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**(a) Significance**

**Introduction:** Texans Can operates a unique network of eleven charter schools serving the most at-risk 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in the five largest cities in Texas: **Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, and San**



**Antonio.**<sup>1</sup> Responding to an unmet need of troubled youth that traditional schools commonly rejected, Texans Can began providing a learning environment for minority at-risk youth whose experiences include: low academic achievement, poverty, high dropout rates and violence. With the passing of the Texas charter school legislation in 1995, Texans Can (one of the first 20 charters) opened its first high school. Texans Can’s vision is simple, yet challenging – create systemic changes in education so ALL students receive an equitable and excellent education. Geographically located across the expansive state of Texas (Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, etc.), Texans Can has since its inception (1995) utilized a variety of traditional paper/print and electronic systems and procedures to inform key human capital decisions. The **Human Capital Management System (HCMS)** as implemented within the last 2 years, addresses the most important element in a school—human capital—by continually working with teachers and principals to systematically increase their skills and thereby increase student achievement.

Aligned to **Absolute Priority 1**, Texans Can is committed to the current implementation of a **HCMS** with modifications/enhancement. Texans Can, current HCMS process which begins with recruiting, hiring, developing and retaining effective educators, has engaged in large scale systemic efforts to improve teacher effectiveness. In 2014, Texans Can, in a State competitive application process, was awarded a demonstration grant to pilot a teacher, educator and administrator performance-based compensation system (PBCS). Texans Can has transformed their traditional HCMS by implementing comprehensive research-based strategies incorporating



best practices in the areas of teacher **recruitment, mentoring, induction, development, retention, and strategic compensation**. Texans Can is measuring teacher effectiveness using validated intuitive evaluation software (e.g. TalentEd) to improve operational efficiencies, minimize risk and oversee management processes. This includes a PBCS for incentive pay to reward and retain highly effective educators. Comprehensive efforts to improve, measure educator effectiveness are described in the project design and management sections, respectively. The commitment of all charter schools (Appendix E – MOU) along with educators using data from evaluation systems, will enhance HCMS. State and local level policies, also facilitate the expansion of HCMS aligned to a vision of creating effective educators and instructional improvement.

**Prior Experience:** In 2014, **Texans Can** was 1 of only 17 state-wide systems awarded a four year grant by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to pilot a teacher, educator and administrator evaluation project-based compensation system known as the Educator Excellence Innovation Program (EEIP). Through EEIP, Texans Can implemented **Project READY (Rewarding Educators for Academically Developing Youth)** in all **11 high-need charter schools** (Appendix F2 – Student Profile). With the solicitation of TIF 2016, Texans Can proposes to leverage lessons learned, experiences gained, and local capacity to move forward with **Project READY-2ExCel (PR-2ExCel)**. **PR-2ExCel** key human capital decisions include enhanced: recruitment, hiring, placement, retention, compensation, professional development, tenure and promotion. The HCMS and PBCS will ensure that high-need schools attract, retain, train, promote, and compensate effective educators (Appendix F3 – HCMS/PBCS Model).

Texans Can currently serves **4,158** high-need students and employs **35** School Leaders (Principals and Assistant Principals), **212** Teachers, and **154 other** educators in its schools and will add 2 new campuses (2016-2017 school year) to the original 11 for a total of **13** schools



employing an estimated **50** additional educators (total **451**) (Appendix F4 – Educator Profile).

Texans Can educators for **all existing campuses** are depicted below, *See table 1:*

<b>Table 1: Texans Can High-Need Schools</b>	<b>School Leaders</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Other Educators</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>154</b>

**Source: Texas Education Agency – Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) 2015-16**

Since inception, Texans Can has served over **145,000** low-income underrepresented minority students and their parents. Texans Can’s target population is high-need, at-risk and underserved youth and includes a high percentage of Hispanic, African-American, limited English proficient, low-income, and some of the most undereducated students in Texas.<sup>2</sup> Texans Can and its exclusive growing statewide network of 11 (soon 13) charter schools have become a platform for quality education and community empowerment where underrepresented students, parents, teachers and administrators are engaged in leadership training, academic preparation, technology integration, college and career readiness, enrichment and social programming. Without Texans Can these students would have been abandoned without an education or a desire to succeed.

Texans Can serves **4,158** of the hardest to serve minority at-risk, low-income student populations in the state in its **11** (soon 13) high-need charter schools of which all are receiving Title I funding. Of these, **2,713** are Hispanic, **1,280** are African American, **3,967** are at-risk, **81** are special needs students and **3,941** are categorized as low-income which translates to 90.2% eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch (Appendix F5 – Free Reduced List).<sup>3</sup> **10** of the **11** campuses are categorized as Priority schools (Appendix F6 – Priority List). Additionally, prior to ESEA waiver, 9 schools missed Federal Standards (AYP) for 2 consecutive years (2011-2013).<sup>4</sup>

**Academic Assessment:** 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 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The STAAR scores of students in



these schools were well below the state average. The STAAR scores (core subjects) for these schools demonstrated a significant under-achievement of **57%** when compared to the state at **77%**.<sup>5</sup> Reading results only showed **54%** of the students met state standards compared to **77%** of students statewide. Students demonstrating competency in Math were also at-risk with only **49%** of students meeting STAAR standards compared to **81%** for the state. Texans Can’s 11 (soon 13) high-need charter schools are extremely economically disadvantaged (aggregate **93%**), and all possess ongoing low student academic achievement and school ratings. Texans Can’s schools face unique challenges in increasing academic performance, college readiness (15.8%), graduation rates (54.5%) and college enrollment (18.2%). Texans Can target population is categorized as some of the *hardest to serve* in *Texas*. See table 2 below:

Table 2: Schools	Enrollment	Hispanic	African American	Low-Income	At-Risk
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,158</b>	<b>2,713</b>	<b>1,280</b>	<b>3,941</b>	<b>3,967</b>

**Source: Texas Education Agency – Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) 2015-16**

**Aligned to Requirement 1:** Texans Can has taken the challenges of low academic scores, non-effective teachers and principals, high turnover, an absence of formal mentoring, limited professional development, a deficiency of an educator appraisal system, and initiated a vision of advancing current PBCS and institutionalizing a highly effective HCMS to impact 13 high-need schools across the Texans Can state network of charter schools. Texans Can has been rewarding teacher effectiveness through a transformative effort that moved from traditional salary means to compensate educators – to a PBCS based on educator effectiveness. Texans Can continues to be committed to overcoming numerous challenges, namely ineffective teaching that leads to low-academic scores. In fact, Texans Can, in a continuous improvement process, reviewed several data sources including district and campus improvement plans, state assessment (STAAR) test scores, demographic data, federal and state accountability ratings, teacher and administrator data



including previous appraisal data, proven research, and policies. This process led to major decisions such as: piloting the current EEIP grant and PBCS. Both were approved, supported and developed with the input of teachers and school leaders (Appendix F7 – Educator Survey). Focus groups continue to be held frequently with the superintendent, teachers, principals, and non-classroom staff, etc. A current School Advisory Council (will be maintained with TIF), on an on-going basis, identifies areas of gaps and challenges as well as strengths and opportunities related to infrastructure, resources, practices, policies, budgetary, compensation, curriculum, instruction, capacity building and support mechanisms that led to the expansion of services and implementation of effective PBCS and HCMS. Other data elements reviewed continuously in order to compare to desired outcomes are that of achievement ratings such as campus ratings, tenure and qualifications, hiring practices, policies, career pathways, etc. Thus, in review of the 2016 TIF Solicitation, Texans Can schools demonstrated a **high-need** as well as **high-support** for a program aligned to TIF. As noted, *PR-2ExCel* is highly endorsed from the entire charter school faculty with over **97%** demonstrating support. Receiving EEIP funding from the State of Texas in 2014, allowed Texans Can and 11 charter schools to engage in rigorous evaluation of current its traditional HCMS and implement a PBCS in 11 charter schools.

