



2025-2026 Effective Advising Framework Implementation Grant
Informal Discretionary Grant (IDC) Application Due 11:59 p.m. CT, June 17, 2023

NOGA ID

Authorizing legislation

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.

TEA must receive the application by **11:59 p.m. CT, June 17, 2025**.

Application stamp-in date and time

Grant period from **September 1, 2025 - August 31, 2026**

Pre-award costs permitted from **Pre-Award Costs Are Not Permitted**

Required Attachments (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)

Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules

Attachment 1: 2025-2026 Effective Advising Framework Implementation Grant Program Agreement

Amendment Number

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

Applicant Information

Organization Mercedes I.S.D. CDN 108907 Campus N/A ESC 1 UEI ULQ5EL5S9BY4

Address 206 W. Sixth Street City Mercedes ZIP 78570 Vendor ID 1746001718

Primary Contact Jeanne Venecia Email jeanne.venecia@misdtx.net Phone 956-825-2016

Secondary Contact Mona Guerra Email mona.guerra@misdtx.net Phone 956-825-5077

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

☒ IDC application, guidelines, and instructions

☒ Debarment and Suspension Certification

☒ General and application-specific Provisions and Assurances

☒ Lobbying Certification

Authorized Official Name Dr. Alicia Noyola Title Interim Superintendent of Schools

Email alicia.noyola@misdtx.net Phone 956-514-2002

Signature *A Noyola* Date 6-5-2025

Shared Services Arrangements☐ Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are NOT permitted for this grant. .**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 LOI 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 2025-2026 Effective Advising Framework District Planning Grant Program Guidelines.
- ☒ 4. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2025-2026 Effective Advising Framework District Planning Grant Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.
- ☒ 5. 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

1. How this program will support individual student planning in the context of comprehensive school counseling, and 2. How this program will foster innovation in CTE programming and/or promote career pathways aligned to high-skill, high-wage careers or industries.

Mercedes Independent School District (MISD) will utilize Effective Advising Framework (EAF) grant funds to strengthen individual student planning by embedding personalized, data-informed advising within its comprehensive school counseling program. Through the implementation of structured advising systems, students will receive targeted, developmentally appropriate guidance aligned with their academic progress, interests, and postsecondary goals. Counselors, advisors, and trained educators will leverage academic and career readiness tools to support the development of individualized graduation plans, provide navigation through college and career pathways, and offer early exposure to postsecondary options. Key advising activities, including one-on-one conferences, career interest inventories, and goal-setting sessions, will occur at multiple points throughout the school year to promote informed decision-making. This continuous and student-centered advising model will empower students to actively shape their educational trajectories and prepare for high-impact college and career opportunities.

The EAF program implemented will drive innovation in CTE programming and promote career pathways aligned with high-skill, high-wage industries by integrating labor market intelligence into the district's advising systems. Through strategic collaboration among counselors, CTE staff, and district leadership, students will receive targeted, personalized advising that connects them to in-demand career sectors such as healthcare, information technology, education, and advanced manufacturing. The program will provide professional development for teachers to deepen their understanding of CTE pathways, expand student awareness of industry-recognized certifications and dual credit opportunities, and increase access to work-based learning through new and strengthened partnerships with local employers and postsecondary institutions. By embedding career-focused advising into the broader educational experience, MISD will increase CTE engagement, enhance postsecondary readiness, and promote upward economic mobility for all students.

