

Absolute priority and competitive preference priorities

Our proposed Crockett Independent School District Literacy Initiative addresses the Absolute Priority as well as Competitive Preference Priorities 2, 3 and 4. First, the initiative addresses the Absolute Priority in that our project includes innovative approaches to literacy that include book distribution and childhood literacy that represent promising strategies that are supported by at least one study that is based on scientifically valid research. Additionally, our project qualifies for: **Competitive Preference Priority 2:** Technology (electronic linkages and computerized, evidence-based literacy supports and interventions) is an integral component of our project approach; **Competitive Preference Priority 3:** Our project approach includes a strong focus on improving early learning outcomes. Approximately 195 children from the Crockett Early Learning Center will be participating in our literacy initiative; and **Competitive Preference Priority 4:** Crockett ISD is a rural school district (**15 total points**).

(a) Significance

(i) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population.

With the support of [REDACTED] in Innovative Approaches to Literacy Program funds over 24 months (the district will provide [REDACTED] in matching funds over two years), Crockett Independent School District (ISD) will launch the comprehensive literacy initiative outlined in this proposal. The project builds on a promising practice (EIR and EIR Plus) that has been proven effective at improving students' reading abilities. Crockett ISD serves 1,310 students in five school buildings. Two libraries serve the district (one for the elementary and junior high schools and one for the high school). All Crockett ISD schools are Title I schools. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the poverty rate in Crockett (35.14%) is **more than double** that of the

rest of Texas (15.4%). About 79.5% of Crockett ISD students are considered "at-risk" and a full **86.41%** qualify for free or reduced lunch. As a small, impoverished rural town with few community resources, the district's two school libraries are the primary literacy resource for Crockett ISD students. The elementary and junior high school libraries share the same space (one elementary library on one side, the junior high library on the other), with each having its own librarian. The district no longer has a certified librarian on staff—just two full-time aides. There is a significant need to improve the literacy achievement of our younger students. In comparison to the statewide average the academic achievement of Crockett ISD students is considerably lower. The statewide average proficiency in Reading/English Language Arts is 88% (only our 5th graders and 10th achieved this level).

Crockett ISD Student Academic Achievement

Grade	2010 Reading/ELA	2011 Reading/ELA	Grade	2010 Reading/ELA	2011 Reading/ELA
3	87%	80%	7	67%	75%
4	77%	82%	8	82%	85%
5	96%	97%	10	84%	88%
6	71%	72%	District	78%	81%

In February, 2011, a manual analysis (the library is not computerized) of the elementary/junior high library was conducted as part of the planning process for the Crockett ILSL initiative. Benchmarks were drawn from *School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas*. The library assessments were a collaborative process involving the school librarians, teachers, school and district administrators, parents and students. The results showed

that in terms of meeting Texas standards, both the elementary and junior high libraries are not effectively meeting the needs of our students on a number of levels including: lack of access to up-to-date resources (e.g., books, digital media, etc.) and technology; library resources that are not linked to classroom curriculum; and librarians in need of professional development to boost student information literacy and reading skills. The elementary and junior high school library facility was constructed in 2008. However, because Crockett voters repeatedly failed to approve a bond issue, the facility was constructed without the resources (e.g., books, technology, digital resources, etc.) necessary to support student learning. The library opened (and still has) the same aging resources that were in the previous library. The assessment shows that elementary library has about 13,000 books, with many of these having copyrights in excess of ten years--the encyclopedia collection is five years old and out-of-date. Given the rapid pace of change in heavily-studied fields such as technology and health, Crockett ISD students lag far behind their peers in terms of access to up-to-date reference resources.

The Junior High library has 6,781 books in its collection, which is considerably lower than the 12,000 books recommended in the State of Texas (2005) Exemplary Standards. Many of the books in this library are more than 11 years old. The average number of books per student at the elementary school is 25.39 (19.35 at the junior high). The national average is 26¹. Neither school library has an automated catalogue. Consequently, librarians must devote most of their time towards checking books in and out, rather than assisting students. Across both libraries, particular weaknesses were identified in the 300s, 500s, 600s, 700s and 900s. As a result, our students lack access to relevant, up-to-date information regarding topics such as current events, history, health, reference and biographies. Additionally, because we lose about 100 books per year, our selection of fiction books for pleasure reading has considerably declined. Neither

library has eBooks or digital audio books.

