

Grantee Name: Houston Independent School District Alternative Certification Program
Project Name: Project REACH Grant
Project Director: [Sharon Lekawski](#) 713-802-6850
Partner Districts/LEAs: Houston Independent School District

The goal of Project REACH is to recruit, train, and retain a cadre of highly qualified mid-career professionals and recent college graduates, as highly-qualified core subject teachers with an additional certification in the area of special education, English as a second language, or bilingual education. These recruits will teach in high-need schools in the Houston Independent School District, a high-need LEA (HISD). Project REACH is specifically designed to prepare individuals to become core content teachers who also hold an additional certification in special education, English as a second language, or bilingual education. The HISD Alternative Certification Program will provide an intense, comprehensive, supportive 18-month teacher preparation to grant participants, which includes a one-year teaching internship leading to an initial Standard Texas Teacher Certification for 120 teachers, and an additional certification in the area of special education, English as a Second language, or bilingual education within the three year support period. Project REACH partner, University of St. Thomas, will provide support for the grant participants through the graduate level education coursework all participants will take, and partners Neuhaus Education Center and Intercultural Development Research Association will offer Project REACH participants on-going professional development opportunities through content-specific training experiences, specifically in the areas of special education, English as a second language, and bilingual education. Project REACH participants will also receive a total of three years of mentoring support through the school district, HISD-ACP, and work in reflective inquiry groups (Critical Friends Groups). Project REACH will recruit 120 participants over the life of the grant (40 in year 2; 40 in year 3; and 40 in year 4). Project REACH focuses on improving teacher retention through the use of a rigorous induction program which includes university graduate coursework, three years of mentoring support, and two years of participation in Critical Friends Groups.
