

Competitive Preference Priority 1—Need for Assistance

The Texarkana Arkansas School District (TASD) is applying for a Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP) Grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement under the following competitive priorities: 1. Need for assistance 2. New or revised magnet schools projects and strengths of evidence to support proposed projects 3. Selection of students and 4. Increasing racial integration and socioeconomic diversity. The proposed Texarkana MSAP project will build on the highly successful district elementary magnet schools that are in place and thriving. With this proposal, project-based learning using STEAM curricula will now extend up from 5th through 12th grades while the high school AP program will be extended down so that preparatory-AP courses can scaffold and support more students at the middle school and junior high to get into the AP pipeline. Three schools will participate in this new magnet strand called **The Texarkana Montage Project**: College Hill Middle School (5-6), North Heights Jr. High (7-8), and Arkansas High School (9-12).

Montage is a term indicating an artistic composite of juxtaposed elements, each retaining its own identity. This STEAM magnet strand uses the arts as the element that brings together STEM conceptual ideas into a ‘montage’ of meaningful learning. The Texarkana Montage project will juxtapose rigorous and dynamic academic experiences using project-based learning within hands-on, high-tech environments, student leadership development, and individual wellness to personalize student learning from the middle school through high school. TASD educators will become facilitators of learning to help students as they develop intellectual and social skills. This emphasis on personalized learning will take TASD to a new level of excellence. In 2013, TASD secured a MSAP grant from the U.S. Department of Education for their award-winning elementary magnet program, which is successfully bringing non-minority and affluent students

back to the district. The past four years have re-energized the T ASD elementary schools, which are now self-sustaining, and have moved the district forward in its systemic reform. Project Based Learning (PBL) and STEAM curricula are now well grounded throughout the lower grades. The Texarkana Montage project will be the district's next step toward continuous improvement of enhanced and meaningful learning for all students as the middle school (grades 5-6), the junior high (grades 7-8), and the high school (grades 9-12) embrace PBL and STEAM curricula. In turn, Pre-AP and advanced coursework will be pushed down to grades 5-8, enabling more students to take higher-level AP courses as they move on to Arkansas High, which is a nationally certified AP school. This Montage project will be an artistic composite of personalized learning for every student, allowing each student to embrace his/her own identity while maneuvering in any circle of society and in whatever field of work or study each chooses to pursue.

Background

Geographically located on the border of Texas and Arkansas, Texarkana is composed of two cities with the same name: Texarkana, Texas and Texarkana, Arkansas. Because of the different tax structure of each state, families tend to live on the Arkansas side of State Line to enjoy the lower property taxes and then send their children to the perceived more affluent schools on the Texas side. Centrally located between Little Rock, Hot Springs, Shreveport, and Dallas, Texarkana employers draw their workers from a population of just over 130,000 people within a 30-mile radius. The per capita income for the city in the 2000 census was \$17,130 and, as of 2015, that had risen to \$22,058...still a low salary in today's economy. The top employers in the Texarkana area include the Red River Army Depot, Cooper Tire and Rubber Company, Domtar, International Paper, and two medical facilities: Christus St. Michael Healthcare and Wadley

Regional Medical Center. Various trucking, railroad, and airline related jobs are available. The combination of an uncertain job market and increasing cost of living lead many Texarkana young people into the world of work in blue collar jobs right out of high school. The irony of this is that the major medical and industrial facilities afford many management positions, which would provide young people with a much higher standard of living. Texarkana Community College, Texas A&M University-Texarkana, the University of Arkansas Community College at Hope, as well as the University of Arkansas Medical Sciences and Health Education Center, are all located within a 30-mile radius and offer opportunities to continue education for a wide variety of responsible positions in the area.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Texarkana, Arkansas has a population of 66% White, 31% Black, 2% Hispanic, .5% Native American, and approximately .5% Asian and Other. TASD's Black population is 53%...**almost double the Black percentage of the city** and its surrounding population. The census's 2017 city projection for the White population is 69% while the Black population is projected to decrease to 24%. **The school district's Black percentage is increasing, even as the city's Black percentage is decreasing.** *White Flight is very evident:* TASD White families are leaving the district. Some are leaving to enroll in the **perceived** higher performing and more affluent public schools across the state line in Texas; some are leaving to enroll in the majority White schools in the bedroom communities surrounding the city, and still others are leaving to enroll in private and parochial schools in the city. In 2007, the TASD School Board decided that an aggressive change would have to take place in order to stop the loss of student enrollment. Using the magnet school concept as the systemic reform model, Texarkana set about to upgrade its schools in order to reduce minority group isolation as well as to improve academic achievement. The elementary magnet schools have been highly successful

and that success is now fueling parents’ desires for continuation of this high quality education as students continue on into the secondary schools. This MSAP project is designed to enhance and replicate the effective teaching strategies and techniques inherent in personalized learning from the elementary up through the high school while also enabling more students to take part in the AP program once they reach the high school years.

School	Black/Multi Enrollment	Hispanic Enrollment	White Enrollment	Low SES Enrollment	Total Enrollment
College Hill (5/6)	307 (55%)	30 (5%)	219 (39%)	380 (64%)	558
No. Heights (7/8)	345 (60%)	24 (4%)	200 (35%)	269 (48%)	571
Arkansas High (9-12)	626 (55%)	37 (3%)	471 (41%)	481 (46%)	1144

According to <http://arkansas.educationbug.org>, TASD is a **small urban district of 4438 students** in kindergarten through 12th grade with a **68% socioeconomic disadvantaged**. There are approximately **650 private school students** in the area, with enrollment of **Whites averaging 90%** in most of the private schools. Four small districts surrounding TASD have enrollments of just over 3200 students in the 5th-12th grades. Fouke School District is 89% White, Genoa School District is 99% White, Ashdown School District is 63% White, and Spring Hill School District is 90% White. TASD has struggled with the effects of White-flight to surrounding suburbs and towns, as evidenced by these four bedroom community districts. These four school districts do not have any special programs or resources; but what they do have is the perception that they are safer. Over the past four years elementary students are returning to

TASD because of the magnet programs in place. Public perception is changing; but at the 5th grade transition, many families still leave. With this secondary magnet project, many will stay (or return) if they feel confident that the academic programs in the middle school, junior high, and high school are just as safe, rigorous, and inviting. In order to directly address, reduce and/or eliminate minority group isolation and increase school choice for families, TASD is creating and will heavily market this innovative opportunity for ALL students in the greater Texarkana area through the proposed MSAP project. There is a strong educational value in students from all ethnicities, races, and socio-economic levels growing up together in safe and secure academic environments. The TASD School Board supports the vision of this magnet project, as well as TASD’s approved Voluntary Desegregation Plan Resolution (see *Board Resolution and Assurances* in appendix).

Eligibility

The table below reveals the academic weaknesses of TASD project schools’ students in all subject areas compared to students throughout the state of Arkansas. **Each school is diligently working to achieve annual progress and has identified science, math, and English/Language Arts as high need areas for improvement.** According to the 2014/2015 Arkansas A-F Report Card, **all the project schools in this application need improvement.** If this continues, the chances for student success as Texarkana, Arkansas graduates will be handicapped. **Major intervention** is needed in these schools. The chart below shows the percentage of students who “Met Expectations” or “Exceeded Expectations.”

Texarkana State Accountability

Project School	% Met or Exceptional	% Met or Exceptional	% Met or Exceptional
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		Science	English/LA	Mathematics
Arkansas High	9 th -11 th	29% w/ 10% Exc	24% w/ 4% Exc	11% w/ 0% Exc
Arkansas State	9 th -11 th	32% w/ 15% Exc	30% w/ 8% Exc	22% w/ 1% Exc
N. Hghts Jr. Hi	7 th /8 th	11% w/ 1% Exc	16% w/ 1% Exc	11% w/ 0% Exc
Arkansas State	7 th /8 th	28% w/ 6% Exc	28% w/ 6% Exc	19% w/ 0% Exc
Col. Hill M.S.	5 th /6 th	35% w/ 5% Exc	17% w/ 1% Exc	22% w/ 1% Exc
Arkansas State	5 th /6 th	43% w/ 17 % Exc	31% w/ 2% Exc	22% w/ 1% Exc

College Hill Middle School (5-6) and North Heights Jr. High (7-8) received “D” ratings by the state of Arkansas. Arkansas High School has received a “C” rating. This is due to the way Arkansas grades its schools. Each school, across the state, is graded without any consideration for other factors such as student SES. With the high number of low-SES students and other risk factors, T ASD schools consistently receive unsatisfactory marks. While these schools have shown improvement, the Arkansas formula does not recognize any improvement in rating unless the school achieves an “A” for two years. The unfortunate consequence is that the public perception is that these schools are not quality. This magnet project will enable T ASD to market these upper level schools in order to recruit families. T ASD also recognizes that there are students sitting ‘on the bubble,’ as well as other students languishing but not really flourishing, whose lives could be forever changed for the better with this magnet project. A priority under the U.S. Department of Education’s Magnet Schools Assistance Program holds a possible lifeline for these schools since, according to the priority, **“schools identified for school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under Title I [can be]...magnet schools to be funded under this project...”** The fact that the critical 5th-12th grade years of these T ASD schools did not achieve “A” status puts the entire district academic program at risk, which impedes

its voluntary desegregation efforts. The priority cited above provides eligibility for selection as a Magnet Schools Assistance Program grant recipient.

According to the October 1, 2016 Enrollment Snapshot, Arkansas High School has a total enrollment of 1144, 46% low socio-economic status, 59% minority with 51% Black and 41% White. North Heights Jr. High has a total enrollment of 571, 48% low socio-economic status, 65% minority with 60% Black and 35% White. College Hill Middle School has a total enrollment of 558, 64% low socio-economic status, 61% minority with 55% Black and 39% White. **Each project school has a Black population percentage that is almost double the city's Black percentage and climbing.** The TASD School Board has directed the Superintendent to seek Magnet Schools Assistance Program funding for these schools and to create the Texarkana Montage Project. This STEAM magnet theme was carefully crafted to provide rigorous mathematics and science that are accessible in meaningful ways and promote critical thinking, reasoning, and lasting understanding. Partnerships, internships, and in-class experiences will make this magnet strand relevant and rigorous.

The costs of fully implementing the project as proposed:

Texarkana Arkansas School District is requesting \$3,059,437 for 2017/2018, \$3,348,826 for 2018/2019, and \$3,079,779 for 2019/2020, \$2,693,851 For 2020/2021, and \$2,818,028 for 2021/2022. The driving force of this grant proposal is to provide educational opportunities for the approximately 2500 secondary students (5th-12th) in Texarkana, Arkansas, and to bring back students from the private, parochial, and nearby suburban public schools in spite of budgetary problems. The MSAP grant funding will enable district officials to remain focused on improvement of academic achievement, balance demographic profiles in the schools and initiate innovation. Meeting the need for assistance at this time will put in place the structures and

training that will sustain the T ASD magnet instructional program beyond the grant cycle.

Approximately **4,500 potential non-Black public school applicants** are in the surrounding bedroom communities of Texarkana. Additionally, over **500 non-Black private school applicants** live within driving distance of T ASD. Because the amount of local funds available is limited to maintaining facility needs and basic supplies, the need for assistance is tremendous if these potential students are to be attracted to the three project magnet schools. The community is very pleased with the elementary magnet schools in place now, so with this new MSAP project, students who would normally leave the district as they enter the middle school years, will remain in order to continue the dynamic learning begun in the elementary grades. Word is circulating throughout the Texarkana region about the innovative, personalized learning occurring in T ASD and its projection on to the high school. The cost of this proposed project allowed under MSAP guidelines is high due to the number of schools, the needed supplies, and high-end technology needed for the STEAM focus of the Montage magnet theme, as well as for the specialized training to develop and sustain the authentic project-based studies.

Three areas of major expenditure will be necessary to support the unique elements and requirements of the program: professional development, marketing & recruitment, and supplies & equipment. It becomes obvious during classroom observations and interviews with administrators and teachers that in the past there has not been the **amount and depth of training needed relative to authentic content or up-to-date strategies or methodologies**. MSAP funding will be used for training and coaching to infuse science, math, technology, engineering, and the arts learning throughout the core subject areas, for content background and instruction in application of pedagogies with professors at local universities, with nationally recognized consultants, and at premier conferences and training centers nationwide. It will be important to

give the very **best professional development in specialized magnet content, integration of curriculum, and the strategies and best practices that match the academic concepts within the STEAM focus of this magnet theme.** Additionally, it will be essential to train all faculty members on the various **technological equipment and software applications** that will be purchased in support of the standards-based curriculum and instruction. The specialized equipment and supplies listed in the budgets of the three schools are costly and offer a **level of instructional excellence** that these students would not have without this special funding. The potential value for students cannot be realized without **sustained and extensive training** for teachers on these specific pieces of equipment and supplies relative to their respective magnet school sites. Basic to the success of the overall program will be the implementation of a **professional marketing and recruitment plan.** A dynamic and intensive marketing campaign has been outlined that will educate the public as to the many advantages of magnet school attendance. The timeline for the marketing plan has been developed to reflect a sequential and comprehensive approach for attracting and holding the interest of students. The theme for each magnet school will emphasize academic rigor through personalized learning in all **marketing strategies and promotional materials.**

The resources available to the applicant to carry out the project:

TASD's commitment to its proposed school improvement program is evident in the local dollars spent on upgrades and additions of close to \$27 million over the past ten years. The reconfiguration of buildings will continue in an effort to provide high quality facilities for students and a quality work environment for staff. The need for additional classroom space was a dominant factor in the planning for the MSAP grant application for this 2017 to 2022 funding

cycle. The renovations and improvements for the Texarkana schools in this application are indicated below:

College Hill Middle School: HVAC and lighting renovation to entire campus at \$1,562,308.

New flooring, paint, shelving, and windows installed in Library/Media Center and Technology Lab at \$45,000. Parent and Counseling Center created for \$2500.

North Heights Jr. High School: Room division to provide more compartmentalized space and refurbishment of choir room and upgrades to main hall area at \$55,000; Plato Labs, including computers, wiring and infrastructure, and software at a cost of \$45,000; Compass Learning Lab, including computers, wiring and infrastructure, and software at a cost of \$40,000; portable building to accommodate restructuring of school to add classroom space at \$65,000

Arkansas High School: Arkansas High was built ten years ago at a cost of approximately \$15 million. It houses 10-12 core classrooms and features nine science labs. An attached Freshman Academy was opened in 2011 by redesigning an existing building to incorporate all freshmen classes except science for approximately \$3 million. Five computer labs were created at that time. Over the past five years, the following district improvements were made, including but not limited to the high school: roof replacements (\$4 million), electrical/data upgrades (\$2 million) and additional lighting controls (\$750,000). Internet upgrades and switches added for \$38,000. Added a parking lot next to the renovated freshman academy for \$345,000.

Each project campus has a Parent Liaison in place. Parent Liaisons are critical for attaining the positive parent involvement needed to advance student academics and sustain the project. These campus parent liaisons are under the direction of the Assistant Superintendent and are **Title I funded**. Each campus parent liaison develops positive parent relationships and works with families of students on a more personal basis in order to assist students in maintaining good

attendance, answering questions about academic issues, and helping families navigate college applications and financial aid. **Bilingual services** in the district ensure that families whose home language is not English are able to understand all the nuances of the educational system. Another important, and costly, resource that the **district provides is complete transportation services to the project schools**. The district budget is stretched to the limits to provide the facility upgrades that are absolutely necessary to add classroom spaces at these schools. Basic instructional supplies have been provided from the general fund and the district is committed to funding and expanding the Advanced Placement program for more students at Arkansas High School. This dynamic and innovative Texarkana Montage Project will not happen without MSAP funding.

Each school site will use their MSAP project design as a working reference as each step of the plan is implemented. Then, when the whole program is in place and funding ends, that same working reference will serve as a touchstone to ensure that future modifications or additions are true to the basic design. T ASD has highly successful magnet elementary schools that are now well received in the Texarkana area and drawing students back to the district. They have a critical mass of teachers who have been trained, with some advancing to trainers in project-based learning, various technology and software platforms, as well as other instructional initiatives so that they are now in a position to maintain and sustain these systemic reforms. This Montage project will develop this same expertise and start-up materials into the secondary schools, which will counteract White Flight and keep families in T ASD.

Building capacity of staff will be a main priority and, once established, will remain in place through a continuation plan for comprehensive training and coaching as new faculty members come on board. According to the Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, there are six **quality indicators of high achieving schools**. These indicators are: aligned and

rigorous curriculum, effective instruction, use of formative assessment and student assessment data, positive school climate focused on achievement, effective school leadership, and family/community engagement. **Each of these indicators is apparent throughout this project.** With five years to put the project in place under the guidance of strong leaders and with teachers committed to its success, the ‘ripple effect’ will ensure that these secondary magnet schools will sustain beyond the five-year grant cycle.

Magnet campus faculty members, under the guidance of their principals are committed to ensuring that the Texarkana Montage project becomes a reality and is sustained beyond the initial funding. They have been meeting in small writing groups to secure additional funding for classroom projects, as well as for campus wide projects. Funding sources include **state grant opportunities, local corporations, foundation grants, district mini-grants, and even soliciting Eagle Scout projects** such as campus outdoor environmental areas and decking around campus sporting venues. The Montage project is the next phase of the district improvement plan; therefore, each of the secondary Title I school improvement plans are aligned to this vision. District writing teams meet regularly, and have met with success in securing outside funding through the National Science Foundation, the Kennedy Center partnership, the Arkansas Economics Initiative, as well as regional partnerships with Wadley Medical Center, Christus Hospital, the Red River Army Depot, and businesses such as Staples, Target, Walgreen’s and Wal-Mart.

The district level management team **will review all available resources** that become available, assessing and selectively choosing materials and support services that are the diagnostic or prescriptive fit for the given school. With federal funding contributing to expanding institutional capacity, enhancing intellectual capital, and providing for detailed evaluation and documentation

of the efficiency and effectiveness of the magnet Montage project, TASD can focus their attention on generating funding for a program running at full capacity with established and documented evidence of success. Once the equipment and supplies are in place, their replenishment and cyclical **upgrading and replacement will become part of the district technology and maintenance plan**. Partnerships with local universities and community colleges, medical facilities, businesses, and corporations will be forged with this project. Members from these partnership organizations, along with parents and community leaders will advise and support the Texarkana Montage project through the **TASD Magnet Advisory Council**, which will meet under the leadership of the Assistant Superintendent Robin Hickerson along with the Magnet Director.

In conclusion, sustaining reform is a process. Data collection will be crucial for ascertaining what is working and what is not. Keeping monthly tabs on patterns in student behavior, classroom assessments, and instruction can provide early indications of forward momentum or problems. Partnerships with outside assistance providers will be established and then extended beyond the initial stages of effort to help negotiate the inevitable changes that naturally occur within a school and within a district. These external providers can give advice on how reforms can be adapted to work better...both technically, but also politically, by communicating and reminding everyone of the vision and core values set forth at the onset of the project. Leadership depth will also be developed at each school and within the district over time so that there is sustained growth. The responsibility for leading the reform effort will be distributed among the campus faculty members and administration. The special personnel budgeted within this grant application will be charged with developing the expertise of the faculty and staff during the five years of the grant so that their expertise is no longer needed. This project is developing strong

teacher leaders in order to ensure that reforms within the schools last even when dynamic and effective leaders retire or move on.

The extent to which the costs of the project exceed the applicant's resources:

TASD has stretched its budget to the limits in order to provide the facility upgrades that are absolutely necessary to add classroom space. Basic instructional supplies have been provided from the general fund and to applicable past categorical projects. The district will provide transportation service to the magnet schools and pledges that this proposal will be sustained beyond the grant cycle. The needs to be met through MSAP funding will be the highly specialized support structure provided through the district magnet office, supplies, equipment, and the extensive professional development necessary to implement the unique Montage magnet theme at each of the applicant schools. **Examples of supplies and equipment** that will be needed for the magnet strand include: presentation equipment, library titles (both e-books and print, streaming subscriptions and videos), professional library materials including expository readings, engineering software and ancillary materials, robotics, advanced science investigation kits, physics equipment, math manipulatives, reading literacy materials, multicultural art prints, digital technology including individual student personal notepads, iPads, state-of-the-art integrated arts materials and equipment, stagecraft supplies and equipment, radio and TV broadcasting equipment, computers and printers, language software programs, media retrieval system, environmental science materials and equipment along with outdoor field science monitoring devices, video streaming, Makerspace equipment and supplies, costuming materials, music keyboarding and musical instruments, and graphic design software. This proposal includes the various equipment and supplies that are required to ensure that the Montage project is learner centered and students have the materials needed to be successful.

The Texarkana Montage project is truly **innovative and supports systemic reform**, while also being **intriguing and interesting to young people**. The implementation of Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, and the Arts is very costly at the secondary level and these costs greatly exceed the resources that are currently in place. As detailed in the table below, the cost of the Montage project will not be possible without MSAP funding. The cost of the project implementation exceeds district resources by 9% in 2017/2018, by 10% in 2018/2019, and 9% in 2019/2020, by 7% in 2020/2021, and by 7% in 2021/2022.

Cost of the Texarkana Montage Project

Funding Year	Funding/Pupil (5% increase/yr)	Local Resources (based on 3000)	MSAP Funding (2017-2022)	Total Funding (2017-2022)
2017/2018	\$10,872	\$32,616,000	3,059,437	35,675,437
2018/2019	\$11,415	\$34,245,000	3,348,826	37,593,826
2019/2020	\$11,985	\$35,955,000	3,079,779	39,034,779
2020/2021	\$12,584	\$37,752,000	2,693,851	40,445,851
2021/2022	\$13,213	\$39,639,000	2,818,028	42,457,028

The additional MSAP funding is extremely important to the full implementation of the Texarkana project at the three project schools. The success in attracting students from affluent areas of the city to these project schools lies in the full use of the specialized resources, equipment, and supplies associated with engaging inquiry and understanding in the classroom. This requires proper training and technical support for the faculty to use the resources properly and on-site specialists to provide just-in-time answers and guidance to faculty members. These expenses cannot be absorbed in the local funding. As with any district, personnel costs make up over 85% of T ASD’s local budget; therefore, additional specialized personnel and professional

development are needed. The additional personnel hired for the five years of the MSAP grant cycle will train the teachers. **At the end of the 2021/2022 school year teachers will be ready to carry on the Montage project on their own.** This ensures that all personnel within the schools understand that *this is their project rather than an add-on project that only the specialists are charged with.*

The difficulty of effectively carrying out the project exceed the applicant's resources:

High costs are associated with higher levels of integration and educational quality. District officials realize that to establish magnets designed to raise educational quality, as well as attract students from private and parochial schools, the startup cost will necessarily be high. In this funding request, approximately 3000 students will be served each year at a cost of approximately \$12,000 per pupil. **For start-up costs of a carefully designed program of this high caliber, and in a system that is in such need of intervention, this per pupil cost is extremely reasonable.**

Texarkana Arkansas School District is deeply committed to establishing and maintaining its Texarkana Montage magnet program beyond the grant cycle. This is the next phase of the district vision for improving T ASD schools. As stated before, this project will expand the successful elementary magnet strands up through the 5th through 12th grades as well as introduce project-based learning for interdisciplinary and real-world STEAM curricula to secondary teachers. This project also expands the AP program at the high school, as well as down to the middle school and junior high by pushing Pre-AP and advanced academic coursework into the lower grades thus giving more students access to AP offerings. This is the next phase of the district vision. Non-discrimination practices and fair employment standards will continue, not just because they are required, but because this district fully endorses them as a part of their belief in the positive

benefits of diversity. Federal funding through the **Magnet Schools Assistance Program will provide the “seed” money** that moves the dreams of this community, staff, and most especially the parents and students to reality. The innovations developed during the grant cycle are expensive; but by the end of the five years, equipment, technology, and other large purchases will be in place **and** the critical mass of teachers and staff will be trained. **Budgeted district funds will maintain the specific support of these innovations in the future.**

In preparing this proposal, TASD has developed a cost-effective budget for sufficient start-up funds to implement the establishment and revision of the three proposed magnet schools in a manner that will assure accomplishment of their magnet project objectives, so that when funding ends, the district can, in good faith, pledge to continue support. This proposal contains a request for MSAP funding of approximately \$15 million for five years to operate three magnet schools. The funding will support the district level magnet office and the three magnet schools designed to attract, hold the interest, and improve the academic achievement of close to 3000 students. The proposed MSAP budget is sufficient to allow each school to offer, not just another special program, but a program that will resonate with staff and parent expectations while making extensive contributions across the school community.

