



**2021-2023 Expansion of Dual Credit Faculty for CCRSM LOI
Letter of Interest (LOI) Application Due 11:59 p.m. CT, April 12, 2021**

NOGA ID

Authorizing legislation **General Appropriations Act, Article III, Rider 49, 86 TX Legislature; TEC §29.908(b) & 102.1091**

This LOI application must be submitted via email to 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, April 12, 2021**.

Application stamp-in date and time

Grant period from

Pre-award costs are not permitted for this LOI.

Required Attachments

1. Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)
2. Attachment 1: CCRSM Crosswalk
3. Attachment 2: Letter of Instructional Assurances
4. Attachment 3: Letter of Hiring Assurances from Higher Education Partner(s)
5. Attachment 4: Participant Roster
6. Attachment 5: Letter of Educators' Commitment

Amendment Number

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

Applicant Information

Organization CDN Campus ESC DUNS

Address City ZIP Vendor ID

Primary Contact Email Phone

Secondary Contact Email Phone

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 Title

Email Phone

Signature Date

Shared Services Arrangements

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are permitted for this grant. **Check the box below if applying as fiscal agent.**

- The LEA or ESC submitting this application is the fiscal agent of a planned SSA. All participating agencies will enter into a written SSA agreement describing the fiscal agent and SSA member responsibilities. All participants understand that the "Shared Services Arrangement Attachment" must be completed and signed by all SSA members and submitted to TEA before the NOGA is issued.

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 assurances that a maximum of \$25,000 will be requested for reimbursement per educator for expenses related to tuition, fees, and travel during the life of the grant. Additional costs will be the responsibility of the LEA or participant upon a local agreement.
2. The applicant provides assurances that all participants serve within the eligible CCRSM in the 2021-2022 school year. Participating educators must each sign a Letter of Educator's Commitment which will be collectively submitted as Attachment #5.
3. The applicant provides assurances that successful completion is defined as an average of 75% or higher in each course completed. All expenses related to participation in the accelerated credentialing program (e.g., tuition and fees, textbooks, travel expenses) are eligible for reimbursement by TEA upon successful completion of courses per term.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Statutory and TEA Program requirements as noted in the 2021-2023 CCRSM Expansion of Educators Eligible to Teach College Courses LOI Program Guidelines.
7. The CCRSM program leader(s) will submit a CCRSM designation (renewal) application for designation in 2022-2023 and for designation in 2023-2024.
8. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2021-2023 CCRSM Expansion of Educators Eligible to Teach College Courses Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.
9. The applicant provides assurances that an academic year signed and dated memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the dual credit provider will be publicly posted by August 15, 2021. The MOU must address the following elements: Eligible courses; Student eligibility; Location of the class; Composition of students in the class; Faculty selection, supervision, and evaluation; Course Curriculum, Instructional Materials and calendar; Academic policies and student support services; Data-sharing policies and procedures; Courses of study that lead to an associate degree or up to 60 hours of college credit toward a 4-year degree; Administration of statewide assessments; Transcription of credit and Funding.

TEA Program Requirements

1. Identification of Needs: Describe your plan for identifying dual credit faculty needs for this grant, as well as in the future. What systems will you put in place to ensure each CCRSM cohort is offered a sequence of coursework which will lead to a postsecondary credential?

Aquilla Independent School District, located in Aquilla, Texas, is a single-campus, rural school district (10 TEA Priority Points) with 335 students. Its campus, Aquilla Junior High/High School, is a College & Career Readiness School Models (CCRSM) designated campus. Its number of economically disadvantaged students is 58.8%, almost the state average of 60%. It has a rate of 5.1% students with dyslexia, higher than the Texas average of 3.6%. The number of Aquilla students with physical disabilities (29.4%) exceeds the state average (21.9%). The percentage of districts students with behavioral disabilities (26.5%) also exceeds that of the state (20.6%) (2020-2021 TAPR).

Of Aquilla’s 50 staff members, only 2 have master’s degrees. This rate of 9.9% is significantly lower than the state’s average of 24.3% of educators with master’s degrees. This investigation revealed and identified the district’s dual credit faculty needs; therefore, the district seeks to expand its dual course credit opportunities through this grant program by allowing six of its teachers to receive their master’s or become accredited in a dual content area through 18 credit hours.

In order to identify the future dual credit faculty needs after the grant period ends, the district will survey staff and students who participate in the dual program and receive feedback from the participants themselves on what they think could improve and what courses, if any, should be added. The district will also assess the Workforce Development Council statistics for on-demand employment in the area.

