Targeted Literacy Advancement - 2012
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Absolute Priority:

(a) Book distribution / childhood literacy activities to improve the literacy skills of children

(i) Promoting early literacy and preparing young children to read;

The **Targeted Literacy Advancement** initiative will create a Professional Learning Community that meets monthly to provide training and embedded professional development to elementary teachers. The PLC will promote the complete integration of evidence-based best practices in literacy instruction – including the evidence-based *SunSprouts* K-2 program. Funding will bring ongoing training and the tools needed to implement both *SunSprouts* and *VersaTiles* evidence-based programs; which will dramatically improve student literacy.

(ii) Developing and improving students' reading ability; and

Targeted Literacy Advancement (TLA) will establish a PLC at rural, high-need Burkeville ISD and Newton ISD, bringing ongoing, embedded training in literacy strategies that will promote skills among targeted high-poverty youth K-12. All teachers will complete at least five embedded training hours each month throughout the project period. Libraries will be enhanced to include much needed print resources, family literacy-focused activities will take place one evening each month, and all students will take part in a reading incentive program that will allow them to earn books for their home libraries.

(iii) Motivating older children to read

Both Districts will provide a literacy incentive that will allow students to earn points to purchase books to take home – a powerful motivator for older students in rural communities where books cannot easily be purchased. Most students have five or fewer books of their own at their homes. Purchasing books will motivate students to complete the literacy activities, homework, and classroom grade levels needed to earn points. Libraries will add new titles to the outdated print collections. **TLA** will add a large selection of high-interest titles with low reading level content to provide age-appropriate reading materials for low-level and struggling readers. The PLC will focus on evidence-based strategies to encourage older students to read.

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(b) Age of children to be served within the attendance boundaries of high-need LEAs

TLA will target students ages 5 – 18; or between the grades of K-12. Both Burkeville

ISD (28.37% poverty rate) and Newton ISD (33.46% poverty rate) are high-need LEAs, with

high poverty rates, (approx.72% Free/ Reduced Lunch Rate), low student academic performance

levels, and a multitude of risk factors that negatively impact youth.

(c) Key goals, activities to be undertaken and rational, timeline, parties responsible for implementing activities, credibility of plan as judged by supporting evidence

A chart depicting project objectives, activities and milestones, budget expenditures,

timeline, and parties responsible is included on Page 21, please cross-reference. Project

activities have been selected by the **Targeted Literacy Planning Committee** to address the

unique needs of the targeted rural communities. A chart depicting the specific needs of the

targeted community, and project activities that have been included to address those needs, is

included in the narrative that follows on Page16. Please cross-reference.

(d) (i) a description of how the proposed project is supported by the cited study; and

TLA will provide the training and tools necessary for teachers District-wide to

implement *VersaTiles*.   The approach of this evidence-based program includes:

- A Scope and Sequence in conjunction with core instruction to increase teachers' ability to meet individual needs and increase academic success

- Objective-based, "hands-on" practice that provides students immediate feedback

- Informal and formal assessment options

Each of these strategies are supported by extensive research, documenting evidence that they

are significant factors in contributing sound instructional materials and teacher strategies for

implementing a successful standards-based curriculum.

(ii) Citation for the supporting study that is relevant to the project

Berliner, D.C; Casanova, U. (1993) *Putting Research to Work in Your School.* Scholastic. 52-54,
102-111

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> Ericsson, K.A.; Krampe R.T; Tesch-Romer, C. (1993) *The Role of Deliberate Practice in the Acquisition of Expert Performance* -Psychological Review, Vol.100, 363-406

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Technology (5 points)

      Targeted Literacy Advancement will bring a full-time Local Literacy Coordinator to both Burkeville ISD and Newton ISD to provide ongoing embedded professional development to ALL educators and library media specialists throughout the project period. Each teacher will take part in at least five hours of individualized PD each month, focused on improving literacy through the integration of educational technology in the classroom. Each Local Literacy Coordinator will work with Library Media Specialists to lead a PLC focused on best practices in literacy and technology integration. Technology will also be a feature of monthly ***Home Team Advantage* Nights**, and utilized to motivate parents to participate alongside students.

Competitive Preference Priority 3: Improving Early Learning Outcomes (5 points)

      TLA will include multiple strategies to address the needs of high-need youth grades K-3. Teachers will complete ongoing professional development focused on implementing both *SunSprouts* and *Versa Tiles* with fidelity – evidence-based programs that dramatically improve literacy outcomes for young elementary students. Each Local Literacy Coordinator will train teachers to fully integrate existing educational technologies into their instructional routines.