Marketing and Recruitment: Basic to the success of the overall program will be the implementation of a professional marketing and recruitment plan. The timeline for the marketing plan (in the Priority Three section) reflects a sequential and comprehensive approach for **attracting and holding the interest of students.** The magnet fairs, mass media advertising, open house events, and materials for distribution **must be of the best quality and therefore will be costly.**

Personnel: In order to accomplish the objectives of this proposal, funding is needed for full-time staff members at the Central Office to coordinate magnet curriculum development and instructional trainings, develop marketing/recruitment, provide clerical support for the operation of the grant, as well as coordinate parent support to families. Additionally, six full-time equivalent (FTE) coordinators at the project campuses are needed to facilitate curriculum, professional development training, purchasing, technology, and parent relations. These coordinators will be hired for the five-year cycle and will coach and mentor the teachers to become independent of them by the end of the five years.

Resources and Training: While administrators and teachers have had some great professional development trainings, there hasn't been the critical mass of secondary teachers trained and the training did not continue with follow up and coaching to ensure that the training was implemented into the classroom. The implementation of the training techniques into the classroom instruction will be ensured because of the magnet personnel in place at each campus to provide just-in-time coaching and support but also because there will be a whole campus emphasis on the training. MSAP funding will be used to secure authentic curriculum development and instructional methodologies training with nationally recognized consultants, with Texas A&M University-Texarkana professors in the fields of engineering, math, the sciences and business as well as at premier conferences/training centers nationwide. It will be important to secure the very best professional development in the science, technology, engineering, arts, and math magnet content and integration of that curriculum with the strategies/best practices for these project schools.

Equipment and materials must be state-of-the-art and staff must be trained to effectively use new and innovative teaching strategies if diverse groups of students are to be attracted.

Additionally, teachers will be given the time and resources necessary to develop curriculum that is truly innovative, meets the needs of their students, and utilizes the full potential of modern technology. It will also be essential to train all faculty members on the various equipment and software applications that will be purchased in support of thematic curriculum and instruction. The specialized equipment and supplies listed in school budgets are costly and they require on-going training on how to use them effectively and efficiently. The potential value for students cannot be realized without extensive training for teachers on specific pieces relative to the STEAM and personalized learning focus of the Montage theme.

TASD is requesting adequate funds to cover start-up costs of collaborative activities with the Science, Math, Engineering, and Business departments at Texas A&M University-Texarkana; summer enrichment; as well as other expenses necessary to achieve the goals of this project. The magnet activities will be delivered efficiently and effectively; aggressive marketing and recruitment, comprehensive and targeted professional development, thematic curricular design and development, strong alignment to the Arkansas state standards, thematic curriculum document writing and publishing, interactive evaluation and personnel improvement plans, recruitment of highly qualified personnel in specific thematic areas, instructional and marketing/recruitment materials, and upgrading of supplies and equipment will be taken to a new level of excellence.

TASD is committed to integration and educational equity for all students as outlined in this Texarkana magnet application; however without MSAP funding, the Montage project will not be able to provide the level of quality that is critical to attract a diverse population. Parents must be convinced that the quality of education received in these magnet schools is world-class. **Without the accoutrements inherent in a strong curriculum of instruction that is necessary with**

Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math courses as well as the **structures to safely nurture and guide students through to post-secondary employment or further education,** families will not be attracted to these urban project schools and students currently in these schools will suffer as a result of the district’s diminishing resources.

Competitive Preference Priority 4—Increasing Racial Integration and Socioeconomic Diversity

Every child carries within him/herself a voice that cries, “Help me find my greatness!” The high expectations implicit in a teachers’ demand for excellence and the help by involved adults are important elements for answering that cry. A child learns that he/she is capable and that greatness is expected of him/her. Texarkana is a community whose children are increasingly separated along socioeconomic lines. Racial and socioeconomic integration is the foundation of this grant proposal. The project brings non-minority, affluent students together with minority, Low SES students. Students must grow up together so that they are able to interact and work together as adults. The very nature of the Texarkana Montage project brings students together.

The arts infused coursework throughout the day is a natural draw to students as they design, interact, and develop artistic endeavors in tandem. Harvard Associate Professor, Dr. Jal Mehta states, “...the way in which people learn outside of school –with like-minded others, around topics they care about, with people of varying levels of expertise, in networks that reach out in all directions—will penetrate how both students and adults learn in schools.” This profound statement is why project-based learning will be such a powerful enhancement of the project schools’ curricula for truly increasing racial integration and socioeconomic diversity. **As students work together in teams on intriguing and engaging projects, with varying levels of**

expertise and with varying background perspectives, friendships will be forged and relationships will develop.

There is mounting support for schools to take a more holistic approach to educating poor children. While people in poverty are as diverse as people in any other socioeconomic class, substandard housing, inadequate medical care, and poor nutrition can affect a child’s physical and cognitive development. Living in daily economic hardship can also adversely affect students’ mental health. Children who live in poverty often come to school behind their more affluent peers in terms of literacy and language development. Poverty also places constraints on the family’s ability to access high-quality day care, before- or after-school care, and limited physical space to create private or quiet environments conducive to study. One initiative that seems to provide evidence of promise is Harvard University’s Education Redesign Lab. This initiative links agencies responsible for children’s services. In this approach, school systems and social service agencies work together to address both in-school and out-of-school factors that affect student learning. Another initiative that holds evidence of promise is “Broader, Bolder Approach to Education,” which is a group that uses comprehensive “whole-child” strategies for educating students in poverty. The Texarkana Montage project has incorporated the following best practices from **both** of these initiatives in order to address the racial and socioeconomic integration in the project magnet schools: 1) ***Personalized learning***, which is a kind of individualized education plan that addresses in-school and out-of-school needs of students. 2) ***Integration of social, emotional, and health services*** so schools can respond to issues that arise, which affect a child’s ability to attend classes or pay attention when he/she gets there. 3) A third area of best practices is ensuring all students have access to ***arts-rich activities***, including after school and during the summer. And finally 4) ***governance*** in order to seek critical community

and family input when making education decisions so that a collaborative and comprehensive approach is used to mitigate the effects of poverty and racial isolation.

A blend of family attitudes, cultural ideas, and frustration often lead students to believe that their academic ability is a fixed trait like eye color. By nurturing **growth mindsets** students will learn that the brain can grow and change and that they don't enter schools with a set of unchangeable strengths and weaknesses. With the Montage project, work will be about changing students' beliefs, but also giving them opportunities to self-assess in order to become aware of their own growth academically. Another evidence of promise deals with peers. There is **power of peers** learning from each other when the academic setting is diverse racially, ethnically, and economically. There is some indication that in classrooms that engage students in looking at and learning from one another's work, the quality of student learning rises. By building on the authentic desire to do well, teachers tap into a deep-seated motivation and elicit remarkably well-informed, high-quality ideas. This power of peers makes the challenge and achievement of good work much more manageable and attainable for students.

To help teachers work with students who have disengaged from school, the following classroom strategies from Robert and Jana Marzano's book, "The Key to Classroom Management: Translating Research Into Action" are **research-based strategies** that will be used to help students reconnect and be successful in the academic environment. 1. For students who avoid connection with others, are shy, or who don't initiate conversations...almost an attempt to be invisible as well as for students who have a fear of failure, who give up easily, are convinced they can't succeed, or are easily frustrated and use negative self-talk: Provide safe adult and peer interactions and protection from aggressive people. Provide assertiveness and positive self-talk training and reward small successes quickly. 2. For the student who is hostile, oppositional, or

covert by appearing to agree but then doing the opposite of what is asked: Describe the student's behavior clearly. Contract with the student to reward corrected behavior and set up consequences for uncorrected behavior. Be consistent and provide immediate rewards and consequences. Encourage and acknowledge extracurricular activities in and out of school. Give the student responsibilities to help foster successful experiences. 3. For the student with attention problems such as hyperactivity or inattentiveness: Contract with the student to manage behaviors. Teach basic concentration, study, and thinking skills. Separate the student into a quiet work area. Help the student list each step of a task. Reward successes and even assign a peer tutor. 4. For the perfectionist student: Ask the student to make mistakes on purpose as a teaching tool for others as well as have the student tutor other students. 5. For the socially inept student who is teased for unusual behavior, appearance, or lack of social skills: Teach the student to keep the appropriate personal space distance from others. Teach the meaning of facial expressions, such as anger and hurt. Make suggestions regarding hygiene, dress, mannerism, and posture.

Desegregation

Rebecca Wheat who is the author of, "The Spirited Principal, Success for Boys" and "Action Now: Transforming Schools Through Community," wrote a commentary in the September 30, 2015 *Education Week* entitled, "ZIP Codes Needn't Predict Students' Futures." In this commentary, she outlines how school principals can counteract the abilities, capabilities, and life expectancies that are statistically predicted for their students, just because of where they live. Wheat states that, based on ZIP codes, which identify students' communities and residences, two children living only ten blocks apart have a statistically 15-year difference in their life expectancies because of how each school deals with its student population. In schools where collaborative work is understood and used to advantage, time is set aside each week for grade-

level teachers' meetings. Teachers plan together and have time to discuss individual children. Various racial and economic groups are represented in the school's family activities, and as participants come together, they get to know each other and realize more concretely that they have the same important vision in common: a desire for their children to have the most rewarding school experiences possible. This is the power of the voluntary desegregation plan that is transforming Texarkana Arkansas Public Schools.

Effectiveness to recruit students from different social, economic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds

Strong school leadership, ongoing professional development, a tech savvy environment with the rich appeal of the arts will make learning relevant and fun for every child, drawing families to the TASD schools. Each school will foster a participative school culture where students and teachers are not just consumers of knowledge but also producers of knowledge. The magnet program will provide a seamless, high quality, coherent education, grounded in STEM conceptual understandings that articulate from the thriving elementary magnet program up through the 5th through 12th grades. Learning will be transformed using project-based units of study that are interdisciplinary and infused with the arts to engage students. These PBL units will incorporate design-thinking with hands-on, inquiry learning in technology-rich environments.

There are **no entrance requirements** for any child or youth wishing to attend the TASD magnet schools. Because there is only one middle school, one junior high school, and one high school in TASD, students will be recruited from the feeder schools, which are the surrounding affluent, non-Black suburban districts, from private and parochial schools, from homeschoolers, and from across the state line in Texas (families who actually live in TASD; but cross over to attend school in Texas.) In Arkansas, students are able to enroll in the school of their choice

based on approval of both the sending district and the receiving district. Children and youth from any race, ethnicity, or gender, including those with limited English proficiency and/or special education needs, or physical disability are welcome in TASD. All magnet students will have access to free transportation. Selection into the program is based on space availability and **is through random computer lottery**. Information, in both English and Spanish, regarding the magnet school programs and application deadline will be placed in **newspapers, radio and television advertising, brochures, cable community calendars, billboards, banners, and on the district website**. In addition meetings at gathering places such as **neighborhood churches, community centers, the city library, and neighborhood Boys and Girls Clubs** will ensure that **no family is left out of the loop**. Persons registering the last day of the application period have the same chance of being accepted into the program as those registering the first day. The computer lottery ensures fairness by assigning students by random selection.

A strong academic focus is a primary motivator for parents to send their children to a magnet school and will be **highlighted in the marketing campaign**. Texarkana's Montage project offers an AP Capstone Diploma program from the College Board, which is a college- and career-ready path diploma, which has requirements above and beyond the standard high school diploma. For this advanced diploma, students as Sophomores go through a year-long AP Seminar and then as Juniors, students conduct a rigorous and independent year-long research project. Arkansas offers an Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science (AAIMS) and Arkansas High School is currently an AAIMS school. With this Montage project College Hill Middle School and North Heights Jr. High will develop their teaching staffs to support and develop a pathway for students to be successful in AAIMS schools and thereby scaffold and broaden the number of students who are prepared and able to access this advanced academic

program. The merits of this program will be marketed throughout the city since these will attract and support families from diverse backgrounds to these project schools.

To increase awareness of educational choice, a communication network will be part of the campus strategies to ensure that outreach efforts are extended to all parents. This **communication network** consists of easily navigated district and campus websites, flyers, newsletters, contact through campus parent liaisons and magnet coordinators, parent meetings, community-parent reading programs, mentorships, partners-in-learning adoptions, campus committees, parent chaperones for field trips, career days, multicultural events, and other opportunities for participation at schools. Each of the magnet schools have addressed parents' desire for rigorous and highly-engaging educational programs that are infused with the arts, are academically challenging, are focused on higher order thinking skills, have high student expectations, are technologically advanced, and provide holistic student-centered instruction. A marketing campaign that keeps parents apprised of the options that children have available to them through magnet schools is critical for effectively recruiting students from diverse backgrounds to the project schools. All the project schools are whole school magnets. The neighborhood children within each attendance zone, as well as those recruited to the school, will all be magnet students. Families in Texarkana indicated the following factors were major considerations when deciding to send their child(ren) to a magnet school: 1) safety of the campus 2) advanced academics 3) cutting edge technologies 4) attractive theme/program emphasis 5) bus transportation. Marketing will stress these factors to potential magnet families. The yearly recruitment schedule and marketing will be analyzed and improved each year with input from principals and magnet staff members. (See marketing timeline in Priority 3 – Selection of Students section.)

The perception of historically low academics in these proposed magnet school sites will be discussed with families, explaining the steps being taken to broaden and deepen the curricular offerings at the magnet schools, how differentiated and personalized instruction will support all students, and the extent of interaction with the home. Marketing will target families with a consistent, positive information flow relative to the positive aspects of the program. College Hill Middle School, North Heights Jr. High, and Arkansas High School will all become STEAM magnet schools. All will have a strong Arts-infused STEM base with computer science concepts underlying their themes.

How to foster interaction among students of different social, economic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds in classroom activities, extracurricular activities, or other activities

While educators can't compel friendships among students, they can help them navigate the terrain. The nature of a shared project can foster or discourage interaction. The TASD Montage project will foster interaction among students of different social, economic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds in all school activities. Adolescence is a transition time from childhood to adulthood; and emerging research suggests adolescence is also a critical time for the development of complex problem-solving and social learning. In a series of studies by University of California, Los Angeles, neuroscientist Matthew Lieberman found that teenagers assigned to learn a card game picked up strategies more quickly and performed better when they played with three others of the same age group than they did when they played the game only against a computer. Understanding adolescents' need for social learning, the Montage project has incorporated extra-curricular and co-curricular clubs and organizations as part of the plan for fostering interaction among students of different social, economic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. Since adolescence is a time for figuring out your identity and who you're going to

be for the rest of your life, it is extremely important that the Montage project schools' students bond with each other in academic environments as they work together on projects assigned in their core classrooms; but also in activities and events beyond the school day.

The project design is meant to achieve a true integration of culturally diverse school settings throughout each of the magnet campuses. While all students within the school participate in the magnet program, there are subtle ways that teachers can enhance interactions among students. One technique is called **co-generative dialogues**, which are meant to better meet the specific academic needs of students. In co-generative dialogues, four to six students and their teacher (during lunch, before or after school) engage in a conversation about the classroom. The conversation must generate an action plan and the goal is to help the teacher become a more effective teacher. Teachers will be learning how to conduct co-generative dialogues, as they are powerful tools for creating classroom-learning communities, especially with students from historically disenfranchised groups.

Various research-based best practices and strategies, including multi-tiered interventions and positive behavior support that improve student achievement for children from diverse groups will be implemented in these project schools. Using Vgotsky's theory of social constructivism, Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec state that **cooperative group work** produces higher achievement, greater motivation to learn, more positive relationships among students, greater acceptance of differences, and higher self-esteem. **Interdisciplinary project-based learning** eliminates the piecemeal, patchwork approach to learning and focuses on the interconnectedness and interrelationships of real-world, critical issues. Both cooperative group work and interdisciplinary project-based learning will be cornerstones in the T ASD Montage project.

Social scientists often use the term social capital to describe social connectedness, which means the informal ties to family, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances; involvement in civic associations, religious institutions, athletic teams, volunteer activities, etc. A New York University doctoral researcher, Kate Schwartz analyzed the transition from elementary to middle school in a study in the American Journal of Community Psychology and indications are that community groups and sports can help students stay more connected academically during this critical transition period for low income students. Schwartz found that students who took part in one or two sports or community activities outside of school a few times a month had higher grade point averages, particularly if they became more involved in those activities during 6th grade.

Lower SES parents' social ties tend to be disproportionately concentrated within their own extended family and perhaps a small group of friends as well as a neighbor or two. This means that lower SES children are more likely to interact regularly only with kin and neighborhood children. When adjusting to college, choosing college majors, and making career plans, youth from more affluent, educated homes are more likely to engage with a wider array of informal advisors such as family members, faculty, and outsiders. Children from poor families typically only have the opportunity to consult with one or two members from their immediate family. In short, the social networks of more affluent, educated families amplify their other assets in helping to ensure that their children have richer opportunities. To counter and 'level the playing field' for poor families that lack informal advisors for their children, **mentoring programs at each of the project schools** will connect mentors and "savvy" adults outside the family for students academically as they conduct academic research projects; but these mentors and savvy adults will also play a critical role in helping each child develop his/her full potential. Careful,

independent evaluations have shown that formal mentoring can help at-risk children and youth to develop healthy relations with adults (including parents), and in turn to achieve significant gains in academic and psychosocial outcomes such as school attendance, school performance, self-worth, and reduced substance abuse. These measurable effects are strongest when the mentoring relationship is long-term and strongest for at-risk children.

Each of the Montage project schools will incorporate ways to connect with families from diverse backgrounds. By sharing with the people around us, it helps everyone to make connections. Public art project and intercultural learning experiences will be fostered at the campuses. A particularly powerful art project that will be replicated at the Montage project schools is the “Before I Die” art project. This project uses blank walls where post-it notes provide people (parents, faculty, staff, and students) to post a goal. A person’s goal may be as simple as putting in a garden or as complex as becoming a fighter pilot; but it can also reveal commonalities and trigger connections. PTA meeting structures will value families by requiring faculty members to attend meetings in order to build relationships with families. Each meeting will begin with a simple dinner and include children (as well as providing babysitting services for those who choose to use it) so families feel welcome. Additional monthly parent involvement meetings will be held in the mornings for those who must work nights. From Family Math Nights to Staff/Family Sporting Games to International Nights, families will be valued and placed at the center of the school community.

How to ensure equal access and treatment for participants who are traditionally underrepresented in courses and activities

Stereotypes start breaking down as people become more acquainted on a personal level. TASD plans to conduct an “equity audit” of each of its project campuses. This audit will examine each

school's discipline, suspension, and expulsion procedures, ensure that all students have access to rigorous courses to prepare them for college and careers, and partnerships between higher education institutions, medical facilities, and the business community.

Research suggests that years of little biases add up, shaping who gets identified for accelerated or advanced courses. "Are you sure you belong here?" is a critical question for a disadvantaged student, and when coming from a teacher or another student, it's a micro-aggression incident of discrimination. Awareness of micro-aggression incidents will be highlighted and suppressed.

Another strategy for addressing equal access and treatment of underrepresented students is called ***Shadow a Student***. Throughout the year, campus staff members will take part in shadowing a student for a full day. This means eating lunch with the student, attending classes, and even riding the bus with the student. Adult insights from this exercise serve to shift their mindset and to bring them into full realization of what students encounter each day. Susie Wise, the K-12 lab network director at Stanford University's digital-school states, "Some of the leaders who've done this have been surprised with how passive the student's day is, how much sitting there is, how many transitions there are that don't make much sense." Using these insights administrators, teachers, and other staff members can develop ways to make the project schools more attuned to the needs of all students to ensure none feel disenfranchised. A further strategy will be to connect every student at the onset of middle school with an "education mentor" charged with mentoring the student through high school graduation and the transition to postsecondary. As part of this mentoring program, students will receive help from the local community college and higher education institutions, including tutoring, visits to college campuses, and financial planning. An often overlooked, underrepresented student population group is girls and especially girls from minorities and/or low SES. All-girl teams and/or girl-led teams in Biomechanics, Chess,

Robotics, and other extra-curricular and co-curricular STEM and entrepreneurial activities will be a top priority for encouraging their full participation.

The Montage project will also upgrade and strengthen the family unit throughout the district over the next five years. Vikki Katz, an associate professor of communications at Rutgers University and a senior fellow at the Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop with Michael H. Levine, executive director of the Joan Ganz Cooney Center, and Carmen Gonzalez, assistant professor of communication at the University of Washington state that their research clearly demonstrates that schools' outreach to parents is critical to helping families support their students' classroom learning and enhance their technology related skills. They found that parents and children fluidly trade expert and learner roles as they use technology together, and do so even more frequently in Spanish-dominant, immigrant-headed households. Beyond wiring the schools, the Montage project will provide Wi-Fi (using Wi-Fi outfitted buses that can be parked in different parts of the city) to the homes where the historically underserved children live in order to better close the opportunity gap for them.

Equal access and treatment for traditionally underrepresented students will be accomplished through 1) **safe and secure learning environments** 2) a dynamic, **highly qualified professional staff** successfully teaching a real-world curricula 3) campuses and facilities organized as **centers of community collaboration and learning** 4) a student body at each school that exhibits pride in school and is **fully engaged** in their learning 5) a comprehensive program to **integrate technology** throughout and 6) campuses that have effective and **open dialogue with the community**. We know that it takes high-quality teaching and good parenting for children to succeed. Through carefully crafted professional development the Montage project will upgrade and strengthen the teaching and learning in classrooms throughout these project schools over the

next five years. The Montage project will also upgrade and strengthen the family unit over the next five years by providing needed supplemental services to parents. These include summer and after-school enrichment and tutoring programs as well as health and social activities at the project campuses. One strategy for helping students who show signs of disengaging during the 7th and 8th grade years is to run apprenticeship programs to help them transition to the high school. Counseling workshops help students evaluate their options for high school and to be prepared for the social and emotional aspects of the transition. Included in this strategy will be a peer-to-peer support system that employs high school students. A high school readiness metric will be based on students' attendance, grades, and history of suspensions from school because these are proven indicators of success.

Some strategies that will be used to increase access to advanced academic classes are: 1) Loosen or eliminate enrollment criteria for accessing advanced courses. Many times, teachers and guidance counselors express concerns that Black, Latino, or poor students are unprepared and that enrolling them in advanced courses would lead to failure. This "protection from failure" actually works to deny students opportunities for rigorous educational experiences. 2) Send teachers and administrators to College Board workshops. 3) Indicate to parents it's better for students to take AP courses, even if they get a lower grade. 4) Train guidance counselors on identifying and encouraging students to take advanced coursework. 5) Open more sections and offer more advanced coursework. 6) Develop an AP preparation program for first-time AP students. 7) Make an AP course the standard course (or eliminate the honors level). 8) Build more science labs in order to offer more sections of AP science courses that require a lab setting. To better serve the traditionally underserved student populations, including African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, females, Special Education students, limited English proficient

students, and the disabled, magnet staff members will complete gender sensitivity training, generational poverty and diversity training as well as cultural competency coaching. Many of the magnet personnel represent these diverse populations (and diversity will be a top priority as TASD recruits top educators and develops top educators from their own ranks). These personnel will provide positive role models for encouraging students to think of the possibilities for their own lives.

The effectiveness of all other desegregation strategies to eliminate, reduce, or prevent minority group isolation with substantial minority students

The success of the elementary magnet schools in bringing families back to TASD indicates that Texarkana is effectively reducing minority group isolation with substantial minority students at the elementary level. These efforts will be replicated at the middle school, junior high, and high school. No one can operate within a hostile environment, let alone children whose circumstances were set just because of their birth: race, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation. The magnet schools in this MSAP project have developed **anti-bullying and character development programs**, are grounded in multicultural activities, and students will be engaged in community service projects and civic activities to develop and promote safe and nurturing environments. **Mentorships** on every campus allow both face-to-face and electronic contacts with experts-in-the-field for work on academic projects; but will also connect students to the possibilities for their future. **Career awareness** activities will enable students to learn about career choices from engineers, lawyers, doctors, scientists, architects, accountants, computer technicians, government employees, psychologists, and others. Collaboration with community agencies and organizations provides opportunities for unique contribution to the magnet programs. Home visits reveal that **technology is non-existent** in many homes beyond a

cell phone for students who attend TASD schools. The Montage project will ensure that these children are afforded the resources to bridge the digital divide from one-on-one computer/tablet accessibility to a Wi-Fi environment for completing homework outside of the campuses through mobile Wi-Fi Labs as well as having Wi-Fi available on the project campuses until at least 7:00 PM throughout the work week. High expectations in teaching means effective teachers **make every instructional minute count**; time on task means students are engaged throughout the school day.

Research on raising achievement consistently points to an effective teacher as the most crucial element in a student's success. These campus projects are designed around some basic premises for ensuring effective teaching for enhanced desegregation efforts: 1) a strong **principal leader** 2) **raise expectations** for what's possible 3) participate in **literacy-based professional learning communities** 4) develop a **shared belief and vision** of the schools and its students 5) participate in **effective coaching** experiences, and 6) work toward becoming a **self-sustaining school**.

