

Introduction: The Houston Independent School District (HISD) is the largest public school system in Texas and the seventh-largest in the nation, covering 301 square miles within the Houston area. With 279 schools, HISD serves a highly ethnically-, culturally-, linguistically-, and economically-diverse population of 203,066 students. The district’s students, regardless of sub-population, are less likely to graduate from high school or graduate on time.

(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*

For the proposed project, *Literacy Includes Technology (Project LIT)*, HISD has identified three high-need, high poverty schools that serve high-need students, where the education gap — as exemplified by low graduation and high dropout rates, low socio-economic status, and high poverty — had a demonstrated need to be closed, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Selected Demographics for High-Need Schools, HISD, & Texas (2011-2012)									
Area	Enrolled (#)	Ethnicity (%)				ED (%)	ELL (%)	At-Risk (%)	SpEd (%)
		AA	H	A/O	W				
Kashmere Gardens	416	90	8	1	1	96	5	58	6
Key MS	485	67	31	1	1	90	9	72	31
Kashmere HS	582	85	13	1	1	71	3	78	29
HISD	203,066	25	62	5	8	80	30	62	8
Texas	4,912,385	13	50	6	31	59	17	46	9

Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS Report, & HISD, 2010-2011 School Profiles. AA - African American, H - Hispanic, A/O - Asian/Other, W - White, ED – Economically Disadvantaged, ELL – English Language Learners, SpEd – Special Education

Kashmere High School (Tier 1) and Key Middle School (Tier 2) have both been identified as “Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools” by the US Department of Education and the Texas Education Agency. The proposed project seeks to serve 416 elementary-, 485 middle-, 582 high-school students and, approximately 400 community children who are under age five. The three schools have an average of 99% minority enrollment, 86% poverty rate, where 69% are at risk of educational failure. Two of the three schools have higher than average special education populations (Key at 31% and Kashmere at 29%) than HISD (8%).

Table 2 reveals that only a few students are proficient in Reading, based on the National Percentile Ranks (NPR) relative to other students in the same grade in the national norm-reference group. Most of the students are not performing at or above grade-level in Reading.

Table 2. Stanford 10 Reading (NPR) Results (2011-2012)					
3rd Grade		8th Grade		9th Grade*	
Kashmere Gardens ES	HISD	Key MS	HISD	Kashmere HS	HISD
19	47	30	44	18	42

*Source: HISD, Research & Accountability Department. *Administered in Fall 2010.*

In 2012, Kashmere Gardens third graders (46 % average correct) and Key eighth graders (59% average correct) did not do as well as their peers (63% and 65% respectively) in HISD in Reading/ELA on the state assessment test (STAAR). At the high school level, Kashmere High School’s students (at 67% failed) did considerably worse than their peers in HISD (at 41%) overall. The difference in the failure rate in English 1 Reading among Kashmere’s Hispanic (H) students and their HISD peers was more than 42 percentage points. Kashmere High School’s Class of 2010 graduation rate was one of the lowest in HISD at 56.3%, much lower than for

HISD (74.3%) and Texas (84.3%). More disturbing, Kashmere's Class of 2010 graduation rate for Hispanic students was 27.8%. Kashmere needs more help to improve.

The communities served by Kashmere High School have higher levels of poverty and lower levels of educational attainment. Adults, aged 25 and older who, have a high school diploma or higher (45.9% in 77026 and 58.5% in 77028) is much lower than the percentages for adults living within HISD (72.7%), Houston (74%), and Texas (80%) (*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census, American Community Survey*). High poverty levels are associated with low educational attainment levels; "living in poverty significantly decreases the odds of both high school completion and college attendance" (Wenk and Hardesty, 1991; Murdock, 2003).

The local capacity for ensuring the project's success will be accomplished by implementing a high-quality, research-based plan, with an innovative approach to literacy that includes the following: (1) Professional development (PD) for teachers and librarians on integrating differentiated and technology-infused reading instructional strategies, aligned to the HISD curriculum, across the core content areas in grades K to 12; (2) Professional development for early childhood teachers (for children ages zero to five), provided through a community-based organization, will provide content knowledge, skills and resources needed to provide a quality learning experience for all young children, including training for parents on promoting literacy activities in the home setting; (3) Training for parents, of children ages three and four and school-age children through grade 12, to develop their skills to better support the education of their children and increase student academic achievement; (4) Improving the quality of campus libraries to support instruction and learning to meet the needs and demands of the globalized 21st century knowledge-based economy by providing professional development to librarians, updating the quality, size, and modality (e.g., print, audio, video, and digital) of

library books and other materials, and expanding access to technology and Internet-based resources; and (5) Upgrading technology infrastructure, hardware, software, and connectivity to improve speed and Wifi capacity, with the commensurate professional development for teachers, to accommodate multiple devices to enhance the instructional and learning process.

