



**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

Carl D. Perkins Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, P.L. 115-224

This IDC application must be submitted via email to [competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov](mailto: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): **N/A**

**Applicant Information**

Organization **South Texas ISD** CDN **031916** Campus  ESC **1** UEI **LN7MSV2NQWD9**  
Address **7001 E. Expressway 83** City **Mercedes** ZIP **78570** Vendor ID **74-1507696**  
Primary Contact **Vanessa Rivera** Email **vanessa.rivera@stisd.net** Phone **(956) 514-4268**  
Secondary Contact **Marissa Vaiz** Email **marissa.vaiz@stisd.net** Phone **(956) 514-4229**

**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. Marco Antonio Lara, Jr.** Title **Superintendent**

Email **tony.lara@stisd.net** Phone **(956) 514-4216**

Signature  Date **6-10-25**

**Shared Services Arrangements**

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are NOT permitted for this grant. .

N/A

**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.

**1. Supporting Individual Student Planning in Comprehensive School Counseling**

The 2025–2026 program will enhance student planning through a developmentally aligned counseling framework. STISD will integrate personalized academic and career planning using tools like Eduthings and Pathful Explore. Counselors, in collaboration with the Postsecondary Success Specialist and CTE Director, will ensure students are enrolled in the appropriate CTE programs of study aligned with their goals.

In middle school, Pathful Explore will introduce students to a variety of career-related fields through career interest inventories and specialized career lessons in an effort to guide high school CTE course selection and future goals. At the high school level, effective advisement will take place as counselors work closely with students to support their academic and personal development through TSIA2 prep, SAT/ACT readiness, CTE program of study completion, and college application tracking. Regular meetings with counselors and parent informational sessions will promote a collaborative planning environment. Ongoing training and family engagement will support this data-driven, student-centered approach.

**2. Fostering Innovation in CTE and Promoting High-Wage Career Pathways**

STISD's program will drive CTE innovation through aligned, future-focused strategies. These include:

- IBC Alignment: Enhancing course sequencing and teacher training to boost IBC attainment among seniors.
- Early Career Exploration: Middle schools will utilize Pathful Explore for interest-based lessons and tools to provide interactive career exploration.
- Work-Based Learning: Strengthening partnerships with industry and agencies to offer internships, CTSO participation, and real-world experiences.
- Community Engagement: Initiatives like "Career Cluster of the Month," parent informational sessions, and digital newsletters will engage families and stakeholders in CTE awareness.

These strategies aim to prepare students with the skills and experiences needed for success in high-demand, high-wage careers.



## 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. **EAF Coach:** Mrs. Jennifer Avelar will serve as the Effective Advising Implementation Coach. She is Director of College and Career Success, is a TEA-designated EAF Coach with Distinction. She has over 15 years of experience in education and currently supports districts across Region One with Effective Advising Framework (EAF) implementation and College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR) strategies. She will allocate 25% of her time to support the district, including leading the EAF Steering Committee, aligning advising systems with district goals, and ensuring progress on all TEA deliverables. Support will include site visits, virtual check-ins, and regular coordination. The EAF Coach fee is \$20,000.

2. **EAF Project Lead:** Mrs. Vanessa Rivera, Career & Technology Education Director for STISD will serve as Project Lead. With extensive experience in CTE leadership, she will dedicate 20% of her time to leading project implementation, facilitating steering committee meetings, ensuring timely submission of deliverables, and building external partnerships to enhance CTE programs. The steering committee will provide ongoing collaboration and feedback to help ensure the successful implementation of the EAF framework. STISD will support Ms. Rivera and her responsibilities to ensure she can dedicate the time needed for this project, and her role will be prioritized during the grant year.

