

Transforming School Libraries Through Professional Learning Communities

Project Justification

The problem and challenge to be addressed by the project: Laurens County School District 55 is a small rural public school district in South Carolina. The district is considered high poverty as all students in all schools qualify for subsidized meals under the community need provision. Even with lack of community resources, the district seeks to provide world class instructional opportunities for students. The district has successfully completed a six-year STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) project focused on providing professional development across the district. Building on the success of the STEM project, the district has developed this project to *provide professional development for **Teacher Librarians***. The proposed activities will provide a level of specialized training that will enable these educators to *transform the 20th library-media centers in each school to 21st century learning hubs*. Without this funding the Teacher Librarians will continue to participate in literacy based training with other content area teachers. This project will allow the Teacher Librarians to *become instructional leaders* within each school as they present transformational activities that will provide for extensive opportunities for students to develop 21st century standards-based skills. The project will support *educators throughout the district as they shift to cross-disciplinary inquiry-based methods* fostering collaboration and the development of 21st century skills.

Knowledge of current best practices and knowledge of prior work in this area: District Teacher Librarians have taken the initiative to find and use evidence-based resources, strategies and activities that fit within budgets and time. A list of **Web Links to State and National Information to Inform Project Leaders** is included in the supporting documents. Examples of resources used include Standards and suggestions for planning from the American Association of School Librarians. Learner standards are used to organize instruction and collaboration. The AASL Action Plan has also informed the development of a focus centered on library users. The global and simple approach is focused on actions steps to engage teachers and students in learning, applying and sharing knowledge. Additional time for collaboration across the district, funding to attend national and state conferences and support from expert mentors is needed to make efficient use of these strategies possible.

Teacher Librarians have also taken the initiative to find and use information including Impact Studies published by the South Carolina Association of School Librarians. The impact studies outline strategies using school libraries in transforming schools by contributing to student success. These studies link library instruction and using Teacher Librarians as instructional leaders to improved student academic achievement and school success.

Teacher Librarians also share trend articles on topics such as the Maker Movement, information for the center for the Future of Libraries and Guided Inquiry. This project will build on the professional enthusiasm of Teacher Librarians.

Identification of the institution as small and rural: Laurens County School District 55 is considered a small rural district. The district serves the city of Laurens, four small near-by communities and the rural areas surrounding these communities. The district has a total of 9 schools (4 elementary, 2 middle schools, 2 rural schools serving grades preK-8th grade and 1 comprehensive high school). The total number of students served is 5,706. Each school has 1 certified Teacher Librarian. Some school libraries have assistants that are assigned within the school and often shared with other school departments. The operating budget of the district library system is included in district operating funds. The size of collections meets minimum standards; however the age and condition of holdings is in need of improvement. Each library is assigned a large room within the school. Some of the libraries have limited storage and meeting spaces. The Teacher Librarians have requested specialized training to focus on transforming 20th century media centers to 21st century learning spaces focused

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on collaboration, inquiry and the development of 21st century skills. This is supported by district administration.

The district partnerships included in this proposal include the public library and the county museum. These organizations work with the schools to provide learning activities for students and other community members during the times the schools are not open.

Beneficiaries of the project: The direct beneficiaries of this project are the 5,706 students and approximately 400 educators within the district. Other beneficiaries of the project will be patrons, professional staff and volunteers associated with the Laurens County Public Library and the Laurens County Museum. These partnering institutions work with the district to provide learning opportunities for district students and staff and community members. Staff and volunteers associated with these partners will be invited to attend project activities relevant to the mission of each organization.

Stakeholder involvement in planning this project: The planning process for this project builds on the newly adopted district strategic plan. The strategic planning process for the district was designed to authentically engage stakeholders – including students, parents, teachers, administrators, staff, and community leaders – in articulating district success, values, and priorities for the future. The planning team for this project participated in the strategic planning process. The district final document was reviewed for relevance to this project. The team made the decision to write this project to support the district vision, mission and strategic plan. The district has agreed to support the project if it is funded. A summary of the project planning team findings and a letter of support from the district superintendent are included in the support documents of this application.

Project alignment with the goals of the program, category, and agency-wide goal: The over-reaching goal of this project is to *transform school library practice to promote life-long learning* and to *build capacity* by providing professional development for Teacher Librarians and by forming a professional learning community among these educators to encourage professional collaboration and develop a cadre of librarian leaders within the district. The district agrees that school libraries play a critical role supporting cross-disciplinary and inquiry-based methods of learning and fostering the development of 21st century skills. The district also recognizes the need for specialized professional development to position school library professionals as integral instructional partners with classroom teachers as they enhance the ability of libraries to become dynamic hubs for self-directed, inquiry-based learning.

This project will provide professional development for Teacher Librarians and assist with the development of a professional learning community. The areas of focus will include reconfiguring space in learner-centric ways to support the development of 21st century skills and literacies as well as deepening meaningful instructional collaborations between school librarians and classroom teachers.

