

Table of Contents

Part 1: Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) and Ed Supplemental (SF424)

Part 2: ED Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED Form 524)

Part 3: Abstract..... *i*

Part 4: Project Narrative

 a. Significance..... 1

 b. Quality of the project design..... 6

 c. Professional development systems to support the need of teachers and principals..... 22

 d. Quality of the management plan..... 30

 e. Adequacy of resources..... 38

Part 5: Budget Narrative..... 41

Part 6: Other Attachments

 Appendix A - TIF Optional Application Requirements Checklist 113

 Appendix B - TIF Optional High-Need School Requirement 114

 Appendix C - Logic Model..... 115

 Appendix D - Resumes of Key Personnel 116

 Appendix E - Letter of Support and Memorandum of Understanding 122

 Appendix F1 - Endnotes..... 153

 Appendix F2 - Free and Reduced Lunch Rates – High Need..... 158

 Appendix F3 - State of Texas Priority List – High Need 160

 Appendix F4 - Target School Profile..... 161

 Appendix F5 - Target School Educator Profile 163

 Appendix F6 - Educator Survey of Support 165

 Appendix F7 - TalentEd and VAL-ED Overview..... 166

 Appendix F8 - Hiring Process..... 178

 Appendix F9 - Educator Performance Scale..... 179

 Appendix F10 – HCMS/PBCS Model..... 180

 Appendix F11 - Professional Development List..... 181

 Appendix F12 - Organizational Chart..... 183

 Appendix F13 - Job Descriptions 184

 Appendix F14 - Competitive and Invitational Priorities Narrative Response 203

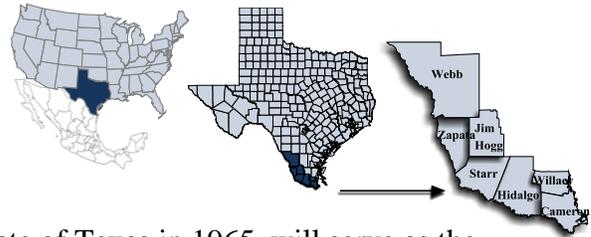
 Appendix F15 - State Plan 208

 Appendix F16 - Indirect Rate from TEA..... 217

Part 7: Assurances and Certifications: ED-GEPA Section 427 Requirement

(a) Significance

Introduction: Region One Education Service Center (Region One), a Local Education Agency (LEA), located in the remote tip of South Texas



along the Texas-Mexico border, chartered by the State of Texas in 1965, will serve as the lead and fiscal agent of the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) Program entitled *Project RISE (Region One Incentive Strategies for Educators)*. Region One has developed a reputation for excellence in education and training services, particularly in providing resources, expertise and high-quality services to school districts in meeting the needs of underserved, isolated, at-risk, low-income and minority students and their parents in the southernmost remote tip of Texas.¹

For decades, the Texas counties bordering Mexico have experienced some of the nation's lowest educational levels and severest hardships with the highest poverty and unemployment rates in the nation, **55%** and **12.4%**, respectively.² The target geographic area along the Texas-Mexico border encompasses **seven economically depressed** counties with over **1.5 million** people of which **97%** are Hispanic, and nearly **69%** do not speak English at home.³ Also, **52%** of the region's working age population does not have a high school diploma; only **13%** of the labor force has a bachelor's degree or higher; and over **41%** of the population is under the age of **18**. Overall, the areas demographics include low academic achievement, high dropout rates, high incidences of poverty, and limited English proficiency. (Endnotes are found in Appendix F1).

Who We Are: The **mission** of Region One is "**Students First.**" This mission drives Region One to support schools and educational institutions in improving performance and enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of their overall operations. Region One serves **47** school districts that include **11** rural, **10** charter institutions, **613** K-12 campuses, **38,746** educators and over **417,490** students, of which **407,320** are Hispanic, **354,904** are low- income, **145,652** are English

Learners (EL), **25,808** are migrant and **31,322** are students with disabilities.⁴ The target population of Region One remains one of the most unique populations in Texas, leading in the number of Hispanics, English Learners (EL), migrant, and low-income populations.

Target Schools: Selection of target school districts and campuses was based on low-income (Free and Reduced Lunch) and Priority status, student demographics and socioeconomic characteristics, low-academic performance, high teacher turnover, low educator retention rates, and limited resources to meet the complex demands of student learning. In accordance to the “high-need school” eligibility criteria, *Project RISE* has selected **15** economically depressed **urban/rural** school districts, of which all are receiving Title I funding and combined have a low-income (free/reduced lunch) rate of **88.21%**⁵ (Appendix F2 – Free/Reduced Lunch Rates October , 30 2016). Of the target **16** districts there are **15** schools, **6** charters, **10** rural (**31 Total**) and **21** categorized as Priority (Appendix F3 – Texas Priority List). The schools include **15,076** students of which **14,893 (98.7%)** are Hispanic, **11,501 (76.2%)** are at-risk, **4,479 (29.7%)** are English Learners (EL), **1,025 (7%)** are students with disabilities, and **14,051 (87.01%)** are categorized as low-income, based upon Free/Reduced Lunch (Appendix F4 –School Profile May 30, 2016).⁶ These schools employ over **1,088** teachers, **31** Principals, **56** Assistant Principals, and **371** other personnel (Total **1,546** educators). Of the **1,088** teachers, **153** have a Masters, **907** have Bachelors and **28** have an Alternate Certification (Appendix F5 – School Educator Profile).⁷

Educator Tenure: The retention rates of these schools are extremely low. The average tenure for a teacher and principal at target schools is 2 to 3 years, respectively. To compound the problem of retention, target schools have difficulty in recruiting effective educators to serve its remote, isolated South Texas economically distressed schools, and students (minority, low-income, English Learners, etc.) who are categorized as the hardest to serve in Texas. High

poverty and low-achieving schools, have difficulty attracting high-quality applicants.⁸ Once hired – educators at target schools face many challenging circumstances surrounding their schools such as poor nutrition, low-student achievement and motivation, high illiteracy, etc. These challenges are compounded with pressure to turnaround low-achieving schools (**21 categorized as Priority**) that have historically experienced low student achievement.

The reasons for the shortage of teachers are two main factors: teacher recruitment and teacher attrition. Teacher recruitment refers to the shortage of new teachers entering or even considering the profession. Teacher attrition is due to teacher retirement or teachers who are already in the profession leaving. Studies have revealed that salary gaps between teachers and non-teachers with similar technical training dissuade potential teachers from entering the profession and discourage current teachers from staying.⁹ The average annual salary of certified teachers in this area with three years of teaching experience is \$45,275 as compared \$56,690 in the State.

Campus Leadership: Research shows the quality of campus leadership has a significant impact on school culture, teacher effectiveness and student success.¹⁰ Thus, principals and educators need additional training, knowledge, and appropriate certifications to perform tasks at a level needed to meet the complex educational demands of schools. Target principals and teachers are faced with challenges related to: 1) fostering development of educators who are eager to advance; and 2) recruiting high-quality teachers and educators eager to learn and teach.

Academic Assessment: The student population in the school is Hispanic with a high percentage of low-income, who are less likely to graduate from high school or go to college . Also, Texas administers the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) and End-of-Course (EOC) tests to measure students’ abilities to meet academic standards and college readiness through 12th grade. The STAAR scores of students in these schools were well below

the state average. The STAAR scores (in core subjects) for these schools demonstrated a significant under-achievement of **64%** when compared to the state at **77%**.¹¹ Reading results only showed **62.1%** of the students met state standards compared to **77%** of students statewide. Students demonstrating competency in Math were also at-risk with only **72.1%** of students meeting STAAR standards compared to **81%** for the state.¹² Each school also faces unique challenges in increasing student achievement, college readiness (**32%**), graduation rates (**75%**) and college enrollment (**34.6%**).¹³ Overall, Region One serves economically distressed schools and students who are categorized as the **hardest to serve in Texas**.

