



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

NOGA ID

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

This LOI application must be submitted via email to **loiapplications@tea.texas.gov**.  
 The LOI application may be signed with a digital ID or it may be signed by hand. Both forms of signature are acceptable.  
 TEA must receive the application by **11:59 p.m. CT, December 7, 2020**.

Application stamp-in date and time

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

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

**Required Attachments**

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

**Amendment Number**

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

**Applicant Information**

Organization  CDN  Campus  ESC  DUNS   
 Address  City  ZIP  Vendor ID   
 Primary Contact  Email  Phone   
 Secondary Contact  Email  Phone

**Certification and Incorporation**

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

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

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

Authorized Official Name  Title

Email  Phone

Signature  Date

**Shared Services Arrangements**

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

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

- Pathway 1: Teachers as Instructional Leaders
  
- Pathway 2: National Board Candidacy Cohorts
  
- Pathway 3: Teacher Policy Fellowships

**Statutory/Program Assurances**

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

Check each of the following boxes to indicate your compliance.

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

**Summary of Program**

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

Thrall ISD (TISD) is a rural district located 45 miles northeast of Austin on US HWY 79, covering 149 square miles in Eastern Williamson County and serving the small communities of Thrall, Beakiss, Shiloh, Noack, Hare, Structure, and Sandoval. We are dedicated to ensuring that every student develops a work ethic along with the knowledge and skills to become a productive, contributing, and responsible citizen. Our small school and class size setting provides the optimum learning environment for all TISD students. TISD consists of 3 campuses (all located on the same property utilizing 11 different buildings) with a total student population of approximately 700. Thrall Elementary School includes PreKindergarten-4th grades with 268 students, Thrall Middle School includes 5th-8th grades with 213 students, and Thrall High School includes 9th-12th grades with 216 students. District personnel totals 106 employees. As set forth in the District Improvement Plan, Goal #3 is: "The district will recruit, train and retain highly qualified and motivated staff to promote a positive influence on all students."

To advance Goal #3 of the District Improvement Plan, TISD requests Leadership Cycle grant funding to support up to 8 TISD teachers across our 3 campuses in the NBCTs certification process. Because the NBCT process uses an e-portfolio submission model, TISD is interested in a support program that matches this model. Accordingly, TISD will work with an approved Pathway 2 External Partner to offer a portfolio-based preparation and support program to a select cohort of NBCT applicants. As part of the program, the applicants will master the key competencies associated with the National Board components by earning aligned micro-credentials. In the first year, the cohort will engage in virtual, one-on-one coaching sessions on a weekly basis. The coaches will support each teacher as they work to master the key skills underlying 2 of the 4 NBCT components by engaging in the micro-credentials aligned to each component. Coaches and teachers will access exemplar video content from the National Board ATLAS video library directly from links embedded in the micro-credential frameworks. The program will also foster collaboration amongst the teachers in online discussion rooms facilitated by the coaches. During the second year, the teachers will continue to work on micro-credentials focused on the most common areas where candidates struggle in the National Board process, while preparing to submit the final 2 components. The coaches will provide ongoing support until each participant earns certification. TISD will create opportunities for teachers who successfully complete the program to share their experience with other educators across the 3 TISD campuses to encourage additional cohorts to earn National Board certification.

**Qualifications and Experience for Key Personnel**

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

Title and Responsibilities of Position	Required Qualifications and Experience
NBCT Coaches (proposed): Provide weekly one-on-one virtual coaching to each NBCT candidate until certification is achieved.	Certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; Trained in cognitive coaching; to be hired and compensated by the Pathway 2 External Partner.
Program Director (External Partner - proposed): Work with TISD Program Director to implement the NBCT Support Program.	The Pathway 2 External Partner (including but not limited to a Regional Service Center selected as a Pathway 2 External Partner) will provide a program director with demonstrated experience coordinating NBCT support programs.
Program Director (TISD - Existing): Coordinate with the External Partner Program Director to implement the NBCT Support Program.	Certified District Administrator At least 5 years experience in Campus Leadership At least 3 years experience in District Leadership

