

A. Significance

- (i) *Project is likely to build capacity to provide, improve, or expand services to the population...*
 (ii) *Project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies...*

Introduction: In response to the **Absolute Priority** (*book distribution and childhood literacy activities*) and the **Competitive Preference Priorities** (2. *Technology* and 3. *Improving early learning outcome*), East Austin College Prep Academy (EACPA - charter school) will partner with its parent organization Southwest Key Program (SKP)– Community Center (El Centro del Familia) and United Way of Greater Austin (Success By Six), and the Boys and Girls Club (two sites) to implement a comprehensive literacy program in the **Govalle/ Johnston Terrace neighborhood of East Austin, Texas entitled – Project START** (Students and Teachers in Austin Reading Together) – (*Appendix 1- Letter of Support*). *Endnotes are on pg.26.*

Target Area: This area is populated by **minority and underserved residents who are isolated economically, educationally, socially and politically from the rest of the city.**ⁱ A high percentage of Hispanics, African-American, limited English proficient (LEP), low-income, and under-educated residents live in this area. Poverty, low educational attainment, high dropout and teen pregnancy rates, limited resources and violence are common in this area. According to the U.S. Census 2010, Austin had a population of 786,382 of which 26.2% were Hispanic 7.7% African American, 11.1% lived in poverty and nearly 10% percent did not speak English at home. **On the contrary**, the population of East Austin in 2010 was 35,938 of which **58.9%** were Hispanic, **30.7%** were African American and **55%** lived in poverty, which was four times higher than the Austin MSA (11.1%). Nearly **65%** did not speak English at home which is **six** times higher than the MSA (10%), **54%** of the region’s working age population **did not** have a high school diploma, which was triple, the rate of the Austin MSA (15.2%) and only **11.6%** of the labor force had a bachelor’s degree or higher as compared to **36.7%** in the Austin MSA.

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Schools: Of the 120 Austin ISD schools, 3 high schools, 4 middle schools, and 17 elementary schools serve the residents in East Austin. These schools serve a total of 13,489 students, of which 9,191 are Hispanic, 3,581 are African American, 11,841 are low-income and 5,258 are LEP. Of the three high schools (East Memorial, LBJ, and Reagan), two have been rated "academically unacceptable" over a four year period.ⁱⁱ Similarly, data from the middle schools shows students have not been receiving rigorous academic preparation necessary to be successful, particularly in reading.ⁱⁱⁱ The Texas Assessment Knowledge Skills (TAKS) scores (soon to be STAAR) of students in these schools were well below the state average in all subjects tested. The TAKS scores (core subjects) for the three high schools demonstrated significant under-achievement of **57%** when compared to the state at **76%**. The four middle schools had a low TAKS score (all subjects) of **53.3%** when compared to the state at **76%**.^{iv} Evidently, **major achievement gaps** exist between the local schools and the overall state rating.

Lead Agency: EACPA is a certified Charter School, designated as a local education agency by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) in 2008. Currently, EACPA is in its 3rd year and has two school's serving 800 students in 4th – 9th grade, among which 80% of the students are Hispanic, 8% African American and 90% are low-income. In Year two, 10th – 12th grade will be added and 300 new high-school students will be enrolled for a total of 1,000 students thereafter. Based on a 2011 analysis conducted by the principal, EACPA's library "**Learning Center**" consists of a 1,100 sq. ft. room, two outdated computers, limited internet access, no visual or audio devices, and outdated donated books that are far from relevant to today's 21st century learning needs. The printed materials are not high-interest topics and the non-existence of electronic materials deters students and parents from engaging in literacy /library activities. In fact, as per Texas Library Standards, the school rated "Unacceptable" for age of collection of books and number of items

per pupil (9,000 items or 16 per student, 3000 sq. ft. and age of books no less than 15 years).^v

Lack of Adult Support: The lack of English proficiency, education, and technology impedes the creation of a literacy-rich environment at school and home, hence making it difficult for students to gain motivation in reading. The lack of knowledge and not understating the important factors reading plays in the intellectual development of the mind, inhibits parents from modeling good reading habits which in turn results in low-academic performance of students.

Solution: To address the above situation, EACPA engaged the existing East Austin Children’s Promise – Advisory Council, its partners, as well as parents, EACPA teachers, administrators, and staff during the past year to develop a high-quality plan that includes book distribution, pre- literacy activities, and literacy activities. In response to Absolute Priority, *Project START* is based on **Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Alliance for Excellent Education research and report entitled , *Reading Next: A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy report, in Ocother2004 and several other scientifically-valid research studies (as included in the Endnotes section)***. Using the report, EACPA and its partners came up with the following scientifically valid research-based guidelines that have proven to be successful in oral, pre-literacy and literacy development programs implemented in various parts of the country: **1) All of the domains of a child's development - physical, social-emotional, cognitive, language and literacy - are interrelated and interdependent;**^{vi} **2) Early learning experiences support literacy development in young children;**^{vii} **3) Scientifically research-based instructional approaches fostering communication skills, including oral and written language promote access, opportunity, and academic achievement;**^{viii} **4) Purposeful, direct, explicit, systematic instruction is valuable for continuous literacy achievement;**^{ix} **5) Student learning and motivation are enhanced by connection to**

