



Texas Partnerships Guide



Updated April 2021

About this Guide

This guide describes what Texas Partnerships are, the different kinds of Texas Partnerships, outlines the process of applying for Texas Partnerships benefits, and provides guidance for developing strong district charter partnerships. The guide includes links to a variety of resources and tools to support districts in charter authorizing and partnership development. For more information about Texas Partnerships, please see the [FAQ](#) on the Texas Partnerships website or contact the Texas Partnerships team at TXP@tea.texas.gov.

This guide was updated in April 2021. Any revisions made in future versions will be listed on this page.

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SECTION ONE.

ABOUT TEXAS PARTNERSHIPS

What is a Texas Partnership?

In a Texas Partnership, the district authorizes a partner to operate an innovation or turnaround in-district charter school ([See: What does it mean to authorize a partner to operate a school?](#)). The authorized partner has sole responsibility over personnel, including hiring, firing and managing staff, as well as sole authority over decisions related to curriculum, calendar, and assessments. The district holds the partner operator accountable through a performance contract outlining academic and financial performance measures for the partnership as well as the division of roles and responsibilities.

What is the benefit of engaging in Texas Partnerships?

When executed successfully, Texas Partnerships offer districts the opportunity to expand the diversity of school options, bring in targeted expertise for innovation and turnaround support, and empower school leaders and partners with greater autonomy. In turn, partners typically receive access to a facility and district operational services. Most importantly, effective partnerships give more students access to great schools.

Texas Partnerships are a versatile tool that provide a way for every Texas district to ensure it is meeting the needs of all students by implementing sustainable, lasting change for the campus community and for the entire district.

Figure 1. Key Components of Texas Partnerships

- District authorizes the partner to operate an in-district charter school
- The partner manages the district school and is responsible for student outcomes
- The partner has sole autonomy over personnel, curriculum, calendar, and assessments
- The district school board and staff hold partners accountable through a performance contract

What does it mean to authorize a partner to operate a school?

Every Texas school district has the authority to authorize charter schools under Texas Education Code (TEC) Chapter 12, Subchapter C. In its role as a charter school authorizer, the local Board of a Texas school district is responsible for approving and overseeing charter schools in a manner that advances the objectives of Texas charter school law, including:

- Improving student learning;
- Increasing the choice of learning opportunities within the public-school system;
- Creating professional opportunities that will attract new teachers to the public-school system;
- Establishing a new form of accountability for public schools; and
- Encouraging different and innovative learning methods.

In accordance with nationally accepted professional standards for charter school authorizing, the local Board should ensure that district policies and practices uphold three core authorizing principles:

1) Maintaining high standards. To maintain high standards, the Board should:

- Set high standards for the approval of the charter schools it authorizes; and
- Hold the charter schools it oversees accountable for meeting the performance standards and expectations set forth in the charter contract and state law.

2) Upholding school autonomy. To uphold charter school autonomy, the Board should:

- Honor and preserve core autonomies crucial to school success, including independent and effective board governance, personnel decision-making, educational programming, and budgeting;
- Assume responsibility for holding schools accountable for outcomes, rather than inputs and processes; and
- Minimize, within state and federal law, administrative and compliance burdens on all charter schools it oversees.

3) Protecting student and public interests. Students' well-being and interests should inform all Board actions and decisions. The Board should:

- Hold its charter schools accountable for public education obligations, including fair treatment in admissions and disciplinary actions, and appropriate services for all students in accordance with law;
- Hold its charter schools accountable for sound public governance, fiduciary responsibilities, and operational transparency in accordance with law;
- Charter only high-quality schools that will operate ethically, transparently, and in compliance with applicable laws; and
- Support parents' and students' ability to make informed choices about educational options by providing clear, accurate, and timely information regarding performance of the charter schools it oversees.

For more on in-district charter authorizing, including the charter application and review process, oversight and evaluation, autonomy, and accountability, see TEA's [Authorizer Handbook](#) (found on the [Tools](#) page of the [Texas Partnerships website](#)).