Competitive Preference Priority 4 – Serving Rural LEAs (5 points)

      TLA will create a vertically-aligned, research-based literacy curriculum at Newton ISD and Burkeville ISD, bringing high-intensity trainings to teachers and cutting-edge technology to students in a fully sustainable model designed to improve literacy outcomes. The incentive-based book store component of this project will distribute books to students. Please cross-reference the chart on Pages 7 and 8. Both Newton ISD and Burkeville ISD are listed on the Rural Local Education Agency list created by the Department of Education.

(a) Significance (10 points)

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(i) Build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population. (5 points)

      Region 5 Education Service Center is a local education agency in Texas, serving 6 counties and 30 public school districts. While throughout Region 5, student reading performance is reported above state averages, two rural, isolated Districts have significantly lower reading outcomes at all grade levels on the STAAR. Both Burkeville ISD (299 students) and Newton ISD (1,125 students), are struggling to make dwindling resources meet the ever-growing needs of high-risk students living in remote communities – resulting in alarming performance gaps among student groups at all grade levels. The chart below illustrates this performance gap.

	Percent of Students Meeting Standards		
2011 STAAR	**ESC 5**	**Burkeville ISD**	**Newton ISD**
Reading - Grade 3	91%	**79%**	91%
Reading - Grade 5	87%	89%	**81%**
Reading - Grade 6	84%	**68%**	**69%**
Reading - Grade 7	86%	91%	**68%**
Writing – Grade 7	93%	**81%**	**71%**
Reading – Grade 8	89%	99%	**80%**
Reading – Grade 9	89%	**83%**	**78%**
Reading All Grades Tested	90%	**87%**	**84%**
Writing All Grades Tested	91%	90%	**82%**

      The Texas Success Initiative assessment also indicates challenges for these Districts, only 45% of Burkeville students and 46% of Newton students demonstrated "Higher Education Readiness" in 2011. Students enroll in kindergarten lacking age-appropriate literacy skills – a deficit that results in retention rates that often triple or quadruple Texas averages:

2011	Non-Special Education Retention Rates

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Grade Level	Texas	Burkeville ISD	Newton ISD
Kindergarten	2.3%	0.0%	**8.2%**
Grade 1	4.7%	**10.0%**	**12.7%**
Grade 4	1.1%	**9.5%**	0.0%
Grade 7	1.0%	**17.4%**	0.0%

Literacy instruction within each District is lacking continuity and alignment to STAAR standards, a weakness further exacerbated by a prevailing lack of professional development opportunities within these small rural districts. Funding is not in place to bring in outside PD providers, and small rural districts struggle to find in-house classroom coverage that would allow teacher travel to regional ESC trainings. Staff morale within Burkeville ISD and Newton ISD is low, with turnover rates reported at 18% (Burkeville) and 22% (Newton). Educators – although dedicated – struggle to continue promoting high standards of learning for a student body with rapidly rising poverty rates and a growing number of risk factors, without funding or training support. Burkeville ISD and Newton ISD are in desperate need of sustainable solutions to the literacy instruction challenges negatively impacting student outcomes.

Library Media Centers, the hub for literacy instruction in successful Region 5 districts, are outdated to the point of irrelevancy at both Burkeville and Newton. Although the 2009 State of America's Libraries Report determined that a library's print collection is rated "acceptable" only if it is less than 15 years old, this standard is far from attainment in targeted districts. The chart below illustrates the average age of resources at both Burkeville and Newton, as determined by the **Targeted Literacy Planning Committee**:

Resource	Average Age
Non-Fiction Print Materials	19 years
Fiction Print Materials	17 years

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Biography Print Materials	22 years
Story Collection	22 years

There is no question that the current state of the holdings in targeted districts is detrimental to their ability to lead literacy development and provide student motivation. The non-fiction print collection is **older than the average high school senior**, leaving students unable to find resources that detail America's War on Terror, the technology revolution of the past twenty years, two decades worth of medical advances, and global events such as recent trends in pollution, environment, and climate. The biography sections at each site stopped being updated in the early 1990s. Fiction sections are nearly as outdated, with an average copyright of 1995, leaving students unable to access current titles. Extreme rurality and poverty leave students with very few book acquisition options beyond the school library.

ESC 5 has formed a **Targeted Literacy Planning Committee** (**TLPC**) to address the overwhelming needs of Burkeville ISD and Newton ISD. Comprised of representatives from each relevant stakeholder group, including Region leadership, District administrators, teachers, Library Media Specialists, parent volunteers and student volunteers, **TLPC** has designed **Targeted Literacy Advancement** to meet the unique needs of targeted districts, ultimately providing sustainable solutions to the long-term challenges that face small, rural school districts. Sustainability will be attained through the targeted inclusion of intensive professional development in literacy instruction best practices, vertical alignment of literacy curricula (to include an evidence-based program), home literacy promotion, and one-time purchases to dramatically improve the holdings at each Library Media Center in targeted districts.