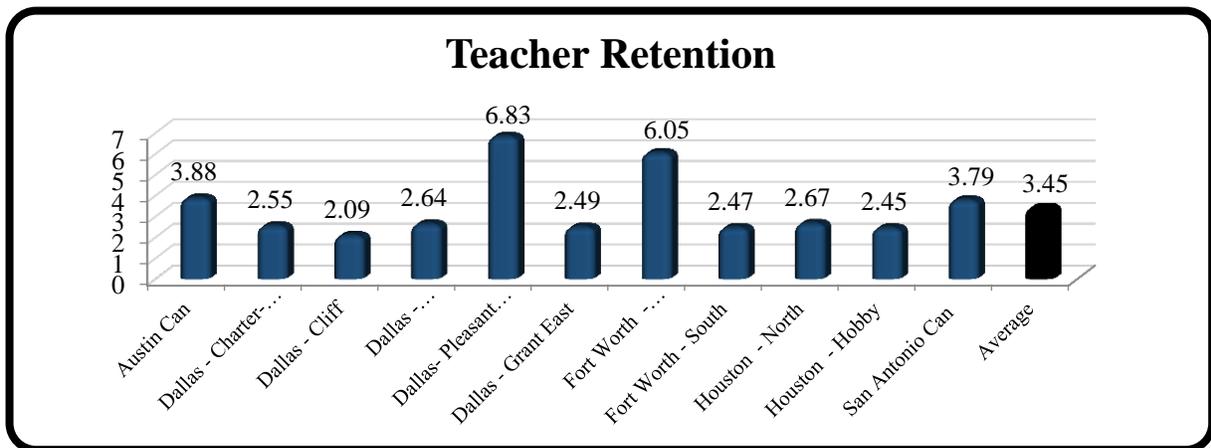
Furthermore, with the EEIP grant being a district wide initiative, it serves to be in direct alignment to the goals of the TIF grant. However, the state grant (seed money) is modest in terms of financial resources needed to fully expand and reach the desired number of educators and principals that will have a **broader scale impact** upon the target population. Therefore, the foundation is laid – of a uniquely designed HCMS/PBCS plan to support and improve Texans Can educators’ effectiveness to increase student achievement. Texans Can has made substantial progress, yet realizes additional work is needed to ensure that the educator evaluation and



support systems are robust, relevant, reliable in producing authentic information, and seamlessly integrated into school- and district-level human capital processes. With piloting the state EEIP (HCMS and PBCS), as part of comprehensive reform strategies, Texans Can is poised to make more informed human capital decisions that support educators and improve student outcomes. *PR-2ExCel* will meet the needs of their high-need target population by enhancing and sustaining mechanisms and strategies that ensure high-need schools obtain and retain effective educators.

Texans Can will sustain *PR-2ExCel*, with an overarching goal of: **Creating a 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade pipeline of highly-effective teachers, leaders and educators to increase ALL students' academic achievement, graduation and post-secondary outcomes.** This system will use valid and reliable measures aimed at increasing the competencies, skills, and knowledge of school teachers, administrators, and other educators (Appendix F3 – HCMS/PBCS Model). The system also intends to create, retain and reward highly effective leaders of learning for increasing the academic performance and college readiness outcomes of ALL students (grades 9-12), particularly at-risk, minority, low-income, and under-represented students to compete in 21<sup>st</sup> century careers. Texans can realizes high poverty and low-achieving schools have difficulty attracting high- quality applicants.<sup>6</sup> Once hired – educators at Texans Can face many challenging circumstances surrounding their schools such as poor nutrition, criminal activity, high illiteracy, etc. These challenges are compounded with immense pressure to turnaround low-achieving schools that have historically low student achievement. Texans Can understands the critical importance of ensuring that educators are as effective as possible for their underserved high-need students. Realizing effective teachers are the most critical in-school factor in improving student outcomes,<sup>7</sup> *PR-2ExCel* will: 1) foster development of educators who are eager to advance; 2) recruit and retain high-quality educators eager to learn and teach (Appendix F8 – On-Boarding).

National and state research confirms that the single most important variable in student achievement is the quality of the individual teacher in the classroom (Loeb, et. al., 2005).<sup>8</sup> Highly effective teachers are critical in supporting students to meet their highest academic potential. The challenge of ensuring quality teaching is often magnified by high teacher turnover and a shortage of qualified, credentialed, and experienced teachers (Educate Texas, 2012).<sup>9</sup> Texans Can, just in the past year, retained highly-effective teachers at a higher rate – many of whom would have likely left the system in the absence of pay for performance. *See graph below:*



Overall, teachers on average have remained with the system well over 3 years, where in the past many would have left after only 1 year. Prior to (EEIP) pay for performance, the most common cited reason from departing teachers was not feeling properly compensated for their extremely hard work and their effective performance with high-need struggling students.

**Approach and Significance:** Given the above-mentioned challenges, Texans Can agrees on performance-based and value-added incentives as a tool to not only recruit and retain more teachers, but also to complement current observational measures, student academic performance, and personal reflections on teaching that will drive significant and lasting improvement to overall student achievement.<sup>10</sup> Fryer (2013) found that these 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 (Appendix F9 – Incentives Graph).<sup>11</sup>



The proposed HCMS/PBCS addresses the most important element in a school: human capital, educators working to systematically increase skills and thereby increase student achievement. *PR-2ExCel* will approach educator effectiveness with a multifaceted, aligned approach for recruiting, promoting, supporting, evaluating and compensating teaching talent to enhance not only effectiveness, but also job satisfaction and collegiality, which directly impacts recruitment and retention of effective teachers in high-need schools.<sup>12</sup> The significance of *PR-2ExCel* is many fold. The ability to earn PBCS incentives, with the criteria to earn an incentive dependent upon student achievement gains, could clearly impact teachers' attitudes toward their school, alter their teaching practices, and increase effectiveness, retention and productivity.

*PR-2ExCel* will build local capacity to provide services that address the needs of the target population by developing the talent of teachers, administrators, and educators across 11 (soon 13) high-need charter schools. This will be accomplished through: hiring quality staff, appointing Master/Mentor Teachers (added duties/compensation) to coach less experienced teachers, offering incentive awards and salary increases for highly-effective performance, proposing bonuses, recruitment and retention payments to retain and attract quality educators and professional development opportunities, and systems that support educators in high quality learning and teaching to ensure student success. PBCS, based on schoolwide student achievement gains, will encourage teacher collaboration and increase educator productivity. Educators rewarded for student achievement gains may allocate more time to instructional practices intended to improve student achievement levels.<sup>13</sup> Significant to *PR-2ExCel* is the gained experience (2 years) of the integration of classroom observation and student achievement with effective assessment measures of teachers and principals. Prior to piloting EEIP, principals evaluated the performance of individual teachers using procedures that were fairly unstructured.



