

**Early-Phase Competition Absolute Priority 4 (SEL)  
Region One Education Service Center  
S411C230008**

**The Education Innovation and Research (EIR) Early Phase Region One Education Service Center - Project Project LIFT (Linking Innovation Fostering Transition )!**

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**Applicant Name:** Region One Education Service Center

**Project Title:** Project LIFT! (Linking Innovation Fostering Transition).

**Type of Grant Requested:** (select one)  Early-Phase  Mid-Phase  Expansion

**Absolute Priorities the Project Addresses:** (select all that apply)

Absolute Priority 1-- Demonstrate a Rationale (Early), Moderate (Mid), Strong (Expansion)

Absolute Priority 2-- Field-Initiated Innovations—General

Absolute Priority 3-- Promoting STEM Education

Absolute Priority 4-- Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs

Absolute Priority 5-- Educator Recruitment and Retention

**Competitive Preference Priorities the Project Addresses:** (select all that apply)

Competitive Preference Priority 1— Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Implementers and Partners

Competitive Preference Priority 2—Supporting a Diverse Educator Workforce and Professional Growth to Strengthen Student Learning\* (FOR EARLY-PHASE AP5 APPLICANTS ONLY)

**Total number of students to be served by the project:** 3,126 students

**Grade level(s) to be served by the project:** Secondary 6th to 12th grades

**Definition of high-need students:** Students that are historically underserved, qualify as low economic status, live in rural isolated areas, qualify for free/reduced lunch are at-risk academically, economically and socially an include Students with Disabilities and English Learners.

**Brief description of project activities:** Project LIFT! activities, components and evidence-based services are informed by a large body of research and implementation of systematic, rigorous, and meticulous evaluation Project LIFT's! approach will develop, implement, and test promising new integrated evidence-based strategies embedded into Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) I (Universal), II (Targeted) or III (Intensive). Activities will include the following key components: (1) Social Emotional Learning, (2) Mental Health Counseling/Advising Strategies, and (3) Trauma-Informed Practices with capacity building, professional development and comprehensive training designed to increase 3,126 students' academic, social emotional and mental health outcomes in 5 LEAs, 10 secondary schools, influencing 242 educators. Each student will engage in weekly intervention with a Teacher Advisory Led Program (one-to-one, group, counseling/advising, trauma informed practices etc.) and student sessions, 36/week per school year throughout the five-year period to address learning barriers both in and out of the classroom and enable healthy development and respond to students' needs using evidence-based practices, etc.

**Summary of project objectives and expected outcomes:** Region One established various measurable outcomes that are linked to the needs, to the six Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) measures and to Project LIFT's! scope of work. The objectives were specifically developed to measure changes in knowledge, skills and behaviors to overall increase attendance, academics, graduation rates and post-secondary enrollments. In comparison to the baseline data in the needs section, all objectives are ambitious due to the proposed increase and are attainable as a result of Region One's experience with similar programs and extensive planning, assessment, and data driven decision making that occurred to develop each measure: Objective 1. Develop and implement an effective program that incorporates evidence-based SEL, mental health and trauma-informed strategies.1.1 Each year 1,000 unduplicated students will be reached and provided services until all 3,126 students or more are reached over the

five-year period, as measured by services, contact logs and surveys. (GPRA 1); 1.2 Each year 1,000 unduplicated high-need students will be reached and provided services until all 3,126 students or more are reached over the five-year period, as measured by services, contact logs and surveys. (GPRA 2); 1.3 Each year, an ongoing well-designed and independent evaluations designed to provide performance feedback to inform project design will be implemented with fidelity, as measured by formative and summative data, evaluation recommendations, project design modifications, surveys, reports. (GPRA 3); 1.4 Each year, an ongoing well-designed and independent evaluations that will provide evidence of their effectiveness at improving student outcomes will be implemented with fidelity, as measured by pre-post student behavior, disciplinary and academic performance outcomes. (GPRA 4); 1.5 Each year, an evaluation that provides information about the key elements and the approach of the project to facilitate testing, development, or replication in other settings will be implemented, as measured by per-post assessment results, development of new programs, activities and services and the replication of best practices in additional school settings. (GPRA 5); 1.6 Each year, the cost per student (federal funds) served by the grant will decrease by 5% or more by improving cost efficiency, as measured by match (in-kind) and the federal operating budget. (GPRA 6); 1.7 The # of training and/or technical assistance events to support implementation of a multi-tiered system of support with fidelity will increase by 7% over baseline, as measured by EDSCLS or similar tool. (Project Measure); 1.8 The # and % of schools implementing a multi-tiered system framework with fidelity will increase by 5% over baseline, as measured by EDSCLS or similar tool. (Project Measure); 1.9 The # of educators who participate in professional development aimed at evidence-based SEL, mental health and trauma-informed strategies will increase by 5% over baseline, as measured by session and self-evaluations. (Project Measure); Objective 2. Improve the behavior, relationships, engagement, social, emotional and academic success of all students, particularly for all high-need students (minority, at-risk, English Learners – EL, low-income and students with special needs).; 2.1 The # and % of schools that report a decrease in suspensions, expulsions violations, bullying, fighting, assaults, etc., will increase by 8% from baseline (Linked to Table 1 & 2), as measured by School Climate Survey and PEIMS data.; 2.2 Student attendance rates, especially for students with major disciplinary issues, will increase by 4% over baseline (Linked to Table 1), as measured by PEIMS.; 2.3 Students who report using alcohol, marijuana or ATOD will decrease by 7% from baseline (Linked to Table 2), as measured by School Climate Survey.; 2.4 Students who report feeling sad, depressed or suicidal will decrease by 7% from baseline (Linked to Table 2), as measured by School Climate Survey.; 2.5 Target students' academic scores will increase in all Core Subjects by 7% over baseline of 48% (page 3), respectively, as measured by STAAR.; 2.6 Target students' academic scores will increase in Math, Reading and Science by 5%, 7 % and 8% over baseline of 45%, 53% and 54% (page 3), respectively, as measured by STAAR.; 2.7 Target educators implementing MTSS tiers of support and evidence-based SEL, mental health and trauma-informed strategies will increase by 10% over baseline, as measured by School Climate Survey and PEIMS data. \*Baseline data collected Year 1.; 2.8 The % of parents involved in academic, wellness and mental health school and student activities will increase by 5% over baseline, as measured by School Climate Survey. \*Baseline data collected Year 1

