## PROJECT LEADER

**SIGNIFICANCE**

Throughout the United States school districts are finding themselves in a financial crisis. Navasota ISD is no different. Yet, even though the funding for staff, interventions, and quality education is decreasing at alarming rates, student needs are remaining, and in many instances, rising. Making decisions that have a direct impact on students and their families is a daunting task. National estimates indicate that approximately 30% of students are at risk of academic failure (Halsell, Miranda, & Santos de Barona, 1990). Research has shown that low academic achievement, poor vocabulary, and weak verbal reasoning abilities by the end of elementary school accounts for 27% of the variance among delinquent students (Farrington, 1979). These results make a strong argument for early intervention and literacy enhancement.

Navasota ISD is a rural school district with 2,987 students on five campuses. During the 2011-12 school year approximately 28.2% of students are Caucasian, 42% are Hispanic, and 29.8% are African American. NISD serves a predominantly at-risk student population with over 71% being served by free/reduced lunch. Poverty rate as indicated by the US Census Bureau for NISD is 29.1%.

**Comparison of Poverty Indicators**

| Indicator | Navasota | Texas |
|---|---|---|
| Children living below poverty | 40.2% | 24.2% |
| % living in poverty who DID NOT graduate from High School | 43.4% | 45.2% |
| % living in poverty who DID graduate from High School | 21.7% | 18.5% |
| Among those living in poverty % of MALES who are DISABLED. ***% of Disabled Males living above poverty is 27.7% | 32.2% | 17.6% |
| Among those living in poverty % of FEMALES who are DISABLED. ***% of Disabled Females living above poverty is 22.7% | 35.4% | 21.9% |

Navasota ISD students are plagued with risk factors. Many of the risk factors are hard to mitigate. Some of those include: low educational status of adults in the community, poverty rates for families, many parents commuting 30-90 miles each way to urban areas for employment, lack of public transportation, lack of community social support services, and lack of organized youth

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activities. Protective factors are low. Factors such as self esteem and positive relationships with adults were less likely to be self reported from students on survey instruments than the state average. According to the United States Census Bureau the median income for a household in the city was ██████ compared to the national median of ██████ Males had a median income of ██████ versus ██████ for females. The per capita income for the city of Navasota is ██████ (United States Census Bureau). The geographical area of Navasota ISD is rural **(Competitive Priority 4)** , which requires extensive travel to access resources commonly available in more urban locations. Generational poverty, as well as high divorce rates are challenges that face the students of the school districts daily. In addition, a disproportionate number of African American and Hispanic families are represented in these poverty statistics. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, *Where Kids Count, Place Matters (2010),* and researchers Greg Duncan and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, *Consequences of Growing Up Poor (1997),* document the negative outcomes for children living in impoverished neighborhoods which include: poor physical and mental health; lack of positive adult role models and nurturing relationships; early and frequent exposure to violence; child abuse; substance abuse; crime; gangs; significant number of adults without a high school diploma or college degree; and unemployment or underemployment. Growing up in poverty presents numerous obstacles to school success. Yet, breaking the cycle of poverty is a complex process. Ruby Payne (2005) states in *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* there are only two ways out of poverty: education and relationships.

Navasota Independent School District was deemed to have not met adequate yearly progress (AYP) according to *No Child Left Behind* guidelines. In fact, just this week NISD was informed that none of the five schools in the district met AYP. Navasota High School, Navasota Junior High, and Navasota Intermediate School have all been classified as academically unacceptable by the State of Texas. Navasota Junior High School has also been classified as a persistently low performing school **(Competitive Priority 1)** due to low percentages of students passing the state accountability test, TAKS, within the past two years. (NOTE: Texas has now changed the assessment instrument for students to the STAAR test instead of the TAKS test.)  Findings in the district and campus

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improvement plans, needs assessment, and additional assessments required for the low performing schools in the district, indicate that critical needs are present on each campus throughout the district.

With no local bookstores and a small public library, the school libraries are the primary source of reading material for youth. Navasota ISD proposes to improve student reading ability and strengthen the literacy development across all academic content areas of its students by providing a wide range of literacy resources. *Project LEADER (Libraries Empower Academic Development & Excellent Readers).* To accomplish *Project LEADER* will focus on providing resources to support literacy rich academic and enrichment activities by enhancing the quality and quantity of resources (print and electronic) in school libraries, increasing access to school libraries, increasing interventions for students to improve literacy, promoting parent engagement, facilitating early childhood literacy development, and fostering collaboration of all staff members through joint PD.

Project LEADER will provide students with increased access to school library materials; a well-equipped, technologically advanced school library; and well-trained, librarians who work collaboratively with teachers in an effort to increase the literacy level of students. NISD will achieve this by extending library hours to include at least 30 minutes before school each day, up to two hours after school, hours during the summer months, and at least one Saturday per month. By extending the hours of operation of the library, and by adequately maintaining experienced library staff, up to date books, materials and technology equipment, not only will academic achievement be increased in the students, but a love for reading and learning can be fostered throughout the community. Furthermore, NISD will actively promote a book distribution program for children of all ages (infant – school age).

Project LEADER was developed by a district committee. The committee reviewed the literacy needs assessment and the District and Campus Plans (found at: www.navasotaisd.org), and spent months researching current literature concerning literacy obtainment, relationships between reading levels and achievement, and the importance of a program that is aligned with the current curriculum. All campuses throughout the Navasota ISD will receive benefit from Project LEADER, which will enhance academic achievement in literacy from kindergarten through twelfth (12th) grade (2987 students). In planning Project LEADER, NISD conducted a thorough needs assessment,

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analyzed data relative to student achievement, demographic statistics, and the current status of library materials. In addition, surveys were conducted in the fall of 2010 to assemble the input of teachers, students, parents, and local community members (including city librarian). The surveys asked for suggestions concerning titles/authors, hours of operation, and future library use. The library and literacy needs assessment is integrated with the NISD District and Campus Improvement Plans and the long range Strategic Plan. It is through the Improvement Plans that staff development is approved, funding is appropriated, and funding sources are leveraged in meeting goals.