The previous approach to evaluation was antiquated as well as implied few, if any, direct and meaningful outcomes/feedback for teachers.<sup>14</sup> Texans Can’s goal by piloting an educator evaluation and support system was to have robust, relevant, reliable authentic information, and a seamless system integrated into human capital (HCMS) processes. In fact, as aligned to research, Texans Can continues to make progress toward improving the validity and reliability of teacher and principal assessments.<sup>15</sup> **PR-2ExCel**, will assess educator effectiveness by employing valued-added measures assessed by student achievement gains (classroom/ schoolwide) and rigorous classroom observations.<sup>16</sup> **PR-2ExCel**, to accomplish the end goal of providing effective teaching to every child whereby overall student performance improves, will focus on:

- 1) Enhancing effective HCMS and PBCS systems;
- 2) Increasing student academic performance by creating highly-effective teachers;
- 3) Establishing effective recruitment, hiring and induction practices;
- 4) Establishing effective, mentoring, coaching, retention and evaluation practices;<sup>17</sup>
- 5) Increasing career growth/pathways through effective recognition and rewards; and
- 6) Increasing effective professional development via alignment to data, needs and evaluation plan.

**(b) Quality of the project design**

**(1) The extent to which the proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort...**

In concert with Absolute Priority 1 and Requirements 1 and 2 as well as Competitive Priority 2 and the Invitational Priority (Appendix F10 – Priority Narrative), Texans Can has designed a quality program that addresses the needs and the intent of TIF in 13 high-need schools. **PR-2ExCel** will be integrated to enhance Texans Can’s current (state) EEIP evaluation **PBCS and HCMS** design systems and its strategic plan of **instructional improvement** to overall increase **student achievement**. **PR-2ExCel** will also be an integral part of Texans Can’s policies and procedures that drive effective professional development (as noted in Section C) and support effective teaching and learning strategies. **PR-2ExCel** will serve as a method for educators to



individually and collaboratively refine their instruction through data analysis, professional learning communities (PLC) – common planning time (CPT) and ongoing dialogue and support to effectively improve student outcomes and school ratings (Appendix F11 – TEA Rating).

With the implementation of PBCS (state EEIP) over the past two years and overall enhancing the HCMS, Texans Can is poised to be increasingly successful. As aligned to Absolute Priority 1, and the vision of Texans Cans’ Instructional Improvement, systemic and comprehensive efforts will continue to enhance the **HCMS/PBCS**, provide opportunities to support educators in high need schools, and make informed human capital decisions. *PR-2ExCel* will create collaborative campus cultures that support the development of **highly-effective teachers**, leadership and encourage all school personnel to seek and attain **professional growth** within their field while **promoting** career advancement and **rewards** through (PBCS) compensation.

**Proposed Strategies:** *PR-2ExCel* will sustain a HCMS/PBCS along with differentiated compensation plan adapted from proven models such as the Texas Appraisal Performance (TAP) system. This will be accomplished by: supporting recruitment, development, and the retention of highly-effective teachers, school leaders and other educators; promoting career advancement; and 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. The HCMS/PBCS strategies consist of effective: (1) Recruiting and Hiring; (2) Induction; (3) Coaching and Mentoring; (4) Career Pathways; (5) Value-added system; (6) Differentiated Compensation; and (7) Retention (Appendix F3 – HCMS/PBCS Model).

**Recruiting and Hiring:** Texans Can 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/educators. Texans Can will use AppliTrack,<sup>18</sup> the leading recruiting/hiring solution for schools, to enhance recruiting and hiring efforts. 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 difficult-to-fill schools with historically high minority populations and low-student achievement.<sup>19</sup> Accordingly, target schools 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/educators.<sup>20</sup> Details below serve as a description of the HCMS with modifications for TIF implementation (Appendix F3 – HCMS/PBCS Model):

**Induction:** *PR-2ExCel* will enhance the implementation of a comprehensive induction system at 13 campuses that will provide all first year, new (3 years or less), and struggling teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful and effective in their classrooms and throughout their teaching careers. The induction system will include: summer orientation training for all first year and new teachers;<sup>21</sup> opportunities for new teachers to observe or co-teach with skilled teachers; follow-up discussions of classroom observation results; and ongoing professional development and formative review of first year/new teacher performance.

**Coaching and Mentoring:** Texans Can will formalize a comprehensive coaching/mentoring component to ensure all teachers (first year, new, tenured, veteran, struggling, etc. ) are linked to an experienced educator and provided ongoing guidance.<sup>22</sup> The Project Director and 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.



Prior to a Master and Mentor Teacher being matched with a mentee, they will participate in a three-day comprehensive training program. The Master and Mentor teachers will provide support through modeling lessons, assistance with lesson planning, classroom management, and observation/formative feedback of lessons. The mentees/teachers will receive feedback in the form of a qualitative coaching conversation that will delve much deeper into effective instructional and student engagement strategies, technology integration, and lesson alignment

**Career Pathways:** A formal career pathways element with salary augmentation and incentives is currently being implemented that offers educators opportunities for career advancement. Texans Can will provide multiple career pathways (Campus Master and Mentor Teachers) 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. Texans Can will provide opportunities to support educators in high need schools and academic areas, increase teachers’ pedagogical growth and student academic achievement, and increase recognition, retention and promotion of highly-effective educators by promoting the pursuit of advanced degrees, multiple certifications, and the cultivation of a district-wide plan of growing its own teachers and leaders.

**Embedded with Comprehensive Efforts:** A **value-added system** has been piloted as a comprehensive effort and is ideally suited to meet the needs of campuses by providing opportunities to support educators in high-need academic areas, increase teachers’ pedagogical growth and student academic achievement, increase recruitment and retention of highly qualified educators, and create an environment for educators to pursue advanced degrees and multiple certifications. Utilizing and adapting a proven value-added model (e.g. TalentEd), Texans Can *PR-2ExCel* will provide incentives for teachers based on the **three** following components: (1)



**Educator Performance** - This is an annual average of the scores based on a 5 point scale on the proven Skills and Knowledge Standards received by the teacher from classroom observations during the year (Appendix F12 – Performance Scale). It is also an average of the 15 instructional rubric domains and seven responsibility indicators in the 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. **Value Added Scores:** Teachers 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, teachers 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.

**Teachers who teach Value-Added Classes-State Assessed core-subjects:** Teacher Classroom Performance (**50%**); Student Classroom value-added scores (**30%**); and School-wide value-added scores (**20%**). **Teachers without Value-Added Classes-State Assessed core-subjects:** Teacher Classroom Performance (**50%**); and School-wide value-added scores (**50%**). **Principal and Assistant Principal(s) performance pay system includes two measures:** School-wide value-added scores (**50%**); and Performance based evaluation scores (VAL-ED) (**50%**). **Other administrative and supportive staff:** Individual performance targets (e.g. 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 differentiated compensation, the following weighted



scores will be used: **Classroom Performance Standard Score:** For teachers a minimum score of 3 (max. score = 5.0) will be required and 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 and 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 (VAL-ED), and a school-wide value-added score of 3.0 is required to be eligible to receive a bonus (Sass, 2010).<sup>23</sup> (Appendix F13 – TalentEd/VAL-ED).