The Partners in School Innovation in San Francisco, CA states that, "Typically, black students still perform at significantly lower levels than white and Asian students. Schools that do achieve strong results for black students address racial dynamics carefully yet directly, empower students to bring their whole selves to school, and teach in ways that leverage students' experiences and cultures." For students, respect involves "a basic recognition of one's humanity." Middle-school-age students reported losing respect for teachers who disciplined students in a dismissive or punitive way. Feeling respected can change how hard students are willing to work in class. One strategy for addressing racial dynamics is social justice through storytelling: connecting cultural literacy—an awareness of and sensitivity to diverse cultures and lifestyles—and media literacy—a knowledge of how to decode and produce media messages. Personal stories allow students to

talk about their passions, whether it's their own lives or the problems they see in the world. These cinematic personal documentaries allow students to talk about their struggles. Although extremely personal in nature, when students are empowered to tell their own stories, learning becomes energized. The process of telling your own story automatically becomes one of listening to and decoding the stories of others.

Quality of Project Design

TASD is patterning its Montage project on inclusive STEM secondary schools, which offer promising school reform correlates. Nancy Spillane, a clinical associate professor at the Center for Excellence in STEM Education at West Virginia University and Sharon Lynch, a professor of curriculum and pedagogy at George Washington University in Washington, DC collaborated with doctoral candidate, Michael Ford to analyze what highly successful secondary schools do that make them so effective. The study schools were scattered across the nation and were made up of higher proportions of students from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in STEM (African Americans, Hispanics, women, students from low-income families, and first-generation college-bound). None of the schools used academic admission requirements; but instead used a randomized lottery for admission. The research study was called, "Opportunity Structures for Preparation and Inspiration." The following strategies and/or procedures highlighted in the study are being infused in the project design of each of the TASD project schools: 1) Students will be offered broader and deeper STEM coursework than mandated by the state of Arkansas in order to graduate with a more enhanced high school diploma. 2) Leadership will be distributed among school administrators, teachers, and at times, students. 3) Each school will have a clear sense of its mission. 4) Project-based learning will be the dominant instructional pedagogy used to deliver the curriculum. 5) There will be a blurred boundary between formal and informal education

allowing for reconfiguring relationships among teachers, students, and knowledge. 6) Each school culture will be a rich learning place for students, but also for the adults who work there. Each of the T ASD project schools (College Hill Middle School, North Heights Jr. High, and Arkansas High School) will have regular professional development opportunities designed to foster staff collaboration horizontally through grade-level planning sessions and vertically through subject-specific efforts. One morning each week will be designated for using a “tuning process” at staff meetings where teachers will engage in reflections about their teaching practices and choices for assessment. Professional development experiences will include teacher-developed mini-lessons inspired by instructional rounds conducted by groups of teachers observing each other.

In order to be college and career ready, students need to be nurtured and supported as part of a learning community while also learning to collaborate and step out as leaders. This Montage project is built on **strong theory** that students, especially minority and low SES students, will be more engaged academically when the curriculum is more **personalized to their interests**, when the curriculum is more **authentic** meaning conceptual understandings are applied through interdisciplinary projects addressing real-world issues, and when the curriculum is **infused with the arts** to address individual student expression. With STEM, students will engage in scientific inquiry through questioning, developing models, investigating, constructing explanations, and communicating information. STEM also promotes collaborative learning, which is key for students to be successful in careers, and has been shown to increase both flexibility and fluency in math. STEM pushes science and math learning to Bloom’s highest cognitive level (creating and evaluating). Optimal solutions rather than perfect solutions means critical thinking must come into play as learners grapple with the requirements of a problem. A designer in the

corporate world, in order to design the most affordable products or processes, must make some trade-offs or compromises. The reality is practicality. These real world understandings will become apparent as students work through a design project. As they record their design sketches, data, and reflection pieces, students must rely on their knowledge of science and mathematics as well as the specialized skills of design, optimization, and making trade-offs. Purdue University's Design Goal Process will be used to guide project-based learning: ASK: What is the problem? What have others done? What are the constraints? (**research phase**) IMAGINE: What could be some solutions? Brainstorm ideas. Choose the best one. (**brainstorming and converging ideas phase**) PLAN: Draw a diagram. Make a list of materials. (**application of science and math concepts phase**) CREATE: Follow your plan and create it. Test it. (**synthesis/creating phase**) IMPROVE: Troubleshoot and make your design even better. Test it. (**critical thinking phase**)

The answers to these projects are in the students' realm as opposed to traditional schooling where teachers hold the correct answers. Students have control of the outcome. Students use oral and written communication to promote knowledge construction and critique through scientific argumentation, which includes 1) **individual cognitive activities** and 2) a **negotiated social act** through talking and writing within a specific group. Students learn to **research to understand** problems better, they must **argue from evidence** and **analyze data using mathematics**; and they must communicate results to others.

Partnerships: The project schools will be "porous" to the outside world, changing the relationship between student, teacher, and knowledge by changing the schools' connections with their surrounding communities. Outside experts will be welcomed as project mentors, panelists, and/or judges...either in person or virtually. Students will be provided outside-of-school, real-world experiences and career connections through community-based projects, field trips,

mentorships, internships, and job shadowing. Students will make formal presentations of their completed projects before panels made up of business personnel, scientists, teachers, other students, and community members. Such connections to outside STEM experts and community resources will give students increased freedom and accessibility to learn in settings beyond the traditional classroom. These intentionally created school structures will support teacher collaboration and foster relationships that will allow teachers to learn from one another and work toward common goals by creating an environment of trust. Shared decision making and opportunities to assume leadership roles within the schools will give teachers a sense of ownership for the school outcomes, and reinforce the school-wide collaborative culture. For students, the flattened hierarchies of the project schools will deepen student understanding of STEM, bolster their confidence, and allow them to see new opportunities for college and career. The Texarkana, AR Chamber of Commerce partners in education is addressing ways that local businesses can leverage their expertise to support and mentor students in the Montage project schools. Christus St. Michael Healthcare and Wadley Regional Medical Center are local partners that will be invaluable experts for the Montage theme. Laura Clark, as the Vice Chancellor of Academics for the University of Arkansas Community College in Hope, AR has assured T ASD that a memorandum of agreement will give the Montage project campuses real-world STEM experiences with the higher education institution through events such as *Night at the Aquarium* or *Business Ventures through the Stock Market*. The schools will focus on innovative instruction, and then access informal STEM resources in the community to enrich student learning. This forces the schools to be outward focused. These partnerships will unite scientists, educators, and students through mentoring experiences with students working on research projects as well as teachers developing lesson plans and activities, and through summer internships and shadowing

experiences for both students and teachers working with scientists. An example of a project-based unit that incorporates real-world STEM experiences, is one that would allow students to choose a medical facility such as a Senior Living Home, a Nursing Home, a Hospital, or Rehabilitation Center in order to learn biomedical concepts tempered through an entrepreneurial lens. Students and teachers, with the various business and medical partners, would discuss each facility's values and common purpose within the community, thus bringing civics understandings together with the STEM conceptual understandings. As students probe deeper into their unit of study, under the guidance of their teacher and the expert(s)-in-the-field, the question of, "Why do I need to learn this?" is answered and becomes a powerful learning motivation.

Through a very rigorous curriculum that **personalizes learning for every youth**, students will develop deep understandings of the world economically, socially, and environmentally.

Capitalizing on the **high interest of the arts**, students will use the arts to develop strong science and math literacy inherent in project-based learning. Team building, leadership, service learning, and citizenship will be key elements as students hone their skills as young entrepreneurs, enabling them to take higher level AP courses when they move on to Arkansas High School and then graduate to pursue advanced certifications and/or higher education.

The following logic models are based on strong theory of change in alignment with overarching outcomes of the MSAP legislation statutes dealing with desegregation effort, student academic achievement effort and capacity building effort.

Logic Model: Montage Project Voluntary Desegregation Effort

Project Focus: Bring project-based learning with STEM through the Arts up through the 12th grade and expand the number of students accessing AP by pushing the PreAP and advanced academic coursework down to the middle school and junior high school.

THEORY of CHANGE: High student interest in arts-infused and hands-on academic environments is based on **STRONG THEORY** that the arts have a dynamic draw for low-SES and minority student engagement

Resources	Activities	Outputs (products/services)	Short Term Outcomes	Mid Term Outcomes	Long Term Outcomes
District Staff MSAP funds -Funded Staff -Supplies/Equipment -Contractual Services -External Evaluation Professional development for teachers on cultural competency, generational poverty, and diversity issues Community Support -Magnet Advisory Board -Campus PTOs	Board approved District Voluntary Desegregation Plan Marketing/Recruitment -Educate community about secondary magnet school offerings -Showcase events featuring secondary school students and faculty/staff -Teacher/staff home visits to transition year students (5 th , 7 th , 9 th grades)	-Annual distribution of Magnet brochures and flyers to Texarkana area -District Magnet Infomercial to air on local TV channel -Area-wide marketing blitz of magnet program, including billboards, radio spots, and newspaper ads -Quality project management -Applications and race-neutral lottery process	-Increased community awareness of magnet schools -Increased enrollment of students returning, as well as from outside district -Improved parents' knowledge and perception of magnet schools	-Increased community and parent support for magnet schools -Improved school/family relations -Increased sense of belonging and school bonding for students	-Increased socioeconomic and racial diversity in magnet schools -Consistent pool of applicants each year to magnet schools -Interaction and involvement parents from all diverse groups throughout schools
Context: -TASD's commitment to equity for all students -Negative community perception of TASD secondary schools -Increasing Black and Low-SES student populations at TASD secondary schools					

Logic Model: Montage Project Academic Improvement and Capacity Building Effort

THEORY of CHANGE:-Relevant and authentic interdisciplinary learning is based on STRONG THEORY that PBL and personalized learning academic environments have a strong impact on low-SES and minority student engagement

Resources	Activities	Outputs (products/services)	Short Term Outcomes	Mid Term Outcomes	Long Term Outcomes
<p>Approximately \$15 million in MSAP funds over 5 years -Funded Staff -Supplies/Equipment -Contractual Services -External Evaluation</p> <p>Professional development featuring knowledge about evidence-based teaching strategies and strong theory-based attributes such as PBL, STEM, and personalization</p> <p>-Creative learning spaces in schools that blend on-site and off-site learning</p>	<p>-All teachers and staff participate in an annual Retreat, as well as school trainings and follow-up coaching -All campus leaders participate in leadership trainings w/ follow-up coaching -Teachers meet weekly to work on improving instruction and student learning -Business, community, and higher education partnerships established -Align standards-based curriculum with STEM concepts across schools -Develop annual Faculty/Staff Retreats -Expand campus' Parent Resource Centers -Hold Parent workshops and family events</p>	<p>-Teacher develop Grade level Interdisciplinary units of study that include student-centered goals for learning -Establish mentoring relationships -Establish Professional Learning Communities at each project campus -Core courses aligned to graduation pathways, including AP Capstone Diploma and AP Certification -Arts infusion throughout core content coursework -Authentic STEM experiences that connect student learning to the outside world -Bridges for families in poverty that connect them to academic and community resources -Mentoring and enrichment for students and staff</p>	<p>-Teachers increase knowledge of content and instructional strategies w/ theme -Teachers develop shared values and vision emphasizing student-centered learning -Enhanced communication skills of school leaders, teachers, and administrative staff -Increased parent/teacher/student relations -Enhanced instructional competence of teachers -Service learning projects become an integral part of curriculum</p>	<p>-Teachers adopt effective instructional practices; including increased use of differentiated instructional pedagogies -Improved student academic achievement -Student-centered school cultures that are aware of and accept each child's individuality -Increased student interest in STEM careers -School culture sees students as unique individuals and encourages them to use critical and creative thinking</p>	<p>-Increased student achievement on state assessments -Institutionalize evidence-based strategies -Decreased disparities in graduation rates -Increased rates of college acceptance and attendance without the need for remediation -Student-centered school cultures that accept and enhance each child's individuality -Personalized learning with social, emotional, and health services integrated throughout the culture of the school</p>
<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Many students are not accessing their academic potential and languish as they move on to the upper grades -Lack of diversity in Advanced Placement and higher level STEM courses at the high school -Lack of diversity in Pre-AP and advanced STEM courses at the 5th-8th grade levels -Students leave TASD to attend private, parochial, or suburban schools perceived as safer and/or more academically viable. -TASD elementary schools have successfully implemented project-based learning with a STEM through the Arts focus at each of the elementary schools and Arkansas High School is an AP certified school with an AP diploma program 					

Professional Development: College Hill Middle School and North Heights Jr. High are being significantly revised to accommodate this Montage magnet theme that incorporates all the nuances of the integrated STEAM curriculum. Training for the teachers in the Texarkana project will be ongoing and embedded as “just-in-time” coaching and mentoring on the concepts to ensure that the theme is truly infused throughout the day and throughout the core curriculum. Arkansas High School as a new magnet school will continue the articulation of the Montage magnet theme from College Hill Middle School and North Heights Junior High up through the 12th grade. This theme has brought the 5th-12th grade faculties and staffs together with a focused determination and all the secondary project faculty members are excited about this new integrated STEAM magnet strand for their schools. The higher education institutions in the Texarkana area offer endorsements in engineering, science, mathematics, and entrepreneurship, while also connecting teachers to internships and shadowing experiences throughout the summer months through the local and regional partners in education. A possible by-product of this partnership is supporting alternative teacher certification for university majors in STEM fields to address the teacher shortage. University advisors have reported engineering students have expressed interest in teaching with many suggesting a possible career pathway of using their STEM degree (for example, engineering) for the benefit of society.

The common threads at each of the three project schools will include 1) **guided inquiry** using extended projects that teach concepts and skills that generate complex products 2) **curriculum based on the Arkansas State standards** which use authentic problems set in **real world contexts** which deepen students’ science and math literacy 3) the use of **modeling and visualization** for bridging experiences and abstractions 4) students’ **collaborative construction of meaning** through differing perspectives based on shared experiences, and 5) the use of

workplace tools for developing face-to-face and virtual learning communities. The high school faculty will receive basic Project Based Learning training from the Buck Institute while the middle school and junior high teachers will work on more advanced PBL training, serving as mentors and coaches to the high school faculty. Inversely, the middle school and junior high teachers will be taking the basic *Laying the Foundation* training for teaching AP coursework from the National Science Foundation while the high school teachers will continue with more advanced AP training and serve as mentors and coaches to the middle school and junior high teachers.

In a manuscript titled, “How Does Participation in Middle School Technology Education and STEM-Related Career and Technical Education (CTE) Courses Impact Student Achievement in Science, Mathematics, and Reading?” Dr. Daniel Cox from the Volusia County, Florida school district studied the relationship between enrollment in the county’s 14 middle schools’ CTE and STEM offerings and student performance on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). The first conclusion was that students who enrolled in CTE courses scored better on math and science than students who took no CTE courses; but when the study looked specifically at students who enrolled in the **Technology/STEM elective that included Pitsco labs**, an additional bump in scores was identified. It will be imperative that teachers in the magnet schools receive the initial training and on-going just-in-time coaching and support to implement a high-quality STEM program using STEM resources such as Project Lead the Way and Pitsco. All teachers and staff members will have extensive training on project-based learning, which is the use of in-depth and rigorous classroom challenges that students use to focus their learning of STEM concepts and understandings. This is a non-traditional style of teaching and it means teachers will need the initial training and then coaching and follow up to ensure that

implementation of this new student-centered classroom is maintained. The structure of this proposal with instructional mentor teachers and PLCs in place at the campuses, the intermittent trainings through the five years of the grant, and the daily focus of the entire faculty and administration on this new vision of learning, is designed to personalize instruction and truly revise the curricular programs at these project schools. Teacher teams will be linked to develop and co-teach projects in order to integrate subject areas and to ensure real world viability of the projects. This will also strengthen teacher buy-in and support for this 21st Century teaching model.

The **Buck Institute for Education (BIE)** offers consultants, webinars, workshops, and videos designed to help the district implement project-based learning in the schools. This was the PBL training used at the elementary level and therefore the secondary schools will maintain the integrity of the PBL implementation in the district by continuing to use BIE. This professional development will give teachers throughout the project schools the extensive and intense professional development on PBL pedagogy needed to ensure that all staff members are highly qualified to implement the required coursework effectively. This consistent training based throughout the project schools will provide a common instructional language for teachers to reflect and improve their teaching practice. This also allows the district to ensure that there is a district scope and sequence of core courses spiraling through the grade levels at every campus. Additionally, the National Science Teachers Association, as well as other resources will be sought for high quality training. Site visits and contact with schools successfully using STEAM themes will be made as the faculty members build on the successes and learn from the pitfalls of other schools.

Technology-rich work settings will allow students to use technology to support the learning process to investigate, problem-solve, design, model and test original solutions in order to

construct appropriate mathematical and computational models to illustrate conceptual understandings. Each of the schools is requesting **classroom sound systems** to minimize distractions for students, and especially for students with hearing loss. Assistive technology offers supports for not only students with disabilities, but for all students, including those in the special education arena. For example, a student with autism might use a tablet and keyboard to remove the anxiety that writing by hand causes him/her. While access to the tablet is the first step, it doesn't end there. Lessons need to integrate the technology purposefully in order to allow students with special needs to learn successfully. Technology has the power to unleash the academic and social potential of students enrolled in special programs and for students with a variety of disabilities. Instead of remedial school experiences, students with special needs deserve instruction that is accessible and purposeful. Technology can enable students to work through parts of the learning process that are particularly challenging for them. The right tools can also help make content more accessible by allowing students to learn through their strengths. Technology gives students with Individual Education Plans multiple paths to reach a goal. In addition, students often exhibit increased confidence because they need less assistance from an adult. Some simple but powerful ways to maximize student learning include: 1) **speech-to-text apps and software** for students who are highly verbal yet struggle with writing 2) **a mini-lesson recorded** for a student to watch again as needed for students who need more processing time 3) **specific apps or games which focus on a particular skill** such as phonics or math for students with a specific learning disability in reading or math 4) **apps and software that read text aloud** for students with a specific learning disability in the area of reading 5) **sequencing apps** for students with expressive language needs. These instructional and assistive technologies are often

underutilized, and their impact on students is invaluable. When used purposefully, technology enables teachers to provide more interactive, graphic, and sensory supports.

To close the achievement gaps and build on ELLs' (English Language Learners) strengths, teachers for ELLs need additional skills and abilities. Ideally, a bilingual teacher in the classroom is the best solution and TASD will recruit bilingual teachers as much as possible. Beyond bilingualism, the following **Sheltered English techniques** will be developed as part of the cultural competency professional development offered to the project schools: 1) knowledge of language uses, forms, and mechanics 2) efficacy with respect to helping all students achieve high standards 3) strong relationship-building skills and attention to the social-emotional needs of students 4) cultural knowledge and the ability to incorporate this knowledge into instruction 5) specific pedagogical skills, including knowing how to conduct formative assessment of students' developing skills 6) organize the classroom to invite greater participation and 7) scaffold instruction for students who are struggling with English. Great care will be given to provide professional development for non-bilingual teachers on ways to adapt their lesson plans and materials. Books, apps, computer programs, and learning materials, in the languages needed, will be provided. Bilingual parents and volunteers will be invited to engage in reading and learning activities, thus preparing and encouraging families to take an active role in home language literacy. Bilingual paraprofessionals for classrooms that need language supports will be a top priority.

Building relationships with families of immigrant students, along with ALL the students in the magnet schools, will be a major focus of this TASD Montage project. It will be important for each teacher to get to know each family and learn the family's "story." This can be a long process, filled with trial and error. In order to develop a system to handle informal, ongoing

communication between teachers and parents, bilingual services are available throughout the district and will be focused under the guidance of the **Family Communication Specialist**. It will be critical to do the following: 1) find out whether parents prefer communication through phone, email, or text messages 2) use bilingual interpreters and/or parent liaisons to help translate classroom signs and labels, activities students take home, and parent newsletters, or to help during parent meetings or open houses 3) train parents or community volunteers to interpret key communications to parents 4) use a language line to have a conference call with a parent. While sometimes necessary, it will be best to avoid having students translate for their parents. This task is stressful and students may only know the school-related vocabulary in English. Building trust with families is all about making them feel comfortable and at ease.

Professional development will be highly focused on projects and incorporate science and math applications through engineering design. A Council of Chief State School Officers 2008 study stipulated that three conditions must be met to have an effective STEM program: 1. The programs focused on content in mathematics and science. 2. The programs included on-site follow-up in classrooms. 3. The teacher-contact time reached at least 50 hours. The Montage project has taken all three conditions into account. With instructional coaches at each campus, follow up and just-in-time coaching will be a daily process as teachers incorporate content and strategies into their teaching. After extensive teacher training and coaching, the faculty members of the project schools will incorporate innovative teaching practices and techniques, such as but not limited to, **constructivist teaching strategies, cooperative learning techniques, and project-based learning** that integrate STEAM concepts through the content areas. **Design Technology Engineering for American Children (DTEACH)** professional development will train 5th-8th teachers, as well as orient the 9th-12th teachers on beginning lessons on engineering

topics from design and product fabrication to design technology and energy. **LEGO-Dacta Robotics** training will generate enthusiasm among teachers as they experience the exciting world of pneumatic circuit construction combined with problem solving and real-life structural principles. **Activities Integrating Mathematics and Science (AIMS)** professional development integrates hands-on design activities with the use of technology to promote analysis of structures and their construction. The **Texas A&M University-Texarkana Summer Seminar Project** will provide educators with the opportunity to collaborate with guest speakers who are engineers from all walks of life. **NASA Distance Learning** training assists teachers in affording students virtual field trips through linkups to provide tours, activities, and discussions with engineers and astronauts, which focus on space flights. **Jason Projects** such as, “Frozen Worlds” will motivate 5th-8th grade teachers to develop projects that investigate, in this case, the habitats and survival of animals and humans at Glacier National Park and Antarctica. **Computer Assisted Design (CAD)** program training actively involves educators through computer technology in how to rotate a 2-dimensional object to a 3-dimensional object for architectural and mechanical engineering student projects. A variety of community-based instructional trips, shadowing opportunities, and mentoring experiences will provide positive learning for all ages.

The manner and extent student academic achievement will improve

National research has shown that by grades 5-7 students lose interest in individual science, technology, engineering, and mathematics so students at all grade levels need to understand why these disciplines are important and relevant. The interdisciplinary STEAM focus at the project schools will be geared to excite and engage even the most reluctant student. In TASD, the elementary level magnet schools are exposing students to coding, engineering, and general problem solving while incorporating the arts into STEM. To continue this successful elementary

program up into the middle and junior high years, **courses will be reworked and relabeled to spark students' interest.** After school programs such as, *Engineering, Design and Modeling* as well as *Engineering Simulation and Fabrication* will be semester-long opportunities that will allow 7th and 8th graders to explore career and technology. Mini career and technical education classes will give middle school and junior high students experience with fun classes to motivate them to get into career pathways when they move on to high school. A high-school credit class (Essentials of Computer Programming), which is a prerequisite for many career pathways, will be offered to eighth graders. Students in this course can go into programming, computer science, digital design, or web development. The need is to hook students early so they can take advanced career and technical coursework before they leave high school. At the high school, students pursuing the AP Capstone Diploma will have access to advanced courses, including but not limited to, the following: AP Seminar with Leadership & Service Learning in the ensuing semester, AP Research, AP Micro and AP Macro Economics, Robotics, Principles of Biomedical Sciences, and Cybersecurity. At the junior high school, students taking the AP Capstone Pathway will have access to advanced courses, but not limited to, the following courses: Information & Communications Technology, Leadership & Service Learning, Exploring Personal Finance, Robotics, Algebra I, Physical Science, and Essentials of Computer Programming. At the middle school, students taking the AP Capstone Pathway will have access to, but not limited to, the following courses: Robotics & Automation, Robotics, Design & Modeling, Pre-AP Math, Pre-AP Science, and Environmental and Spatial Technology.

The plan is to expose all students to a rigorous curriculum and increase the value of a high school diploma by taking concrete steps to increase opportunities for minority and low SES students. One step will be to identify “missing” students by digging into school-level data and

surveying staff and students about barriers and access. Student profiles will be prepared with information on each student's educational goals, career interests, the adults whom they trust, and barriers they face. Letters will be sent home to parents and an AP recruitment night will be held for middle school, junior high, and high school freshmen and sophomores where the students and families can meet AP teachers and students already enrolled in the classes so as to ease their anxieties about pursuing the AP Capstone Diploma pathway.