In the Fall of 2010 NISD began a district wide comprehensive positive youth development program, entitled Raising Healthy Children (RHC), formerly known as the Seattle Social Development Project, developed by Drs. Catalano and Hawkins of the Social Development Research Group. The program is applauded as a Blueprints promising program by the Center of Study and Prevention at the University of Colorado. Every staff member within NISD (teacher, counselor, administrator, clerical etc) has been trained extensively in the program and it is being implemented on all campuses. The program consists of a school wide implementation component, family support, and a peer to peer component. Massive needs assessment information was collected and analyzed within this program including yearly data from the Communities that Care Survey (CTC). In addition, surveys were conducted in 2011 to assemble the input of teachers, students, parents, and local community members concerning the needs of the district. In 2011 a Climate Survey (teachers, administrators, students, parents, and community) was also conducted and analyzed both on the campus and district level. In the needs assessment SEVEN themes emerged related to literacy:

Need 1.      Lack of student academic achievement;

Need 2.      Lack of sufficient resources to increase reading ability;

Need 3.      High student to technology device ratio for use in instructional environment;

Need 4.      Limited parental involvement and parenting skills training;

Need 5.      Lack of professional development in implementing high need interventions;

Need 6.      Limited resources in school libraries; and

Need 7.      Limited access to literacy resources for students and parents.

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At a time when the global economy calls for more highly-skilled workers, gaps in achievement for low income and minority students in the areas of reading, math, and science, as well as low graduation rates and enrollment in post secondary education are unacceptable. Navasota ISD reading levels for First Graders were acquired through the *Developmental Reading Assessment* and the reading levels for Second Graders were gathered from the Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI). Students above the third grade were assessed using the TAKS test.

**Primary Reading Levels**

| READING LEVEL | Below | Equal To | Above |
|---|---|---|---|
| First Grade | 46% | 18% | 36% |
| Second Grade | 42% | 27% | 31% |

In addition to reading scores being <u>below state average at all levels,</u> 91 students participated in remedial classes to pass mandated tests for graduation under *No Child Left Behind* standards. Again, although secondary schools are not included in this application proposal, background information concerning these schools is important to understanding how the development of the project was based on data driven decision making, and the impact that foundational success at the elementary level has in preparing students to be successful as they progress through the entire school system.

**Reading Passing Rates**

| Passing Reading TAKS | Navasota | Texas | + above  - below |
|---|---|---|---|
| Third Grade | 82% | 89% | -7% |
| Fourth Grade | 71% | 85% | -14% |
| Fifth Grade | 74% | 85% | -11% |
| Sixth Grade | 87% | 94% | -7% |
| Seventh Grade | 76% | 88% | -12% |
| Eighth Grade | 84% | 95% | -11% |
| Ninth Grade | 79% | 87% | -8% |
| Tenth Grade | 84% | 89% | -5% |

Increasing outreach is imperative to increasing parental engagement in their child's academic success. This outreach is hampered by cultural and language barriers. Currently Navasota ISD has no African American or Hispanic librarians. In addition, all librarians are female and none of the

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librarians speak Spanish. The lack of culturally and linguistically accessible librarians makes communication and trust building relationships more difficult. Many of the families within Navasota ISD struggle with self sufficiency and other barriers to school success. The NISD program strives to mitigate some of these barriers by being cognizant of them during the hiring process and by building community collaboration in providing support and information on how to access resources.

*Project LEADER* intends to enhance the work that is already being accomplished in Navasota ISD through the Raising Healthy Children replication grant by: (1) increasing the quality and quantity of literacy materials in school libraries (print and electronic); (2) encouraging collaboration between librarian and teachers; (3) using the trainer of trainer model to implement instructional strategies in the classroom and library; (4) enhancing early childhood literacy skills and parent engagement through the use of technology, Reader's Theatre, and book distribution; (5) conducting professional development for assisting all students, but especially those with special needs, in obtaining their optimal literacy potential from the Neuhaus Education Center; and (7) supporting the acquisition of core content material through the implementation of an intensive vocabulary development program.

## QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN

*Project LEADER* is a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning that supports rigorous academic standards and is coordinated with related efforts at the school. Navasota ISD offers a rigorous curriculum throughout the K-12 school system by supplementing the TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) with the C-Scope curriculum. Project LEADER complements the C-Scope curriculum in that it expands literacy development throughout all core academic subject fields and promotes meaningful and purposeful parental engagement. The role of the librarians as a literacy coach to all teachers and as an integral part of the instructional team adds richness and value to the educational experience for NISD students. Furthermore, the use of the trainer of trainers model for expanding school wide capacity for instructional leadership in literacy will have a long lasting impact on student achievement.