Texas Partnerships Benefits (SB 1882)

The Texas Legislature signed SB 1882 into law in 2017. This bill encourages districts to create district-charter partnerships to improve student outcomes by offering two benefits: partnerships may receive additional state funding for the partnership school, and schools that received an overall F rating under state accountability are eligible to receive a two-year exemption from specific accountability interventions (See Figure 2). Districts must meet minimum eligibility requirements to access these benefits and will complete a Texas Partnerships Benefits Application. This application is reviewed by an agency-selected review panel.

Figure 2. Overview of Partnership Benefits

Additional Funding. Approved partnership schools may receive additional state funding for each student. This funding is available to districts that receive less per-pupil state funding for a partnership school than it would receive if the school were a state-authorized charter school. This potential additional funding applies to partnerships with Innovation or Turnaround Schools.

To estimate the potential financial benefit of SB 1882 for a specific school, refer to the Texas Partnerships Benefit Calculator on the [Tools](#) page of the Texas Partnerships website.

Accountability Exemption. Approved partnership schools with an overall F rating receive a two-year exemption from specific accountability-related sanctions to allow time for the partnership to improve academic performance.

For schools that have received consecutive unacceptable ratings for up to three years, the exemption begins the academic year after the school receives approval for partnership benefits.

For schools with four or more consecutive unacceptable ratings, the accountability intervention exemption begins the academic year the school applies for partnership benefits.

SECTION TWO.

TYPES OF TEXAS PARTNERSHIPS

Texas Partnerships are unique based on two factors: 1) the type of partner and 2) the type of partnership school.

Types of Partners

There are two types of potential partners. The first type – **existing Texas partners** – includes state-authorized (Subchapter D) Texas charter operators, as well as district-authorized (Subchapter C) charter operators in good standing. To meet the state’s definition for “good standing,” the partner must have at least three years of experience operating a Texas charter school and received acceptable academic and financial accountability ratings for the three preceding school years. In addition, the partner may not be associated with a charter that has been revoked.

The second partner type – **new Texas partners** – include all other eligible entities, such as existing state- or district-authorized charter operators with less than three years of experience operating a charter school in Texas, non-profits, institutes of higher education, governmental entities, and out-of-state school operators.

Figure 3. Two Types of Partners

| Existing Texas Partners | New Texas Partners |
|--|--|
| <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State or district-authorized charter operators with at least three years of experience operating a charter school in Texas • Institutes of higher education, governmental entities, and other non-profits with at least three years of experience operating a charter school in Texas <p><i>Existing partners must have acceptable academic and financial performance in each of the three preceding school years. Neither the partner organization, nor the key individuals involved, may be associated with a revoked charter.</i></p> | <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing state or district-authorized charter operators with less than a three-year track record • Out-of-state charter operators (that have not operated in Texas), institutes of higher education, governmental entities, and other non-profits with less than a three-year track record |

Types of Partnership Schools

There are two types of partnership schools. Turnaround Schools include schools that received an overall F rating the year prior to becoming a partnership school. In contrast, Innovation Schools include existing district schools that received an overall A, B, C, or non-consecutive D the year prior to becoming a partnership school, and new schools with a new county district campus number.

Figure 4. Two Types of Partnership Schools

| Turnaround Schools | Innovation Schools |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school received an overall F rating for the school year before operation of the district campus under the contract begins | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Existing schools that received an overall A, B, C, or D• New schools, defined as new schools for state reporting; must receive a new county district campus number (CDCN). |

SECTION THREE.

DEVELOPING STRONG LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Before a district can apply to TEA for partnership benefits, the district must first authorize the district charter partnership. Developing strong partnerships capable of transforming schools and creating great new or innovative learning environments requires significant planning, and districts must work thoughtfully and intentionally with community members and partners. This section outlines the broad steps that districts follow to develop successful district-charter partnerships.¹ Practices that align with the statute and rules that govern Texas Partnerships are highlighted throughout this section. **Please note that this section only discusses the development of Texas Partnerships.** Districts play an active role in the ongoing oversight of their district charter partnerships, and more information about oversight and evaluation can be found in the [Campus Evaluation Framework](#).