(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.

HISD proposes to build on the current infrastructure, by implementing promising new strategies:

Professional Development for Teachers: Teachers will receive professional development on the use of technology and Web applications to support literacy curriculum. Students cannot benefit from technology if teachers do not know how to integrate it into instruction (Johnston, 2012).

Professional Development for Librarians: Librarians are essential allies for teachers for the effective teaching of students (Tschannen-Moran, 2009). In the research of Hanson-Baldauf and Hughes-Hassell (2009), they found "that a significant number of school librarians do not feel competent with emergent technologies. Librarians will also receive professional development on the use of technology and Web applications to support the literacy curriculum.

Professional Development for Daycare/Early Child Teachers: The project will provide professional development to targeted Daycare/Early Childhood teachers to promote literacy for children, birth to age four. The Collaborative for Children will provide language and literacy-based trainings for early childhood education teachers in child care centers serving children in the Kashmere feeder pattern. The project will incorporate early literacy strategies that are proven successful with young children (Wasik & Bond, 2001; Whitehurst 1988; Roberts & Neal, 2004).

Training for Parents and Family Literacy Activities: Through Parent Prep Academy (PPA), HISD will partner with internal and external providers to create courses designed to strengthen

families by developing life-long learners. Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY), a parent involvement, school readiness program, will provide home instruction for parent participants of 3-5 yr olds. The HIPPY program has resulted in “positive outcomes for participating children and families, as well as for whole communities” (HIPPY Research Summary, 2009). Schools will hold family literacy nights during the school year, and provide extended library hours. *Training for Parents of Children with Disabilities* will also be provided.

Parent Literacy Resource Center (PLRC): Each school will have a PLRC housed in the library and staffed by a librarian; the center will be open to parents before and after school, during the school year, and summer. Parents will be able to check out books and other materials to take home, as well as receive free books, periodicals, and ebooks (downloaded onto devices, and thumb drives to take home). Parent centers offer an excellent strategy for schools to involve culturally-diverse families in the educational process (Correa, 1989; and Yates, 1993).

Campus-based Upgrades to Library Facilities and Resources: HISD will update the quality, size, and modality of library books and other materials, as well as expand access to technology and Internet-based resources. HISD will ensure that the three campus libraries are staffed by certified librarians; and offer extended hours through out the school week and on selected Saturdays. In addition, the district is upgrading hardware, software, and internet (WiFi) connectivity to improve speed and capacity while also applying Web 2.0 applications to provide fully-imbedded blended-learning models to support differentiated instruction and learning styles. Students will be able to engage in technology supported project-based learning, collaborative strategies, and the creation of learning communities.

(b) Quality of the project design - (i) *The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable*

HISD is committed to providing a high-quality education for every child, regardless of where they live or what school they choose to attend. As indicated above, the students in this community come from some of the lowest income levels in the city. HISD believes in equity for all children and acknowledges that in order for the students to have a chance to improve, efforts must be concentrated and focused. This pilot project will focus on providing intensive and innovative services to five major groups in this feeder community: (1) birth to age 3; (2) Preschool ages 3, 4, and 5 which includes Pre-K; (3) elementary school (grades K – 5); (4) middle school (grades 6 – 8); and (5) high school (grades 9 – 12). HISD will partner with a local non-profit organization to help bridge the gap between birth and school age services. This non-profit will provide services to daycare and other childcare providers in the area where students will eventually enroll in Kashmere Gardens Elementary School (ES). Kashmere Gardens ES students usually attend Key MS, and Key MS students usually attend Kashmere HS. The plan is to provide a continuum of services for students that will last even when the grant period ends.

Goals, Measureable Objectives, and Outcomes

Goal 1: Increase school-readiness in pre-school (birth to age 5) children.

Objective 1:1 – By the end of the project period, 75% of the participating parents will be trained in how to help their child access literacy materials.