Crockett students have limited access to technology in the school libraries. While most of their peers across Texas have access to rapid, efficient, electronic card catalogues, Crockett ISD students must use a manual card system, just like their parents and grandparents did. While students in more affluent districts are able to quickly search for library resources using keywords and subjects to create cross-referenced resource lists, Crockett students must sift through thousands of index cards in an effort to locate the resources they need. In 2011, a School Technology and Readiness (STAR) analysis was conducted at both the elementary and junior high schools. Across the 24 measures of technology readiness, neither school scored a 4 (1-4 scale, with 4 being the target) in **any** category. Across both libraries, there are seven computer workstations for student use. With an average class size of about 25 students, access to the computers is severely limited. Many of the technology weaknesses stem from the fact that the existing technological infrastructure does not support the implementation of advanced technologies (e.g., we do not have electronic whiteboards, no wireless access, a technology backbone that cannot support additional traffic, etc.).

(ii) The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies

Our proposed literacy initiative builds on a promising practice referred to as the Early Intervention in Reading (EIR) program. EIR is a classroom-based, small-group intervention for struggling readers. Through EIR, classroom teachers carry out the program, usually with the help of instructional aides or older students. EIR is designed to help kindergarten and first-grade students succeed in school and to help children continue to make good progress in reading in grades 2 through 4. Kindergarten is a whole class literature-based emergent literacy/oral

language program with small group follow-up for children who need extra help. Children in first and second grade receive 20 to 30 minutes a day of instruction as a portion of the school's regular reading program, with a focus on word recognition, fluency (reading with speed, accuracy and proper expression), and comprehension instruction. In the first-grade program, emphasis is placed on developing students' phonemic awareness (i.e., their awareness of how to properly sound out words and letters) and their understanding of the alphabet, and on helping students to apply phonics while reading connected text (i.e., grouped words). In grades 3 and 4, students continue to apply their phonics knowledge and word recognition strategies to the reading of connected text and work on fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Crockett ISD will integrate the EIR model into the classroom environment for younger students and a use modified version (EIR Plus) of the practice, which utilizes the same teaching concept but in a small group tutoring environment for older students. Both the EIR and EIR Plus model have been identified as 'promising practices' and are listed on the Promising Practices Network website.ⁱⁱ Both approaches are supported by scientific studies. For example, one study showed that EIR and EIR-plus-tutoring students scored significantly higher than control students on the number of words read correctly per minute (effect size 0.34) and on accurate story retelling (effect size 0.69).ⁱⁱⁱ

Scientific research forms the basis of other aspects of our proposed strategies as well. For instance, research shows that when children and teens are surrounded by large quantities of books they want to read and actually read more. And those who read more score higher on academic achievement tests.^{iv} We will also acquire library resources in a variety of different formats including paper and digital media. Providing students' access to digital media has proven to be an effective means for bringing lessons to life and engaging struggling readers.^v Also, in

determining the types of library resources to acquire, input was gathered not only from the librarians but from teachers, administrators, parents, students, curriculum specialist/special education staff and students. This engagement has been shown to be an excellent means of creating "buy-in" and a sense of "ownership" of library materials, increasing student enthusiasm for reading.^{vi} In addition, through this literacy initiative, classroom teachers will collaborate with elementary and junior high librarians to develop exemplary, concept-based units of instruction that focus on improving students' literacy and information retrieval skills.^{vii}

As outlined in the previous section, Crockett ISD serves an extraordinarily high percentage of low-income students. More than 85% of our students qualify for free and reduced lunch and our town is one of the most impoverished communities in the State of Texas. Our unemployment rate is nearly three points higher than the rest of Texas and property tax revenue has declined by more than \$20 million over the last three years. Poverty directly affects academic achievement due to the lack of resources available for student success. Low achievement is closely correlated with lack of resources, and numerous studies have documented the correlation between low socioeconomic status and low achievement.^{viii} With state legislators **slashing education funding by more than \$4 billion**, Crockett students are desperately in need of resources to support their academic and social growth. Outside financial assistance is critical to launching this project—without the support of Literacy Program funds, this critically-needed project will not take place and the academic performance of thousands of our underserved students will continue to lag behind that of their peers in more affluent districts.