cultural experience and personal relevance;^x **6)** Valid and reliable student literacy achievement data assists in alignment of literacy activities across age- and grade levels;^{xi} **7)** Collaboration among education professionals, family, and community is essential to improved student literacy achievement;^{xii} and **8)** Students performing below level in literacy will benefit from instructional interventions that are needs based, intensive and of sufficient duration to accelerate learning implemented within a RTI model.^{xiii} **Project START** will also increase the literacy, education, and technology resources in the target area by providing access to and use of high-quality print and electronic media literacy/library materials to help educators, students and parents acquire the linguistic, social and technological skills needed for success in the digital age.^{xiv,xv} Through enhanced classroom and library hours before, after-school, weekends, and summer, **Project START** will engage parents to actively participate in their children’s education.^{xvi} Additionally, professional development of educators and staff will be an integral part of **Project START** (*Appendix 2 – List of job-embedded Professional Development*).

B. Quality of project design

(i) Goals, objectives, and outcomes of the project are clearly specified and measurable...

Project START will serve **800 students** in **4th - 9th grade** at EACPA, **75 community youth** in **1st – 12th grade** participating at the two Boys and Girls Club sites in the neighborhood, **125 children from birth to 6 years** through the United Way of Greater Austin – Success By Six Program, and **75 youth ages 4 - 20** at Southwest Key Program's El Centro del Familia. Over **540 parents** will also be engaged in literacy services at all five sites. In total, **1,615** under-represented, low-income, minority, at-risk youth and adults will be served annually.

Goal 1: Create an educational culture that enhances learning and academic performance of all students, particularly underserved minority, Limited Language Proficient (LEP), low-income,

low-performing and special education students so they excel academically.

Objective 1.1: Increase oral language and pre-literacy skills of participating preschool children (Absolute Priority and Competitive Priority 3).

Outcome 1: **75%** of 0 to 3 year old children participating in the project will achieve significant gains in oral language skills by the end project period, as measured by pre and post assessment.

Outcome 2: **80%** of 4 year old participating children will achieve significant gains in oral language skills by the end project period, as measured by pre and post assessment (**GPRA 1**).

Outcome 3: **70%** of participating 5 year old children will be prepared to enter kindergarten on or above grade level by the end project period, as measured by school entrance assessment.

Objective 1.2 Increase the performance of participating students in K – 2nd grade on early reading assessments (Absolute Priority and Competitive Priority 3)

Outcome 1: **80%** of participating students in grades K – 2nd will be reading at grade level or higher, as measured annually by pre and post assessment. *Baseline collected upon award.

Outcome 2: **50%** of participating students, parents will be actively engaged in their child’s reading, literacy and learning habits, annually, as measured by self-reporting evaluations.

Objective 3: Increase percentage of participating students who meet or exceed proficiency on the State English Language Arts assessment in grades 3rd – 12th (Absolute Priority)

Outcome 1: **80%** of participating students in grade 3 will meet or exceed proficiency on the state standard test in reading or language, as measured annually by STAAR test (**GPRA 2**).

Outcome 2: **78%** of participating students in grades 4 – 7 will meet or exceed proficiency on the state standard test in reading or language, as measured annually by STAAR test.

Outcome 3: **76%** of participating students in grade 8 will meet or exceed proficiency on the state

standard test in reading or language, as measured annually by STAAR test (GPRA 3).

Outcome 4: **75%** of participating students in grades 9 – 12 will meet or exceed proficiency on the state standard test in reading or language, as measured annually by STAAR test (GPRA 4).

Objective 4: Increase use of technology enabled instruction, assessment, and decision making for effective implementation (Competitive Priority 2)

Outcome 1: Each Year, **100%** of teachers and librarians will participate in pedagogical instructional strategy training to build literacy skills of students', as measured by STAAR.

Outcome 2: Each year, **80%** of teachers receiving professional development in reading strategies (pedagogy) will show improvement in teaching, as measured by observation rubric.

Outcome 3: Each year, **65%** of participating parents will engage in literacy, college awareness and financial literacy training to increase support of their child's academic performance and knowledge of post-secondary requirements, as measured by annually surveys.

Goal 2: Improve reading skills and academic achievement of all children, students and adults, particularly minority, low-income, low-performing and special education populations through access to high-quality print and electronic literacy activities and library materials

Objective 2.1: Provide access to up-to-date high-quality print and electronic media materials for educators, students and their parents (Competitive Priority 2).

Outcome 1: **800** students/youth will have access and utilize print/electronic media materials by the end of year one, as measured by roster and self-reporting evaluations.

Outcome 2: **540** parents/adults will have access and utilize print/electronic media materials by the end year one, as measure annually by roster and self-reporting evaluations.

Objective 2.2: Acquire current Web. 2.0 technology/ equipment to build critical thinking,

reading, and learning skills of participants (Absolute Priority and Competitive Priority 2).

