



**2021-2022 Teacher Leadership Cycle 2**  
**Letter of Interest (LOI) Application Due 11:59 p.m. CT, December 7, 2020**

NOGA ID [redacted]

Authorizing legislation **ESSA, Title II, Part A**

This LOI application must be submitted via email to [loiapplications@tea.texas.gov](mailto:loiapplications@tea.texas.gov).

The LOI application may be signed with a digital ID or it may be signed by hand. Both forms of signature are acceptable.

TEA must receive the application by **11:59 p.m. CT, December 7, 2020**.

Application stamp-in date and time

Grant period from **March 1, 2021 - July 31, 2022**

Pre-award costs permitted from **Pre-Award costs are not permitted for this grant.**

**Required Attachments**

- Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)
- Refer to the Program Guidelines for required attachments by Pathway.

**Amendment Number**

Amendment number (For amendments only; enter N/A when completing this form to apply for grant funds): [redacted]

**Applicant Information**

Organization **Harlingen CISD** CDN **031-903** Campus [redacted] ESC **1** DUNS **069463784**

Address **407 N. 77 Sunshine Strip** City **Harlingen** ZIP **78550** Vendor ID **74-6001053**

Primary Contact **Dr. Jessica Hruska** Email **jessica.hruska@hcisd.org** Phone **956-430-9540**

Secondary Contact **Mrs. Veronica Kortan** Email **maria.kortan@hcisd.org** Phone **956-430-9765**

**Certification and Incorporation**

I understand that this application constitutes an offer and, if accepted by TEA or renegotiated to acceptance, will form a binding agreement. I hereby certify that the information contained in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, correct and that the organization named above has authorized me as its representative to obligate this organization in a legally binding contractual agreement. I certify that any ensuing program and activity will be conducted in accordance and compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

I further certify my acceptance of the requirements conveyed in the following portions of the LOI application, as applicable, and that these documents are incorporated by reference as part of the LOI application and Notice of Grant Award (NOGA):

- LOI application, guidelines, and instructions
- Debarment and Suspension Certification
- General and application-specific Provisions and Assurances
- Lobbying Certification

Authorized Official Name **Dr. Art Cavazos** Title **Superintendent of Schools**

Email **arturo.cavazos@hcisd.org** Phone **956-430-9500**

Signature *Dr. Art Cavazos* Date **12-7-20**

**Shared Services Arrangements**

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are NOT PERMITTED for this grant.

**Pathway Selection: Please select ONE pathway.**

Pathway 1: Teachers as Instructional Leaders

Pathway 2: National Board Candidacy Cohorts

Pathway 3: Teacher Policy Fellowships

**Statutory/Program Assurances**

The following assurances apply to this program. In order to meet the requirements of the program, the applicant must comply with these assurances.

Check each of the following boxes to indicate your compliance.

- 1. The applicant provides assurance that program funds will supplement (increase the level of service), and not supplant (replace) state mandates, State Board of Education rules, and activities previously conducted with state or local funds. The applicant provides assurance that state or local funds may not be decreased or diverted for other purposes merely because of the availability of these funds. The applicant provides assurance that program services and activities to be funded from this LOI will be supplementary to existing services and activities and will not be used for any services or activities required by state law, State Board of Education rules, or local policy.
- 2. The applicant provides assurance that the application does not contain any information that would be protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) from general release to the public.
- 3. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Statutory and TEA Program requirements as noted in the 2021-2022 Teacher Leadership Cycle 2 Program Guidelines.
- 4. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2021-2022 Teacher Leadership Cycle 2 Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.
- 5. The applicant provides assurance that they accept and will comply with [Every Student Succeeds Act Provisions and Assurances](#) requirements.
- 6. The applicant agrees to all applicable program-specific assurances as described in the 2021-2022 Teacher Leadership Cycle 2 Program Guidelines.

**Summary of Program**

Provide an overview of the program to be implemented with grant funds. Include the overall mission and specific needs of the organization. Describe how the program will address the mission and needs.

