

# Funding Implementation and Support

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Texas 2036 supports five of TEA’s seven exceptional items, totaling \$312.9 million: Bluebonnet implementation (\$238 million), Texas Strategic Leadership supports (\$10 million), school turnaround (\$30 million), K–12 cybersecurity (\$21.2 million), and Windham School District (\$13.7 million).
- Texas 2036 also supports a costed plan to continue the Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) beyond August 2027. Linking child-care and education data could help Texas examine how early services relate to kindergarten readiness and later outcomes.

## WHY THE REQUEST MATTERS

Texas has invested in statewide instructional materials, school improvement, and shared technology. **The next step is whether school systems can use these tools well – and whether students see results.** TEA’s \$97.3 billion base request (all funds) incorporates the required 3% reduction and seeks an FTE cap 140 below 2026–27. Its exceptional items address needs the base request leaves unresolved.

Optimizing the impact of the Bluebonnet Curriculum requires more than just adoption – it requires effective implementation. In 2026, 215 of 628 applicants for implementation support were unfunded. **Schools need time and expertise to turn materials into stronger reading and math instruction,** but mere access to the materials alone does not do that.

Additional state support is needed to improve student learning at campuses with historical challenges. Federal Title I funding brings structured improvement help to certain F-rated campuses, but TEA identifies other F-rated campuses and struggling districts with less or limited assistance. **Strong district leadership and sustained campus support give these schools a better chance to improve.**

Other pressures can interrupt learning opportunities altogether. TEA reports 152 K–12 cyber incidents in the past year, highlighting risks to instruction and sensitive data. In TDCJ facilities served by Windham School District, staffing and digital connectivity constrains access to education, testing, and credentials that can support inmate reentry.

## ECIDS FUNDING

TEA, TWC and HHSC executed a data-sharing agreement in August 2026. TEA reports three ECIDS dashboards in production and a dashboard requiring matched data from all three agencies remains in development. The \$2.9 million available for development covers work through August 2027. Because TEA’s LAR does not price an ECIDS exceptional item, Texas 2036 recommends a costed plan for continued operations and outcome analysis.

**34%**

**of 628 applicants did not receive Bluebonnet implementation support in 2026**

**557**

**school systems using TEA’s shared cybersecurity services**

## PROPOSED ACTION

**Support Bluebonnet implementation (EI #1, \$238 million).** Fund coaching and professional development for school systems adopting Bluebonnet math and elementary reading materials. TEA should report which applicants receive support and where it goes.

**Support Texas Strategic Leadership (EI #3, \$10 million).** Expand training and coaching for senior district leaders, including new and aspiring superintendents. TEA should report cohort participation and subsequent district outcomes.

**Support school turnaround (EI #4, \$30 million).** Extend state assistance to F-rated campuses and struggling districts beyond those eligible for structured Title I support. TEA should identify recipients and track their performance over time.

**Support shared K–12 cybersecurity (EI #6, \$21.2 million in FY 2028).** Expand services beyond the 557 participating school systems. TEA should report participation, service coverage and disruptions.

**Support Windham School District (EI #7, \$13.7 million from the Foundation School Fund).** Add 51 educators and staff at 32 TDCJ campuses to serve an estimated 4,299 additional students. Maintain digital connectivity for testing and credentials. TEA projects 255 more high-school-equivalency recipients and 3,808 additional industry certifications.

**Establish an ECIDS funding path.** TEA, TWC and HHSC should submit a 2028–29 operating cost estimate, cross-agency linkage milestones and a plan for privacy-protected public reporting. Texas 2036 supports funding the next phase once its cost is specified.

## BUDGET COST ESTIMATE

Five supported exceptional items total \$312.9 million: \$299.2 million in General Revenue and \$13.7 million from the Foundation School Fund. ECIDS is outside this total because the LAR does not price it.

| Request                          | FY 2028              | FY 2029              | Biennial total       |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| EI #1: Bluebonnet implementation | \$119,000,000        | \$119,000,000        | \$238,000,000        |
| EI #3: Strategic leadership      | \$5,000,000          | \$5,000,000          | \$10,000,000         |
| EI #4: School turnaround         | \$15,000,000         | \$15,000,000         | \$30,000,000         |
| EI #6: K–12 cybersecurity        | \$21,200,000         | \$0                  | \$21,200,000         |
| EI #7: Windham School District   | \$6,849,396          | \$6,849,396          | \$13,698,792         |
| ECIDS Funding                    | TBD                  | TBD                  | TBD                  |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>\$167,049,396</b> | <b>\$145,849,396</b> | <b>\$312,898,792</b> |

## PUBLIC POLICY IMPACT

The Legislature needs evidence about the reach and results of these requests. TEA should report which school systems receive implementation, leadership and turnaround support, how far shared cybersecurity services extend, and whether Windham’s projected student gains occur. ECIDS would bring similar accountability to early-childhood services by identifying gaps and examining relationships with kindergarten readiness and later outcomes.

### FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

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