1. Set A Vision

Texas Partnerships can help districts meet their student outcome goals. These partnerships are most effective when they connect to a district’s broader vision for student success that considers academic goals, the diversity of student needs, expectations for low-performing schools, and a desire for continuous and dramatic improvement. Districts will form that vision in concert with the community and use that vision as the north star that guides all school actions. To develop a strong vision that drives the work with Texas Partnerships and other school actions, the district leadership team should consider the following:

- How could engaging in a partnership improve student learning and encourage innovative learning methods, and how is this tied to the district’s broader strategy to improve student outcomes?
- How would a partnership create more professional opportunities that would attract teachers to your district?
- How would the district’s process for selecting and overseeing the performance contract with a partner bolster accountability in the district?

Texas Partnerships Benefits Eligibility Requirement:

Districts applying for Texas Partnerships benefits are required to adopt TEA’s [Model District Charter Authorizing Policy](#) or a similar policy, approved by TEA, that meets [eligibility requirements](#).

Districts that are not using the TEA model charter authorizing policy must have the locally developed policy approved prior to submitting the application for Texas Partnership benefits. For due dates and submission information, please see the [Texas Partnerships website](#).

Resources to Support This Step:

- [Texas Authorizer Online Training](#) (AOT): Module 1—Overview and Authorizing in Texas
- [Authorizer Handbook](#): Section 1—Planning
- [Quality Authorizing Self-Assessment](#): Phase 1—Planning

¹ This section draws heavily from Public Impact & EdPlex. (2016). School restart authorization process guide. Chapel Hill, NC: Public Impact, and Denver, CO: EdPlex. Retrieved from www.schoolrestarts.org. For more information on any of the topics mentioned here, see www.schoolrestarts.org.

2. Identify Schools for a Texas Partnership

Any school could potentially benefit from an in-district charter partnership if the partnership increases school operating autonomy, expands leadership capacity, and maximizes resources for the school. The district should conduct a needs assessment to determine which schools would make the best candidates for potential partnerships.

First, districts should establish and apply transparent and objective criteria for identifying existing schools or neighborhoods where a Texas Partnership would address a specific community need. That could mean launching a new partnership at an Innovation School in a rapidly growing part of town or restarting a struggling school at risk of closure as a Turnaround School. This first step should produce a list of likely partnership schools the district can share with potential partner organizations. The list also serves as a starting point for working with school communities in the partnership process (see Step 3: Engage the School Community).

Secondly, districts should identify schools for a Texas Partnership based on a school performance framework or additional criteria, such as school readiness, community support, and potential for matching it with qualified partner organizations. Districts should also consider alternative school actions, such as school closure or redesign, that may be more appropriate for meeting district and school objectives.

Texas Partnerships Benefits Eligibility Requirement:

To be eligible for Texas Partnerships benefits for a Turnaround School, districts must partner with an organization that:

- has been in existence for at least three years prior to undertaking the management of the district campus,
- has managed multiple campuses for multiple years, and
- has a track record of managing campuses to academic success or has significantly improved the academic performance of campuses.

Resources to Support This Step:

- [Texas Authorizer Online Training](#) (AOT): Module 2—Applications
- [Authorizer Handbook](#): Section 2—Application Process and Decision Making (Quality Seats Analysis)
- [Quality Authorizing Self-Assessment](#): Phase 1—Planning (Conduct Quality Seats Analysis)

3. Engage the School Community

Community engagement is critical to establishing and maintaining successful partnerships, and this engagement should not happen at only one point in the process. Rather, districts should actively engage their community in the partnership process, giving students, parents, staff, and other community members an opportunity to ask questions, learn what is happening, voice their concerns and hopes, and actively participate in the process of choosing a partner. Texas Partnerships are more likely to succeed when the families those partnerships aim to serve are active participants in the process.

But what does effective community engagement look like? Although the specifics will be different for every school, clear and consistent communication is critical. The district should communicate about the reasons for the partnership, the district's goals for partnership, and what families can expect from the process. It is also important to set clear expectations for community involvement. Community members should know when they will have an opportunity to vote, shape a policy or statement, or provide feedback – and how the district will then use that information to shape the partnership.

