



INNOVATE SAISD: ANNUAL CALL FOR QUALITY SCHOOLS 3.0

INTRODUCTION

Every child deserves a best-fit school, and one size does not always fit all. Learning is a deeply personal process, so families should be empowered to choose the school that best meets the needs of their children. When students can connect with one another around similar goals and aspirations in an environment that is personalized for them, their learning becomes more powerful and their possibilities for success are limitless.

San Antonio Independent School District has a rich history of providing students with unique learning opportunities. The district opened its first magnet school in 1983. Today the district has more than thirty choice schools and programs offering a wide variety of models: International Baccalaureate, Montessori, Dual Language, STEM, Single-Gender, Arts Integration, and more.

To continue to advance high-quality school options in the district, SAISD's Office of Innovation is seeking proposals from qualified educators and leaders in SAISD who would like to leverage their skills and build upon their past successes to launch autonomous, in-district charter schools.

Through the Annual Call for Quality Schools, current campus leaders have the opportunity to redesign existing schools, develop new school models, and revise existing in-district charters. Approved school applicants will receive increased autonomy over time, talent, and resources in return for greater accountability in the form of a performance contract.

Included in the Annual Call is the district's Network Principal Initiative, in which high-capacity school leaders with a track record of success join together to form a network of schools and expand their collective impact. Network principals will also launch Senate Bill 1882 partnerships in collaboration with a mission-aligned nonprofit partner. These partnerships enhance network schools with additional expertise, community support, and financial resources.

The theory of action behind the Annual Call for Quality Schools is clear: **if we provide skilled educators with the autonomies that they need to run a high-quality school in the manner they see fit, then they will provide our city's students with the option to attend and excel at a diverse array of high-quality, innovative schools.** These school options will be open to all students, regardless of their academic ability or where they live.

The educators approved to run autonomous schools through the Annual Call will operate schools that will serve as models for the rest of the district and catalyze school innovation and improvement for all of SAISD.

GETTING STARTED & LETTER OF INTENT

Applicant Leadership Team Requirements

1. **Existing neighborhood schools that have Met Standard¹**: three to five people, including the principal and two full-time teachers
2. **New schools²**: three to five people, including the principal and at least two other people who will be working at the campus full-time

The Applicant Leadership Team is the group of educators who will be the primary application writing team. This group will be led by the school principal and include only campus staff. However, schools must also engage a broader set of stakeholders in the design process, and this engagement will be captured in the application.

Letter of Intent

The school principal must submit a non-binding letter of intent by August 26, 2020, using the online form available at <https://innovatesaisd.org/resources/>. The purpose of this letter of intent is to provide the Office of Innovation with an opportunity to provide support for applicants.

Formatting the Application

- Write your application using the Application Template (in Word or Google Doc) provided at <https://innovatesaisd.org/resources/>.
- Use Calibri 11-point font with standard one-inch margins and 1.15 line spacing.
- Use the Section and Component headings provided in the application but delete the questions prior to submittal.
- Include a footer with the school name to the left and page numbers to the right.
- Include a cover page and table of contents with correct page numbers.
- Attach the completed data template as Appendix A.
- Title and letter all appendices (e.g. Appendix A – Data Template, Appendix B – School Schedule) and include references in the document when appropriate (e.g. See Appendix B – School Schedule).
- Include one space between each section heading and your response and between each paragraph.
- Spell out all acronyms the first time they are used (e.g. PBL, CBA, PBIS, etc.).
- The document (including cover page, table of contents, and appendices) **must not exceed 50 pages**. Any pages that exceed the page limit will not be read or scored by the evaluation committee.
- The file should be saved in PDF format using the naming convention “Name of School, SAISD In-District Charter Application, School Year” (e.g. “Gates Elementary, SAISD In-District Charter Application, 2020-21”).

Submitting the Application

Submit via email to innovateSAISD@saisd.net. See below for a detailed timeline of submission dates.

Original Work

This in-district charter application must be written by the Applicant Leadership Team with guidance other campus staff. Reading other schools’ charter applications for inspiration is encouraged, but copying language directly from another charter application is not permitted. Any responses that contain copied language will not be scored by the evaluation committee.

