Karnes City Independent School District – Literacy is Essential for Academic Progress (LEAP)

(a) Significance

(i) Extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity... The Karnes City

Independent School District (KCISD) is located in Karnes County, Texas. KCISD is a 361.6

square mile rural district in South-central Texas, approximately 50 miles south of San Antonio,

Texas. KCISD is home to 4,647 residents. According to the 2010 United States Census, **27.3%**

of all families living in the school district are living in poverty. In fact, in 2011 the *Texas*

Education Agency (TEA) reported that of all youth in KCISD, **66.3%** are considered

"economically disadvantaged". Ethnically the student population is comprised of **68.2%**

Hispanic or Latino, **27.9%** White, **3.1%** African-American and **0.8%** are considered other

(Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American, or two or more races). Despite the impoverished

nature of this community, KCISD has been highly successful at improving the educational

achievement of nearly all of its students. According to a 2011 TEA report **96.0%** of all KCISD

students were able to pass the *Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills* Reading and English

Language Arts (R/ELA) assessment. Further, disaggregated data shows that **99.0%** of African-

Americans, **95.0%** of Hispanics, and **99.0%** of Whites were able to pass this statewide

assessment. Further, when disaggregated by economical disadvantaged or "at-risk" status ("at-

risk" is a term used by TEA to define students who have two or more risk factors that make them

susceptible to academic failure) KCISD students performed well as **95.0%** of all economically

disadvantaged youth and **91.0%** of all students identified as "at-risk" passed the statewide

R/ELA assessment. To put this information into some perspective, KCISD minority youth passed

the statewide R/ELA assessment at rates that are **7.5%** *HIGHER* than the State of Texas average

and the district's economically disadvantage youth passed the same assessment at a rate that is

5.6% *HIGHER* than the State of Texas average. KCISD's "at-risk" students passed the R/ELA

assessment at a rate equal to the State of Texas average (91.0%). Clearly, KCISD has the documented capacity to provide for, improve upon, and expand services that address the needs of all the youth it serves.

However, to continue this trend of high academic attainment and standards KCISD understands that it needs to continue to develop programs and practices that are evidenced-based and involve more parents and community stakeholders. Further, as reading is fundamental to all school successes, KCISD is dedicated to improving literacy through the use of evidenced-based practices that more fully utilize campus libraries. Specifically, KCISD is proposing to implement a project containing multiple reading/literacy components: (1) Increase the number of KCISD parents who read to their newborn children (modeled after the *Reach Out and Read* program) by collaborating with local area pediatricians; (2) Increase a student's interest and engagement in reading by providing each child with a new book each month (modeled after *Imagination Library* program); (3) Increase preschool teachers' use of evidenced-based practices, specifically *dialogic reading*, via school professional development opportunities; (4) Increase campus library utilization by enhancing the collection and technology at each campus library; and (5) Increase the integration of school library resources into the classroom by providing extensive professional development opportunities for all R/ELA teachers. The KCISD's proposed project is entitled *Literacy is Essential for Academic Progress* (LEAP).

LEAP will significantly improve local capacity by (1) enhancing local area intellectual capital by partnering with local area pediatricians and family practice doctors to empower KCISD families to read to their children; (2) enhancing local area preschool providers' capacity to provide books and supports that encourage literacy skill development; (3) providing all K through 3rd grade R/ELA faculty with the professional development and supports to implement

dialogic reading; (4) building the institutional capacity of the campus libraries by providing each with new books and updating their technology; and (5) building the intellectual capital in all KCISD R/ELA faculty (K through12) on how to integrate school library resources into their classroom instruction. Importantly, all five of the components of the LEAP plan are included as part of the State of Texas Literacy Plan.

   *(ii) Extent to which the project involves the development of promising new strategies...*LEAP builds on existing evidenced-based programs and recognized best practices by including several of them in its design, including: the *Reach Out and Read* (ROR) program; the *Imagination Library* (a book distribution program of low-income elementary school students); and the best practice of using Dialogic Reading. ROR is a book distribution program that was developed in partnership with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) who was interested in making literacy promotion a standard part of the pediatric well child care visit. Doctors and nurses are trained to provide parents of young children (between the ages of 0 and 36 months) with advice on reading aloud and to give age and culturally appropriate books to each infant and preschooler at routine checkups. Studies have shown that ROR is an evidenced-based practice and that it is cost effective. Parents who received ROR were significantly more likely to read to their children daily and to have books at home and children in the program increased their expressive vocabulary. These outcomes held true even with low-income families with low levels of parental education (Weitzman, et al. 2004; Russ, et al. 2007; Bokony, 2009). Further, these findings were replicated by other studies (Needlman, et al. 1991; High et al., 1999) including one that used a randomized control group and was published in a peer-reviewed journal (Golova et al., 1999).