Through the Teacher Leadership Cycle 2 Grant Pathway 2, Harlingen Consolidated Independent School District (HCISD) is proposing to implement a program to promote National Board Certification and develop a teacher leadership pipeline in our district dubbed "Project NBC". Project NBC is designed to support our district leadership definition that is built upon the commitment to excellence and a heart for people. This project will focus on providing teachers the training needed to become a National Board-Certified Teacher and ultimately cultivate a self-sustaining program to develop additional National Board-Certified Teachers.

The goal of Project NBC is to increase the number of National Board-Certified teachers, increase the number of highly effective and diverse teachers in the classroom, and build human capital to retain highly effective teachers in the classroom. Through a partnership with the National Research Board Center, Stanford will be offering a rigorous and supportive program to prepare a cohort of 15 candidates for National Board Certification. This two-year program will include weekly online synchronous meetings, access to comprehensive online resources, including an asynchronous Canvas course/help desk, and one-to-one mentoring sessions with National Board-Certified mentors provided by our partner. In addition, all teachers will have access to a three-year subscription to the National Board ATLAS video library and two paid workdays to complete the requirements of the certification.

The performance measures that will be implemented, collected, and analyzed are the number of candidates who complete the National Board Certification, growth on T-TESS Evaluations and student growth, as well as participation in the program requirements including mentorship. The total cost requested for the grant is \$18,950.

The Teacher Leadership grant will not only help increase the number of National Board-Certified teachers and impact student growth, but it will also help us reach our district goal to increase our retention rates for teachers by offering leadership opportunities in the classroom, building teachers' skillsets, and empowering teachers.

**Qualifications and Experience for Key Personnel**

Outline the required qualifications and experience for primary project personnel and any external consultants projected to be involved in the implementation and delivery of the program. Include whether the position is existing or proposed.

Title and Responsibilities of Position	Required Qualifications and Experience
<p>Program Facilitators- Facilitators will be responsible for creating and implementing all trainings in the program.</p>	<p>All program facilitators will be certified by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards and have been a teacher for more than 5 years. This is a service that will be provided by our external partners.</p>
<p>Mentors- Mentors will be responsible for supporting candidates throughout the program and will also provide one-to-one support monthly.</p>	<p>All mentors will be certified by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards and have been a teacher for more than 5 years. This is a service that will be provided by our external partners.</p>
<p>District Project Manager- The district project manager will oversee the project implementation and serve as a liaison between the district and the external partner.</p>	<p>The district project manager will be an employee of the district and have the ability to facilitate the partnership. This position is existing.</p>
<p></p>	<p></p>
<p></p>	<p></p>



**Goals, Objectives, and Strategies**

Describe the major goals/objectives of the proposed program. What activities/strategies will be implemented to meet those goals/objectives?

The Rio Grande Valley is highly underrepresented in the area of National Board-Certified Teachers and currently no Harlingen CISD teachers hold a National Board Certification. In addition to the underrepresentation in our area, HCISD is committed to building human capital and delivering opportunities to advance teachers' knowledge and skillset to impact student success. As a result, we have developed the following goals for this two-year project which include:

- Increasing the number of National Board-Certified teachers qualifying for a Teacher Incentive Allotment designation.
- Increasing the number of highly effective and diverse teachers in our district.
- Developing a robust leadership pipeline by offering professional growth opportunities, building human capital, and retaining effective teachers in the classroom.

The major activities and strategies to meet the goals of the project in the first year include:

- Weekly online synchronous meetings.
- Comprehensive online resources, including an asynchronous Canvas course and help desk.
- One-to-one Mentoring Sessions with National Board-Certified mentors provided by our partner.
- Two paid workdays to complete certification requirements
- Three-year subscription to the National Board ATLAS Video Library

**Performance and Evaluation Measures**

Describe the performance measures identified for this program which are related to student outcomes and are consistent with the purpose of the program. Include the tools used to measure performance, as well as the processes that will be used to ensure the effectiveness of project objectives and strategies.

The performance and evaluation measures for Project NBC are directly related to the goals of the project and are outlined below:

Goal (1)  
 Increasing the number of National Board-Certified teachers qualifying for a Teacher Incentive Allotment designation.  
 Performance/Evaluation Measure (1)  
 Number of teachers in the cohort who have completed the requirements of the National Board Certification. Teachers will begin by submitting two components of the four-component process in May of 2022, with scores offered by National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in December of 2022. The remaining two components will be submitted in May of 2023, with scores received in December of 2023.