Objective 1:2 – By the end of each project year, at least 90% of the four year children participating in the project will have achieved significant gains in oral language skills as measured by the end of year (EOY) assessments (GPRA 1).

Objective 1:3 – By the end of the project period, 95% of participating childcare providers will be trained in how to improve educational and developmental outcomes of children, as measured by sign in sheets and attendance documentation.

Outcome: 85% of participating students will be able to begin school ready to read and learn.

Goal 2: Increase student achievement

Objective 2:1 – By the end of the project period, the number of participating 3rd grade students who meet or exceed proficiency on State reading or language arts assessments will increase by 25% as measured by the previous year’s score (GPRA 2).

Objective 2:2 – By the end of the project period, the number of participating 8th grade students who meet or exceed proficiency on State reading or language arts assessments will increase by 35% as measured by the previous year’s score (GPRA 3).

Objective 2:3 – By the end of the project period, the number of participating high school students who meet or exceed proficiency on State reading or language arts assessments will increase by 25% as measured by the previous year’s score (GPRA 4).

Objective 2:4 – The participating local and school libraries will offer opportunities for educational interventions to all program participants as measured by sign in sheets.

Outcome: 75% of participating students meet/exceed state reading and language assessments.

Goal 3: Increase the use of technology to drive innovation and achievement

Objective 3:1 – By the end of the project period, 80% of participating teachers will integrate literacy technology strategies into the classroom, as measured by lesson plans and observations.

Objective 3:2 – By the end of the project, 80% of the participating students will use technology to create literacy learning communities as measured by portfolios and other student projects.

Objective 3:3 – By the end of the project period, 75% of participating English language learners (ELL) and culturally diverse learners will develop effective comprehension strategies as measured by pre- and post-tests.

Outcome: 80% of participating students will achieve gains in reading achievement.

Goal 4: Increase student and parent access to literacy resources

Objective 4:1 – At least 98% of students will be given at least two free books to take home each year of the project and at least 75% of the students will check out at least 20 books per year.

Objective 4:2 – At least 75% of the parents/guardians will participate in parent engagement opportunities to strengthen their child’s literacy attainment as measured sign in sheets.

Outcome: 85% of participating students will participate in recreational reading.

These goals and objectives will help HISD to meet the overall purpose of the project and are designed to address the needs of the targeted population and meet the GPRA measures developed by the Department of Education.

(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.

This project will be coordinated with several entities within HISD and the city of Houston and will build upon current services offered throughout the city that support literacy and reading for children birth through 12th grade. In order to provide a comprehensive support system, HISD will provide services to these schools through HISD Literacy, HISD Technology, HISD Parent Engagement, and HISD Library Services Departments. Other groups and organizations will address overall health and well-being and focus on ensuring that students come to school ready to learn. These services include food and nutrition (Houston Food Bank), family education and supports (The Mexican Institute, the Houston Public Library, and the Collaborative for Children), engaging curriculum and lessons for students (HISD Curriculum Department and the Children’s Museum), mentoring and youth services (Afterschool programs), mental, physical, and emotional health services (City of Houston Health Department), and a strong system of tiered responses to intervention services based on the specific need of students.

Emphasis will be placed on coordinating and integrating services across the Kashmere school community for children birth to grade 12 to leverage resources and expertise in order to have a greater positive impact on achievement levels of children. Through project resources and a partnership with HEB Grocery Store, Project LIT will give books to participating students and parents in the project to take home, enabling them to build their home library.

(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.

The district's Strategic Direction includes Five Core Initiatives: (1) Effective Teacher in Every Classroom; (2) Effective Principal in Every School; (3) Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports; (4) Data-Driven Accountability; and (5) Culture of Trust through Action. This project is based on the five core initiatives, but is driven by Core Initiative 3. HISD is embarking on a bold venture to provide a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning that supports rigorous academic standards for students. This includes providing a curriculum that supports literacy development across the content areas to ensure students are reading at or above grade level. HISD's **Literacy Curriculum Department** has recently revised the curriculum to ensure alignment to current state and national standards and is working with the Professional Development department to build teacher capacity to deliver effective literacy instruction and interventions at every level. A calendar of comprehensive professional development training to support literacy, including supports for English language learner, gifted and talented students, and special needs students has been developed for teachers to increase their pedagogy. The district has also developed a curriculum for grade 6 and 9 Tier II Reading Intervention courses.

