middle school models. The learning from this trip will inform SSAISD's own MS design work.

→ Continued SPF Development

SSAISD has launched a community conversation anchored in the simple but poignant question: "what do you look for in your own child's school?" Themes that emerge from these conversations will inform next steps in the development of an SPF.

Spring Branch ISD

→ School Design

SBISD is in the middle of their School Redesign Collaborative with 10 schools representing over 15,500 students.

→ Maintaining Momentum

Spring Branch has been actively engaged in managing the impact of Hurricane Harvey on their community while continuing to work on their Roadmap and SPF development.

RESOURCE ROUND UP

The 5Essentials System

School performance frameworks, while always grounded in academic outcomes, often include measures that go beyond standardized test scores. For example, the [rating for a school in Camden](#) (NJ) is based 50% on student outcomes on state tests and 50% on a school quality review visit conducted by fellow principals, teachers, and administrators. The [rating system in Oakland](#) includes school culture and climate measures, including student survey results related to student engagement and growth mindset. The [system used in Chicago](#) includes information on freshmen on track rates as well from the [5Essentials Survey of School Effectiveness](#).

The [5Essentials](#) is a diagnostic survey-based assessment of school effectiveness based on more than 20 years of research. The 5Essentials survey assesses a schools' strengths and weaknesses in five key areas for improving school success and student learning:

- ✓ **Effective Leaders:** The principal works with teachers to implement a clear and strategic vision for school success.
- ✓ **Collaborative Teachers:** The staff is committed to the school, receives strong professional development, and works together to improve the school.
- ✓ **Involved Families:** The entire school staff builds strong relationships with families and communities to support learning.
- ✓ **Supportive Environment:** The school is safe and orderly. Teachers have high expectations for students. Students are supported by their teachers and peers.
- ✓ **Ambitious Instruction:** Classes are academically demanding and engage students by emphasizing the application of knowledge.

Research demonstrates that schools strong on the 5 essentials are ten times more likely to improve student learning than schools weak on the five essentials. The SGS team encourages you to explore the 5 Essentials as a component of your School Performance Frameworks.

TEA DIVISION UPDATES

System Support and Innovation

→ Transformation Zone Planning Grants

The application for the Transformation Zone (TZ) Planning Grant is now live on [TEA's Grant Opportunities website](#). Transformation Zones are groups of Priority or Focus schools supported by a dedicated zone leadership or management team. The TZ planning grant will support districts to develop a dedicated Zone Management or support structure and create strategies that can transform schools in the zone into better options of students.

Responsibilities of a Zone management team could include managing a school development or redesign process, developing an annual portfolio review process, or related activities. Strategies to transform schools in the zone could include actions such as: Identifying and partnering with high quality charter management organizations to operate campuses in the zone, Redesigning the campuses in the zone, in partnership with external organizations that specialize in school design, or other locally developed and evidence-based strategies.

For more information, please visit the [Transformation Zone page through the TEA website](#).

SAVE THE DATE!

October 24th 11am-12:30pm CT

National webinar hosted by Regional Education Lab Southwest

Building a System of Great Schools: The What, So What, and Now What?

This free public webinar will provide a brief overview of the research surrounding school portfolio management, followed by an engaging discussion around defining school quality (the “What”), mapping school quality to potential school interventions (the “So What?”), and orchestrating an annual decision-making cycle to ensure school interventions maximize impact for students (the “Now What?”). Current district efforts to implement school portfolio management will be profiled. **Susan Bowles Therriault, Ed.D.**, will provide a national perspective on school portfolio management. **Star Wallin**, a national expert on school portfolio management design and implementation who has worked closely with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) will guide the conversation with **Eric Gordon**, Chief Executive Officer of CMSD. **Mike Herschenfeld** will provide an overview of the Texas Education Agency’s System of Great Schools Network.

**Registration information will be posted to the website below by the end of next week*

WWW.SYSTEMOFGREATSCHOOLS.ORG