¹ Campuses rated “Improvement Required” are not eligible to apply.

² A “new school” means a startup school that does not currently exist and that will have a new school code.

TIMELINE AND DUE DATES

Date	Action
July 10, 2020	SAISD announces the Annual Call and requests school proposals
July 2020 – January 2021	Office of Innovation holds workshops, office hours, and individual meetings with prospective applicants by request. To request such a meeting, please email jnorman1@saisd.net or call (210) 554-2662.
August 26, 2020	Letter of Intent due
September 30, 2020	Part 1 of Application (draft) due to Office of Innovation for feedback
November 4, 2020	Part 2 of Application (draft) due to Office of Innovation for feedback
December 9, 2020	Part 3 of Application (draft) due to Office of Innovation for feedback
January 13, 2021	Final Application due for formal evaluation
January 18 – February 12, 2021	Teacher and parent petitions collected (for existing schools only)
January 26 – February 4, 2021	Application evaluation and capacity interviews conducted
March 2021	Applications recommended to SAISD Board of Trustees for authorization
April - August 2021	Office of Innovation works with approved applicants and district departments to prepare for school launch

OFFICE OF INNOVATION SUPPORT

If you have any questions throughout this process, please consider the following:

- The Office of Innovation maintains a website with a comprehensive set of resources, including a regularly updated FAQ document at <https://innovatesaisd.org/annual-call/>.
- The Office of Innovation will conduct a series of workshops and office hours, the full schedule for which may be viewed in the Resources section of the Innovate SAISD website.
- For any additional questions, please email jnorman1@saisd.net, or call the office.

Office of Innovation (210) 554-2662

Mohammed Choudhury, Chief Innovation Officer
 John Norman, Director of School Design and Charter Partnerships
 Dana Ray, Director of Strategic School Support
 Namrita Singapuri, Director of Performance Management and Special Projects
 Jennifer Duran, Coordinator of Special Projects
 Karen Galván, Strategic Engagement Specialist
 Leslie Berry, Executive Secretary

APPLICATION OVERVIEW AND SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Component	Deadline
<p>Application Part 1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Executive Summary 2. Applicant Leadership Team 3. Stakeholder Map 4. Data Reflection 5. Challenges for your School 	<p>September 30, 2020 (draft for feedback)</p>
<p>Application Part 2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Mission 7. Goals 8. Academic Model 9. Data and Continuous Improvement 10. School Autonomy 11. Human Capital 12. Climate and Culture 	<p>November 4, 2020 (draft for feedback)</p>
<p>Application Part 3</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Family and Community Engagement 14. Student Recruitment and Retention 15. Campus Leadership Team 16. Implementation Plan 17. Budget Exercise (if applicable) 18. Network Development Plan (if applicable) 19. Partner Governing Board (if applicable) 	<p>December 9, 2020 (draft for feedback)</p>
<p>Final Application (Parts 1, 2 and 3)</p>	<p>January 13, 2021 (final for evaluation)</p>

PART 1

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Complete the Executive Summary that is provided in the application template. In the School Overview section, write a one paragraph summary of the school and the proposed focus of your school design plan. Include a high-level description of the school’s data, challenges, and proposed academic model or other strategies that address your data and challenges. The overview should answer the question: “Why is this school applying to become an in-district charter?” Do not complete the Executive Summary until after you’ve written most of your application. The Executive Summary must not exceed one page.

2. APPLICANT LEADERSHIP TEAM

Identify your applicant leadership team. For existing schools, the applicant team must be three to five people, including the principal and two full-time teachers. For new schools, the team must be three to five people, including the principal and at least two other people who will be working at the campus full-time.

For each applicant team member, briefly explain why you chose that person.

- What skills and expertise does the person have that are important to leading this process and helping the school achieve its goals?
- Briefly discuss the person’s track record of success in work that is like the work they will do at your proposed school. Include more than just years of experience and positions held (e.g., student outcomes, school improvement initiatives, professional accolades, etc.)