**Differentiated Compensation:** Texans Can believes hard-work and dedication to students deserves career advancement, promotional growth, and greater compensation. **PR-2ExCel** (PBCS) has allotted sufficient resources (noted in budget) to offer salary augmentation and incentives to retain, reward and recognize highly-effective educators. 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 performance bonuses for teachers, Master and Mentor Teachers, non-classroom teachers without state STAAR scores (librarian, P.E. etc.), principals, other administrators, etc. The value-added, performance-based incentive pay for teachers will be up to **\$3,000** per year and up to **\$1,500** per year for non-classroom teachers, educators, principals and assistant principals. In addition, teachers and other educators (principals and assistant principals) performing at and beyond expectations will also be eligible to receive potential salary increases (4% annually).

**Retention:** As a means to retain highly effective educators, TIF funds will support **PR-2ExCel** to recognize the skills, knowledge and professional achievement and mastery of content knowledge as well as superior teaching and leadership skills of an increase number of teachers, principals, and other educators. A key example of such recognition and reward is appointing



Master and Mentor Teachers. These educators are recognized for demonstrating successful fulfillment job functions and taking on additional responsibilities such as but not limited to: classroom observation, training, etc. As a result, Master Teachers receive an additional **\$8,000** annually and Mentor Teachers receive **\$5,000** annually. (Detailed in Budget Narrative)

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

Texans Can has long standing collaborations with: (1) The State of Texas (Texas Education Agency) and Education Service Centers as an award recipient of one of seventeen to pilot EEIP (Appendix F14 – NOGA), and (2) Institutions of Higher Education, (e.g. University of North Texas and Texas A&M University). These partnerships and numerous other well established collaborations have proven to be well aligned to Texans Can’s overall vision, mission and goal. Partnerships have been instrumental in shaping the HCMS/PBCS, with the input of teachers and school leaders from all of the high need schools. Collaboration with partners has better prepared Texans Can to immediately take on the complex work. Partnerships have become a platform for which Texans Can was able to regularly meet – seeking feedback of internal and external voices of stakeholders and educators on initiatives that impact schools (Appendix F15 – ESC Letters)

**Internal Collaborative Partnerships:** Campus Leadership Teams (**CLT**) serves as an internal system that is in place for seeking feedback in order to understand of the critical role educators’ voices play in successful human capital transformation. These collaborative teams of internal partners bring together teachers and principals and elicit the input from all partners to tackle specific issues. Issues such as: selecting a rubric for use in evaluations and focus groups that provide feedback on career ladder systems or new compensation, etc. Purposeful collaboration with appropriate internal and external partners will maximize the effectiveness of *PR-2ExCel* services moving systemic transformative efforts forward to sustaining effective education.

**Collaboration with State and Region:** Through the state partnership to pilot the EEIP program,



Texas Can has piloted a HCMS by implementing comprehensive research-based strategies. The partnership with TEA and Education Service Centers 10 and 20 has aided Texas Can to incorporate best practices in the areas of teacher capacity building as well as recruitment, mentoring, induction, development, retention, and strategic compensation. Over the last 2 years of piloting a state-wide educator evaluation system, Texas Can has measured teacher effectiveness using validated intuitive evaluation software to improve operational efficiencies, minimize risk and oversee management processes. This includes piloting a PBCS for incentive pay for highly effective teachers, educators and administrators.

**Collaboration with IHEs:** Texas Can has a history of partnering with Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) in order to tap into new recruiting opportunities as well as to inform and strengthen pre-service programming and to shape the curricula and pedagogy of training activities and anchor simulation and internship activities that focus on real-world problems for educators. Through IHEs, each campus will receive ongoing technical assistance and research-based high-quality, job-embedded professional development that supports the school's comprehensive instructional program efforts and aligned with state academic standards. Educators will be trained on how to utilize student data to inform and differentiate instructional practices in order to meet the academic high-need students. Professional development efforts are further described in Section C and a list of topics can be found in Appendix F16 (PD List).

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

The theoretical concept of *PR-2ExCel* draws from best practices that provide for enhanced sustainable HCMS/PBCS for teachers and other educators. It builds on current theory of *Human Capital*, whereby incentives vary according to the amount of investment in human capital; that is, the education and training undertaken by workers and widespread investment in human capital will optimally create the desired skill-base and work-force. According to USDOE,<sup>24</sup>



reshaping current human capital policies and practices can fundamentally impact district budgets. Salaries and benefits are the biggest budget line item for school districts, on average, accounting for more than 70 percent of expenditures. Rethinking three key components of human capital organization of the teaching workforce, teacher professional/career development, and teacher compensation, can increase productivity dramatically (Appendix F17 – Human Capital).

Placed in the context of education, Texans Can understands teachers are the most critical “human capital” element in each high-need school. “Teachers influence students’ learning more than any other school-based factor (Chetty, R., Friedman, J. N., & Rockoff, J. E. (2011);<sup>25</sup> Briggs, D., & Domingue, B. (2011);<sup>26</sup> Rutledge, S. Harris, D.H., and Ingle, W. (2010);<sup>27</sup> Viadero, D. (2009).<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, those who are most effective, may leave the schools that need them most. To counter balance turnover, systems must be developed to sustain effective systems to retain effective educators (Skiba, G., Noguera, P. (2010).<sup>29</sup> On average, teachers with strong academic backgrounds seek out higher-income schools with better student achievement—proactive measures to attract, recruit and retain effective teachers in high need schools must be put in place.(Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008<sup>30</sup>; Deangelis & Presley, 2007<sup>31</sup>; Goldhaber, Choi, & Cramer, 2007).<sup>32</sup> In schools that retain teachers, principals think about their teachers as learners and commit to helping them improve continuously (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Cochran-Smith et al., 2012).<sup>33</sup> They can enable teachers to work collaboratively on instruction. Ronfeldt, M., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2013),<sup>34</sup> explains, norms of collaboration “do not spring spontaneously out of teachers’ mutual respect and concern for each other.” Rather, they are deliberately constructed, in large part, by effective systems and leaders/principals. Strong leaders/principals intentionally develop and maintain an “integrated professional culture” in their schools where novices benefit from guidance and support from more experienced teachers, while



veterans enjoy the challenges of mentoring their new colleagues (Pearson, 2012)<sup>35</sup>.

Therefore, **PR-2ExCel** will continually take from the extensive theory and research of sustainable comprehensive HCMS/PBCS for teachers, principals, and other personnel in high-need Schools, as they employ diverse teacher performance management policies. Teachers should be evaluated based on their ability to fulfill their core responsibility as professionals—delivering instruction that helps students learn and succeed.<sup>36</sup> This demands clear performance standards, multiple rating options, regular monitoring of administrator judgments, and frequent feedback to teachers. It requires professional development that is tightly linked to performance standards and differentiated instruction based on individual teacher needs. Texas Can will implement an effective evaluation system that is fully integrated with theory of action and will utilize the evaluation standards as a primary factor in decision-making. With sustained effective PBCS and HCMS systems tightly tied to evaluation outcomes - all teachers and educators will be seen as a critical investment in human capital that impact increased academic performance and college readiness outcomes of ALL students.<sup>37</sup> (Appendix F3 – HCMS/PBCS Model).

**PR-2ExCel** evaluation methodologies will assist in understanding the effectiveness and context of project services in accomplishing the anticipated impacts, 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, Mentoring, Coaching, 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 a foundation for evaluators, staff and educators in moving **PR-2ExCel** forward.