Finally, it is important to anticipate that district-charter partnerships may not be well-understood, especially in districts where such partnerships do not already exist, and families and school staff feel uncertain about the future of their school. Districts must set clear expectations about the partnership, including how it will form and how it will work, and communicate at each step along the way.

Texas Partnerships Benefits Eligibility Requirement:

Districts that partner with open enrollment (Subchapter D) charters must consult with campus personnel regarding the provisions included in the performance contract.

Resources to Support This Step:

- [Texas Authorizer Online Training](#) (AOT): Module 8—Engaging the Community
- [Authorizer Handbook](#): Section 1—Planning (Community Engagement)
- [Quality Authorizing Self-Assessment](#): Phase 1—Planning (Engage Community)

4. Recruit Operating Partners

The next step includes publishing a Call for Quality Schools that invites potential partners to apply at the schools identified in Step 3. A strong Call includes:

- An overview of Texas Partnerships and anticipated roles and responsibilities
- Details about the schools and types of partnerships desired
- High-level student demographic data so operators can determine if they are a good fit
- Detailed information about the needs of students at each school
- Community priorities for the school
- Grant funds or supplemental funds available for the partnership, including an estimate of potential funding available to approved partnership schools
- Any non-negotiables for partnership from the district's perspective
- Clear, published criteria for evaluating operator applications

Texas Partnerships will only be as successful as the partners participating in them, and recruiting great operating partners takes time. Districts should ideally begin recruiting potential operators as soon as they think they may want to partner and should begin cultivating a pipeline of leaders and high-performing school operators to support this work.

Resources to Support This Step:

- [Texas Authorizer Online Training \(AOT\)](#): Module 2—Applications
- [Authorizer Handbook](#): Section 2—Application Process and Decision Making
- [Quality Authorizing Self-Assessment](#): Phase 2—Application Process and Decision Making (Call for Quality Schools)

5. Collect and Evaluate Local Campus Partnership Applications

Campus partner applications allow the district to assess the partner’s capacity to operate the school, including how they will address the specific school needs identified in the Call (See Figure 6). Ideally, multiple organizations would apply to operate each school, providing the district and school community a variety of options. The district then evaluates applications to ensure applicants have the capacity to operate the school.

Districts should also carefully consider and clearly communicate the role that parents and other school community members will play in the application review and approval process, including how the application process will work and how and when decisions will be made. Districts can create opportunities for parents and community members to play an active role in the approval process by including community representatives on the application review team, or by forming parent/community councils that select partners (or submit preferences) from a pool of district-approved operators.

Texas Partnerships Benefits Eligibility Requirement:

Districts applying for Texas Partnerships benefits are required to adopt TEA’s [Model Local Campus Partner Application](#) and [Model Scoring Rubric](#) or a similar local application and scoring rubric, approved by TEA, that meets [eligibility requirements](#). Figure 6, below, gives an overview of these local application and scoring rubric requirements. Districts are also required to conduct a capacity interview with potential operating partners.

Figure 6: Elements of a Strong Partner Application and Evaluation Rubric

A strong partner application includes sections that require the potential partner to provide...

- Evidence of the partner’s capacity to manage the campus, including ensuring the partner will have at least 3 people on the board and one full time staff member when the district applies for benefits
- Evidence that the partner has a consistent vision and school culture
- Information about the partner’s curriculum, assessments, instructional strategies
- Description of how the partner will recruit and manage their staff, and any professional development activities or programs
- If the partner will manage a turnaround campus, evidence that the partner has been in existence for at least three years prior to undertaking the management of the district campus, has managed multiple campuses for multiple years, and has a track record of managing campuses to academic success or has significantly improved the academic performance of campuses.

A strong partner evaluation process includes...