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Each of the initiatives that have been included in Project LEADER serve to mitigate barriers to student success and to fortify the foundation for a lifetime of learning. Flocabulary is a program that is geared at delivering core subject specific information in an innovative matter by coupling vocabulary and content with music that students identify with. Neuhaus Education Centers specializes on strategies for literacy instruction that include intentional activities to enhance academic growth and development of students with special needs. Reader's Theatre is based on the solid principals of literacy obtainment while also making reading fun and interactive. It is especially useful for parental engagement as "homework" consists of each member of the family participating in the "play". Materials are bagged with multiple color coded copies of the play and appropriate props to enhance the experience. Enhancing the early reading readiness of pre school age children (birth to age five) promotes equity for achieving academic success and expands on the Reach Out and Read Program. The book distribution program will supplement the existing program (Reach Out and Read) by distributing more materials through new contact points. Funding associated with the Project LEADER will be leveraged with monies from other programs in an effort to build a comprehensive program that is sustainable and that is specific enough to meet the needs of an individual child and broad enough to meet the needs of the vast mixture of students who attend the school.  Title I funding (school wide classification) as well as funding through the Rural and Low Income School Program and a grant from the Office of Adolescent Health will be used in conjunction with this grant funding to support and sustain the program **(<u>Competitive Priority 4</u>).** In addition, school allotment resources will also be directed at implementing Project LEADER.

The goals, objectives and outcomes of *Project LEADER with their associated needs and project activities are:*

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**GOAL:  THE GOAL OF** *PROJECT LEADER IS TO IMPLEMENT A HIGH QUALITY PROGRAM BIRTH – GRADE 12 TO DEVELOP AND IMPROVE LITERACY SKILLS FOR ALL YOUTH.*

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**OBJECTIVE 1:**  To increase access to a wide variety of literacy resources (print and electronic) that increase reading levels and offer learning opportunities to all students by August 31, 2013.

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| Outcomes | Needs |
|---|---|
| Purchase and catalogue at least 50% of library resources by March 15, 2013. | Need 1.Lack of student academic achievement |
| | Need 2. Lack of resources to ^ reading ability |
| | Need 3. High student to technology device ratio |
| Plan/ implement at least four Family Literacy Nights libraries on or before Aug 1, 2014. | Need 6.Limited resources in school libraries |
| | Need 7.Limited access to literacy resources |

| | **Activities** |
|---|---|
| Extend library hours before school, after school, on Saturdays, and/or during summer by at least 100 clock  by August 15 of each year. | 1.Purchase materials (print and electronic) |
| | 2. Extended library hours |
| | 3. Author Visits |

**OBJECTIVE 2:**  To provide a minimum of five high quality literacy activities with meaningful opportunities for parental engagement by August 31, 2014.

| Outcomes | Needs |
|---|---|
| Plan, publicize and implement at least four Family Literacy Nights by August 1, 2014. | Need 1.Lack of student academic achievement |
| | Need 4. Limited parental engagement |
| | Need 7.Limited access to literacy resources |

| | **Activities** |
|---|---|
| Implement a parent lending program (print and electronic) in the school library by Aug 1, 2013. | |
| | 1. Family Literacy Nights |
| Schedule and implement at least three parenting workshops to communicate literacy development and academic strategies to parents by Aug 2014. | 2. Reader's Theatre |
| | 3. Student Author |

**OBJECTIVE 3:**  To implement consistent collaboration and professional development opportunities for teachers, school leaders, and librarians with focus on using literacy resources and interventions effectively to support academic achievement by January 15, 2013.

| Outcomes | Needs |
|---|---|
| Implement a joint professional development opportunity using Flocabulary to increase content area literacy/vocabulary by Jan 15, 2013. | |
| | Need 1.Lack of student academic achievement |
| | Need 2. Lack of resources to ^ reading ability |
| Implement a joint PD opportunity using Reader's Theatre to increase literacy levels and parent engagement by February 15, 2013. | Need 3. High student to technology device ratio |
| | Need 5. Lack of professional development |
| | Need 6.Limited resources in school libraries |
| Implement a joint professional development | |

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opportunity using Neuhaus Education Center to increase literacy levels by March 15, 2013.

Librarian will schedule time with teachers during professional learning communities to collaborate concerning literacy implementation strategies by November 15, 2013.

| Activities |
| --- |
| 1, Flocabulary training |
| 2. Flocabulary interventions and strategies |
| 3. Reader's Theatre training |
| 4. Neuhaus training |
| 5. Professional Learning Communities |
| 6. Joint lessons |
| 7. Conferences and other PD |

**OBJECTIVE 4:** To offer appropriate educational interventions for all students (English Language Learners, Special Needs, Gifted and Talented, At-Risk, struggling etc) with support from school library/librarian by January 15, 2013.

| Outcomes | Needs |
| --- | --- |
| Integrate Flocabulary, Reader's Theatre and Nauhaus supplemental instruction when appropriate to increase content area literacy and vocabulary development by April 30, 2013. | Need 1.Lack of student academic achievement |
| | Need 2. Lack of resources to ^ reading ability |
| | Need 3. High student to technology device ratio |
| | **Activities** |
| | 1. Student Authors |
| Integrate technology applications as supplemental instruction to increase literacy levels by January 30, 2013. | 2. Flocabulary |
| | 3. Reader's Theatre |
| | 4. Neuhaus |
| | 5. Brain Friendly Classrooms |

**OBJECTIVE 5:** To enhance and expand a book distribution service to all families within the enrollment zones for children from birth to school age by April 1, 2013.

| Outcomes | Needs |
| --- | --- |
| Support and publicize Reach Out and Read Program to parents and community by 15 January 2013. | Need 1.Lack of student academic achievement |
| | Need 2. Lack of resources to ^ reading ability |
| | Need 4. Limited parental engagement |
| | Need 5. Lack of professional development |
| Distribute infant based reading readiness skill tips/books to parents who give birth in local hospital by 15 March 2013. | Need 7.Limited access to literacy resources |
| | **Activities** |
| Distribute books and reading readiness tips to parents on a monthly basis according to need by 15 March 2013. | 1. Promote and publicize book distributions |
| | 2.Distribute books |
| | 3.Student Authors |

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Performance feedback and continuous improvement of the program are integral to the success of the project. The executive management team will consist of the librarians, program director, teachers, parents and two (advisory) student representatives. The executive management team will be responsible for seeking out feedback and making recommendations for program improvements. Twice each year students, parents, teachers and staff will be surveyed to collect data on program impact. In addition, a box in the main office of the school, as well as a dedicated email account, will collect feedback from all stakeholders on a continuous basis.