Through the **Technology Department**, the district is in the process of creating blended-learning strategies designed to improve reading skills (Reading and Literacy immersive games)

and after school programs to teach children and youth to write programming code, using Scratch (designed by MIT). During the upcoming school year, HISD is also planning to deploy an enterprise Wireless Fidelity (Wi-Fi) network to all campuses so that our students, especially those in high poverty areas, have access to internet connectivity. The planned network design is being funded primarily through the E-Rate program via Priority 2 internal connections funding. HISD applies for E-Rate funding for campuses with high percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch, of which Kashmere, Key, and Kashmere Gardens are eligible.

The **Parent Engagement (PE)** Department facilitates and coordinates HISD parent involvement activities consistent with the district's core value: *"Parents Are Partners."* Parents are the first and most significant supporters of their child's educational experiences. Within the district, school personnel have long recognized the role parents have in the lives of their students and have continuously promoted parents being actively involved in their children's education. Parents' active involvement with their child's education at home and in school brings great rewards and has a significant impact on their children's lives. According to research studies, children of involved parents: (1) are absent less frequently; (2) behave better; (3) do better academically from pre-school through high school; (4) go farther in school; and (5) go to better schools (Giran, 2006). In an effort to develop a more coordinated system of parent trainings and workshops in HISD, the Parent Prep Academy (also referred to as the Academy) created a parent education system designed to strengthen families by developing parents as lifelong learners. Within the Academy, courses are offered to provide information and resources empowering parents to become informed, engaged, as well as prepared to advocate for their child's education.

The **Library Services Department** offers a full range of professional support to school libraries, school librarians, teachers, and students. The department provides integrated services

enabling schools to enhance the quality of instruction and instructional delivery to improve student achievement, information literacy, and facilitate a 21st century learning environment. Online resources are available to all students, teachers, parents, and administrators in HISD. Campus access is available through any district computer and can be accessed at an outside computer with a username and password.

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

The project director will solicit feedback from all stakeholders including students and parents associated with the project, partners, and employees of the project on an on-going basis. The project director will monitor the project and guide the librarians and other staff in implementing strategies aimed at achieving the identified objectives. Quarterly meetings of project director, evaluator, campus librarians, and other key personnel will be held to review progress, gather feedback, and if applicable make programmatic modifications to improve the project. If it is determined that changes are necessary, the evaluator and project director will provide a forum to discuss the evaluation findings so that key project personnel and administrators can make better and more pertinent program planning, implementation, and improvement decisions. In effect, by working closely with the project implementation team and project planners, the evaluator will provide on-going evaluative feedback on all implementation elements of the initiative so that timely on-going programmatic refinements can be made throughout the 24 months of the project's implementation and documented in the final report.

(c) Quality of the project services (i) Quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants traditionally underrepresented.

HISD has a diverse, multi-cultural student body, of which 92% are a member of at least one ethnic or racial minority group. HISD prides itself on its ability to ensure that all its students, teachers, administrators, support staff, and parents have equal treatment and access to quality instructional methods, programs, and materials. Because the underlying purpose of this proposed project is to increase the number of low-income students who have access to high-quality programs designed to develop and improve literacy skills for children and students from birth through 12th grade, all eligible students and teachers from the targeted high-needs schools identified in this proposal, including those who are members of groups that have traditionally been under-represented, will be especially encouraged to participate regardless of their race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. This project will focus on activities and strategies that create environments to promote integration and community building.

Technology has been shown to be extremely effective in promoting integration and community building. Several case studies (Cummins, Brown, Sayers, 2006) document how different forms of technology can increase student learning. These case studies show that low-income students do well using technology when they are given the proper resources and opportunities to do so. The studies also document that students are very much capable of using technology resources for collaborative critical inquiry when given the chance, in or out of school. Also, technology can be instrumental in assisting English language learners and students with special needs to increase both cognitive engagement and learning. A study completed by Meskill and Mossop (2000) show that teachers observed that children were “especially responsive when they were able to create products of their learning to share with others” using technology. With 87% of the ninth grade Hispanic students at Kashmere HS failing to pass the English 1/Reading portion of the state assessment and only 27% of the Hispanic students in the Class of 2010

graduating from high school, and up to 31% of the students identified as needing special education services, these schools need intensive strategies to reach these students. In addition to the technology that will be provided to increase student participation and achievement, several other strategies will be incorporated to ensure that we meet the needs of all students. This list is not exhaustive, but includes: (1) Large print books will be used for early readers and readers with special needs; (2) Use of Fast ForWord reading intervention software; (3) Use of IEP for special needs students; (4) Use of adaptive computers for special needs students; and (5) Providing specialized and cooperative interactive instruction for students.