(b) Quality of the project design

(i) The extent to which the goals, objectives and outcomes to be achieved

The overall goal of the literacy initiative is to improve the reading skills and academic

improvement of underperforming students at Crockett Elementary School and Crockett Junior High School. Our 24-month objectives and outcomes include:

Objectives and outcomes	Measurement
Objective 1: Increase student literacy	
<p>Outcomes: 1.1) the percentage of 4-year-old children who achieve significant gains in oral language skills will increase by 10% (GPRA 1); 1.2) the percentage of 3rd-grade students who meet or exceed proficiency of State reading or language arts assessments will increase by 10% (GPRA 2); 1.3) percentage of participating 8th-grade students who meet or exceed proficiency of State reading or language arts assessments will increase by 10% (GPRA 3); 1.4) percentage of participating high school students who meet or exceed proficiency on State reading or language arts assessments will increase by 10% (GPRA 4). Benchmarks for outcomes 1.1 through 1.4: 5% increase in year 1; 5% increase in year 2</p>	<p>Computerized assessments (measure progress and identify areas of weakness); STAAR Reading assessment</p>
Objective 2) expand technology-based resources in the library	
<p>Outcomes: 2.1) within 24 months, technology will be integrated into the school library; 2.2) integrate information literacy skills development into the curriculum in 100% of classrooms; 2.3) the library will score at least a '3' in 75% of the STAR assessment; and 2.4) implement computerized card catalogue;</p>	<p>Qualitative survey; STAR assessment; lesson plan review</p>
Objective 3) enhance the capacity of librarians and classroom teachers to improve student literacy and link classrooms with library resources	

<p>Outcomes: 3.1) each year of the project, provide 30 hours of professional development for librarians and classroom teachers-100% of participants will indicate the acquisition of new skills; and 3.2) library resources will be linked to classroom curriculum.</p>	<p>Sign-in sheets; post-participation survey; bi-weekly meeting logs; lesson plan reviews</p>
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The objectives and outcomes outlined in the above section are **ambitious** in that in comparison to current baselines, they represent an increase of significant magnitude that will place the district on par with its peers. The objectives and outcomes above are **attainable** in that they can be reasonably achieved within the 24-month project period.

Crockett ISD will achieve the objectives and outcomes above by implementing the evidence-based EIR and EIR Plus approach. Other aspects of our project approach are also built upon a foundation of scientific-based research and include: the acquisition of up-to-date library resources including books and digital media; the acquisition and use of advanced technology, incorporated into the curricula of the school to develop and enhance students' skills in retrieving and making use of information and in critical thinking; facilitation of Internet links and other resource-sharing networks; and ongoing, job-embedded professional development for librarians and classroom teachers.

(ii) Coordination with additional resources

Crockett ISD will coordinate this project with ongoing initiatives shown below.

Initiative	Coordination
<p>Each school's and the District Improvement Plan</p>	<p>Campus and district annual needs assessment/progress measurement conducted by a multi-disciplinary team; related goals, objectives and action items are developed</p>

Reading and literacy-enhancement software	Standards-based technologies (e.g., STAR Reading, Study Island, A+Anywhere, etc.) that utilize diagnostic assessments and interventions that target STAAR learning objectives
Family involvement	We will host two literacy-focused library events each year.
Federal and state programs	The proposed project will be coordinated with: federal Title I and Title IID (Enhancing Education Through Technology) formula grants, and with the Houston County Head Start, Early Head Start, Pre-K and Universal Pre-K programs; and other federal and state grants awarded to the District. We will coordinate with the Texas Library System and with local libraries to offer linkages, distance learning facilities, electronic resources and other support.

(iii) The extent to which the proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students.