**Summary of how the project is innovative:** Region One Education Service Center (Region One), in partnership with Five Rural Participating LEAs: Jim Hogg County Independent School District (ISD), Monte Alto ISD, San Isidro ISD, Webb Consolidated (CISD) and Zapata County ISD; One MinorityServing Institution – University of Texas at Austin (CP1); Two Community Health Clinics – Hope Family Health Center (HFHC), Nuestra Clinic de Valle – NCDV (Our Valley Clinic); and One Private Entity – EGT Institute, Inc., proposes to implement an Education Innovation and Research (EIR) – Early Phase Program entitled Project LIFT! (Linking Innovation Fostering Transition), aligned to Absolute Priorities 1 (Demonstrate a Rationale) and 4 (Social, Emotional and Academic Needs), and Competitive Preference Priority 1 (Promoting Equity). Project LIFT's! design and model of delivery will study, implement, and test the interconnected components and practices of within its new and innovative fieldinitiated educational

program within a Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) by embedding Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Mental Health Counseling/Advising Strategies that enable healthy development, address learning barriers, and support Trauma-Informed Practices and capacity building for educators to avoid deficit-based approaches with rural high-need students and schools, underserved shortage areas and hard to staff schools. Project LIFT's! design includes newly developed practices aimed at improving high need student achievement and attainment to benefit student wellbeing and support academic success. Student social emotional learning and academic development are interconnected; thus, support will be provided for 242 educators to promote high-quality SEL intended to overcome the persistent and significant challenges to students (3,126) success.

**Other studies related to the proposed project:** Project LIFT! is adapted from the following MTSS, SEL, Mental Health and Trauma Informed proven evidence and research studies: (1) Crowder M.K., Gordon R.A., Brown R.D., Davidson L.A., Domitrovich C.E., (2020). Linking social and emotional learning standards to the WCSD Social-Emotional Competency Assessment: A Rasch approach. *Sch Psychol.*; 34-3:281-295. doi: 10.1037/spq0000308. PMID: 31094566. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31094566/>; (2) Collaborative for Academic and Social Emotional Learning e-CASEL. (2020). What is SEL? Chicago, IL: CASEL. <https://casel.org/what-is-sel/>; (3) Taylor, R.D., Oberle, E., Durlak, J.A., & Weissberg, R.P. (2017). Promoting positive youth development through school-based social emotional learning interventions: A meta-analysis of follow-up effects. *Child Development*, 88,4, 1156-1171.; (4) Bos, J.M.; Dhillon, S., Borman, T., (2019). American Institutes for Research: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED602462>. Meets WWC standards without reservations because it is a randomized controlled trial with low attrition. Using Review Standards 3.0 <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Study/131>; (5) Rahimi, R., Liston, D., Adkins, A., Nourzad, J. (2021) "Teacher Awareness of Trauma Informed Practice: Raising Awareness" GER: Vol. 18 : Iss. 2 , Article 4.DOI: 10.20429/ger.2021.180204, <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/gerjournal/vol18/iss2/4>

**Proposed implementation sites:** Five Rural Participating School Districts/Local Education Agencies (LEA) in deep south Texas: Jim Hogg County Independent School District (ISD), Monte Alto ISD, San Isidro ISD, Webb Consolidated (CISD) and Zapata County ISD; and their 10 secondary schools, influencing 242 educators.

**Organizations partnering with this project:** Lead Fiscal Agent – Region One Education Service Center (Region One), along with the 5 target LEAs will partner with One Minority-Serving Institution –University of Texas at Austin (CP1); Two Community Health Clinics – Hope Family Health Center (HFHC), Nuestra