Approach and Significance: *Project RISE* is endorsed from a large majority of the leaders of the participating school districts and teachers with over **82%** demonstrating support of the program (Appendix F6 – Survey Results). Given the above-mentioned challenges, the leaders of Region One and partner schools agree on performance-based and value-added incentives as a tool to not only recruit and retain more teachers, but also to complement observational measures, student academic performance, and personal reflections on teaching that will eventually drive significant and lasting improvement to overall student achievement.¹⁴ Fryer (2013) found that incentives for teaching performance in schools serving low-income communities were beneficial policy options when used in conjunction with a focus on recruitment and retention.¹⁵

Located along the Texas-Mexico Border, isolated from Corporate America and Northern Texas (Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin, etc.), Region One and partner schools have utilized a variety of traditional and outdated (print and electronic) systems and procedures to inform key human capital decisions. Therefore, the proposed human capital management system of *Project RISE* will address the most important element in a school—human capital—by working with teachers and principals to systematically increase their skills and thereby increasing instructional

improvement and student achievement. *Project RISE* will approach the multifaceted problem of teacher and principal effectiveness with a multifaceted, aligned approach for recruiting, promoting, supporting, evaluating and compensating teaching talent to enhance not only teacher effectiveness, but also job satisfaction and collegiality, which directly impact recruitment and retention of effective teachers in high-need schools.¹⁶

The significance of *Project RISE* is many fold. The ability to earn performance-based incentives and the fact that the criteria to earn an incentive depends on student achievement gains, could affect teachers' attitudes toward their school choice, alter their teaching practices, and increase their productivity. In particular, the proposed program will: 1) systematically transform educator quality and effectiveness through improved school district-level recruitment, preparation, hiring, induction, evaluation, professional development, strategic performance-based bonuses and incentives, career pathways, and retention;¹⁷ 2) transform district administrative transparent practices to improve quality, effectiveness, and efficiency;¹⁸ and 3) enhance educator and administrative quality and effectiveness to improve student learning and student academic performance.¹⁹ The proposed program may serve as incentives for effective teachers to remain in a school that provides bonuses and may attract other effective teachers to the school. In addition, performance-based incentives (PBCS) based on schoolwide student achievement gains (described later) may encourage teacher collaboration, which may increase educator productivity. Educators rewarded for student achievement gains on standardized tests may allocate more time to instructional practices intended to improve student achievement levels.²⁰

Another significant characteristic of *Project RISE* is the integration of classroom observation with student achievement with effective assessment measures of teachers and principals. Traditionally, local principals have evaluated the performance of individual teachers using

procedures that are fairly unstructured. The usual results of such “drive by” assessments are simply to classify individual teachers as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory.²¹ These binary designations have typically implied few, if any, direct and meaningful outcomes for teachers (e.g. for compensation, advancement, or professional development). There is a growing consensus that underscores the importance of a balanced approach based on articulating clear and objective assessment standards for teaching practice, relying on multiple sources of data.²²

Project RISE, inspired by recommendations of the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) Project, will assess educator effectiveness by simultaneously employing valued-added measures measured by student achievement gains (classroom and schoolwide) and rigorous classroom observations.²³ In fact, a majority of target teachers and administrators (82%) believe that the proposed value-added approach (e. g. TalentEd, VAL-ED – Appendix F7) of *Project RISE* will complement observational measures, student academic performance, and personal reflections on teaching far better than the traditional systems being implemented. They believe that they stand to gain if they could see performance placed in context of value-added measures and analysis.

Planning Year: Critical to the success of the proposed changes and implementations of the Human Capital Management System (HCMS) and Performance-based Compensation System (PBCS) system, is the thoughtful and engaged planning year. The first year of *Project RISE* will be dedicated to planning, procurement, establishing the school-wide network, review and selection of the evaluation appraisal systems (e. g. TalentEd), building school-level capacity to implement the HCMS/PBCS, hiring of Content Coaches and other staff, appointment of Master and Mentor Teachers, professional development, and establishment of the Advisory Committee.

(b) Quality of the project design

(1) *Project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning...*

Proposed Strategies: Project *RISE* will establish a HCMS and PBCS to *create a K-12th*

grade pipeline of highly-effective teachers, leaders and educators to increase ALL students' academic achievement, graduation rates, and college enrollment. This will be accomplished by:

1) supporting recruitment, development, and retention of highly-effective teachers, school leaders and other educators; 2) promoting career advancement; and 3) rewarding educators for high-level performance through a value-added, performance-based incentive plan that provides financial compensation to selected educators in addition to their salary. During the planning year (Year 1), educator appraisal systems with value-added assessments like TalentEd and VAL-ED will be discussed and selected. The value-added, performance-based incentive system will be ideally suited to meet the needs of campuses by providing opportunities to support educators in high-need academic areas, increase teachers' pedagogical growth, instructional improvement and student academic achievement, increase recruitment and retention of highly effective educators, and create an environment for educators to pursue advanced degrees and multiple certifications.

Strategies: In Years two through five, *Project RISE* will implement the above-mentioned value-added performance-based incentive plan, as well as the following strategies as part of the Human Capital Management System and Performance-based Compensation System:

Recruiting and Hiring: Concerted efforts are made to create an inclusive working environment in order to attract talented people from all backgrounds—regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, age or disability (Appendix F8-Hiring Process). Region One and partner school districts believe that strong programs of recruitment and hiring effective and qualified teachers and educators are necessary to maintain and enhance the teaching profession within its institution, particularly employing educators in their difficult-to-fill schools with historically high minority populations and low-student achievement. Thus, Region One and target school districts will implement a formalized system to review and modify current recruitment and hiring

practices at all campuses to ensure effective strategies (early hiring practices, hiring bonuses, incentives, relocation allowances, etc.) are incorporated to attract the most qualified and effective teachers and educators.²⁴ Due to the fact that each school has its own particular challenges in recruiting effective teachers and educators, target school districts have allowed more autonomy to school leaders in recruiting and hiring teachers. Region One will collaborate with AppliTrack, a leading recruiting/hiring solution for schools, to enhance recruiting and hiring efforts.

Induction: *Project RISE* will implement a comprehensive induction strategy at target campuses that will provide first year, new (three years and less), and struggling teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful and effective in their classrooms and throughout their teaching careers.²⁵ The content and structure of the comprehensive induction strategy shall be aligned with TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills), TEKS Resource System – Researched-based Curriculum Management Practices, STAAR-EOC and to the designated evaluation-appraisal system (e.g. TalentEd and VAL-ED – Appendix F7) standards. The induction system will include the following: 1) A two-day summer orientation/training for all first year, new teachers and struggling teachers; 2) Ongoing support from a Master and Mentor Teachers, including regularly scheduled meetings during non-instructional time; 3) Regularly scheduled opportunities for new teachers to observe or co-teach with skilled teachers; 4) Follow-up discussions of the classroom observation results and co-teaching experiences; 5) Ongoing professional development designed to address target teacher needs and concerns; and 6) Ongoing formative review of first year and new teacher performance, including classroom observations, reviews of lesson plans, and feedback based on clearly defined teaching standards and expectations. Teachers will also attend a two-day campus orientation each year, led by the principal of each campus. Activities will include: campus tours; introduction to faculty, *Project*

RISE staff, and to Master/ Mentor Teachers; and a copy of campus improvement plan, handbooks on policies and procedures, and other resources and materials.

Coaching and Mentoring: Through *Project RISE*, Region One and target campuses will also formalize a comprehensive coaching/mentoring component to ensure all teachers (first year, new, tenured, veteran, struggling, etc.) are linked to an experienced educator.²⁶ Campus Master and Mentor Teachers will be engaged to guide and provide ongoing guidance to new, first year, and other teachers. To the extent possible, the Project Director and the Campus Principal will pair a mentor with teachers that teach the same subject, grade level, or that previously taught the same subject or grade. Selection of Master and Mentor Teachers will be made from the pool of committed tenured, experienced, degreed (Masters), and certified teachers at each campus (Further details in Management section). Selection of the Master/Mentor Teachers at each school campus will be based on the following criteria: 1) Possess three years of teaching experience in the same subject and tenured status and demonstrated knowledge of adult learning theory and peer coaching techniques; 2) Demonstrated knowledge and skills to address the performance evaluation criteria and outcomes to be met by mentee; 3) Hold a Master's in content area, advanced professional certificate and be rated as satisfactory; and 4) Possess a positive reference from a current or recent building principal or supervisor that addresses the instructional, management, human relations, and communication skills. The basis of the selection will be made through review of personnel records, academic accomplishments of their students based on STAAR-EOC scores, peer recommendations, annual evaluations and the number of professional development activities participated including any certifications/awards received.