This literacy initiative is part of a district-wide comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students. This effort is built upon a foundation of broad-based involvement and coordination. First, the need for this initiative has been identified by both Campus Improvement Plans and the District Improvement Plan. These documents are developed each year through needs assessments conducted with a broad range of stakeholders including school and district administrators, teachers, curriculum specialists, guidance counselors, specialized support staff, parents and project partners (Groves Educational Foundation, PTO and Bulldog Booster Club). These key stakeholders will be involved in the effort through their participation in the Literacy Advisory Council, which will assist the Project

Director in carrying out and sustaining project activities. The LAC is comprised of school personnel from each school (librarian, teachers, building principals, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction/Special Education Director, parents and community members). The full LAC will meet quarterly. Key roles and responsibilities of the LAC will include: 1) provide input and direction to guide project activities; 2) ensure that project activities are aligned with the schools' and district's goals and objectives and integrated into the campus' and district improvement plans; 3) assist in analysis of assessment data and provide suggestions to refine, strengthen and improve the project approach to ensure that the diverse needs of all students are met; 4) align professional development strategies to project goals (e.g., increase student literacy; improve students' information literacy, etc.); 5) identify opportunities to leverage additional community resources and coordinate this initiative with other literacy, library, technology and professional development funds; 6) develop a plan to promote the literacy initiative to students and the community through the district website, school newsletter, via email, and at school-based events (e.g., assemblies, parent-teacher conferences, back-to-school nights, etc.); 7) plan and facilitate two school-based literacy-focused family events each school year; and 8) collaborate to guide selection of up-to-date library resources (e.g., books, technology, etc.).

(iv)The extent to which performance feedback and continuous improvement are integral to the design of the proposed project

Plans for monitoring performance feedback are outlined in the evaluations section elsewhere in this proposal. The plan includes multiple feedback loops to continuously gather student, teacher and administrator feedback for the purpose of reviewing assessment data (monthly) and using the information gathered to refine, strengthen and improve the program approach as appropriate. This will include bi-weekly project meetings among school-based project personnel

and quarterly meetings among the full Literacy Advisory Council. The evaluator will prepare quarterly programmatic and financial reports, which will be reviewed and discussed during these meetings. Parents will be provided with progress updates during regularly-scheduled parent-teacher conferences held throughout the year and will be solicited for feedback via an annual Stakeholder Performance Survey.

(c) Quality of the project services

(i) The quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented

Though a small, rural town, Crockett enjoys a great ethnic diversity. About 50% of the population is Black, 27% is White and 20% is Hispanic. As such, Crockett ISD strongly encourages persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented (e.g., based on race, color, national origin, gender, age or disability) to apply for and work at the District. Crockett ISD has strict anti-discrimination policies in place and reaches out to diverse communities through job fairs and distributing open position information among community organizations. Staff demographics are reflective of our student body and our community. The district maintains General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) statement, which discusses district policies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of traditionally underrepresented groups. Steps taken to ensure equal access include (but are not limited to): adapting program materials (e.g., other languages, large type print, braille, etc.); adapting programmatic approaches (e.g., use of assistive listening devices, alternatives to keyboards, etc.); and other steps as necessary to ensure that all students—including those with special needs or disabilities—have equal access to the program and program materials. Additionally, all information disseminated by this project will be made available in a

variety of formats for participants with varying disabilities and learning needs. All web-based information will be fully accessible.

(ii) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are appropriate to the needs of the intended recipients or beneficiaries of those services.

The proposed project will increase the number of books in the library with a focus on balancing the collection, enhancing alignment to the classroom curriculum and increasing the average copyright age of the collection. A portion of funds will be used to acquire up-to-date school library media resources, including books that will build library collections that support resource-based learning strategies and reflect the curriculum taught at all grade levels. The selection of new materials will be collaboratively developed with input from the multi-disciplinary project team (librarians, teachers, administrators, curriculum/special education specialist, administrators, parents, community members), guided by the collection analysis and carefully planned to ensure that the needs, interests and learning styles of all students are reflected in the diversity of materials available at each school library. Crockett ISD school libraries work with Follett to locate and acquire up-to-date books and digital media. This will include the acquisition of curriculum-focused eBook bundles for all grades, leisure reading (all grades) and professional development titles for teachers. The project also includes the purchase of non-fiction books for all grade levels (about 1,400 books) in literacy skills development, reading, mathematics, science, ESL and social studies, as well as 'reading for pleasure' titles.