Ongoing **professional learning communities** (PLCs) are the basis of the work that creates a whole school of effective teachers. In order for professional development to be successful and positively affect student learning, professional development at these magnet campuses will be **job-embedded, ongoing, coherent, and intense** with follow up and coaching throughout the school years. The **development of a shared belief system and vision for the schools** began with the development of this Montage project. Teachers challenged each other's ideas and values as they honed their vision for their schools. Successful literacy coaching will ensure that the PLCs positively influence student achievement. High trust and expert teaching go hand in hand. Each of the schools has instructional facilitators in place who have developed trust with their faculties over the years. With the new trainings and focus at the schools, the instructional coaches will **demonstrate and model effective teaching** to teachers in their classrooms, as well as conduct **side-by-side guidance** as teachers teach their lessons. The coaches and teachers will collaborate in planning decisions, the on-the-spot teaching and assessing moves, the specific questioning to check for understanding the evidence of learning, and how to use that evidence to shift instruction. **Personalized learning is a progressively student-driven model** in which students deeply engage in meaningful, authentic, and rigorous challenges to demonstrate desired outcomes. As students gain more insight and responsibility for their learning, the facilitation of

learning goals becomes more student driven. For example, a teacher-generated learning goal on a science unit on extreme weather might be for students to understand the causes of hurricanes and tornadoes in the United States. A teacher and students co-created learning goal for that same unit might be that, after initial research on various kinds of dangerous weather patterns, the teacher and students work together to identify two locations that interest them and key questions they'd like to explore about the kinds of extreme weather that affect these geographic areas. Finally, a student-generated learning goal for that same extreme weather unit might be to study how recent hurricanes have affected Haiti since the student's heritage is Haitian. Thus each unit of study is structured and based on learning standards, yet flexible to meet students' interests and passions. Work toward **becoming a self-sustaining school** is all-important. Training for magnet administrators will be secured since the management of a magnet school requires a unique set of skills. The National Institute for Magnet School Leadership (NIMSL) offers a network of selected, top performing magnet school principals as mentors and coaches to local administrators as they work to transform the cultures of these project schools. This will happen over time as staff members develop into **effective, responsive teachers** who use their deep literacy and knowledge of their students to **make wise curricular decisions**. The project schools will be schools where teachers **routinely visit other classrooms, observe each other's teaching, and examine student work samples** as part of respectful relationships built from a strong foundation of trust, where the entire staff participates in ongoing, high-level **PLCs focused on student achievement** and where **collegial conversations** about literacy, teaching, assessing, learning, and advocacy permeate the school culture. Teachers will readily **transfer and apply their knowledge of literacy across the curriculum and across grade levels**. Students will be able to explain what they're doing and why. **Student data and current research inform and guide**

instruction. Staff members will constantly strive to **improve and enhance their practices** while also nurturing **caring and trusting relationships** with colleagues, students, and their families; but ultimately, where **joy in teaching and learning is evident** throughout the schools. *What is presented in the following pages are vignettes meant to tell the story of the Montage project.*

Campus Designs

Mobile devices are allowing digital learning to take place anywhere—on a bus, a beach, a bed, or at a ball game. That’s why College Hill Middle, North Heights Jr. High, and Arkansas High are turning their libraries, unused closets, hallway nooks, classrooms, and even outdoor areas into open, collaborative spaces that better reflect the open, collaborative learning of today. The question is, “How do we design this so students are able to see themselves as learners where ever they go?” The three project schools will be upgrading the bell/clock safety systems to incorporate hall video monitoring, paging and piped in sound systems. School curb appeal will also be important to bring a sense of pride and ownership to these campuses.

A meta-analysis of one-to-one computing programs conducted by Michigan State University researchers and led by Binbin Zheng, an assistant professor of counseling, educational psychology and special education found that one-to-one laptop programs, on average, had a statistically significant positive impact on student test scores in English/language arts, writing, math and science. The project schools will be implementing one-to-one computing programs at each of their schools to encourage the frequency and breadth of student technology use for writing, Internet research, note-taking, completing assignments, and reading. Laptop use will be used extensively, as a tool throughout the writing process. It is also hoped that student-teacher communications (via email and Google docs) will increase and parent involvement in their

children’s schoolwork will increase as well. A side product of the program will be positive student attitudes with higher student engagement, motivation, and persistence.

Spaces must be able to be reconfigured as students gather in the morning for a Socratic circle to discuss ideas and opinions and then roll their moveable desks into small collaborative groups to work on a project. Students learn about engineering and manufacturing with hands-on projects—designing parts on the computer and then creating prototypes with 3D printers and using other machines to produce final products. An example of this would be a virtual welding machine that teaches students this in-demand skill before they attempt it for real. Inspiration for the schools’ student-friendly spaces center around micro-learning areas to address how people learn. Each school’s “IDEA” (Innovation, Discover, and Engagement Area) can be reserved by any teacher and will be able to be reconfigured in seconds to fit a wide range of activities. Students can face forward for a formal presentation or face each other for a discussion. Dry-erase paint will cover at least one wall, inviting students to write or illustrate ideas. A mix of café tables in another section of the room will invite small group collaborations. Each area’s centerpiece will be an Apple-style genius bar, where the instructional technology coordinators assist students and teachers with “just-in-time” support. Rather than simply telling students or teachers what to do, the Magnet IT coordinator will guide them through a structured “ideation” process so they find their own solutions—such as picking a tool for a video project or an app for a lesson.

Classroom spaces will be transformed to look and function more like work spaces in tech companies. From letting students draw on hallway tiles to create bar graphs and spreadsheets to putting old lawnmowers, sewing machines, and discarded coffeemakers in a project lab for students to rebuild, these magnet schools are encouraging students to be “makers” and “inventors.” An unused closet may become a maker space complete with 3D printers and a tool

cabinet filled with items from people's garages, including glue guns, drills, and soldering irons. The idea is for students to invent things and solve problems. Instead of an Hour of Code, these schools will weave coding into cross-curricular projects all year long.

Because of the nature of three schools articulating the same magnet theme from 5th-12th grades, the three project schools will be tightly connected. Literacy is essential to learning science. With the Montage project, Science and English/Language Arts will be interwoven subjects. During the 8th grade year, parents and students will work closely with high school counselors to develop a comprehensive graduation plan. Students will select high school courses to develop their personal graduation plan to complete high school graduation requirements and to access the high school AP coursework. Students will be involved in service learning projects within the community. The core concept behind service learning is that by combining service objectives and learning objectives, learning is deeper and more meaningful as it positively impacts the surrounding community. Along with service learning opportunities, the students will also be involved in internships and shadowing experiences in high school. These internships and shadowing opportunities will coincide with dual credit and advanced placement coursework.

A PBL project that ties STEM and entrepreneurship together while also providing service learning to help the community is a national project called *GoBabyGo*. To help young children (ages 2-5) with disabilities become more mobile, students use their science, technology, engineering, and math skills to modify electric-powered toy cars that children can operate. Recognizing that the dominant way we learn is through physical interactions with the world, children with disabilities who have little or no mobility, are able to interact with their environment through these refurbished cars. While modifying the cars for children with disabilities, the students learn patience and teamwork. They know they have to get this right so

the child will be able to use the car safely and comfortably. The project involves creative engineering and physics. Students will learn how to wire electrical circuits, measure and cut PVC pipe, and use power tools, along with basic safety principles. The cars will then be donated to children with disabilities. A partnership with engineers in the community will be sought to make sure each car is structurally safe and sound. One aspect of this project is that the car must fit the unique needs of each child. The students will have to determine how much weight the car will hold, how to create an easy-to-use seat belt, and then test it. For example, a child on a ventilator would need a platform for the ventilator somewhere in or on the car. Other skills that this PBL project develop are “people skills” by working with special-needs children as well as by collaborating with others.

Teachers wrestle with proving that the classroom curriculum is meeting standards and showing evidence of high-yield instructional strategies such as problem solving and brainstorming. With **Pitsco Education Missions**, the teacher can access that data and information in a matter of minutes. The upper-level mission pretests and posttests track all students’ scores for each mission. Based on the content learned in the hands-on, team-based missions, the teacher can also show examples of higher-order thinking, problem solving, brainstorming, and collaboration. Mission titles include: Circuits, Crime Lab, Energy, Engineering, Flying Things, Motion and Force, Puzzlers, Rocketry, Simple Machines, Skyscrapers, and Technology and Design.

The world of robotics is expanding rapidly, from robotics competitions to robots in the medical field. **TETRIX Building System** is a natural choice for robotics. TETRIX has a wow factor that impresses engineers and programmers. TETRIX has a multitude of parts available so building and programming a humanoid robot is a great possibility...in fact a high school team using a TETRIX Building System took first place in the World Robotics Olympiad competition at Qatar

in 2015. The team built an elbow system, increasing the number of servos on each arm to six, which allowed for greater mobility. They also added an ultrasonic sensor to their rock detection system and transformed the right arm of their humanoid robot into a rock grabber. Finally, they added some *'bling'* in the form of an LED strip.

In the Montage project the needs of local businesses are being matched up with students' interests. For too long the education system has produced students that industry has had to retrain, which is costly. It's very hard to redirect high school juniors and seniors because they're already on a certain credit path. So the need is to partner with businesses and start in the lower grades. With the Montage project, freshmen will be able to enroll in either (or both) Pitsco Module labs (STEM/Robotics or Biotechnology) as introductory career courses. All students will encounter project-based learning experiences in the core math and science classes where Pitsco kits will be used in PBL learning activities. The STEM/Robotics module lab addresses a critical shortage of engineers and skilled technicians as well as programmers, technology troubleshooters, and audio/visual specialists. The Biotechnology module addresses the healthcare system where there is a critical shortage of qualified professionals in all areas. Near the end of the school year, the knowledge these freshmen gain from the biotech modules will culminate in a field trip to Texarkana medical facilities to see up close how nurses, doctors, surgeons, and others perform their duties.

In the math and science classrooms, students will better understand perplexing concepts by using hands-on Pitsco kits, such as T-Bot II, which is a hands-on robotics project that illustrates hydraulic power and mechanics. By doing higher-level polynomials, which is factoring and cubes, and since T-Bot shows volume and pressure, there is a strong tie-in for students. In Advanced Algebra (Algebra 2) students will be able to use the T-Bot II Hydraulic Arm from

Pitsco Education that they assemble and use during several class periods to tie the Algebra 2 concepts to a real-world object. The T-Bot II illustrates hydraulic power and mechanics when students use a series of syringes and tubes filled with water to operate four axes on a robotic arm. From Straw Rocket Launchers to Cartesian coordinate systems to Parachute Kits, TASD freshmen will explore STEM careers in an applied and dynamic environment.

Learning continues as students reinforce concepts such as Earth & Weather and Force & Motion using drones. With the implementation of drones, students will understand applications of the content. Since drones fly with the use of a variety of forces, students get the opportunity to experiment with the merger of forces that keep drones flying. The camera and video system aboard drones can be used to better understand geological and meteorological features. In Engineering 1 and 2, electronics, programming, mechanical engineering, and leadership as well as responsibility will all be part of using drones in the coursework. It can take students as long as two months to build a drone before getting it to fly. Thrust, lift, and drag are terms that will have meaning, especially because of the many crashes students are sure to encounter. They must pay attention to outside conditions, especially wind. Using 3D printers to create different blades will allow students to experiment with different blade types and drag. Using drones will bring engineering and programming to life.

At the high school, an old environmental area that was used as an Outward Bound Ropes Course twenty years ago will be repurposed for an **outdoor environmental learning center called the Montage Outdoor Studio with an amphitheater complete with sound and lighting and a nature trail**. Similar environmental learning centers will be developed at College Hill Middle School (STEM Pavilion) and North Heights Jr. High (Nature Center). These will all have butterfly gardens, herb gardens, and landscaping designed by students through the after school

clubs and exploratories. Students with Chromebooks, iPads and/or laptops in hand will have the opportunity to cluster around the learning areas working on nature projects. **Dance, music, theater arts, pottery, photography and the visual arts** are all a part of the whole student focus of these magnet schools, especially for low SES and minority populations who may not have access to the arts beyond the school day. Students will not be turned away from participating in the arts due to lack of personal funds for an **instrument, a uniform, a costume, or materials and competition fees**. A **keyboard lab** as well as a **strings lab**, at both College Hill Middle and North Heights Jr. High will be added for those students who want to pursue music. The Arts make a difference! Arts integration turns curriculum toward work that does not merely reproduce knowledge, but uses knowledge in authentic intellectual ways. Evidence shows that the arts can have powerful effects on student achievement...and be most profound for struggling students. Hallways in each of the schools will have nooks that resemble coffee shop environments with soft music and clustered tables for students to study and work together. Collaborative learning spaces both indoors and outdoors will transform the cultures at these magnet project schools. *Imagine:* In the new High School dance studio, dance classes will work out on the practice bars. The classical ballet students will be aspiring for their Pointe shoes, but for now they are practicing the tango in preparation for the school *Dancing With the Stars* competition coming up in the ensuing week. Pre-drill team practice will take up most of the gymnasium but it will give way to the Zumba class in the next hour. Health and fitness are a huge concern at all the project schools and students will be offered ways to stay fit for life at the schools, including after-school martial arts as well as early morning Tae Chi.

Chess is a game of skill that will be started at the middle school and continue through the high school. It has the power to transform lives for students as their ability to think more critically, to

process data more rapidly, and to make better decisions is developed. The focus of the after school Chess Clubs will not be to simply learn how to play the game; but to also apply its tactics and strategies to life. Throughout the year, students will keep either a written journal or a web blog on how the tactics and strategies of chess are connecting to their lives...in other words learning the consequences of one's actions...to think through all available options when faced with a problem or decision and to consider what may be the result of one's actions.

A **STEM summer camp** will be held each summer as a means of getting students and teachers primed for the STEM experiences that lie ahead during the regular school year and creating excitement in the community for recruiting to these new magnet upper level schools. Four camps will be held, each one lasting two hours per day over a four-day period (morning sessions for Lower School students and afternoon sessions for Upper School students). The Lower School sessions will be open to rising fourth through sixth graders, and the Upper School sessions will be open to rising seventh through ninth graders. Lower School students will experience the Pitsco Missions curriculum. Each four-student Mission Crew will work to complete hands-on application-based activities. They also will complete robotics activities. The Upper School students will experience STEM Modules and work in pairs as they experience the application-based learning activities. On the last day of each session, a parent information session will be a part of the final culminating celebration in which facilitators will share STEM education.

Some teachers have decided to turn their classrooms into "Learning Lounges" using furniture that is more informal than traditional desks. Coffee Shop like tables can be adjusted to differing heights, allowing students to stand at counter height or to dangle legs while perched on bar stools. Other tables can be rearranged easily to suit different lessons or collaborative work. Students can also sit on beanbags or lean back in rocking video-game chairs. The minute the

students have a Chromebook or a laptop in their laps, they tend to huddle in different places. It makes the room a place where students want to be.

Since colored walls stimulate certain emotions, a bank of colored lights, which teachers can change will be able to project the desired hue against white classroom walls. Large monitors on different walls will give every student an ideal view. Since monitors are usually twice as bright as projectors that only work best in dark rooms, teachers will be able to keep shades open during class time. The PentaClass classroom audio sound systems will provide 360° sound dispersion which is easily mounted in the ceiling and typically only requires one speaker per classroom.

Across the parking lot from College Hill Middle School is the Texarkana Country Club with tennis courts, an 18-hole golf course, and an Olympic-size swimming pool. As part of the College Hill Middle School physical education program and after-school program, the Country Club will allow classes to use their facilities. Additionally, students from the North Heights Jr. High and Arkansas High School will have access to the facilities after school. Students will be able to sign up for these after school ‘clubs’ and will be dropped off at the Country Club using the school buses on their normal route and then pick them up for the ride home at the end of the afternoon. For many of these urban, city kids, this will be a wonderful way to expose them to healthy exercise and enjoyable life past times that they may be able to continue as adults. At the campuses health and fitness equipment will be added to the Physical Education programs to instill lifelong health habits for these students. Arkansas has an obesity crisis and the fitness habit is something that must be nurtured and developed while students are at an age to make fitness and health a lifelong habit.

Each school will also provide office space for teachers to collaborate on planning. The offices will be located near classrooms that constitute small learning communities in which teachers

instruct groups of the same students. These spaces make informal conversations about lessons and students more natural. It will also encourage more team teaching and interdisciplinary projects. Instead of working individually in classrooms, teachers will collaborate and plan together.

The computer labs at the schools will be turned into colorful open spaces with flat-screen TVs, pop art, roller chairs, and large tables. Students will be able to choose from semester long courses in programming, game design, interactive storytelling, or digital art and leave each year with a portfolio, a game or product they've developed, as well as a Certificate of Accomplishment.

The libraries will become communication/media arts centers that connect with their school's TV and recording studios. Imagine students using laser cutters, 3D printers, microcontrollers, and wood shop equipment to learn about art, design, computer science, robotics, engineering, and programming. For one project, students will be able to develop and print their own candy bars: creating 3D vacuum molds, designing wrappers with nutritional information in Photoshop, and then scripting and producing commercials.

A distance learning lab, Young Authors' Lab, and mobile broadcasting station will be installed at each of the schools for both journalism and PBL student use. Housing conditions come alive as a PBL topic for students as they assume the role of architects to design housing for families interested in minimalist life styles by designing 'tiny house' living. The students will be able to work with local architects to design the project as part of their unit of study. In another PBL unit, high school students might gather and analyze data on texting and driving to create a public service announcement from their research. The after school computer club can also become an in-school internship as members of the class can work to code for computers and web sites while

others, when needed, can be fixing and tweaking technology...providing a strong background for students wanting to go into some type of technology or engineering-based career. Students can also develop and execute their own community service projects through a community-based tutoring outreach program called Project Heart. This can become a “game changer for students” because it provides them with the opportunity to pause and see that there’s a world out there that they can impact. The implementation of these projects requires students to exercise real leadership skills, which will serve them well when they step out the door and into the world of work.

A Montage Extravaganza is planned for the end of the 2017/2018 school year. Set up around the perimeter of the high school auditorium as well as throughout the halls will be stations where students from all three project magnet schools and their teachers will demonstrate and explain various science concepts learned throughout the year using exhibits and student developed products. Using the Pitsco Education Flight Technology Module, students can model their own wings and actually put them to the test using the Pitsco wind tunnel. As aspiring engineers, an airfoil design that produces a down-force instead of lift is exciting because, what is disastrous for an airplane, would be ideal as a spoiler on the back of a sports car to enable the car to stay on the road.

Leadership development will be a major part of developing students at these three project schools. Using the seven habits of highly successful people as part of the *Leader in Me* process, students will incorporate the seven habits into their personal lives. The *Leader in Me* is a whole-school transformation model that empowers students with the leadership and life skills they need to thrive in the 21st century. It is based on principles and practices of personal, interpersonal, and organizational effectiveness. The program builds individuals’ emotional intelligences to improve

relationships, transform the school culture, and develop highly motivated staff members as well as students. Students learn how to become self-reliant, take initiative, plan ahead, set and track their goals, do their homework, prioritize their time, manage their emotions, be considerate of others, express their viewpoint persuasively, resolve conflicts, find creative solutions, value differences, and live a balanced life.

At the T ASD project schools students will experience dynamic experts-in-the-field guest speakers, job shadowing, and learning about jobs and careers that connect to STEM fields, as well as the arts. All of this individualized, interdisciplinary research nature of PBL will set the groundwork for students to complete senior capstone projects, making their senior year very worthwhile and productive.

Statistically just 11 percent of low-income first-generation college goers graduate in six years. To combat this statistic for Arkansas High School graduates, T ASD is setting up an Alumni Office in order to develop a way of networking and supporting Texarkana's alum as they move on into the real world. Some will go directly into the world of work and it is important to know how they fare in that environment; but it is also important that T ASD supports its alumni beyond high school graduation to college completion. A major part of the Montage project is to teach perseverance and future success beyond high school. This entails making T ASD students independent learners and preparing them for the ups and downs of college. The Alumni Office will also coordinate assistance in helping students calculate their GPA and provide assistance as they fill out housing and financial-aid forms. Follow up visits to see T ASD graduates on their college campuses to check on them and refine the district network's college-prep programming will be a part of this Alumni Office. While most college freshmen struggle with the first semester

of college, T ASD graduates will have another hometown connection besides a family member who will be another adult advocate.

The extent that the applicant has the resources to operate beyond the grant

In preparing this proposal, Texarkana Arkansas School District has developed a cost-effective budget for sufficient start-up funds to implement the creation of the three magnet schools in a manner that will assure accomplishment of the magnet project objectives, so that when funding ends, the district can, in good faith, pledge to continue support. Because this is the vision for the district, T ASD has aligned each of its project schools' School Improvement Plans to this proposal. Basic instructional supplies have been provided from the general fund. Local funds will be used for personnel (administrators and teachers), supplies and equipment necessary to implement Arkansas' required curriculum. The MSAP funds will be used to supplement existing local funds and allow T ASD to increase capacity. The schools' existing budgets will supply such equipment and supplies as: copy machines, fax machines, telephones, classroom furniture, electricity and climate control. The district will also provide transportation service to the magnet schools and pledges that this proposal will be sustained beyond the grant cycle. The five-year grant cycle will be sufficient time to institutionalize the key elements of this magnet vision so that the district will be able to systematically replenish and upgrade supplies and equipment and also to train and assimilate new staff members beyond 2022.

Multi-Year Financial and Operating Model: T ASD's Montage project is reorganizing and restructuring the district work at the secondary level. The three areas to be addressed with the multi-year financial and operating model are: Process and Technology, Work Structures, and Organization. A timeline of the multi-year activities can be found in the Quality of Management Plan section of this grant proposal. An operating model is an overall operations and technology

ecosystem of a district. Cloud-based applications will be secured instead of capital investments in technology as much as possible. As the project campuses' magnet theme implementations are aligned with their Title I School Improvement Plans, a strong emphasis on organizational sustainability is being put in place. Classroom equipment and supplies, as well as the professional development for faculty and staff members will be the most significant costs of the Montage project and these will be complete by the end of the grant cycle. Subsequent equipment acquisitions will be secured on a rotating basis to ensure that technology needs are maximized over time. TASD will follow a systematic process of planning, communication, professional development, assessment, evaluation, and leadership support.

At the 5th-8th grade level, students start to transition from consuming content to creating it. They multitask more and increasingly use the Internet to research information. Having devices that help create flexible learning environments is critical. Chromebooks at this age offer immediate access to cloud-based documents and other work plus at the middle school students and staff members will operate within the Google ecosystem, which is compatible with Chromebooks. **At the high school** learning devices for this age must be powerful enough to run multiple applications and support software that can run more complex multimedia applications. High school students learning to develop iPhone apps in elective coding classes will use the 11-inch Macbook Air. This will enable students to use 3D-animation software programs that simulate activities such as a frog dissection. It will also allow doing fieldwork and connecting probes to the device to collect data, then with a robust Wi-Fi connection collaborate with classmates or students thousands of miles away. The magnet campus positions will be used to support and foster faculty and staff development so that these positions will be phased out at the end of the five-year cycle. While the grant management will abate at the end of the grant cycle,

the work of guiding and supporting the magnet schools through ongoing curricular and instructional improvements as well as parental choice and student recruitment efforts will be ongoing as part of the district vision. This is not an add-on program for Texarkana; this is the district vision.

Strong partnerships between the higher education institutions, the medical facilities, and TASD are being forged. Members of the business community and higher education educators were a part of the development of the Montage project. Focus groups were held at various schools with families and students to create this magnet theme. Currently, TASD is a part of the **Chamber of Commerce's Partners in Education**, which is made up of business leaders of companies in the Texarkana area. Additionally, a **Magnet Advisory Committee** made up of parents and community members will meet regularly to provide input and feedback on the educational programs at the magnet schools. State and local leaders are committed to this vision.

(Letters of Support can be found in the appendix.)

Arkansas High School is offering the Advanced Placement Capstone Diploma to their student body in the 2016/2017 school year. Students who earn scores of 3 or higher in both of the AP Capstone courses and on four additional AP Exams of their choosing will receive the AP Capstone Diploma. Students who earn scores of 3 or higher in both of the AP Capstone courses but not on the four additional AP Exams, will receive the AP Seminar and Research Certificate, signifying successful performance in those courses. Over 130 colleges and universities have signed a Statement of Support endorsing AP Capstone for its challenging interdisciplinary curricula including Yale, Princeton, Harvard, **University of Arkansas, Texas A&M**, Boston University, MIT, Vanderbilt, Baylor and Columbia University.

The extent to which the training and professional development services are of sufficient

quality, intensity, and duration: Professional development will be ongoing and occur throughout the school year. Cohorts of educators will be formed for networking and support as they enhance their expertise. **Resources and Training:** While administrators and teachers, over the years, have had some great professional development trainings there hasn't been the critical mass of teachers trained at the secondary level in a shared vision of evidence-based research teaching methods and strategies. Additionally this training must include follow up and coaching to ensure that the training is consistent and implemented into the classroom. Since the Montage project is the next phase of the district vision for improving its schools and builds on the successful elementary magnet program, administrators, teachers and staff members are working together. The implementation of the training techniques into the classroom instruction will be ensured because of the magnet personnel in place at each campus to provide just-in-time coaching and support but also because administrators will also be trained and coached so that there will be a whole campus emphasis on improving classroom instruction. MSAP funding will be used to secure authentic curriculum development and instructional methodologies training with nationally recognized consultants, with Texarkana higher education professors in STEAM fields, as well as at premier conferences and training centers nationwide. It will be important to give the very best professional development in the core disciplines as well as PBL, financial literacy, computer science, arts integration, interdisciplinary curriculum, and the strategies/best practices for these project schools. **Equipment and materials** must be state-of-the-art and staff must be trained to effectively use new and innovative teaching strategies if diverse groups of students are to be attracted. Additionally, teachers will be given the time and resources necessary to develop curriculum that is truly innovative, meets the needs of their students, and utilizes the

full potential of modern technology. It will also be necessary to train all faculty members on the various equipment and software applications that will be purchased in support of thematic curriculum and instruction. The specialized equipment and supplies listed in the school budgets are costly and they require on-going training on how to use them effectively and efficiently. The potential value for students cannot be realized without authentic and extensive training for teachers on specific pieces relative to the magnet theme.