(ii) Development of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies. (5 points)

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Over a 24 month period, supported by ██████████ in Federal funds, **TLA** will include a variety of strategies to enhance the capacity of Newton ISD and Burkeville ISD to meet the literacy instruction needs of their rural, high poverty, high-risk student population. Key project activities have been selected to provide sustainable solutions to existing gaps and weaknesses, maximizing teacher effectiveness and promoting a District-wide focus on the importance of literacy. Four strategies will form a comprehensive approach to literacy improvement:

Professional Learning Community

There is a desperate need for ongoing professional development in targeted small, rural districts, where a perception of professional isolation leads to high turn-over rates and low levels of student achievement. Currently, teachers participate in less than 8 hours of PD annually. **TLA** will create a PLC focused on best practices in literacy instruction – particularly on best practices for low income, rural students. The PLC will be led by the new Local Literacy Coordinator in each District. Monthly PLC activities for all teachers and Library Media Specialists in targeted districts, supported by embedded, individualized trainings and a PLC website that includes a discussion board, conference room, and reference depository for teachers to share successful literacy lesson plans, will create an environment of ongoing improvement that will improve both teacher morale and effectiveness and student achievement.

Vertical Alignment of Literacy Curricula

Current literacy instruction is not aligned from one grade level to the next, resulting in state assessment scores that fluctuate dramatically from one grade level to the next in both districts. **TLA** will bring evidence-based *VersaTiles* to targeted districts, providing the tools needed to vertically align curricula K-8, with detailed connections of literacy practice, application, and problem solving to STAAR standards, and conceptual development. Further enhanced by the *eVersa Tiles* online practice system and the fluency/vocabulary/writing-focused *WorldScapes*

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program, the K-8 literacy curriculum will be designed by the new Local Literacy Coordinators, and will provide the framework for ongoing student growth and improvement.

Library Media Center Rebirth

Through **TLA**, Library Media Centers will become the District leader in literacy promotion. Each District will receive more than 800 new titles, including significant numbers in key sections such as Biography and Story Collection. **TLA** will bring up-to-date titles to the print holdings, making the Library an exciting place to visit once again.

Home Literacy Promotion

Successful literacy programs do not end at the final bell of the school day. Adult education and literacy levels are low in these isolated, rural communities, and both Newton ISD and Burkeville ISD struggle to promote family participation alongside their students. More than one in four adults in targeted communities did not graduate from high school, and approximately 50% of students in Burkeville and Newton do not own more than five books at their current reading level. **TLA** will open school libraries to families during evening hours on a regular basis, and provide workshops for parents to promote home-based literacy activities. All students K-8 will also be encouraged to participate alongside their parents in the home-aligned component to the *VersaTiles* program. These *Home Team Advantage Literacy Toolkits* will allow families at-home access to quality literacy materials and activities aligned to STAAR standards and the newly designed literacy curriculum. Students will be rewarded for *Home Team Advantage* usage, earning points to "purchase" new books to take home and keep. Teachers will also be able to award points for classroom successes, test performance, and meeting independent reading goals. Students K-12 will participate in this district-wide incentive.

Targeted students represent the highest-need youth in Region 5. They are geographically isolated, attending underfunded schools, and facing the barriers of intergenerational poverty.

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Their adult role models did not graduate from high school, and too often, they lack the home support needed for academic success and college aspirations. **TLA** will bring a vertically aligned literacy curriculum, teacher training, and powerful literacy tools to these high-need communities, providing new opportunities to achieve at levels on par with youth nationwide.

(b) Quality of the project design (20 points)

(i) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (5 points)

The overall goal of **TLA** is to create sustainable solutions to literacy challenges in Newton ISD and Burkeville ISD, improving student achievement on standardized literacy assessments. Specific project objectives, to be measured annually throughout the 24-month project period, have been created in alignment to the unique needs of targeted districts as well as in alignment with required GPRA assessments. (Related benchmarks and activities are described in the chart on page 20, please cross-reference.)

1. At least 50% of families, K-8, will complete a *Home Team Advantage* literacy activity monthly throughout the project period, as measured by student activity log returns.

2. At least 30% of students K-12 will earn enough points to "purchase" a new book each quarter, as measured by book inventory logs.

3. Increase by 3% the number of Grade 3 students who meet or exceed proficiency levels on the Reading STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) when compared to benchmark data collected in May 2012.