Outcome 1: **3,000** printed materials of interest will be purchased and disseminate and used by the end of 1st semester, as measured by roster and self-reporting evaluations.

Outcome 2: **90%** of participants will engage in literacy activities through electronic learning by the end of the project period, as measured by roster and self-reporting evaluations.

Objective 2.3: Enhance access to quality print and electronic materials before and after school, weekends, and summer to provide students (AP and CP 2 and 3).

Outcome 1: **80%** of target population will engage in project activities during non-traditional hours (before and after school, weekends, summer, etc.), based on rosters and self-evaluations.

(ii) Project coordinated with similar community, State, and Federal resources...

The Boys and Girls Club, United Way of Greater Austin (Success by Six), and Southwest Key Programs (SKP) have been selected as partners for their ongoing support, collaboration, organizational foundation, resources, expertise, knowledge, skills, experience and leadership in delivering literacy programs. Each partner will have a unique role in supporting and delivering literacy activities, academic strategies while integrating technology in programming when appropriate before, during and after-school including evenings, weekends, and summer. The Boys and Girls Club has several pre-literacy and literacy programs (such as, SPARK Early, Cultural Literacy Project, Family Reading Night, JETS Reading Program, etc.) to sharpen reading skills of academically challenged children, while cultivating an excitement for reading and learning. Success By Six is a national United Way strategy in more than 350 cities across the country - all focused on improving early literacy and school readiness. SKP provides transformative education, innovative safe shelters, and alternatives to incarceration for over 6,000 youth each day in six states, while creating opportunities for their families to become self-

sufficient. In order to increase the civic, social, education and employability skills for East Austin residents, SKP completed construction of the \$8 million 30,000 square-foot state-of-the-art 21st century community facility (El Centro del Familia) in the target neighborhood in 2007. This facility is currently home to **EACPA**, Boys & Girls Club, GED and ESL classes, and the AMD (Advanced Micro Devices) – Community Technology Center. **Project START** will be integrated as a major component of this facility. This configuration will not only maximize resources and services provided through the project, but will allow **Project START** to access a variety of partner organizations currently coordinating services at the El Centro de Familia. These programs, services, and curricular approaches in collaboration with the charter school curriculum will further enhance the intensity and content of literacy activities as described later.

(iii) Project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support...

Project START is part of a larger initiative entitled the East Austin Children’s Promise (EACP). EACP is an ambitious neighborhood revitalization and community development effort to improve the East Austin community, through several education, social, employment, health, and well-being programs. In fact, EACPA was recently successful in receiving a Full Service Community Schools grant and Carol M. White Physical Education grant from the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE). **Project START** will be integrated with these two school-based academic, educational, social, mental health, physical and well-being programs.

Project START will also be aligned with the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) system with the newly adopted reading and writing standards (2011) and statewide professional development for the English Language Arts (ELA) End-of-Course (EOC) assessments. It will also be integrated, supported and implemented with the current initiatives of Region XIII Education Service Center (ESC XIII) research, pre-service literacy education and

professional development. Additionally, to further disseminate resources and research, *Project START* will utilize the statewide (TEA) online web 2.0 platform, *Project Share*, as well as its own project website through which professional development resources will be shared.

(iv) Performance feedback and continuous improvement are integral part of the project...

The project director will conduct weekly staff meetings and use its existing *MIS system* for participant feedback and continuous improvement measures. Utilizing the Continuous Improvement Management (CIM) Process Model developed by USDOE (*Appendix 3 – See CIM Model*), the director (with assistance from the independent evaluator) will: 1) work with the Literacy Steering Committee (described later) on a monthly basis to solicit feedback, ideas, and input into program operation and evaluation; 2) assess student, staff, parent, and faculty satisfaction every quarter through focus groups, personal interviews, and surveys; 3) monitor disciplinary and academic performance of students every quarter to assess effectiveness of services; 4) strive to continuously improve the project through on-going measurement of proposed objectives and outcomes every month; and 5) Review ongoing evaluation data.

C. Quality of the project services

(i) Strategies provide equal access and treatment for eligible project participants....

Through policy, EACPA ensures that members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability will have equal access and treatment in any activity of the organization. Therefore, in addition to serving all participants with equal access and rigor, EACPA and its partners will give special attention to recruiting and providing equal access and treatment to LEP, economically disadvantaged students, children with disabilities, and students with other risk factors associated with lower achievement. Multiple strategies will be used to ensure equal access and treatment for eligible project participants: 1) All students in the targeted cohort will be given priority to enhance

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academic performance; 2) All participating students will receive supportive services to include tutoring, mentoring, academic camps and online supports for completion of their coursework; 3) Reading intervention services will target every student for reading success without exclusionary practices; 4) An Advisory Curriculum will target underrepresented children, youth, and parents, and include academic and career counseling, leadership, character education, higher education requirements, and course selection; 5) Teachers, the Literacy Coach, Curriculum Facilitator, tutors and partners will be trained to work with diverse populations (younger and older) and will use appropriate modifications in instructional strategies and literacy curricula; 6) A Literacy Steering Committee (LSC) will meet regularly to examine policies and programs toward ensuring literacy development including early learning for all students; and 7) The Project Director, evaluator, partners, project staff and LSC will meet monthly to assess student progress, and responsiveness to the needs of diverse learners. Also, all buildings of EACPA are accessible to individuals with disabilities. Arrangements are made for all students with special needs. In hiring personnel, EACPA will also ensure all persons regardless of gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age will have equal access to all employment and program services.