(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 students in these schools have needs that can greatly benefit from this project. Principals were surveyed to determine what services best serve the needs of their students and school community. The principals spoke with and surveyed key stakeholders to determine appropriate activities and strategies. For these students, reading is a challenge, evidenced by poor performance on standardized reading tests and low graduation rates, which provided the impetus on which to build the project. The project was designed around a continuum of services. Beginning at birth, children need to be provided with services that will help them to be ready, both mentally and physically, to learn and grow. To understand and support the development and learning of students, teachers must be able to take a developmental point of view. This includes understanding that children go through several stages or sequences of development (Darling-Hammond, Orcutt, and Cheung, (2003)). HISD's partnership with Collaborative for Children, a 501 (c) 3 organization, will allow the district to impact children who have not yet entered school. Collaborative for Children will work with children ages birth to five by training the daycare

centers and Head Start programs in the areas surrounding the three project schools strategies on teaching literacy to students and parents. The primary focus of the training, *Loving Literacy for Life*, will be Birth to 4-year old classrooms. *Loving Literacy for Life* will consist of: an online introductory course; 12 hours of classroom training per year for each early education classroom, and mentoring sessions each month per teacher. Each child care center will also receive classroom supplies and materials to help them create a language and literacy-rich learning environment. *Loving Literacy for Life* is aligned with Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines and will focus on classroom management, phonological awareness, language development, letter knowledge, writing, and reading aloud. Additionally, HISD will incorporate the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPO) program into the project. HIPPO is a school readiness program that helps parents prepare their preschool child for academic success. This home-based, family-focused program targets parents from disadvantaged backgrounds to offer educational enrichment opportunities for their three, four, and five-year old children.

At the elementary school level, the students live in high poverty conditions, with 96% of the students receiving free and reduced price lunches. The poverty rate of this community is almost twice that of the city of Houston and less than half of its residents have a high school diploma or higher. These needs caused the principal to determine that the students must be provided with strategies that can move them away from these dismal statistics. The school has a full-time librarian who is willing to do whatever it takes to see the students in this community succeed. The school is currently participating in the 450 million word challenge in which the students are challenged to read a million words from books, magazines, and newspapers. In order to support this challenge, student incentives are needed to drive the students to achieve higher. The students in this community need extrinsic motivators in order to get enough confidence to

develop intrinsic motivation (e.g., Gambrell & Marinak, 1997; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Smith & Wilhelm, 2002; Snow, 2002; Turner, 1997). The needs of this community warrant the purchase of more books for pleasure reading for students and parents. Pleasure reading encourages comprehension and personal development (Holden, 2004).

At the secondary level (middle and high school), the schools feel a need to implement technology reading programs to provide interventions for struggling readers. Currently, the high school does not have a librarian, but has a library facility and the capacity to implement a strong program. The number of books cataloged in our library need to be increased, as well as replace outdated texts and materials. As noted earlier, the high school and middle school have extremely high special education populations; therefore, the principals feel there is a need to utilize an accelerated reader program in the Special Education Department and include the use of a reward system to support the accelerated reader program. Allowing the students to have access to a daily print subscription of a newspaper will increase their awareness of current events.

For all levels, the project will focus on technology to increase access and excitement. Also, because this project realizes that the educational potential of technology has much more to do with *pedagogy* than with technology itself, the project is providing intensive professional development to assist all of the teachers in how to use and incorporate literacy into technology. All levels will receive books that will be distributed to all students each year of the project. The books will be: (1) initially matched just right to the student's reading level so that they can be read without difficulty, (2) of a wide variety that are interesting and age appropriate, (3) chosen by the students by interest, and (4) able to be used with technology and infused into the curriculum. Additional strategies will include partnerships with other previously stated

community based service organizations and extended library hours for student and parent use during afterschool hours and on some Saturdays.

(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.