4. Increase by 3% the number of Grade 8 students who meet or exceed proficiency levels on the Reading STAAR, when compared to benchmark data collected in May 2012.

5. Increase by 8% the number of Grade 12 students who meet or exceed Higher Education Readiness Standards in Reading on the Texas Success Initiative, when compared to benchmark data collected in May 2012.

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(ii) The extent to which the proposed project will be coordinated with similar or related efforts, and with other appropriate community, State, and Federal resources. (5 points)
Sustainability is crucial to the lasting impact of any initiative undertaken by a school district.　Region 5 ESC and the **TLPC** have designed this initiative to align with a variety of existing resources and funding streams to maximize efficiency and promote the continuation of activities beyond the initial 24 month funding period.　Alignments include:

⇒ **Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Department** of ESC 5 will work with the project-funded Local Literacy Coordinator to provide trainers for monthly PLC meetings

⇒ **Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Department** of ESC 5 will provide technical assistance to teachers and Library Media Specialists as new technology is acquired

⇒ **Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Department** of ESC 5 will provide trainers for quarterly parent home-literacy workshops

⇒ **Data Management for Assessment and Curriculum** of ESC 5 will work with the external evaluator to provide a wide variety of web-based applications for ongoing assessment of project impact

⇒ **English Language Arts Team** of ESC 5 will work with the project-funded Local Literacy Coordinator to assist in the development and implementation of a K-12 curriculum aligned with state and federal mandates

⇒ Each campus will be approved for a stipend to support teacher pursuit of the SBEC-approved **Master Reading Teacher Training Program** – creating in-house reading specialists at each campus prepared to play a leading role in the PLC beyond the initial 24 month project period.

⇒ **Title I** funds are allocated to each targeted school annually, and will be utilized to support related literacy and family-involvement activities

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⇒ **Title II, Part A – Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting** funds provide

supplemental monies in targeted districts to improve student achievement. Funds will

further support **TLA**, using scientifically-based retention and training strategies to

promote highly-qualified principals and assistant principals in schools while holding

districts accountable for improvements in student academic performance.

(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. (5 points)

All Texas Independent School Districts submit an annual District Improvement Plan to

the Texas Education Agency. Both Burkeville ISD and Newton ISD submitted Improvement

Plans in 2011 focused on two key themes to meet their unique needs:

- Literacy Improvement: Continuous use of student assessment data to provide

  individualized instruction; Documented alignment of lesson plans to STAAR standards

- Professional Development: New opportunities for technology trainings; New

  opportunities for evidence-based literacy strategy trainings

The **TLA** initiative was designed with these specific needs in mind, creating fully sustainable

solutions to literacy challenges by a **TLPC** inclusive of all relevant stakeholder groups.

(iv) The extent to which performance feedback and continuous improvement are integral to the design of the proposed project. (5 points)

The **Targeted Literacy Planning Committee** will continue to meet monthly throughout

the 24 month project period, to provide opportunities for real-time modifications based on impact

data. The external evaluator will create **Quarterly Evaluation Reports** (**QER**), which will be

examined in detail each quarter by the **TLPC**. Each **QER** will document movement towards

stated goals and objectives, featuring benchmark data from both qualitative and quantitative

sources. Data will measure project impact on all stakeholders, including current students K-12,

parents, and all Newton and Burkeville teachers and Library Media Specialists. The external

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evaluator will break data out into No Child Left Behind subsets to highlight disparities and

performance gaps that can be addressed (including gender, race, ethnicity, grade level, disability

status, and socioeconomic status). The **TLPC** will utilize each **QER** as a tool, providing real-

time data to drive informed decision-making regarding project modifications. Each **TLPC**

meeting will feature opportunities for members to brainstorm and vote on project modifications

to best promote the attainment of stated goals and objectives. Region 5 Education Service

Center intends to deliver **Targeted Literacy Advancement** to positively impact ALL students

and ALL student subsets in targeted Independent School Districts. Performance gaps will be

addressed as soon as they are reported, with four regularly scheduled meetings each year to

create a performance feedback loop that will allow for continuous project improvement.

Although the **TLPC** will play an important role in creating and presenting suggested

modifications, ESC 5 leadership will make all final decisions about project changes.