(ii) The extent to which the services to be provided are appropriate to the needs ...

(iii) The extent to which training to be provided are of sufficient quality and intensity

In addition to being based on the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Alliance for Excellent Education research and report entitled , *Reading Next: A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy report, in October 2004, Project START* will ensure that all children gain the essential five components for reading as outlined in the Report of the National Reading Panel and Teaching Children to Read (2000): **phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.**^{xvii} Consistent with the **Absolute Priority**, the report states that: 1) Oral language development begins in infancy; 2) Access to

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quality print and electronic literacy materials before and after school, weekends, and summer provides a foundation for enhanced motivation to read among students and parents; 3) Dual language learners benefit from explicit instructional techniques that work to include them in classroom social interactions and recognize the value of their home language; 4) Explicit, systematic instruction in five critical components of reading, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension has been shown to prevent reading difficulties that require intervention, including special education; 5) Explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics enables students to master the alphabetic principle and effectively apply their knowledge of letters and sounds to read text; 6) Explicit fluency instruction helps provide a bridge between word recognition and comprehension; and 7) Both direct instruction and indirect development of the structure of language and vocabulary, coupled with opportunities for exposure and learning in a variety of contexts, are an integral factor in literacy development. Based on the above research-based rationale, the following activities will be implemented:

Pre-K and Kindergarten children: In order to develop oral language and phonics among children between 0-5 years of age, EACPA, in partnership with Boys and Girls Club and United Way will implement curriculum (such as SPARK and Success By Six) that includes listening comprehension, verbal expression, and vocabulary development. Key components of pre-literacy programs will include emphasis on oral language, phonics, alphabetic code, and print knowledge and use. Activities (undertaken by SKP, United Way and Boys and Girls Club) will also foster vocabulary building among Pre-K and Kindergarten children by engaging them and their parents in activities that are cognitively and linguistically stimulating. Utilizing effective strategies purported by **National Reading Panel (2000a), entitled, *Assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction***^{xviii}, teachers and staff will: 1)

nurture relationships with parents who engage in responsive conversations, as well as model reading and writing behavior as a key ingredient for nurturing language and literacy; 2) distribute and provide daily reading of quality books, including those that reflect children’s culture; 3) provide experiences that expand children’s vocabulary, such as trips in the neighborhood and exposure to various tools and materials; and 4) provide opportunities for children and their parents to be immersed in language-rich environments in order to develop phonological awareness; and 5) provide opportunities for children and parents to engage in focused recreation that incorporates literacy tools and electronic resources, as key ingredients for nurturing literacy.

Additionally, classroom teachers, as part of regular subject matter instruction, will devote at least 10 minutes per day in their classes to develop the reading fluency of students. The teacher will hold this session at the beginning of the class each day on oral reading of a text related to a subject matter. The teacher will provide systematic and explicit guidance and feedback to students. To encourage participation, the teacher will occasionally divide students up into pairs. During this 10-minute session, teachers will have pairs practice “paired-reading” while teachers circulates around the room observing and providing encouragement and corrective feedback.^{xix}

Adolescent Learners: For adolescents, these same five components will be equally relevant. In addition to direct, explicit comprehension instruction, teachers will supplement the subject area curricular efforts through *standards-based instruction*^{xx}, enhanced by the *Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)* model of instruction, to address the needs of students – especially struggling readers, LEP, and underrepresented students. The SIOP model is currently the richest research-based resource available for creating responsive learning environments for struggling readers and LEP students.^{xxi} To address the needs, the teachers will use the SIOP model in their classrooms and reinforce it again during 3-hour weekend camps every two weeks

for 36 weeks per year. The teachers will accompany students and parents to these weekend camps where both teachers and the literacy coach will utilize the SIOP model as well as other effective reading strategies to develop students' reading skills. For those that are most in need for additional assistance, the literacy coach and tutors will provide direct reading instruction during the summer months, after-school, and during the regular school year in one-on-one settings or in small groups to accelerate reading comprehension of struggling readers. Also, teachers will engage students in pre-guided, post-reading and writing activities.^{xxii} Teachers will have the flexibility to integrate these strategies with their regular instruction, depending on their purposes for teaching, the difficulty of the text, and how well their students can read the text.