- Employing a review panel to identify partner strengths, weaknesses, past performance, and best fit to campus and district needs
- Conducting capacity interviews with board members and proposed staff members

Resources to Support This Step:

- [Texas Authorizer Online Training](#) (AOT): Module 2—Applications

- [Texas Authorizer Online Training](#) (AOT): Module 3—Capacity Interviews
- [Texas Authorizer Online Training](#) (AOT): Module 9—Due Diligence
- [Authorizer Handbook](#): Section 2—Application Process and Decision Making
- [Quality Authorizing Self-Assessment](#): Phase 2—Application Process and Decision Making

6. Nominate Partner Applications for Board Approval

All local campus partner applications must receive local board approval. Districts should be sure to schedule time for this step that recognizes both the board’s meeting schedule and the time needed to inform the entire school community about the benefits of the partnership and to win support.

Partnerships may also fundamentally shift in roles and responsibilities for the school district, the new charter operating partner, and other community members and organizations that have had an ongoing relationship with the school. District leaders can help prepare their local boards to make these difficult decisions by providing detailed information about the campus identification and partner selection and allowing adequate time for board members to evaluate the opportunity and hear community input.

Resources to Support This Step:

- [Texas Authorizer Online Training](#) (AOT): Module 2—Applications
- [Texas Authorizer Online Training](#) (AOT): Module 3—Capacity Interviews
- [Authorizer Handbook](#): Section 2—Application Process and Decision Making
- [Quality Authorizing Self-Assessment](#): Phase 2—Application Process and Decision Making (Recommendation and Board Decision)

7. Negotiate and Execute Performance Contracts with Selected Partners

In accordance with a district's local authorizing policy, the performance contract formalizes the partnership, clarifies roles and responsibilities, and sets expectations for the partnership. The performance contract outlines the operating partners autonomy over the academic model, staffing, budget, and calendar, and it includes the academic model the partner will implement at the campus(es) they will manage. The contract will also include the funding structure of the partnership and the academic and financial goals the operating partner must meet. The operating partner will already have provided most of these details through the application process, and the contract simply codifies those details. (This is another reason why having a robust application and evaluation process is important.)

Any district that applies for partnership school benefits must submit an executed performance contract to TEA. TEA will review the contract against a [rubric](#) to confirm that the contract meets SB 1882 benefits eligibility requirements. To maintain eligibility for 1882 benefits, the performance contract must continually meet these requirements throughout the existence of the partnership. The district must notify TEA of any changes to the performance contract within 30 calendar days.

TEA has also created a contract template that districts can use in beginning negotiations and finalizing negotiation terms. The model contract and corresponding evaluation form can be found on the [Tools](#) page of the Texas Partnerships website.

Texas Partnerships Benefits Eligibility Requirement:

The performance contract must be approved by the district and operating partner board and meet all [eligibility requirements](#). Districts must submit any amendments to the contract to TEA within 30 days.

Resources to Support This Step:

- [Texas Authorizer Online Training](#) (AOT): Module 4—Autonomy & Accountability
- [Texas Authorizer Online Training](#) (AOT): Module 5—Ongoing Evaluation
- [Authorizer Handbook](#): Section 3—Pre-Opening
- [Quality Authorizing Self-Assessment](#): Phase 3—Pre-Opening
 - *Districts should also review the Monitoring Sections of the [Authorizer Handbook](#), [Quality Authorizing Self-Assessment](#), and the [Campus Evaluation Framework](#) for guidance regarding performance goals and consequences to be included in the contract.*

SECTION FOUR.

APPROVAL PROCESS FOR PARTNERSHIP SCHOOL BENEFITS

After a district develops and authorizes a strong partnership (see Section 3), the district can apply to TEA for partnership benefits available through SB 1882. This section outlines the process and requirements for applying for benefits.

All districts seeking approval for a Texas Partnership must submit:

1. A completed Texas Partnership Benefits Application
2. The district’s Local Board-Approved Charter Authorizing Policy
 - *If the district is not using the TEA model policy, the charter authorizing policy must be approved prior to the application submission*
3. The Local Campus Partner Application submitted by the partner and the district’s completed evaluation documentation
 - *If the district is not using the TEA model application and scoring rubric, these must be approved prior to the application submission*
4. The Partnership Performance Contract (approved by the district and operating partner boards)

TEA will not evaluate all documents for all partnership applications. The review process varies depending on the school- and partner- type (See Figure 7). The rest of this section describes each of the documents that TEA may evaluate as part of a district’s application for partnership benefits. TEA will review other documents for context and completeness only.