The executive management team will also continuously evaluate student progress. They will use state test scores, curriculum based measures, benchmarks, and other classroom/school assessments to determine if the program is meeting the needs of the students. The team will use the data to evaluate the program's effectiveness, student achievement, and to contemplate whether any necessary changes are in order. The executive management team will meet at least once every month and will address all questions and concerns received (weekly meeting for the first four months of the grant). Recommendations for program improvements will be taken to the administration council and School Board before implementing changes. Once each semester, the executive management team will make a public presentation on program progress in an open community meeting, where any stakeholder can also deliver their feedback in a verbal format.

## QUALITY OF THE PROJECT SERVICES

Navasota ISD's students are very diverse: ethnically, economically, and academically. Traditionally education tends to focus its instructional practices on a model geared toward middle to upper class, Caucasian students from two parent homes. Students from groups outside of this mold have often struggled when the strategies/ techniques used in classrooms did not fit their learning style or needs. NISD's mission is to meet the needs of ALL students so that all students will have equal access to strategies for ensuring academic success. The librarians will serve as a literacy coach and will work together with teachers to develop instructional techniques that are differentiated based on each student's academic level. The assistance of technology for access to supplemental educational opportunities as well as individually identified resources for support will be made available.

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NISD has a special needs population of just over 7% of total student enrollment. The high rate of students with special needs led to the decision to utilize the Neuhaus Education Center program which grounds its structure in K-12 instruction of struggling students, specifically those with dyslexia and learning disabilities. Although the program was originated for students with special needs, it has been proven effective for Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III interventions.

Services to be provided in Project LEADER include: (1) increasing the quality and quantity of literacy materials in school libraries; (2) encouraging collaboration between librarian and teachers; (3) conducting professional development for assisting all students, but especially those with special needs, in obtaining their optimal literacy potential from the Neuhaus Education Center; (4) enhancing early childhood reading readiness and parent engagement through the use of technology, Reader's Theatre, and book distribution; (5) using the trainer of trainer model to implement instructional strategies in the classroom and library and (6) supporting the acquisition of core content material through the implementation of an intensive vocabulary development program.

Increasing the quantity and quality of literacy materials is more than just buying books. Many factors must be taken into consideration including a collections age and subject matter balance. The age/collection size of each of the Navasota ISD campuses is listed in the chart below. All libraries have had a TitleWise Collection Analysis prepared by Follett Library resources. The TitleWise Analysis indicates that the collections are out of date and unbalanced to the point where they are not a reliable resource for information/curriculum integration and collaboration.

| | # Bk/ student | # of Books | Avg Pub | Average Age | Certified Librarian | # of Computer |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Navasota High School** | 776 enroll 27.4 bk/st | 21296 | 1992 | 21 years | 1 Certified | 25 Windows XP 10 iPads |
| **Navasota JR High** | 582 enroll 23.6 bk/st | 13751 | 1997 | 16 years | 1 Certified | 23 Windows XP 10 ipads |
| **Navasota Intermediate** | 362 enroll 29.1 bk/st | 10525 | 1998 | 15 years | 1 Non Certified | 3 XP + 3 Windows 98 |
| **Webb Elementary** | 911 enroll 14.6 bk/st | 13391 | 1997 | 16 years | 1 Certified | 1 XP + 5 Windows 98 |
| **High Point Elementary** | 356 enroll 27.7 bk/st | 9867 | 1996 | 17 years | 1 Non Certified | 3 XP + 5 Windows 98 |

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Just as import as the number of books per student is the *age sensitivity* of the books. Categories of books have acceptable ranges for age due to the data and information involved becoming absolute. During the Titlewise assessment of campus libraries the following data was collected concerning the *percentage of books that are beyond the age sensitivity range*:

|  | NHS | NJH | NIS | Webb | HPE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Systems Data/Computers** | 65.5% | 73.1% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| **Political Science** | 70.5% | 50.9% | 53.8% | 31.2% | 56.6% |
| **Social Problems** | 67.1% | 42.1% | 53.3% | 60.0% | 88.1% |
| **Education** | 71.2% | 66.6% | 87.9% | 67.9% | 85.3% |
| **Commerce, Communication, Transportation** | 73.4% | 57.1% | 90.0% | 69.7% | 75.9% |
| **Astronomy and Allied Sciences** | 62.7% | 27.42% | 82.3% | 57.4% | 78.3% |
| **Life Sciences** | 83.0% | 15.1% | 62.7% | 62.5% | 89.1% |
| **Medical Sciences** | 65.5% | 47.5% | 86.0% | 64.8% | 92.1% |
| **Geography** | 96.1% | 58.2% | 69.4% | 58.0% | 77.3% |

Each library will base selections off of the needs of their particular campus. The Titlewise assessments as well as student, teacher, and community surveys will be used to guide selections.

Navasota ISD has a high rate (71.1%) of economically disadvantaged students. Students in special education are overrepresented as well as economically disadvantaged also. Students from economically disadvantaged families often have home lives that lack academic advantages. Many of these students do not have regular access to technology. Often they lack supervision or an adult to assist with homework. Studies have shown that these students are not read to as often as some of their peers, so their background in literacy is not as extensive (Dupert; 2009).