Library at the Learning Center and Proposed Mobile Library: In addition to equipping the onsite library (**Learning Center**) with a wide range of literacy resources spanning a range of both complexity and content (including both literature and informational text) to effectively support reading and writing, EACPA will also establish a mobile library within the target neighborhood. Under the supervision of the teacher-librarian, the library (Learning Center) and proposed mobile library will: a) Increase access of participating children, youth, and parents in the target neighborhood to a wide range of literacy activities and resources (either print or electronic) through distribution of appropriate books; b) Provide high-quality literacy activities with meaningful opportunities for parental engagement, including encouraging parents to read books often with their children in their early years of school and of life, and teaching parents how to use literacy resources (print and electronic) effectively. Collections will include novels, fictions, short stories, and literary works associated with drama, poetry, literary criticism and history, literary biography, the craft of writing, journalism, public speaking, etc. In addition, books, study guides, and on-line lesson plans associated with the Accelerated Reading program

will be purchased to increase the vocabulary and reading comprehension of students.

Book Distribution: EACPA, Boys and Girls Club, United Way, and SKP will be putting books in the hands of children and their parents, and encouraging them to read. According to the USDOE's Commission on Reading's Report (1985) entitled, **Becoming a Nation of Readers**, reading motivation activities, books in the home, leisure reading, and parent involvement are among the best ways to help young children become fluent, able readers. The Teacher-Librarian will select appropriate books (in consultation with partners) and hold quarterly free book distribution events through the Library Center and the mobile library described above. EACPA student volunteers and community volunteers recruited by the Boys and Girls Club, United Way, and SKP will be engaged in distribution of children books. The Teacher-Librarian, with assistance from trained volunteers, will train parents (either in one-hour sessions in the library or by viewing a training video) on effective strategies on how to engage their young children in conversations (dialogic reading) around books rather than reading straight through books.^{xxiii}

Motivation: One of the most common problems all teachers face is lack of student motivation. However, motivation is of particular importance for those who work with both young and older children. Considerable research has shown a decline in motivation and performance for many children as they move from Pre-K to elementary school into middle school and high school.^{xxiv} Based on participating younger and older students' interest, teachers, teacher-librarian, tutors and partners will equip the Learning Center, the mobile library, and each classroom of EACPA with appropriate books, reports, and journals (print and electronic) in order to provide students with opportunities to select for themselves materials they prefer. Across all subject areas, the teachers will "tune in" to their students' interest in order to understand what they find relevant and why, and provide them with additional choices to read and research that

are more relevant to their students' interest and social context.^{xxv}

Technology: The Learning Center and the mobile library will also include a lab for 2Know - Classroom Response System,^{xxvi} computer-based writing, for keyboarding instruction, assessment/quizzing, and with the addition of optional Smart Applets, and a range of other applications. Additionally, the Learning Center will include: 1) an interactive technology literacy curriculum (easyteck) that will teach students critical technology skills in the context of core curriculum and real world challenges; 2) Scope and Sequence resources and lesson plans; and 3) *Study Island's* web-based resources for STAAR mastery and SAT (college) preparation. Furthermore, ongoing subscriptions to popular magazines, periodicals and journals will support and extend the collections of the Learning Center. Library collections and subscriptions will also be made available through online resources such as netTrekker,^{xxvii} Discovery Education,^{xxviii} and Britannica Online^{xxix} will be available for technology integration with literacy instruction.

Parental engagement: In addition to engaging parents in pre-literacy and literacy activities, Boys and Girls Club and SKP will provide ESL, GED, and adult basic education at El Centro del Familia. Additionally, EACPA will host monthly parent information nights at this Center. Examples of topics will include: parents' role in college preparation; courses needed for graduation; rigorous coursework (Pre-AP/AP/IB/early-college credit courses); financial literacy, and financial aid; college entrance requirements; types of college degrees and career pathways; and preparing a supportive home environment for literacy development.

Screening and monitoring: For 0 to 4 year olds: Assessment of Literacy and Language (ALLTM) will be utilized and for grades K-3: Primary Reading Inventory (*TPRI*), Progress Monitoring for Emergent Readers (*PMER*), and Progress Monitoring for Beginning Readers (*PMBR*) instruments will be used. ALLTM will be used to aid in early detection of language

disorders, language and emergent literacy deficits, and weak language and emergent literacy of all young children (0 – 4 years old). PMER will be used for Grade 2 students and PMBR will be used for Grade 3 students. TPRI will be used every six months on K-3 grade students. Students of grades 4-12 will be screened by using several assessment instruments such as District Benchmark Assessments, Curriculum Based Monitoring (CBM) Assessments, DRA/TALA Adolescent Fluency Assessment, and Lexile measures at the onset of the program and every six months after that. Students scoring two grades below grade level on screening assessments will be identified as in need of additional intervention and will be assisted through targeted intervention and individualized coaching. Classroom teacher observations with documentation and annual STAAR-EOC scores will also be reviewed every six months. The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) will be used to assess the progress that LEP students make in learning the English language. Following each screening assessment, scores will be analyzed for each student, by class, and by grade. This data will be used to monitor reading achievement levels of the students according to standards set by STAAR requirements. Teachers will analyze class data to determine trends in reading strengths and weaknesses of students, and to decide where to focus instruction.