TASD is requesting adequate funds to cover start-up costs of collaborative activities with the science, math, engineering, arts, and business departments at the higher education institutions in the Texarkana area, summer enrichment, as well as other expenses necessary to achieve the goals of this project. The magnet activities will be delivered efficiently and effectively through aggressive marketing and recruitment, comprehensive and targeted professional development, thematic curricular design and development, alignment to the Arkansas state standards, thematic curriculum document writing and publishing, interactive evaluation and personnel improvement plans, recruitment of highly qualified personnel in specific thematic areas, instructional and marketing/recruitment materials, and upgrading of supplies and equipment. All will be taken to a new level of excellence.

High costs are associated with higher levels of integration and educational quality. District officials realize that to establish this new magnet thematic strand in order to raise educational quality, as well as to attract affluent students to the district, the startup cost will necessarily be high. In this funding request, the current students, as well as the projected 800-900 recruited students to the secondary magnet schools will be served each year at a cost of just over \$15 million. For start-up costs of a carefully designed program of this high caliber, and in a system that is in need of intervention, this per pupil cost is extremely reasonable.

The extent the proposed project is supported by strong theory

Magnet schools are recognized as a systemic reform model and by expanding the successful and effective elementary magnet program through the 12th grade at Arkansas High, TASD is using the elements of this systemic reform model as the next step for improvement of the secondary programs at Texarkana Arkansas School District. As noted in the Logic Model, the outcomes will transform the district and the project schools. The objectives with the respective performance measures are noted in the Plan of Operation section and will benchmark progress toward achieving the outcomes. The Montage magnet theme is supported by strong theory. This magnet theme is using project-based learning, a heavy emphasis on STEM and arts education, personalized learning strategies, as well as evidenced-based interventions to insure each school's climate is conducive for all students to be supported and nurtured to become successful scholars. Based on the White House Summit on Redesigning America's High Schools findings, it was determined that the TASD secondary schools would be remade to be more tech-savvy, hands-on, career- and college-focused, more personalized in order to be more interesting and exciting for students and to allow them to explore wonderful possibilities for their futures.

School Climate Theory: Working with the Texarkana partners in education, the faculty and staff of each project school, as well as its families formulated the Texarkana Montage project. One theory that offers insight into working with students is from New York University's Research Alliance, which assessed school climate and student achievement over time at 278 middle schools since they tend to have challenging school climates and serve students at a crucial time in their social and academic development. Based on 31,000 responses to surveys between 2008 and 2012, the authors focused on four measures of school climate: school safety and order, leadership and professional development, high academic expectations, and teacher

relationships and collaboration. The study found that if a school improved from the 50th percentile across the study's four measures of school climate to the 84th percentile, teacher turnover declined by 25%. A similar percentile increase in measures of school safety and high academic expectations boosted math scores enough to account for an extra month and a half of instruction. Improvements in school climate also boosted language arts scores on state tests AND these gains were statistically significant. Nick Lawrence, states that teacher retention and certain test scores have improved since the school started encouraging one-on-one coaching for every teacher and offered opportunities for them to take leadership positions. While more research is needed, this study validates the theory that addressing school climate data is valid as an assessment tool. Further justification for assessing student perception of a school's climate comes from Mary Helen Immordino-Yang, an associate professor of education, psychology, and neuroscience at the University of Southern California. In an interview with *Education Week*, Immordino-Yang states that, "Emotional thought is the platform for learning, memory, decision-making, and creativity, both in social and non-social contexts." The NoVo Foundation is funding her research on the social and emotional implications on learning (www.novofoundation.org). While definitive results have yet to be published, it validates Texarkana's use of this theory to justify the 'high-touch' needs of students. TASD will monitor the perspectives on each school's climate from students, families, and teachers using a School Improvement Survey from the U.S. Department of Education's bank of questions on school climate. (See appendix.)

Project-Based Learning Theory: The Montage project will be using project-based learning theory to upgrade the teaching and learning at the project schools. This teaching model organizes learning around real-world and authentic projects or complex tasks, based on challenging questions or problems. These interdisciplinary tasks involve students in design, problem-solving,

decision making, or investigative activities. Students have the opportunity to work relatively autonomously over extended periods of time, which then culminate in realistic products or presentations where students reveal their evidence of learning. The five criteria that distinguish PBL from discovery learning or other less-didactic teaching models are: 1. *Centrality* (not peripheral to the curriculum)—Students learn the central concepts of the discipline via the project. 2. *Driving question*—The project must be crafted in order for students to make a connection between activities and the underlying conceptual knowledge that the teacher hopes to foster. 3. *Constructive investigations*—An investigation is a goal-directed process that involves inquiry, knowledge building and resolution. 4. *Learner autonomy*—PBL projects do not end up at a predetermined outcome or take predetermined paths. 5. *Realism*—These can include the topic, the tasks, the roles that students play, the context within which the work of the project is carried out, the collaborators who work with students on the project, the products that are produced, the audience for the projects' products, or the criteria by which the product or performances are judged.

The article, "Classrooms: Goals, Structures, and Student Motivation" in the Journal of Educational Psychology (1992), states that students who possess a motivational orientation that focuses on learning and mastery of the subject matter are more apt to exhibit sustained engagement with schoolwork than students whose orientation is to merely perform satisfactorily or complete assigned work. Accordingly, PBL designs, because of their emphasis on student autonomy, collaborative learning, and assessments based on authentic performances are seen to maximize students' orientation toward learning and mastery. Another article found in the Educational Psychologist (1991) entitled, "Motivating Project-Based Learning: Sustaining the Doing, Supporting the Learning" by Blumenfeld, Soloway, Marx, Krajcik, Guzdial, and

Palinesar states that the way to insure students become more proficient at inquiry and problem solving is to simulate the conditions under which experts master subject matter and become proficient at conducting investigations. By shifting the major portion of instruction in schools from teacher-directed, teacher-assigned “schoolwork” with its emphasis on comprehension, to student-initiated, goal-driven, independent, “intentional learning” with an emphasis on knowledge building, learning is more likely to be retained and applied. “A Collaborative Model for Helping Middle-Grade Science Teachers Learn Project-Based Instruction” published in The Elementary School Journal (1994), the authors indicate that using technology in project-based science makes the environment more authentic to students because the computer provides access to data and information, expands interaction and collaboration with others via networks, promotes laboratory investigation, and emulates tools experts use to produce artifacts.

Infusion of the Arts Theory: STEM through the Arts undergirds the Texarkana Montage magnet theme. In searching for how to improve learning for all students, but especially for minority and poor students, various studies on the arts pointed to their benefits: Elliott Eisner’s work, *The Arts and the Creation of Mind* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 2002), John Dewey, “Art as Experience,” in Jo Ann Boydston, Ed., *John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925-1953*, vol 10 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), and Richard Siegesmund, “Reasoned Perception: Art Education at the End of Art” (Doctoral dissertation, Stanford University, 2000) all show strong theory for infusing arts throughout the core curriculum.

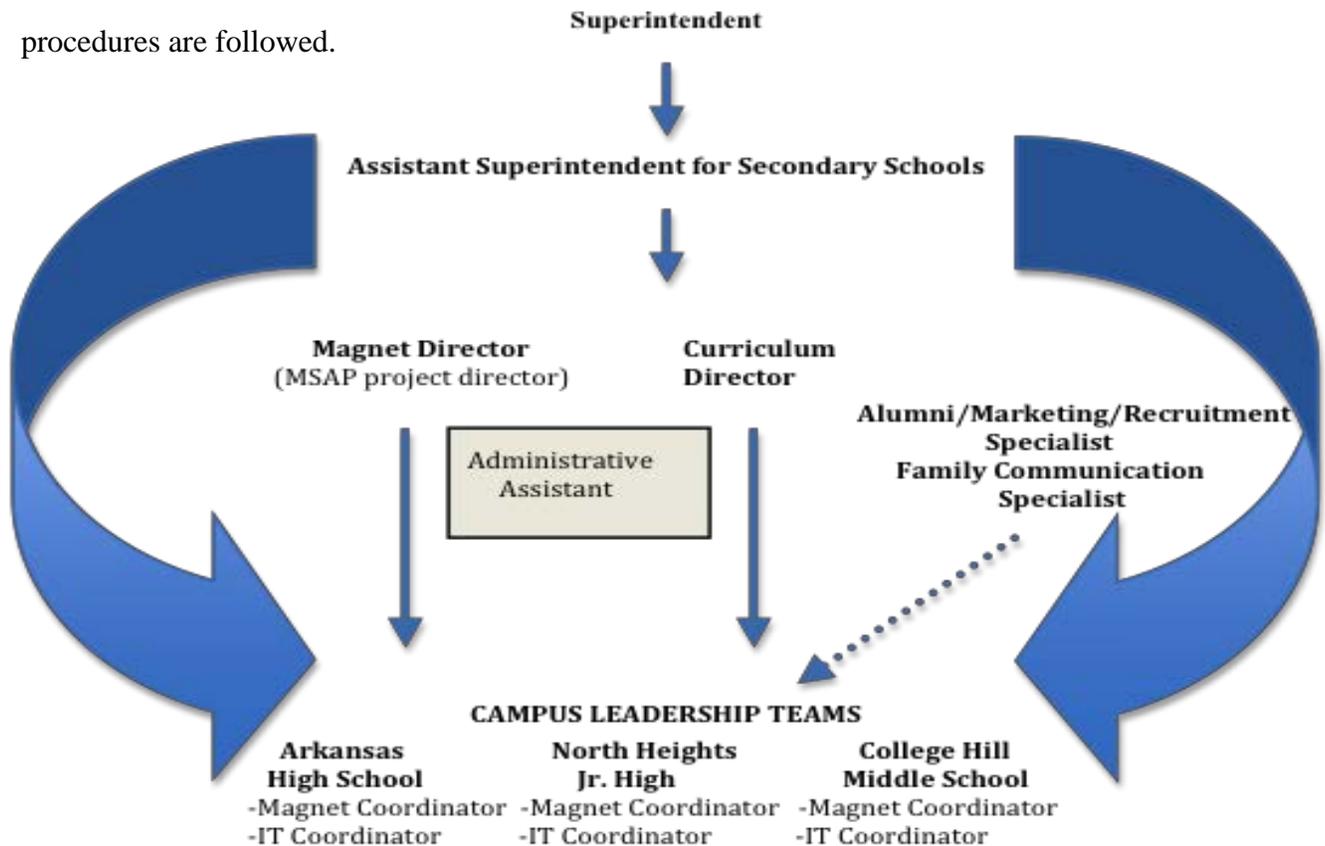
Jessica Hoffman Davis, who is a cognitive development psychologist and the founder and first director of the Arts in Education Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education states that, in the process of creating, artists reflect on their work, consider alternative points of view, try out changes, and begin the cycle of revision again. She argues that teachers and students in all

subjects would benefit from engaging in this reflective process. The achievement gap in the U.S. between minority students and non-minority students, as well as low-income and high-income students, also applies to equity and access. Artistic literacy will be infused throughout the core curriculum and throughout the day in the project magnet schools. The foundation for this thinking is taken from the work of the National Coalition for CORE ARTS standards: 1) In today's multimedia society, the arts are the media, and therefore provide powerful and essential means of communication. They provide unique symbol systems and metaphors that convey and inform life experiences as ways of knowing. 2) Participation in each of the arts as creators, performers, and audience members enables individuals to discover and develop their own creative capacity, thereby providing a source of lifelong satisfaction. 3) Understanding artwork provides insights into individuals' own and others' cultures and societies, while also providing opportunities to access, express, and integrate meaning across a variety of content areas. 4) Participation in the arts as creators, performers, and audience members or responders enhances mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing. 5) The arts provide means for individuals to collaborate and connect with others as they create, prepare, and share artwork that brings communities together. Each of the arts has common characteristics that make them powerful preparation for college, career, and a fulfilling life for all T ASD students.

Quality of Management Plan

The T ASD management plan has been developed to be effective and efficient. This plan was developed over the past two years and incorporates the sentiments and desires of various stakeholders in the community including students, families, business leaders, and post secondary educators who collaborated on how to incorporate evidence-based instructional practices into the project schools so that ALL students are engaged in the learning process. The management plan

is headed by a management team of high quality personnel who will provide administrative leadership, instructional guidance, and curricular support for the implementation of all aspects of the magnet school programs at the proposed sites. The T ASD management plan incorporates best practice project management strategies to ensure that all local, state, and federal requirements are met with fidelity, both programmatically and financially; and to ensure that timelines and procedures are followed.



The Assistant Superintendent, the project’s External Evaluator, and the T ASD Magnet Director (project director) will work collaboratively to ensure timely compliance and monitoring of all components of this multi-phased project are achieved. A clear task workflow of all collaborative partners, campus and district employees, advisory boards and committees will be established to ensure that all interface seamlessly for effective implementation of the T ASD Montage project and to provide performance snapshots to help evaluate performance measures. From planning to

implementation and reporting, the Magnet Director will coordinate, track and monitor all aspects of the project, ensuring clear communication, not only among the management team and regional partners, but also with the T ASD School Board. Internal control measures offering a checks and balances perspective on local, state, and federal finances and compliance will be a part of the district Finance Department with oversight from the T ASD Assistant Superintendent's Office.

At the campus level each project principal will head his/her campus leadership team comprised of the assistant principal(s), counselor(s), media specialist, parent liaison, magnet instructional technology (IT) coordinator and magnet coordinator. The campus magnet IT coordinators will oversee the day-to-day technology needs of the faculty, modeling software and hardware just-in-time professional development for teachers and staff, as well as troubleshooting technology issues for the campus. The campus magnet coordinators will oversee the magnet theme curriculum implementation and work with grade level/subject area professional learning communities (PLCs). All magnet purchase requests will ultimately be approved by the campus principal before going on to be approved by the Magnet Director and finally to the Assistant Superintendent. The campus principals as well as the IT and curriculum coordinators will meet monthly with the Magnet Central Office personnel to network and troubleshoot issues common to the project schools.

Adequacy to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and in budget

A leadership and accountability structure is already in place within the district that holds all administrators to rigorous performance standards. The staffing and management structure of the Montage project within the existing staffing and management structures of the project schools, include reporting and accountability mechanisms that will ensure the timely and efficient implementation of the key project activities. A detailed project implementation plan has been

developed to achieve the project's objectives and performance measures; and is supported by a reasonable and cost-effective budget. In-kind resources designed to promote capacity building beyond the grant cycle are being leveraged to ensure sustainability of the project. The five yearly audits of the grant project will create a continuous improvement process that will engage stakeholders in ongoing feedback, assessment, and adjustments of project activities.

The following key personnel will ensure that the needs of the separate and distinct stakeholders are maintained. *(See the section on Quality of Personnel for additional information on each key staff member.)*

Oversight and Compliance: The oversight of the MSAP project will be the TASD's **Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education** who will ensure that the TASD project operates according to all established guidelines and procedures, including local and state requirements and regulations, and will ensure continuous academic growth and high levels of student achievement. The Assistant Superintendent will oversee the district magnet office and the campus leadership teams. A **Magnet Advisory Council** will be established to include parents, community leaders, as well as leaders from post-secondary institutions. Each of these entities, under the Assistant Superintendent, will ensure that the real world needs for employment and post-secondary education are aligned with the magnet curricula and content in the project schools and that the students in the project schools receive the social and emotional support to thrive and excel upon graduation.

Campus Leadership: **Each magnet school principal** will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of their campuses and will supervise their **campus leadership teams** in the implementation of the Montage project at their individual schools. At each school, the magnet grant will cover the salary of a full-time campus Magnet Coordinator and a full-time Magnet

Instructional Technology Coordinator. In collaboration with the Magnet Director and the Curriculum Director, the campus leadership teams are responsible for ensuring that each student is provided the necessary instruction and supports to be ready for success at each succeeding year of the student's academic progress by working with regular classroom teachers to develop curriculum materials, by working with the TASD Magnet Curriculum Director to coordinate development of curricular units and materials along with curriculum development efforts, by assisting the Magnet Director in providing teacher training, by designing and providing evidence-based instructional interventions, by participating in the Montage project's planning committee and/or Magnet Advisory Council, by participating in professional development activities specific to their campus' needs, and by overseeing magnet-related parent involvement activities.

Sustainability and Continuous Improvement: This magnet project is the vision of Superintendent Becky Kessler and Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education Robin Hickerson, in collaboration with regional and TASD educators, TASD families, business leaders, and the Texarkana, Arkansas community. It is setting the work for the project schools for the next five years and will continue beyond the grant years. To ensure the sustainability of the project, the **Assistant Superintendent**, with the TASD Finance Office, will be responsible for ensuring that all funds are expended appropriately and according to the ED Grant application. The **Magnet Director** (who will take the reins as Project Director) will be responsible for coordinating all of the MSAP proposed activities, interfacing with the Texarkana Arkansas School District Executive Team, and ensuring that all MSAP contracts are completed on time and within budget. The TASD Magnet Office, headed by the **Magnet Director**, will include a **Curriculum Director** (to lead and support the magnet curriculum and instructional implementations at the

campuses), an **Alumni/Recruitment/Marketing (A/R/M) Coordinator** (to market and recruit students to the project schools), as well as a **Family Communication Specialist** (to coordinate the work of the campus parent liaisons, oversee student enrollments, and the campus web pages. To help complete the required evaluations and assessments, including the ongoing quantitative and qualitative data analyses of the project's performance and outcomes, the project will contract with an **External Evaluator**. The district will develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) covering all five years of the project's grant period, based on district contracting procedures, to contract with an organization or person(s) to conduct the independent and external evaluation. The External Evaluator will be responsible for performing process and outcome evaluations using both quantitative and qualitative data required for both formal and informal reporting. Implementation visits will occur monthly in the first year and then no less than quarterly in subsequent years to document the progress made towards the stated goals and objectives and to indicate any areas of concern. To maintain the T ASD Magnet Office, an **Administrative Assistant** will be hired. The Administrative Assistant will report to the Magnet Director and will compile student level performance and outcome data (i.e., enrollment data, state testing results, attendance, discipline data, parent engagement, and other designated data), process all magnet travel, contractual forms, and purchasing in order to assist the Magnet Director in the day-to-day operations of the District Magnet Office.

The T ASD project's plan of operation is efficient and effective because it will use highly skilled and trained personnel to ensure the smooth operation of this innovative educational vision for area youth. The Magnet project is flexible enough to allow for parent, community, and business input via the Magnet Advisory Council; to handle state and local queries via the district oversight and compliance staff; to support high-level curriculum and instruction via the district

Magnet Office and campus leadership teams; to address federal queries as well as questions and concerns from collaborative partners via the Magnet Director, Assistant Superintendent, and Superintendent; and to produce frequent and informative reports that detail the successes and challenges of the project's implementation via the External Evaluator and district Magnet Office.

Clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones

Throughout the grant cycle, the Magnet Director will hold data-rich monthly group meetings with campus principals to ensure the smooth administrative implementation of the Montage project. The district Magnet Curriculum Director will hold monthly group meetings with campus Magnet Coordinators and also with campus IT Coordinators to ensure the smooth implementation of instructional strategies, PBL curricular development, and instructional technology implementation. These meetings will be held at the different magnet project schools on a rotating basis, which will open opportunities for magnet campus' leadership teams to experience each school's implementation efforts. Meeting agendas may include, but are not limited to the following: effective outreach and recruitment strategies, curriculum development, professional development resources, successes and challenges, partnership development and barriers, family outreach and engaging hard-to-reach as well as non-English-speaking parents, evaluation activities and findings, and campus' web page development. The A/R/M Specialist and Family Communication Specialist, as well as other district or regional personnel as necessary, will be guest speakers and participants in these meetings as well. At each meeting the host site will provide an update of the schools' progress in implementing the various program components and solicit solutions to implementation challenges. Because the project schools are whole school magnets, classroom teachers along with all campus personnel, will be responsible for providing students with all components of the magnet project, including counseling and

social services to meet students’ health, social, and emotional needs. Campus Parent Liaisons will develop parent outreach activities with other members of the campus’ teams and be an additional advocate for parents’ needs and interests on campus planning teams. Each school building has been updated and, except for magnet theme modifications, is a sound facility with no need for repairs and renovations. Each campus has existing equipment and supplies that will be available to support the implementation of the magnet programs.

The TASD management plan of operation is well designed to attain the specific outcomes of the MSAP statutory purposes: **Desegregation and Choice** by successfully attracting a diverse population of students and families to the TASD schools through providing innovative programs of study, **High Academic Achievement** by implementing sound instructional programs using evidence-based research, strong theory, and best practices, and **Developing Capacity** to sustain the project by ensuring that the campus faculty and staff as well as the district personnel are well trained to continue the magnet programs beyond the funding cycle. The Magnet Director, under the guidance of the Assistant Superintendent will initiate a series of activities after planning with appropriate personnel from the district and campuses. **Each year the following monthly timeline of activities and procedures** will be instituted to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in implementing the categorical outcomes of the MSAP statutory purposes:

YEARLY Timeline of Major Activities	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J
Magnet debrief & orientation for MSAP project											X	
Teacher workdays before opening of school	X											
Orientation for all personnel	X	X	X									
Professional development and coaching	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Order equipment and materials (during the year)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		

Parent Involvement Activities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Magnet Tech Team and Site Team meetings	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Curriculum project development sessions	X				X	X						X	X
Review and edit of units and projects	X											X	X
Collect, analyze, & disseminate MSAP formative data		X	X						X	X			
Develop and implement marketing campaign	X	X				X	X	X	X			X	X
Monitor project activities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Collect and analyze MSAP summative data			X						X	X	X	X	
MSAP formative and summative report to Sch. Bd.					X							X	
MSAP Annual Progress Report & Ad Hoc Report			X								X		
Magnet Principals Meetings		X		X			X		X			X	
Magnet Curriculum Meetings	X		X		X	X		X		X	X		
Magnet Technology Meetings	X		X		X	X		X		X	X		
Project Campus technology & curriculum coaching			(W	E	E	K	L	Y)			
Magnet Advisory Board Meetings			X			X			X			X	

Progress toward quality education begins at the building level in the individual classrooms.

Title I funded Parent Liaisons at each campus will track student attendance and monitor family dynamics to ensure individual student needs are addressed. Working closely with the campus Guidance Counselors, campus administrators, and classroom teachers, these liaisons will, many times, be the first line of contact for students to access needed resources. Campus Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) will be set up to ensure classroom teachers and support staff have the scaffolds they need to enhance their expertise in curricular and instructional matters. Lead teachers will be identified as peer leaders at each grade level and within subject area disciplines

so that these PLCs represent both horizontal and vertical learning needs. The principal of each campus will oversee the magnet implementation at each project school using his/her leadership team. Magnet meetings with various members of the campus leadership teams will be held monthly so the Magnet Director and Magnet Curriculum Director are able to intercede to offset barriers and stumbling blocks that the magnet campuses encounter throughout the school year. Additionally, the campus principals and the Magnet Director are also a part of the Central Office Executive Team that meets with the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent each month. Through partnering with the regional higher education institutions, the regional medical facilities, as well as with area businesses, this MSAP project will be a collaborative effort. TASD's plan of operation is designed to support and ensure that each magnet school will be a humane enterprise as it deals with internal and external evaluation processes and accountability requirements. It is this successful plan of operation that guarantees all outcomes of the MSAP will be accomplished.

This project was developed to ensure that the goals and objectives of its vision are attained within the project period. The Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education will be the Project Director until a full time Magnet Director is hired. This ensures that the Montage project is seen as the key work for the project schools at its inception. Stringent schedules and precise job descriptions for key personnel will ensure that outcomes are attainable within the project period. The Magnet Office, with oversight from the Assistant Superintendent, will operate with a Magnet Director and Magnet Curriculum Director, as well as an Alumni/Recruitment/Marketing Specialist and a Family Communication Specialist. The Magnet Administrative Assistant will ensure that the clerical duties of maintaining a smooth functioning office will be in place. These staff members are charged with establishing the magnet office in order to **provide the direction**

and support needed to effectively market the magnet schools, ensure diversity enhancement throughout the project campuses, and raise the academic achievement level of all students in the three project schools.