(c) Quality of the project services (25 points)
**(i) Strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who
are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color,
national origin, gender, age, or disability. (10 points)**
Targeted Independent School Districts have similar NCLB sub-group distributions:

2011-2012		
NCLB Sub-Groups	**Burkeville ISD**	**Newton ISD**
African American	24.4%	41.1%
Hispanic	2.0%	3.7%
White	72.9%	37.9%
Economically Disadvantaged	71.2%	74.6%
Limited English Proficient	0%	0%
At-Risk	40.1%	51.4%
Special Education	15.8%	12.1%

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As evidenced by the above statistics, language barriers are non-existent in targeted communities. As such, strategies to address this challenge will not be implemented (offering bilingual advertisements or translators). A variety of strategies to provide equal access to all stakeholders have been incorporated into **TLA**, including:

⇒ The Professional Learning Community will focus on promoting literacy skills for ALL students – with monthly sessions (supported by ongoing discussions and opportunities for collaboration through the PLC website) focused on effective literacy strategies (including educational technology integration) for low-income students, students with special needs, minority students, and students with little home support

⇒ The PLC will also research and practice evidence-based strategies for improving parental involvement in their child's education. Parental involvement levels are currently low at targeted districts, and active parent support is a key indicator of ultimate student success. Efforts will be made to draw ALL families into District-supported literacy programming

⇒ *Home Team Advantage* **Nights** will be offered monthly, drawing local families into the library and providing evening opportunities for working families to support their children. Programming will be scheduled to meet the needs of families with multiple children, allowing parents to complete activities alongside each child.

⇒ Advertisement of *Home Team Advantage* **Nights** will be ongoing through a variety of measures, including individual home calls by classroom teachers, to encourage participation by ALL families, including those with parents that did not graduate from high school and do not maintain a strong relationship with the school district.

⇒ Teachers will receive embedded training in utilizing existing adaptive technologies for students with special learning needs, enabling them to integrate hands-on learning tools

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that best meet the needs of students with learning challenges while promoting their

attainment of strong literacy skills

⇒ Points to purchase books will be earned through a variety of activities, including

classwork, homework, independent reading and family-based literacy programming.

Individual teacher will be able to establish unique point-earning standards, allowing all

students multiple opportunities to benefit from this literacy-promoting program

(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. (10 points)

Targeted Literacy Advancement was created by the stakeholder-led **TLPC** to meet the

unique literacy needs of high-poverty, high-risk, isolated youth attending Newton ISD and

Burkeville ISD. The overall project goal is to create sustainable solutions to deep-seated

challenges in these small communities, leading to significant gains in literacy skills for students

K-12. The chart below relates specific project components to the needs of targeted districts:

Needs	Targeted Literacy Advancement Strategies
Lack of PD opportunities (No funding in place to bring in PD providers, small districts struggle to send teachers to regional trainings more than an hour away, small districts with five or fewer teachers per grade level result in greater feelings of professional isolation)	Two Local Literacy Coordinators will provide ongoing, embedded PD, and will lead a PLC for ALL teachers in targeted districts. Every teacher will take part in one PLC meeting per month, contribute to the online PLC database, and will complete at least one hour of embedded professional development with the Local Literacy Coordinator each quarter.
District technologies are under-utilized, as teachers lack the trainings needed to fully integrate these powerful	Library Media Specialists will participate in turn-key trainings to enable them to train District teachers in effective integration of these educational tools. Local

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educational tools	Literacy Coordinators will also provide embedded, individualized trainings for teachers
Libraries are outdated to the point of irrelevancy (Average copyright dates District-wide are in the early 1980s)	All libraries will receive new books in critical areas (non-fiction and fiction).
Lack of literacy continuity / vertical alignment District-wide (evidence-based reading programs are lacking; teacher training is lacking)	Local Literacy Coordinators will provide training and lead the PLC. Local Literacy Coordinators will establish a vertically aligned literacy curriculum featuring evidence-based *VersaTiles* and *WorldScapes*. Curricular tools and books needed to deliver instruction will be purchased. Trainings will be embedded and ongoing.
Lack of family-centered literacy opportunities, low levels of parental involvement, low levels of parental education, lack of home literacy support	K-12 book purchasing program for students will create motivation and generate parent interest. ***Home Team Advantage* Nights** will take place monthly, brining families to school libraries to complete literacy-based activities and literacy trainings to promote reading at home.

In addition to these project activities, **TLA** will also dedicate funding to a professional External Evaluator and Data Collection Specialist, two contractual individuals that will facilitate ongoing program assessment and evaluation, paving the way for continual performance feedback loops and data-driven decision making. This will assist ESC 5 and the **TLPC** in delivering a program that meets objectives and goals equally for all targeted audiences.