The Master and Mentor Teachers will receive an annual salary increase of **\$7,000** and **\$5,000**, respectively for additional duties and regular release time. Prior to a Master and Mentor

Teacher being matched with a mentee, they will participate in a three-day comprehensive training program, provided by Region One. This foundational training focuses on the knowledge, skills, and understandings critical to new teachers and is guided by the belief that learning to teach is a career-long developmental process that involves a continuous cycle of planning, teaching, and reflecting.²⁷ At the heart of this work is the Master and Mentor Teachers ability to respond to new teachers' individual developmental and contextual needs and to promote the ongoing examination of classroom practice.

The Master and Mentor Teacher will coach and mentor mentee/teacher for three hours or more a week. The Master and Mentor teachers will provide support through modeling lessons, assistance with lesson planning, classroom management, and observation/formative feedback of lessons. In addition, the mentees/teachers will receive feedback in the form of a qualitative coaching conversation that will delve much deeper into effective instructional strategies, student engagement strategies, technology integration, and lesson alignment. In addition, first year and new teachers at each campus will also have opportunities to interact with their peers in six one-hour round table discussions each year. During the round table discussions, the mentees/teachers and Master/Mentor Teachers will discuss as a group best practices in instructional techniques and classroom skills. This teaming approach will provide necessary instructional guidance and support to the mentee. These relationships will also add value to the induction program.

Master/Mentor Teachers will be required to engage in professional development activities that are both self and team-directed. Additionally, Master Teachers, principal, assistant principal, and other school leaders will be engaged in quarterly classroom observations of all teachers using evaluation appraisals like *TalentEd Skills and Knowledge Standards*. The standards establish a 15-indicator, research-based rubric of effective teaching, designing and planning

instruction and the learning environment. Post observation sessions will include feedback based on quantitative information about the new teachers overall skill set based on one or more measures of effective teaching captured through the rubric mentioned above. These coaching relationships will be reviewed each year for effectiveness by the Principal and the Project Director. If problems exist in these relationships, reassignment will occur.

Teacher Retention: Region One believes hard-work and dedication to its students deserves career advancement, promotional growth, and greater compensation. *Project RISE* has allotted sufficient resources to offer salary augmentation and incentives (described below) to retain high quality teachers as well as incentives for teachers to become Master and Mentor Teachers to undertake added responsibilities (coaching, classroom observation, pedagogical training, etc.). Evaluation (e.g. TalentEd) appraisals systems will measure teacher and principal progress.

Creating Career Pathways: A formal career pathways element with salary augmentation and incentives will be implemented to offer educators opportunities for career advancement. *Project RISE* will provide multiple career pathways (Campus Master and Mentor Teachers, etc.) for professional growth of teachers, administrators and non-classroom staff including, but not limited to teacher certification, enrollment in Master's degree programs, increased job responsibilities tied with compensatory incentives, and promotion. Through *Project RISE*, educators will receive support to obtain a Masters in specific content areas (Math, Science, etc.). The Master's degree in content areas will afford partner schools the opportunity to increase Advance Placement (AP)/dual enrollment courses offered and will lead to additional teacher compensation with these new responsibilities. Region One will also encourage assistant principals to successfully complete an approved principal educator preparation certification program to enhance their capability to address the complex challenges faced by the schools.

Performance Assessment: A formal review process will be utilized to assess multiple measures of educator performance (Appendix F9) at the classroom and school-wide level.

Teacher Performance Assessment: The evaluation appraisal (e.g. **TalentEd Perform System**), an integrated and effective system for teacher evaluation and support adapted from the Texas TAP system, will serve as the crux of teacher performance assessment. Teacher practice in classroom will be measured by performance validated systems (e.g. TalentEd), which will include a rubric with domains: 1) Instruction, 2) The Learning Environment, 3) Designing and Planning Instruction, and 4) Responsibilities. In addition, evaluation of teachers will include value-added assessments by measuring the contribution of teachers or schools to the growth in their students' academic achievement during a school year. This will involve matching each student's test scores to his or her own previous scores in order to measure individual value-added growth on an annual basis. Through value-added assessment, the impact of a school year on a student's learning can be separated from the his/her prior experiences in and out of school, as well as the student's individual characteristics such as demographics, socioeconomic status, and family conditions. The value-added assessment data will provide each teacher with a classroom score – cumulatively leading up to school-wide value added assessment data.

All first year and new teachers will have four or more required observations each year. This will include three 50-minute observations (announced) and one short observation (20 minutes unannounced) annually during the first three years of employment. All other teachers (four years or more of experience) will have three or more required 50-minute observations (announced) and one randomly short 20-minute observation (unannounced) annually.

The number of times teacher classroom observation occurs will be based on each teacher's performance and ratings. The reviewer or observers conducting the observation will notify the

reviewee/observed teacher prior and sufficient time will be allocated within the school day to enable participants in the classroom observation to discuss any questions. Classroom observations will be performed by the core team (Master Teacher, Principal and Assistant Principal and other school leaders) at each campus. This team based approach to observations may result in teachers' observation scores varying from observer to observer but research supports that perspectives of two or more observers per teacher will greatly enhance reliability and integrity. Observed teachers will be rated under a three-part rubric (Exemplary, Proficient, and Unsatisfactory) on a five-point scale, where a score of 1 indicates unsatisfactory performance and a score of 5 indicates exemplary performance on a particular indicator. Pre- and post-conferences will be held between the teacher and the reviewer for each observation and information derived from classroom observations will allow teachers to identify problems and opportunities, evaluate instructional effectiveness, and identify and share best practices to improve student performance. With this timely actionable information, teachers can immediately differentiate instruction to improve teaching strategies to overall improve student academic performance.

Principal and Assistant Principal Performance Assessment: Principals and assistant principals will be evaluated annually by the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents and teachers using instruments like VAL-ED. The process includes principals being evaluated anonymously by all the teachers in their school and their supervisor. Principals also complete a self-evaluation. With their scores, principals receive a detailed scoring rubric which provides comprehensive feedback on their strong suits and areas of improvement. Instruments like VAL-ED will be used to measure the effectiveness of school leadership behaviors known to influence teacher performance and student learning.²⁸ The rubric will include these type of components: High Standards for Student Learning, Rigorous Curriculum (content), Quality Instruction (pedagogy), Culture of Learning & Professional Behavior, Connections to External Communities, and

Performance Accountability. Each of these domains will be evaluated based on key processes and roles that principals and assistant principals undertake: Planning, Implementing, Supporting, Advocating, Communicating, and Monitoring. All respondents will reply to the same items about principal leadership behaviors. When the principal receives the annual report with the results of the assessment, it will allow the principal and assistant principals to compare their own ratings on each of the core components and key processes against the ratings given by teachers and supervisors. Thus, principals and assistant principals can get informative feedback about the leadership behaviors in which they are excelling and on behaviors where more work is needed.

Staff Performance Assessment: Assessment will be based on: 1) Individual performance targets (e.g. leadership qualities, facilitating effective professional development, leading instructional planning period, etc.) established by the principal (or his/her supervisor) at the beginning of each year; and 2) School-wide value-added scores. School-wide value-added scores will include measures on: growth in STAAR-EOC scores of students in core subject areas by grade level, improvement of Texas accountability ratings, increase in graduation rates, decrease on dropout rates, increase in teacher retention rates, increase in parental engagement, etc.

Value-Added Performance-Based Incentive Plan: To ensure effective collaboration and efficient implementation of project services, Year One of the *Project RISE* will be dedicated to planning activities. During the planning year, educators from target school districts will be engaged in selection of the evaluation appraisal system, developing specific district guidelines, policies and procedures that establishes the following value-added, performance-based, and differentiated incentive plan, adapted from the proven Texas TAP system. The Texas TAP System recognizes instructional performance and student learning growth with differentiated compensation performance bonuses using the TalentEd Perform Model, which calculates

incentives for teachers based on three components: (1) **Teacher Performance** - This is an annual average of the scores based on a 5 point scale on the proven Perform Skills and Knowledge Standards (e.g.TalentEd) received by the teacher from classroom observations during the year. It is also an average of the 15 instructional rubric domains and seven responsibility indicators in the (TalentEd) Performance rubric. A score of 3.0 represents proficient performance that still has room for improvement. A score of 4.0 or above relates to being highly effective; (2) **Student Classroom value-added scores** - This is a whole number from 1 to 5, reflecting the achievement growth of the teachers' classroom students during one school year; and (3) **School-wide value-added score** - This is a whole number from 1 to 5, reflecting the achievement growth of all students in the school in tested grades and subjects (Appendix F9-Educator Performance Scale).