   Providing elementary school students with free, age and culturally appropriate books, each month, has been found to be effective at creating a "literate home environment" (Rashid, et al.,

2005). Literate home environments are directly related to a child's language development (Kelly & Campbell, 2008; Embree, 2009), to early literacy development (National Reading Panel, 2001), to school readiness (American Library Association, 2007), to future reading performance (Molfese, Modglin, & Molfese, 2003), and to and overall school achievement (Chall & Snow, 1982). These effects persist even in low-income households (American Library Association, 2007).

Adults promote children's active involvement in reading when they use *dialogic reading* (DR). DR reading is a dialogue or conversation between an adult and child during shared book reading. It is a type of reading in which the child becomes the storyteller and the adult is an active listener who asks questions, adds information, and prompts increasingly sophisticated descriptions from the child. As the child becomes more skillful in storytelling, the adult moves from simple labeling to open-ended questions described above. Adults who encourage children to take an active rather than passive role during shared reading improve both language and emergent literacy skills. As the adult expands on the child's dialogue, the child uses more mature words and sentences. The child improves in use of vocabulary, syntax (the order of words in a sentence or phrase/the rules or patterns of language), semantics (word meaning or differences between word meanings), pragmatics (conventions of reading text/understanding how language is used in books), and in the social skills of language such as turn taking in a conversation (Hay, 2007; Wasik, 2001). Teachers and parents can be trained in dialogic reading. In both middle class and low-income families, children make the greatest gains when both parent and teacher are trained in this method and it is occurring in both home and school (Chow, et al., 2008; Whitehurst & Arnold, 1994; Whitehurst, 1988; Whitehurst et al., 1994).

(b) Quality of the project design

(i) Extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved are measureable... The following data and information documents the LEAP Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes and shows that each is designed to be clearly specified and measureable.

Goal 1: Increase utilization of campus libraries by faculty, students, and parents	
Objectives	*Outcomes*
1. Decrease the age of the campus library collection by adding 1,000 new books at each campus.	1. Decrease the collection age at each campus library in the areas of Social Sciences, Language, Literature and Rhetoric; Technology; Geography and History; and General Fiction by 15.0% as measured by the *Collection Analysis Report*. 2. Increase the number of faculty, students, and parents who utilize the library collection by 15.0% as measured by the *Library Utilization Report*.
2. Increase the quality and quantity of the technology offering at each campus.	1. Increase the number of up-to-date computers at each campus by 50.0% as measured by the *Technology Replacement Report*. 2. Increase the number of computers (desktops, tablet, etc.) that have continuous access to the Internet by 50.0% as measured by the *Technology Accessibility Report*. 3. Increase the number of multimedia devices that supplement reading and literacy development by 50.0% as measured by the *Multimedia Device Inventory Report*. 4. Increase the number of faculty, students, and parents who utilize the library technology by 20.0% as measured by the *Library Utilization Report*.
3. Increase KCISD Reading and Language Arts faculty's knowledge of how to use the new library resources.	1. Increase, by 75.0%, the number of R/ELA faculty who are provided professional development on how to utilize the new library resources as measured by the *PD Sign-In Sheets*. 2. Increase, by 50.0%, the number of R/ELA faculty who integrate their lesson plans with library resources (collection and technology) as measured by the *Library Utilization Survey*.

Goal 2: To improve literacy skills	
Objectives	*Outcomes*
1. Recruit local area pediatricians to help implement the ROR program.	1. Increase the number of parents who are provided books that they can read to their children by 50.0% as measured by the *ROR Distribution Log*. 2. Increase the number of parents who read aloud to their children each week by 20.0% as measured by the *Family Reading Survey*. 3. Increase the oral language skills of 4-year-old children participating in the ROR program by 10.0% as measured by the *Test Of Preschool Early Literacy* (TOPEL).
2. Provide age and culturally appropriate books to students in KCISD's preschool through 3rd grade classrooms.	1. Increase the number of students who have books in their homes by 50.0% as measured by the *Imagination Library Distribution Log*. 2. Increase the number of parents who read aloud to their children each week by 20.0% as measured by the *Family Reading Survey*. 3. Increase the number of 3rd grade students participating in the LEAP program who meet proficiency on the *State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness* (STAAR) reading assessment by 20.0%.
3. Provided professional development opportunities for KCISD Reading and Language Arts faculty in the use of *Dialogic Reading* (DR).	1. Increase the number of Pre-Kindergarten through 3rd grade Reading and Language Arts faculty trained in DR by 80.0% as measured by the *DR Survey*. 2. Increase the number of minutes children are exposed to DR instruction each week by 25.0% as measured by the *DR Survey*. 3. Increase the number of 3rd grade students participating in DR who meet or exceed proficiency on the *State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness* (STAAR) reading assessment by 20.0%.