We also intend to integrate proven, reference-based early literacy and reading enhancement technologies into the project. Technologies will utilize adaptive assessments that adjust questions based on students' responses. Students will read books and take quizzes on the computer to help determine if they understand what they are reading. The software program allows teachers to

generate reports on an individual as well as a whole class basis. Using the individual reports, teachers and students are able to regularly discuss progress. Getting the students involved in planning their own educational success is a great motivational tool. It helps show them why they are doing what they are doing and helps teachers design a step-by-step process to meet their goals. In addition, this type of involvement also fosters the development of students' information literacy skills because through the intervention process, students are encouraged to seek out additional supportive resources. The software will focus on addressing individual students' weaknesses in each of the following five key areas: 1) phonics; phonemic awareness; comprehension; vocabulary and fluency. Regular bi-weekly school-based LAC meetings (which includes both librarians and classroom teachers) will include 'collaboration sessions' for the purpose of identifying and implementing strategies for teachers to embed the technologies into everyday lessons to meet the needs of each individual student. Approximately [REDACTED] will be dedicated towards installing an electronic card catalogue that includes eight (8) work stations.

To facilitate Internet links and other resource-sharing networks, Crockett ISD libraries will subscribe to electronic resources including *World Book Online* and *eLibrary*, *DiscoveryLearning.net*, and *SIRS database*, all of which offer up-to-date reference materials, resources for non-English speakers, along with quality, easily accessible full text magazine & newspaper articles, scripts, images, and more.

A multi-disciplinary team collaboratively developed the activities and strategies that comprise our literacy initiative specifically for the purpose of addressing the needs of the libraries, schools and target population as identified through the assessment process. The table below illustrates how our proposal addresses those identified needs.

Identified need	Strategy for addressing the need
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Library collections are aged and have significant content gaps	Acquire up-to-date books to decrease the average copyright age and address weaknesses in the collections
Persistently poor student literacy achievement	Improve library collections; enhance knowledge and skills of librarians and teachers; new teaching resources; introduction of computer-based literacy support and intervention tools
Unacceptable STAR assessment	Upgraded technological backbone will support new short- and long-term technology-embedded learning environments
Linking classroom curriculum to school libraries	Ongoing professional development to increase linkages; bi-weekly curriculum meetings
Inability of students to find appropriate fiction and non-fiction books due to a lack of a computerized card catalogue	The electronic card catalogue will enable students to search for books, digital media and other resources by keyword, title, author or subject. They will also be able to browse book and resources lists related to their topics of interest

(iii) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.

Approximately [REDACTED] ([REDACTED] per year) in Literacy funds will support professional development and training for librarians and teachers to improve their capacity to enhance the literacy of students. Professional development will have a particular focus on linking classrooms and libraries while providing instruction on research-based and classroom-tested strategies for improving student literacy. To support implementation of our chosen promising practice,

classroom teachers and support personnel will participate in EIR-focused professional development, which includes a half-day initial session and nine two-hour monthly meetings of the classroom teachers. In addition to learning new strategies as students make progress in developing their reading abilities, teachers share their successes and concerns. Professional development is also provided through an internet-based instructional delivery system. Librarians and classroom teachers will also be provided with at least six (6) hours of training in proper use of any newly-acquired technologies with annual follow-up sessions. Regular bi-weekly collaboration sessions will focus on use of technologies, aligning books and resources to classroom curriculum and school improvement plans, and sharing resources, ideas and strategies for improving our students' literacy, among others. These regular meetings are already in place.

Additional professional development to be provided during the summer will focus on topics including (but not limited to): digital literacy; technology-infused learning; creating active learning environments; improving students' information literacy skills; professional learning communities; literacy support strategies; modeling; practice; content-area examples; and planning for and discussion of applications in the classroom and more. The professional development will occur over time (quarterly). By participating in these sessions our library personnel and teachers will become adept at selecting strategies to use based on student needs, the demands of the curriculum or program competencies. Professional development will be coordinated with the District's current professional development approach. Evaluation will include assessment of professional development activities (e.g., number and type of sessions, number of participants, pre- and post-implementation knowledge gained, etc.). Library personnel and teachers will be provided with a total of 30 hours of professional development each year of the project. Our overall professional development approach will be based on best- and promising

practices. For example, National Staff Development Council (NSDC) standards¹ stress that quality teacher professional development should: 1) be focused on student learning and achievement; 2) be research-based with relevant content-area examples and applications, and opportunities to practice; 3) support the development of a professional learning community; 4) include a variety of formats designed to meet adult learning needs and help teachers meet school and district goals; 5) be adequately supported by school leaders and resources; 6) use multiple forms of data to guide and monitor improvement; and 7) occur over time as part of a systemic plan for educational improvement. Our professional development plan is aligned to each of the seven elements above, including the development of a professional learning community.

