



THE SGS BULLETIN (No. 4)

BUILDING SYSTEMS OF GREAT SCHOOLS ACROSS TEXAS

FROM THE SGS TEAM!

SGS Roadmaps

Earlier this month, all eight districts in Cohort 1 of the SGS Network submitted initial drafts of their System of Great School Implementation Roadmap to Commissioner Morath.

Completion of the Roadmap is one of the few required activities for members of an SGS Network Cohort. While the initial drafts included high-level prioritization of levers and initiatives, a completed draft will include initiatives, milestones, and deliverables. Districts will continue to work with their executive advisors to identify timelines, owners, key interdependencies, and risk mitigation strategies.

Throughout the development of the Roadmap, districts are also engaged in implementation work towards becoming a System of Great Schools. Updates on districts' planning and implementation can be in the district updates section of this bulletin.

Check out the New SGS Website!

www.systemofgreatschools.org

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

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 in real time and engage in discussions across the network.

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.*

Other Important TEA Deadlines

November 30th
(DSSI; Bibi Katsev)

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

IN THE SPOTLIGHT



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](#).

In working towards the implementation of a [school performance framework](#), Manor Independent School District has focused on developing a school excellence framework as pre-work. 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. While it is not always necessary to carve this work out, it can serve as a critical step for a district to identify the qualitative components it wants to measure against school success.

Manor's draft [School Excellence Framework](#) identifies five pillars with multiple measurable components under each:

1. **Student Success (Instruction):** campus improvement plan, curriculum and standards, evidence-based instruction, instructional leadership, professional learning communities, and delivery of instruction;
2. **Student Success (Climate):** positive climate, routines and transitions, culture of high-expectations, and tracking systems;
3. **People:** talent management, staff development, use of staff, and leadership practices;
4. **Service:** shared responsibility, stakeholder support, use of partnerships, and customer service; and
5. **Resources:** use of funds, use of time, and use of material resources.

Additional information and resources related to SGS lever 1 and school performance frameworks can be found in the Resource Roundup section below.

TIMELY TOPICS

[Building a System of Great Schools: The What, So What, and Now What?](#)

On October 24, 2017, the Regional Education Lab (REL) Southwest hosted a [bridge event webinar](#) in collaboration with the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Comprehensive Center about school system management. The webinar presented actionable guidance on how to begin the process of defining what a high-quality school is, taking strategic actions towards ensuring that more of a district's students attend a high-quality school each year, and how this translates into a district managing a System of Great Schools. The recorded webinar will be available on the [REL website](#) as soon as possible.

[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

→ Strategic Abandonment

EPISD has been working through strategic abandonment exercises to ensure that its focus is narrowed to the programs that will truly impact student outcomes, and are aligned with the board goals.

→ Focus on Student Outcomes

EPISD presented to local stakeholders its focus on student outcomes, utilizing SGS as the foundation to ensure high performing schools, continuous improvement, and providing the necessary support from central office. Directly aligned with SGS levers 1, 2 and 6, EPISD is going to focus on literacy, numeracy, New Tech, and Active Learning.

Fort Worth ISD

→ Strategic Priorities

FWISD has developed next steps, and assigned ownership to its 3 defined district priorities:

- Create Strategic Plan 2.0 to provide a roadmap for the next five years and connect the SGS work to overall work of the district.
- Develop a Quality Schools Framework to clearly define school-level success and drive school quality by expanding successful schools, growing new schools, and acting to address struggling schools.
- Comprehensively plan for new schools and charter partnerships to begin to build a process for expanding quality options to students and families.

Manor ISD

→ Lone Star Governance

Manor ISD's board recently completed the Lone Star Governance Training paving the way for sustainability and broad support for the district's strategic plan and its work with SGS.

→ SGS Implementation Roadmap

Manor ISD's Executive Directors (who oversee support for all schools) have aligned their monthly school visit protocol based upon SGS work to uniformly monitor a school against certain components of its School Excellence Framework. This is the first step in unifying the conversation about school performance.

Midland ISD

→ Listen and Learn

Superintendent Riddick and the MISD senior leadership team have completed the initial five sessions of the tour on October 26th. Additional L&L sessions have been scheduled given the overwhelmingly positive response by the Midland community.

→ Call for Quality Schools

MISD is executing a Call for Quality Schools in Midland to identify high quality in-district and external partners to help serve Midland's students with rigorous, innovative models. MISD launched its Call for Quality Schools Request for Information on October 16th and applications are due November 17th. [Midland on the Move Video](#).

→ Continued Groundwork on SPF

MISD's "Midland on the Move Transformation Team" has made significant progress on SPF values and measures and is continue to refine measures and weights for further discussion of an initial SPF design.

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.

RESOURCE ROUND UP

A focus on SGS Lever 1: School Quality

Lever 1 of the System of Great Schools strategy is to create a shared, local, definition of what a great school is. A school performance framework and management process are the foundation of a System of Great Schools. Together, these initiatives give district leadership the data and decision-making framework it needs to get more students into better schools every year. A [presentation describing Lever 1](#) and a [quick start bundle of resources](#) can be found on our website.

→ **The work (presentations):**

- 1.1 [Establish a school performance framework](#)
- 1.2 [Identify school actions and develop guidelines for applying them](#)
- 1.3 [Develop a regular portfolio review and planning process](#)
- 1.4 [Continue developing capacity to improve school planning processes](#)

Access to a thorough description of the work that can take place while implementing Lever 1, as well as resources and examples, can be found on the [System of Great Schools website](#).

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](#).

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