Project Work Plan

Project Activities: The project team will work together beginning as soon as the project is funded to efficiently implement the project as presented in this proposal. The team members are regular employees of the district that have worked together on other similar projects as part of regular job responsibilities. No salaries or benefits for district employees will be needed for this project.

The major activities of this project include professional development for Teacher Librarians and other educators. Community partners will be invited to attend training activities that are relevant to the mission of their organizations. Professional development includes a combination of trainings provided within the district by expert presenters from outside the district, opportunities for Teacher Librarians to attend state and national conferences, and professional development for district educators facilitated by teacher-librarians.

As soon as the project is funded, district stakeholders and project partners will be informed. The budget will be setup through the district electronic financial accountability system. The project leadership team will schedule on-line and face to face mentor activities provided through the project. As soon as the budget is in place, presenters from outside the district will be contracted and Teacher Librarians will be registered for conferences. This should all be accomplished by January 2020. Evaluation surveys will be administered to activity participants after each activity.

The leadership team will meet at least monthly to monitor progress of the project. The team will schedule workshops facilitated by Teacher Librarians during the months of February 2020-April 2020. Teachers will attend presentations and conferences. Library-teachers will facilitate workshops for district educators. The team will meet during May and June to report on year 1 activities and to plan year two. The project timeline includes details on persons responsible for each process.

Project Staff, Partners, Consultants, and Service Providers: The district leader for this project is Mrs. Laurie Seawright. She will serve as project coordinator. Mrs. Seawright is a certified and highly qualified administrator with experience in working with educators on similar projects. Mrs. Seawright works through the office of Teaching and Learning and will coordinate data collection and organization through that office with existing staff assigned to this project as part of their regular job responsibilities. An additional assistant from the Office of Accountability and Federal Programs will be assigned to work with Mrs. Seawright as needed to insure compliance with internal risk management strategies.

The project management team includes four Teacher Librarians, Mrs. Vicky Culbertson, Mrs. Ami Hardy, Mrs. Michelle Spires and Mrs. Wilma Tribble. Details of their qualifications, certifications and experience are included in the support document.

The partners in this project are the Laurens County Public Library and the Laurens County Museum. Both organizations have long-standing partnerships with the district. Staff and volunteers from these organizations will be invited to attend relevant in district trainings. The partnering organizations will provide services to district students and teachers when the school libraries are not open during the summer and after school hours. Their training is essential to ensure seamless delivery of materials learned through this project.

Time, Financial, Personnel, and Other Resources: The district will assign district employees to implement this project. The team responsible for implementation has worked on similar projects. This model for implementation is cost effective and has worked well for the district. There is no financial match required for

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this project; however, the district will commit to assign and pay data and reporting personnel from the Office of Accountability and Federal Programs. The district has also agreed to fund the writing of the project. As soon as Teacher Librarians are trained, they will be assigned time to facilitate workshops for other certified staff. The district will provide release time for these trainings. The district will also allow time for Teacher Librarians to attend out-of-district trainings, conferences and meetings.

Risks and Risk Mitigation: 2 CFR Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, emphasizes the requirements for the SCDE as the pass-through entity for specific federal programs to judiciously award, administer, and monitor each subaward. To comply with §§ 200.331 (b), the SCDE conducted the annual risk assessment of, and assigned a risk score to each of its sub recipients based upon overall financial and programmatic performance as demonstrated through the following 10 criteria:

- Required Reporting
- Turnover of Key Personnel
- Programmatic Compliance
- Fiscal Compliance
- Performance
- Frequency and Need of Technical Assistance
- Financial Stability
- Quality of Management Information Systems (internal controls)
- Timeliness of Annual Financial Audit Submission
- Other Material Factors (accreditation and confirmed cheating/test security violations)

The scores from each criterion are totaled for an overall risk score that indicates low, medium, or high risk categories. Overall risk scores less than 18 indicate low risk, risk scores between 19 and 28 indicate medium risk, and risk scores of 29 and higher indicate high risk.

Laurens County School District 55’s overall risk score is “15” which is considered **low risk**.

Proposed Evaluation Activities and Performance Measurements:

This project will be evaluated using pre-determined Performance Measure Statements for the first two goals to document the achievements of this **Promote Lifelong Learning** and **Build Capacity** project. At the end of each project activity participants will complete the survey provided by IMLS. Possible responses are Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The following data will be collected:

IMLS Agency-Level Goal 1: Promote Lifelong Learning Performance Measure Statement	Information to Report
<i>Survey Respondent: Program/Project Participants</i>	<i>Data to be Collected</i>
1. My understanding has increased as a result of this program/training: 2. My interest in this subject has increased as a result of this program/training: 3. I am confident I can apply what I learned in this program/training:	Number of participants Number of total responses Number of responses per answer option Number of non-responses
Level Goal 2: Build Capacity	
1. My understanding has increased as a result of this program/training: 2. My interest in this subject has increased as a result of this program/training: 3. I am confident I can apply what I learned in this program/training:	Number of participants Number of total responses Number of responses per