Postsecondary credentials are ensured through the sequence of coursework offered through the school district and its partner college, Hill College. Hill College has worked with Aquilla ISD in the past, including for TEA’s P-Tech Implementation grant. Both institutions have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding for said grant and will complete another MOU for the Expansion of Dual Credit.

2. Program Design: Name the university partner(s) which will provide graduate level instruction to participating educators. Describe in detail how the LEA will coordinate with the university partner(s) to design an accelerated credentialing program. What are the university's roles and responsibilities in building a program to expand the number of educators credentialed to teacher college courses?

Aquilla ISD is partnering with Tarleton State University as its chosen 4-year institution of higher learning. TSU is located in Stephenville and is a founding member of the Texas A&M University System.

Aquilla ISD is focusing on Education & Training and STEM for its dual credit courses that will be provided to students following the grant period's end, including Curriculum & Instruction, Criminal Justice, and Biology. Aquilla ISD's six selected teachers would be conducting their graduate studies through Tarleton's online graduate programs. Tarleton State University offers a Master's of Education in Curriculum and Instruction and a Master's of Business Administration.

Two of Aquilla's selected teachers hold Elementary Education Teaching Certificates, and one is pursuing a master's degree in Special Education while the other is pursuing Curriculum & Education. Another teacher is pursuing a Master's of Science in Agriculture, another a Master's in Business Administration, and another in Biology.

Tarleton's roles and responsibilities will include working closely with the grant program's Project Director while developing the accelerated credentialing program. All of Aquilla's desired master's degrees can be completed in two years, ensuring Aquilla's selected teachers meet the grant program's ending date of the grant period (June 15th, 2023). It will be the responsibility of all participants, including teachers, district administration, and University administration, to ensure the teachers' completion of the program from Fall 2021 to Summer 2023. Tarleton offers free support services to students, including academic coaches, career advisors, and counseling, all offered online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. When selected teachers take advantage of these resources, they will be better equipped to handle the stresses of studying and working full-time with the support of the University.

TSU completed and signed the grant application’s Attachment #2 Letter of Instructional Assurances (10 points) to demonstrate its commitment to providing Aquilla’s teachers with quality graduate courses and thus helping expand Aquilla ISD’s dual credit program.

TEA Program Requirements (Cont'd)

3. Hiring: Name the dual credit provider(s) who will hire educators. How will the applicant collaborate with the dual credit provider? What steps will take place to ensure that the courses taken by the educator will meet the accrediting standards of the hiring dual credit provider? What are the roles and responsibilities of the hiring dual credit provider?

Aquilla ISD is partnering with Hill College, a public 2-year community college located in Hillsboro, as its dual credit provider. Aquilla ISD and Hill College hold a dedicated partnership spanning years, including collaboration in the district's 2021-2023 P-Tech Planning and Implementation grant. Both institutions developed an MOU together. The two institutions' partnership history will facilitate collaboration when discussing the grant program's implementation and its funds, including Hill's Dual Credit Department meeting with Aquilla's Project Director and selected teachers. Once the grant award has been announced, these meetings will discuss the teacher's chosen programs of study, the district's programmatic needs for college-level courses, the specific dual credit courses selected teachers will teach once accredited, what credentials the college requires of educators, and the targeted number of students for the expanded dual credit courses. Hill College and Aquilla ISD collaborated in completing the grant application's Attachment #1 CCRSM Crosswalk (5 points) to ensure the transfer of the teachers' programs of study into dual credit courses for district students. To further demonstrate Hill's commitment, Hill College is accredited by the Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award the associate degree.

Hill College's roles and responsibilities include hiring Aquilla ISD's selected teachers once they become accredited as dual credit faculty, as stated in Hill's Attachment #3 Letter of Hiring Assurances from Higher Education Partner (10 points). Lastly, Hill College will provide Aquilla ISD's participating students dual credit in the selected and hired teachers' content areas as the dual credit provider.

4. Sustainability Plan: Describe the sustainability plan to be implemented which can support the ongoing efforts of the CCRSM campus(es) to address capacity challenges for offering college-level courses beyond the life of the grant. How will the applicant build upon the success of this program to expand college course offerings for high school students in the future.

In order to support the ongoing efforts of the CCRSM campus to address capacity challenges for offering college-level courses beyond the life of the grant, Aquilla ISD will work with Tarleton State University and Hill College to examine critical areas of growth in dual credit. If the district determines a need to address its dual credit program's capacity and expansion, it will implement diverse and increased grant funding from outside sources, including local, state, and federal funds. Career and Technology Education (CTE) funds can also be utilized to hire CTE teachers who can also teach dual credit courses.