Karnes City Independent School District – Literacy is Essential for Academic Progress (LEAP)

*(ii) Extent to which the project will coordinate with similar or related efforts…*Continuing what was done during the development of this proposal, KCISD will, upon funding, continue to coordinate its efforts with local area agencies and organizations that are performing similar or related efforts, including: the Family Practitioners and child and family nurses at the Otto Kaiser Memorial Hospital (to implement the ROR program); the Economic Opportunity Development Corporation of Karnes County, which provides pre-school education via Head Start funding (to conduct the Imagination Library); the Karnes City Public Library (to integrate and promote library utilization); and the Principals from each participating KCISD campuses (to coordinate professional development opportunities around dialogic reading and training on how to effectively utilize the new library resources). As a result of these coordinations and collaborations LEAP will be working with providers who have ready access to the targeted population, will be able to coordinate with other area pre-school providers so that the maximum number of students and families are impacted by the book distribution program (Imagination Library), will be integrating and publicizing library activities and resources via school and community library systems, and will be integrating training into the school calendar. Thus, LEAP will be directly coordinating with similar or related efforts and directly linked to appropriate resources and services at community (e.g., local library, etc.), State (e.g., public school district, Otto Memorial Hospital, etc.), and Federal (e.g., Head Start) levels.

(iii) Extent to which project is a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning… LEAP is designed with the understanding that only a coordinated, comprehensive, and continuously evaluated effort can truly improve teaching and learning. As part of this coordinated and comprehensive plan LEAP will increase the resources at each campus library, including the updating of technology, for KCISD faculty to use during instructional lessons.

Karnes City Independent School District – Literacy is Essential for Academic Progress (LEAP)

Further, each participating facility will be provided with professional development opportunities to ensure that all involved personnel are fully trained in how to efficiently and productively use and incorporate the new resources and technology into the academic curricula in an age and culturally appropriate manner. In addition to the professional development on the efficient use of the new resources and technology, the involved KCISD R/ELA faculty at each participating facility will be provided professional development and supports related to implementing dialogic reading for students in Pre-K through 3rd grade.

To support learning, LEAP will utilize a three prong approach. First, LEAP will work to ensure that children, especially low-income children, and their families are provided with books so that parents can read aloud to their children. This approach, as noted above, is based on evidenced-based practices that documents that reading aloud to young children, including infants, is an effective practice that improves children's literacy skills in later years. Further, for students already in preschool programs LEAP will provide each child with a free book to take home. This approach fosters a love of reading and helps to further develop young reader's literacy skills. Once in the K-12 structure of KCISD, each child will be exposed to dialogic reading. Dialogic reading, as noted above, is an evidenced-based practice that helps young readers to develop their reading and literacy skills. Further, it provides the R/ELA teachers with immediate evaluative information and help on how to identify which children may need differentiated instruction and/or additional supports. This three prong approach, providing equal emphasis on quality teaching practices as well as providing evidenced-based learning practices, supports the rigorous academic standards established for all children, including low-income children, by the staff and leadership of KCISD.

*(iii) Extent to which performance feedback and continuous improvement are integral…*LEAP

will continuously collect a variety of data for each participant (i.e., students and teachers) in both the intervention and comparison groups that can be disaggregated for quick, detailed analyses. By continually collecting process and progress data the *LEAP Management Team* (LMT) will be able to determine what is working and what areas may need modification. Data collection will be routine and for each academic reporting period will, as a minimum, include (1) TOPEL and STAAR scores from participating students; (2) the number of resources added to each library; (3) the number of hours of professional development provided each teacher; (4) the number of books distributed via local area pediatricians or family practitioners; (5) the number of books provided to children attending local area preschool programs; (6) number of hours of reading aloud to children reported by that families; (7) number of teacher-provided hours of dialogic reading services; and (8) number of faculty, students, and parents who utilize each library.

LEAP will utilize periodic assessments, typically monthly, to report on its progress toward achieving its intended outcomes. The LEAP Evaluation Plan, described in the Evaluation section, below, addresses the use of objective performance measures clearly related to the intended outcomes. The *LEAP Evaluation Team* (LET) will use the data and information collected from all assessments and evaluation measures to produce both *quantitative* and *qualitative* analyses of all implementation and performance processes. By determining and assessing the factors that affect the processes, the LET expects to be able to ensure continuous monitoring. At the beginning of each month, the LET will prepare a report summarizing all data collected to date, including during the previous month, and present, informally, the key findings to the *LMT* (i.e., the KCISD Superintendent and the Principals from each participating school campus, a member representing each key community partner [e.g., Otto Kaiser Memorial Hospital, Head Start, City Library, etc.], the *LEAP Director/Technology Coach* (LD/TC), and the

LEAP External Evaluator). These monthly summaries, along with all other collected data, will be compiled and presented to the LMT as quarterly evaluation reports, which are important because waiting a year to see if LEAP is having an impact is not acceptable. Further, all formal data analyses and summaries will be published **semi-annually** and used by the LMT to make any needed modifications.