The **Magnet Director** will spend *fifty to sixty percent of school hours on magnet sites*, observing in classrooms and conferring with the campus leadership teams and other campus staff members to gain a thorough working knowledge of each magnet school's implementation. The remaining time will be dedicated to managing budget matters, working with the external evaluator and other consultants, magnet principals, conferring with community contacts, and attending civic and business meetings to share the latest news and publications about the schools. The Magnet Director will supervise and guide the quality of the work accomplished by the Magnet Alumni/Recruitment/Marketing Specialist as well as all aspects of the project implementation on the magnet campuses in collaboration with the Magnet Curriculum Director and Assistant Superintendent.

The **Magnet Curriculum Director** will work closely with expert content and process education consultants in order to facilitate all aspects (curricular, instructional, and assessment) of the implementation of the Montage curricula: PBL, Science, Technology (including Computer Science coursework), Leadership Development, Engineering, Math, and the Arts at each project school. The Magnet Curriculum Director will spend *sixty to seventy percent of time at magnet sites and/or with curriculum teams*, distributing the time equitably as needed. Approximately twenty to thirty percent of the time will be devoted to office duties. The **campus Instructional Technology and Curriculum Coordinators** will work closely with the Magnet Director and Magnet Curriculum Director as the campus faculty and staff members enhance their expertise in instructional pedagogies and in using technology tools and software. These coordinators will

spend *100 percent of the school day at their specific project sites*. These staff members will ensure their individual magnet campus' websites are maintained and updated regularly. The **Alumni/Recruitment/Marketing Specialist** will work with outside advertising agencies, as well as the T ASD public relations director to develop an effective marketing and recruitment plan in order to target the populations of students needed to result in a truly diverse student population, conduct the magnet student application process, and then monitor the student selection lottery. This Specialist will also develop and head the Arkansas High School Alumni Office in order to monitor graduates for five or more years after graduation. This unique position will be instrumental in bridging students' pathways from middle school through graduation and on to post-secondary education and/or employment, while also coordinating the marketing and recruitment to the project schools. This specialist will be housed at Arkansas High School in order to create and build the Alumni Office (with locally funded clerical support) but will spend *twenty percent of time* at the project sites (in order to better understand the unique programs and build relationships with students from each school) and at least *thirty percent of time* will be spent designing marketing brochures and campaigns, conferring with advertising agencies as well as community recruitment efforts. The **Family Communications Specialist** has direct contact with the Superintendent and will be the liaison and advocate for families at the Central Office. This staff position will maintain the district web site, monitor campus and teacher web pages to ensure pertinent public information is accurate and positive, including the district's social media sites. The **Magnet Administrative Assistant** will possess outstanding telephone skills, inter-office and intra-office communications, and generally ensure the smooth interface of duties among the specialists and the campus personnel on a daily basis. This staff member will spend *one hundred percent of the time in the magnet office* facilitating the work of its personnel,

securing student level performance and outcome data (enrollment data, state testing results, attendance, discipline data, parent engagement, and other designated data), and processing all magnet travel, contractual forms, and purchasing requests.

This comprehensive vision for improving the educational opportunities for Texarkana, Arkansas' constituents was created using the six legislative purposes of the U.S. Department of Education Magnet Schools Assistance Program. The outcomes for the project goals and objectives are measurable and quantifiable and over the course of this multi-year project can be used to determine the district's progress in meeting its intended outcomes. The TASD Magnet Office, working closely with the External Evaluator, will be responsible for tracking and reporting monthly progress of the Montage project in achieving each goal, objective, and performance measure. The magnet project schools are whole school magnets meaning all students will have access to the theme-based curriculum and enrichment opportunities. The campus' programs will align with other services in the schools to address the needs of students, including language needs, learning needs, economic needs, behavioral needs, as well as any other special needs. The instructional staff who provide services to students with disabilities and ELLs at the project schools will participate in magnet curriculum development to ensure that instructional units and materials are designed to meet the learning needs of all students.

As noted in the Project Design section of this application, partnerships with community and business entities will provide students with opportunities to gain real world experiences. Many of these experiences will be scheduled during the school day, while others will occur in out-of-school-times: after school, weekends, and summers. These experiences help students to apply and bridge the content knowledge learned in coursework while also building their soft skills such as communication, collaboration, creativity, ethics, persistence, and digital literacy. Educators

will also take advantage of out-of-school times partnerships by working in externships with key partners, especially in STEM fields, in order to better understand how to facilitate student learning with real world PBL projects. All aspects of these partnerships, which include mentoring opportunities, will be especially important for minority and low-income students to increase their understanding of careers.

Capacity building of the school leaders, staff, and community to sustain this high-quality project is an integral part of the project management. Because T ASD has a sustaining magnet program in place at the elementary schools, there is a critical mass of district and campus educators who have an understanding of the power that a magnet project brings to changing and improving schools from the inside-out. Their expertise will be leveraged to ensure that the secondary schools are just as successful in sustaining the Montage project after federal funding ceases. The management plan has also built in various mechanisms to insure success for the T ASD Montage project implementation. These mechanisms include a strong plan of professional and curriculum development to enhance the knowledge and skills of all instructional staff members and all school leaders in the theory-based magnet theme at the project schools, as well as the evidence-based instructional approaches to bring all students to a high level of achievement both personally and collectively. District level and campus level efforts will include annual curriculum planning institutes, monthly study groups on relevant research topics, summer workshops, on-going follow up and coaching on a daily and weekly basis, training and technical assistance in specific theme and related instructional strategies being delivered at each school. Professional Learning Communities serve as a powerful mechanism that will be in place at each campus so that colleagues collaborate and improve their instructional repertoire throughout their teaching careers at T ASD.

The Montage project leadership team, in conjunction with the Magnet Advisory Council and campus parent and student groups, will follow a continuous improvement framework to insure project integrity. The key elements in the continuous improvement framework are timely and provide regular feedback of implementation efforts with monitoring and measurement of program activities. This will allow for ongoing corrections from all stakeholders to project activities and investments. Furthermore, the project’s external evaluator will conduct formative and summative evaluation of the project to provide external feedback on the implementation and effectiveness of program activities. (See the Evaluation Plan section.)

The following goals, objectives, and performance measures constitute the work for the next five years in shaping this new and dynamic vision for TASD. The parties with major responsibility for implementing each objective are italicized, recognizing that ALL staff members in the central office and at the project campuses have onus for the successful implementation of the Montage project in the secondary schools since this is the district’s vision.

Texarkana Arkansas Montage Project		
Legislative Purpose #1: Elimination, reduction, or prevention of minority group isolation		
GOALS	OBJECTIVES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
#1: Reduce Black minority group isolation, as well as low-income SES student populations in the project magnet	1.A Attract non-Black students from surrounding affluent, White suburban district schools. <i>(Project Director, A/R/M Specialist)</i>	1.A.1 By the annual April application deadline, each project magnet school applicant pool will have at least 10 applications from regional feeder schools outside the TASD school district. 1.A.2 Each project year (2017-2022), the October 1 st enrollment snapshot for each project magnet school will indicate a 2% reduction of Black

<p>schools from the October 1, 2016 enrollment snapshot and positively impact diversity in the feeder schools.</p>	<p>1.B Increase minority group representation at the feeder schools <i>(Project Director, A/R/M Specialist)</i></p>	<p>minority group isolation 1.A.3 Each project year (2017-2022), the October 1st enrollment snapshot for each project magnet school will indicate a 2% increase of non-low income SES students 1.B Each project year (2017-2022), the October 1st enrollment snapshot for each feeder school will indicate the Black enrollment will be within \pm 10% of the feeder school district’s Black student population</p>
<p>Legislative Purpose #2: Assist LEAs in achieving systemic reforms and meet challenging State academic content standards and student achievement standards</p>		
<p>GOALS</p>	<p>OBJECTIVES</p>	<p>PERFORMANCE MEASURES</p>
<p>#2: Build capacity of all student groups to meet or exceed Arkansas state standards in English/Language Arts, in Mathematics, and in Science by using rigorous,</p>	<p>2.A Implement rigorous and highly engaging magnet school themes at the project schools that are based on strong theory and evidence-based research as viable systemic reform models.</p>	<p>2.A.1 By September of each project year, the number of students at each of the project schools scoring proficient or advanced on the Arkansas State Accountability Test for English/Language Arts will increase by at least 2% from the Spring 2016 baseline. 2.A.2 By September of each project year, the number of students at each of the project schools scoring proficient or advanced on the Arkansas State Accountability Test for Mathematics will</p>

<p>evidence-based strategies, and highly engaging programs at each project school and implementing inclusive parent involvement programs at each project school that include district-wide community services and family resources.</p>	<p><i>(Project Director, Magnet Curr. Dtr, Campus Curr Cs, Campus IT Cs)</i></p> <p>2.B Implement an academic engagement program at each project campus <i>(Magnet Curr. Dtr, Principals, Campus Curr Cs, Campus IT Cs)</i></p>	<p>increase by at least 2% from the Spring 2016 baseline.</p> <p>2.A.3 By September of each project year, the number of students at each of the project schools scoring proficient or advanced on the Arkansas State Accountability Test for Science will increase by at least 2% from the Spring 2016 baseline.</p> <p>2.B.1 By May 2018, each campus will have an academic engagement program including “acceleration academies” in place providing small-group instruction under the guidance of high-performing teachers outside of the daily class times such as before school, after school or during lunch periods as well as during scheduled school breaks and weekends with baseline data of students serviced for 2017/2018. Each subsequent project year, the percentage of students serviced in these acceleration academies will increase by at least 2%.</p> <p>2.B.2 By May 2018, a peer-to-peer support system will be developed and in place whereby students will be identified and trained to work as peer leaders. A high-school readiness metric will be</p>
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	<p>2.C Implement a parent involvement program at each magnet campus <i>(Project Director, Family Comm. Sp, A/R/M Sp.</i></p>	<p>used to assess students’ attendance, grades, and history of suspensions from school since these are proven indicators of success. Intervention events and social activities using student peer leaders will be used to upgrade students’ lives both academically and socially. A student survey each spring will ascertain students’ perception of the school culture and their own self-assessment. By May 2018, at least 60% of the students will indicate a positive perception of the school culture and by May 2019, at least 75% of the students will indicate a positive perception of the school culture. Each subsequent year of the grant, the percentage of students indicating a positive perception of the school culture will increase by 5%: 80% by May 2020, 85% by May 2021, and 90% by May 2022.</p> <p>2.C.1 By May 2018, each campus will have in place a Parent Involvement program with baseline data from each school of parent involvement in day-to-day school activities (such as Second Cup of Coffee with the Principal, Parenting Workshops, technology workshops, parent use of Parent Resource rooms, etc.), school events (such as</p>
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	<p><i>Principals, Parent Liaisons)</i></p>	<p>resources such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and volunteers to connect with students and families.</p> <p>By May 2019 each campus will collect baseline data on student/family accessibility of said services and by May 2020, and each subsequent year of the grant, student/family use of said services will increase by at least 5%.</p> <p>2.D.2 By May 2018 a Family Outreach Office will be in place and by May of each subsequent project year, increased family participation in these educational supports (including finding jobs, getting affordable housing, enrolling in higher education and/or vocational classes, and scholarship attainment) will increase by 5%.</p> <p>2.D.3 By May 2018 a technology mobile lab that acts as a digital connectivity bridge for neighborhoods lacking internet access will be in place within the Texarkana area as well as mobile Wi-Fi hotspot devices for student checkout at each project school. By the end of the grant cycle (2022), an additional technology mobile lab and Wi-Fi hotspot devices will be in place to assure all students have access to the internet.</p>
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Legislative Purpose #3: Development, design, and expansion of innovative educational methods and practices that promote diversity and increase choice		
GOALS	OBJECTIVES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
<p>#3: Design and develop innovative educational methods and practices that personalize learning using project-based learning that is both interdisciplinary and real-world, as well as through hands-on inquiry, that encourages and enhances design and creative thinking.</p>	<p>3.A Students in each project school will participate in project-based learning (PBL) units that are interdisciplinary, real-world, and aligned to the Arkansas state standards. <i>(Mag Curr D, Campus Curr C., Campus IT C.)</i></p> <p>3.B Students in each project school will have classroom teachers who facilitate and design high-interest and engaging learning while preserving the</p>	<p>3.A By May 2018, each project school faculty will have completed basic PBL training and have developed at least one inter-disciplinary PBL unit per grade level that is aligned with the school’s magnet theme. By May of each subsequent year, each project school will have two additional theme-based PBL units (one/semester/grade level) bringing a total of 9 PBL units/grade at each project school by the end of the MSAP cycle in 2019.</p> <p>3.B By August 2018, project campus teachers and staff members will be trained in the basics of student-centered classroom pedagogy (such as, inquiry questioning techniques, Steven Covey’s The Leader in Me, etc.) and district wide curricula (such as PBL, technology applications, computer science, hands-on science, engineering design thinking).</p>

	<p>dignity of the child. <i>(Proj.D., Principals, Mag Curr D, Campus Curr C., Campus IT C.)</i></p>	<p>-By August 2019, project campus teachers and staff members will have been trained in the basics of student-centered classroom pedagogy and district wide curricula and pedagogy at each project school with 60% of classroom teachers at each campus implementing the curriculum and techniques in the classroom as reported by classroom observations and student technology products.</p> <p>-By August 2020, all new project campus teachers and staff members will have been trained in the basics of student-centered classroom pedagogy and district wide curricula and pedagogy at each project school with 75% of classroom teachers at each campus implementing the curriculum and techniques in the classroom as reported by classroom observations and student technology products.</p> <p>-By August 2021, all new project campus teachers and staff members will have been trained in the basics of student-centered classroom pedagogy and district wide curricula and pedagogy at each project school with 85% of classroom teachers at each</p>
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	<p>3.C Students in each project school will have access to high-interest and engaging co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.</p> <p><i>(Principals, Campus Curr. C., Campus IT C.)</i></p>	<p>campus implementing the curriculum and techniques in the classroom as reported by classroom observations and student technology products.</p> <p>-By August 2022, all new project campus teachers and staff members will have been trained in the basics of student-centered classroom pedagogy and district wide curricula and pedagogy at each project school with 100% of classroom teachers at each campus implementing the curriculum and techniques in the classroom as reported by classroom observations and student technology products.</p> <p>3.C.1 By June 2018 student participation in specified co-curricular and extra-curricular activities (such as Chess Club, Stock Market Entrepreneurs, Biomechanical Engineering Club, Environmental Science Club, Robotics, golf, swimming, tennis, Leader in Me Club, and Graphic Arts) will be within \pm 10% of each school's ethnicity enrollment; and, maintain this participation throughout 2018/2019, 2019/2020, 2020/2021, and 2021/2022.</p>
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<p>Legislative Purpose #4: Courses of instruction that substantially strengthen the knowledge of academic subjects and the attainment of tangible and marketable career, technological, and professional skills</p>		
GOALS	OBJECTIVES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
<p>#4: Strengthen student knowledge of academic subjects as well as attain tangible and marketable career, technological, and</p>	<p>4.A Students in each magnet school will be taught 21st Century Soft Skills development (communication, collaboration, creativity, and professional ethics)</p>	<p>4.A.1 By June 30, 2018 the TASD will have developed a district wide 21st Century Soft Skills scope and sequence for K-12 (with rubrics). By June 30, 2019 each project school will have a baseline assessment by grade levels, of 21st Century soft skills attainment for their student populations and by June 30, 2020 documentation of the 21st Century soft skills attainment for each project school's student populations will increase</p>

<p>professional skills through increasing the number of students taking advanced academic, Pre-AP and AP courses by developing partnerships with post-secondary institutions and local businesses for mentoring opportunities, as well as for field trips, internships, apprenticeships, shadowing, and enrichment activities.</p>	<p><i>(Proj.D., Principals, Mag Curr D, Campus Curr C.)</i></p> <p>4.B Increase the number of students who take advanced Pre-AP coursework in middle school as well as junior high and increase the number of high school students who take AP courses in advanced mathematics, sciences and computers.</p> <p><i>(Proj.D., Principals, Mag Curr D, Campus Curr C.)</i></p>	<p>by 3% for each economic and racial student category each year of the grant cycle.</p> <p>4.B.1 By May of each project year, student participation in advanced academic coursework at College Hill Middle School and North Heights Jr. High will increase at least 2% for each economic and racial student category from the current percentage of 5th-8th students taking Pre-AP courses in 2016/2017:</p> <p>College Hill M.S. Pre-AP Math: 57% Low SES, 27% Black, 3% Hispanic, 1% Native Am., 0% Asian, 62% White, 2 or more 7%</p> <p>College Hill M.S. Pre-AP Science: 64% Low SES, 33% Black, 3% Hispanic, 0% Native Am., 0% Asian, 50% White, 2 or more 14%</p> <p>College Hill M.S. Environmental & Spatial Technology: 59% Low SES, 23% Black, 6% Hispanic, 1% Native Am., 1% Asian, 61% White, 2 or more 8%</p> <p>North Heights Jr. H. Algebra I: 52% Low SES, 33% Black, 7% Hispanic, 0% Native Am.,</p>
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	<p>4.C Develop partnerships with local educational institutions of higher education, medical institutions, and with local businesses for field trips, internships, apprenticeships, and shadowing activities. <i>(Proj.D., Principals, Mag Curr D, A/R/M Sp., Campus Curr)</i></p> <p>4.D Provide</p>	<p>0% Hispanic, 0%Native Am., 0% Asian, 63% White, 2 or more 4%</p> <p>AP Computer Science: 31% Low SES, 38% Black, 0% Hispanic, 0%Native Am., 6% Asian, 56% White, 2 or more 0%</p> <p>4.C By June 2018, each project magnet school will have developed formal partnerships with area businesses, educational institutions of higher education, medical institutions, and with local businesses for field trips, internships, apprenticeships, and shadowing opportunities as appropriate for the particular needs of the campus' students. By June 2019, each project school will collect baseline data on the types and numbers of field trips, internships, apprenticeships, and shadowing opportunities taken by students and teachers at each grade level and by each student so that by June 2020, an increase of 5% in student participation in job shadowing, apprenticeships, and internships will occur at College Hill Middle School and North Heights Jr. High and 10% at Arkansas High School.</p> <p>4.D By June 2018 the project magnet schools will</p>
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	<p>opportunities for students to engage in mentoring and college enrichment activities.</p> <p><i>(Proj.D., Principals, Mag Curr D, A/R/M Sp., Campus Curr.)</i></p>	<p>have mentoring and college enrichment plans in place so that each student has the opportunity to enhance tangible and marketable career as well as technological and professional skills. By June 2019 baseline information on student participation in mentoring and college enrichment activities will be collected and by June 2020, and each subsequent year of the grant cycle, an increase of 10% in student participation in mentoring and college enrichment activities will occur at each of the project schools.</p>
<p>Legislative Purpose #5: Build Institutional capacity to continue operating magnet schools at a high performance level after funding is terminated.</p>		
GOALS	OBJECTIVES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
<p>#5: Access top quality curricular and instructional professional development in order to develop highly qualified learner-centered teachers who use</p>	<p>5.A Ensure a highly qualified, learner-centered teacher is in each magnet classroom, who uses evidenced-based instructional methods designed to create open, learner-</p>	<p>5.A.1 By March 2018 a professional-learning-communities (PLC) model plan for each project magnet school will be in place ensuring classroom teachers have time for practice, reflection, and innovation using techniques such as peer-coaching, lesson study, and lesson planning. By August 2018, the campus PLCs will be in place and teachers will indicate at least 50% are satisfied with the school culture on a School Climate Survey. By August</p>

<p>evidence-based instructional methods and aspire to improve their own professional expertise.</p>	<p>centered classroom environments. <i>(Principals, ProjD, MagCurrD, CampusCurrC, CampusITC)</i></p>	<p>2019, teachers will indicate at least 70% are satisfied with the school culture on the School Climate Survey. By August 2020, teachers will indicate at least 80% are satisfied with the school culture on School Climate Survey. By August 2021, teachers will indicate at least 85% are satisfied with the school culture on the School Climate Survey. By August 2022, teachers will indicate at least 90% are satisfied with the school culture on School Climate Survey.</p> <p>5.A.2 Each year of the grant cycle, at least 5% additional teachers at each project school will be in process or have secured advanced certifications or post-baccalaureate degrees from the baseline number for the school in August 2018: 5% more than the baseline number in 2019/2020, 10% more than the baseline number in 2020/2021, and 15% more than the baseline number in 2021/2022.</p>
<p>Legislative Purpose #6: Ensure students have equitable access to succeed academically and continue with postsecondary education or productive employment.</p>		
<p>GOALS</p>	<p>OBJECTIVES</p>	<p>PERFORMANCE MEASURES</p>
<p>#6: All students will have</p>	<p>6.A Develop a Magnet Advisory</p>	<p>6.A By January 2018 the district Magnet Advisory Council (MAC) will be in place; by March 2018</p>

<p>equitable access to be successful academically to continue to their next level of education as well as to post-secondary education and/or productive employment without need for remediation.</p>	<p>Committee made up of members from local businesses, community members, and post-secondary institutions, including Arkansas High alumni and student representation. <i>(ProjD, Ass't Supt for Secondary, MagCurrD, A/R/M Sp)</i></p> <p>6.B Establish an Arkansas High Alumni Office to track graduates over 5-10 or more years beyond graduation. <i>(A/R/M Sp, MagCurrD, HSCurr C)</i></p> <p>6.C All district</p>	<p>MAC by-laws and governing structure will be in place; and by June 2018 the MAC will be fully functioning, so that by June of each subsequent year of the grant cycle, the MAC will meet quarterly to review magnet school progress and to provide varying perspectives on overcoming any obstacles or challenges in ensuring all students have equitable access to high quality education at Texarkana Schools.</p> <p>6.B By January 2018 an Arkansas High Alumni Office (AAO) will be in place so that by June 2018 the Arkansas High Alumni Office will be fully functioning. By September of each grant cycle year and beyond the Arkansas High Alumni Office will present a "Status of Arkansas High School Graduates" report to the TASD Superintendent and to the TASD's School Board.</p> <p>6.C By January 2018 a cultural-competency</p>
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	<p>administrators, faculty, and staff members participate in a cultural competency program throughout the grant cycle to ensure that bias is not embedded in the system and the daily practices of the schools and district.</p> <p><i>(Proj.D, Ass't Supt. Secondary, MagCurrD)</i></p>	<p>training program will be contracted and by April 2018 all district personnel will privately take an implicit association test to become aware of individual interracial discriminatory behavior. By June of each subsequent year of the grant cycle (2018-2022), school personnel will complete four hours of cultural competency training and hold one student cultural competency activity at each project campus each year on some aspect of cultural competency.</p>
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The TASD Montage project management plan has measurable and quantifiable objectives that were built directly on the MSAP statutory purposes of ensuring desegregation and choice, developing capacity, and improving academic achievement.

Desegregation and Choice: Each school year minority/non-minority enrollments will indicate to what extent the TASD desegregation goal is being met. The **Magnet Director and A/R/M Specialist** will monitor enrollment applications to make adjustments in the marketing and recruitment plan. Majority students will be attracted from the surrounding affluent White suburban school districts as well as from private and parochial schools. In addition, home-schoolers will also be a target market for the Montage project. Magnet campus personnel will

participate in Magnet community activities and events to showcase each magnet school in order to attract families to the T ASD magnet schools. **Principals and campus personnel** will ensure that students are encouraged and supported to take higher-level academic coursework and to participate in co-curricular and extra curricular activities. By monitoring and analyzing the participation of minority populations and low SES populations in the higher-level coursework and in the co-curricular and extra curricular activities, adjustments to enhance a supportive and culturally relevant environment will ensure that substantial progress is made toward achieving equitable opportunities for all diverse student populations and that re-segregation within the schools is not occurring.

Developing Capacity: **Campus administrators** will monitor the implementation of the innovative methods and practices in the classroom using the Arkansas teacher evaluation system. By May 2018, each campus will have completed basic professional development in the district wide focus on the following: PBL (project-based learning), STEAM, inquiry learning, and technology training. Summers will be used for curriculum development as teams of teachers work together to develop and create their interdisciplinary magnet themed units and lessons, which will be aligned to the Arkansas State Standards. Additionally, the physical design and layout for each magnet campus will be in place by Fall 2018, so that each campus “screams its theme.” The 2018/2019 through 2021/2022 school years will be ongoing professional development and instructional coaching to enhance the implementation of project-based learning using STEAM topics and incorporating financial literacy and computer science lessons, as well as the use of new technology tools and software. The final year of the grant will be used to further embed the magnet theme into the daily curricula of the schools as more and more teachers assume collaborative leadership roles. The goal is to have a flattened organization at

each magnet campus so that classroom teachers, staff, and administrators work as a well-oiled team and student-centered learning is facilitated throughout the schools.