**(4) The extent to which the proposed project will integrate with or build on similar effort...**

**PR-2ExCel** will be well integrated into and build upon numerous efforts in place that align to



TIF’s purpose and priorities. As a catalyst for higher expectations in public education and as a successful network of charter schools serving the needs of the traditionally extremely underserved youth, Texans Can knows it has the power to break the cycle of poverty student’s face every day with innovative efforts such as *PR-2ExCel*. Texans Can’s priority is to synchronize and align all funding streams with *PR-2ExCel* from programs and policies that are supported by community, State and Federal resources. Texans Can is committed to provide complete support to students, staff, and leaders of the 13 campuses while focusing on specific initiatives that have a broad impact on the quality of every student’s education. Texans Can established an Education Foundation that recognizes a need to support low-income communities to overcome the challenges facing children with learning differences and deficiencies. Texans Can chose to highlight the following two existing funding streams from other programs also aligned and integrated into the vision of *PR-2ExCel* (Appendix F14 – NOGA ).

**Educator Excellence Innovation Program (EEIP)** – The **EEIP** (as noted prior) grant was awarded to Texans Can in the spring of 2014 and provides state revenue from the Texas Education Agency to improve educator effectiveness in Texas public schools through funding innovative practices that focuses on differentiated compensation for teacher performance and effectiveness based on student performance. Texan Can, one of seventeen state-wide awardees is expected to improve student performance by fostering open, supportive and collaborative campus cultures that allow teachers to seek and attain growth within their fields. These models of recruitment, hiring, preparation, induction, professional development, evaluation, compensation, career pathways and retention will be evaluated for their effectiveness in teaching and improving student performance, especially among students attending Title I-funded schools with high levels of economically disadvantaged enrollment, so that best practices can be scaled across the state.



***Cars for Kids*** – To further support its mission through a diversification of funds, Texans Can created Cars for Kids, a social entrepreneurship venture. Initiated 15 years ago, the Cars for Kids vehicle donation program is one of Texans Can’s premier fundraising initiatives, providing much needed financial support for educator and student programming. Cars for Kids accepts vehicle donations that include cars, vans, sports utilities vehicles, trucks, boats, jet skis, snowmobiles, trailers, motorcycles, motor homes, RVs, forklifts, tractors, and heavy equipment machinery. In turn, Texans Can auctions the vehicles for a profit. One hundred percent (100%) of the proceeds goes toward school for teacher/educator initiatives and to educational, college career readiness programs for all students in the 13 charter schools (Appendix F18 – Cars For Kids).

Cars for Kids has proven highly successful in raising funds for Texans Can’s various programs and initiatives. In FY14 and FY15, Cars for Kids generated **\$1,534,499** and **\$1,916,943** in external funding, respectively to support ongoing programming and services. To date, in the first few months of FY16 Cars for Kids has generated **\$567,000** in external funding. Operating this initiative for over 15 years, Texans Can is confident in its abilities to continue generating revenue through Cars for Kids which will be utilized to leverage funding for *PR-2ExCel*.

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

An integral part of *PR-2ExCel*’s comprehensive Professional Development (PD) Plan will be ongoing high-quality support and training tailored for teachers, principals and other staff in a manner that promotes a more effective educator workforce. *PR-2ExCel* plan has been developed to ensure that all educators across Texans Can’s high need schools have the opportunity to improve their effectiveness and is aimed at fully supporting the needs of teachers, principals and other personnel identified through the evaluation process. Each educator’s evaluation will directly inform the requirements of their professional improvement and performance plan (time,



duration, topic, and modality) and be tied to expectations of Student Growth. Training and targeted capacity building will be provided year round aligned to the needs of teachers, administrators and other educators on topics that include but not limited to: effective classroom design, delivery, instruction, pedagogy, management, communication, leadership skills, and new teacher development. Texans Can will utilize the information generated by both the HCMS and educator Evaluation/Support System, which will provide a multi-faceted high-quality plan for professional development (up to 40 hours annually) including: 1) **Job-embedded coaching**; 2) **Support System** of Master Teachers, principals, assistant principals, and other school leaders conducting classroom evaluation and assisting in identifying needs; 3) **Educator development**, core content and technology integration training to teachers; 4) Implementation of effective **Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)**; and 5) Use of **evaluation and disaggregated data** (*formative/summative, instructional improvement, teacher, principal and other personnel evaluation appraisal system and external evaluation*) generated by the Evaluation and HCMS.

**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 plan 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.<sup>38</sup> 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 master/mentor teachers receive recognition and incentives<sup>39</sup> (Appendix F19 – Employee Education Program (TEEP)).

**Support System:** 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 services received, Mentees will participate in simulation (incubator setting) exercises, in a live classroom setting and video-based modalities demonstrating effective instructional and coaching strategies through observation of actual tenured teachers teaching. 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, guiding the utilization of data to improve teaching and learning, and leading the instructional planning period. **Master Teachers** will play a key role and receive an annual **\$8,000** incentive. Master Teachers will collaborate with principals to ensure all students are learning from effective teachers that demonstrate mastery in their professional content. Teachers selected at this capacity will engage in 8 hours of relevant training first and then work with 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 colleagues, demonstrating model lessons and helping implement curriculum; 5) Observing and providing peer coaching toward meeting teachers' IPGIP goals; and 6) Observing teacher classroom practices and performance using the evaluation appraisal rubrics (Appendix F13 – TalentEd/



VAL-ED) 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, skills, competencies and attitude towards becoming a highly effective teacher. Emphasis will be to train Master Teachers, principals and assistant principals (10/hrs. annually) on how to conduct formative review of teacher performance through classroom observations, reviews of lesson plans, and feedback using proven rigorous classroom evaluation standards from a proven model.

In addition and based on the **IPGIP**, Content Coaches and College/Career Coaches will provide targeted customized training to teachers on differentiated instruction and post-secondary preparedness that will involve more individualized instruction tailored to the unique needs of the individual student. Texans Can will provide year-round assistance to teachers and administrators on ways to incorporate effective common planning time (90 minutes a week) methods in instruction including opportunities for teachers to practice skills necessary to build professional learning communities and collaborate with parents and other stakeholders.

Furthermore, as part of the instructional improvement plan, district administrators, principals, assistant principals, and Master Teachers will receive ongoing technical assistance from the Instructional Specialists and Content 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 prepares students to think critically (video streaming, 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).<sup>40</sup> Teachers will also receive individualized capacity building support in their classrooms from Master and Mentor Teachers. This support will be based on the needs of the teacher and their students and will include ongoing professional development,



assistance, and guidance on lesson planning and instruction strategy modeling in the classroom.

To support principals' professional growth as they take on the challenges associated with their role, each principal will receive professional development opportunities that include: 1) An annual two-day summer retreat which will feature planning and simulation activities that train principals to establish/maintain a performance based culture within their campus;<sup>41</sup> 2) A retired principal and/or superintendent coach who will provide monthly coaching driven by professional goals; 3) Professional development courses that will support development in specific areas related to instructional improvement and leadership – aligned with TEKS, STAAR-EOC, Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards; 4) Monthly videoconference 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; Formative Assessment; and 5) Monthly sessions between project staff, school leaders and Master/Mentor Teachers related to operational topics at each campus.