Qualifications and Experience of Key Personnel

- EAF Coach** - Who is the EAF Coach and what are their qualifications? What percentage of their time will be allocated specifically to the district to support implementation and what is the ESC fee for the contracted support?
- EAF Project Lead** - Who is the EAF Project Lead and what are their qualifications? What percentage of their time is allocated to this project? How will the district ensure the EAF Project Lead has the appropriate time and capacity to lead this project? How will the district ensure the steering committee provides the necessary support to the EAF Project Lead? Include the stipend amounts allocated for the Project Lead and each steering committee member. (Total stipend amounts for Project Lead and steering committee members are not to exceed 20% of the total grant budget.)
- District Commitment** - Outline the district's commitment to this project. Reference the District Commitments from Lever 1 and Lever 3 of the EAF in your response. Describe district leadership's involvement in the EAF grant from the 2024-2025 school year and the evidence of support shown for this initiative. In addition, how will the district communicate this initiative to necessary stakeholders in this grant project to ensure buy-in and foster an internal culture of advising?
- Steering Committee** - Who are the steering committee members and how do they meet the required criteria outlined in the Program Elements below? How will the district ensure the steering committee provides the necessary support to the EAF Project Lead? Include the stipend amounts allocated for the EAF Project Lead and each steering committee member. (Total stipend amounts for the EAF Project Lead and steering committee members are not to exceed 20% of the total grant budget.)

1. Amanda O. Cardoza will serve as the district's EAF Implementation Coach. Ms. Cardoza currently serves as the College, Career, and Life Readiness Lead at Region One Education Service Center, where she brings extensive experience and a strong background in counseling. Ms. Cardoza is the current EAF Coach for Mercedes ISD under the EAF Planning Pilot Grant. In her continued role, she will lead the coordination and facilitation of the district's EAF Steering Committee, ensuring the successful implementation of program requirements and the timely completion of all grant deliverables. She will allocate 25% of her time specifically to support the district's EAF Implementation Grant.

2. Jeanne Venecia, Director of Student Services for Mercedes ISD, will serve as the Project Lead for the Effective Advising Framework (EAF) Implementation Grant. Mrs. Venecia brings extensive qualifications to the role, including a robust background in student support services, counseling coordination, and multi-tiered systems of support. In her current capacity, she provides direct oversight and guidance to all campus counselors and social workers across the district, ensuring equitable and comprehensive service delivery to all students. To ensure successful implementation of the EAF grant, Mrs. Venecia will allocate 15-25% of her time to project leadership responsibilities; including active participation in all EAF Steering Committee meetings, completion of grant-specific deliverables, and facilitation of improvements to the district's advising and counseling framework that are fully aligned with Mercedes ISD's curriculum and instructional design priorities. To guarantee that Mrs. Venecia has the time and capacity to lead this initiative effectively, the district has assembled a cross-functional EAF Steering Committee to support the EAF project through ongoing collaboration, progress monitoring, and implementation of systems and structures aligned with grant goals. The total stipend for the project lead will be \$5,000.

3. Mercedes ISD is deeply committed to the Effective Advising Framework (EAF) as a strategic driver for increasing postsecondary readiness and ensuring equitable access to college and career pathways. Rooted in the district's vision and mission, the EAF initiative supports a holistic approach to student success through personalized advising, career exploration, and strong interdepartmental collaboration. Since the 2024-2025 planning year, district leadership has been actively engaged in the development and coordination of the EAF through a cross-functional Steering Committee and a dedicated Project Lead. This leadership team has committed time and resources to align the initiative with instructional priorities and advising systems. In alignment with Lever 1 and Lever 3 of the EAF, Mercedes ISD will continue to prioritize strong leadership, planning, and systemic advising improvements. The district will ensure stakeholder engagement and buy-in through regular updates to district leadership, targeted professional development for counselors and advisors, and parent/student outreach through informational sessions and digital communication. By embedding EAF priorities into the district's strategic goals and fostering a culture of advising at all levels, Mercedes ISD will build sustainable systems that support every student in achieving their full educational and career potential.

4. The CCMR Coordinator, Student Success Advisor, Special Education Director, Director of Special Programs, District Lead Counselor, Career and Technical Education (CTE) Director and Director of Secondary Curriculum will all serve as steering committee members. Each steering committee member will allocate between 10-20% of their time toward the execution of EAF grant activities in accordance with the district's approved implementation plan. The stipend for each steering committee member will be \$2,000.