Academic Achievement: The vision of the TASD Montage project is that the focus of every classroom is student-centered rather than teacher-centered, with a heavy emphasis on personalized learning opportunities. The campus leadership team composed of the Principal, Assistant Principal(s), Parent Liaison(s), Media Specialist, and Counselor(s), along with the Magnet Curriculum Coordinator and Magnet IT Coordinator, will work to develop a school culture that fulfills students' four psychological needs: 1) a sense of belonging, 2) autonomy or freedom to make choices, 3) a sense of fun and joy, and 4) individual power or feeling of success. Classroom walk-throughs, weekly cognitive coaching with teachers, teacher peer mentoring sessions, analysis of student achievement data, benchmark assessments, and ongoing lesson study activities will determine the progress that each campus is making toward high academic achievement. Monthly district magnet meetings will also allow the leadership team members to network, troubleshoot, and collaborate with other project school personnel with like positions.

This project application is the vision for furthering and expanding the district's existing elementary magnet program up through the high school so it will be 100% of the district's secondary program and the project schools' work for the next five years and beyond. Teachers, in anticipation of the grant award, are already moving toward project-based learning and STEM curricular enhancements using book studies and discussion groups. This is creating a 'happy tension' as these professional educators gear up for this dynamic opportunity to work smarter in truly innovative and cutting-edge magnet schools. TASD will utilize all MSAP grant funds to provide special magnet personnel, curriculum, professional development, supplies, materials,

equipment, travel, and contractual services necessary to implement an effective magnet schools program capable of achieving the goals established by the U.S. Department of Education's MSAP. The Magnet Program Funding Requests (ED FORM 524) summarize the way in which funds requested in this proposal will be utilized. The **investment in personnel** is critical to achieving the objectives of the program. The funds will cover salaries and stipends for needed personnel for magnet theme development, provide adequate stipends for curriculum development and extensive professional development in instructional strategies and interdisciplinary curricular teaching, provide release time in order for teachers to serve as observers, mentors, and peer coaches, and cover salaries and extra duty pay for enrichment and after-school programs and tutoring for students. Magnet support personnel are needed for each project year; however, training and extra duty assure progress is made toward developing teacher competencies in the implementation and ultimate sustainability of the MSAP goals. These magnet support personnel will be phased out over the five-year grant cycle as expertise and leadership depth is developed at each magnet school and within the administrative ranks.

Equipment will be one-time purchases. **Equipment** purchases are detailed in the individual school budgets, and include such items as wireless networking and centralized technology systems. Supplies and materials, including technology tools such as classroom projection systems and software applications, computers and personal digital devices, along with instructional supplies and materials will be purchased to implement the themes at each magnet school. Approximately 2% of this budget will be spent on advertising and marketing. The majority of the **supplies and materials** budget will go directly into the classrooms for instructional purposes. Under the contractual category, funds will be expended for top consultants to work with teachers for **specialized training, curriculum integration and**

alignment to the Arkansas state standards. Using a **Trainer of Trainers model**, these consultants will give teachers the tools and expertise for creating special learning activities and academic opportunities, which will be sustained as campus teachers gain the necessary skills to coach and train additional hires over the ensuing years. The **Other budget category** reflects costs for student admissions for field trips which include trips such as those to local and regional science, art, and history museums, medical facilities, the Arkansas state capitol, historical sites, the Museum of Natural History, the medicinal value of herbal gardens at the Native American Environmental Center, the Dallas Patent Office, and the Dallas Botanical Gardens to offer students learning that extends and enhances learning beyond formal classroom learning. Travel funds are also critical to enable teachers to make site visits to other schools where model programs that feature instructional best practices are available, to attend institutes to receive specialized training, and to attend the U.S. Department of Education meetings and conferences. The **Magnet Director** is a key person and will be directly under the supervision of the **Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education**. The Magnet Director will oversee every aspect of the Magnet project. He/she, with the **A/R/M Specialist** will work with the campuses to develop ongoing strategies for year-round recruitment: such as, hosting rotating monthly Real Estate meetings at each project school in order to familiarize real estate agents to the wonderful qualities of the project schools, staying ‘in the news’ with activities and events at the project campuses, speaking engagements at service organizations such as Kiwanis or the Chamber of Commerce, hosting parent meetings, producing Magnet PSAs on TV and radio, along with coordinating shopping mall events featuring live performances and magnet student displays.

The Executive Director of the National Staff Development Council states that, “[Instructional] Leadership development is an essential and often-neglected task in the process of creating

schools in which all students and teachers learn and perform at high levels.” Professional development will include **campus teachers and support personnel, as well as administrators** who will incorporate evidence-based innovative teaching best practices such as Project-Based Learning, Brain-Based Learning strategies, Gifted and Talented training, Sheltered English techniques, Reality Therapy, the Leader in Me, Conflict Resolution, technology integration, Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences, Generational Poverty training, team teaching and co-teaching, constructivism and inquiry learning, Socratic questioning techniques, portfolio assessment, and field science investigations into the school culture and into the classroom instruction, as well as instructional interventions selected using evidenced-based research studies. The **Magnet Curriculum Director** will assist in the identification of appropriate consultants as well as master teachers in the schools who are already using some of these instructional practices in their classrooms to spread the depth of instructional leadership throughout the Montage project. Through site visits and cognitive coaching feedback with campus mentor teachers, principals, and the campus Magnet Coordinators, the Magnet Curriculum Director with the External Evaluator will monitor the progress of teachers incorporating innovative methods and practices into their classrooms. Clear evidence of student creativity and enjoyment will abound in these magnet schools where students are involved and challenged, projects link to real life issues, and student interests are expressed above and beyond the dictates of the classroom. The **Magnet Director with the campus Instructional Technology Coordinators** will ensure that the technology tools and software purchased with MSAP funds are used effectively at each of the project schools and that the campus teachers and administrators are supported over the grant cycle years in developing IT expertise to continue using the technology resources beyond the grant cycle. Over the next five years the **Magnet Alumni/Recruitment/Marketing Specialist**

will develop a comprehensive district plan that connects recruitment of families to the magnet program, nurtures and documents T ASD students' paths through the magnet program, and then follows the graduates as they continue beyond in post-secondary employment or further education. This will forge a positive community perception of T ASD's magnet schools throughout the region. The resources and personnel needed to address the **objectives of desegregation and choice, capacity development, and high academic achievement** will sustain the high performance level of these magnet schools and determine the project's progress.

How the plan will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are heard

“When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school...” That's the conclusion of a 2002 report from Southwest Educational Development Laboratory entitled, “A New Wave of Evidence.” This Montage project is a collaborative effort with the Texarkana community, higher education institutions, and businesses throughout the city and region. **A Magnet Advisory Council**, made up of parents, students, community, and business leaders, as well as key district and campus educators and headed by the Magnet Project Director will be formed to meet regularly and provide input and a diversity of perspectives on the governance of the schools. Families will be encouraged to attend Magnet Advisory Council meetings and, if interested, to run for positions on the council.

Schools play an important role in determining the levels of parental involvement in the school. Each campus will have a **School Leadership Team**, made up of the Principal, PTA President, and School Counselor, campus Curriculum Coordinator, along with at least four elected parents and two students representing the campus' student body, to assist in the evaluation and assessment of a school's educational programs and their effects on student achievement. Specifically, the school PTAs will be used to outline parent expectations for the magnet

programs and policies of the school and will regularly communicate with parents about what students are learning. District and campus websites and social media will provide interactive venues for outside input. The schools will provide opportunities for parents to talk with school personnel about their role in their student’s education through home visits, family nights, and well-planned student-led parent/teacher conferences and open houses. Parent and community members will be welcome as volunteers in the schools and these programs will invite **parents to act as full partners in making school decisions** that affect students and families.

Joyce Epstein’s Framework of Six Types of Involvement will be used to guide parental decision-making and involvement in the project magnet schools. The six types of involvement are: 1) **Help all families establish home environments to support children as students.** Parent Liaisons at each school will be the direct contact with families and will also coordinate campus parent meetings and workshops. These parent activities will have babysitting services for younger children and some will be held in community centers, apartment common areas, and libraries to ensure families feel comfortable in attending. 2) **Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs.** Parents who do not speak English well or are non-English speakers, who do not read well, or who need larger print will be considered when developing any type of communication. There will be clear two-way channels for communication from home to school and from school to home. 3) **Recruit and organize parent help and support.** It is important to recruit volunteers widely so that families know that their time and talents are welcome. Flexible schedules for volunteers, assemblies, and events will enable more parents who work to participate. 4) **Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home.** Each school will design and organize a weekly schedule of interactive homework that gives students responsibility for discussing important things they

are learning with their families. 5) **Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.** It will be especially important to include parent leaders from all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups in the school. Training will be offered to enable these parent leaders to serve as representatives of other families, with input and communication to all parents. 6) **Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.** Each campus leadership team will ensure equity of opportunities for students and families to participate in community programs and/or to obtain services.

One strategy to engage families of English learners in order to build a strong and trusted relationship with bilingual families is to develop Family Academic Literacy Projects. With this strategy, after-school learning spaces for EL students and their families are created as intentionally bilingual learning spaces. Participants include teachers, administrators, students, and family members. At a Family Academic Literacy project, participants connect academic literacy to family experiences, including social and community projects such as the planting of a garden. As families and students watch teachers take risks in Spanish, they find ways to jump in to help translate, answer questions, or offer encouragement. Food will be provided at these gatherings to ensure the social nature of the learning event is enhanced. Each family academic literacy event will provide scaffolding for language-learning students by teaching new literacy strategies to them and to their parents. As a result of this type of project, families gain confidence participating in and speaking their home languages at school events; and, by having the school value the home language, parents conversely, gain confidence in giving input and voicing their opinion in school decisions. This is especially true for low-income families whose voices are

typically not heard. These types of projects demonstrate to parents that working alongside their children and in partnership with teachers is a powerful piece of the magnet program.

Quality of Personnel

The Texarkana Arkansas School District Montage project holds great promise for upgrading academic opportunities for youth throughout the Texarkana area. Staff members associated with the project schools and district office are “highly qualified, and highly effective” professionals who have had input into the development of this vision. They are committed to the enormous task these magnet programs represent and are anxious to secure the specialized thematic training that they need to improve the curriculum and instructional delivery in these schools. The TASD personnel are committed to the fulfillment of the responsibilities as articulated in the grant application and will ensure that the MSAP purposes are realized. The central office, under Superintendent Kessler’s leadership, is streamlined and ready to ensure that communication across departments is maximized and that this MSAP project is fully realized. In the central office, at the secondary schools, and throughout the district are many seasoned staff members with direct experience working and supporting the design, delivery, and assessment of the elementary magnet programs. Many of these seasoned staff members, including the Superintendent, were a part of the secondary magnet project design development and many have already transitioned to the secondary Montage project schools. Their expertise and guidance will be invaluable in the delivery and assessment of the project, as well as infusing the magnet philosophy to others.

The project director is qualified to manage the project

Assistant Superintendent Robin Hubnik Hickerson will serve as **Project Director**. Ms. Hickerson has spent her entire career working in schools with a high poverty rate. Before being

named Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education, she was the principal of Arkansas High School. This project is very dear to her because she knows the difference it will make for so many students who need the supports that this project will give them to excel. She was instrumental in developing this vision with district educators and community stakeholders. Ms. Hickerson has earned many top honors as both a classroom teacher and administrator. She was Teacher of the Year for Pine Street Middle School (Texarkana, Texas) and Arkansas Middle Level Principal of the Year in 2007. She is a National Distinguished Principal, was honored as an Administrator Who Makes a Difference by the Arkansas Middle Level Association in 2006; and in 2009, she received the Distinguished Alumni Award from Texas A&M University-Texarkana. Under her leadership as principal of College Hill Middle School, the campus received the prestigious Shannon Wright Award for outstanding middle school in Arkansas. Always striving to improve her skills, she has received extensive training in working with children of poverty, minority students, gifted students, and adolescent learners. She is a graduate of the Arkansas Master Principal Program and Leadership Texarkana. Even as she is able to release the full management of the project to the magnet director, the MSAP Montage project will continue to take at least 60-80% of her time since these three project schools comprise the secondary program for T ASD. The hiring of a project director will relieve her to focus on her Assistant Superintendent for secondary education duties without the day-to-day magnet grant oversight.

Magnet Director: Following notification of an MSAP award, a magnet director will be selected and will take over as the **MSAP project director**. He/she will be a seasoned certified educator with specialized magnet school knowledge and achievement who has at least a Master's degree in education and at least three years in the classroom as well as two years of educational administration/leadership experience with Arkansas administrative certification. The person who

assumes this position must have demonstrable verbal and written communications skills; have excellent supervisory, organizational, and training skills; have competent technological orientation; have skill in program development and execution with the ability to work independently with minimal direction coordinating activities, evaluating data, and establishing priorities. This person must have the ability to interact confidently and sensitively with various groups and to analyze problems and make well-reasoned, sound decisions. The Magnet Director will serve on the Central Office Executive Team to ensure clear communication among all members of the Management Team. The Magnet Director will head up the Magnet Advisory Council and will oversee all aspects of the day-to-day magnet schools program implementation including 1) the effective management of the Montage program development, including overseeing marketing and recruitment efforts 2) oversee budget and ensure financial accountability for appropriate thematic purchases 3) participate in the hiring of magnet personnel for the Montage related positions 4) supervise program delivery according to the project design 5) assess needs and monitor improvements with the external evaluator in order to complete the yearly MSAP annual performance and ad hoc reviews 6) establish operating procedures for campus projects that meet program goals, and 7) provide program content expertise, which may include delivering in-service training and/or arranging appropriate consultant training and coaching. This position requires the ability to coordinate a range of activities and to ensure that all are completed in a timely manner. The Magnet Director will oversee the magnet theme implementation at each of the magnet schools and serve as the first line advocate for the magnet campuses in order to remove any barriers at the central administration. The Magnet Director will keep the Board of Education and the community apprised of the gains made by the magnet schools in reaching their goals. Fifty to sixty percent of the Magnet Director's time will be on

campuses monitoring magnet activities and events, 25% in the community at events to highlight the magnet project, and only 15% of the time will be spent in the office. (See full job description in the Appendix.)

Other key personnel are qualified to manage the project

TASD Superintendent Becky Kessler, Ed.D. has over thirty years of education experience and took over the Texarkana Arkansas School District in 2013. Dr. Kesler has served as teacher, Assistant Principal, Principal, Human Resources Manager, Assistant Superintendent and now Superintendent of Texarkana Arkansas School District. She has seen the power of magnet schools as a reform model for the district and believes strongly in the Montage project. She maintains professional affiliations in the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators, Arkansas Association of School Personnel Administrators, and the Society for Human Resource Management. Through these activities she is able to network with professionals throughout the region and throughout the nation in order to secure the best-qualified applicants for positions as they come open. Dr. Kessler will be instrumental in collaborating with Ms. Hickerson to ensure the rigorous curriculum and instruction needed for this project is in place.

Magnet Curriculum Director (to be hired) will devote 100% of time to this magnet project. This certified educator will have an education master's degree and have at least three to five years classroom teaching experience. This person will be responsible for overseeing the planning and implementation of the specialized curricula and professional development at each of the magnet schools with the campus administrators and campus magnet coordinators and campus IT coordinators. Coordination with higher education institutions, medical community, business partners, magnet education consultants, resource persons, and community organizations will be essential in developing the sustainability of this instructional program beyond the grant cycle.

Qualifications include expertise in curriculum writing, cognitive coaching (with sensitivity to adult learners), and professional development, as well as working knowledge of the Arkansas State Standards, the national AP certification requirements and the ACT Aspire Assessment. The Magnet Curriculum Director will spend 85-90% of time in the field working with campus teachers and specialists to ensure success of the curricular theme and only 10-15% of his/her time will be spent in the office. (See full job description in the Appendix.)

Magnet Alumni/Recruitment/Marketing Specialist (to be hired) will have responsibilities that include overseeing the recruitment and magnet application process. A highly qualified certified educator with expertise in advertising and marketing, as well as one of absolute integrity and empathy with magnet guidelines, will be sought to fill this position. This position will also be responsible for developing a high school Alumni Office and overseeing the pathways to post-secondary success for students. This individual must possess strong human relations skills, precise knowledge of the Magnet Schools Assistance Program, and an understanding of the STEM magnet program across grade levels. Multi-tasking and communication skills are of paramount importance. Fifty to 60% of time will be working with project campuses and agencies on marketing and recruitment events at the schools and the relationships needed to excite students and parents with the magnet pathways this project opens for them. This leaves approximately 40% to 50% of time to develop and oversee the high school Alumni Office and to compose and ensure that marketing and recruitment information for families is kept current. (See full job description in the Appendix.)

Family Communication Specialist (to be hired) will promote the school district through positive communication with all stakeholders. This person will foster collegiality and team building among staff and families and encourage their active involvement in the decision making

process. This person will articulate a clear direction for all students and families by articulating a positive image of the school district and school district personnel.

Magnet Administrative Assistant (to be hired) is the front line contact with parents and also interfaces with campus faculty, staff, and administration and must have excellent telephone and computer skills in order to support the daily operations of the magnet project. This position is vital. The Administrative Assistant supports the application and lottery process and coordinates the logistics of the Magnet Director, the Magnet Curriculum Director, the Magnet Family Communication Specialist, and the Alumni/Recruitment/Marketing Specialist. In order to maintain communication between and for the Magnet District Team, field questions and concerns of parents and campus personnel, and to process the magnet paperwork and reports, this person will devote 100% of time in the office. This will ensure the smooth functioning of the magnet project. (See full job description in the Appendix.)

School Leadership: The **magnet school principals** are all ‘highly qualified’ and **will receive extensive training in all MSAP statutory purposes**. All principals hold Arkansas administrative certifications and have experience in their respective school levels. Each principal has exhibited enthusiasm for the project and has generated faculty and staff support. Since all of these are school-wide magnets, every staff member will devote 100% of time to the project.

Eva Nadeau is the Principal of **Arkansas High School** (9-12) with over 20 years of experience. Ms. Nadeau is a first-generation college graduate who grew up in poverty, so she is VERY aware of the issues students from low socio-economic levels face, especially poor minority students. She works daily to empower all her students and challenge them to overcome the barriers that they encounter along the way. She is a proud member of the Arkansas High School Transition Team and is participating in the University of Kansas Transition Coalition. This coalition is

designed to ease the stress for children of poverty and to meet the special needs of life after high school. Arkansas High School is only one of thirty teams selected nationally to be a part of this coalition and only one of three selected from Arkansas. Assisting Ms. Nadeau at Arkansas High School is Natasha Hampton, Director of the **Texarkana Arkansas Career & Technology Center**. As the first African American to hold this position, she brings a unique perspective to this aspect of the high school and will be a valuable asset as Arkansas High School focuses on getting students into the workforce by expanding the pipeline for them to enter science, technology, engineering, and math programs.

Theresa Cowling is Principal of **North Heights Jr. High School** (7-8). She has worked in school districts with high minority student populations, as well as low SES of 66% to 70% or more for her entire teaching career. One of her 'hobbies' while traveling is to visit schools across the nation to see first-hand how other educators are using best practices to improve education for their students. She has said that, "Each visit and training has provided me with creative approaches to promote student learning at North Heights."

J.R. Arnold is the Principal of **College Hill Middle School** (5-6) with ten years of experience. Mr. Arnold, as a child, grew up in various states and had the opportunity to learn in educational settings that were not only diverse in ethnicity, but also cultures. Arnold took a non-traditional route to educational licensure since he worked in the business world for two years before deciding that he wanted to work in education. He taught physical science, Honors Chemistry, and AP Chemistry with the Benton, AR school district while working on his Masters of Arts in Teaching. With this strong science, as well as business background, he brings a wealth of knowledge to the middle school experience, especially for a diverse, low-income student

population. He believes in continuous learning in order to effectively lead schools in today's society.

The **Campus Magnet Coordinators** (to be hired) at each magnet school site are key individuals needed during the ongoing development and implementation phase of this project. These staff members will be certified master teachers selected based on their expertise in curriculum development, instructional delivery, interpersonal/intergroup relations, and team building. Their goal is to **empower teachers** and to build the faculty's capacity to operate high functioning and academically rigorous magnet programs. As the entire faculty gains expertise and confidence as education professionals, the entire governance of the schools will be flattened. This relieves the campus administrators to pursue other duties that are often pushed aside because of the intense workload that comes with being an instructional leader of a campus with few supports. Specific duties for these coordinators include, but will not be limited to: coordinating the curriculum writing process with the district Magnet Curriculum Director, coordinating the instructional delivery professional development and cognitive coaching (including the computer science curricula), working with the leadership team and staff to implement the PBL unit development and the STEM theme, overseeing the design and implementation of summer programs to ensure thematic integration and standards practice, participating in collaborative efforts with the higher-education institutions and community business partners as these experts-in-the-field provide mentoring and resource opportunities to the schools, helping with budget and processing of the theme related supplies and equipment requests, and participating in the observation process with the internal and external evaluators. The persons identified as campus Magnet Curriculum Coordinators must hold an Arkansas teaching certificate, possess a minimum of three to five years teaching experience, including

experience in schools with diverse populations, experience in curriculum and instructional delivery development, ability to be a team member and work well with all staff members and student families, ability to work effectively with diverse populations, and possess excellent writing and communication skills. (See full job description in the Appendix.)

Campus Magnet Instructional Technology Coordinators (to be hired) will devote 100% of time to this magnet project. Again, these positions will demand a certified educator with a master's degree in Educational Technology and have at least three to five years classroom teaching experience. Each person will work directly with campus personnel on upgrading their technology skills in the use of technology tools and software within the classroom environment. One aspect of this position will be to train technology lead teachers at each campus to better infuse technology use throughout the campuses. In addition these persons will coordinate maintenance and updating of the campus' websites to ensure they are kept current. Each Magnet Instructional Technology Coordinator will spend 85-90% of the day in classrooms at the campus and only 10-15% of the day in the office. (See full job description in the Appendix.)

Teachers who will provide instruction are qualified

Magnet classroom teachers are keys to the success of each magnet school. All of the teachers at each magnet school have valid Arkansas teaching certificates. The following charts provide an indication of the expertise that many campus personnel have. While it is extensive, the specialized training that this MSAP project will make possible is highly anticipated. As the following charts indicate, training has occurred; but the coaching and infusing of the training throughout the faculty, as well as bringing in the specialized STEM training at these campuses is vital to this project. **Coaching and infusing the training will be the key to ensuring that best practices are happening** throughout the schools and that the school cultures become truly

student-centered over the next five years. The core teachers at each of the magnet project schools are content experts and are each highly qualified in their field of study. Advanced science and mathematics courses, including physics and engineering, are already in place. Additional specialized STEM coursework and certifications for teachers at the schools is being developed with Texas A&M University-Texarkana, as well as with other higher education institutions. The Montage project has put into place the **ongoing and just-in-time professional development** to ensure that the training really takes hold and builds the capacity of the schools to continue the project beyond the five years of the grant cycle. As vacancies occur during the grant cycle, the Principals, working with the Magnet Leadership team and following all T ASD contracting rules, will make every effort to recruit staff members who bring relevant experiences as well as passion for the magnet project.

The following charts summarize the teaching experiences and special trainings that teachers in the project schools possess. T ASD will continue to recruit professionals from diverse backgrounds, including minorities and men (since they are a scarcity in education), to ensure that students have dynamic role models in the classroom.

Arkansas High School (9th-12th)
<p>Of the 61 teachers: 28 have Masters and 24 are male. There are 51 Caucasians, 1 Hispanics, 0 Native American, 0 Asian, and 9 African Americans.</p> <p>Special training include: Early Literacy & Language, Hands-on Equations, Mathematics Design Collaborative, Build Your Own Curriculum, Cultural Proficiency, Inquiry Science, Arts-Integration, Cultural Diversity, Boys in Crisis, Effective Literacy & Fluency, Common Core, Pathwise Mentoring, Step Up to Writing, Comprehensive Literacy, Reading First, Everyday Math, Counseling, Parental Involvement, Generational Poverty, Building Academic Vocabulary,</p>

TESSA, Investigative Math, Advanced Placement & Pre-Advanced Placement.

Of the 7 specialists: 6 have Masters and 1 is male. There are 5 Caucasians, 0 Hispanics, 0 Native American, 0 Asian, and 2 African Americans.

Special training include: Whole Brain Teaching, Build Your Own Curriculum, Cultural Proficiency, Cultural Diversity, Boys in Crisis, Effective Literacy & Fluency, Common Core, Pathwise Mentoring, Step Up to Writing, Comprehensive Literacy, Reading First, Everyday Math, Counseling, Parental Involvement, Generational Poverty, Building Academic Vocabulary, TESSA, Student GPS

Of the 11 paras: 0 have Bachelors 5 have Associates and 3 are male. There are 4 Caucasians, 0 Hispanics, 0 Native American, 0 Asian, and 7 African Americans.

Special training include: Blood Borne Pathogens, CPR, First Aid

North Heights Jr. High School (7th-8th)

Of the 45 teachers: 22 have Masters and 16 are male. There are 35 Caucasians, 0 Hispanics, 0 Native American, 0 Asian, and 10 African Americans.