Lastly, if the district determines a dire need to expand its dual credit faculty program by credentialing more of its educators, it will look for distinct funding sources to ensure accredited educators' recruitment and retention. For example, Title II, Part A-Supporting Effective Instruction funds can be utilized to recruit credentialed teachers.

TEA Program Requirements (Cont'd)

5. **Recruitment and Retention:** How were teachers identified and recruited? What new practices will be put into place to support their completion of the accelerated credentialing program? What commitment has the applicant made to educators to ensure that they will be able to teach college courses upon satisfaction of meeting credentialing requirements? What commitment has the applicant asked of educators to ensure that they will continue to serve the CCRSM beyond the grant period to teach college-level courses?

Aquilla ISD identified and recruited its teachers for the Expansion of Dual Credit Faculty program through an online survey detailing the grant’s opportunities and requirements. Through the application’s Attachment #4 Participant Roster (5 points), six district teachers demonstrated a positive willingness to commit to receiving their master’s degrees in diverse content areas in order to teach dual credit courses. Through Tarleton State University, three of the six selected teachers are obtaining their master’s in Curriculum and Instruction, with one adding a focus in Biology in order to teach dual credit biology. Another instructor is taking on a Criminal Justice master's and two are committing to a Master's in Business Administration.

Aquilla ISD has assured its educators that they will teach college courses after becoming accredited through a contractual agreement with their educators and with their hiring partner, Hill College. Through the memorandum of understanding created with Hill College, Aquilla ISD has committed to its teachers that a 2-year institution of higher education will hire them to teach dual credit at Aquilla’s secondary campus.

As Aquilla ISD educators were required to sign Attachment #5 Letter of Educators’ Commitment (5 points), so too will they be required to sign a contract with the district detailing their intent to remain with Aquilla ISD two years following the grant period’s end in order to utilize their graduate degrees for the expansion of dual credit courses at the secondary campus, as is the original intention of the grant.

These educator’s commitment to teaching dual credit will increase the diversity of study at Aquilla Junior High/High School, providing a more enriching educational experience for Aquilla students.

Budget Narrative

Include a narrative describing how the proposed budget will support the needs and goals of the program, including for staffing, instructional expenses, supplies, materials, contracts, travel, etc. Describe any matches that are anticipated to support this program, either by the LEA, college partner, or educator. Describe the disbursement plan for the expenses incurred by educators participating in the program. Describe anticipated risks for this project and the adjustments which may be made over the course of the grant period.

The following budget narrative outlines the intended monetary disbursement for the grant applicant’s staff, instructional expenses, supplies, materials, travel, and operating costs.

PAYROLL: The program’s Project Director will earn a minimum of 10% of grant funds secured as a stipend, thus earning a total of \$16,000.

PROFESSIONAL CONTRACT SERVICES: Tarleton State University will receive direct payments from Aquilla ISD for its teachers’ tuition and other expenses necessary to obtain their graduate degrees, including fees. Each teacher is eligible for up to \$25,000 in reimbursement from the grant funds. The total amount of grant funds allocated for contracted services is \$124,00. Since the district will pay Tarleton State directly instead of having the individual teachers pay out-of-pocket, the grant reimbursement will run directly to Aquilla ISD.

SUPPLIES & MATERIALS: Necessary supplies and materials for teachers to obtain their graduate degrees include books and exams (i.e. content exams), miscellaneous study items, etc, totaling \$28,200.

OTHER OPERATING COSTS: As teachers are pursuing their graduate degrees through Tarleton State’s online course programs, the district has allocated limited travel funds for teachers. Additional operating costs include teachers’ enrollment costs, such as fees and exams like the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). Total amount budget for other operating costs equals \$7,800.

The district anticipates risks related to their selected teachers’ possible issues during the completion of their graduate degrees. For example, teachers run the risk of falling below the required grade average of 75 due to their long work and study hours. To combat this possible crisis, teachers will be encouraged to take advantage of Tarleton’s support services, which include, as mentioned, online tutoring, time management, and counseling services.

Another possible risk involves teachers deciding to drop the program or their teaching job. As mentioned, Aquilla ISD will have signed a contract with their selected teachers to ensure they commit to teaching their accredited dual credit courses for at least two years following the grant period’s end.

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.

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Amended Section

Reason for Amendment