Technology will be a strong component of the project. Because of the emerging technologies that are evident in the literacy strategies that will be implemented in the project, an expert instructional technologist will train the schools on how to use the different types of technology that will provide innovation to the project and train the HISD Professional Development department on how to use these technologies so that the information will create sustainability. In most cases, a train the trainer model will be used in the participating schools so that teachers will continue learning, even when the grant period has ended. The district will also provide online training and training videos. Much of the training will be done face-to-face in the schools, some can be delivered via blended-learning methods, or via on-line tutorials.

(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.

In the design of this project, HISD worked with partners and vendors in an effort to ensure that the potential services of this proposed project are reasonable and will meet the objectives and design of this project and can make a significant difference in the lives of the children and the community. Many of the services proposed provide direct services to students and their parents. This project focuses on services that are beneficial to low income/high poverty students, special needs students, minority, and ELL students. This will be a pilot project focusing on a community of students from birth to grade 12. These project costs will be adequate to

achieve the significant gains in student literacy that are projected in the proposal because they are based upon the known results of current efforts at the schools. Because of our belief in the significance of this project, HISD and its partners will assume many of the costs of the project, including some professional development and technology training costs. The budget is sufficient for staff travel in order for the program to achieve its objective of preparing students to be effective, motivated, and successful readers and to provide innovative professional development of instructional staff. The travel costs were determined by estimating the number of out-of-town conferences and professional development workshops to be attended, and researching the airfare, hotel costs, and registration costs of these opportunities.

The first year's budget includes start-up costs (library and classroom supplies, computers, etc.). Additionally, salaries and fringe benefits are reasonable and based on HISD's salary structure. The cost of the evaluator for the program is extremely reasonable, and the evaluator has extensive experience in evaluating grant funded programs of this nature. All vendors and outsourced activities will follow the standard laws of procurement.

(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.

The project will serve approximately 1900 students at a cost of approximately [REDACTED] per student per year. The costs are very reasonable based on the number of services provided and the types of supports the students will receive during the life of the grant. The staff development, literacy strategies, and family involvement created through the project will impact the student population of the schools involved in the project for generations to come. According to Dr. Steve Murdock, "There is no more significant indicator for economic prosperity than education." This project will make a difference in the lives of the children and community.

(e) **Quality of the management plan.** (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.*

Timeline of Major Grant Activities Years 1-5 (Oct. to Sept. 2012-2014)			
Major Activities	Timeline	Personnel Responsible	Milestones
Submit awarded grant to Board of Education for approval/acceptance	October 2012	Project Director, HISD Grants Manager	Approved project available to begin to serve students
Hire Qualified Librarian for the high school	November 2012	High School Principal	School produces high quality library services
Complete contracts for external evaluator and vendors	November 2012 – December 2012	Project Director	Project activities are completed on time and within budget
Purchase technology and supplies for the libraries and schools	November 2012 – January 2013	Campus Librarians IT Department	Libraries / Schools set up to provide high quality literacy supports
Purchase library books and other library supplies	November 2012 – January 2013	Campus Librarians Library Services Department	Libraries / Schools set up to provide high quality literacy technology
Begin quarterly meetings with the key stakeholder	December 2012 – June 2014	Project Director, Librarians, Evaluators, Other Key staff	Project review determines if changes are needed to the program

Timeline of Major Grant Activities Years 1-5 (Oct. to Sept. 2012-2014)			
Major Activities	Timeline	Personnel Responsible	Milestones
Provide extended hours libraries	January 2013 – September 2014	Campus Librarians	Students increase number of books read; technology accessed at higher %
Provide Professional Development for Literacy Strategies	January 2013 – September 2014	Literacy Curriculum Department; Professional Development Dept	Teacher begin infusing literacy strategies across the curriculum
Provide Professional Development for daycare providers and programs	January 2013 – September 2014	Literacy Curriculum Department; Collaborative for Children	Daycare programs teach educational strategies aligned to state guidelines
Provide the HIPPY program on the elementary school campus	January 2013 – September 2014	Parent Engagement	Parents begin to teach educational strategies aligned to state guidelines
Provide Professional Development for Literacy Technology Strategies	January 2013 – September 2014	Literacy Curriculum Department; Technology Dept	Teacher begin integrating technology into literacy strategies
Students receive books for reading	January 2013 – September 2014	School Librarian	More students are reading for pleasure
Final report is submitted to the funding agency	September 2014	Project Director Project Evaluator	Project completed on time and within budget; report completed

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

The Proposed Project Director and Key Personnel are qualified to carry out their responsibilities as indicated in their biographies below and their attached resumes.