All LET analyses will include the results of both quantitative and qualitative data and, to the maximum extent possible, will include disaggregation of subgroups to permit a full assessment of LEAP's effects and impacts. The **semi-annual** reports will be issued by the end of the seventh month of each LEAP year (i.e., if LEAP starts on October 01, 2012, the first **semi-annual** report will be completed by April 30, 2013). All of LEAP's *formative reports* (i.e., monthly, quarterly, and semi-annual) will be created to provide enough data to determine if LEAP is being implemented effectively and efficiently. The LET will review the data and make recommendations at the following monthly meeting of the LMT, which will be responsible for developing the objective plans for any needed changes. Additionally, at the end of each operating year, all LEAP staff and key stakeholders will participate in a Project Review, led by the LET, which will result in a *summative assessment* that will become the *Annual Project Evaluation Report*, which will be essential in order for the LMT to review progress and make needed adjustments for subsequent LEAP years. The *Annual Project Evaluation Report* will be completed within 45 days of the end of each LEAP project year and will bring both process and outcome/product data together for each of LEAP Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes. Process data will provide the context (i.e., how progress occurred) and the outcome/product measures will describe the magnitude of the progress and compare it to the initial benchmarks and targets set for each goal and objective. It also will use year-to-year trend data to examine the performance

over the course of the two-year LEAP project and beyond. The LET will, with assistance from

all LEAP stakeholders, will help prepare the required Annual Project Evaluation Report for the

U.S. Department of Education (ED), which becomes the basis of LEAP's planning for its next

operating years, including those years after federal funding has ended.

In summary, LEAP will have a rigorous and continuous assessment system that includes

regular monthly, quarterly, semi-annual, and annual evaluation reports. Each report will be

prepared and presented in a manner that allows all key stakeholders to quickly determine the

strengths and the needed improvements. This rigorous, extensive evaluation and reporting

process is essential if LEAP is to achieve the ambitious goals and objectives it has set for itself.

(c) Quality of the project services

(i) Quality and sufficiency of strategies ensuring equal access and treatment... KCISD has a

long and proud history of ensuring equal access and treatment of all members of groups that have

traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age or

disability. One reason for this success is that Karnes City is a predominately minority-majority

community. Further, the school district has been able to recruit eligible students from many

groups that have been traditionally underrepresented including African-American, Hispanic,

American Indian, Asian, and Pacific Islanders. Further, it has been highly successful at ensuring

that students with limited English proficiency (LEP) along with special needs children, including

those with disabilities, are provided high quality services. Successful strategies have included:(1)

community outreach and recruitment efforts; (2) a history of serving all students and their

families, regardless of background, with dignity and respect; (3) communications between the

school and the parents in their dominate language; (4) participation in and recognition of

significant cultural events and holidays; (5) effective family engagement programs; (6) hiring a

diverse workforce; and (7) utilizing social media. LEAP will continue to utilize all of these proven strategies and supplement them with new elements, including: forging collaborations with local area pediatricians and local area family practitioners, including local area preschool students in the Imagination Library (book distribution) program; and working more closely with local area literacy providers, like the local public library. All of these efforts will help to ensure equal access and treatment for all eligible KCISD residents.

(ii) Extent to which services proposed by the project are appropriate… LEAP is designed to enhance and improve students' literacy skills. Specific emphasis has been placed on fostering and expanding the literacy skills of students from low-income households. Part of this strategy is based on the knowledge that many children from low-income households are less ready for school, especially in terms of literacy skills. The National Center for Education Statistics (2008), as well as others, have reported that children living in poverty are less likely to be read to and have fewer books in the home which accounts for individual differences in academic achievement (O'Donnell, 2008; ALA, 2007). Additional research noted that with few or no books in the home and limited time spent reading aloud in the home result in later academic difficulties especially in lower-income households (Colgan, 2002). Further, students who start school at a disadvantage generally continue to perform at a lower reading level throughout high school compared to peers who start school with enriched home reading experiences (American Library Association, 2007; Kelly & Campbell, 2008). Research indicates that "intervening early to improve the home learning environment for disadvantaged children will ensure that they are ready to learn when they enter school and succeed later in life" (ROR, 2008, p. 2).

LEAP was designed with all of this research and the related best practices in mind. For example, LEAP is modeled after Reach Out and Read (ROR) which required collaborating with

local area pediatricians and family practitioners to place books into the hand of all new parents, including parents from low-income households. Having a doctor reinforce the need for reading aloud to young children has been found to increase parental reading to children (ROR, 2008; Golova et al., 1999). Sanders (2000) reported that parents exposed to ROR are 3 times as likely to report reading to their children compared to non-ROR parents and that children in families exposed to ROR are approximately 1.5 times more likely to have 10 or more picture books in the home (Needlman et al, 2005). Increasing books in the home and reading aloud by parents can improve educational achievement. ROR exposure is associated with an 8.6-point increase in receptive language and a 4.3-point increase in expressive vocabulary (Mendelsohn et al., 2001).

For children already in preschool LEAP includes a book distribution program modeled after the Imagination Library. This practice has been found to increase the number of literate homes (Rashid, et al., 2005) and has been found to improve children's language development (Kelly & Campbell, 2008; Embree, 2009), early literacy development (National Reading Panel, 2001), school readiness (American Library Association, 2007); future reading performance (Molfese et al., 2003); and overall school achievement (Chall & Snow, 1982). These effects persist even in low-income households (American Library Association, 2007).

