



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

NOGA ID

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

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

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

TEA must receive the application by **11:59 p.m. CT, April 12, 2021**.

Application stamp-in date and time

Grant period from **May 27, 2021 to June 15, 2023**

Pre-award costs are not permitted for this LOI.

**Required Attachments**

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

**Amendment Number**

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

**Applicant Information**

Organization  CDN  Campus  ESC  DUNS

Address  City  ZIP  Vendor ID

Primary Contact  Email  Phone

Secondary Contact  Email  Phone

**Certification and Incorporation**

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

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

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

Authorized Official Name  Title

Email  Phone

Signature  Date

**Shared Services Arrangements**

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

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

**Statutory/Program Assurances**

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

Check each of the following boxes to indicate your compliance.

1. The applicant provides assurances that a maximum of \$25,000 will be requested for reimbursement per educator for expenses related to tuition, fees, and travel during the life of the grant. Additional costs will be the responsibility of the LEA or participant upon a local agreement.
2. The applicant provides assurances that all participants serve within the eligible CCRSM in the 2021-2022 school year. Participating educators must each sign a Letter of Educator's Commitment which will be collectively submitted as Attachment #5.
3. The applicant provides assurances that successful completion is defined as an average of 75% or higher in each course completed. All expenses related to participation in the accelerated credentialing program (e.g., tuition and fees, textbooks, travel expenses) are eligible for reimbursement by TEA upon successful completion of courses per term.
4. The applicant provides assurance that program funds will supplement (increase the level of service), and not supplant (replace) state mandates, State Board of Education rules, and activities previously conducted with state or local funds. The applicant provides assurance that state or local funds may not be decreased or diverted for other purposes merely because of the availability of these funds. The applicant provides assurance that program services and activities to be funded from this LOI will be supplementary to existing services and activities and will not be used for any services or activities required by state law, State Board of Education rules, or local policy.
5. The applicant provides assurance that the application does not contain any information that would be protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) from general release to the public.
6. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Statutory and TEA Program requirements as noted in the 2021-2023 CCRSM Expansion of Educators Eligible to Teach College Courses LOI Program Guidelines.
7. The CCRSM program leader(s) will submit a CCRSM designation (renewal) application for designation in 2022-2023 and for designation in 2023-2024.
8. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2021-2023 CCRSM Expansion of Educators Eligible to Teach College Courses Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.
9. The applicant provides assurances that an academic year signed and dated memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the dual credit provider will be publicly posted by August 15, 2021. The MOU must address the following elements: Eligible courses; Student eligibility; Location of the class; Composition of students in the class; Faculty selection, supervision, and evaluation; Course Curriculum, Instructional Materials and calendar; Academic policies and student support services; Data-sharing policies and procedures; Courses of study that lead to an associate degree or up to 60 hours of college credit toward a 4-year degree; Administration of statewide assessments; Transcription of credit and Funding.

**TEA Program Requirements**

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

Brownsville Independent School District (BISD) College, Career, and Military Readiness Department conducts a yearly District Needs Assessment to determine the areas of need for Dual Enrollment. Brownsville ISD, the largest district in deep south Texas graduates very few seniors with Associates Degrees. This has been a great concern for BISD as the Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) for 2019-2020 had 0% graduates, while the average for the region was 5% and 2% for the state. The "High Needs Subjects" is due to a lack of qualified district and Adjunct Instructors provided by Texas Southmost College (TSC). This has created a problem in ensuring BISD is providing highly qualified faculty for students enrolled in Dual Enrollment programs as they meet the CCRSM leading to an Associates Degree. The areas identified in the annual District's Needs Assessment tend to be the same for both BISD and Institution of Higher Education (IHE) partners. There is a high demand for building a pipeline of highly qualified Dual Enrollment Instructors by developing a district talent pool which will ensure students are provided the best education to attain their Associates Degree while also earning a high school diploma. In developing a district talent pool, the focus would be to provide masters level courses in Biology, English, Government, Economics, Speech, Psychology, Art Appreciation, Music Appreciation, and Mathematics. BISD would also collaborate by meeting twice a year with IHE partners to ensure they are also building a pipeline of highly qualified Dual Enrollment Instructors so they could also provide additional support through the partnership. BISD has developed multiple systems designed to ensure that cohort students are successful in earning a postsecondary credential. An Associate Degree Crosswalk listing all of the required courses for an Associate Degree and recommendations for the grade level each course is taken has been created (attachment 1). Additionally, a computerized spreadsheet is used by the 7 high school counselors that tracks the courses for the Associate Degree as well as the student's TSI data. In fact, all data that is part of the outcome-based measures (OBM's) of the TEA's ECHCS Blueprint is included in this spreadsheet. Each district ECHS campus has a transitional counselor who works specifically with cohort students in tracking the course work, in reviewing cohort TSI testing data, and in making recommendations on cohort next steps; and this is done on a semester basis. If a student is working toward a CTE credential, as well as an Associate Degree, the 7 ECHS's have a Career Placement Officer whose job is to track student progress, including cohort students, on completing required course work and in successfully finishing credentialing testing and certification. A final step in the credentialing process involves working with our IHE partner, TSC. TSC holds a degree audit for all BISD students identified as being associate degree candidates. Implementation of the above steps will assure cohort students a sequence of courses leading to an associates.