**Educator Development:** A summer professional learning Institute will attribute to the total 40 hours of professional development for new, existing, mentor and master teachers. The Summer Institute will kick off each series of annual trainings on various topics such as: adult learning theories, classroom instruction, effective pedagogy, and management strategies. This professional development training will prepare educators to effectively participate in collaborative group professional growth activities and also be directed to introduce and train new and first year teachers, tenured teachers, Master and Mentor Teachers, administrators, and other non-teaching school leaders on: the components of Performance-Based Compensation; Instructionally Focused Accountability Systems; and Teacher and Other Personnel Evaluation System Standards (e.g. TalentEd). Summer learning includes areas of leadership, team-building



skills, test analysis, establishing standards-based classrooms, etc.

As aforementioned, each educator will be required to engage in 40 hours of targeted professional development (PD) training. Through this PD, educators will be linked to sessions and resources that will help them to understand the research and implications 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)<sup>42</sup> 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 individual educator's conference (one hour each - 8 times a year) teachers and observers will engage in high-quality professional conversations to reflect on their professional practice with more depth and clarity. Information derived from observations will be discussed and suggestions will be provided by the observers on individualized professional development for each teacher. With this timely, actionable data, the teachers can identify problems and opportunities, differentiate instruction and professional development, evaluate instructional impact and program effectiveness, provide feedback and share best practices. In order to support the unique needs of first year, new, tenured, Master and Mentor Teachers and administrators at each campus, ongoing access to high quality learning and assessment resources will be accessible via an on-line Training Cloud. The Training Cloud is an interactive Web tool that provides individualized feedback, training and support. All educators will have real-time access to the



latest online cloud trainings to download, review and utilize to improve instruction.

**Professional Learning Communities (PLCs):** Instructional planning periods (known as common planning time - CPT) for grade level or subject content teams has increasingly been considered a crucial part of school improvement.<sup>43</sup> PLCs 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.<sup>44</sup> To enhance collaboration among teachers, each campus will offer 90-minutes of CPT per week imbedded within a school day and grouped by grade level and/or core subject areas. PLCs that meet in regularly scheduled CPT allow teachers time to discuss and resolve curricular issues, coordinate lessons, review data and locate common “problem spots” (e.g. areas/curriculum that tend to cause problems). DuFour (2004) characterizes collaborative PLCs 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.”<sup>45</sup>

**Evaluation/Disaggregated information:** A multitude of disaggregated information is generated by the proposed educator Evaluation and Support System. This information is accessed and utilized to identify and drive professional development needs of individual educators and schools. Critical to the overall evaluation processes are: external evaluation, formative and summative, instructional improvement, teacher and principal and educator appraisal systems.

**External Evaluation:** An independent evaluator with at least 20 years of experience conducting numerous federal and state education evaluations will work closely with the Project Director in implementing an equitable, transparent, and rigorous formative and summative evaluation process. Schools will provide program data on the progress of the performance indicators and professional development data will be collected ongoing and maintained by the external



evaluator. The evaluator will develop a secured web-based data management system which will link all aspects of *PR-2ExCel*'s programmatic and evaluation data to teacher and principal payroll and human resources systems to appropriately allocate differentiated compensation for all educators. Reports on average total score and on each performance standard will be available to the Campus Leadership Team by cluster, grade-level, subject-level, teacher type, and individual teacher to assist with identification of particular strengths and weaknesses that need development within a school's faculty. The evaluator will regularly assist the Project Director and Campus Leadership Team at each campus to review the summative evaluation data and analyze critical issues encountered by teachers and students, impact of activities on leadership capacities, instructional improvement, student academic growth, and school-wide performance. The evaluator will also meet regularly with the Project Director, staff, and educators as well as conduct quarterly reviews and produce summative semi-annual and annual reports. The Project Director and the evaluator will review evaluation (formative and summative) data quarterly and, based on the results, provide recommendations for continuous improvement.

**Formative/Summative:** To seek programmatic, implementation and fidelity two methods of evaluation will be implemented— Formative and Summative (using a quasi-experimental design – QED). The integrated and effective system for teacher evaluation and support is adapted from the State of Texas Teacher Appraisal and Performance (TAP) system for Teacher and Student Advancement. Information derived from classroom observations and other disaggregated information will allow teachers to identify problems and opportunities, evaluate instructional effectiveness, and identify and share best practices to improve student performance. An ongoing formative evaluation will focus on assessing project progress as well as address whether or not proposed objectives are being met and strategies are being implemented as planned at each



partner campus. Driven by the Logic Model (Appendix C), ongoing findings will be compared to objectives, outcome measures (pgs.36-38), project timeline, and adjustments will be made, as needed. Baseline data will be collected immediately 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 in year one. Similarly, a total of **2,000** (K-12) non-treatment students with like characteristics will also be selected and assigned to the control group. A computerized lottery process will be used to randomly select both treatment and non-treatment groups. The quasi-experimental evaluation (QED) and sampling design will meet the What Works Clearinghouse evidence standards.

**Instructional Improvement:** All teachers will be evaluated through multiple classroom observations by trained and certified observers and through the teachers’ contributions to student achievement growth. This includes four elements of success: ***I. Multiple Career Pathways; II. Year-Round Intense Professional Growth; III. Focused Accountability; and, IV.***

***Performance-Based Compensation.*** Accountability is embedded into each of the four components and includes multiple classroom observations each year by trained and certified observers using research-based instructional quality rubrics, as defined by the System Standards. The observation data will be integrated with the Teacher and Other Personnel Evaluation System Teacher Responsibility survey data to develop a Skills and Knowledge score on a 5-point scale, with 3 representing proficient performance that still has room for improvement. A score of 4.0 or above represents being highly effective. The scores will be averaged over the year for an annual score for each teacher at the end of each year – cumulatively leading up to the school-wide value



added data. To continually assess the professional development needs of each educator an observation rubric will be utilized that illustrates a weighted score. This score takes into account disaggregated information such as: (1) **Content**: This will address instructional procedures observed during the lesson under observation and will also contain a summary of what was discussed at the observation conferences. (2) **Format**: This section will contain an overview and a brief description of the lesson and its objective. (3) **Domains**: Comments and rating under each domain will be addressed and areas of concern will necessitate immediate plans for further capacity building improvement. Overall, based on disaggregated information generated by the proposed educator Evaluation System such as classroom observations data, student academic data, survey feedback, and teacher reflections, **PR-2Excel** will continually identify the professional development needs of individual educators and schools.

**Teacher and other personnel evaluation appraisal system: PR-2ExCel**, will utilize the Evaluation System that includes a rubric with four domains; (1) **Instruction**: Standards and Objectives, Motivating Students, Presenting Instructional Content, Lesson Structure and Pacing, Activities and Materials, Questioning, Academic Feedback, Grouping Students, Teacher Content Knowledge, Teacher Knowledge of Students, Thinking, and Problem Solving. (2) **Learning Environment**: Expectations, Managing Student Behavior, Environment, and Respectful Culture; (3) **Designing and Planning Instruction**: Instructional Plans, Student Work, and Assessment; and (4) **Responsibilities**: Staff Development, Instructional Supervision, Mentoring, Community Involvement, School Responsibilities, Developing Professionally, and Reflecting on Teaching. The value-added assessment data will provide each teacher with both a classroom and school-wide value added scores showing the teacher's and the school's average student gain in a year.