Value-added measures: Teachers of subjects and grades will use STAAR-EOC scores in core subject areas to calculate student growth in both classroom and school-wide value added scores. Teachers of non-tested subjects, or non-tested grades, will use scores from classroom-based assessments developed or selected at the local campus level.

Value-added scores: Educators who perform 1 standard error above the average gain receive a score of 4, and those who perform 2 standard errors above the average gain receive a score of 5. Similarly, educators that score 1 standard error below the average gain receive a score of 2, and those who perform 2 standard errors below the average gain receive a score of 1.

Utilizing the above three categories, **Project RISE** will use the following weightage to determine differentiated performance-based financial incentives (Appendix F10 – HCMS/PBCS Model):

Teachers who teach Value-Added Classes-State core-subjects: Teacher Classroom Performance (**50%**); Student Classroom value-added scores (**30%**); and School-wide value-added scores (**20%**). **Teachers without Value-Added core-subjects:** Teacher Classroom

Performance (50%); and School-wide value-added scores (50%). ***Principal and Assistant Principal(s) performance includes two measures:*** School-wide value-added scores (50%); and Performance based evaluation scores utilizing tools like VAL-ED (50%). ***Other educator and staff:*** Individual performance targets (i.e., leadership qualities, facilitating effective professional development, leading instructional planning period, etc.) established by the principal at the beginning of each year (50%); School-wide value-added scores (50%). To be considered eligible for compensation performance-based pay: ***Classroom Performance Standard Score:*** For teachers, a minimum score of 3 (max. score = 5.0) will be required. For **Master Teachers**, a minimum score of 3.5 on a 5-point scale is required. ***Student Classroom and School-wide Value-added Score:*** For teachers, a minimum score of 3.0 (max. score = 5.0) will be required. For **Master Teachers**, a minimum score of 3.5 on a 5-point scale is required. For principals-assistant principals, a score of 4.0 (highly effective) on a 5-point scale and a school-wide value-added score of 3.0 is required to be eligible to receive a bonus (Sass,2010).²⁹

Differentiated Compensation: Utilizing the eligibility criteria above, performance assessment data will be weighed according to the percentages above to determine the final score of educators for differentiated levels of compensation. The value-added, performance-based incentive pay for teachers will be up to **\$3,000** per year; and for non-classroom teachers, educators, principles and assistant principals it will be up to **\$1,500** per year. In addition, teachers and other educators (principals and assistant principals) performing at or beyond expectations will also be eligible to receive potential salary increases (4% annually).

Embedded with Comprehensive Efforts of Region One: Strategies for supporting school improvement goals of each partner school district align perfectly with ***Project RISE*** and are directly in step with current rebuilding and long-term goals of Region One and partner school

districts. Region One also assists each partner school district to establish Individual Teacher Improvement Plans for each teacher so that areas of need for improvement or teacher growth will be built into the professional development plan of each school. With ongoing assistance from Region One, professional development goes beyond a hit or miss process and is targeted toward, not only district and individual school goals and needs, but also to individual teachers' needs and growth goals. All data sets (formal evaluations, walk-throughs, student achievement, student growth) are examined collaboratively with leaders of school campuses to make sure the professional development plans and retention and tenure decisions are based on solid data and evidence on teacher quality and student achievement. Special attention is given to the needs of low-income, minority, English Learners and students with disabilities.

To improve teaching and learning and increase the number of students who receive instruction and support from highly effective teachers and principals to meet the rigorous STAAR standards, Region One will provide year-round professional development (40 hours) and technical assistance to all target school districts. Armed with students and educator data on all target districts, Region One will provide ongoing technical assistance to school districts (including those districts where significant numbers of teachers do not meet effective teacher standards as defined by TEA) to: 1) develop and implement strategies to recruit, hire, and retain effective teachers and principals, particularly in schools with a high percentage of low-achieving students;³⁰ 2) provide feedback, coaching and job-embedded professional development that improves the knowledge of educators in core content disciplines and instructional practices; 3) implement educator (teachers, staff, and principals) evaluation systems and advancement initiatives that promote professional growth and emphasizes multiple career paths (mentor teacher, career teacher, or exemplary teacher) and pay differentiation; and 4) carry out activities

that are designed to improve the quality of teaching, educator tenure, and student achievement levels. The capacity of the school districts to implement *Project RISE* will be enhanced by the ongoing professional development and technical assistance efforts of Region One.

(2) Services to be provided involve the collaboration of partners for maximizing services...

Project RISE will build upon numerous efforts in place that align to TIF's purpose, requirements and priorities. Region One's priority is to coordinate all funding streams with *Project RISE* from programs and policies that are supported by community, State and Federal resources. Region One is committed to providing ongoing support to teachers, leaders, and educators from the target school districts while focusing on specific academic and social initiatives that have a broad impact on the quality of education for every student.

Established in 1965, and a recipient of **three large GEAR UP Partnership awards over the last 18 years**, Region One, in collaboration with local colleges, universities, community-based organizations, private entities, and school districts has developed strong partnerships (e.g. UT Dana Center- Agile Mind, College Board, ACT, Texas Instruments, Apple, Inc., Texas Graduate Center and Five local Higher Education Institutions – University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV), University of Texas Brownsville (UTB), South Texas College (STC), Texas State Technical College (TSTC), Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) and has implemented numerous innovative services and programs designed to help districts, schools and students achieve success and will continue through *Project RISE* (Appendix E – Letters of Support). As part of the P-16 Council of south Texas, Region One maintains a strong relationship, reputation, commitment, and connection with school districts in the region through a comprehensive network of Regional Advisory Councils (RAC) of Superintendents, Curriculum Advisory Councils and District and Campus Leadership Teams. On a monthly basis, Region One facilitates and coordinates the Regional Advisory Council meetings to strategically examine,

plan, learn from each other, and implement collaborative student, parent and school, educator and instructional improvement efforts. The existence of these strong relationships with school districts will set the stage for *Project RISE* to assist districts in recruiting effective teachers, leaders, educators and sharing of best practices and lessons learned.

As evidenced above, through *Project RISE*, Region One will collaborate with local school districts, universities, community organizations, and private entities (procured in year one) to implement programs through an integrated support system that not only reflects characteristics and structure of member schools, but also allows Region One to: effectively support teachers, administrators and educators capacity building and evaluation; enhance student instruction; implement evidence-based programs for minority, low-income, at-risk and English Learners; and provide technology integration support to districts. Underlying the partnership structure is a belief that by bringing together various entities representing varying expertise and different perspectives will ultimately lead to maximizing of resources and sustainable educational reform.

Additionally, to foster collaboration among teachers and administrators among all partner campuses, Region One and Project Director, with support from each school's principal, will establish a peer review process through which the principals, assistant principals, and lead master teachers of each campus will work in partnership with each other to review, discuss, share, and replicate effective pedagogical strategies. The focus will be on fostering replication of effective instructional practices, professional collaboration, ongoing professional growth and improvement, and supporting high student achievement. During peer review meetings, educators will analyze school-wide student achievement data, evaluation appraisal (e.g. TalentEd Suite reports) results, and share effective instructional strategies, challenges, accomplishments, and lessons learned related to student engagement, project-based learning, and assessment tools. The

Project Director and Master Teachers will oversee the peer review activities. Units of instruction that are approved at both the district and school level will be published and posted on Region One's website so teachers can share and benefit from each other's high-quality work. Through this site, collaboration resources, tools and assessment instruments will also be available for teachers and administrators to utilize. Resources will include video examples of model classrooms and teachers performing at all levels of proficiency on the evaluator appraisal (e.g. TalentEd Skills and Performance Standards rubric); as well as a resource exchange containing assessment tools, lessons plans, and curricula, each rated for quality and usefulness. Teachers and administrators will have access to online evaluation appraisal systems (e.g. TalentEd Perform) activity manuals, lesson plans, toolkits, and training modules that include a collection of foundational tools, assessments, trackers, templates, and other instructional planning materials that are rigorous and standards-aligned and can be accessed according to grade and subject.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project is supported by a strong theory...