Ms. Elizabeth “Liz” Philippi, Manger, Department of Library Services, will serve as Project Director. Ms. Philippi has more than 28 years of K-12 experience working as a Librarian, including as District Library Systems Administrator and managing the district's Department of Library Services, where she administers the departmental budget of [REDACTED] and directs the activities of professional and supporting staff and delivery of school library services across a 279 school library system within HISD. Ms. Philippi will dedicate 25% of her time to the project.

Dr. Carol Bedard, Director of Literacy, will oversee the literacy curriculum that will be used at the schools. Dr. Bedard will work with professional development to ensure that teachers receive the training they require to adequately address the needs of the students. Previously an associate professor at the University of Houston – Downtown, Dr. Bedard has more than 20 years of teaching experience and has previously worked with many of HISD’s schools. Dr. Bedard will dedicate 15% of her time to the project.

Ms. Kelly Cline, Senior Manager, Parent Engagement Department, manages and directs a strategic and collaborative approach to the delivery and implementation of parent engagement services district-wide. Ms. Cline provides supervision for the Parent Engagement Specialists, the district's Volunteers in Public Schools program, Parent Prep Academy, and the district's HIPPY program. For the project, Ms. Cline will coordinate the various parent-centered initiatives at Kashmere Gardens, Key, and Kashmere and will dedicate 15% of her time to the project.

Ms. Beatriz Arnillas, Senior Manager IT – Education Solutions, provides educational solutions perspectives to the district, to integrate educational needs with IT infrastructure. Ms. Arnillas works in collaboration with the Professional Development and Curriculum departments to ensure proper support for teachers and schools, in alignment with Texas curriculum and competencies. Ms. Arnillas will dedicate 15% of her time to the project.

Dr. Venita R. Holmes, Manager, Department of Research and Accountability, will serve as the project’s liaison between the district and the independent evaluator. Dr. Holmes provides oversight for program evaluations conducted by advanced-level Research Specialists, as well as oversight of external research conducted in the district. Dr. Holmes will work closely with the project director, the campus principals, and the independent evaluator to ensure efficacy of the project’s evaluation and dedicate 15% of her time to the project.

The principals of the schools, **Ms. Kristi Rangel King** (Kashmere Gardens ES), **Ms. Nicole Moore** (Key MS), and **Ms. Amber Wilson** (Kashmere HS) are dedicated to ensuring that this project is successful and will dedicate 15% of their time to the project.

Mr. Al Gavito will serve as the Project Evaluator. HISD will contact with Mr. Gavito to be the independent evaluator. The role of the independent evaluator will be to coordinate and implement an evaluation plan that effectively measures the success of the program to reach the stated goals and objectives. Mr. Gavito’s qualifications, relevant training, and experience as an independent evaluator will ensure that the project’s evaluation is prudently conducted; Mr. Gavito will also provide leadership in the collection, analysis, and reporting of all pertinent data to facilitate on-going refinements of the project. Mr. Gavito has a 34-year background in research studies related to K12 education. He will work closely with key staff and the principals.

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

The project director, staff from Library Services, and principals will provide direct oversight to the program. They will ensure that the products and services that are a part of this proposed project are of high quality. They will also ensure that the components of this project are completed as directed by the grant, on time and within budget. These individuals will work with the **Procurement Services department**. Procurement Services has the authority to commit district funds for the acquisition of goods and services. Procurement Services is responsible for facilitating the processes governed by state and federal law to ensure best practices, and an equally competitive environment for the purchase of all goods and services. In addition to the other district level departments that are supporting the project, i.e. Library Services, and Technology (IT), HISD will provide technical assistance through Central Office Administration:

- **Grant Department:** Assistance in general grant management and technical assistance in the completion and filing of progress reports and amendments.
- **Research And Accountability:** Assistance in accessing student data for evaluation reports.
- **Accounting/ Budgeting/Purchasing Departments:** Assistance in managing budgets, tracking of expenses, purchases; and completion of financial reports as required by the grant.
- **Legal Department:** Assistance in the development and approval of contracts.
- **Curriculum Department:** Support of curricular enhancements and assistance with the district's online curricular alignment resource.

With these mechanisms in place, the district will ensure that the project will provide high quality products and services to the students of the proposed project.