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(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. (5 points)

Essential to the successful implementation of a Professional Learning Community, monthly embedded trainings will take part throughout the 24-month project period. Ongoing trainings and professional development will provide project sustainability, creating a lasting impact on the literacy instructional strategies delivered within both districts. All teachers will take part in the same monthly professional development schedule throughout the project. Below is a sample training schedule, detailing activities for each week during the first two months of implementation. Although topics for each activity will change from month to month, the time committed to literacy professional development will remain constant:

September: 5 Hours of Training

Week 1: PLC Meeting – "Best Evidence-Based Practices in Literacy for Low-Income Students" – 1 Hour *Delivered through collaboration with **Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Department** of ESC 5

Week 2: Embedded Local Literacy Coordinator Training – 2 Hours

Week 3: Upload at least one successful literacy lesson plan to website – 0.5 Hours

Participate in conversation thread: Low-Income Student strategies – 0.5 Hours

Week 4: Online PLC Reflection – Successes and Challenges in Implementation – 1 Hour

October: 5 Hours of Training

Week 1: PLC Meeting – "Best Evidence-Based Practices in Literacy for Multiple Learning Styles" – 1 Hour *Delivered through collaboration with **Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Department** of ESC 5

Week 2: Embedded Local Literacy Coordinator Training – 2 Hours

Week 3: Upload at least one successful literacy lesson plan to website – 0.5 Hours

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> Participate in conversation thread: Multiple Learning Styles strategies – 0.5 Hours
>
> Week 4: Online PLC Reflection – Successes and Challenges in Implementation – 1 Hour

(d) Adequacy of resources (10 points)
(i) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. (5 points)

Students at Burkeville ISD and Newton ISD face challenges of much greater intensity than their peers throughout Texas and across the nation. Intergenerational poverty and low adult education levels leave many students unaware of career opportunities beyond teachers and firefighters. Too often, post-secondary training and education is seen as unnecessary, leaving young people without the job skills and know-how necessary to be successful in the 21st century job market. Youth are geographically isolated, and without the basic enrichment opportunities that promote protective factors in youth living in larger communities. A growing trend of below-average literacy skills among these young people is especially alarming, further widening the gap in opportunities available to these rural families.

Within the school environment, teacher turn-over is abnormally high, print resources are significantly outdated, and a lack of training has left most technology tools underutilized. Library Media Centers are ignored as irrelevant. The literacy curricula is not aligned between grade levels, leaving literacy instruction to the digression of educators that have little opportunity for training in literacy best-practices and who suffer from professional isolation. Parental involvement levels are low, students do not own books, and there are virtually no structured activities in place to promote at-home literacy. Ultimately, these challenges combine to create a nearly insurmountable barrier to literacy success for targeted students.

With a one-time funding distribution of ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮; **Targeted Literacy Advancement** will create fully sustainable, in-house remedies for each of these barriers – preparing Newton

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ISD and Burkeville ISD to begin a new era of literacy success, targeting students, parents, and

educators; that will last long beyond the 24-month project period.

(ii) 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. (5 points)

      Targeted Literacy Advancement will serve Burkeville ISD (299 students) and Newton

ISD (1,125 students), ultimately impacting 1,424 students annually. When taken over the entire

24-month project period, the price per student is ██ – making **TLA** an extremely cost-effective

program that will promote results worth far more than the initial investment. On an annual basis,

the price per student reduces further, totaling only ████ – approximately the cost of a hand-

held video game system.

      Targeted Literacy Advancement will provide at least five hours of professional

development every month to EACH Burkeville ISD and Newton ISD educator throughout the

project period, and will establish a Professional Learning Community that will continue long

beyond the initial 24 months.   Teacher will learn how to fully integrate existing educational

technologies, powerful tools in motivating students and meeting the unique needs of students

with varying learning styles. Print holdings in Library Media Centers will be replenished,

significantly updating the fiction and non-fiction collections. An evidence-based literacy

curriculum and the technologies needed to support it will also be purchased, dramatically

improving the rate of fidelity teachers are able to reach through instruction. Parents will benefit

from home literacy trainings and new opportunities to participate in literacy activities alongside

their children. Students K-12 will participate in an incentive that will allow them to purchase

books with earned points – a program that will increase the connection between school and

home, provide youth with new opportunities to hone their literacy skills, and can be sustained

through business contributions in future years.

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      The **TLA** initiative will create a fully sustainable approach to improving literacy outcomes, targeting student outcomes through teacher and parent trainings in addition to the acquisition of an evidence-based literacy curricula and new technology and print resources.

(e) Quality of the management plan (20 points)

(i) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. (10 points)

      The chart below illustrates the **TLA** management plan:

Objective: At least 50% of families, K-8, will complete a *Home Team Advantage* literacy activity monthly throughout the project period, as measured by student activity log returns.