The theoretical concept of ***Project RISE*** is addressed from a perspective of Motivation theory. This theory provides further insight into how employees in an organizational setting respond to incentives.³¹ Motivation theory argues that intrinsic financial rewards from work provide additional motivation.³² Performance placed in the context of value-added settings can become an integral component of employee motivation and productivity. Educators are more likely to succeed when the incentives are realistic, transparent, and designed with employee input.³³ From this perspective, financial incentives are only one component of inducing motivated educator efforts, and financial incentives should be integrated with efforts such as ongoing professional development, induction, mentoring, enhancement of career pathways, and effective recruitment and retention of good educators.³⁴

The above-mentioned theory is relevant in today's world. The rigid single-salary schedules,

which dictate the compensation received by most public school teachers, have been nearly universal in U.S. public schools for well over half of a century. However, today, there have also been frequent state and local efforts to provide teachers with “merit pay” incentives of various types.³⁵ These initiatives have included teacher rewards for student performance (e.g. test scores or graduation rates), for acquiring skills and certification and for assuming additional professional responsibilities (e.g. “career ladders”) as well as differentiated compensation for teachers of high-need subjects and in hard-to-staff schools. Proponents of teacher incentives argue that they can drive improvements in student outcomes through multiple channels by: 1) providing financial incentives for teachers to focus or increase their effort; 2) encouraging the development of stronger teaching skills; 3) increasing incentives for high performing teachers to enter or remain in schools subject to the incentives; and 4) altering the selection of individuals into teaching towards those who are more able to benefit from such a reward system.

A comprehensive rigorous evaluation and the methodologies will assist in understanding the effectiveness and context of *Project RISE* services in accomplishing the anticipated outcomes, as listed in the Logic Model (Appendix C). For example, to what extent are certain “thresholds, dosages, combinations, and components” of services and programs (HCMS/PBCS systems, Professional Development, Coaching, Value-Added evaluation, etc.) associated with the development of effective educators that increase academic achievement of students? Finding such as these will build upon and serve as a “**strong theory**” and foundation for evaluator, staff and educators in moving *Project RISE* forward and successfully.

(4) The proposed project will integrate with or build on similar or related efforts...

Project RISE will be integrated with the ongoing efforts of the Division of Administrative & Leadership Support of Region One. This division is charged with providing leadership and professional development, technical assistance, support and direct services to Administrators,

School Personnel, and Board Members. Through Region One, school districts receive guidance on administrative responsibilities of leadership, management, program planning, and implementation. The support provided to district personnel is designed to enhance school district operations to improve instructional program to overall enhance student performance.

Project RISE efforts will also be combined with the GEAR UP program of Region One. Funded in 2011 by the U.S. Department of Education, the GEAR UP seven year grant (\$7 million annually) involves **22 school districts, 65 schools, 7 institutions of higher education, and 14 organizations**. Professional development efforts of *Project RISE* (described in Section 3) will be integrated with the professional development efforts of the GEAR UP program. In addition, Title 1, Title II, and IDEA funding as well as reallocated general operating funds will be leveraged to provide professional development support for educators in areas that are directly related to content areas, instructional strategies, assessment tools and protocols, teacher growth, and teacher/principal leadership. Region One will also partner with Texas Education Agency's TIF (Educator Excellence Innovation Program) Summer Institute and the Texas Association of School Boards to solicit guidance and professional development on practices for hiring, placement, evaluation, retention, dismissal, compensation, professional development, tenure, and promotion and to ensure alignment with goals and objectives of *Project RISE* (pgs. 36-38).

(c) Professional development systems to support the needs of teachers and principals identified through the evaluation process

Professional Development: Region One, in partnership with reputable higher education institutions, community-based organizations, and private firms (e.g. Five local Higher Education Institutions – UTRGV, UTB, STC, TSTC, TAMU; College Board, ACT, Texas Instruments, etc. procured during planning year) will provide year-round professional development (40 hours annually) to participating TIF staff, teachers, Master/Mentor teachers, principals, assistant

principals, and other school leaders on topics such as, classroom instruction, effective pedagogy, management strategies, new teacher development, effective communication and collaboration strategies, leadership and team-building skills, test analysis, establishing standards-based classrooms, and supervision. Special emphasis will be made on how to collect and assess value-added student achievement and educator performance data, conduct formative review of teacher performance through use of validated evaluation appraisal systems (e.g. TalentEd and VAL-ED) and instruments, classroom observations, reviews of lesson plans, and feedback using proven rigorous classroom evaluation methodologies to improve instruction and student learning.

Region One will utilize the information generated by both the HCMS/PBCS and educator Evaluation/Support System, which will provide a multi-faceted high-quality plan for professional development (Appendix F11 – List of Professional Development) including: **1)** Job-embedded coaching; **2)** Educator development, core content and technology integration training to teachers; **3)** Implementation of effective Professional Learning Communities (PLCs); **4)** Master Teachers, principals, assistant principals, and other school leaders conducting classroom evaluation of teachers; and **5)** Use of disaggregated data generated by the external evaluators and the educator Evaluation and Human Capital Management/Support Systems to inform teachers and educators of classroom management and pedagogical instruction decisions.

Job-embedded Coaching: To guide teachers’ professional growth and provide them with multiple career paths, the Principal and Master Teachers of each campus will assist teachers (tenured, new, Mentor teachers) to develop an “**Individual Professional Growth and Incentive Plan**” (IPGIP). The plans will lay out general expectations, specific learning and career goals and activities to address each individual’s growth needs in such areas as certification, instruction, communications, management, and planning. The individualized growth plans will become the

touchstone for career growth, mentoring, coaching, and assessing progress of teachers for bonuses, promotion, and retention.³⁶ Instructional programs are perceived as an effective staff development approach for teachers. By establishing teacher coaching and mentoring training programs, the district serves three important purposes: teachers are given a strong start at the beginning of their careers, veteran teachers learn new skills and experienced classroom teachers serving as masters/mentor teachers receive recognition and incentives.³⁷ Through highly effective year-round mentoring at each campus, educators that provide instruction in the same subject, grade level, or that previously taught the same subject or grade will act as a Mentor Teacher. Each month, in addition to the one-to-one academic instructional guidance and services received, mentees will also have opportunities to view videos and participate in simulation exercises demonstrating effective instructional and coaching strategies. Mentor teachers will receive an annual \$5,000 incentive for added responsibilities such as: providing mentees/teachers with guidance on strong lesson planning and classroom management, assistance and support in making professional decisions, and guiding the utilization of data to improve teaching.

Master Teachers, after 8 hours of relevant training, will collaborate with campus principals to ensure all students are learning from effective teachers that demonstrate mastery in their professional content. Teachers selected at this capacity will work with first time, new, tenured and struggling teachers in building capacity through: 1) Creating an atmosphere and attitude conducive to learning; 2) Jointly establishing goals and an academic achievement plan; 3) Improving pedagogical instructional strategies and classroom management practices; 4) Team teaching with colleague, demonstrating model lessons and helping implement curriculum; 5) Observing and providing peer assistance and coaching toward meeting teachers' **IPGIP** goals; and 6) Observing teacher classroom performance using the evaluation appraisal rubrics (e.g.

TalentEd) and conducting follow-up teacher conferences. Master Teachers will have a reduced class schedule to work with core content teachers to help increase their knowledge, competencies and attitude towards becoming a highly effective teacher. Special emphasis will be made to train Master Teachers, principals and assistant principals (10 hours annually) on how to conduct formative review of teacher performance through classroom observations and feedback using rigorous classroom standards from a proven *Performance Standard Model* (e.g. Talent Ed).

Inspired by Bloom's Taxonomy and Carol Tomlinson's work, teachers will receive training, provided by Content and College/Career Coaches, on how to provide differentiated instruction and post-secondary preparedness that will involve more individualized instruction tailored to the unique needs of each student. Region One will also utilize the proven *Baldrige Framework - Measuring What Matters* curriculum aligned to Texas' TEKS Resource System curriculum to assist teachers and administrators of each campus on ways to assess instructional goals and use data from these assessments to improve classroom instruction.³⁸ Region One will provide year-round assistance to teachers and educators on ways to incorporate project-based learning and common planning time (90 minutes a week) methods into instruction; including opportunities for teachers to practice skills necessary to build professional learning communities, and effectively communicate and collaborate with parents and other stakeholders in the school and community.