(d) Adequacy of resources

(i) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project and the extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits.

The attached project budget is both adequate and sufficient to support the proposed literacy project. First, it fully supports necessary upgrades to the technological infrastructure of both of the district's school libraries. These upgrades will provide years of service and will support the development of short- and long-term technology-embedded learning environments. The district will fund all ongoing maintenance and upgrade costs. Our proposal also addresses each of the primary deficiencies that were identified during the needs assessment process (e.g., average copyright, average number of books per student, digital resources, access to technology, professional development, etc.). Students' information literacy skills will be enhanced through introduction of a comprehensive electronic card catalogue that will also increase access to up-to-

¹ <http://www.learningforward.org/standards/standards.cfm>

date resources including books, digital media, online databases and more. Lastly, our proposed project approach leverages existing school and community resources including technology (e.g., standards-based assessments and interventions) and increased access to library resources.

Our total 24-month budget request is [REDACTED] (Crockett ISD will provide [REDACTED] in matching funds over two years). The project will serve approximately 1,310 students per year at a **cost of just [REDACTED] per student**, which is reasonable given the objectives, design and potential significance of our literacy initiative. Similar projects have been implemented in the State of Texas with per-student costs in excess of [REDACTED]. The budget is based on actual district costs, industry standards and reviews of catalogs and other resources. The library resources (e.g., books, digital media, etc.) to be purchased will remain current useful and current for at least five years or more. In addition, our literacy initiative also builds upon current strategies, activities and programs. For example, Crockett parents are actively involved in the schools through the Bulldog Booster and PTO organizations. Members of these groups regularly participate in the annual campus and district needs assessments as well as developing related campus and district improvement plans. The groups also organize activities that encourage parental involvement in their children's education including "Parent University," "Muffins with Mom," "Donuts with Dad," and others. Through the Crockett literacy initiative these groups will organize two literacy-focused events at each school library every school year, further broadening its reach and impact. Training and professional development will sustainably build the capacity of our librarians and educators to link classrooms and libraries to literacy enhancement (and other) strategies. Crockett ISD fully intends to sustain the literacy activities beyond the Federal funding period and will continue to provide for supplementary library/classroom literacy-focused training each year. In addition, within 90 days, the project team will estimate any ongoing funding needs and then

identify a list of potential local, state and federal funding sources, along with appropriate strategies, action items and timelines for approaching each. The sustainability plan will be reviewed and updated quarterly. Crockett ISD enjoys a low staff turnover rate. However, to ensure that program continuity will be maintained should there be a change in the operational environment of the district or the schools, we intend to incorporate this literacy initiative into the overall "culture" of the schools and the district by incorporating the project strategies into each school's Campus Improvement Plan, as well as the District Improvement Plan

(e) Quality of the management plan

(i) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed

District administrator Jack Patton will serve as Project Director, devoting approximately 25% of his time towards project activities. A Literacy Advisory Council (LAC), comprised of both librarians, classroom teachers, key administrators, building principals, parents, student representation and members of the community, will assist in carrying out and sustaining project activities. The full council will meet quarterly with school-based meetings being held weekly. Mr. Patton is an experienced administrator who has successfully managed large, complex, grant-funded projects (e.g., Texas Education Agency Investment Capital Grant-\$200,000; Rural Technology Grant-\$400,000; Mathematics Instructional Coaches Pilot Program-\$250,000; Dropout Prevention Grant -\$300,000) with a strong educational background. He has a Master's Degree in Education and is a certified as a Professional Superintendent. As a Superintendent in Llano, Texas, Mr. Patton was awarded the Texas Successful School Award for academic performance in for three consecutive years. Dr. Jeannie Julian, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction/Special Education Director will also be a key member of the project team, dedicating about 25% of her time towards carrying out project activities. Dr. Julian has

extensive experience in curriculum planning, development and integration. School library personnel will also serve on the Literacy Advisory Council, devoting approximately 30% of their time towards project activities. A proposed project timeline is shown below.