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

The University of Texas - Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) will be providing graduate level courses to BISD eligible teachers from our seven early college high schools. BISD has been working over the years to increase dual enrollment courses and the UTRGV has put in place several graduate accelerated online programs (AOP) that can be completed in one year completely online. Two of UTRGV's AOP master's degree match two of our high needs content areas of Math and English which all our students are required to take within the first 30 hours leading to an associates degree. Seven years ago, the BISD and UTRGV offered an incentivized program for teachers seeking master's degrees. The UTRGV and BISD each split the cost of the master's tuition and fees equally with the participating teachers. In other words, BISD teachers up to 3 years ago could earn a master's degree for one-third the cost. Many districts including BISD have had to reduce cost in several areas of operation to ensure yearly recurring costs such as salary increases and instructional technology that can be maintained year after year.

The UTRGV already has two accelerated graduate programs that teachers can participate beginning Fall 2021 and Spring 2022, and complete their master's degree by Summer 2022 in Mathematics and English. UTRGV also offers a 2-year master's degree program in Biology, Art Appreciation, Music, Psychology, Speech, Economics and Government which will help us increase the number of students enrolled in dual credit courses that will lead to an increase in the percentage of Associates Degree graduates in Brownsville from 0% to the state average of 2% by 2024, and ultimately to the regional average of 5% by 2026. Approximately one-half of the teachers seeking dual credit faculty credentially will go through UTRGV non-degree seeking route to earn their 18-hour concentration in Mathematics, English, Art Appreciation, Music, Economics, Government, and Psychology, and be able to complete their hours by end of summer 2022. Texas Southmost will credential and approve these teachers to begin teaching dual credit courses by Fall 2022 which is halfway through the grant. UTRGV College of Education Dean, Chair and University Graduate Program Coordinator are taking the lead role to communicate and blend with the other content colleges so that two groups of teachers (current master's degree holders and teachers completing their masters) can acquire 6-18 credits so that the district can increase the number and diversity of dual credits offered to students by Summer and Fall 2022.

**TEA Program Requirements (Cont'd)**

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

Our local community college, Texas Southmost College (TSC) will continue to be our Dual Credit Provider. They have provided over 90 percent of the dual enrollment classes for Brownsville ISD students throughout the years.

BISD works closely with TSC to inform our partner of three important things: a) the number of teachers at each of our 7 ECHS that will be completing their master's degree at the end of each semester; b) the various content areas of the master's degrees earned for each of the 7 ECHS; c) when we propose to offer the courses within the academic year and at which of the 7 early college high schools; and d) which BISD teachers are available to teach in the TSC sponsored dual enrollment summer program. TSC will also work closely with the district to set special summer dates for BISD students to enroll for dual credit courses using district teachers as the dual enrollment adjunct instructors.

The district and UTRGV have worked closely with TSC in the past as to what required courses and course prefixes, such as BIOL, ECON, MATH references the 18 hours of content within each respective master's degree. An important role that TSC initiated a few years ago was designating on their website a specific application process for our BISD Dual Enrollment Teachers for more efficient processing. In addition, TSC is responsible for reviewing the BISD teachers application and accrediting through the UTRGV transcripts that the teacher applicants meet the master's degree requirements and the 18 hours in content for our dual enrollment instructors (See Attachment #3).

In addition, the district and the community college will both sign a local partnership agreement in Summer 2021 to ensure the newly credentialed master's degree teachers are eligible to be hired by the college to teach dual credit courses as early as summer session 2022, pending a criminal background check and review of all qualifications as outlined in their job descriptions.