**Goals, Objectives, and Strategies**

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

As noted, Goal 3 of TISD's District Improvement Plan is to recruit, train and retain highly qualified and motivated staff to promote a positive influence on all students. The objective of the proposed NBCT support program is to use a portfolio-based support structure to enhance the District's ability to meet this goal by incentivizing and supporting teachers to become NBCTs. By earning National Board certification, the select cohort of TISD teachers will position themselves to receive a "Recognized" designation on their certificate and obtain a salary increase via Teacher Incentive Allotment funding. These teachers will also be designated as leaders on the TISD campuses. Based upon the body of research regarding the benefits of NBCT certification, we also expect these NBCTs to demonstrate enhanced instructional effectiveness in their classrooms, thereby having a positive influence on our students across all 3 campuses.

Strategies/activities to meet the goal include: (1) Recruitment and selection of qualified TISD teacher leaders to engage in the NBCT program (2) Designation of highly-qualified TISD staff to coordinate, promote, and support the NBCT program; (3) Selection of a qualified Pathway 2 External Partner to implement a portfolio-based NBCT support program with dedicated one-on-one virtual coaches to promote success for each teacher's component submission process; and (4) Rigorous implementation and monitoring of the NBCT Program to ensure fidelity of engagement, course corrections when needed, and annual data reporting.

**Performance and Evaluation Measures**

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

TISD will evaluate program success based upon the percentage of cohort members who successfully earn National Board certification. This performance measure is related to student outcomes because studies consistently demonstrate that students with a National Board Certified teacher perform at a significantly higher level on various assessments compared to peers on average. Accordingly, TISD intends to improve educator effectiveness and student outcomes by increasing the number of NBCTs within the district. During the grant term, TISD will use reporting tools provided by our Pathway 2 External Partner to track the data required by the mandatory performance measures on page 11 of the Program Guidelines, including but not limited to the following: (1) the number of NBCT component-aligned micro-credentials each participant engages in on a monthly and annual basis; (2) the number of micro-credentials each participant earns on a monthly and annual basis; (3) the number of NBCT components each participant submits to earn on a monthly and annual basis; (4) the number of components each participant earns on a monthly and annual basis; (5) the hours of virtual coaching sessions logged per participant; (6) the number/percentage of participants who successfully earn National Board Certification at the end of the 2-year program; and (7) data documenting the recruitment and selection process.

During the program term, the engagement data will alert TISD when assistance may be needed to ensure each teacher maintains progress towards completion of 2 components in 2021-22, 2 components in 2022-23, and all micro-credentials aligned to each component prior to and concurrent with the respective component submission process. Following the end of the program, the data will show success of the program (the number of candidates who successfully earn National Board certification), as well as metrics showing how the program components relate to the program goal (e.g. is there a correlation between the frequency of coaching sessions and micro-credential and/or component earn rates?).

TISD will also survey and interview program participants and their students on a regular cadence to obtain the following qualitative data: (1) survey and interview feedback from participants regarding their perceived impact of the program and their NBCT certification on their job satisfaction, leadership skills, instructional effectiveness, desire to remain employed at TISD and (2) survey and interview feedback from TISD students regarding the students' perception of the impacts on instructional effectiveness in the classrooms of teachers who earn NBCT certification as part of the program.

**Budget Narrative**

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

The above outlined activities will be made possible with the proposed budget detailed in the spreadsheet attachment. This program will help TISD meet Goal 3 of the District Improvement Plan (recruit, train and retain highly qualified and motivated staff to promote a positive influence on all students) by engaging an approved External Partner to begin the District's first cohort of National Board Certified Teacher candidates. Each teacher in the cohort will have access to a micro-credential program that is designed to support them in the areas in which teachers typically struggle in the certification process. Teachers in the cohort will also receive one-on-one support from a virtual coach to guide them through the National Board Certification process. Finally, the budget will also provide access to the National Board ATLAS video library for each teacher to view exemplar videos in preparation for the portfolio components of the certification process. Since the External Partner will provide the coaching and facilitation as part of their per educator fees, additional coaches/mentors/facilitators will not be required to be funded through the grant.