Each member brings essential expertise aligned with the EAF's comprehensive advising priorities: The CCMR Coordinator and Student Success Advisor bring direct knowledge of postsecondary readiness strategies, academic advising structures, and data-driven interventions. The Special Education Director will ensure the framework is inclusive, equitable, and accessible for all students, including those with special needs and underrepresented populations. The Director of Special Programs will ensure that the parents and the community is involved in the implementation of the framework as well as ensure grant compliance. The District Lead Counselor ensures alignment with guidance counseling models and professional standards. The CTE Director supports the integration of career pathway advising and work-based learning opportunities. The Director of Secondary Curriculum ensure alignment between advising practices and instructional design across K-12 settings.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Indicate the four EAF Priorities the district will implement in the 2025-2026 school year that were developed with the support of the EAF Coach in spring 2025 using either the EAF Gap Analysis Tool or the SY25-26 EAF Priorities and Student Outcomes resource. For each EAF Priority, include the following: a description of the EAF Priority to be implemented, the aligned SMART student outcome goal, the targeted grade level(s), the targeted development area (academic, career, personal/social, or financial literacy and aid), the key staff who will lead and support implementation of this priority, and the strategy to support the priority. Include in the strategy the necessary staff training, communication to stakeholders, advising resources, and external partnerships.

1. Provide the information above for the district's first EAF Priority.
2. Provide the information above for the district's second EAF Priority.
3. Provide the information above for the district's third EAF Priority.
4. Provide the information above for the district's fourth EAF Priority.

EAF Priority 1: Expand Access to Work-Based Learning Opportunities: MISD will expand access to internships, apprenticeships, and work-based learning experiences for 12th grade students to strengthen postsecondary and workforce readiness.

Goal: By the end of the 2025-2026 school year, increase the percentage of 12th-grade students participating in a work-based learning experience from a 12% baseline to a 25% target.

Targeted Grade Level(s): 12th Grade

Development Area: Career Development Expectations (CD)

Key Staff: CTE Director (lead), CCMR Coordinator, Student Success Advisor, High School Principals

Strategy: The district will develop new and expand existing partnerships with local employers, chambers of commerce, and higher education institutions to offer real-world experiences. Staff will receive training on aligning student interests with available career pathways and using advising tools to place students into appropriate internships or apprenticeships. Stakeholders will be informed through campus meetings, newsletters, and district communications. Students will be matched using interest inventories and supported through advising sessions. Partnerships will be formalized through MOUs, and program logistics will be tracked using a centralized management system.

EAF Priority 2: Increase Early College Readiness through TSIA2 Success: MISD will implement a targeted advising and instructional support system to prepare 10th grade students for the TSIA2 college readiness assessment.

Goal: By the end of the 2025-2026 school year, increase the percentage of 10th grade students passing the TSIA2 from a 9% baseline to a 50% target.

Targeted Grade Level(s): 10th Grade

Development Area: Academic Development Expectations (AD)

Key Staff: Director of Secondary Curriculum (lead), High School Counselors, CCMR Coordinator, Student Success Advisor, Deans of Instruction, ACE Program Coordinator

Strategy: The district will provide TSIA2 prep through embedded instructional support, after school tutorials, and integrated advising on college readiness benchmarks. Teachers and counselors will receive training on TSIA2 scoring, readiness standards, and student data analysis. Communication will include student score reports and TSIA2 information nights for families. Resources will include College Board-aligned practice tools and locally designed progress monitoring systems. Partnerships with local colleges will provide test administration and guidance on remediation options.

EAF Priority 3: Strengthen Career Preparedness in Early High School: MISD will expand structured career exploration and pathway selection in 10th grade to help students align their coursework with long-term career goals.

Goal: By the end of the 2025-2026 school year, increase the percentage of 10th grade students participating in career preparedness activities from a 60% baseline to a 70% target.