To assist PreK-3rd grade students who are experience difficulties in fully developing their literacy skills, LEAP will utilize dialogic reading. The dialogic reading approach provides a structured way for children to engage in discussion about books and practice oral language skills during read-alouds. (Whitehurst et al., 1988; Whitehurst et al., 1994; Zevenbergen & Whitehurst, 2003). During these shared-reading experiences the adult becomes an active listener and interviewer. This approach results in the child using more sophisticated language. Children from low-income backgrounds and English language learners experience significant growth in their

oral language skills using dialogic book reading (Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998; National Early Literacy Panel, 2008; Valdez-Menchaca & Whitehurst, 1992). In the second year, LEAP will expand the use of dialogic reading to include using 5th and 6th grade students who will be trained in and use dialogic reading techniques during tutoring sessions for students needing additional literacy supports. This practice has been found to be effective at increasing preschool students' receptive and expressive vocabulary and with improving school readiness (Udaka, 2009).

Expanding the library collection and providing up-to-date technology in the library has also been found to be effective. The number of library volumes purchased in any preceding year significantly influenced reading scores of elementary and high school students (Smith, 2001); and Lance (2005) found that schools with libraries with current collections had **13.5%** higher test scores. Research has shown that providing students with access to additional resources is strongly correlated with improved reading scores and enhanced academic achievement (Lance, 2007; Klinger, 2006; Smith, 2006). The Illinois Study (Lance, 2005) found that schools with newer library collections had students who achieved **10.3%** higher on reading and writing tests and had high school students with higher college admission scores.

Students with access to advanced technology succeed in school as noted in the University of Colorado (Lance et al., 2007) report, which found a strong link between academic achievement (represented by scores on standards-based state tests of reading/language arts skills) and technology integration. Lance (2005) found that libraries that had adequate numbers of computers had **9.5%** higher test scores. NCLIS (U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science) in 2008 noted that at every grade level, schools that had more library computers connected to the Internet had higher average test scores. Only by increasing numbers and quality of computers can the LEAP Project campuses give students greater access to the

resources of the SLMC and help to ensure their successes.

Advanced technology is less effective if it is not internet-enabled. Studies of elementary classes where half the students had online access and half did not, showed Internet access to be a **critical** factor in school success. Students with online access had significantly higher scores on measurements of information, literacy, communication, and presentation of ideas (Lance et al., 2007; & Lance et al., 2005). Further, recent studies found high correlations between students' access to the library catalog, access to licensed databases, and access to state links with improved academic achievement in reading (Lance et al., 2007; 2005; 2002; 2000; Todd, 2005; Todd et al., 2004; Rodney et al., 2003; 2002 and Burgin et al., 2003). Finally, Lance (2005) found that schools that used the school computer network to extend the library into every classroom experienced, on average, a **10.0%** improvement in student achievement test scores.

In summary, all facets of LEAP are appropriate to the needs of the intended recipients and are supported by scientifically-based reading research.

(iv) Extent to which training or professional development are sufficient… Professional development (PD) is a critical component of the LEAP project. All local area pediatricians and family practitioners will be provided with 3 hours of PD on how to implement and document the results of the ROR component. The training will focus on the importance of reading aloud to young children, the need to provide parents of newborns with age and culturally appropriate materials, and how to provide follow-up services. The PD plan will follow the ROR training guidelines. A 1.5 hour "booster" PD will be scheduled for the start of the second year of LEAP to reinforce key components and to inform the group of any significant adjustments based on the evaluation results from the first year.

Preschool teachers, including KCISD's and local area preschool faculty, will be invited to

attend a 4 hour professional development on how to implement the Imagination Library component of LEAP. The PD will focus on the importance of providing a "rich home literacy environment", the need to provide parents of preschoolers with age and culturally appropriate reading materials, and how to provide follow-up services. Additional PD time will be spent on how books are to be chosen and how KCISD will order and distribute the books to each preschool teacher. A 2.0 hour "booster" PD will be scheduled for the start of the second year of LEAP to reinforce key components and to inform the group of any significant adjustments based on the evaluation results from the first year.

All KCISD R/ELA faculty who teach Pre-K to 3rd grade students will be provided 5 hours of professional development, in Year One, on the implementation of dialogic reading. The PD will be broken down in the following manners: (1) 1.0 hours will be used to review the theory and research results of dialogic reading, 1.5 hours will be used for demonstrating how to effectively utilize dialogic reading, and (3) the remaining 2.5 hours will be used as "experiential learning" where the teachers will model and practice using the dialogic reading techniques. This will ensure that all teachers have the knowledge of the importance of the dialogic reading; will have seen how dialogic reading is to be implemented; and will have had time to personally practice implementing dialogic reading. In Year Two, an additional 2 hours of "booster" PD will be provided.

