2024-2025 Summer Career and Technical Education Grant

Informal Discretionary Competition (IDC) Application Due 11:59 p.m. CT, April 9, 2025

NOGA ID [ ]

| Authorizing legislation | General Appropriations Act, House Bill 1, Article IX, Section 18.114(c)(v) |

This IDC application must be submitted via email to **competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov**.

The IDC application may be signed with a digital ID or it may be signed by hand. Both forms of signature are acceptable.

Application stamp-in date and time

TEA must receive the application by **11:59 p.m. CT, April 9, 2025**.

| Grant period from | **May 29, 2025 - September 30, 2025** |
| Pre-award costs permitted from | **Not Permitted** |

Required Attachments

1. Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)

See the Program Guidelines for for additional attachment information.

Select Focus Area (Applicants May Select One or Both Focus Areas)

☒ Focus Area 1: Career and Technical Education Course

☐ Focus Area 2: Work-Based Learning Experiences

Amendment Number

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

Applicant Information

| Organization | The Varnett Public School | CDN | 101814 | ESC | 4 | UEI | L5VKSBEMDN81 |

| Address | 5025 South Willow Drive | City | Houston | ZIP | 77035 | Vendor ID | 1760297121 |

| Primary Contact | Frank Cisneros | Email | fcisneros@varnett.org | Phone | 281-369-8855 |

| Secondary Contact | Shawna Clouser | Email | sclouser@varnett.org | Phone | 281-369-8855 |

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 LOI application, as applicable, and that these documents are incorporated by reference as part of the LOI application and Notice of Grant Award (NOGA):

☒ LOI application, guidelines, and instructions

☒ General and application-specific Provisions and Assurances

☒ Debarment and Suspension Certification

☒ Lobbying Certification

| Authorized Official Name | Dr. Nita White | Title | Superintendent |

| Email | nwhite@varnett.org | Phone | 713-667-4051 |

| Signature | N. White Ed.D | Date | 4-8-25 |

Shared Services Arrangements

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are permitted for this grant. **Check the box below if applying as fiscal agent.**

☐ The LEA or ESC submitting this application is the fiscal agent of a planned SSA. All participating agencies will enter into a written SSA agreement describing the fiscal agent and SSA member responsibilities. All participants understand that the "Shared Services Arrangement Attachment" must be completed and signed by all SSA members, and submitted to TEA before the NOGA is issued.

Statutory/Program Assurances

The following assurances apply to this program. In order to meet the requirements of the program, the applicant 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 IDC 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 the Statutory and TEA Program requirements as noted in the 2024-2025 Summer Career and Technical Education Grant Program Guidelines.

☒ 4. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2024-2025 Summer Career and Technical Education Grant Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.

☒ 5. The applicant provides assurance that curriculum will be appropriately aligned to regional labor market supported CTE programs of study.

☒ 6. The applicant provides assurance to provide data to TEA on student completion of courses through the Fall PEIMS Collection Process.

☒ 7. The applicant assures that any Electronic Information Resources (EIR) produced as part of this agreement will comply with the State of Texas Accessibility requirements as specified in 1 TAC 206, 1 TAC Chapter 213, Federal Section 508 standards, and the WCAG 2.0 AA Accessibility Guidelines.

Summary of Program (Focus Area 1)

Provide an overview of the program to be implemented with grant funds. Include the overall mission and specific needs of the organization. Describe how the program will address the mission and needs.

The Varnett School is seeking funding to launch a focused summer program aimed at preparing 65 incoming 8th and 9th graders for high school Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways in computer programming and gaming. This initiative combines hands-on learning with interactive instruction provided by YaizY, a STEAM education partner known for delivering TEA-aligned courses and industry-supported content. Certified math and science teachers will lead classroom activities to ensure students have the guidance and support they need to succeed.

Summary of Program (Focus Area 2)

Provide an overview of the program to be implemented with grant funds. Include the overall mission and specific needs of the organization. Describe how the program will address the mission and needs.

Qualifications and Experience for Key Personnel (Focus Area 1)

Outline the required qualifications and experience for primary project personnel and any external consultants projected to be involved in the implementation and delivery of the program. Include whether the position is existing or proposed.