**Principal evaluation appraisal system (VAL-ED)**: In order to ensure quality teaching and



learning, principals and assistant principals will be evaluated annually by the Superintendent and teachers using a 360 degree evaluation in which principals are anonymously evaluated by all the teachers in their school and their supervisor. Principals will 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. The instrument is directly influenced by principles of universal design and time-tested practices of item and test development (Downing, 2006).<sup>46</sup> The Evaluation System will be used to measure the effectiveness of school leadership behaviors that influence teacher performance and student learning. The following components are included: High Standards for Student Learning, Rigorous Curriculum (content), Quality Instruction (pedagogy), Culture of Learning & Professional Behavior, Connections to External Communities, and Performance Accountability. When the principal receives the annual report with the results of the assessment, the report will allow the principal and assistant principals to compare their own ratings against the ratings given by teachers and supervisors.

#### **(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. Serving as the lead and fiscal agent, *PR-2ExCel* will be located in Texas Can Leadership and Instruction Division. Through this division, Texas Can pledges their commitment, facilities, personnel, resources and active participation to ensure *PR-2ExCel* is an essential part of the divisions' operations (Appendix E – MOU). As a recipient of numerous federal, state and private grants (\$60 million budget annually), Texas Can 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. Texans Can will use its knowledge in the management of the *PR-2ExCel* to ensure the delivery of effective, timely, accessible, quality, and culturally relevant services. Texans Can is successfully administering numerous grants which support the learning of teachers, educators, students and parents including EEIP, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, etc., which have met and/or exceeded all its performance outcomes with excellent financial audit reviews. Texans Can will use this extensive management experience to ensure *PR-2ExCel's* service delivery design meets all the proposed objectives and outcomes on-time and within budget. Texans Can will also use this experience to integrate the following elements for effective program implementation.

**TIF Advisory Council (TAC):** The management plan will include the current **TAC** to assist with planning, implementation, guidance, monitoring and feedback in program operations for continuous improvement. To support collaboration in the implementation of the *PR-2ExCel*, the **TAC** will meet quarterly to review program objectives, activities, recruitment and hiring plans, policies, HCMS/PBCS systems, incentive payments and evaluation outcomes. The **TAC** is comprised of educators who will represent the lead agency and schools (Superintendent, Project Director, Principals, Assistant Principals, teachers, evaluator and other personnel) and is a vital element of the *PR-2ExCel* continuous improvement and feedback component.

**Management Structure:** Successful management requires efficient procedures for making decisions, feedback, instructional alignment, and monitoring which have been established by Texans Can. *PR-2ExCel* will be placed within the Division of Leadership 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:** Texans Can recognizes that effective management requires strong leadership skills, management experience and academic training. Given these aptitudes, Dr. James J. Ponce, Superintendent will act as the Principal Investigator (.10 FTE) and supervise the Project Director at no-cost. Dr. Ponce has over 23 years of managing federal/state educational programs. Dr. Ponce holds Doctorate and Masters in Educational Administration and has earned numerous national accolades (e.g. National 2015 Blue Ribbon Award) (Appendix D – Resumes).

Mr. Mendel Weiss, as Cognitive Development Coordinator, will be the Project Director. Mr. Weiss with over 19 years of relevant training, education, academic and management experience (5 years required) in federal/state programs will oversee the daily operations with guidance from the TIF Advisory Council to ensure compliance with objectives. Mr. Weiss has a Masters in Educational Leadership and Policy and demonstrated experience in working with disadvantaged schools, communities and students for the past 19 years (3 years required). Mr. Weiss is an experienced leader who will devote 100% of his time to the project. Mr. Weiss will supervise staff, coordinate services, oversee daily operations and work with the evaluator to ensure compliance with scope of work. Mr. Weiss will ensure all USDOE reports are completed on-time and will act as the liaison to Texans Can and USDOE TIF Office (Appendix D – Resume).

To maintain accountability and ensure high-quality products and services are delivered (on-time and within budget), the Project Director will utilize the Logic Model (Appendix C) as a guide and work closely with the HCMS/PBCS Coordinator, Instructional Specialist, 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 **PR-2ExCel** team will meet weekly to review program progress, student development, educator progress, cost efficiencies and areas needing improvement. The program staff, Master/Mentor teachers and partners will provide monthly reports to the Project Director detailing status, pre/post-results, and progress towards objectives.

**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 **TAC** 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 Texans Can finance department to track and oversee project expenditures. This will include monthly meetings with the finance department and quarterly meetings with the **TAC** 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 Coord.-HPC; Instructional Specialist-IS; Content Coaches-CC; College/Career Coaches-CCC; Master/Mentor Teachers-MT; Partners-PA; Evaluator-EV		
ACTIVITIES/MILESTONES	PERSON	TIMELINE
Engage <b>TAC</b> and <b>13</b> Schools	PD, HPC	O – 2016*



Hire <b>ALL</b> Staff	PD, HPC	O – N 2016
Appoint and Engage Master and Mentor Teachers	PD, PA	O – N 2016*
Engage Content and College/Career Coaches	PD, PA	O – N 2016 *
Develop Year Activities and Master Calendar	PD, HPC, IS, EV	O – N 2016*
Engage Evaluator to develop tools and collect baseline	PD, HPC, EV	N – 2016
Review policies and disseminate educator surveys	PD, HPC, IS, EV	N – 2016
Involve the partners to assess capacity building needs	PD, HPC, IS, CC	N – 2016*
Begin capacity building for educators and develop <b>IPGIP</b>	ALL	N – D 2016*
School teachers and educators engage students	IS, CC,CCC, MT	N – 2017*
Review, modify and integrate curriculum	PD, HPC, IS, CC	N – J 2017*
Introduce and implement HCMS/PBCS to educators	PD, HPC, IS, EV	J – M 2017*
Train and conduct quarterly classroom observations	PD, MT, PA, EV	J – M 2017*
Collect classroom and schoolwide data	PD, EV, MT, PA	A – M 2017*
Administer surveys; teacher, educators, student, partners	PD, HPC, EV, PA	A – M 2017*
Evaluate, compile, review data for program improvement	PD, HPC, EV	M – J 2017*
Start Summer Institute program, activities and strategies	ALL	J – A 2017*
Collect, clean and analyze all PBCS data for payout	PD, HPC, EV	J – A 2017*
First Incentive Payment is disseminated	PD, HPC, EV	S – 2017*
Plan, incorporate lessons learned and best practices	PD, HPC, EV, PA	S – 2017*
Implement Year Two with program adjustments	PD, HPC, EV, PA	S – 2017
Compose and submit annual USDOE performance report	PD, EV	O – 2017*
<b>Replicate model in Years 3 – 5</b>	<b>ALL</b>	<b>S – 2018</b>
<b>Sustain <i>PR-2ExCel</i> after Year 5</b>	<b>ALL</b>	<b>S – 2021</b>



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

**Other Key Personnel:** Guided by its non-discrimination policy, Texans Can will ensure all persons regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, age or disability have equal access to all employment and program opportunities. Based on years of managing similar programs, the following staff (to-be hired –TBH) has been allocated sufficient time to fulfill their duties (Appendix F20 – Organizational Chart). Job descriptions are included in Appendix F21.