Figure 7. Documents TEA will Evaluate to Determine Eligibility for Partnership School Benefits by School- and Partner-Type

| School Type | Turnaround | Innovation | Turnaround | Innovation |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Partner Type | New | New | Existing | Existing |
| Charter Authorizing Policy | Evaluated* | Evaluated* | Evaluated* | Evaluated* |
| District Authorizing Practice Questions | Evaluated | Evaluated | | |
| Local Campus Partner Application | Evaluated* | Evaluated* | | |
| Evidence of Evaluation of Local Campus Partner Application | Evaluated | Evaluated | | |
| Partnership Performance Contract | Evaluated | Evaluated | Evaluated | Evaluated |

* Districts that are not using the TEA model Charter Authorizing policy or the TEA model Local Campus Partner Application and Scoring Rubric must submit these documents for approval prior to submitting the application for benefits. Districts using the model submit these documents with this complete application package. For due dates and submission instructions, please visit the [application page](#) on the Texas Partnerships website.

Texas Partnership Benefits Application

The Texas Partnership Benefits Application includes a section on district charter authorizing policies and practices where districts describe how they are implementing their charter policies, including the resources available, the district staff that are dedicated to overseeing the partnership(s), the leadership of the district's charter authorizing functions, and the process the district uses to review, monitor, and intervene at a school when necessary. **TEA will evaluate the policy implementation for districts partnering with a new Texas partner, regardless of school type.** Districts must also attach their Local Board-Approved Charter Authorizing Policy, and districts not using the TEA model policy must have their policy approved prior to the application submission.

Local Campus Partner Application and Evidence of Evaluation

For each partnership school, districts must attach the Local Campus Partner Application that their partner submitted, as well as evidence of the district's evaluation processes, including evidence of the capacity interview. Districts not using the TEA model application and scoring rubric must have their application and scoring rubric approved prior to the application submission. **TEA will only evaluate the Local Campus Partner Application for districts proposing a partnership with a new Texas partner.**

Partnership Performance Contract

All districts that apply for partnership benefits must submit the *executed* Partnership Performance Contract. **TEA will evaluate the performance contracts to ensure they meet all statutory and rule requirements for all partnerships regardless of school or partner type.** Districts should refer to the Performance Contract Rubric found on the [Tools](#) page of the Texas Partnerships website when drafting and negotiating contract terms to ensure alignment with regulatory requirements. The Performance Contract Rubric clarifies contract criteria for partners' operating authority, academic performance goals, financial goals, school enrollment and expulsion policies, contract terms, charter exemptions, service level agreements, per pupil or percentage funding allocations from the district, accountability for implementing an education plan, and consequences for breach of contract. TEA also created a Partnership Performance Contract districts can use as a template. If the performance contract does not meet all the criteria in TEA's rubric, TEA may approve the benefits contingent on the district making specific, requested modifications.

TEA Review Process

TEA's application review will include the following steps:

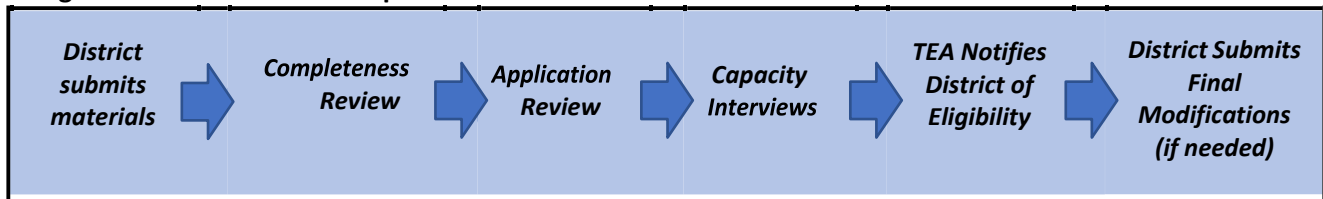
1. **A completeness review.** TEA will first review the application for completeness and to ensure that districts have adopted and/or implemented all relevant policies and templates as required. If TEA determines that any part of a district's submission is incomplete, it will notify the district so it can re-submit the necessary documents. TEA will remove from consideration any applications that:
 - Are submitted after [the published deadline](#)
 - Include plagiarized materials
 - Are from districts that did not submit a Letter of Intent by [the published deadline](#)
 - Are from districts that did not attend mandatory webinars or include partners that did not attend mandatory webinars
 - Include an operating partner that has fewer than 3 members on its governing board and 1 full time staff member at the time the application is submitted to TEA