Technology has the ability to mitigate many barriers, but the lack of technology can build higher barriers **(Competitive Priority 2).** In today's society, technology is used by most individuals on a daily basis. Computer software assists students in academic achievement by enhancing and supplementing the traditional classroom instruction. Electronic tablets have applications that increase reading readiness, vocabulary, and critical thinking skills. Electronic tablets and electronic readers also motivate students to love reading. A struggling high school student might be embarrassed to carry a low level reading book around with him, but he is more than willing to be seen by his peers holding an iPad. If the goal is to increase the student's reading level, then using electronic tools to

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accomplish this goal could be necessary. Students with special needs benefit on a regular basis from the use of technology to assist in their acquisition of knowledge.

This project is requesting funds for electronic tablets to be used as e-readers. Having the ability to assist student learning with educational applications and websites that strength basic skills as well as the ability to access thousands of books is imperative to increasing student literacy. In addition, having the availability of printed and electronic resources that are age appropriate and at a reading level that challenges without frustrating students is essential to student academic growth. Eighth grade students (13/14 years old) who read at a third grade reading level need the tools and resources to both master the various core content being taught and to increase their literacy skills.

The strongest resource a library offers is the librarian.  NISD has three certified librarians with two paraprofessionals who are both working toward certification. Multiple studies, such as that by Lance, Rodney, and Hamilton-Pennell (2005) have linked improved test scores to the level of training and certification of the library specialist. One of the most noted activities associated with higher scores at the elementary level include collaborations with teachers where the librarian identifies materials and specific tools for a teacher to use in planning lessons and integrating technology into the classroom. Joint professional development where the librarian and the teachers work side by side is the model that has been deemed to be most effective. Project LEADER has the librarian taking on the role of a literacy coach. By having the librarian train with teachers they become part of the instructional team. Navasota ISD has started a new scheduling model where teachers have a conference period and a teaming period. Teaming periods allow for teachers to work together on instructional practices. During the teaming period professional learning communities (PLCs) have been established. Project LEARDER would include the librarian in the PLCs.

Neuhaus Education Center  (**<u>Competitive Priority 3</u>**) is a non-profit founded by a group of parents and teachers who were interested in bringing effective Orton-Gillingham-based reading instruction to their local schools. The original curriculum, *Alphabetic Phonic,* **was used** to teach dyslexic students to read, write, and spell. In 1999, after 15 years of teaching teachers to use *Alphabetic Phonics*, Neuhaus published a refinement of that Orton-Gillingham instruction named

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*Basic Language Skills*. In that year, the Neuhaus Dyslexia Specialist Preparation Program (DSPP) was accredited by the newly formed International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council (IMSLEC). In 2011, the Texas Legislature approved the licensing of Dyslexia Therapists and Dyslexia Practitioners. The Neuhaus Dyslexia Therapist Preparation Program (DTPP) and Dyslexia Practitioner Preparation Program (DPPP) prepare qualified teachers for licensure. In 2000, the National Reading Panel Report established that direct instruction in phonemic awareness, decoding, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary are helpful to all students. In response to the new research, Neuhaus expanded its mission to preventing reading failure by providing teachers of all students with PD in research-based methods of reading instruction.

Data from an intervention study with third-grade students using the Neuhaus framework, *Developing Metacognitive Skills,* suggested that the addition of metacognitive strategies to daily comprehension lessons boosted students' comprehension and spelling by 20% and vocabulary by 40% on standardized and criterion reference measures (Boulware-Gooden, Carreker, Thornhill, & Joshi:2007). In the study, 130 third graders in two schools were given 30-minute comprehension lessons daily over a five-week period. Students in one school received metacognitive strategies that the other school did not receive. Metacognitive strategies help students to "think about their thinking" before, while, and after they read.

Professional development from the Neuhaus Center is available both on-site and online. It is the intension of this project to send a cadre of teachers and the librarian to the Neuhaus center to become trainers of trainers. The Basic Language courses available include two weeks of intense instruction to teach strategies for students with dyslexia and other related disorders and two follow up training dates. Teachers will participate in the Basic Language Skills - Introduction course during year one and the Basic Language Skills - Advanced course during year two. The teachers will also participate in the Reading Readiness course during year one as a prerequisite for the Basic Language Skills courses. The Basic Language Skills courses focuses on fluency, decoding, comprehension, phonemic awareness, composition, and oral language. The teachers will bring the skills they learn back and share with the rest of the staff. This professional development is geared toward expanding

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the range of literacy strategies and resources available to teachers. In addition, much of the content learned through Neuhaus is geared toward meeting the needs of students who have particular learning difficulties or who are with special needs. Although the same principles can be used with all students, teachers having confidence in the skills necessary to succeed when working with special populations is essential to overall success. Having an option for more in-depth on-line professional development is also a major plus for this program. Teachers, like students, have both strengths and weaknesses. Being able to address weaknesses in instruction by having specific teachers register for on-line PD in areas where they need the most attention is both a cost effective method and comprehensive in increasing the schools capacity for success.

The principles of the Neuhaus literacy program will also be extended to a "brain friendly" classroom. In this classroom students will develop literacy skills while combining that learning with physical movement. The brain friendly classroom is a researched based motor development program based on the brain research that supports how movement improves brain function, especially as it relates to decoding (Madigan, 2011). This classroom is funded through another funding source, but will be leveraged with Project LEADER.

Reader's Theater is reading a story aloud, like a play, without memorization, props, or a stage. Students are each assigned a character role and read their parts with expression, meaning and enthusiasm. Each character's dialogue is presented in a different color throughout the story and the roles are written at different reading levels. According to a Loyola University Study (2009) word recognition and reading comprehension improves 27% when text is presented in color compared to bold text, and 35% when presented in color compared to contrasting fonts. Reader's Theatre is done in with repeated readings in multi-leveled small groups (high, medium, and low readers together) so that it provides the practice of "Repeated Guided Oral Reading" which builds reading fluency (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Griffith, 2004). Plays inherently come with built-in strategies to help students read better. The acting out of story dialogue compels readers to work more closely with the text to interpret and project meaning into the experience. As a result, students show improvement in

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vocabulary, comprehension, and retention. Reader's theater is a fluency building strategy that engages and entertains students while they learn and improve their skills.