Goal (2)  
 Increasing the number of highly effective and diverse teachers in our district.  
 Performance/Evaluation Measure (2)  
 Number of teachers who showed growth on their T-TESS evaluation or increased percentage of students who showed growth. This measure will be analyzed at the end of each academic year of the two-year program and will be obtained through the district's evaluation system.

Goal (3)  
 Building human capital and offer professional growth opportunities to retain effective teachers in the classroom.  
 Performance/Evaluation Measure (3)  
 Candidates will be required to participate in at least 85% of the weekly synchronous sessions and engage in at least 5 mentor sessions each year. This measure will be assessed at the end of each academic year and will be documented through attendance. Teachers who certify in the National Board process will be trained as facilitators to support future cohorts of teachers in our district who pursue certification.

**Budget Narrative**

Describe how the proposed budget will meet the needs and goals of the program, including for staffing, supplies and materials, contracts, travel, etc. If applicable, include a high-level snapshot of funds currently allocated to similar programs. Include a short narrative describing how adjustments will be made in the future to meet needs.

The proposed budget is designed to cover our qualified external partner, substitute coverage for each National Board Candidate, and subscriptions to the National Board ATLAS for each candidate. A detailed breakdown for all cost expenses for each of these components is outlined below:

**External Partners (National Board Research Center, Stanford)**

The funds allocated in the budget under 6200 Professional and Contracted Services relate to the programming offered by our external partners. The facilitation of the weekly meetings, asynchronous Canvas resources, help desk, and one-to-one mentorship sessions is covered with the price of \$600 per candidate for the 2021-2022 school year. We will have 15 candidates for a total for line item one of \$9,000. The second line item in this section is \$3,500 for a two-day jumpstart training that will occur in the summer of 2021. Due to the current pandemic and the sheer distance between our external partners and our district, all interactions will be virtual.

**Substitute Coverage**

The funds allocated in the budget under 6100 Payroll are for 2 days of substitute coverage for each candidate. One day will be used in the fall and the other in the spring for the purpose of allowing teachers on the job time to complete components of the National Board Certification requirements.

**National Board Accomplished Teaching, and Learning Schools (ATLAS) Subscriptions**

The funds allocated in the budget under Supplies and Materials correlate to the 15 subscriptions to the National Board ATLAS. ATLAS is a library of authentic video cases showing National Board-Certified Teachers at work in the classroom. The subscription is a three-year subscription starting in the summer of 2021.

Note: HCISD will be contributing a portion of the cost for testing and completion of the National Board Certification.

**Program Requirements**

1. **Teacher Leader Recruitment & Selection:** Consider the degree to which the diversity of your LEA's leadership mirrors that of the student population in your district. Describe the following: a) how you will recruit and select a diverse group of teacher leaders representative of the LEA's student population; b) research-based best practices you will use related to recruitment and selection; c) how you will ensure teacher leaders have a demonstrated track record of excellence improving student outcomes, exhibit strong interpersonal skills and leadership potential, and demonstrate an interest in the teacher leadership model of the pathway you have chosen.

HCISD has developed a rigorous recruitment, hiring, and selection process that is grounded in our leadership definition for any professional position at every level of the organization. This process ensures that every qualified individual has the opportunity to showcase their commitment to excellence and their heart for people as these two characteristics are the standing pillars of our leadership definition. Engaging in this foundational and researched based approach we will recruit a diverse group of teacher leaders for Project NBC during the spring of 2021 by:

- Sharing the opportunity with Harlingen Learning Community which includes key campus personnel and administrators
- Holding an informational session on the requirements of the program as well as the application process

The selection process of 15 candidates will take place no later than May of 2021. To ensure that all teacher leader candidates demonstrate an interest in obtaining National Board Certification, have demonstrated excellence in improving student outcomes, and exhibit strong leadership skills, each candidate will participate in the following procedure and activities:

**Round 1**

1. Submit an electronic application that highlights the teacher's demonstration of excellence including student growth, T-TESS Evaluations, and recommendation letters from current supervisors
  2. Submit a video showcasing examples of their commitment to excellence, their heart for people, and their inspiration in participating in Project NBC
- Both submissions will be evaluated against a rubric by a small committee of representatives at different levels of the organization.