If the district is exploring a Senate Bill 1882 partnership with a mission-aligned nonprofit organization to support this school, please provide the following information:

- Name of organization
- Name of people employed by the organization who will be working full-time on this partnership. Briefly describe their relevant background and expertise.

3. STAKEHOLDER MAP

This section requires you to reflect on the various stakeholders at your campus, assess their individual needs, and then articulate where your school is succeeding and falling short relative to those needs. Please complete the tables below.

New schools: Please write about the stakeholders you expect to serve and how well their needs are being met by existing schools.

Students		
<i>Specific stakeholder groups to consider: student clubs and leadership groups, different age groups (early childhood vs. late elementary or freshmen vs. seniors), special populations, etc.³</i>		
Recent Engagement with this group⁴		
Stakeholder's Top 3 Needs (as described by the group)	How school is currently meeting the needs	Areas for growth in meeting the needs
1.		
2.		
3.		

Campus Staff		
<i>Specific stakeholder groups to consider: Teachers, office staff, custodians, counselors, librarians, etc.</i>		
Recent Engagement with this group		
Stakeholder's Top 3 Needs (as described by the group)	How school is currently meeting the needs	Areas for growth in meeting the needs
1.		
2.		
3.		

Families		
<i>Specific stakeholder groups to consider: families new to the school, families with special needs, non-English speaking families, parent-teacher associations, etc.</i>		
Recent Engagement with this group		
Stakeholder's Top 3 Needs (as described by the group)	How school is currently meeting the needs	Areas for growth in meeting the needs
1.		
2.		
3.		

4. DATA REFLECTION

Using this [Data Template](#), submit three-year trends of data for your school. *When submitting your final application, copy and paste an image of the data template onto page 1 of the Appendix. Do not create a new table in your application document.*

Existing Schools: In addition to completing the template, applicants must also answer the following:

- Which aspects of your school's data show areas of strength, and what strategies have led to those successes? Focus on 2-3 data points only.
- Which aspects of your school's data show areas for growth, and why do you believe the school is struggling in those areas? Focus on 2-3 data points only.

³ Specific stakeholder groups are listed to encourage applicants to think broadly about each stakeholder. In completing the mapping exercise, you can respond as to the stakeholder generally or focus on specific sub-groups, as you deem relevant.

⁴ Schools are expected to engage with stakeholders through informal conversations, surveys, events, or other means to learn the stakeholders' needs directly. "Recent" engagement means engagement that occurred within one year of the submission of this application.

- In your response to this question, only write about previous efforts. Do not describe future plans or intended strategies. Those will be included in the rest of the application.

New Schools: Complete the data template utilizing district-level or nearby school results for the grades you seek to serve (e.g. 6-8). For your narrative response, reflect on the challenges facing similar schools in SAISD generally; for example, an applicant proposing to launch a new middle school might reflect on what is holding back the success of middle school students in SAISD rather than at any specific school.

5. CHALLENGES FOR YOUR SCHOOL

Using the chart below, describe the three most significant challenges or obstacles confronting your school. In identifying each of these obstacles, a quality response should:

- briefly identify the three challenges;
- clearly articulate one root cause for each challenge;
- explain how you identified these root causes; and
- explain how you engaged stakeholders to identify and verify these causes.

The root causes must be under the control of the group doing the analysis, be aimed at the systems level, and address the underlying reason for student performance. The root causes should be causes that would be resolved, if addressed by the school. The causes should not blame individuals, including students and staff, or refer to factors that are external to your school, like a family’s socio-economic status.

Top 3 Challenges		Root Cause
1.		
2.		
3.		
How Root Causes were Identified (including who was involved)		

NOTE: Part 1 of the Application is due to the Office of Innovation on **September 30, 2020**. Feedback received on Part 1 will assist you with the completion of Part 2.

PART 2

6. MISSION

What is your mission?

- A mission statement should communicate your fundamental beliefs about student learning.
- The mission statement should be clear, concise, and memorable.
- It must also reflect high expectations for students and align with the broader mission of SAISD, which may be viewed [here](#).