The District endeavors to continue offering this NBCT support program in order to build future cohorts of teacher leaders. This will be based on evaluation of the program success and if funding remains available. TISD will adjust the size of the program to meet future needs based upon availability of grant and other funds, such as Title II, at that time.

## Program Requirements

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

TISD will recruit and select up to 8 National Board candidates that are representative of the student population of our district. The District's total minority enrollment is 28%, and 24% of our students are economically disadvantaged (eligible for free or reduced price lunch). Dependent upon the applications submitted, TISD intends to form a program cohort that includes at least one teacher from each of our 3 campuses. We will work with our External Partner to design the recruitment plan and application questionnaire to recruit and select candidates who are committed to meeting the rigors and time demands of pursuing National Board Certification.

TISD will publicize the opportunity and recruit program applicants through a variety of outreach efforts designed to convey key information regarding the program elements and timeline, the career advancement opportunities associated with National Board certification, and the application requirements. The outreach will include but not be limited to: on-site and/or online meetings; webinars (which will be recorded and available for playback); FAQs and fliers posted on the District's website and social media pages; direct email to all TISD teachers; and presentations by current NBCTs and the selected External Partner.

To be considered for the program, applicants must first complete an online application form demonstrating that they meet certain minimum qualifications, which will include but not be limited to: at least 3 years of teaching experience, a demonstrated track record of excellence improving student outcomes, evidence of strong interpersonal skills, and a demonstration of leadership potential. In addition to providing evidence of these qualifications, each applicant will be required to submit an essay describing their commitment to fully engaging in the National Board certification process and the key elements of the support program (weekly coaching, collaboration with other cohort members, engagement in the micro-credentials aligned to the NBCT components, and submittal of the portfolios required to each each NBCT component). After reviewing the application materials, TISD and the Pathway 2 External Partner will interview the top candidates to select the final cohort members.

TISD will select eligible teachers using an equitable process. TISD Leaders at the campus level will ensure all staff have access to program information and details. We will identify teachers who display high levels of student success using formal and informal evaluations. As required by the mandatory performance measures on page 11 of the Program Guidelines, we will gather and report data on our recruitment and selection process.

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

**NBCT Support Program Participants' Responsibilities:** (1) Engage in the NBCT support program in order to earn NBCT certification within a 2-year period; (2) Attend one-on-one coaching sessions with a virtual coach on a weekly basis; (3) Engage in a portfolio-based learning program to earn a series of micro-credentials aligned to the NBCT components; (4) Engage in online discussion forums with fellow cohort members regarding NBCT topics; (4) Submit the materials required to earn each of the 4 NBCT components within the required time period; and (5) Work with fellow cohort members to make presentations to the larger TISD community regarding the benefits of participating in the NBCT support program.

TISD will measure the success of our participants using data showing levels of engagement with each teacher's coach, data showing each participant's progress towards earning each micro-credential and NBCT component, and ultimately, data showing the number of micro-credentials and components earned by each participant during the 2-year program term.

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

TISD will also conduct regular surveys and interviews of program participants to gather qualitative data on their perceptions of the NBCT program elements, the benefits of virtual coaching, and how the competencies they have mastered while earning the NBCT components impact their classroom practice. Similarly, we will also survey the participants' students to gain insight regarding their perception of changes in educator effectiveness and engagement.

TISD plans to create a pipeline for future leaders to help support incoming cohorts. Bi-monthly meetings will be held with teachers from all campuses to share ideas and highlight program success.