Training and professional development: Guided by the RTI (Response to Intervention) model, and with assistance from United Way, Boys and Girls Club, SKP, and ESC XIII, professionals, educators and teachers will be trained on: 1) How to accelerate student reading achievement using systematic and explicit instruction; 2) Using assessment data (electronic) to drive instruction; 3) Lesson progressions to guide educators/teacher lessons for phonological awareness, phonics/word study, fluency, comprehension skills, etc.; 4) Questioning and discussion strategies that engage students; 5) Implementation of systematic, explicit, and

differentiated instruction, as well as guide assessment and evaluation results to place students in appropriate tiers for improvement in phonemic awareness, phonics/word study, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension; 6) Implementation of appropriate screening and progress monitoring methods; 7) identification of appropriate research-based reading interventions and assessment tools; and 8) Strategies to differentiate literacy instruction based on student needs. In addition, break-out sessions will focus on solutions to differentiate instruction, to identify and assess students who are falling behind, and decrease the number referred to special education.

Teachers and administrators will also participate in a common planning time to learn about and develop a deep understanding of the skills and strategies that ensure students learn effective use of strategic reading, thinking tools, and meta-cognitive processes associated with pre-literacy and literacy development. The Teacher-Librarian and Literacy Coach will help teachers translate information presented at on-site workshops into classroom practices through modeling, side-by-side co-teaching, observation, and feedback. The Literacy Coach and Curriculum Facilitator will also assist teachers and administrators to coordinate resources, model lessons, and provide expertise around literacy practice. Furthermore, through ongoing consultation, professionals' educators/teachers will compile and share a portfolio of lesson plans, reading lists, assessment tools, observations, reflective notes, challenges, and lessons learned through **Project Share**.

D. Adequacy of resources

(i) Costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and proposed project...

(ii) Costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons served and to the benefits...

As described before, **Project START** will be integrated with the ongoing programs of United Way, Boys and Girls Club, ESC XIII, and SKP. With the support of these partners and EACPA (*Appendix 1-Letter of Support*), the year one budget () adequately includes funds for training programs, high-quality print and electronic materials, technology, online educational

resources and databases, support for teachers, students, parents and community members including instructional assistance and academic guidance. EACPA has also allocated sufficient staff, supplies, and technology to accomplish the proposed outcomes. The budget reflects actual costs and is adequate to support operational costs based on our experience and research of other literacy project costs. The budget of [REDACTED] in year one will serve a total of [REDACTED] participants. This translates to [REDACTED] per participant, which is cost effective given the scope, intensity and range of support and services proposed to the target population and all the variables surrounding this area. These costs are realistic and compares favorably to other similar literacy projects.

E. Quality of the management plan

(i) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives on time and within budget.

EACPA, a local education agency, will be the lead and fiscal agent of the *Project START*. In addition, representatives from the Advisory Council, partners, LEA administrator, charter school principal, teachers, evaluator, and parents will form a **Literacy Steering Committee (LSC)**. The **LSC** facilitated by the director will meet quarterly and play a critical role in the planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and sustainability of *Project START*.

Management Structure: Ms. Jennifer Nelson, Vice President of Community Programs will act as the project director and will provide program supervision. Ms. Nelson is an experienced and qualified leader who will devote 100% of her time to the project. To maintain accountability, relationships and ensure full implementation of program, Ms. Nelson will work closely with the Literacy Coach, Teacher/ Librarian, school educators and partners. To insure the program is being effective, a high level of communication among staff, partners, school personnel, parents, students and community will be implemented, including weekly meetings to review program progress, outcomes and areas needing improvement. The literacy staff and partners will provide monthly reports to the Director detailing status, pre/post-results, and progress towards objectives.

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To ensure implementation on-time and within budget, the following time line has been created.

Timeline: The following timeline has been created: (Start date: October 1, 2012)

Director-PD; Literacy Coach-LC, Teacher/Librarian-TL; Tutors-TU; Partners-PA; Evaluator-EV		
Activities/Milestone	Responsibility	Timeline
Establish Literacy Steering Committee	PD	O – 2012
Hire Literacy Coach and Teacher/Librarian	PD	O – N 2012
Engage Evaluator to collect baseline (GPRA 1, 2 and 3)	PD, EV	N – 2012
Involve Boys and Girls Club, United Way and Southwest Keys	PD, LC, TL,PA	D – 2012
Literacy staff and partners receive capacity building	PD, LC, TL,PA	D – J 2013
Review curriculum and integrate new print and technology	PD, LC, TL,PA	D – J 2013
Hire Tutors to work with at-risk students and parents	PD, LC	J – F 2013
Begin accumulating literacy print and electronic book/eBooks,	LC, TL, TU	F – M 2013
Integrate services of netTrekker and Discovery Education	PD, LC	F – 2013
Begin professional development to teachers and educators	PD, LC, ,PA	F – 2013
Staff and partner begin intensive literacy services	LC, TL,TU,PA	F – S 2013
Start engaging students in high-quality literacy activities	LC, TL,TU,PA	J – A 2013
Begin engaging children oral language skill development	LC, TL,TU,PA	F – A 2013
Engage parents in literacy and learning activities	PD, LC, TL,PA	M – A 2013
Host extended hour literacy activities -before, after-school, etc.	LC, TL,TU,PA	M – A 2013
Starting offering tutoring services (face-to-face and online)	TU	M – A 2013
Administer surveys, collect data, test, rosters and evaluations	PD, EV	Ap – 2013
Evaluate, compile and review data for program improvement	PD, EV	M – 2013