Existing schools are encouraged to use this process as an opportunity to engage their school community to revise or update the school’s mission statement in a way that aligns with the school’s new vision.

7. GOALS

What are your school goals? Please submit your goals using the chart below.

- Goals must be written in a SMART format - specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.
- Goals must address the root causes of each of your stated challenges.
- Goals may be one, two, or three-year goals.

Goal #	Goal in SMART Format	Baseline Metric and Year	Data Used to Measure Progress towards Goal
1.			
2.			
3.			
Which goal will be the hardest to achieve and why?			

8. ACADEMIC MODEL

An academic model may be a clearly defined program or framework, such as Montessori or STEM, or it may be a collection of programs and strategies that are strategically aligned to drive student outcomes.

What is your school's academic model? In your response, please address the following:

- How do your academic model and strategies align with the school mission and goals and respond to the root causes of your challenges?
- If you are proposing a change from your existing academic model, describe the existing academic model and the basis for the change.
- Which academic strategies, tools, resources, and programs will you incorporate at your school? Strategies should be research-based and proven to increase student achievement. Do not limit your discussion to teaching and learning for core content (e.g. ELA).
- How will you incorporate social and emotional learning into the key elements of your academic program, including assessment and curriculum? Describe the specific SEL curriculum you will use and why you chose it.
- How does your model meet the needs of all special populations? Explain how you will assess whether your model is meeting their needs, and what you will do if future results reflect that your academic model does not work for one or more special populations (e.g. students with disabilities).
- What are the specific downsides of your academic approach, and how will you mitigate those downsides?

9. DATA AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

How will your school track and review data on an ongoing basis? Your response should include:

- regular cycles for data collection, review, analysis, and reflection;
- an explanation of how you will use both formative and summative assessments;
- systems for analyzing both academic and non-academic data; and
- a description of how your school will adjust its practices when your data appears to fall short of your school's goals;

NOTE: Applicants will **not** receive a waiver from districtwide **MAP testing**.

10. SCHOOL AUTONOMY

In accordance with Board Policy EL(LOCAL), the SAISD Board will grant autonomies to in-district charter schools to the fullest extent of the law. Using the table below, please articulate no more than ten specific autonomies that are the highest priority for your school.

Your response to this question will not be an exhaustive list of all autonomies that will be granted to your school. Rather, this question is meant to assess your understanding of school autonomy and demonstrate which autonomies are the most critical to your school’s success. Approved in-district charters will be empowered with all autonomies permitted by board policy and state law.

Please see the [School Autonomy Guidance](#) for examples and explanations of potentially available autonomies.

Autonomy ⁵	District Requirement	Proposed Campus Strategy	Rationale for Campus Strategy
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

11. HUMAN CAPITAL

How will you recruit, develop, and retain teachers and staff? In your response, address the following:

- Why would someone choose to work at your school?
- In describing your staff development opportunities, include more than just formal professional development (e.g., coaching, mentoring, leadership opportunities, etc.).
- How do you systematically identify and retain your highest performing employees?
- Briefly reflect on the Human Capital data included in your data template. Why did you highlight those data points, and what do they illuminate about your school?

New Schools: Explain your timeline for recruiting and hiring your founding staff and a detailed explanation of how you will recruit and attract people to join your new school.

12. CLIMATE & CULTURE

Describe the climate and culture of your proposed school.

- What will the school look and feel like for students, staff and families?

⁵ “Autonomy” is the brief and general description of the autonomy. “District Requirement” is the specific requirement related to the autonomy from which the school is requesting an exemption. “Proposed Strategy” describes exactly how the school plan to utilize this autonomy within the first three years of the charter. “Rationale” is the reason why this strategy is important to the school. The rationale should align to some aspect of your application (e.g., challenges, mission, academic model, etc.)

- Describe systems or programs that will sustain your culture, including any opportunities for social-emotional support.
- Explain how the physical environment (school entrance, hallways, classrooms, outdoor space, etc.) reinforces your school culture.