Further, each KCISD R/ELA staff member and all campus library personnel from all campuses will be provided 8 hours of PD. This PD will be focused on how to effectively and efficiently utilize the new technology. PD topics will include integrating the tablet computers into the classroom, utilizing primary documentation as part of the lesson plan, how to help students create digital content, how to access and utilize online resources, and other related

topics. All PD will be focused on how to successfully integrate the new library resources into the teachers' lesson plans

(d) Adequacy of resources

    (i) Extent to which costs are reasonable… KCISD is proposing to implement a comprehensive, innovative literacy program in an extremely low-income and rural community for an initial investment of ▮▮▮▮▮▮ per year, for two years, for a total of ▮▮▮▮▮▮ . This investment will be used to achieve ambitious goals of improving utilization of the campus libraries and improving the literacy skills of children and students in the KCISD catchment area. This will be accomplished by creating and sustaining collaborations with local area pediatricians and family practitioners, preschool providers and local library staff. Further, KCISD's R/ELA staff will need professional development in the areas of dialogic reading and in how to effectively and efficiently utilize the new library resources. Each key LEAP component will be continuously evaluated by the LEAP Evaluator who has conducted dozens of nationwide evaluations on literacy and literacy enhancement practices. The results are expected to show that all students, but specifically those from low-income households, are developing literacy skills at developmentally appropriate levels. This will entail the assessment of 4-year-old children's language development and by assessing LEAP's impact on KCISD students' R/ELA scores on the STAAR. Importantly, LEAP's design includes multiple components that will make it self-sustaining when federal funding ends. First, KCISD will have established partnerships and collaborations that can utilize the evaluation data, if they show positive results, to solicit funding to continue the ROR and the Imagination Library. Second, each KCISD campus library will have the most up-to-date technology and collections, enabling each to maintain its improved status for years to come. Third, KCISD will have trained staffs who understand how to implement dialogic

reading and how to utilize library resources, thus significantly reducing future years' costs related to professional development. In addition, if successful, KCISD's will be an evidenced-based program that can be replicated by other rural and low-income communities.

(ii) Extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons served… The number of persons served by LEAP each year will be extensive and varied: ROR services to 175 newborns and infants; book distribution to approximately 150 preschool-aged students; dialogic reading to approximately 300 Pre-K-3rd grade students; improved library collection and technology access to approximately 959 students and 102 staff members; and professional development to approximately 80 teachers and community members (e.g., pediatricians, family practitioners, child care providers, etc.). In total, LEAP will provide services to approximately 1,766 children and adults in each of two years, which is an investment of approximately ▮▮▮ per participant. Further, since most of the services will be provided each day of the school year the investment per day is only ▮▮▮ per participant. For a program that has the potential to be self-sustaining and become an evidenced-based program that can be readily replicated the investment costs are considered extremely reasonable.

(e) Quality of the management plan

(i) Adequacy of management plan to achieve the objectives on time and within budget… To help ensure full implementation as early in the 2013-2014 school year as possible, LEAP developed the following LEAP Management Plan for Year One that identifies the Year One tasks, which include most of the major Year One activities, assigns the milestones and timelines, and specifies the staff responsible for each activity. The Year One Management Plan is designed so that LEAP is implemented on time and within budget.

Task	Year One Management Plan: Milestones / Timelines /Staff Responsible
Assigning of LEAP Project Director	❶ Superintendent accepts the LEAP grant by signing the Notice of Award and becomes the interim LEAP Director/Technology Coach. Hiring process begins for the positions for the LEAP Director/Technology Coach (LD/TC) and LEAP Technology Technician (LTT). These positions are filled by November 01, 2012.
Procurement of supplies.	❶ Superintendent accepts the grant (see Step 1, above). ❷ Interim Director will work with Wayne Block, KCISD's Business Manager, to order, receive and distribute ROR books, Imagination Library books, library collection resources, and library technology supplies as authorized in the LEAP budget. Procurement process completed by November 2, 2012. ❸ School campuses begin receiving supplies by December 15, 2012.
Procurement of contractors.	❶ Superintendent accepts the grant (see Step 1, above). ❷ Interim Director will work with Wayne Block, KCISD's Business Manager, to secure bids for professional development providers and for an *LEAP External Evaluator* (EE). Bids received and reviewed by November 1, 2012. ❸ Interim Director, working in collaboration with campus principals from each campus, will interview and select the winning bids by November 1, 2012.
Services begin.	❶ The EE, working with the LD/TC, LTT, and the Library Assistants, will collect baseline data, including the STAAR test results of students in all grade levels related to R/ELA and survey data from local area pediatricians/family practitioners, local area preschool providers, and from the local community library by December 15, 2012. ❷ Local pediatricians/family practitioners and local area preschool providers will begin services by January 7, 2013. ❸ By January 14, 2013, updated library collection resources and upgraded technology begin being installed and used on school campuses. ❹ By January 31, 2013, the Pre-K-3rd grade staff is provided dialogic reading professional development and dialogic reading begins. ❺ By February 1, 2013, KCISD R/ELA staff are provided on-going professional development on how to effectively utilize the new library resources. ❻ The EE will, at the end of each month, collect data from local area pediatricians/family practitioners, preschool providers, and KCISD staff on the number of children provided books; the number of