Title and Responsibilities of Position	Required Qualifications and Experience
Summer School Director (Existing Position)-Planning, implementation, evaluation of program; coordinate with YaizY; progress monitoring of program	Strong leadership experience in managing summer school programs. Knowledge of CTE pathways and experience in facilitating grant-supported initiatives.
Certified Math and Science Teachers (Existing Positions)-facilitate lessons; integrate interdisciplinary concept; on-site mentors	Texas teaching certifications in math or science. Experience with technology-driven education and engaging middle school students in project-based learning.
YaizY Instructors (Proposed Positions)-deliver hybrid instruction, guide students on interactive projects, technical skill development & career pathway	Certified instructors with expertise in computer programming, game development, or animation. Experience integrating industry certifications and technology into STEAM education.

Qualifications and Experience for Key Personnel (Focus Area 2)

Outline the required qualifications and experience for primary project personnel and any external consultants projected to be involved in the implementation and delivery of the program. Include whether the position is existing or proposed.

Title and Responsibilities of Position	Required Qualifications and Experience

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies (Focus Area 1)

Describe the major goals/objectives of the proposed program. What activities/strategies will be implemented to meet those goals/objectives?

Challenges Identified:
Limited Access to STEAM Education: Despite Houston's growing technology sector, many students at The Varnett Public School lack access to foundational STEAM pathways such as coding, animation, and gaming. This creates barriers for underserved students seeking opportunities in high-demand fields.
Teacher Shortages and Scheduling Constraints: The Varnett Public School faces challenges in staffing specialized teachers for advanced technical courses during the regular academic year, limiting opportunities to integrate STEAM education into the curriculum.
Workforce Readiness Gap: Houston industries increasingly require professionals skilled in programming and game development, yet current offerings in middle school education do not adequately prepare students to pursue these career paths.

How the Program Addresses These Needs:
Comprehensive Curriculum: By partnering with YaizY, The Varnett Public School will offer TEA-aligned courses that introduce students to coding and gaming concepts tailored to industry standards.
Interdisciplinary Learning Model: Certified math and science teachers will provide in-person support, reinforcing STEAM principles while guiding hands-on activities and project-based learning.
Career Preparation: Through a structured program emphasizing practical skills, students will gain confidence and foundational knowledge, preparing them for advanced high school CTE pathways and future STEAM careers.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies (Focus Area 2)

Describe the major goals/objectives of the proposed program. What activities/strategies will be implemented to meet those goals/objectives?

Performance and Evaluation Measures (Focus Area 1)

Describe the performance measures identified for this program which are related to student outcomes and are consistent with the purpose of the program. Include the tools used to measure performance, as well as the processes that will be used to ensure the effectiveness of project objectives and strategies.

Student Outcomes:
Participation:
Maintain detailed records of enrollment and active engagement for all 65 students throughout the program, ensuring high levels of involvement and retention.
Project Completion:
Monitor completion rates for coding and gaming projects, with milestones set to gauge student progress and mastery of program content.
Skill Development:
Assess student learning progress through pre- and post-program evaluations, measuring growth in foundational coding and gaming skills.
Tools and Processes:
Digital Assessment Platform:
Utilize YaizY's proprietary digital platform to track student performance, monitor project completion, and generate detailed reports on learning outcomes.
Collaborative Evaluation Framework:
Conduct weekly progress meetings involving the Summer School Director, certified math and science teachers, and YaizY instructors to review alignment with program objectives and address any challenges.
Continuous Improvement:
Feedback from students, teachers, and instructors will be collected at regular intervals to refine instructional strategies, improve engagement, and enhance overall program effectiveness.

Performance and Evaluation Measures (Focus Area 2)

Describe the performance measures identified for this program which are related to student outcomes and are consistent with the purpose of the program. Include the tools used to measure performance, as well as the processes that will be used to ensure the effectiveness of project objectives and strategies.

Budget Narrative (Focus Area 1)

Describe how the proposed budget will meet the needs and goals of the program, including for staffing, supplies and materials, contracts, travel, etc. If applicable, include a high-level snapshot of funds currently allocated to similar programs. Include a short narrative describing how adjustments will be made in the future to meet needs.