What are your proposed student behavior strategies and procedures? How do they contribute to the school's culture and promote restorative practices rather than a punitive disciplinary approach?

- Review and reflect on the discipline data provided in the data template. Discuss what has gone well and what has gone poorly in your school's (or the district's) current discipline practices.

NOTE: Part 2 of the Application is due to the Office of Innovation on November 4, 2020. Feedback received on Part 2 will assist you with the completion of Part 3.

PART 3

13. FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Describe your plan to engage with your families and the broader school community (residents, neighborhood associations, nonprofits, businesses, etc.)

- What does success look like for your schools' relationship with its parents and community members? In your response, focus on the outcome of the engagement as well as the inputs.
- How will you ensure timely, responsive, and adequate communication with families and the community?
- Describe the partnerships, programs and strategies that your school will utilize to strengthen support for student learning and encourage parent and community involvement in the life of the school. (Do not just list programs or strategies; explain what they are and how they benefit your community and align with your school goals.)

14. STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

What is your plan for student recruitment and retention?

- Describe how you will attract new students and retain existing students, identifying key strategies, systems, and staff responsibilities.
- Include your school's 30 second "elevator speech" to prospective families.

New Schools:

- Include a chart with your projected student enrollment, by grade level and school year, until the school reaches capacity.
- Provide evidence that your academic model will attract enough students to meet your projected enrollment.

- Explain how you will ensure that prospective students and their families have a clear understanding of the academic model prior to making an enrollment decision.

NOTE: Applicants should **review SAISD enrollment policies and procedures** prior to completing this section. They can be found in the Resources section of www.InnovateSAISD.org, and you should email any questions to jnorman1@saisd.net. **All schools must follow SAISD policies and procedures for enrollment.**

15. CAMPUS LEADERSHIP TEAM

Texas state law requires school districts to ensure that effective “site-based” decision-making occurs at each school to support the improvement of student performance. At SAISD, schools comply with this requirement by maintaining a Campus Leadership Team (“CLT”), which develops the Campus Improvement Plan, approves professional development, reviews student data, and advises the school on organizational matters like budgeting and staffing.

Approved in-district charter schools are not subject to state law or board policy on CLTs. However, empowering a group of school stakeholders to oversee and support the school is a best practice for all schools, and in particular schools with a greater degree of autonomy. The purpose of this question is to encourage applicants to re-imagine the CLT in a way that addresses your school’s unique challenges, aligns with your academic model, and meets the needs of your community.

- A. **PURPOSE AND FOCUS.** What will be the purpose of your CLT? What specific focus areas will it have? The focus areas are up to the school, but they should take into consideration the school’s data, challenges, and academic model. One focus of the CLT could be charter implementation, but the purpose should be broader than just the charter.
- B. **MEETING STRUCTURE.** How often will this group meet, and how will it establish meeting agendas?
- C. **MEMBERSHIP.** Reflect on your data and challenges to determine the type of committee members you may need for this reimagined CLT. Using the chart below, list your proposed committee members. Schools are encouraged to utilize school staff and external stakeholders, such as parents and community partners, for additional expertise. The number of committee members is up to you, but we recommend between 7 and 11, based on board governance best practices.

Committee Member Name	Affiliation or Role	Relevant Expertise
1. Maria Rodriguez	Store Manager, H.E.B.	Business, leadership, fundraising
2. John Smith	Retired Military, Parent	Engineering, neighborhood resident
3. Jennifer Davis	3 rd Grade Teacher	Education, social-emotional support
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		

16. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Using the chart below, outline your plan for implementing at least three key initiatives or projects discussed in this application that will be critical to the success of this charter. The action steps should begin no earlier than board approval of your charter (February 2021). If these initiatives are new and would impact students, staff

or families, include any steps you would take to ensure that your stakeholders are aware of and prepared for these initiatives.

Initiative 1 Goal			
	Action Steps	Deadline	Responsible Party
Initiative 2 Goal			
	Action Steps	Deadline	Responsible Party
Initiative 3 Goal			
	Action Steps	Deadline	Responsible Party

17. BUDGET EXERCISE

This question is only for schools that are eligible for a federal charter school startup grant. All new charter schools that have not previously received a startup grant are eligible and must answer this question.