Furthermore, as part of the School Improvement Plan, district administrators, principals, assistant principals, and Master Teachers will receive ongoing technical assistance from the Project Director and Content and College/Career Coaches on how to empower teachers and staff to: 1) improve teaching (responsive pedagogy) in order to prepare students for college; 2) use data and technology in instruction that prepare students to think critically (video streaming, STEM applications, web-based learning); and 3) promote increased access to college via

increased rigor and responsive research-based pedagogical practices (coaching, modeling, classroom delivery, assessment, and feedback).³⁹ Teachers will receive individualized capacity building support in their classrooms from Master and Mentor Teachers. This support will be based on needs of teachers and their students and will include ongoing professional development, assistance, and guidance on lesson planning and instruction modeling in the classroom.

To support principals' professional growth as they take on challenges associated with their role, each principal will receive professional development that includes: 1) An annual two-day summer retreat, that features planning and simulation activities that train principals to establish and maintain a performance based culture within their campus;⁴⁰ 2) Retired principal and/or superintendent to provide monthly coaching driven by professional goals; 3) Courses that support development in specific areas related to instructional improvement and leadership – aligned with TEKS, STAAR-EOC, TalentEd and Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium standards; 4) Monthly videoconference discussion meetings among other principals, assistant principals, administrators, staff, and Master Teachers on topics such as: Culture & Climate, Time Management & Delegation, Meeting Facilitation, Decision Making, Supervision; and Formative Assessment; and 5) Monthly sessions between Project staff, school leaders, and Master and Mentor Teachers related to operational topics at each campus.

Educator Development: A Summer Training Institute will attribute to the total 40 hours of professional development for staff including new, existing, Master and Mentor Teachers on various topics such as: adult learning theories, classroom instruction, effective pedagogy, management, components of Performance-Based Compensation; Instructionally Focused Accountability Systems; and Teacher and Other Personnel Evaluation System Standards (e.g. TalentEd). This professional development will prepare participants to effectively participate in

collaborative group professional growth activities and introduce the Evaluation/Standards (e.g. TalentEd) cloud software. Summer learning includes areas of leadership, team-building skills, test analysis, establishing standards-based classrooms, etc. As mentioned, each educator will be required to engage in a minimum of 40 hours annually of professional development training surrounding strategies of effective classroom instruction, pedagogy and how those best practices can be applied for diverse, at-risk, and especially high-need students. According to, Marzano, Waters, & McNulty (2005)⁴¹ teachers and administrators who had participated in problem-based experiential programs were more likely to retain knowledge and know how to apply it.

The goals of the professional development will be to: (1) Increase shared understanding, recognition, and commitment of what effective instruction is and making student learning a priority; (2) Provide accurate feedback to teachers and facilitate open conversations between observers and teachers; and (3) Identify next steps of needed professional learning. During each educator conference (1 hour each - 8 times a year) teachers and observers will engage in high-quality conversations to reflect on their professional practice in more depth and clarity. With this timely, actionable data, teachers can identify problems and opportunities, differentiate instruction and capacity building, evaluate instructional impact, provide feedback and share best practices.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs): Instructional planning periods (also known as common planning time - CPT) for grade level or subject content teams have increasingly been considered a crucial part of school improvement.⁴² Collaborative teams, in which teachers share planning time for a common group of students, have been correlated with better school culture, more effective parent communication, high student achievement, increased teacher motivation and job satisfaction.⁴³ Richard DuFour (2004) characterizes collaborative professional learning communities as groups of educators who “work together to analyze and improve their classroom

practice – engaging in an ongoing cycle of questions that promote deep team learning.”⁴⁴ To enhance collaboration among teachers, each campus will offer 90-minutes of CPT per week. The CPT’s will be imbedded within a school day and grouped by grade level and/or core subject areas. During these collaborative planning meetings teachers will be afforded time to discuss and resolve curricular issues, coordinate lessons, review data and locate common “problem spots” (e.g. grade level curriculum that tend to cause problems). This time will also be used to generate high-quality discussion in terms of mathematics and science that are sometimes difficult to explain, to determine key academics language necessary for success in that grade’s curricula.⁴⁵

Evaluation: The professional development activities above will be driven by evaluation activities. Ongoing formative evaluation will focus on addressing whether or not the objectives and strategies outlined are being implemented as planned at each campus. Ongoing findings will be compared to objectives and outcomes (pages.36-38), and adjustments will be made where necessary. Baseline data will be collected immediately upon award. To accomplish the proposed objectives and related performance measures and milestones, the following data will be collected year-round during various periods depending on the data source and instrument:

Student Accomplishments: Graduation rates, performance on state assessment in core subject areas, grade point averages, grade retention, SAT/ACT scores, dropout rates, enrollment in advanced placement (AP) or dual enrollment courses, college and attendance rates all by campus, age, grade, gender, ethnicity and social-economic status, etc. (quarterly);

School Climate: Surveys of teachers, principals, assistant principals, students, parents, teachers and staff on school climate and quality of leadership; pre and post self-assessment of leadership and management skills (bi-annually); survey of all teachers, master /mentor teachers regarding quality of mentoring activities and master teacher performance (quarterly); survey of all teachers

regarding quality of year-round professional development activities (after each session and annually); pre and post self-assessment surveys of all educators regarding the nature and extent of collaboration in the development of the School Improvement Plan and decision-making; review of hiring and retention policies and organizational practices at all campuses (quarterly); and extent appropriate certifications were obtained by teachers and administrators (annually);

Improvement in Instruction: Multiple classroom observations (responsive pedagogy) and student performance, self- assessment and reflection by teachers (after each observation);

Evaluation appraisal system: These systems (e. g. TalentEd /VAL-ED) will serve as the crux of the summative evaluation efforts due to its integration and effective teacher and principal evaluation.⁴⁶ Researchers at the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching have reported that teacher evaluations provide effective feedback on teacher performance and development;⁴⁷ and

External Evaluation: An external evaluator, with at least 20 years of experience conducting numerous federal and state education evaluations will work closely with Region One and Project Director in implementing an equitable, transparent, rigorous, quasi-experimental, quantitative and qualitative evaluation process. To seek programmatic, implementation and fidelity answers the external evaluator will implement two methods of evaluation – Formative and Summative (using a quasi-experimental design – QED). **Formative and Summative Evaluation:** Each year, **formative evaluation** will focus on addressing whether or not the proposed objectives are being met and activities are being implemented as planned. Driven by the Logic Model (Appendix C), ongoing findings will be compared to objectives, outcome measures (pages 36-38), project timeline, and adjustments will be made, as needed. Baseline data will be collected upon award. The **summative evaluation** plan will utilize a rigorous quasi-experimental design to investigate significance and strength of relationships between proposed and actual activities and services on

instructional practices, student academic performances, skills development, graduation rates, college enrollment, and outcomes. The treatment group will consist of **2,000** (K-12) randomly selected students (lottery process) selected in year one. Similar to the treatment group a total of **2,000** (K-12) non-treatment students with like characteristics will be selected (computerized) and assigned to the control group in year one. The rigorous quasi-experimental evaluation (QED) and sampling design will meet the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards.

The evaluator will develop a secured web-based data management system which will link all aspects of *Project RISE* evaluation data to classroom observation, students' scores, teacher and principal payroll and human resources systems to appropriately allocate differentiated compensation for all educators. It will also be aligned with the evaluation appraisal (e. g. TalentEd and VAL-ED) data management systems to ensure coherency. Schools will provide program data on the progress of the performance indicators and professional development data will be collected ongoing and maintained by the evaluator. The evaluator will assist the Project Director to generate a number of analytical reports summarizing educator performance. The evaluator will regularly meet and assist the Project Director and the Principal at each campus to review the evaluation data and analyze critical issues encountered by teachers and students, impact of activities on leadership capacities, instructional improvement, student academic growth, school-wide performance and provide recommendations for continuous improvement.

(d) Quality of the management plan

Management Plan: The above activities will be implemented effectively by executing a management plan that utilizes established organizational and operational structures. This will ensure objectives and outcomes are met. Serving as the lead and fiscal agent, *Project RISE* will be located in the Division of Curriculum and Instruction. Through this division, Region One pledges their commitment, facilities, personnel, resources and active participation to ensure

Project RISE is an essential part of the divisions' operations (Appendix E – MOU). As a recipient of numerous federal, state and private grants (\$200 million budget annually), Region One has administrative, programmatic, fiscal, management and evaluation control systems in place that meet the highest standards of accountability. The administrative systems use the latest organizational managing software (e.g. GrantsMaximizer), communication systems, effective staffing plans, and customer feedback mechanisms for organizational control and continuous improvement. Program support utilizes current technology for participant tracking (Youth Connection), monitoring progress, assessing accountability, fiscal control, management of information, evaluation, reporting and oversight. Region One will use its knowledge in the management of the *Project RISE* to ensure the delivery of effective, timely, accessible, quality, and culturally relevant services. Region One is successfully administering numerous grants which support the learning of teachers, educators, students and parents including USDOE GEAR UP (\$7 million annually), etc., which have met all its performance outcomes with excellent financial audit reviews. Region One will use this extensive management experience to ensure *Project RISE's* service delivery design meets or exceeds all the proposed objectives and outcomes on-time and within budget. Additionally, Region One will use this experience to integrate the following essential elements for a quality and effective program implementation.