Activities / Milestones: *Home Team Advantage* kits will be sent home with all students K-8 each September. Teacher will focus on importance of home literacy during Open House and Conferences. Districts will host monthly family literacy nights to promote guided completion of activities. Advertisement will include posters, flyers, announcements, letters, and phone calls each month. Teachers will make phone calls to at least 30% of their students' households each month to invite parents individually. Quarterly, family night will include a literacy workshop for parents. Parents will complete pre and post assessments at the start and end of each quarterly literacy workshop.

Budget: Funding has been included for: Staffing; Books; *Home Team Advantage* curriculum

Persons Responsible: Project Director; Local Literacy Coordinator; Library Media Specialists

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Objective: At least 30% of students K-12 will earn enough points to "purchase" a new book each quarter, as measured by book inventory logs.

Activities / Milestone: Books will be purchased by Month 2 and again by Month 6 each year. Each class will visit the school "Book Store" at least once each month. Students earning a significant number of points will be recognized on morning announcements to increase

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motivation. Community solicitations will begin by Month 13, seeking ongoing support

Budget: Funding has been included for: Staffing; Books

Persons Responsible: Project Director; Local Literacy Coordinator

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Objective: Increase by 3% the number of Grade 3 students who meet or exceed proficiency levels on the Reading STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) when compared to benchmark data collected in May 2012.

Activities / Milestones: PLC meetings will take place monthly. All teachers will complete at least five hours of embedded trainings each month. All teachers will implement at least 1 technology-integrated literacy lesson weekly. All students will be able to earn at least three books annually through book store points. At least 20 families will take part in *Home Team Advantage* **Night** each month. Technology purchases will be complete by Month 3 annually. Library book purchases will be complete by Month 3 annually. Vertically aligned literacy curriculum will be implemented by Month 13.

Budget: Funding has been included for: Local Literacy Coordinator; Project Director; Literacy Curricula; Print Materials; Take-Home Books

Persons Responsible: Project Director; Local Literacy Coordinator

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Objective: Increase by 3% the number of Grade 8 students who meet or exceed proficiency levels on the Reading STAAR, when compared to benchmark data collected in May 2012.

Activities / Milestones: See Above; **Budget:** See Above; **Persons Responsible:**   See Above

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Objective: Increase by 8% the number of Grade 12 students who meet or exceed Higher Education Readiness Standards in Reading on the Texas Success Initiative, when compared to benchmark data collected in May 2012.

Activities / Milestones: See Above; **Budget:** See Above; **Persons Responsible:**   See Above

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(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 of the proposed project. (5 points)

   TLA will be supported by two grant-funded positions, the Project Director and the Local

Literacy Coordinator, as well as an External Evaluator as shown below:

Project Director – 0.25 FTE
Job Description: Coordinates the overall implementation of the project by: monitoring Local Literacy Coordinators, facilitating meetings, serving as liaison between consortium members contracted personnel, monitoring budget, and completing reports.

Local Literacy Coordinators – Two positions at 1.0 FTE each
Job Description: Coordinates local implementation in each district by: ensuring that all aspects of the project are implemented according to the proposed guidelines, coordinating and/or providing professional development, and working with Library Media Specialists to lead a PLC

External Evaluator – INSERT Hours Year One, INSERT Hours Year Two
Job Description: Dr. Greg Muller (resume appended) will conduct both formative and summative evaluation activities, providing real-time data illustrating movement towards all objectives and goals, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data sources to provide a continuous feedback loop that promotes ongoing project improvement

   The two targeted Districts represent the highest-need communities in Region 5. The

Education Service Center is the logical leader of this much-needed intervention, which will

provide a lasting impact that dramatically improves student literacy outcomes. Dr. Muller and

Capacity Builders, Inc. have directly involved in 77 *Improving Literacy Through School*

Libraries projects over the years, and specifically in the last two funding cycles, have

successfully evaluated five of these projects. ESC and Capacity Builders, Inc. represent the most

qualified team to conduct the **Targeted Literacy Advancement** initiative.

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(iii) The adequacy of mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services from the proposed project. (5 points)

As described above, the well-established **Targeted Literacy Planning Committee** will meet monthly to assess project successes and address challenges experienced. Quarterly, the **Targeted Literacy Planning Committee** will utilize a detailed **Quarterly Evaluation Report** prepared by an external evaluator to assess movement towards specific goals and objectives. Dr. Muller will receive data sets from both qualitative and quantitative sources monthly, and will also design additional measurement tools as necessary to capture needed data. **Quarterly Evaluation Reports** will create a continuous feedback loop, informed by real-time data, which will allow project leadership to make informed, data-driven decisions. Professional evaluation services, including both formative and summative monitoring and reports, will ensure **TLA** delivers high-quality services to all NCLB sub-groups.