**Round 2**

1. Participate in an interview session that will involve candidates providing a classroom experience with the interview panel
  2. Participate in a question and answer session around interest in Project NBC, leadership characteristics, and student outcomes
- The interview will be evaluated against a rubric by a small committee of representatives at different levels of the organization.

2. **Teacher Leader Role & Responsibilities:** Describe in detail the following: a) the main role and responsibilities of teacher leaders in your grant pathway, b) the main activities in which teacher leaders will engage each month of the school year and approximate time commitments for each month, and c) how you will measure the success of teacher leaders in their respective roles.

The main role of the 15 teachers in the Project NBC cohort will be to actively participate in and complete the outlined program put forth by our external partners which is Stanford's National Board Research Center and complete the required components to become Nationally Board Certified.

This program is designed to combine collaboration with other National Board-Certified Teachers along with a compilation of key resources to create a comprehensive learning experience with consistent support along the way. Each week cohort teachers will attend synchronous meetings along with weekly self-paced content in an asynchronous course through Canvas. This program will focus on covering an array of topics including understanding the 4 components of the National Board Certification, as well as scoring. In addition, participants will engage in exercises to practice the writing component and will receive feedback from certified teachers and coaches.



**Program Requirements (Cont.)**

**2. Teacher Leader Role & Responsibilities (Cont.):**

Over the course of the program, teachers will be required to put in between 10-14 hours a month to complete the content and gather artifacts for their portfolios.

At the end of each month, cohort teachers will meet with their designated mentors as a checkpoint to ensure success of completion of materials and artifacts for their portfolio. In addition to a measure of success, these mentor sessions will serve as extra support for teachers who may have questions or are struggling with certain components.

**3. Teacher Leader Training & Support: Indicate whether you will partner with an external entity to provide training and teacher leader support specific to your pathway (required for pathways one and three). Describe in detail the following: a) the content, frequency, duration (total hours), and measures of success of your teacher leader training over the course of school year, which may include summers, b) additional supports your LEA, campus leadership, and external partner (if applicable) will provide teacher leaders to ensure a strong onboarding process and success in this program, and c) the qualifications you and your external partner, if applicable, have to provide these supports.**

As mentioned above, we will be partnering with an external entity, Stanford's National Research Board Center, to provide training and support for Pathway 2: National Board Candidacy Cohorts. The National Board Resource Center (NBRC) at Stanford has a mission to offer support to educational systems and teachers to pursue National Board Certification, promote teacher leadership, and improve the quality of teaching. The NBRC will be implementing a program that is endorsed by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards and will be tailored to meet the needs of HCISD.

This two-year program will include weekly online synchronous meetings, comprehensive online resources, including an asynchronous Canvas course and help desk, as well as one-to-one mentoring sessions with National Board-Certified mentors provided by our partner. These sessions will begin in the summer of 2021 with a 2-day jumpstart session followed by one-hour weekly meetings in the fall of 2021. The total hours of time engaged in the program range from 2-3 hours per week or 10-14 hours monthly from September to May of the 2021-2022 academic school year. The content of the program focuses on the four components of National Board Certification and scoring along with teacher growth including differentiation, creating safe and inclusive learning environments, reflecting on professional learning, developing content knowledge, and collaboration. These sessions will be supported with writing, review, and feedback sessions with certified teachers and coaches.

**Program Requirements (Cont.)****3. Teacher Leader Training & Support (cont.)**

As a district, we realize teachers will need additional support as they progress through this rigorous program. As a result, we are committed to providing two days throughout the year, one in the fall and one in the spring, for candidates to work on their National Board Certification requirements during the workday. In addition, we will partner with NBRC Stanford to create an onboarding celebration and outline a collaborative support pipeline to ensure success in the program.

HCISD has a high success rate with implementing projects, such as the one outlined above. We are dedicating a project manager to serve as a liaison between NBRC Stanford and HCISD to ensure the success of the project and our candidates. As a nationally recognized organization and TEA approved partner, NBRC Stanford meets all qualifications put forth by the grant. Our cohorts will be facilitated by Geetha Lakshminarayanan and Alissa Fong, the co-directors of the NBRC and are National Board-Certified Teachers. All mentors and any additional facilitators will all be National Board-Certified, and many have also completed the certification renewal process.