Targeted Grade Level: 10th Grade

Development Area: Personal & Social Development Expectations (PS)

Key Staff: CTE Director (lead), Student Success Advisor, Campus Counselors, Career Exploration Teachers

Strategy: The district will deliver classroom based career lessons, administer career interest inventories, and implement student led portfolio development. Teachers and counselors will be trained in how to utilize School Links resources and individual graduation plan development. Stakeholder communication will occur through parent nights, student assemblies, and advising meetings. MISD will partner with regional workforce boards and higher education institutions to provide industry insights and job shadowing opportunities.

EAF Priority 4: Increase FAFSA Completion through Strategic Advising: MISD will enhance financial aid advising and family engagement to increase FAFSA/TAFA completion among 12th grade students.

Goal: By the end of the 2025-2026 school year, increase the percentage of 12th grade students completing the FAFSA from a 71% baseline to an 85% target.

Targeted Grade Level: 12th Grade

Development Area: Financial Literacy and Aid

Key Staff: Student Success Advisor and CCMR Coordinator (lead), Campus Counselors, Director of Special Programs

Strategy: The district will host multiple FAFSA/TAFA workshops for families in both English and Spanish, provide one-on-one FAFSA advising sessions, and track completion rates in real time. Staff will be trained in FAFSA processes, verification procedures, and use of data dashboards. Communications will include family newsletters, social media campaigns, and automated reminders. MISD will collaborate with local universities, Region One ESC, and community organizations to support application events and financial aid literacy.

Performance and Evaluation Measures

For each of the four EAF Priorities indicated above, describe how you will monitor progress throughout the year to ensure successful implementation so that student outcome goals are met. Include in your response the types of data used to monitor progress, the tools that will be used to collect and analyze data, and the process for reflecting on the data.

EAF Priority 1: MISD will track the number and percentage of 12th grade students participating in internships, apprenticeships, or work-based learning experiences monthly through campus-based reporting in a local tracking system and verified by the CTE Director using attendance logs, placement records, and partnership documentation. The district will also monitor student reflections or supervisor feedback forms to assess quality of experience. Quarterly reviews of participation data will be conducted during EAF Steering Committee meetings to identify barriers and adjust recruitment, scheduling, or placement efforts as needed.

EAF Priority 2: Progress will be monitored through student TSIA2 diagnostic assessments, pre- and post-test scores, and official results. Data will be collected via the TSIA2 platform and district benchmarks. CCMR Coordinator, Student Success Advisor and counselors will use a local tracking system to disaggregate data. Monthly data checks will guide targeted interventions, and campus teams will meet with district curriculum leadership and the CCMR Coordinator and Student Success Advisor quarterly to evaluate trends and revise instructional and advising supports.

EAF Priority 3: Career preparedness participation data will be collected through the number of students completing interest inventories and career lessons. Counselors and career exploration teachers will track this data using a local tracking system. Participation will also be reflected in the college and career readiness platform, like School Links. Monthly reports will be submitted to the CTE Director and reviewed during campus leadership meetings. Reflections from student surveys and counselor observations will inform program improvements and lesson pacing.

EAF Priority 4: FAFSA/TAFSA completion will be monitored through real-time data from the ApplyTexas and THECB dashboards, cross-referenced with counselor documentation. The Student Success Advisor and CCMR Coordinator will maintain a FAFSA tracking spreadsheet, updated weekly during peak season. Schools will identify students who have not completed financial aid applications and offer targeted outreach. Monthly data will be reviewed with counselors and principals to assess progress, identify gaps and implement timely follow up strategies.

Budget Justification

Describe how the proposed budget will meet the goals of the proposed program. For each category below, include the following: How does this budget category align to one or more of the four EAF Priorities the district has identified? Provide a justification for the specific funding allocations in the proposed budget which may include explanation of pay rates and hours expected for services rendered.