2. **Application review.** TEA will formally evaluate relevant pieces of each district’s application (See Section 4, Figure 7 for which pieces TEA will formally evaluate based on the partner- and school-type). The review team will discuss individual findings and will establish a consensus rating for each section based on the criteria laid out in its published [rubrics](#) for each part of the application submission.

3. **Requests for Additional Information and Capacity interviews.** TEA may request additional information and/or conduct capacity interviews with districts submitting an application that do not meet a minimum threshold in the steps above. During these interviews, TEA staff may ask questions to clarify specific elements of the application(s) and to assess the district and partner’s capacity to implement the partnership plan laid out in their application. Districts should plan to include their Board Chair, Superintendent (or designee), the primary staff member(s) responsible for authorizing in the interview, and leadership representative(s) from the partner organization.

In the case that TEA determines that elements of the district authorizing policies and practices or partnership performance contract do not meet minimum statutory or regulatory requirements, the district may receive approval conditional on making specific modifications to their district authorizing policies and practices or partnership performance contract. In such instances, districts will have an opportunity to submit modifications (See Figure 9).

Figure 9. Review Process Steps



SECTION FIVE.

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

This section summarizes the authorizing tools mentioned in prior sections that are available to districts engaging in charter authorizing. Other financial and technical support resources are potentially available to districts applying for Texas Partnerships benefits. Districts interested in receiving additional support should contact the Texas Partnerships team at TXP@tea.texas.gov.

Authorizing Tools

Prior to developing partnerships, we strongly encourage districts to review the suite of authorizing guidance and tools related to partnership development available on the Texas Partnerships website:

- The [Texas Authorizer Online Training](#) (AOT) is a series of online modules designed to provide districts with an introduction to authorizing – what it is and why it is important – and provide Texas authorizers with a thorough grounding in the fundamentals of quality authorizing practices. The series of courses found in the online training will convey the historical context of the charter movement and authorizing both nationwide and statewide, cover the essential practices of authorizing, and orient learners to core resources and tools to support their work.
- The [Authorizer Handbook](#) is a reference document that provides an overview of best practices throughout the authorizing life cycle and includes several templates and exemplars.
- The [Quality Authorizing Self-Assessment](#) offers a checklist of critical authorizing responsibilities outlined in the Authorizer Handbook.

Texas Authorizer Leadership Academy

The Texas Authorizer Leadership Academy (TALA) is a comprehensive program for district leaders who are currently or aspiring to use authorizing practices to improve the number of high quality, best fit school options in their district. Through a cohort model, participants will learn to implement effective authorizing practices and lead change in their districts. For more information about TALA, please contact the Texas Partnerships team at TXP@tea.texas.gov.

Grants

School Action Fund

The School Action Fund (SAF) aims to increase the number of students in great schools by providing customized planning and implementation support to school districts committed to transforming low-performing schools and creating better options for students through to bold and aggressive school actions. To learn more about SAF, please visit the [TEA Grant Opportunities page](#).

Charter School Program Grant

The Charter School Program Grant (CSP) aims to increase the number of great schools by supporting the start-up and replication of high-performing charter and partnership schools. The CSP offers a start-up and replication grant to support districts to implement and expand partnership schools. To learn more about CSP, please visit the [TEA Grant Opportunities page](#).