Reader's Theater, through reading aloud with expression, offers numerous benefits for students who participate including improved fluency building, self-esteem, oral speaking skills, and even decision making skills. All these translate into success in other areas of their lives. Interactive or guided reading is also vital to progress for young or struggling readers. Role-play reading in small non-threatening groups fosters a sense of belonging; helps struggling students to achieve success in front of their peers; shy students to gain confidence, and gives all students the opportunity to succeed. The conversational group aspect of reader's theater provides extra incentive for full participation and enjoyment of the reading activity, but it also offers students the opportunity to cooperate, interact, and improve their social skills. The intent of the program is to use Reader's Theatre as a Tier II intervention for students. It will supplement classroom instruction. In addition, it is intended that the Reader's Theatre curriculum be checked out to students on a rotating basis as "homework". The goal is to have the family do the guided reading repetitions at home. This increases parental involvement and promotes higher literacy skills.

Flocabulary is an online resource that develops student's academic vocabulary and mastery of content material. Flocabulary is innovative in that it combines hip-hop music and curricular materials to teach academic content in grades K-12. The premise of the program focuses on motivating students to learn via an activity that they enjoy. Flocabulary is similar to the concepts used with the *School House* Rock Saturday morning music cartoons of a generation ago. Much research has been completed documenting that facts put to music are learned more quickly and retained longer than by traditional memorization. The program combines academic content that is rigorous with engaging strategies for students of all backgrounds.

Dr. Roger Farr, former president of the International Reading Association, conducted a study in 2009 which determined that *The Word Up Project*, Flocabulary's multisensory vocabulary program, raised state test scores for middle school students. The study also showed a dramatic increase in vocabulary proficiency, with the largest gains coming from students of a lower

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socioeconomic status. A total of 1255 students participated in the study in six states. Flocabulary will be used as a supplement to instruction. It is intended to be used as a means of engaging students and parents in the learning process. Expanding vocabulary for students is essential for continued academic success. Flocabulary also has other elements that include core content delivery of history, math, and science through music also. Yearly subscriptions to the online service are ███/classroom.

Developing a student's love of reading is important in the literacy acquisition process. In an effort to increase a student's motivation to read, each library will bring in a Texas author to speak with students. Interaction with authors has been found to increase student engagement. Students in grades 4-6 will also participate in writing and illustrating their own books. This will be done through the Linton book service. Two hardbound books will be published of each child's work. One of the copies will be placed in the school library on a shelf that houses local authors. One family literacy night a year will include a "Meet the Author" event where students will display and read their books.

The book distribution program for children age birth – schoolage is an expansion of the Reach Out and Read program. Reach Out and Read is an evidence-based program that promotes early literacy and school readiness in pediatric exam rooms nationwide by giving new books to children and advice to parents about the importance of reading aloud. Reach Out and Read builds on the unique relationship between parents and medical providers to develop critical early reading skills in children, beginning at 6 months of age. The families served annually by Reach Out and Read read together more often, and their children enter kindergarten better prepared to succeed, with larger vocabularies, stronger language skills, and a six-month developmental edge over their peers. Pediatric healthcare providers are trained in the three-part Reach Out and Read model to promote early literacy and school readiness: (1) In the exam room, they speak with parents about the importance of reading aloud to their young children every day, and offer age-appropriate tips and encouragement; (2) The provider gives every child 6 months through 5 years old a new, developmentally-appropriate children's book to take home and keep; (3) In the waiting room, displays, information, and books create a literacy-rich environment. Project LEADER will expand this program. A representative from the school will give a book and reading readiness tips to all

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parents who give birth within the enrollment zone. This will start a relationship with the families of our future students. Every three to six months a follow book and tips will be delivered. The district's parenting coordinators will implement the program.

**ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES**

All costs for this project are considered reasonable and necessary to achieve the objectives with the desired impact on students for a sustainable period of time. To increase student achievement across the curriculum, Project LEADER focuses on the literacy level of students. Centering on the critical needs from the District Improvement Plan, Navasota ISD has developed Project LEADER to reflect the rigorous expectations for student improvement in literacy. The foundation level of Project LEADER is to purchase books and other printed reference materials that will be distributed throughout the five campuses of NISD. The books will update collections that have inaccurate information due to age of text, align the collections to the district curriculum, lower the average age of the collection, and offer the correct age appropriate reading materials. Specifically, focus for book obtainment will be as indicated in the TitleWise Collection Analysis. (HS: Science, research, fiction, nonfiction; JR: biography, high interest; Elementary: technology, history, geography and high interest). It is noteworthy to recognize that _not all students read at or below grade level_. Some students are reading above grade level. For teachers and librarians this can be just as problematic as a low reading student. Gifted readers usually read consistently. It is not uncommon for some young readers to have read all the books that are of their interest and grade level in a school library. A nine year old that reads on a 10th grade level is not necessarily ready to handle the more mature content in books written for an older audience. Therefore, it is important to include books that are age and reading level appropriate for all children within the district. Books in this category will account for 10% of printed material expenditures. Navasota ISD has a high percentage of students with disabilities. It was decided that 5% of the printed materials will include books that help to define and explain disabilities. Some examples would be: What's Wrong with Timmy?, The Rabbit with Epilepsy, What's Happening to Grandpa? (Alzheimer's), and We'll Paint the Octopus Red (Down's Syndrome). In addition, 15% of printed material funding will be reserved for six

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months, during which time a High Interest Reading Survey will be available on each campus for students, parents, teachers and community members to participate in. The survey will enable individuals to make requests for materials to be added to the library. This ensures that all stakeholders have a voice in the acquisition of materials.