Startup grant opportunities are available for new in-district charter applicants. These competitive federal grants have awarded schools up to \$800,000 over two years to support planning and start-up expenses related to the schools’ redesign. Using the chart below, create a proposed budget for \$800,000, with a description of each item, along with estimated costs and a detailed rationale for each item. The budget should be based on actual costs for items that align to your mission and goals and address your stated challenges. The Sustainability Plan should address any recurring costs in future years after the grant funds are spent (e.g., maintenance, license fees, follow-up trainings, etc.).

Please remember that this is a highly competitive grant, so additional funding for your charter is not guaranteed. Additional guidance on allowable and unallowable expenses will be provided.

Item Description	Estimated Cost	Rationale	Sustainability Plan

18. NETWORK DEVELOPMENT PLAN

This question is only for principals who are selected to participate in SAISD’s Network Principal Initiative.

Through this initiative, high-capacity school leaders with a track record of success will join together to form a network of schools. A network principal will either transition to a supervisory role at two schools or continue to lead one school and form a network with one or more other principals. In both cases, the network principals will seek to form a Senate Bill 1882 partnership with a mission-aligned nonprofit or university.

- A. **SYSTEMS.** How will you modify and/or create systems and structures to support your role as a network principal with a non-profit partner? Detail multiple specific examples of how you intend to create and/or modify systems to ensure communication and alignment with your non-profit partner and the other schools in your network.
- B. **MITIGATING RISKS.** How will you ensure that becoming a network principal with a non-profit partner does not jeopardize the success of your current school? Articulate key risks and detail one or more mitigation strategies that are proportionate and appropriately responsive to each corresponding risk.

19. PARTNER GOVERNING BOARD

This question is only for schools at which the district is proposing a Senate Bill 1882 partnership.

State law requires all Senate Bill 1882 partnership organizations to have a governing board to oversee the partnership and manage the partnership schools. This board must meet a minimum of three times per year and fulfil the obligations described in the partnership agreement, including approving the school budget, supporting the school in meeting its performance goals, and conducting an annual financial audit of the nonprofit organization. The nonprofit partner should complete this question with assistance from the school staff.

- A. **MEMBERSHIP.** Using the chart below, list the proposed members of the board, along with their current role and relevant expertise. You are not obligated to have more than three identified board members at this time, but you must complete the “relevant expertise” for all 7 board member positions to demonstrate the expertise you believe you will need. Reflect on your data and challenges to determine the types of board members you may need.

Board Member Name (First and Last)	Affiliation or Role	Relevant Expertise
1. Maria Rodriguez	Store Manager, H.E.B.	Business, leadership, fundraising
2. John Smith	Retired Military, Parent	Engineering, neighborhood resident
3. Jennifer Davis	3 rd Grade Teacher	Education, social-emotional support
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		

- B. **SUSTAINABILITY.** How will you recruit and retain board members?
- C. **ACCOUNTABILITY.** How will the board hold the principal and other school staff accountable to achieve the school’s goals and implement the school’s charter with fidelity?

NOTE: Part 3 of the Application is due for feedback on December 9, 2020.

CAMPUS CHARTER PETITION

To become an in-district charter, Board Policy EL(LOCAL) requires the support of 67% of the classroom teachers and 67% of the parents of currently enrolled students at your campus. Please contact the Office of Innovation for guidance on the process of collecting the required petitions. The Internal Audit Department will conduct a formal review of all submitted petitions.

Pursuant to state law and Board policy, new schools do not require petitions to be authorized as in-district charters.

APPENDIX (EIGHT-PAGE MAXIMUM)

Applicants are encouraged to submit up to **eight pages** of additional documents relevant to the proposed school. The Appendix will be included in the 50-page overall limit. Examples may include bell schedules, a day in the life, lesson plan template, sample project-based learning unit, formative assessment cycle, or PLC data analysis protocol. Page 1 of the Appendix must be your completed [Data Template](#).