Payroll, Professional and contracted services, Supplies and materials, Other operating costs

Payroll (6100): \$45,500 to partially fund the salaries of the CCMR Coordinator and Student Success Advisor, who are critical leads in implementing EAF Priorities 1, 2, and 4; \$21,000 is allocated for stipends for Steering Committee members. These stipends compensate committee members for their time to oversee implementation and support cross-functional advising systems across all four EAF Priorities.

Professional and Contracted Services (6200): \$20,000 is allocated for technical assistance and coaching from Region One ESC, whose support will ensure fidelity to the Effective Advising Framework across all four GLEs; \$8,000 is dedicated to training teachers and counselors on how to successfully implement and integrate SchoolLinks, a college and career readiness platform that supports EAF Priority 3; \$2,000 is set aside for additional professional development sessions for teachers, counselors, and school leaders on topics supporting all EAF Priorities, such as advising best practices, equity in access, and integrating academic and career pathways.

Supplies and Materials (6300): \$20,000 to purchase SchoolLinks licenses for all students. SchoolLinks will supports all EAF Priority 3. This investment directly supports the district's goals to improve student engagement in career planning and increase preparedness for postsecondary success.

Other Operating Costs (6400): \$2,000 is dedicated to travel costs for teachers, counselors, and school leaders to attend out of district professional development, ensuring they receive high-quality, targeted training aligned to all four priorities; \$1,500 is allocated to support college fairs, which offer students direct interaction with college, career, and military representatives. These events promote awareness of postsecondary options and directly support EAF Priorities 1 and 4.

Equitable Access and Participation

Check the appropriate box below to indicate whether any barriers exist to equitable access and participation for any groups that receive services funded by this program.

- ☒ The applicant assures that no barriers exist to equitable access and participation for any groups receiving services funded by this program.
- ☐ Barriers exist to equitable access and participation for the following groups receiving services funded by this grant, as described below.

Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>

PNP Equitable Services

Are any private nonprofit schools located within the applicant's boundaries?

- ☒ Yes ☐ No

If you answered "No" to the preceding question, stop here. You have completed the section. Proceed to the next page.

Are any private nonprofit schools participating in the program?

- ☐ Yes ☒ No

If you answered "No" to the preceding question, stop here. You have completed the section. Proceed to the next page.

5A: Assurances

- ☐ The LEA assures that it discussed all consultation requirements as listed in Section 1117(b)(1) and/or Section 8501(c)(1), as applicable, with all eligible private nonprofit schools located within the LEA's boundaries.
- ☐ The LEA assures the appropriate Affirmations of Consultation will be provided to TEA's PNP Ombudsman in the manner and time requested.

5B: Equitable Services Calculation

1. LEA's student enrollment	<input type="text"/>
2. Enrollment of all participating private schools	<input type="text"/>
3. Total enrollment of LEA and all participating PNPs (line 1 plus line 2)	<input type="text"/>
4. Total current-year program allocation	<input type="text"/>
5. LEA reservation for direct administrative costs, not to exceed the program's defined limit	<input type="text"/>
6. Total LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 4 minus line 5)	<input type="text"/>
7. Per-pupil LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 6 divided by line 3)	<input type="text"/>
LEA's total required ESSA PNP equitable services reservation (line 7 times line 2)	<input type="text"/>

Appendix I: Amendment Description and Purpose (leave this section blank when completing the initial application for funding)

An amendment must be submitted when the program plan or budget is altered for the reasons described in the "When to Amend the Application" document posted on the [Administering a Grant](#) page. The following are required to be submitted for an amendment: (1) Page 1 of the application with updated contact information and current authorized official's signature and date, (2) Appendix I with changes identified and described, (3) all updated sections of the application or budget affected by the changes identified below, and, if applicable, (4) Amended Budget Request. Amendment Instructions with more details can be found on the last tab of the budget template.

You may duplicate this page

Amended Section

Reason for Amendment

<input type="text"/>	
<input type="text"/>	
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