Special training include: Whole Brain Teaching, Cultural Proficiency, Cultural Diversity, Boys in Crisis, Effective Literacy & Fluency, Common Core, Pathwise Mentoring, Step Up to Writing, Comprehensive Literacy, Reading First, Inquiry Science, Arts-Integration, Everyday Math, Counseling, Parental Involvement, Generational Poverty, Building Academic Vocabulary, TESSA, Investigative Math, Project Based Learning, Build Your Own Curriculum, Pre-Advanced Placement, Hands-on Equations, Mathematics Design Collaborative,

Of the 4 specialists: 4 have Masters and 0 are male. There are 2 Caucasians, 0 Hispanics, 0 Native American, 0 Asian, and 2 African Americans.

Special training include: Early Literacy & Language, Cognitive Guided Instruction, Whole Brain Teaching, Concept Unit Planning, Essential Questioning, Cultural Proficiency, Cultural Diversity, Boys in Crisis, Effective Literacy & Fluency, Common Core, Pathwise Mentoring, Step Up to Writing, Comprehensive Literacy, Reading First, Everyday Math, Counseling, Parental Involvement, Generational Poverty, Building Academic Vocabulary, TESSA, Investigative Math.

Of the 8 paras: 1 has Bachelors 3 have Associates and 1 is male. There are 3 Caucasians, 0 Hispanics, 0 Native American, 0 Asian, and 5 African Americans.

Special training include: Blood Borne Pathogens, CPR, First Aid

College Hill Middle School (5th-6th)

Of the 42 teachers: 18 have Masters and 7 are male. There are 33 Caucasians, 0 Hispanics, 0 Native American, 0 Asian, and 9 African Americans.

Special training include: Early Literacy & Language, Cognitive Guided Instruction, Whole Brain Teaching, Build Your Own Curriculum, Inquiry Science, Arts-Integration, Cultural Proficiency, Cultural Diversity, Boys in Crisis, Effective Literacy & Fluency, Common Core, Pathwise Mentoring, Step Up to Writing, Comprehensive Literacy, Reading First, Everyday Math, Counseling, Parental Involvement, Generational Poverty, Building Academic Vocabulary, TESSA, Pre-Advanced Placement, Hands-on Equations, Project Based Learning

Of the 4 specialists: 4 have Masters and 0 are male. There are 4 Caucasians, 0 Hispanics, 0 Native American, 0 Asian, and 0 African Americans.

Special training include: Early Literacy & Language, Cognitive Guided Instruction, Whole Brain Teaching, Concept Unit Planning, Essential Questioning, Cultural Proficiency, Cultural

Diversity, Boys in Crisis, Effective Literacy & Fluency, Common Core, Pathwise Mentoring, Step Up to Writing, Comprehensive Literacy, Reading First, Everyday Math, Counseling, Parental Involvement, Generational Poverty, Building Academic Vocabulary, TESSA, Investigative Math.

Of the 6 paras: 3 have Bachelors 0 have Associates and 2 are male. There are 3 Caucasians, 0 Hispanics, 0 Native American, 0 Asian, and 3 African Americans.

Special training include: Blood Borne Pathogens, CPR, First Aid

As noted in the charts, many campus personnel have received training in cultural proficiency, brain-based learning, and other trainings such as generational poverty relative to understanding and celebrating the unique differences of all people. This magnet project will deepen this understanding for the personnel as they revisit the conceptual ideas inherent in these trainings and then deepen their understanding through the continuous and ongoing coaching and feedback that comes from having a common vocabulary and school-wide sensitivity to these issues. This same common vocabulary and focus will be manifested as the faculties engage in STEM and arts instructional trainings and professional development. Advanced STEM coursework professional development has been sporadic; but this Montage project will focus and reinforce this STEM training so that STEM learning, as well as arts-infusion is very evident throughout the schools.

Personnel qualifications related to the project objectives, as well as key personnel's knowledge and experience in curriculum development and desegregation strategies

TASD's voluntary desegregation efforts began in 2007 with its first inception of magnet schools in the district. In 2013, there was a critical mass of teachers and administrators who had been a part of this original movement who came together to revitalize TASD's elementary magnet schools. Some of that critical mass of teachers and administrators have now moved into

new positions within the district and up to the secondary schools so they are now in place to truly maximize and take T ASD’s voluntary desegregation efforts to new levels. Additionally, under Dr. Kessler’s guidance, T ASD has developed a tight vertical team effort to articulate standards based curriculum development from K-12 as well as horizontal grade-level teams to articulate curriculum at each level. With the establishment of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in the elementary grades, T ASD will now be establishing PLCs throughout the secondary project schools so as to refine and replicate the best practices that have been institutionalized at the elementary magnet level. Teachers’ expertise, especially AP and advanced academic teachers will be tapped into as these PLCs are established at the middle school., junior high, and high school. Using the magnet personnel to focus the campus efforts will ensure that teachers stop to ‘sharpen the axe.’ These efforts will assure the goals and objectives of the Montage Project lead to the long-term outcomes of the project detailed in the logic models. It will also ensure that the training becomes institutionalized and Montage project effects continue beyond the grant cycle. It’s going to be an exciting five years ahead!

Texarkana Arkansas School District, as part of its non-discriminatory employment practices, will ensure that its personnel are selected for employment without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. The table below presents an overview of the composition of the workforce in T ASD in terms of numbers of employees, minority staff, and gender.

Classification	# Personnel	% Af. Am.	% Female
Teachers	365	18%	80%
Administrators	34	27%	65%
Clerical	40	28%	98%
Non-Certified Instructional Staff	4	50%	75%

Non-Certified Admin. & Support	109	32%	73%
Buildings & Grounds	13	46%	0%
Cafeteria	Cafeteria is outsourced.		
Transportation	35	60%	40%

TASD actively implements strategies that ensure that all employees and potential employees have equal and fair treatment, as well as non-discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap, or national origin in all areas and phases of employment. This includes hiring practices, job assignments, upward mobility, transfer and demotion, layoff, and termination. In doing so, the district provides a wide dissemination of job advertisements and broadly stated job specifications to include a wide range of education and work experience.

TASD’s key personnel are knowledgeable and well versed in desegregation efforts, as well as, developing curriculum and mapping its use throughout the schools to ensure students are not missing key conceptual ideas as they progress through the grades. With the Arkansas Common Core State Standards, work has already begun on upgrading the curricular units and instructional practices throughout the district that will ensure TASD students have the 21st Century skills to be college and career ready.

The TASD personnel are highly qualified and will be able to attract students to the district with these quality magnet schools. The campus administrators, teachers, and central office personnel are developing professional learning communities to conduct lesson studies in order to unpack the state standards, and to collaborate across grade levels and across departments. This project will bring all of this together under the Montage magnet umbrella. These new magnet schools will truly excite families searching for a value-added education. From technology integration (using state-of-the-art technologies and media to support instructional practices), to STEM- and

STEAM-related content areas, to working with diverse learners (including students with special needs and ELLs) to the use of the arts to support, and extend classroom learning, the combined expertise of the district and school based staff members in fields related to the objectives of the magnet project will ensure the Texarkana Montage project is effective in making progress in the areas of systemic reform.

Quality of Project Evaluation

The district will select an **external evaluator with an educational background, experience in evaluation of magnet schools, and expertise in desegregation efforts** in accordance with the requirements of the US Department of Education and the Arkansas Department of Education who will **conduct formative assessments** (Annual Performance Report) to observe, interview, and analyze both quantitative data and qualitative data in order to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement in each school and for continuous program improvement toward meeting the performance objectives. (See the goals, objectives, and performance measures in Project Management section of application.) In addition, the external evaluator will also collect and analyze both qualitative and quantitative data to provide **summative evaluations** about each school and the program attainment of outcomes (see logic models in the project design section) at the end of each grant cycle year (Ad Hoc Report) as well as at the **end of the 5-year grant cycle**. The formative and summative assessments will be done through the focused lens of increasing desegregation, improving student achievement, and developing capacity for sustaining the project beyond the grant period. Analysis of the data from all sources will enhance the capacity of the magnet team members and project school staffs to make informed and timely decisions about program development and implementation. Findings will be shared with school

and district personnel and an **executive summary of the annual report** will be presented to the local School Board as well as distributed to parents and the community.

The evaluation plan for the TASD Magnet Schools Assistance Program has been designed to provide **information for decision-making and action**. It will focus on complying with EDGAR, the U.S. Education Department General Administrative Regulations, by providing a formative evaluation (the **Annual Performance Report**), and a summative evaluation for each year (the **Ad Hoc Report**), as well as the **Five-year Summative Report at the end of the grant cycle** which will use both quantitative and qualitative information to determine: 1) effectiveness of the project in meeting the statutory purposes of the Magnet Schools Assistance Program, 2) progress in meeting approved project objectives, and 3) effectiveness of the project on the participants being served. **Formative assessments throughout each year will be on-going in order to make project improvements as necessary.** The external evaluator, the Assistant Superintendent, and the Magnet Director will meet monthly during the first year of the grant cycle and then bi-monthly during the ensuing years. These meetings will include **periodic visits to each project school, soliciting feedback from students, faculty, and campus administrators**, and reviewing the MSAP project objectives, the level of their implementation, and student achievement in regards to them. Additionally, **family input** and guidance will be solicited through annual **parent and student surveys** as well as through **focus groups**. **Qualitative as well as quantitative methods** will be used with ongoing collection of data occurring from a variety of sources, as detailed in the Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures chart (see Quality of Management Plan section); and, by a variety of assessors (internal and external) who have expertise in the specific area. Yearly collection of data such as enrollment snapshot information (by race and by SES) for each campus and feeder schools will

be used to assess desegregation efforts. Student achievement (by race and by SES) on state tests for English/Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science will be used to assess academic achievement. A high school readiness metric will be developed to assess student indicators of success. A student survey will ascertain students' perception of the school climate and the student's own self-assessment of the learning, as well as any possible cultural biases embedded in the system or the daily practices of the schools and district. Parent participation in school parent involvement activities, in community services, and educational supports from the Family Outreach Office, will be documented and parents will be surveyed to ascertain parent comfort and participation in their student(s)'s learning. Documentation of interdisciplinary and STEM PBL units of study designed and developed by grade level teams will indicate application of the campus instructional training, its integrated technology tools use, infusion of the arts, and progressively more student-centered goals into the magnet curriculum. A school survey will indicate teachers' satisfaction with the school's emotional health and climate. Data on student participation in co-curricular and extra curricular activities, as well as in advanced academic coursework, disaggregated by race and economic levels will indicate whether students are re-segregating within the schools. Data on student attainment of 21st Century soft skills as reported by campus teachers using district-made rubrics will be collected to ascertain student development toward being career- and college-ready. Documentation of campus' formal and informal partnerships with area businesses, educational institutions of higher learning, medical facilities, and with local businesses will be collected and focus group interviews with adults within the organizations as well as teachers, students, and parents will qualitatively be assessed as to the partnerships' effectiveness. Anecdotal documentation of the development of the grade level and vertical professional learning communities at the project schools will be collected and

analyzed to ascertain their impact on teachers' career satisfaction as well as their impact on student achievement. Teachers working toward advanced certifications or post-baccalaureate degrees will be collected to ascertain the professional self-efficacy of teachers in the project schools. Surveys of the members of the Magnet Advisory Council and documentation of the Magnet Advisory Council meeting agendas and minutes will be analyzed to qualitatively ascertain its viability in providing varying perspectives on the Montage project's progress. By September of each grant cycle year, the A/R/M Specialist will present a "Status of Arkansas High School Graduates," with anecdotal accounts to ascertain the status as well as the quality of support for graduates into the real world of work or on to post-secondary education. The Montage project will be fully evaluated from the start of the initiative through the five-year project period to becoming self-sustaining.

Extent the methods of evaluation, will produce evidence of promise

Research and Evaluation are processes that both use systemic inquiry, which entails: collecting data, analyzing data, interpreting data, and finally, using the data. The evaluation of the Texarkana Montage Magnet program will use the four steps of systemic inquiry to understand, describe, and/or empower informed decisions about the project on an annual basis. The research implications of this systemic inquiry will be to understand, describe, and/or empower the Texarkana Montage magnet project results as evidence of promise for similar districts and/or schools across the nation.

As part of the partnership with Texas A&M University-Texarkana, rigorous evaluation designs will be carried out by superintendent-candidates in the Texas A&M University-Texarkana Superintendents' certification graduate program as part of their coursework, under the guidance of their University research and statistical analysis professor(s). A mixed method approach,

which uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods from multiple data sources, will be used to conduct this quasi-experimental evaluation, which will be to measure the impact of various components of the magnet program. To assess the statistically significant impact of the Montage project's interventions, well-designed, quasi-experimental evaluation that utilize clustered regression design (RD) methods, was selected because its theory is grounded in causal inference and hierarchical-linear-modeling (HLM) literature and because RD is a commonly used design in education research to test intervention effects. Additionally, RD designs are less intrusive on campus staff. The goal of these graduate research studies will be to measure the impact on student academic achievement with the statistical rigor of high-quality quasi-experimental design. Comparable Arkansas school district campuses (*comparison*) will be identified to compare with the project campuses (*intervention*). Each comparison group site will be matched to an intervention group site based on covariates such as ethnicity, gender, minority isolation, past academic achievement, socioeconomic status, family structure, etc. Because regression design does not require that needy or deserving students get assigned to a no-treatment or comparison group, there is an ethical advantage over other experimental designs for assessing treatment effects. The evaluation team will collect student-level data that allows the ability to compute the student-level "pooled within-group standard deviation" as well as the ability to control for the covariates, which is important as they may have confounding effects on the results. The research will utilize an *analysis of covariance* (ANCOVA) to assess the magnet program effect while controlling for covariates. By using this comprehensive approach to evaluation, greater assurances can be gained as to **what is and what is not happening (evidence of promise)** among students, teachers, staff, and the community. The superintendent candidates, conducting the research studies as part of their coursework, will be exposed to 'action research

techniques' in an authentic educational setting and be more likely to replicate the "evidence of promise" aspects of the Montage project when they are in a position to head their own districts.

Extent the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project

TASD expects to produce and provide quantifiable data. The TASD Montage project has identified six major overarching outcomes, which are embedded in the MSAP statutory categories of Ensuring Desegregation and Choice, Developing Capacity, and Improving Academic Achievement. These are detailed in the Project Design section of the application in the **Logic Models with short-term, mid-term, and long-term outcomes**. These six overarching outcomes by category are:

Ensuring Desegregation and Choice: **1)** effectiveness of racial integration in the designated project magnet schools, feeder schools, individual classrooms, as well as during school activities and events **2)** ability of the Montage campuses to attract students from differing racial, ethnic, social, and economic backgrounds

Improving Academic Achievement: **3)** improvement of magnet school student achievement so all students successfully advance to the next level of educational endeavor **4)** effectiveness of instruction to raise student performance and close the achievement gap for all populations

Developing Capacity: **5)** development of school cultures that promote rigorous, engaged learning and that sustain systemic reform, and **6)** improvement of parent involvement and participation in the schools

In order to track and study the rate of progress the Texarkana Montage magnet project makes toward its stated outcomes, several evaluation instruments will be used to track this progress.

(See the Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures chart in the management plan section to

see the **benchmarks** of this progress.) These evaluation instruments include: 1) The snapshot data on the **TASD Ethnic Percentage Report**, which measures the racial and SES composition of students enrolled in the district schools, will be **collected annually in October**. Additionally, the racial and SES composition of the applicant pool for each magnet campus and feeder campuses will be monitored and reported. 2) **Local surveys** will provide parental and community feedback on local needs and desires and will be developed using the U.S. Department of Education’s **Inventory of Present Practices of School, Family, and Community Partnership** found in the appendix. This will ensure that the best practices reported by school and district personnel align with parent and community perceptions. 3) Parent **magnet application comments** will provide feedback on effective recruiting methods. This checklist of how families heard of the Montage program and became interested in enrolling (i.e., billboards, TV commercial, radio commercial, newspaper inserts, magnet fair, word-of-mouth, other) will include a comments section. 4) **Applicant pool reports** will disaggregate the number of applicants applying to the magnet schools from the various populations as defined by the federal legislation. 5) **Marketing effectiveness** will be monitored to ensure that the student applicant pool for the magnet schools reflects a racial and ethnic composition that, in relation to the total enrollment of the school, reduces minority group isolation. 6) Each campus’s **Student Participation Report** will measure the SES, racial, and ethnic composition of students participating in designated core classes, as well as in extra- and co-curricular activities. 7) Each campus’s **Family Involvement Report** will measure the parent and family participation in daily school activities and at school events using Joyce Epstein’s six categories of involvement. 8) A **Student Survey** to gain students’ feedback on the school culture and their own self-assessment each year will be used to determine the overall safety and climate of each magnet school from

the students' perspectives. 9) The T ASD **Personnel Report** will be used to ensure that all teachers hired at the magnet campuses meet the highly qualified designation for the state of Arkansas, as well as to track the number of teachers from each campus pursuing certifications or advanced degrees. 10) Texarkana **Montage professional development logs** and then subsequent **Teacher Reflective Coaching logs** will be used to monitor each teacher's completion of the yearly required training and coaching on PBL, science, technology, engineering, math, and entrepreneurship. 11) Campus **PBL units of study** will be compiled electronically by the Magnet Office to share on the district website. 12) A campus **Student Technology Use Report** will be used to monitor core teachers' implementation of technology and training into the classroom instruction to show how students are using technology to show their evidence of learning. 13) **Student achievement data** will be analyzed from the **Arkansas State Accountability testing program**. Benchmark tests, checklists, and rubrics will provide a **stream of formative assessment information** as basis for **personalizing instruction**. Pupil profiles will also be used for **trend analysis** to assist planners with instructional decisions. 14) **Collaboration, Communication, Creativity, and Professional Ethics Skills Rubrics** will be created and then used to assess the student development of these 21st Century 'soft skills.' Work on rubrics such as these has already begun in the T ASD elementary schools so the Montage project schools will build on this work. The development of these rubrics will enhance the professional expertise of the project campus faculties as they work together to ascertain what these soft skills are and how to articulate their development across the secondary grades and throughout the content areas. 15) **Student enrollment in advanced classes** such as Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, Physical Science, and Pre-AP classes at the middle and junior high levels as well as AP classes at the high school will be documented as evidence that positive and effective supports are in place for more

TASD graduates prepared to be college and career ready. In summary, the Montage project will have a rigorous, ongoing assessment and reporting system that includes regular monthly and quarterly data collections, along with semi-annual and annual evaluation reports.

Objective and quantifiable measures have been put in place to guide the attainment of the six outcomes in the Plan of Operation. **The methods that will be used to collect the data on these six components are objective and quantifiable.** The **centralized magnet school personnel and campus leadership teams** will carry out necessary work as outlined in the MSAP grant application. The **Magnet Director and the external evaluator** will be responsible for ensuring the objectivity of the evaluation plan. The external evaluator will assist the project director with **monitoring and documenting instructional activities** that support all components of the programs and implementing an **evaluation design** that will measure the project's attainment of its goals. The external evaluator will assist the project director in preparing the prescribed charts that will result in data for the final performance reports. Individual school sites will be advised of **expectations relative to evaluation plan schedules and procedures.** The prescribed data collection charts and procedures will be shared with the project campuses in workshops at the site. A **timeline for evaluation activities** will be set on the district and school calendars at the beginning of the 5-year cycle, and updated at the beginning of each school year so that the **timely collection of data and debriefings at periodic points** throughout the year are set in advance and do not slide. **Site visit reports** are opportunities to provide feedback based on data related to the implementation of the project. After each site visit, a report will be written by the assessor and submitted to the Magnet Director. It will summarize the findings of the visit and recommendations for improvement. Assessors will orally discuss the proposed recommendations with the school and magnet staff during an **Exit Interview** at the end of the site visit. Adherence

of activities implemented on schedule, the amount of time grant activities are occurring, as well as the quality of the grant activities occurring will all be documented and shared through the site visit reports as well as through **quarterly documentation reviews** to the Magnet Central Office team in September, December, March, and May of each year. The site visit reports and documentation reviews summarize how much progress is being made toward performance measure attainments and fidelity of project implementation. The reports, which are distributed to staff members help them to understand where they are on attaining the intended project outcomes and, if not, why and how the project activities can be improved.

The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed outcomes

The costs of the Texarkana Montage magnet project are reasonable in relation to the systemic reforms that will be enacted over the next five years. This is a comprehensive project that will take a great deal of effort and resources to put into motion. Changing a community's perception about their schools is paramount and that goes beyond marketing. While marketing is expensive, it is a necessary expense to 'tell the story' of the wonderful changes taking place within the schools. Within the schools, students' attitudes and aspirations are directly tied to their sense of worth and belonging. The costs to refurbish tired buildings, to outfit them with educational supplies and equipment that make learning fun and exciting, and to create an environment of collegiality and professionalism is paramount for a young person to realize that he/she is capable and able to achieve a full life upon graduation in whatever endeavor he/she desires. The key costs will be advancing and developing the teaching faculty and staff, including administrators, and are VERY reasonable because these adults hold each child's future in their hands. The

objectives, design, and potential significance of this proposed Texarkana Montage magnet project are reasonable and will ensure that this comprehensive vision is implemented well. While campuses were involved in the initial planning of the Texarkana Montage Project, if funded, additional planning is needed for its implementation since this is a comprehensive initiative. Every school, under the guidance of the Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education will create an implementation plan based on this proposal application and the logic models. The process will start with revisiting the project activities and why they will result in the expected outcomes, as noted on the logic models, and the theory behind the application activities so that all stakeholders understand what is being implemented and why. Using the grant application and logic models, school staff members will revisit and describe the activities to be implemented and the timeline for implementation, as well as the personnel responsible for the activities.

Ensuring desegregation and choice objectives and outcomes will be assessed against the baseline enrollment data of 2016/2017. These data are used to establish the target for the outcome for each objective developed relative to desegregation and choice. Magnet staff trainings at the beginning of each school year will orient teachers and administrators to the importance and function of the applicant pool in achieving a diverse population at each school and in bringing students back to the Texarkana Arkansas School District. Applicant pool information will be archived for data analysis as a part of the MSAP Annual Performance and Ad Hoc reports completion. Marketing venues will be monitored to ascertain their effectiveness on family choice. These marketing venues include: billboards, television, radio, promotional items, public events, as well as district and campus websites. Quantifiable data of actual enrollment will demonstrate the ability of each school to retain new applicants, thereby reducing

racial and economic isolation. Family/parent involvement at school activities and events will measure increased interaction among families of differing social, economic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. Log in sheets will be disaggregated to monitor this objective. Student assignment to core classes, as well as voluntary student participation in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities and events will be monitored to show quantifiable data to see if any student populations are re-segregating within the schools. The high school readiness metric will reveal quantifiable data to indicate students who are at-risk of dropping out and/or disengaging. The annual student survey will then ascertain students' perception of overall school safety and whether the school culture is conducive for all students to feel welcome and engaged.

Improving academic achievement objectives and outcomes will be assessed against the baseline achievement data of 2016. This data is used to establish the target for the outcome for each objective developed relative to improving academic achievement in language arts, mathematics, and science. Technology and software implementation into the core curriculum will be assessed by quantifying the types and categories of technology and software used by students in creating projects for the project-based units. As part of the learning impact documented with the teaching of the PBL units, rubrics measuring the college and career ready skills of creativity, collaboration, communication and professional ethics skills (along with critical thinking design skills) will assess the student development of these 'soft skills.'

Developing capacity objectives and outcomes will be assessed against the baseline personnel data of 2016/2017. These data are used to establish the target for the outcome of each objective developed relative to developing capacity in order to sustain the magnet school project beyond the five years of the grant cycle. Data will be collected of teachers working toward advanced certification and/or advanced degrees, particularly Math, Science, and Reading, as a way of

quantifying the number and percentage of teachers increasing their content expertise in the STEM disciplines. The number of hours of training and coaching sessions will be documented using the teachers' reflective logs to provide each teacher with the quality direction and support to build instructional capacity throughout each project school. The project-based units, as well as the course syllabi in advanced academic offerings, as well as Pre-AP and AP courses will be digitally submitted to the TASD curriculum department and uploaded to the TASD website. The Magnet Curriculum Director and the campus magnet coordinators will then use these units and courses (including teacher video modeling of key lessons) **for lesson study and analysis**, which will further extend the instructional capacity and expertise of faculty members at each school.

As stated before, this evaluation plan for the TASD Magnet Schools Assistance Program has been designed to provide **information for decision-making and action**. The methods employed are appropriate for determining that this comprehensive project is successful in meeting its intended outcomes, including its goals for desegregating and increasing student achievement, and that these methods are objective and the data are quantifiable. **This evaluation plan will produce evidence of promise** by indicating aspects of the project that are most effective and viable, as well as stumbling blocks to be avoided. The Texarkana Montage magnet project is a comprehensive and articulated vision for the secondary (5th-12th grade) schools in Texarkana, AR and holds great promise for our students and community; but it also may hold evidence of promise for similar communities across the nation.