Funding Allocation: Grant funds of up to $48,000 will be allocated as follows:
Licenses for YaizY Curriculum and Software:
Purchase 65–70 licenses at an adjusted rate of approximately $110–$140 per license, ensuring access to curriculum, software, and live hybrid instruction.
Estimated cost: $9,500.
High-Quality Laptops for Programming and Game Design:
Purchase 25 high-performance laptops at approximately $1,200 each, totaling $30,000. These laptops will be shared among students in rotational clusters to facilitate hands-on learning and project work.
Personnel Costs:
Compensation for two certified summer school teachers who will guide student learning and provide on-site support.
Estimated cost: $6,000 (at $3,000 per teacher).
Materials and Supplies:
Allocate $2,500 for essential project kits, gaming accessories, curriculum guides, and classroom resources to support hands-on STEAM activities.
Total Estimated Budget: $48,000

Future Adjustments: Budget allocations will be reviewed monthly, with funds redirected to high-impact areas (e.g., expanded student support or additional resources) based on performance evaluations.

Budget Narrative (Focus Area 2)

Describe how the proposed budget will meet the needs and goals of the program, including for staffing, supplies and materials, contracts, travel, etc. If applicable, include a high-level snapshot of funds currently allocated to similar programs. Include a short narrative describing how adjustments will be made in the future to meet needs.

Program Requirements

1a. Needs Assessment (Focus Area 1): Applicants must complete a Needs Assessment Summary indicating specific area of need the LEA has that hinders the completion of courses within programs of study. (For example: describing scheduling conflicts, specific program of study teacher availability, etc.)

Needs Assessment Summary: Houston's growing technology sector highlights an urgent need to address gaps in STEAM education for underserved middle school students. Barriers such as scheduling constraints, teacher shortages, and limited access to specialized resources have restricted exposure to career pathways like coding, animation, and gaming. These barriers have left students at The Varnett Public School without equitable opportunities to build the foundational skills necessary for success in high-demand fields.

To address these challenges, The Varnett Public School will implement a summer CTE program designed to provide 65 middle school students with access to rigorous coursework in gaming and coding. The program will align with TEA-approved CTE pathways, ensuring that students engage with industry-relevant content and practical learning experiences.

1b. Needs Assessment (Focus Area 2): Applicants must complete a Needs Assessment Summary indicating specific area of needs the LEA has to offer work-based learning opportunities. (For example: describing transportation limitations, describing scheduling conflicts, specific program of study teacher availability, etc.)

Program Requirements, cont'd.

2. **Focus Area 1**: Applicants must specify which program(s) of study and the CTE course(s) in the program(s) of study that will be offered (see https://tea.texas.gov/academics/college-career-and-military-prep/career-and-technical-education/cte-programs-of-study for a list of the approved statewide programs of study). Include the number of students who be engaged and supported in this focus area.

Programs of Study and Course Offerings: The program will feature four foundational courses, carefully designed to introduce students to essential STEAM concepts:
Coding Fundamentals: Develop problem-solving skills and logic through the basics of programming.
Game Design Principles: Foster creativity by teaching students how to conceptualize, build, and refine digital games.
Animation: Explore storytelling through motion and design, leveraging tools used by industry professionals.
Cybersecurity Basics: Introduce students to digital security concepts, equipping them with knowledge to navigate today's tech-driven world.

Student Impact: Through these carefully designed courses, all 65 students will:
Gain Foundational Knowledge: Master introductory skills in coding, game design, animation, and cybersecurity, sparking interest in STEAM disciplines.
Prepare for Advanced Pathways: Earn recognition and foundational credits aligned with TEA CTE standards, enabling seamless progression into high school CTE tracks.
Build Career Awareness: Explore how their newfound technical skills can lead to future opportunities in Houston's technology-driven workforce.

3. **Focus Area 2**: Applicants must specify business and industry partners who will be involved in the program. Additionally, specify the work-based learning model(s) which will be utilized and the number of students who will be engaged and supported.