(f) Quality of the project evaluation (i) *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.*

The external evaluator, in partnership with the HISD Research and Accountability Department, has the overall responsibility for implementing the project evaluation. The external evaluator will develop and coordinate the evaluation plan by applying qualitative and quantitative methods that effectively measure the impact of the program on whether it met stated goals and objectives in collaboration with the Project Director. Evaluation strategies will be comprehensive in nature and perform primarily two tasks. First, to ensure reliable qualitative measures, the evaluation will document the history of the program, incorporating data on program development strategies, monitoring, and implementation activities. This strategy will capture valuable information on the perceptions of program participants regarding the extent that project activities met their individual needs toward improving school-readiness, student achievement, instructional technology, access to literacy resources for parents, and recreational reading materials for students. A second evaluation strategy will be to monitor the efficacy of program operations through classroom observations, review of manuals, brochures, focus groups, site visits, meeting agendas, service provider logs, and budgets. This information will be utilized in formative and summative evaluations to modify practices and adjust expectations, considering the data. All data will be collected, analyzed, and reported, including baseline data for project students, teachers, campuses, parents, and partners. Progress toward meeting project goals and objectives will be reported annually for the project to the USDE.

Quantitative Data: Project impact on students' reading achievement will be measured using multiple data sources. The data sources include state-mandated and standardized achievement tests, GPRA, the Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI), and the Tejas LEE (for Spanish-speaking students). TPRI and Tejas LEE data will be collected at the beginning of the year (BOY) (pretest), middle of year (MOY), and end of year (EOY) (posttest), in order to

evaluate the development of pre-reading and oral language skills for prekindergarten (age 4) through second grade student participants. The Stanford Achievement test, a standardized test, will be used to measure reading performance for kindergarten through 8th grade students. The State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR™) will measure the academic performance of students in reading and literacy in grades 3 through 8. The academic performance of students in grades 9 through 12 will be assessed using the end-of-course (EOC) examinations in reading, including English I, English II, and English III. Stanford, STAAR, and EOC data will be collected at the end of the year. Student performance will be tracked over time.

Trends in academic performance will be tracked over the two-year grant period. The mean normal curve equivalents and standard scores on the Stanford Achievement Test and the percent of students passing the reading STAAR subtests for each campus in the project will be reported. The percent of students who are “developed” in reading at mid-year compared to “end-of-year” will be reported on the TPRI and Tejas LEE. Passing rates on the EOC exams will also be reported. Test and assessment results will be compared to state performance and HISD students’ overall performance. A quasi-experimental design will be used to compare the performance of project students with a comparable group of students who did not participate in the project. The comparison group will be matched on demographic characteristics of project students. 2012 data will serve as baseline to determine if there is a significant difference in performance from pre to posttest.

Qualitative Data: To establish group assignment, the Project Director will provide a roster of students who participated in the program at all grade levels to the evaluator, including identification number, school, grade level, gender, ethnicity, and economic status. Data on students’ participation in specific programs, such as gifted/talented, special education, and ELL

will also be provided. Documentation of staff professional development and parent engagement activities will encompass schedules with dates, workshop descriptions, and presenters. Activities will be monitored and reviewed to describe the scope and frequency of activities for program participants, i.e. hours teachers spent in literacy-based instructional PD, number of support services partnerships, percent of students receiving books, number of parent participants in literacy initiative. In addition, a participant survey of targeted stakeholders (students, teachers, parents, school administrators, service providers) will be developed with the Project Director as a feedback mechanism for promoting quality service delivery and implementation. Open-ended responses will allow for collection of information for program improvement or adjustment.

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

HISD will report, on a quarterly and end-of-year basis, both formative and summative program findings to the HISD Superintendent of Schools, the School Board, the community, and the U.S. Department of Education. The products of the formative and summative evaluations will be used to further refine and define program goals and determine the overall effectiveness of the project. The evaluator will meet monthly with the Project Director to provide appropriate feedback on the program's implementation, parent/teacher/student/project staff concerns, project successes and deficiencies, as well as recommendations from parents, teachers, students, project staff, and other empirical evidence of published reports on other literacy initiatives that have used strategies/activities similar to those of the HISD program. An annual final report will be written to address the goals and objectives of the program for each of the years that the program is funded. The final report will include analysis of data to measure program impact. Additionally, the program evaluator will comply with all grant requirements from the funding agency.