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

The Brownsville ISD Human Resources Department (HR) employee compensation plan has three (3) parts of the Sustainability Plan to help the 7 CCRSM campuses increase the number of teachers pursuing and completing their master's degrees in their teaching fields: 1) BISD teachers pursuing the various high-need master's degrees that successfully complete the 18-hour concentration will receive a \$3,000 stipend per year which extends beyond 2025. Those finishing in Summer 2022 will start receiving the \$3,000 stipend; 2) BISD teachers that working on completing their master's degrees in high needs areas will earn a \$3,000 stipend per year which extends beyond 2025; and 3) Note that BISD teachers that have earned a master's degree but not in the subject they currently teach (e.g, masters in curriculum and instruction) only receive a stipend of \$2,000. Upon completion of the additional 18-hour concentration in their subject area they will be awarded a stipend of \$3,000 per year which extends beyond 2025. Teachers will complete their 18-hour content concentration in the high-needs content areas of Government, Economics, Speech, Biology, Psychology, Art Appreciation, Music Appreciation, English and Mathematics.

In addition, Texas Southmost College, our credentially partner will impart the fourth part of the Sustainability Plan as BISD dual credit teachers will receive an additional \$600 stipend for each dual credit course that has a minimum of 15 students currently and beyond the life of the Dual Expansion Grant. By graduating teachers with master's degrees and assisting those teachers that need to attain their 18-hour concentration will greatly improve dual credit course offerings at all our 7 ECHS ' s. Currently, only one of BISD's early college high schools can provide students courses in 6 out the 9 high needs dual credit courses. The 2019-2020 Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) in 2019 indicates that 0% of BISD students graduated with an associates degree, while the region which consists of smaller school districts graduated 5% percent of their respective seniors. We will continue to work together with UTRGV to increase the number teachers with master's and/or 18-hour concentrations to increase the availability and variety of dual credit courses for our students at all our 7 early college high schools.

**TEA Program Requirements (Cont'd)**

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

The Brownsville ISD planning team first met with administrators and deans from each of the 7 early college high schools to review the grant, assess the needs of each campus, and discuss the identification and recruitment of teachers on March 11, 2021.

Each of the seven administrators at the 7 EHCS that are designated the Dual Enrollment Coordinators were then given the task of presenting to their respective faculty, plus sending the information through a fill-out-form such as "microsoft forms." This also allowed main office to assess the interest from teachers that are excited to: a) add 18 hours in a concentration to their current masters; b) complete their masters that they started a few years ago by acquiring an additional 6-15 hours that will allow them to teach dual enrollment; and c) start a masters in one of the district's high-needs dual enrollment content areas. Part of the recruitment was to communicate to teachers that they would enter a cohort that UTRGV has set in place for the teachers to complete some masters programs in one year and some in two years, versus teachers finishing their masters in 3-5 years going the traditional route.

A new practice that will be implemented by the district's HR Department is to have several checkpoints while the teacher is applying, receiving advisement from the university, starting the first week, mid-term check and finals-week check. Each of these checkpoints is designed to identify barriers and answer questions for the dual enrollment teacher's or to direct them to the proper UTRGV advisor and/or program coordinator who has assisted us during the process of writing this grant. BISD teachers who are selected to participate in the Dual Enrollment Masters program will sign a Letter of Commitment to remain in the district for a period of 3 years from receiving their master's degree and teach dual enrollment courses at their respective early college high school. A few of the teachers will serve two nearby campuses by providing adequate travel time to go from one early college high school to another one so that twice as many students can be served.

Again, our identified high needs college level courses are: Biology, English, Government, Economics, Speech, Psychology, Art Appreciation, Music Appreciation and Mathematics. It has been communicated to the teachers seeking master's degrees that they are desperately needed at the 7 early college high schools to offer more basic college level first year basic courses. Many of the recruited teachers will also help us to offer more variety of dual credits especially in Art Appreciation, Music Appreciation, Psychology, Government and Biology.

**RETENTION:** The school district will require in writing all teachers participating in this grant funded program to serve the district as a dual enrollment instructor for 3 academic years beyond the graduation date of their masters degrees. This has been in practice with other masters program that were in place in the past. The district has in place three incentives/stipends to help retain this talented group of teachers that will attain their master's degree and remain teaching dual credit courses. First, since it is in their content areas, the teachers completing of the 18-hour concentration will begin earning a \$3,000. Second, the teachers will earn a \$3,000 stipend for every year they stay in the district.