3. **District Commitment:** South Texas ISD is strongly committed to the Effective Advising Framework (EAF), grounded in Lever 1: Strong School Leadership and Planning and Lever 3: Internal Culture of Advising. Throughout the 2025-2026 school year, district leaders will continue to collaborate with the EAF Coach to complete the Gap Analysis Tool and develop SMART student outcome goals aligned with CCMR benchmarks. Under Lever 1, district leadership—including Executive Director for Student Support Services, Chief Academic Officer, and CTE Director—actively participates in EAF Steering Committee meetings to guide planning, monitor progress, and align initiatives with district priorities. The EAF District Leadership team will ensure EAF strategies are integrated into broader district efforts, reinforcing leadership accountability and sustainability. Aligned with Lever 3, STISD fosters a districtwide advising culture through monthly counselor meetings, where timelines, goals, and strategies are communicated. This shared leadership model enhances consistency and counselor engagement across campuses. The Post-Secondary Success Specialist plays a key role in supporting implementation, coordinating events like CTE Parent Informational Nights, Senior Summits, Junior CCMR awareness events, and facilitating communication through newsletters and social media to keep stakeholders informed and involved. Together, these efforts ensure strong leadership structures and a collaborative advising culture that supports student success and the long-term sustainability of the EAF initiative.

4. **Steering Committee:** The STISD EAF Steering Committee is composed of experienced leaders who meet the program's required criteria and represent a range of perspectives across academics, counseling, CTE, special education, and district administration. The committee includes the CTE Director, who provides insight into CTE program needs and leads improvement efforts aligned with industry standards; the Chief Academic Officer, who ensures that advising enhancements align with curriculum and instructional design; and the Executive Director for Student Support Services, who communicates the committee's work to district cabinet-level leadership. Also serving on the committee is a high school counselor from the Health Professions campus, who offers campus-level perspectives to inform practical and student-focused decisions. The Post-Secondary Success Specialist, who will lead day-to-day EAF implementation, brings essential support in organizing postsecondary readiness activities, coordinating external partnerships, and hosting transition events. The CTE Coordinator will collaborate with middle and high school counselors and teachers on CTE program of study alignment, career exploration, and CTE tracking tools. The committee will meet monthly to provide structured guidance to the EAF Project Lead, offering expertise in planning, implementation, progress monitoring, and adjustment of strategies as needed. Each member plays a critical role in ensuring that EAF initiatives are aligned, effective, and inclusive with their goals.



## 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: Increase Industry-Based Certification (IBC) Attainment

#### Description of Priority:

STISD will increase the percentage of 12th-grade students earning Industry-Based Certifications (IBCs) to improve postsecondary career readiness and meet CCMR goals.

#### SMART Outcome Goal:

By the end of 2025–2026, the percentage of 12th-grade students earning an IBC will rise from 57% to 62%.

#### Targeted Grade Level(s):

12th Grade

#### Targeted Development Area:

Career Development

#### Key Staff Leading and Supporting Implementation:

Lead – CTE Director; Support – Postsecondary Success Specialist (PSSS), CTE Teachers, School Counselors

#### Strategy to Support Priority:

Staff will receive professional development in August on IBC alignment, course sequencing, and reporting procedures.

Year-round monitoring and collaboration will be implemented to ensure consistency and improvement in regard to CTE course placement and IBC tracking. Communication with stakeholders will include parent information meetings, "Career Cluster of the Month" campaigns, Padlet, CTE Newsletters, and updates via social media. Advising will be supported through Eduthings for tracking student IBC/CTE course progress. Partnerships with CTAT, Region One, and Workforce Solutions will help align CTE instruction with labor market demands and provide additional student career awareness activities.

### EAF Priority 2: Expand Structured Career Exploration in Middle School

#### Description of Priority:

STISD will increase the number of 7th-8th grade students completing structured career exploration modules to ensure early exposure to pathways aligned with high-wage, high-demand careers.

#### SMART Outcome Goal:

By the end of 2025–2026, the percentage of 7th-8th grade students completing the modules will increase from 76% to 81%.

#### Targeted Grade Level(s):

7th and 8th Grades

#### Targeted Development Area:

Career Development

#### Key Staff Leading and Supporting Implementation:

Lead – Postsecondary Success Specialist (PSSS); Support – Middle School Counselors, Enrichment Teachers

#### Strategy to Support Priority:

Pathful Explore will be fully integrated into enrichment periods following August training for counselors and teachers. Parents will be informed about the Pathful Career Exploration program and how it supports their child's future planning and career readiness via district social media and communication platforms. Pathful student usage will occur during enrichment periods, with quarterly usage and completion reports generated by the PSSS. Pathful will serve as a key partner by supporting onboarding, training, and platform reporting.

## Goals, Objectives, and Strategies cont'd.

### EAF Priority 3: Increase TSIA2 Math Benchmark Attainment

#### Description of Priority:

To strengthen academic college readiness, STISD will increase the percentage of 11th-grade students meeting the TSIA2 Math passing score through targeted instruction and expanded test access.