Task	Year One Management Plan: Milestones / Timelines /Staff Responsible
	families served; number of hours of dialogic reading instruction provided; and number of faculty, students and parents utilizing the campus libraries. ❼ The EE, working with all key stakeholders, will complete end of year data collection of the survey data and assessment data, including TOPEL and STAAR results, by June 30, 2013.
Evaluation activities begin.	❶ The EE, with assistance from KCISD staff, will collect the needed baseline data from the 2011-2012 school year. Using this data the EE will create a "Baseline Report" that will provide the foundation of data to determine if LEAP is making substantial progress. This "Baseline Report" will be completed by January 1, 2013.❷ By the 5th of each month the EE will collect monthly data (see item 6 in Services Begin, above) and will create a monthly performance report for dissemination to all LEAP stakeholders, including the LMT members. Reports will include output data, process measure analysis and a determination of a "percent complete" calculation that will help LMT members determine if the LEAP project is on time and on budget. Monthly reports are due on or before the end of each month. ❸ By March 1, 2013, the EE will conduct a program fidelity review at each campus and service provider site to ensure LEAP is implementing all services according to the developers' design. ❹ By April 1, 2013, the EE will publish and disseminate to the LMT a LEAP Semi-Annual Report that will detail the progress LEAP is making and highlight areas that are behind schedule or encountering problems. ❺ By June 1, 2013, the EE will conduct focus groups with teachers, LEAP stakeholders, LEAP partners, parents, faculty and students, to determine the impact that LEAP has had on the campuses and in the community. A focus group report will be written and distributed to the LMT by July 15, 2013. ❻ By July 1, 2013, the EE will publish and disseminate to the LMT a LEAP *Annual Evaluation Report* that will detail the progress LEAP is making, including a budget analysis, and highlight areas that are behind schedule or encountering problems. This Annual Evaluation Report will document and compare the results of the data collected, including GPRA data, in May 2013 to the baseline data collected in January 2013.

(ii) Extent to which the time commitments of the project director... The number of LEAP hours per week for the key personnel are as follows: ❶ LEAP Director/Technology Coach, 37.5; ❷ *LEAP Technology Technician,* 37.5*; hours;* ❸ *Library Assistants* (one at each campus), 10x3 = 30; ❹ local area Pediatricians/Family Practitioners, 5; ❺ Preschool faculty, 20; ❻ KCISD R/ELA staff, 20; and ❼ Dr. Barrington, LEAP External Evaluator, 7.5. In total LEAP will provide 6,770 hours, each year, of dedicated and professional services to help children and their families in the KCISD catchment area achieve their full potential when it comes to literacy skills. Based on past experiences these hours, including the hiring of a full-time LTT, extra-duty pay for the Library Assistants and the hiring of an External Evaluator, will be sufficient for the LD/TC to supervise and lead this initiative.

(iii) Adequacy of mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services... KCISD has a long established tradition and practice of demanding and ensuring only the highest quality services and practices are offered, and this tradition will continue with LEAP, which has clearly defined and measureable goals, objectives and outcomes. KCISD has secured commitments from local are pediatricians/family practitioners to implement, with fidelity, the ROR components. Additionally, KCISD has already secured the by-in and support from local area preschool providers who will ensure that the book distribution program, based on the Imagination Library, will be implemented with fidelity according to LEAP policies and procedures. The LD/TC will routinely visit with providers and ensure that all services are being implemented as documented. The participating Principals along with the LD/TC will ensure that all campuses' R/ELA faculty are trained in dialogic reading as well as on how to utilize the new library resources. Finally, The LEAP External Evaluator and his evaluation team will routinely visit campuses and local area partners to ensure that all operations are proceeding according to plan and with fidelity and will

and present, informally, the key findings that will document areas of strength and areas that may need revisions and/or corrective action. Further, Wayne Block, KCISD's Business Manager, will prepare monthly expenditure reports detailing actual LEAP expenditures related to the formal LEAP Budget. This will ensure that there are mechanisms in place, both for the programmatic side and the financial side, to ensure that only the highest-quality products and services are being utilized by and provided by LEAP.

(f) Quality of the project evaluation

(i) Extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance…

Kyle Barrington, Ph.D., will lead the LEAP Evaluation Team. Kyle Barrington, PhD., is the Lead Principal Investigator (LPI) for Zajonc Corporation. Dr. Barrington has been involved in, and the LPI for, over 120 difference evaluation projects, including multisite, multistate, quasi-experimental evaluation projects involving over 100,000 students and staff. He and his team have evaluated projects involving urban, suburban, and rural communities. Dr. Barrington provides evaluation services, using rigorous quasi-experimental designs, for two large urban school districts, one in Texas and the other in California, which are investigating innovative practices as it relates to literacy skill development. Dr. Barrington has the experience and training in all aspects of program evaluations, including, but not limited to: (1) randomized control trails; (2) rigorous quasi-experimental designs; (3) qualitative data analysis; (4) quantitative data analysis; (5) focus group facilitation; (6) psychometrics; (7) survey creation and validation; (8) publishing in peer-reviewed scholarly journals; (9) fidelity assessment and verification; (10) progress report writing; (11) methodology; and (12) assessing projects cultural impacts. Though Zajonc Corporation will provide a team of evaluators, Dr. Barrington will serve as Zajonc Corporation's single-point-of-contact for the LEAP Project.