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

TISD will use the majority of the grant funds to invest in an intensive, coaching-based NBCT support program provided by an external entity. TISD will choose the external entity from the Pathway 2 External Partner list posted with the LOI. At a minimum, the External Partner must offer a set of research-backed micro-credentials aligned to key NBCT competencies, a coaching staff composed of NBCTs who are trained in cognitive coaching, and an online portal designed to facilitate virtual coaching, cohort discussion rooms, and micro-credential submissions. The partner must commit to guide up to 8 TISD teachers through the process of submitting all 4 NBCT components over a 2-year period, including 2 component submissions during Year 1. As required by the grant guidelines, TISD will identify the external partner during the award negotiation process. The External Partner must provide the following key supports for the NBCT candidates over the course of 2 years:

1. Virtual coaching by trained coaches who have earned National Board certification and been trained in cognitive coaching. In addition to one-on-one participant coaching to support the micro-credential and NBCT component submission processes, the coaches will also facilitate discussion and collaboration within the cohort of participants through online discussion forums provided by the Pathway 2 External Partner.
2. A portfolio-based professional learning program designed to assist participants in mastering the key issues that are often challenging to NBCT candidates. The program must include micro-credentials and access to an ATLAS subscription.

**Program Requirements (Cont.)**

3. Teacher Leader Training & Support (cont.)

3. Data exports for key program metrics to enable the virtual coaches and TISD to monitor participants' progress and to analyze overall program success. TISD will work with the coaches provided by the Pathway 2 External Provider to analyze the data exports regarding participant engagement to ensure that the NBCT candidates are actively engaged with their virtual coaches, are consistently building the portfolios necessary to earn micro-credentials and NBCT components, and are on schedule to earn the micro-credentials and components within the proposed timeline (2 components in 2021-22; 2 components in 2022-23; all micro-credentials aligned to each component to be completed prior to and concurrent with the respective component submission process.)

TISD plans to have monthly meetings with cohort participants to ensure program success.

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

As previously noted, Goal #3 of the TISD District Improvement Plan is: "The district will recruit, train and retain highly qualified and motivated staff to promote a positive influence on all students." In furtherance of this goal, TISD will use this grant funding to increase the retention of highly effective teachers that are representative of our student population by enrolling a carefully selected cohort of distinguished teachers across all 3 campuses in a portfolio-based NBCT support program. Using the funds for the NBCT support program will increase retention of highly effective teachers because research consistently shows that schools with NBCTs are characterized by better teacher morale, higher retention, and increased community and parent satisfaction. In addition, the NBCTs will be eligible for a "Recognized" designation on their certificates and increased salaries pursuant to the new TIA NBCT salary incentives.

Per the guidelines for Pathway 2, TISD will use this grant to provide intensive mentoring supports to teachers who are qualified and motivated to succeed in earning NB certification. The proposed NBCT program will align with TISD's overall teacher retention strategies by provide opportunities for career advancement, salary increases, improved job satisfaction, leadership opportunities, and increased collaboration amongst the cohort of teachers who are collectively focused on achieving a shared learning goal: NBCT certification.

Because research also shows that NBCT candidates who have a mentor and/or coach are more likely to earn certification, TISD will work with our External Partner to ensure that each candidate receives weekly coaching by a certified coach who is trained in cognitive coaching strategies. The coaches will conduct individual check-ins with each educator to ensure progress in NBCT component preparation and submission. In addition, the coaches will act as cohort facilitators to foster collaboration amongst cohort members, provide guidance, and recommend relevant learning resources (including ATLAS materials). In turn, the program participants can share the lessons they have learned with other TISD educators to promote increased collaboration amongst all staff. This will improve the working atmosphere at our campuses and encourage additional teachers to pursue National Board certification following the completion of this initial program. As more TISD teachers earn National Board certification, we expect rates of job satisfaction, campus morale, and teacher retention to continue to rise.



**Equitable Access and Participation**

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

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

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

**PNP Equitable Services**

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

- Yes
- No

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

Are any private nonprofit schools participating in the program?

- Yes
- No

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

**5A: Assurances**

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

**5B: Equitable Services Calculation**

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

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

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

*You may duplicate this page*

**Amended Section**

**Reason for Amendment**