**4. Highly Effective Teacher Retention Strategies:** Describe how you will use this grant to increase the retention of highly effective teachers that are representative of your LEA's student population. Describe: a) your LEA goals related to the retention of highly effective teachers that are representative of your student population, b) the retention strategies will you implement to achieve these goals, including action steps, owners, and timelines, and c) how the design and implementation of this grant program will align to the retention strategies you list in your response.

The Teacher Leadership Grant will allow HCISD to build upon the foundation of the teacher retention strategies and programming that is already in place. Currently HCISD ranges between an 88%-91% teacher retention rate district wide. We attribute our success of the retention of our teachers to the initiatives, support, and opportunities we provide for our teachers within the district. Our goal for the district is to increase our retention rate for board certified teachers by offering leadership opportunities in the classroom, building teachers' skillsets, and empowering our teachers.

The retention strategies that correlate to this grant include establishing support through a mentorship program for National Board-Certified candidates, offering an incentive for teachers to perfect their practice, and providing an avenue for future leadership in the teacher role. The mentorship program for candidates will be led by our external partners and supported by HCISD on a monthly basis for the entire two-year program starting in the summer of 2021. The incentive for perfecting teachers' practices starts with the acceptance into the cohort in the spring of 2021 with the investment of the program cost and HCISD's contribution to test expenses. Finally, Board-Certification will enable our teachers to take on leadership roles, such as department chair opportunities, leading professional development, and mentoring future NBC cohort teachers after year one of the program and beyond.

The design and implementation of Project NBC will help us meet our goal of increasing the retention rate of our teachers by empowering our teachers through mentorship, building skillsets, and leadership opportunities.



**Equitable Access and Participation**

Check the appropriate box below to indicate whether any barriers exist to equitable access and participation for any groups that receive services funded by this program.

- The applicant assures that no barriers exist to equitable access and participation for any groups receiving services funded by this program.
- Barriers exist to equitable access and participation for the following groups receiving services funded by this grant, as described below.

Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>

**PNP Equitable Services**

Are any private nonprofit schools located within the applicant's boundaries?

- Yes
- No

*If you answered "No" to the preceding question, stop here. You have completed the section. Proceed to the next page.*

Are any private nonprofit schools participating in the program?

- Yes
- No

*If you answered "No" to the preceding question, stop here. You have completed the section. Proceed to the next page.*

**5A: Assurances**

- The LEA assures that it discussed all consultation requirements as listed in Section 1117(b)(1) and/or Section 8501(c)(1), as applicable, with all eligible private nonprofit schools located within the LEA's boundaries.
- The LEA assures the appropriate Affirmations of Consultation will be provided to TEA's PNP Ombudsman in the manner and time requested.

**5B: Equitable Services Calculation**

1. LEA's student enrollment	<input type="text"/>
2. Enrollment of all participating private schools	<input type="text"/>
3. Total enrollment of LEA and all participating PNPs (line 1 plus line 2)	<input type="text"/>
4. Total current-year program allocation	<input type="text"/>
5. LEA reservation for direct administrative costs, not to exceed the program's defined limit	<input type="text"/>
6. Total LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 4 minus line 5)	<input type="text"/>
7. Per-pupil LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 6 divided by line 3)	<input type="text"/>
<b>LEA's total required ESSA PNP equitable services reservation (line 7 times line 2)</b>	<input type="text"/>

**Appendix I: Amendment Description and Purpose** (leave this section blank when completing the initial application for funding)

An amendment must be submitted when the program plan or budget is altered for the reasons described in the "When to Amend the Application" document posted on the [Administering a Grant](#) page. The following are required to be submitted for an amendment: (1) Page 1 of the application with updated contact information and current authorized official's signature and date, (2) Appendix I with changes identified and described, (3) all updated sections of the application or budget affected by the changes identified below, and, if applicable, (4) Amended Budget Request. Amendment Instructions with more details can be found on the last tab of the budget template.

*You may duplicate this page*

**Amended Section**

**Reason for Amendment**