Project LEADER will promote Family Literacy Nights which include not only the promotion of reading to the entire family, but also will consist of presentations by authors. Giving students and families the chance to meet to speak with authors will help them to develop a passion for books and reading. Some of the suggested authors include: Gary Soto, John Erikson, David Davis, and Jan Peck. The school libraries will extend normal hours to include summers and a period of 30 minutes before school starts and two hours after school. Schartz (1996) noted that for programs to be successful in promoting an increase in academic achievement three aspects must exist: (1) reinforcement of learning; (2) time and space for quiet study; and (3) providing an educational enrichment and spark for the love of learning. Libraries will be manned by school and library personnel.  Increasing meaningful parental engagement has less to do about money than it does about relationships. Parents often *want* to be able to help their students with school work but either lack the knowledge or tools to do so. As stated above, Reader's Theatre is based on sound scientific research for developing literacy skills. The Reader's Theatre kits for students to take home allow for the entire family to participate in reading and small props to increase the fun nature of the assignments serve to (1) increase motivation for both students and parents; (2) increase bonding between parents and child; and (3) increase bonding between parent and school. Flocabulary is another intervention strategy that will be used to engage parents in student learning. The core content material is set to music which makes the material easier for both the parent and the student to participate. In addition, Family Literacy Nights, including "Meet the Author" event where student authors will present their books, will also be held at the school to promote literacy obtainment and to supply tools to parents that will help them encourage student academic success. These programs have minimal costs.

Collaborative opportunities for professional development will be available to all teachers by using the librarian as a literacy coach on the instructional team. This enables teachers to have another person to help them design individualized interventions for all students (gifted, struggling, special

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needs etc). In addition, because the program is using a train the trainer model with the specific programs being implemented (Neuhaus, Flocabulary, Reader's Theatre, etc) all teachers in the school will have the opportunity to participate in meaningful and purposeful professional development on a regular and sustainable basis. The ability to train new teachers as they join the school staff also adds to the ability for the program effects to continue after grant funding has ended, thus making the impact much larger than the initial cost per student ration would indicate.

**QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The management of Project LEADER will be completed by an Executive Management Team. It will consist of the program director, school librarians, teachers, parents, and two student (advisory) members. They will be responsible for making major decisions, facilitating open communication with all stakeholders, sharing information and resources, overcoming barriers that arise, increasing partnerships and levels of collaboration, and planning for sustainability of the project. The Executive Management Team will meet weekly for the first four months of the grant. After this initial period the team will meet monthly to monitor program implementation and to assess any challenges or barriers that have been identified. The team will examine any written reports or recommendations delivered by campus personnel, community stakeholders, or families and take action accordingly. It is the responsibility of the team to ensure that all partners are meeting program expectations and to monitor the incremental progress of the program in achieving goals. The team will work under the continuous improvement model whereas adjustment to procedures or policies concerning the program will be considered for improved implementation. The Executive Management Team will review all evaluation data and make recommendations concerning program adjustments as needed. Data collection/examination will take place on a continuous basis as noted in the evaluation section. Decisions will be driven by the data collected.

The program director will be responsible for working closely with the funder, the program venders and the evaluator to ensure that the project is administered for maximum impact. The Program Director will be responsible for communicating program expectations. The Director will lead and maintain partnerships among key stakeholders and keep staff, students and families

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informed. The Program Director will manage the project design, staffing and the budget. They will supervise project staff to ensure implementation maintains a high degree of integrity. They will coordinate data collection activities. The Program Director will be responsible for progress reports to the funding agency and will prepare the annual performance report. In addition, the Program Director will work closely with the business office to ensure good financial stewardship of program funding. The Program Director will facilitate the Executive Management Team meetings and present program findings as appropriate. No grant funding will be used for this position. The school will support the salary of the program director. The Program director will be Navasota ISD's Director of Grant Services, Dr. Dawn Marie Baletka. Dr. Baletka has over twelve years experience in grant development, management, and evaluation. Dr. Baletka has successfully implemented multiple other grants including: Teaching American History, Rural Technology, Literacy through School Libraries, Readiness and Emergency Management, Safe and Drug Free Schools, Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Grants, Teenage Preganacy Prevention, Carol M. White Physical Education Program and others. None of the grants under Dr. Baletka's supervision have ever received monitoring findings, experienced unallowable expenditures, or been late or delinquent with progress or financial reports. The Program director will monitor all data analysis, program implementation, and collaboration with evaluator. In addition, the Program director will work in alignment with district CFO and business office to assure that the use of funds is expended within the grant guidelines, that funds are used solely for supplemental expenditures, financial reports are submitted in a timely manner, and that provisions of EDGAR and the OMB circulars are adhered to.

The Project LEADER Coordinator, will be the lead librarian, Mrs. Haven Wisnoski, is a long time Navasota ISD employee and a certified librarian. Mrs. Wisnoski has been a teacher for 15 years and a librarian for 7 years making her total experience in education a 22 year tenure. She will be responsible for maintaining documentation and logs from all campuses and making reports to the Executive Management Team. She will also monitor the collaborative professional development opportunities between teachers and librarians and schedule trainings. The school's CFO will monitor all financial expenditures of the program. The Program Director will meet with the CFO or their

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designee at least monthly to review year to date expenditures and encumbrances. The CFO will file all financial reports according to the timeframes set forth in negotiated contracts.