**HCMS/PBCS Coordinator (1 FTE):** The Coordinator will work with staff and educators to ensure all recruiting and hiring activities including incentive strategies are all 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 (3 FTEs):** Coaches (1-Math, 1-Reading, and 1-College/Career Coaches) will be hired to work with staff, administrators, teachers, and partners to ensure pedagogical 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 Master’s in related field, Texas Teaching Certificate and 3+ years of experience as a teacher in K-12<sup>th</sup> grade school setting.

**Lead Master Instructional Specialist (1 FTE):** The Instructional Specialist will work with all school educators to increase effectiveness of onsite programs and improve utilization of instructional materials. Additionally, the Specialist will promote development, implementation, and coordination of the school’s instructional TIF goal, objectives and outcomes. The Specialist will monitor lesson planning and delivery to ensure the use of differentiation, best practices, pacing, and curricular alignment. Qualifications: a Bachelor’s in related field, Master’s preferred, Texas Teaching Certificate and 3+ years of experience as a teacher in a school setting.

**Master/Mentor Teachers (20 and 25 Appointed, respectively):** Master Teachers will be



paired with new (three years or less), or 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 Texans Can 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. In no case will a single Mentor be paired with more than 5 mentees.

**Objectives:** In concert with the Absolute Priority, Competitive Priorities 2, and Invitational Priority (both described in Appendix F10), Texans Can has designed a quality program that addresses the needs and the intent of the TIF grant. Working together in a TIF strategic focused initiative, Texans Can has designed an ambitious, but attainable 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, Texans Can with the help of an evaluator developed a Logic Model (Appendix C). The Logic Model provides a synopsis of the project meets the evidence standard of a “strong theory” and will serve as a guide for staff.

Texans Can developed the following goal and several **ambitious**, yet **attainable** objectives and outcomes based on the needs, proposed services and allocated resources.

**Goal: Create a 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade pipeline of highly-effective teachers, leaders and educators to increase ALL students’ academic achievement, graduation and post-secondary outcomes.**

**\* Upon award, baseline will be created from the 2015-2016 data for the objectives below.**

**Objective 1:** Increase all students, academic interest, achievement, and college enrollment and persistence through creating highly- effective teachers and educators.



**Outcome 1.1:** Each year, % of students (9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>) meeting/exceeding state standards in Reading and Math will increase by **6% - 8%**, respectively from baseline, as measured by STAAR-EOC.

**Outcome 1.2:** Each year, % of students (9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup>) enrolled in advanced placement, 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 1.3:** Each year, % of students passing a college entrance placement examination (TSI, SAT or ACT etc.) will increase by **10%** from baseline, as measured by college entrance exams.

**Outcome 1.4:** Each year, % of high school students graduating on-time will increase by **10%** from baseline, as measured by Texas accountability system. (**Baseline 54.5%**).

**Outcome 1.5:** Each year, % of graduating students enrolling in college will increase by **12%** from baseline, as measured by postsecondary enrollment data. (**Baseline 18.2%**).

**Outcome 1.6:** Each year, % of college students enrolling in Year 2 of college will increase by **7%** from baseline, as measured by postsecondary enrollment data.

**Outcome 1.7:** Each year, % 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 2.** 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 2.1:** Each year, % of highly-effective teachers and educators in high-need schools will increase by **10%**, from baseline, as measured by PBCS. (**GPRA A & B**).

**Outcome 2.2:** Each year, % of retention rates of highly-effective teachers and educators in high-need schools will increase by **8%**, from baseline, as measured by HCMS. (**GPRA C**).

**Outcome 2.3:** Each year, % of vacancies occupied by highly-effective teachers and educators in high-need schools will increase by **7%** from baseline, as measured by HCMS.



**Outcome 2.4:** Each year, # of target 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 **15%**, from baseline or until **100%** report such use, as measured by HCMS and external evaluation school data. **(GPRA D).**

**Outcome 2.5:** Each year, % of highly-effective teachers and educators in high-need schools receiving compensation pay from State, local, or other non-TIF Federal Resources will increase by **5%**, from baseline, as measured by HCMS. **(GPRA E).**

**Outcome 2.6:** Each year, % of highly-effective teachers and educators in high-need schools receiving the highest effectiveness ratings will increase by **10%** from baseline, as measured by HCMS, PBCS and evaluation data. **(GPRA F & G).**

**Outcome 2.7:** Each year, % of target schools that improve system-wide cost efficiency, productivity, use of time, staff, and funds by leveraging/matching funds will increase **15%** or more, as measured by in-kind/cash documents and operating budgets collected by evaluator.

**Outcome 2.8:** After Year 5 and beyond, **100%** of schools will sustain the evaluation system and offer incentive payments to highly-effective teachers and educators, as measured by evaluator.

**(e) Adequacy of resources**

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

Texans Can is convinced the success of *PR-2ExCel* efforts will be further enhanced by the quality of personnel involvement which has already been undertaken. In fact, it was initiated two years ago with the EEIP program in which over **95%** of educators supported the program and continue to embrace this successful initiative. Engagement efforts will continue to be ongoing and genuine with *PR-2ExCel* as well. Texans Can will continue to prioritize the needs and assets of personnel for planning and implementation of *PR-2ExCel*. The process of developing *PR-2ExCel* was a collaborative effort in which substantial input from each school was considered



and which “buy-in” from all critical personnel was obtained. To ensure the inclusion of diverse perspectives during the development of this initiative, Texans Can prior and after the release of this RFP hosted various focus groups and working sessions (four times) with administrators, teachers, and 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 as well as the restrictions each would be required to 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, Texans Can 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, Texans Can, in collaboration with all 11 schools, disseminated a digital survey to assess the level of teachers, administrators, and educators support and “buy-in.” Of the total **401** educators, over **384 (97%)** responded favorably in support and “buy-in” of *PR-2ExCel* (Appendix F7 – Survey).

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

*PR-2ExCel* will be integrated and enhanced with the effective EEIP and other related Texans Can resources, programs and partners described earlier. With these resources, Texans Can’s Year One federal budget (**\$2,578,880**) and non-federal and non-TIF federal budget (**\$650,000**) adequately supports proposed scope of work, objectives, activities and performance outcomes. Texans Can’s practices has 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 Texans Can have already started as is evident with the leveraged support (**\$650,000** annually). Although the current in-kind/cash budget represents a five year commitment, Texans



Can and all school leaders have agreed to re-evaluate each of their budgets annually to determine if additional resources can be generated. Since inception, Texans Can has established a strong organizational base (e.g. procedures, systems, and educators know their roles and strongly support the initiative). *PR-2ExCel* will be housed at its corporate office in Dallas under the division of Leadership and Instruction as is EEIP, Cars for Kids and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century After-School program. This division strongly advocates and has access to an array of resources that will be leveraged for *PR-2ExCel* which ultimately will lead to sustainability. All these elements ensures a broad diversity of perspectives is brought to Texans Can to ensure schools institutionalize these practices, strategies, programs, and seek other resources. *PR-2ExCel* is endorsed from the leadership of Texans Can and from the entire school faculty with over **97%** supporting the program. The professional development will strengthen commitment, reinforce learning processes, 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 teachers and educators will further enhance morale and ensure commitment to the project. Texans Can is dedicated to sustaining the project and thus, will continue to allocate over **35% (FY15 total profit \$1,916,943)** of its Cars for Kids proceeds during and after the program ends to fully sustain HCMS/PBCS systems and compensation for educators to provide the best venue in which educators are satisfied, 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.