Activity and milestone	Party	Month
Year one		
Ensure that all fiscal accountability and grant program compliance instruments are in place (e.g., separate account codes, etc.); inform faculty and community about project; calendar Literacy Advisory Council (LAC) meetings; bi-weekly collaboration meetings begin	Project Director (PD); LAC	1
Finalize plans for acquisition of resources outlined in the proposal narrative; acquire resources in accordance with district purchasing policies; integrate acquired resources into learning environment	PD; LAC; Teachers	1 - 4
Assess student performance data to establish baselines; survey teachers and principals to identify and prioritize professional development and training needs; notify trainers; finalize contracts and plans	PD; AC	2
Present introductory training session for educators, principals, administrators and support personnel to facilitate buy-in and to ensure effective communication of program goals, objectives and expectations	PD; AC; Consultants	2
Work with Database Specialist to ensure that the mechanism to track professional development hours, training assessments, and leadership roles are in place; ensure all personnel are trained on how to use the database system; arrange for the database system to produce quarterly reports that project if (and to what degree) each benchmark is being	PD; AC; Evaluator	3

met; review reports with LAC to determine if quarterly benchmarks are being met; ensure quarterly LAC meetings are continually held and are resulting in budget oversight, data-driven refinements to the program, and improvements towards meeting project goals, objectives, and outcomes; annual professional development schedule is executed for teachers and principals; year two plans final; follow-up student assessments are conducted; surveys administered		
Prepare and disseminate quarterly programmatic and financial reports; share with the LAC, teachers and principals to help with “data-driven-decision-making” in the classroom and throughout the district	PD; Evaluator	3, 6, 9 and 12
Review and finalize annual sustainability plan.	AC	6
Annual programmatic and financial report is prepared and disseminated	PD; Evaluator	12
Year two		
Adjustments to program are made based on feedback received from year one; baseline data is collected	PD; AC; teachers	13
Professional development and training schedule is finalized and executed	PD; AC	13-24
Quarterly programmatic and financial reports are disseminated	PD; Evaluator	Quarterly
Remainder of project activities are carried out	PD; AC	Ongoing

(ii) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives

The time commitments of the Project Director and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of our proposed literacy initiative. Time commitments are highlighted in the following table:

Position	Key roles and responsibilities	Time commitment
Project Director	Provide overall leadership and guidance; coordinate project activities; prepare budgets and reports; ensure that all project activities are carried out on-time, as specified and within the outlined budget	25% (.25 FTE)
Assistant Superintendent	Coordinate professional development activities and professional learning communities; oversee curriculum and literacy interventions; manage resource integration	25% (.25 FTE)
Library personnel	Manager new library resources; participate in professional development; collaborate with teaching staff	40% (.40 FTE)
Teachers	Participate in professional development and training; implement promising practice and computerized literacy supports and interventions; collaborate with library	30% (.30 FTE)
Library personnel	Participate in professional development and training; implement library-based promising practice and computerized literacy supports and interventions; collaborate with teachers; host family events	30% (.30 FTE)
Principals	Champion initiative at each school; oversee implementation and collaboration at each school site	15% (.15 FTE)
Evaluator	Work with LAC and project leadership to carry out	Varies (contract)

	evaluation plan outlined below and ensure a process of continuous improvement	
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(iii) Ensuring high-quality products and services from the proposed project

This initiative is a collaboratively-designed effort that has undergone sufficient planning and includes an effective framework for ensuring high-quality products and services. First, all key project activities and related milestones have been outlined. Skilled project personnel (CVs attached) with appropriate expertise and backgrounds have been assigned responsibility for accomplishing these tasks. Additionally, as outlined in the evaluation section, our project approach includes formative and summative evaluation measures that provide multiple feedback loops that will be utilized to ensure that the project is being implemented with fidelity to the original design and that feedback gathered is used to refine, strengthen and improve the project approach as appropriate.