The LEAP Evaluation Plan is designed to address six research questions: ❶ To what extent did the implementation of LEAP follow the LEAP Logic Model/Management Plan (i.e., implemented as it was intended)?; ❷ To what extent did participants (e.g. students, parents, community partners, teachers, library staff, principals, etc.) receive the intended intensity and duration of services?; ❸ How many participants utilized different LEAP services?; ❹ To what extent were LEAP participants satisfied with the services received?; ❺ To what extent did LEAP services result in improved outcomes?; and ❻ To what extent did participants receiving LEAP services improve their desired outcomes compared to the non-LEAP participants in the comparison group?

To answer these questions the LEAP Project Evaluator will utilize formative and summative evaluation procedures and methods that are linked with the LEAP Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes and the LEAP Management Plan, identified above, which details the sources of data for measuring LEAP progress and achievement of each goal and objective. The data sources include both quantitative and qualitative data collection processes. Each type of instrument, whether quantitative (e.g., STAAR, TOPEL etc.) or qualitative (e.g., classroom observation, focus groups, satisfaction surveys, etc.), is integrated into a comprehensive and coherent evaluation plan for each goal and objective. With all instruments and processes in place LEAP will be able to collect and report on all of the desired goals and objectives, including the required *GPRA Performance Measures*. Additionally, to add value and rigor to the evaluation design, LEAP will utilize quasi-experimental research design techniques by incorporating a comparison group (i.e., KCISD catchment area students not receiving LEAP services) of similar students at nearby early childhood learning centers so that LEAP participants can be compared with non-participating students. The outcome data assessments will be the TOPEL and the STAAR results.

Data will be collected, by the LEAP Project Evaluator, as children enter Kindergarten and as they move into 4th grade. Using KCISD's demographic data will ensure that students are matched in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, and socioeconomics.

Further, the LEAP Evaluation Plan design addresses the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the IAL Grant. LEAP will use information from all assessments and evaluation measures to produce both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data will include the results of the TOPEL, for preschool students, and the STAAR assessments and benchmarks assessments for students in K to 3rd. Qualitative data will include community partners, parents, teacher and library staff surveys, focus group discussions, the short answer portions of satisfaction surveys. Since the evaluation design produces both quantitative and qualitative data, Dr. Barrington and his team will employ a mixed-methods design. A factorial ANOVA will be used to analyze the data because the quantitative data is being used to analyze the differences between multiple independent groups (i.e., students and comparison group students across several years) and because there are multiple independent variables (i.e., group and year). The qualitative components of this study will be analyzed using data coding and theme analysis.

(ii) Extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback… The LET will compile the information and present informally, on a **monthly** basis, key findings from the data analyzed to the LEAP staff and community partners. These reports will include information pertaining to each gap, goal, and objective to provide sufficient data to determine if LEAP is being implemented effectively and efficiently. Formal data analyses and summaries of both quantitative and qualitative data, which can be used to identify and allow needed LEAP administrative and programmatic changes, will be published **semi-annually** and reported to the

LEAP staff, LMT, KCISD School Board, community partners, parents, and the various funding agencies. To the maximum extent possible, every analysis will include disaggregation of subgroups to assess LEAP's effects on students from minority populations and students from low-income households. The semi-annual reports will be completed 30 days after the end of each six-month period (i.e., if the Grant year starts on October 01, 2012, the semi-annual report will be completed by April 30, 2013). Waiting until the end of the year to learn the ESP Project needs to be modified is not acceptable, so the semi-annual reports will be invaluable and essential to the LMT and key stakeholders in reviewing progress, making necessary adjustments, and planning for subsequent operations.

The Annual Evaluation Report will be available within 30 days of the end of each Grant year. The LMT will receive the draft copy of the Annual Evaluation Report and will have 15 calendar days to review it and make recommendations and/or suggested edits. Once approved by the LMT, the updated Annual Evaluation Report will be sent to the LD/TC for study of each analysis in relation to the budget and for assessment of each component's relative costs. The LD/TC will use this information to make recommendations for budget adjustments or programmatic changes. Once reviewed and approved by the LD/TC, the Annual Evaluation Report will be submitted to the KCISD School Board no later than 60 days after the completion of each Grant year. This intensive reporting schedule will ensure that the LEAP leadership and staffs are fully informed, on a monthly basis, how LEAP is working and if there are any areas of concern. Further, the reports will provide both qualitative and quantitative data in a formative report style that will enable LEAP staff to fully determine the impact the ESP Program is having on its goals and objectives. This will allow LEAP Program staff to have quantifiable data to support adjustments or changes to the program's design to better meet the LEAP Program Goals and Objectives.