All positions will be filled according to local policy and state and federal laws through an open application process. Navasota ISD is an Equal Opportunity Employer, and as such does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, or disability. Recruitment of staff and volunteers to aid in language translation and delivery of program content will be actively pursued. As a barrier and need for this project was determined to be a lack of minority and/or Spanish speaking counselors within the district, concerted efforts will take place to actively recruit and encourage applications from these under represented populations. Specifically, Navasota ISD intends to contact professional university staff from institutions of higher learning that typically enroll African American and Hispanic students (Prairie View A&M, University of Texas at Brownsville, etc.) to ask for assistance in identifying qualified individuals who might be interested in applying. Navasota ISD will also post the job application on the district web site portal that is able to be read in both English and Spanish.

**Timeline of Events**

| Activity/Event/Milestone | Person Responsible | When |
|---|---|---|
| Recruit Executive Management Team | Program director and Librarian | Fall 2012 |
| Executive Team Meetings | Executive Management Team | Weekly/monthly |
| Feedback/ Improvement Review | Executive Management Team | Monthly |
| Survey teachers, students, and parents and develop | Program director and Librarian | Fall and Spring of each year |
| Family Literacy Night | Librarian | At least 5 times |
| Author Visits | Librarian | Twice a year |
| Train the Trainer – Neuhaus | Cadre of Teachers | April 2013 |
| Train the Trainer – Flocabulary | Librarian | March 2013 |
| Train the Trainer – Reader's Theatre | Librarian | January 2013 |
| Data Collection | Executive Management Team | Monthly |
| Professional Development with Teachers | Librarian | Monthly |
| Collaboration between Librarian and Teachers | Librarian and Teachers | Weekly |
| Evaluation | Evaluator | Continuously |

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**QUALITY OF THE PROJECT EVALUATION**

The external evaluator for this project is Price Consulting. Eric Price is principle evaluator and will be will be responsible for analyzing all data and producing formal written reports from which programmatic decisions can be based upon. He is a member of the Washington Educational Research Association (WERA), the primary purpose of which is to guide and support assessment and evaluation practices in the state of Washington. His most recent accomplishments include assisting in the development of the reading, writing and listening portion of the statewide Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). He also recently participated in the development of the WEST-E assessment which certifies educators as highly qualified in compliance with NCLB Act. Mr. Price has over eleven years of experience in developing, overseeing and evaluating large scale assessments and grants. He has been involved overseeing several federal grants totaling millions of dollars, including Title II, Title III, Title V, Title X, the Teaching American History Grant, the Abstinence Based Education Grant, and the Literacy Through Libraries Grant. Mr. Price also has over eighteen years experience working in school districts as a Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, thus increasing his credibility with the administrators, teachers and local Board of Trustees for school districts.

The data collected through this project will be entered into an electronic format and analyzed (process and outcome) throughout the grant period. Results will guide future modifications or adjustments to program. Descriptive statistics will be used to assess the accuracy of input and the distribution of data. Prior to analysis, out of range values, plausible means, and univariate outliers will be checked and indentified (Gall, et.al., 1995; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001.) Skewness and kurtosis will be used to screen the data for normal distribution. Skewness relates to symmetry of the distribution, or a nonsymmetrical curve, and kurtosis deals with the peakness of frequency distribution (Vogt, 1999.) Both indices are useful to examine whether or not scores are normally distributed and, therefore meet the basic assumption of inferential statistics. Correlational techniques will be used to study the relationships among variables. Factor analysis will be employed to find

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patterns of variation among each scale's item and multiple regression analysis will be used to examine the interactions among variables.

The evaluation plan developed by the Project LEADER Core Team has various stages.
*1) Evaluation of needs/ resources. will use qualitative data from surveys and qualitative data from student achievement, etc. Data to be collected* by the librarian and Executive Management Team . Completed by LEADER Team/District Advisory Committee. *2) Evaluation concerning the extent to which program activities were implemented* will use quantitative output data collected and analyzed. A report will be published and available  www.navasotaisd.org  *3) Evaluation concerning how effective the activities were in achieving the goals and objectives of the project* will be assessed using outcome data and will be published at the district web site. *4) Evaluation of the impact of the activities of the project on the participants* will be done through questionnaires given to students, teachers and parents assessing which aspects of the program are used most and least often, and what aspects were the most and least beneficial.  Both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods will be used. Qualitative data will be in the form of student and family self report questionnaires, teacher questionnaires, and librarian questionnaires distributed twice a year. Interviews/focus groups with students, parents, teachers, and librarians will also add qualitative data. The quantitative data is separated into two categories: output data and outcome data. The outcome data consists of: (1) % of students meeting state standards in reading; (2) % of students who are proficient in reading at their grade level. The output data consists of: (1) # of family literacy nights; (2) # of literacy newsletters; (3) # of staff development sessions, (4) # of books and media resources added to library; (5) # of teachers participating in meaningful collaboration with librarian; (6) # books distributed to birth – school age children; (7) # of  books/electronic readers checked out of library; (8) # of trainer of trainers certifications; (9) number of parents participating in family literacy nights; (10) # student authors. Additionally, data will be collected and reported (GPRA) measures: (1) The percentage of 4-year-old children participating in the project who achieve significant gains significant gains in oral language skills; (2)The percentage of participating 3rd-grade students who meet or exceed proficiency on State reading or language arts assessments (3) The percentage of participating 8th-grade students who meet

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or exceed proficiency on State reading or language arts assessments; (4) The percentage of participating high school students who meet or exceed proficiency. Data will be continually monitored and examined. Decisions concerning the program will be data driven and utilize input from the Executive Management Team and other stakeholders. Continuous improvement is the foundation for successful program implementation and both statistical and process evaluation data will be considered in making data driven decisions.

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