(f) Quality of the project evaluation

(i) Evaluation plan

Crockett ISD intends to contract with a third part evaluation firm—Capacity Builders Incorporated (CBI), a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing ongoing, accurate and objective evaluation services. CBI is led by Dr. Greg Muller, a PhD-level researcher (CV attached) with extensive experience evaluating literacy-focused projects and programs. Dr. Muller has published more than 15 articles in peer-reviewed scholarly journals and is a recognized expert on program evaluation. The evaluator will work with the project team to implement an assessment framework that is aligned with School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas evaluation standards. The guide outlines output measures, quantitative

and qualitative data collection strategies, logic model development, STAAR expectations and measures, as well as a program profile and assessment of library program in accordance with strategies for librarians, output measures, and Evidence-Based Measures. The Output Measures quantify the level of use of library programs and services by staff, students, and the community. Evaluation Questions and Evidence Measures included in the revised Standards and Guidelines are designed to clearly elucidate the relationship between library resources, services, staffing and student achievement. No individually-identifiable student data will be used-- student data will be coded. Progress measurement tools and frequency of data collection are shown below.

Objectives and outcomes	Measurement	Schedule
Objective 1: Increase student literacy		
<p>Outcomes: 1.1) the percentage of 4-year-old children who achieve significant gains in oral language skills will increase by 10% (GPRA 1); 1.2) the percentage of 3rd-grade students who meet or exceed proficiency of State reading or language arts assessments will increase by 10% (GPRA 2); 1.3) percentage of participating 8th-grade students who meet or exceed proficiency of State reading or language arts assessments will increase by 10% (GPRA 3); 1.4) percentage of participating high school students who meet or exceed proficiency on State reading or</p>	<p>Computerized assessments (measure progress and identify areas of weakness); STAAR Reading assessment</p>	<p>Establish baseline at the start of each year; follow-up assessments throughout the school year (according to pre-set assessment schedules)</p>

language arts assessments will increase by 10% (GPRA 4). Benchmarks for outcomes 1.1 through 1.4: 5% increase in year 1; 5% increase in year 2		
Objective 2) expand technology-based resources in the library		
Outcomes: 2.1) within 24 months, technology will be integrated into the school library; 2.2) integrate information literacy skills development into the curriculum in 100% of classrooms; 2.3) the library will score at least a '3' in 75% of the STAR assessment; and 2.4) implement computerized card catalogue;	Qualitative survey; STAR assessment; lesson plan review	Annual survey; STAR assessment will be conducted at the end of the project period; lesson plans will be reviewed annually
Objective 3) enhance the capacity of librarians and classroom teachers to improve student literacy and link classrooms with library resources		
Outcomes: 3.1) each year of the project, provide 30 hours of professional development for librarians and classroom teachers-100% of participants will indicate the acquisition of new skills; and 3.2) library resources will be linked to classroom curriculum.	Sign-in sheets; post-participation survey; bi-weekly meeting logs; lesson plan reviews	Post-participation surveys will be administered after each session; annual survey; lesson plans will be reviewed annually

Stakeholder feedback will be gathered through an annual **Stakeholder Performance Survey**, which is a validated instrument developed for the purpose of gathering valid, reliable

performance feedback. It contains an inventory for stakeholder partners to complete where they report on all types and quantities and values of contributions made to a particular program or cause in the previous year. These include volunteer and staff hours, materials, facility/other space, equipment, cash, and other resources. The survey also requires the partner to provide information on his/her opinion of the initiative or program, perceived strengths and weaknesses, areas of concern, and other thoughts so that this input can be used to refine the project.

Collecting Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) data: In addition to the data outlined above, we will also collect, track and report the following: GPRA 1) The percentage of 4-year-old children participating in the project who achieve significant gains in oral language skills; GPRA 2) The percentage of participating 3rd-grade students who meet or exceed proficiency of State reading or language arts assessments; GPRA 3) The percentage of participating 8th-grade students who meet or exceed proficiency of State reading or language arts assessments; and GPRA 4) The percentage of participating high school students who meet or exceed proficiency on State reading or language arts assessments

(ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

Our evaluation plan includes multiple feedback loops to continuously gather student, teacher and administrator feedback for the purpose of reviewing assessment data (monthly) to refine, strengthen and improve the program approach. This will include bi-weekly project meetings among school-based project personnel and quarterly meetings among the full Literacy Advisory Council. The evaluator will prepare quarterly programmatic and financial reports, which will be reviewed and discussed during these meetings. Parents will be provided with progress updates during regularly-scheduled parent-teacher conferences held throughout the year.