Start Summer Literacy Program, activities, strategies	LC, TL,TU,PA	Ju. – 2013
Plan, incorporate lessons learned and best practices	PD, EV,PA	A – 2013
Implement Second Year with program adjustments	LC, TL,TU,PA	S – 2013
Compose and submit annual performance report to USDOE	PD, EV	O – 2013
Replicate model in Third Year with non-federal funds	SP,C,S,PA	S – 2014

(ii) Time commitments of project director, principal investigator and key staff are adequate... (Appendix 4 – Organizational Chart)

Key Personnel – Dr. Gonzales, Superintendent (.10 FTE) with over 45 years of managing federal/state educational programs will supervise the project director at [REDACTED]. His credentials include a Doctorate in Education and Curriculum (*Appendix 5-Resume*).

Project Director (1 FTE): Ms. Nelson, Project Director has over 19 years of training, education, and experience in academic/social programs. Ms. Nelson will oversee the daily operations and evaluation, with guidance from the LSC to ensure compliance with objectives. Ms. Nelson has a Master of Social Work and a B.A. (*Appendix 6-Resume*).

Curriculum Facilitator: Mr. Brain M. Episcopo, at 30% of his time [REDACTED], will work with staff to ensure activities are aligned with classroom teacher’s core content. Mr. Episcopo holds a Master in Latin American Studies and will be an asset (*Appendix 7-Resume*).

Literacy Coach (1 FTE): To-be-hired (TBH) will play a key role in ensuring effective integration into the school's current academic infrastructure and work closely with teachers to ensure pedagogical literacy strategies are integrated into all core content areas. This person will possess a Masters in a related field and have three years of experience as a literacy teacher - preferably working with disadvantaged communities (*Appendix 8 –Job Description*).

Teacher-Librarian (1 FTE): TBH will work with teachers to identify reading deficiencies of students, to ensure literacy activities and library resources are aligned to curriculum. She/he

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will possess a Masters in a related field and have three years of experience as a literacy instructor including technology integration in core content subjects (*Appendix 8 –Job Description*).

Tutors (2 part-time): TBH will tutor students/parents in person and online, before/after school, and during summer. Tutors will be former teacher or college students that possess two years of college and be knowledgeable in content area (*Appendix 8 –Job Description*).

(iii) *The adequacy of mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services.*

EACPA Board of Trustees will be the authorized governing board of ***Project START*** which will be located within the Charter School Administrative Department to ensure that it is an integral part of daily operations and administrative functions. EACPA’s management plan will incorporate all of the essential control functions, oversight and elements to ensure an efficient and effective program implementation. These functions will include on-going planning, staff supervision, financial accountability, communications, reporting, and management of information, sharing resources, evaluation and continuous improvement mechanisms. These functions will ensure the delivery of accessible, quality, coordinated and culturally relevant services to those most in need. EACPA has extensive experience of coordinating and managing federal/state grants which have met and/or exceeded its performance outcomes with excellent financial audit reviews. The management plan is designed to integrate the following elements to achieve the goals, objectives, and outcomes (pages 4 - 7) on time and within budget.

Program and Fiscal Monitoring: The Project Director will use the timeline (above) as a guide to ensure the timely implementation of program services and achievement of outcomes. The timeline, outcomes, *Logic Model* (*Appendix 9*) and evaluation data will be reviewed monthly with the LSC members for effective decision-making. When milestones are not met, the team will develop an action plan. The Director will also work with the EACPA finance department to

track and oversee project expenditures. This will include monthly meetings with the finance department and quarterly meetings with LSC to review actual expenditures against proposed costs and to implement program revisions when appropriate to maximize resources.

F. Quality of the project evaluation

(i) The methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures

The evaluation for this program will be conducted by the independent evaluator firm (EGT Institute, Inc.). EGT Institute (*Appendix 10-Profile*) with its vast years of evaluation experience has been jointly working with EACPA to develop this evaluation design. EGT Institute, Inc. (EGT) will be part of the management structure to ensure that timely information is provided for strategic planning, measuring progress, making program adjustments and maintaining the project focus to achieve the proposed outcomes. The evaluation component will utilize formative and summative performance evaluation measures to assess the effectiveness of the project.