RISE Advisory Committee (RAC): The management plan will include the **RAC** to assist with planning, implementation and feedback. To support collaboration in the implementation of the program, the **RAC** will meet quarterly to review program objectives, activities, recruitment and hiring plans, policies, HCMS/PBCS systems, incentive payments, evaluation results and outcomes. The **RAC** is comprised of educators who will represent the lead agency, target school districts and campuses (Deputy Director, Project Director, Superintendent or its Designee,

Principals, Assistant Principals, teachers, and other personnel) and is a vital element of the *Project RISE* continuous improvement measures and feedback component.

Management Structure: Successful management requires efficient procedures for making decisions, feedback, instructional alignment, and monitoring which have been established by Region One. *Project RISE* will be placed within the Division of Curriculum and Instruction management and programmatic organizational structure to facilitate timely management, decision-making and to maximize internal resources. This design is structured to meet and/or exceed all contractual obligations including all objectives while remaining cognizant of the organization's financial capacity, mission, resources and human capital.

Service Structure: Region One recognizes that effective management requires strong leadership skills, management experience and academic training. Given these aptitudes, Ms. Kelly K. VanHee will act as **Project Director** (1 FTE) and provide the overall leadership. Ms. Vanhee's holds a Masters (MA required) in Educational Administration and Certification in Mid-Management. Ms. VanHee has over 10 years of management experience (5 years required) as an administrator of federal/state programs. She has demonstrated experience in working with disadvantaged students for the past 16 years (3 years required). Ms. VanHee is an experienced leader who will devote 100% of her time to the project. Ms. VanHee will supervise staff, coordinate services, oversee daily operations and work with the evaluator to ensure compliance with scope of work. Ms. VanHee will ensure all USDOE reports are completed on time and act as the liaison between Region One, school districts and TIF Office (Appendix D – Resume).

To maintain accountability and ensure high-quality products and services are delivered (on-time and within budget), the Director will utilize the Logic Model (Appendix C) as a guide and work closely with the HCMS/PBCS Coordinator, Content and College/Career Coaches, Master/

Mentor Teachers, educators, partners and the evaluator to ensure full implementation and oversight of program activities. The Project Director will ensure program effectiveness by maintaining a high-level of open communication among staff, school personnel, community and vendors. The Project Director will meet with the **Project RISE** team meet weekly to review program progress, student development, educator progress, cost efficiencies and areas needing improvement. **Project RISE** staff and partners will provide monthly reports to the Project Director detailing status, pre/post-results, and progress towards objectives and outcomes.

Program and Fiscal Monitoring: The Project Director will use the timeline (below) as a guide to ensure the timely implementation of program services and achievement of outcomes. The timeline, outcomes, Logic Model (Appendix C) and evaluation data will be reviewed monthly with the **RAC** members for effective decision-making. When milestones are not met, the team will develop an action plan to immediately address challenges and ensure objectives are met on-time. The Project Director will also work with the Region One finance department to track and oversee project expenditures. This will include monthly meetings with the finance department and quarterly meetings with **RAC** to review actual expenditures against proposed costs, milestones, allowable costs, and to implement fiscal revisions, when appropriate, to maximize resources. Budget revisions will all be in accordance to federal regulations.

The following timeline will be used as a management tool to assess the activities, progress and fidelity of program services being implemented. Start date is October 1, 2016 (O – 2016).

Director-PD; HCMS/PBCS Coordinator-HPC; Content Coaches-CC; Master/Mentor Teachers-MT; College and Career Coach-CCC; Target Schools-TS; Partners-PA; Evaluator-EV		
ACTIVITIES/MILESTONES	RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINE
Engage RAC and 16 School Districts	PD,TS	O – 2016*

Hire <i>Region One Project RISE</i> Staff	PD, TS	O – N 2016
Engage Evaluator to develop and test instruments and collect baseline data	PD, TS, EV	N – 2016
Involve the partners to assess capacity building needs	PD, HPC, CC, CCC	D – 2016*
Commence the Planning Year Activities: Professional development, select HCMS/PBCS, review policies, disseminate surveys, appoint Master/Mentor Teachers, begin marketing, recruitment activities, etc.	ALL STAFF, TARGET SCHOOLS, PARTNERS, EV	O – 2016 – July – 2017
YEAR 2 - IMPLEMENTATION	RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINE
Begin summer capacity building for ALL staff/educators	ALL	A – 2017*
School teachers and educators engage students	TS, CC,CCC, MT	S – 2017*
Review, modify and integrate curriculum	PD, HPC, TS, CC	S – J 2017
Engage Master, Mentor Teachers and develop IPGIP	TS, CC, CCC, PA	O – 2017*
Engage Content and College/Career Coaches	TS, CC, CCC, PA	O – 2017 *
Begin professional development for all educators	TS, CC, MT, PA	O – J 2017/18*
Introduce and implement HCMS/PBCS to educators	PD, HPC, TS, EV	O – J 2017/18*
Train and conduct quarterly classroom observation	PD, HPC, MT, PA	N – J 2017/18*
Collect classroom and schoolwide data	HPC, TS, EV, PA	N – J 2017/18*
Administer surveys; teacher, educators, student, partners	HPC, CC, TS, EV	A – 2018*
Evaluate, compile, review data for program improvement	PD, HPC, TS, EV	M – 2018*
Start Summer Program, activities, strategies	ALL	J – J 2018*
Collect, clean and analyze all PBCS data for payout	PD, HPC, TS, EV	J – A 2018*
First Incentive Payment is disseminated	PD, HPC, TS, EV	J – A 2018*

Plan, incorporate lessons learned and best practices	PD, HPC, EV, PA	A – 2018*
Implement Year Three with program adjustments	ALL	S – 2017
Compose and submit annual USDOE performance report	PD, EV	O – 2017*
Replicate model in Years 3 – 5	ALL	S – 2018
Sustain <i>Region One Project RISE</i> after Year 5	ALL	S – 2021

*These activities, services and programs will be **ongoing or annually** over the project period.

Other Key Personnel: Region One will ensure all persons regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, age or disability have equal access to all employment and program opportunities.

The following staff (to-be hired –TBH) has been allocated sufficient time to fulfill their duties (Appendix F12 – Organizational Chart). Job descriptions are included in Appendix F13.

Key Investigator (.10 FTE): Dr. Eduardo Cancino, Deputy Director has over 29 years of exceptional educational experience and successful management of federal programs. Dr. Cancino will oversee the project and supervise the Project Director at **no-cost** to the program.

HCMS/PBCS Coordinator (1 FTE): Coordinator will work with staff and school educators to ensure all recruiting and hiring activities including incentive strategies are aligned with the HCMS/PBCS systems at each target school. Coordinator will hold a Master’s in Education (MA), Texas Teaching Certificate, and 5+ years of teaching experience in a school setting.

Content Coaches (7 FTEs): Coaches (2-Math, 2-Reading, 1-Science, and 2-College/Career) will be hired to work with staff, administrators, teachers, and partners to ensure instructional pedagogical strategies and post-secondary initiatives are integrated into all core content areas. Coaches will coach and offer technical guidance to teachers and will lead or coordinate all professional development with partners at each school. Qualifications: a Bachelor’s or Master’s preferred, Texas Teaching Certificate and 3+ years of experience as a teacher in a K-12 system.

Master/Mentor Teachers (60 and 70 Appointed, respectively): Master Teachers will be

paired with first year, new, tenured and struggling teachers and guide them to be effective teachers. Mentor teachers will be paired with teachers that provide instruction in the same subject, grade level, or that previously taught the same subject or grade. Selection of Master and Mentor Teachers will be conducted from the pool of committed, tenured, experienced, degreed (Masters), and certified teachers at each campus. Each campus will establish the ratio of mentors to mentees. One-on-one mentor-mentee matches with at least one year commitment will be sought, but in no case will a single Mentor Teacher be paired with more than five new teachers.