In addition, dual enrollment teachers will earn an additional \$500 per course taught up to 4 per semester with the potential to earn \$4,000 per year. It will be described in our compensation plan 2021-2022 and beyond. Our credentialing partner, TSC will also compensate our dual enrollment teachers \$600 for each course taught with a minimum enrollment of 15 students.

The district lead by the Dual Expansion Program Manager, Human Resources, Grants and College, Career, and Military Readiness Departments will seek to identify and procure funding sources to expand the CCRSM program beyond the two years. Already in place is the \$500 stipend per year that cohort teachers would receive after completing 18 hours. The Dual Expansion Program Manager will be responsible for fiscal and management duties to ensure a high percentage of teachers succeed in the full master's program and 18-hour concentration of credits completion.

**Budget Narrative**

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

**Needs/Goals of the Masters Degree Cohort:** The proposed budget will support the goals of the Brownsville ISD Masters Degree program by first providing funding to two groups of teachers that can immediately increase our number of teachers eligible to teach dual credit courses leading to associate degrees. Our immediate goal is to have teachers from our 7 high schools who need to complete their masters acquire the 6 to 18 hours to graduate and pursue credentialing through Texas Southmost College (TSC), our dual credit provider. Our second goal is to financially support our teachers who already have a master's degree earn the additional 18 hours in a high needs subject. Upon completion of the 18 hours, TSC will credential these teachers as well. These two groups of teachers will increase our dual credit course offerings by summer 2022.

Matching for this program will provided by BISD with one Coordinator and one Specialist working 20% of their time or \$40,000 each per year for a total of \$80,000 for the 2 years. BISD will also provide 2 single offices with computers and printers to be dedicated to the project 20% of the time. These 2 persons will receive a \$4,000 stipend per year from the grant for extra time dedicated to managing and implementation. The Masters Degree Cohort grant will be a shared program between the Grants, Human Resources and College, Career, and Military Readiness Departments. These three departments already have a close relationship with UTRGV and TSC, and have previous experience keeping track of tuition, fees and books, and the teacher reimbursement process. It is critical support the teachers with \$125 per book per college course, and up to \$3,000 for mileage (round trip Brownsville to Edinburg campus). This will vary as some teachers need 9 hours and others will need the 36 hours to complete their master's degrees.

The match or compensation provided to the Masters Degree Cohort also includes paying: a) teachers who start a master's degree a \$3,000 stipend per year after they complete the 33 or 36-hour masters degree upon completion; and b) of teachers who are working to complete the last 6-18 hours will receive a \$3,000 stipend per year by summer 2022. Both of these groups of teachers will receive will a \$3,000 stipend when they graduate with their master's degree and submit an official transcript to the Human Resources Department. Some of our teacher candidates with master's degrees are receiving a \$2,000 stipend each year, because their master's degree is not their field of teaching (e.g., masters in curriculum and instruction), but upon completion of the 18-hour concentration in their teaching field those teachers will be eligible for the \$3,000 stipend upon receipt of their official transcript to HR Department.

**Disbursement Plan:** Participating teachers who complete their course work with the required 75 or better will be promptly reimbursed for their tuition, fees, books, and mileage upon submission of grades each semester. The budget includes \$309,309 for tuition and fees; \$29,397 for reimbursement of textbooks; and \$37,675 for mileage over the two years to support 24 teachers that will become dual credit faculty at the end of the grant period.

**Anticipated risks of this project include:** a) sudden retirement due to unexpected events in a teacher's life; b) a master's candidate may leave the district due to their spouse's relocation; and c) a few teachers may need an extra semester. If a teacher leaves this summer or fall 2021, we will exercise this option to recruit a teacher in that particualar high need subject area.

The district leadership and Dual Expansion Program Manager will also work closely with our long-time partner, UTRGV, to make proper adjustments over the grant period to provide guidance and academic assistance to help teachers that may become stressed or have an unexpected event. Our goal is the well-being of our master's degree candidates to complete this journey so they may assist their respective high schools by providing high quality dual credit courses to help increase our availability and variety of college level course work for our students. The BISD, UTRGV and TSC's goal is to increase the number of teachers with masters credentialed each year so that we ultimately increase student participation in dual credit courses and increase the district's success rate of students attaining their associate degrees from 0% to the state average of 2% (TAPR 2019-2020).

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

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

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**Amended Section**

**Reason for Amendment**

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