#### SMART Outcome Goal:

By the end of 2025–2026, the percentage of 11th-grade students passing the TSIA2 Math benchmark score will increase from 38% to 48%.

#### Targeted Grade Level(s):

11th Grade

#### Targeted Development Area:

Academic Development

#### Key Staff Leading and Supporting Implementation:

Lead – School Counselors; Support – Postsecondary Success Specialist (PSSS), CCMR Specialist, Testing Proctors

#### Strategy to Support Priority:

Curriculum and Instruction staff will deliver Professional Development on TSIA2 strategies, with follow-up data reviews to guide interventions. Parent and student resources will be regularly updated through district newsletters and Padlet posts. Advising resources such as Edspire, OnData Suite, and in-class math intervention strategies will be implemented. TSIA2 testing opportunities will be increased using Accuplacer-certified proctors. CREO Consultants will provide Math Bootcamps and may expand services based on student performance data.

### EAF Priority 4: Increase College Application Completion

#### Description of Priority:

STISD will improve college application completion rates among 12th-grade students through a coordinated advising system that uses real-time data and collaborative planning.

#### SMART Outcome Goal:

By the end of 2025–2026, the number of 12th-grade students submitting college applications will increase by 3%.

#### Targeted Grade Level(s):

12th Grade

#### Targeted Development Area:

Academic Development

#### Key Staff Leading and Supporting Implementation:

Lead – School Counselors; Support – College Advisors, Postsecondary Success Specialist (PSSS), CCMR Specialist

#### Strategy to Support Priority:

Staff will receive training on advising protocols, implementation timelines, and student tracking of completed college applications through ApplyTexas and Common App. Key advising stakeholders will meet monthly to review data, monitor student progress, and track application completion. College advising resources and events will be distributed through social media, newsletters, and campus bulletins. Personalized advising will include open advising hours, one-on-one counseling, and quarterly check-ins. External partners, UTRGV Advise TX, GForce mentors, and THECB's Collegiate Mentorship Program—will support students with applications, financial aid/scholarships, and transition planning.



**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.**

Eduthings will be utilized to train staff, monitor student IBC interests, and pull reports accordingly. Eduthings will also be used to ensure accurate CTE program course placement throughout the year. We will review data regularly and make changes as needed.

**EAF Priority 2.**

Quarterly reports will be pulled to monitor student engagement, review usage and completion of career-focused lessons, and track appropriate pacing based on the counselor-created scope and sequence. The committee will help identify areas where additional support or intervention is needed.

**EAF Priority 3.**

Edspire and OnData Suite will be used to review and analyze TSIA2 test results. Data reviews will help identify trends and guide academic intervention planning. Reports will be pulled in alignment with scheduled TSIA2 testing dates to monitor student progress. We will share data with content teachers to target specific areas for TSIA2 improvement.

**EAF Priority 4.**

Reports will be pulled from the ApplyTexas Counselor Suite by the district CCMR Specialist to provide quarterly updates on completed student college applications. An in-district tracking form will be developed and shared with high school counselors to ensure accurate tracking of Common App submissions. These efforts will allow us to analyze trends, measure progress, and refine strategies to best support our students' success.

**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

In alignment with EAF Priority 1, payroll funds totaling \$60,000 were allocated to support the secretary/clerk position, who will provide essential clerical support to assist with staff training on Eduthings, monitor student Industry-Based Certification (IBC) interests, and help generate reports to ensure accurate CTE course placement throughout the academic year. To address EAF Priority 3, \$40,000 was dedicated to contracted services for a coach and consultant to support TSIA2 preparation. They will collaborate with staff to review and analyze TSIA2 test data using Edspire and OnData Suite, guiding academic interventions based on trends identified from scheduled testing dates and developing TSIA math bootcamps. In support of EAF Priority 2, \$15,000 was invested in supplies and materials, including access to the Pathful platform and summer career exploration camps, to enhance student engagement with career-focused lessons and support pacing aligned with the counselor-created scope and sequence.

**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		Barrier	
Group		Barrier	
Group		Barrier	
Group		Barrier	

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



**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
	N/A
	N/A
	N/A
	N/A
	N/A