Formative and summative evaluation: Ongoing formative evaluation data will be collected and maintained by the evaluators. Ongoing formative evaluation will establish processes for assessing program fidelity and whether or not the program is staying on track and achieving goals, objectives and outcomes (**GPRA/Project Measures**) on pages 4 - 7 in a timely manner. Baseline data will be collected upon award. Each year, formative evaluation will focus on addressing whether or not the activities are being implemented as planned. Accountability standards will be utilized to assess project implementation against the proposed objectives and performance outcomes. In addition to tracking students' oral, pre-literacy and literacy development, ongoing formative evaluation questions will include: 1) Are key staff and teachers trained and in place to successfully implement *Project START*? 2) Are appropriate curricula and teaching strategies being implemented for all students? 3) Are educators being trained through year-round high-quality professional development? 4) Is LSC and educators utilizing student *Project START* “*Students and Teachers in Austin Reading Together*”

performance data in decision making and continuous improvement of its programs and services? 5) Is a method in place to solicit participant feedback? 6) How effective is and online efforts to disseminate knowledge, best practices, and curriculum materials to stakeholders through Project Share? 7) Assess whether or not the purchased print and electronic materials meet curricula and participants' needs; 8) Analyze usage and satisfaction data to determine effectiveness of library materials and assess the level of access of print and digital resources by all participants; and 9) determine participation and satisfaction levels of parental engagement in literacy activities.

The summative evaluation will test the effectiveness of the proposed interventions on participating students. The summative evaluation questions will be: 1) What are the effects of the proposed strategies on students' reading (literacy) skills? 2) What specific interventions have significantly improved student reading performance? 3) Is reading achievement uniformly improved by certain literacy interventions or does it vary by specific subgroups of students?

Data collection instruments will include: 1) baseline data (at the onset of the program); 2) pre and post-tests (bi-annually); 2) standardized open-ended surveys of participating parents, educators and students (annually); 3) classroom observations (semi-annually); 4) interviews with participating educators, partners, and project staff (annually); 5) class grades, and STAAR test scores (semi-annually); 6) pre-post surveys of educators to measure knowledge and expertise in instructional improvement strategies and best practices (annually); 7) professional development surveys (after each session); and 8) number of teachers engaged in project-based and technology-integrated instructional activities (quarterly). Data collection methods will include surveys, focus groups, interviews, student work samples, test scores, performance evaluations, and notes from classroom observations rubrics, etc. Data such as grades of students, assessment, enrollment, training and other services provided, etc. will be disaggregated by subgroups and

maintained throughout the project period. In addition to student assessment data, a variety of methods will be used to maintain both qualitative and quantitative data: 1) sign in sheets of professional development sessions; 2) online surveys distributed to educators to determine pre and post utilization of curriculum and strategies developed; 3) classroom teacher observation rubric; 4) attendance and satisfaction rates of participants at professional development sessions; 5) online pre/post self-reporting surveys to teachers and staff to determine teacher competency, use of oral, pre-literacy and literacy development curricula, and frequency of use of evidence-based literacy lessons and assessments; 6) number of students served by age group and grade level as well as parents; and 7) other related program data to measure performance targets.

Analysis of formative evaluation data will be completed by analyzing qualitative and quantitative data on proposed and actual implementation of activities, accomplishments, challenges, and lessons learned. Analysis for summative evaluation data will be completed by assessing data for performance measures. For students, performance measures and outcomes will be aggregated and analyzed by grade levels, gender, and teaching experience of teachers, schools, and other characteristics as determined by the Evaluator. Within each aggregated group, the significance of gain between mean pre-and post-test scores of participating students will be analyzed each year by using a t-test at 95% confidence level. In addition to utilizing t-tests at 95% confidence level and other descriptive statistics, statistical significance of proposed outcome data will be further analyzed each year depending on the type and source of the data. While the focus of evaluation will be on assessing impact on students' literacy outcomes, it will also look for systemic changes in school practices and decision making processes that may have proximal effect on school-based outcomes (e.g., attendance, promotions, behavior, culture, etc.).

(ii) Evaluation will provide performance feedback and periodic assessment

All student data from ages 0 through Grade 12 will be maintained by EACPA and EGT Institute in a comprehensive data management database that allows for storage, analysis, and reporting of data from the level of an individual student, to more general review and comparison of performance by grade level, age, gender, and demography. Data derived from assessment tools (such as ALLTM, PMER, TPRI, TELPAS, CBM Assessments, DRA/TALA Adolescent Fluency Assessment, Lexile measures, and STAAR-EOC) will be used for screening, diagnosis, progress monitoring, and outcome assessments of all students/children. The Project Director will also participate in the Kindergarten Readiness System as part of maintaining and analyzing pre-literacy data. Interim and annual assessments will provide timely information to teachers and school leaders about how students are performing as well as the impact of the project activities. The assessment data will also be maintained for instructional planning, tracking of children - students' performance, standards benchmarking, and with the three-tier monitoring associated with RTI model. Content analysis techniques will be used to identify important details and patterns in the data. Patterns emerging from the analysis will be summarized to characterize project implementation processes and participant outcomes. Using this approach, a more informed understanding of the proposed program and how it impacts students, parents, and educators can be provided. Findings, challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations will be presented by EGT Institute and discussed with the Project Director, project staff, and LSC at monthly meetings for continuous improvement. In addition, the Director, Evaluator, and LSC will solicit regular face-to-face and online feedback from participating teachers, students, and parents. The evaluation data and the recommendations made by EGT Institute, Inc., will be considered by the Project Director for adoption into future activities of the proposed program. Annual reports will be submitted on time to the USDOE.