(f) Quality of the project evaluation (15 points)

(i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible. (10 points)

Region 5 Education Service Center will contract with Dr. Muller and Capacity Builders, Inc. to conduct both formative and summative evaluation activities. Dr. Muller will continually monitor progress towards stated goals and objectives and create **Quarterly Evaluation Reports** and an **Annual Evaluation Report**, in addition to completing funder-required reporting. The following chart illustrates data to be collected, in relation to each stated objective:

Objectives	Benchmark Data Measures (Baselines collected in Months 1 & 2)	Timeframe
At least 50% of families, K-8, will complete a *Home Team Advantage* literacy activity monthly throughout	▪ Number of parents attending Open House ▪ Number of parents attending conferences ▪ Number of "family participation signatures" returned, including NCLB sub-groups	▪ Annually ▪ Annually ▪ Annually

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the project period, as measured by student activity log returns.	■ Activity return rate, including sub-groups ■ Number and location of advertisement posters	■ Monthly ■ Monthly
At least 30% of students K-12 will earn enough points to "purchase" a new book each quarter, as measured by book inventory logs.	■ Number of successful recruitment calls ■ Number of books purchased ■ Program attendance data, including NCLB sub-group designations for participants ■ Parent satisfaction surveys ■ Pre-Post Literacy Workshop surveys ■ Number of books earned ■ Frequency of and method of point accrual	■ Monthly ■ Quarterly ■ Monthly ■ Quarterly ■ Quarterly ■ Monthly ■ Monthly
Increase by 3% the number of Grade 3 students who meet or exceed proficiency levels on the Reading STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) when compared to benchmark data collected in May 2012. Increase by 3% the number of Grade 8 students who meet or exceed proficiency	■ PLC meeting frequency and attendance ■ Embedded PD frequency for each teacher ■ Online PLC website hits ■ Time tracking on PLC website ■ Number of successful lesson plans uploaded to PLC website ■ Teacher reports of tech-integrated literacy lesson frequency ■ Teacher surveys measuring satisfaction with PLC ■ Book store statistics – how many students have earned how many books, NCLB sub-	■ Monthly ■ Monthly ■ Monthly ■ Monthly ■ Monthly ■ Monthly ■ Quarterly ■ Monthly

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levels on the Reading STAAR, when compared to benchmark data collected in May 2012.	group data for all students	
	▪ *Home Team Advantage* **Night** attendance data, including NCLB sub-group data	▪ Monthly
	▪ *Home Team Advantage* **Night** parent surveys	▪ Monthly
Increase by 8% the number of Grade 12 students who meet or exceed Higher Education Readiness Standards in Reading on the Texas Success Initiative, when compared to benchmark data collected in May 2012.	▪ *Home Team Advantage* **Night** student surveys	▪ Monthly
	▪ Parent Literacy Workshop attendance data, with NCLB sub-groups	▪ Quarterly
	▪ Parent Literacy Workshop pre- and post-surveys with NCLB sub-groups	▪ Quarterly
	▪ Purchase order frequencies for books and tech	▪ Annually
	▪ Student report card data for literacy measures	▪ Quarterly

(ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. (5 points)

Data will be submitted to Dr. Muller monthly. Region 5 ESC will contract with a Data

Collection Specialist to ensure timely collection and reporting of all data sets. Four times each

year, Dr. Muller will create a **Quarterly Evaluation Report** detailing progress towards all stated

goals and objectives for all NCLB sub-groups among stakeholders. The chart above illustrates

the data collection timeframe for each set of qualitative and quantitative data groups.

Each month, the **Targeted Literacy Planning Committee** will meet to discuss project

successes and challenges. Quarterly, the **TLPC** will utilize the **Quarterly Evaluation Report** to

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make real-time, data-driven decisions about needed program modifications to promote full

attainment of goals and objectives for all sub-groups. Milestone data described in each

Quarterly Evaluation Report will be essential in measuring progress towards stated goals, as

state assessment data is collected only once annually. The external evaluator will work closely

with the Data Collection Specialist to design measuring tools when necessary to assess project

aspects more closely. In addition, the external evaluator and Data Collection Specialist will

ensure that all data is broken down into NCLB sub-groups to facilitate the **Targeted Literacy**

Planning Committee's ability to modify programming to address any performance gaps that

may appear among student or family sub-sets.

TLA has been designed to become a lasting solution to the multiple challenges

preventing targeted students from achieving literacy success at levels similar to peers

nationwide. By integrating intensive training, building in-house capacity, promoting parental

participation and aligning curricula with state standards, **TLA** will bring sustainable

improvements to nearly 1,500 high-risk youth living in a remote community that is continually

overlooked by funders.

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