Objectives: Aligned to the Absolute Priority (AP), Competitive Priorities (CP) 1 and 2, and Invitational Priority (Appendix 14), Region One’s quality program addresses the needs and the intent of the TIF grant. Region One has designed an ambitious plan by putting educators and students first while leveraging the expertise, experience, and resources of the schools to increase the number of highly-effective educators and students pursuing and graduating from college.

Logic Model: To align services with the identified needs, Region One with the help of an evaluator developed a Logic Model (Appendix C). The Logic Model provides a synopsis of the project that meets the evidence standard of a “strong theory” and will serve as a guide for staff.

Region One developed the following goal and several **ANNUAL ambitious**, yet **attainable** objectives based on the needs, proposed services and allocated resources.

Goal: Create a K-12th grade pipeline of highly-effective teachers, leaders and educators to increase ALL students’ academic achievement, graduation rates and college enrollment.

*** Baseline will be established from the 2015-2016 data for the objectives/outcomes below.**

Objective 1. Establish an effective human capital (HCMS) and educator evaluation (PBCS) system at each target school to ensure highly-effective educators are apparent and retained.

Outcome 1.1: The % of highly-effective teachers, principals and educators in high-need schools

will increase by **8%** from baseline, as measured by PBCS. (**GPRA A & B**).

Outcome 1.2: The % of retention rates of highly-effective teachers, principals and educators in high-need schools will increase by **9%** from baseline, as measured by HCMS. (**GPRA C**).

Outcome 1.3: The % of vacancies occupied by highly-effective teachers, principals and educators in high-need schools will increase **8%** from baseline, as measured by HCMS.

Objective 2: Increase students', particularly low-income, minority, at-risk and English Learners academic performance and college/career readiness by creating highly-effective educators.

Outcome 2.1: Students in **3rd - 5th** grade meeting/exceeding state standards in Reading and Math will increase by **10% and 12%**, respectively from baseline, as measured by STAAR.

Outcome 2.2: Students in **6th - 12th** grade meeting/exceeding state standards in Reading and Math will increase by **8% - 10%**, respectively from baseline, as measured by STAAR-EOC.

Outcome 2.3: The % of students (**9th - 12th grade**) enrolled in advanced placement (AP), dual enrollment, etc. (ELA, Math, science, etc.) courses will increase by **8%** from baseline, as measured by course enrollment data, PEIMS, College Board and TAPR.

Outcome 2.4: The % of students passing a college entrance placement examination (TSI, SAT or ACT etc.) will increase by **15%** from baseline, as measured by college entrance exams.

Outcome 2.5: The % of high school students graduating on-time will increase by **8%** from baseline, as measured by Texas accountability system and reported by TAPR. (**Baseline 75%**).

Outcome 2.6: The % of graduating students enrolling in postsecondary education will increase by **12%** from baseline, as measured by postsecondary enrollment data. (**Baseline 34.6%**).

Outcome 2.7: The % of target schools categorized as Priority will decrease by **5%** from baseline or until **100%** are no longer in jeopardy, as measured by state accountability data.

Objective 3: Increase cost efficiency and productivity at target schools through a systemic

transformation of effective HCMS/PBCS systems and thus, creating highly-effective educators.

Outcome 3.1: The # of target school districts and schools that use an educator evaluation system to inform human capital decision: recruitment, hiring, placement, retention, dismissal, professional development, tenure, promotion, etc. will increase by **20%**, from baseline or until **100%** report such use, as measured by HCMS and external evaluation school data. **(GPRA D).**

Outcome 3.2: The % of highly-effective teachers, principals and educators in high-need schools receiving compensation pay from State, local, or other non-TIF Federal Resources will increase by **2%** and **4%**, respectively from baseline, as measured by HCMS. **(GPRA E).**

Outcome 3.4: The % of highly-effective teachers, principals and educators in high-need schools receiving the highest effectiveness ratings will increase by **15%** from baseline (2017-2018), as measured by HCMS, PBCS and evaluation data. **(GPRA F & G).**

Outcome 3.5: The % of target districts and schools that improve system-wide cost efficiency, productivity, use of time, staff, and funds by leveraging/matching funds will increase by **10%** or more, as measured by in-kind/cash documents and operating budgets collected by evaluator.

Outcome 3.6: After Year Five, **100%** of target schools will sustain the HCMS/PBCS systems and continue to offer incentive payments to highly-effective educators, as measured by evaluator.

(e) Adequacy of resources

(1) Applicant demonstrates PBCS is developed with the input of teachers and school leaders...

Region One is convinced the success of *Project RISE*'s efforts will be further enhanced by the quality of personnel involvement which has already been undertaken. Region One will continue to prioritize the needs and assets of personnel for planning and implementation of *Project RISE*. The process of developing *Project RISE* was a collaborative effort in which substantial input from each school was considered and which "buy-in" from all critical personnel was obtained (Appendix E – Letters). To ensure the inclusion of diverse perspectives during the

development of this initiative, Region One prior to and after the release of this RFP, hosted various working sessions (four times) with administrators, teachers, and related educators. During this time, feedback was solicited on the program design, activities and outcomes. The timeline and budget was discussed to ensure school personnel comprehended the programmatic and financial commitments each would make, and to overall solicit recommendations. These working sessions played a critical role in tailoring the project design, performance measures, timeline, and activities. Recognizing that each school has specific needs, capacities, climate, and assets. Region One is committed to ensuring each school had the flexibility and autonomy to help design the service delivery model that would most effectively benefit their educators and students. Each school secured “buy-in” in the form of a formal process. To initiate this process, Region One, in collaboration with all 31 schools, disseminated a digital survey to assess the level of teachers, administrators, and other educators support. Of the total **1,546** educators, over **1,268 (82%)** responded favorably in support and “buy-in” of *Project RISE* (Appendix F6 – Survey).

(2) Applicant demonstrates a plan to sustain financially the activities conducted and systems...

Project RISE will be integrated and enhanced with related Region One resources (Division of Leadership, School and Community Support and GEAR UP), programs and partners described earlier. With these resources, Region One’s five year federal budget (**\$48,509,137**) and non-federal and non-TIF federal budget (**\$9.3 million**) adequately supports the proposed scope of work, objectives, activities and performance outcomes. Region One’s practices have always been to sustain promising educational programs that help all learners succeed academically and will continue to do so with this project. Plans of sustainability from Region One have already started as evident with the leveraged support (**\$1.2 million in Year One**) illustrated in the budget narrative on pages 41-108. Although the current in-kind/cash budget represents a five year commitment, Region One and all school leaders have agreed to re-evaluate each of their budgets

annually to determine if additional resources can be generated. Since inception, Region One has established a strong organizational base (e.g. procedures, systems, and educators know their roles and strongly support the initiative). ***Project RISE*** will be housed in the Division of Curriculum and Instruction which is currently hosting GEAR UP, the STEM Center of South Texas, etc. This division strongly advocates and has access to an array of resources that will be leveraged for ***Project RISE*** which ultimately will lead to sustainability. All these elements ensures a broad diversity of perspectives is brought to Region One to ensure schools institutionalize these practices, strategies, programs, and seek other resources. ***Project RISE*** is endorsed from Region One and from a majority of school faculty with over **82%** supporting the program. The professional development will strengthen commitment, reinforce learning processes, be sustained and ensure that all educators are more effectively prepared, skilled and knowledgeable to deliver personalized learning even after grant funding ends. Performance based compensation for effective educators will further enhance morale and ensure commitment to the project.

Region One and participating school districts are dedicated to sustaining the project and thus, have agreed over the five years (Year One Planning) to gradually leverage resources and assume performance incentives, bonuses and stipends costs to their local operating budgets. Thus, in Year Three– Five schools will allocate approximately 10%, 20%, and 30% of teacher performance incentives, bonuses and stipend costs. Similarly, in Year 6 and beyond, the schools have agreed to assimilate 100% of performance incentives, bonuses and stipend costs to fully sustain HCMS/PBCS systems and compensation for educators to provide the best venue in which educators are satisfied and successful and where students can move towards high school graduation, post-secondary education and job preparedness. District and campus administrators will provide ongoing support at no-cost. Please see budget narrative for details.