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<p>4. My organization is better prepared to provide a program or service that addresses community needs.</p> <p>5. My organization is better able to engage my community.</p> <p>6. My organization is better prepared to develop and maintain on-going relationships with community partners.</p> <p>7. My organization is better prepared to share knowledge and other resources as an active contributor to problem solving in the community.</p> <p>8. The organization offers programs, services, or resources that address community needs.</p> <p>9. The organization is an active contributor to problem solving in the community.</p>	<p>answer option</p> <p>Number of non-responses</p>
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Local Program Objectives:

<p>By the end of the grant period, 100% of district Teacher Librarians will have attended at least one professional conference hosted by the state department of education or a state or national library professional association and will have presented at least one professional development session for teachers or administrators within the district.</p>
<p>By the end of the grant period, 100% of Teacher Librarians will have participated in mentoring provided by the funder and will support collaboration within the district professional learning community established through this project.</p>
<p>Project Surveys will be administered to all professional development participants at the conclusion of each session. By the end of the grant period, survey results will show 80% of participant responses document increased understanding, interest and confidence. (strongly agree or agree)</p>

Project Outcomes

Anticipated Impact of the Proposed Work: This project will provide the Teacher Librarians in District 55 opportunities to develop the professional skills needed to transform their 20th century media centers to world class 21st century dynamic hubs for self-directed inquiry-based learning focused on supporting cross-disciplinary development of 21st century skills. Through this project Teacher Librarians will be trained to lead the district in raising the bar on expectations for all school libraries.

Specific Performance Goals and Outcomes:

Intended Result or Output: (By the end of the grant period...)	Articulated Need
<p>The library in each of the 9 District 55 schools will be transformed to support cross-disciplinary and inquiry based learning and will shift toward becoming dynamic hubs for self-directed learning.</p>	<p>The district seeks to provide world class instructional opportunities for students</p>
<p>This project will provide specialized professional development and support professional learning communities for Teacher Librarians.</p>	<p>The district seeks to enable librarians to be leaders in the transformation of school libraries.</p>
<p>This project will provide training for Teacher Librarians to lead professional development for teachers and administrators across this district.</p>	<p>The district seeks to will use library-teachers as instructional leaders within each school.</p>
<p>This project will provide opportunities for teachers and administrators to learn about the potential transformative power of the school library in the 21st Century.</p>	<p>Support educators throughout the district in the shift to cross-disciplinary inquiry-based methods.</p>

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Definition of Success for the Project: The project will be considered a success if all project goals and objectives are met.

By the end of the grant period, 100% of district Teacher Librarians will have attended at least one professional conference hosted by the state department of education or a state or national library professional association and will have presented at least one professional development session for teachers or administrators within the district.

By the end of the grant period, 100% of Teacher Librarians will have participated in mentoring provided by the funder and will support collaboration within the district professional learning community established through this project.
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Project Surveys will be administered to all professional development participants at the conclusion of each session. By the end of the grant period, survey results will show 80% of participant responses document increased understanding, interest and confidence. (strongly agree or agree)

Data Collection and Reporting Plan: Data collection, organization and reporting will be completed by the project team as directed by Mrs. Seawright and an assistant assigned by the Office of Accountability and Federal Programs. The surveys will be administered electronically when possible. The project team will work with Mrs. Seawright to complete required reporting accurately and on time. Mrs. Seawright will keep accurate records of all data collection and reporting activities. These records and reports will be shared electronically with the project team.

Sustainability: Because this is a professional development project the momentum provided by the activities listed in this proposal will serve as a spring board for library and school transformation. The use of Teacher Librarians as instructional leaders will insure partnerships with classroom teachers. This project will pave the way for additional professional development related to the use of libraries in efforts to transform schools to collaborative and self-directed inquiry based learning communities.

Laurens County School District 55 Schedule of Completion
 Schedule of Completion

4. Schedule of Completion

The Schedule of Completion should reflect each major activity identified in your application narrative and the project dates identified on the SF-424S and the IMLS Budget Form. It should show when each major project activity will start and end. The schedule must be no longer than one page per project year. See the sample schedule of completion below. Save this document as a PDF.(2 pages max)

Start Date	End Date	Activity	Required Documentation for Completion	Person
Year 1 (September 1, 2019 – August 31, 2020)				
Sept embe r 2019	Dec. 15, 2019	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. District stakeholders and project partners will be informed. 2. The budget will be setup through the district electronic financial accountability system. 3. The project leadership team will schedule on-line and face to face mentor activities provided through the project. 4. As soon as the budget is in place, presenters from outside the district will be contracted and 5. Teacher-librarians will be registered for conferences. 6. The leadership team will meet at least monthly to monitor progress. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emails to stake holders 2. Electronic Budget 3. Schedule of Mentor Activities 4. Signed contracts with Presenters 5. Conference Registrations 6. Leadership Team Meeting Documentation 	Mrs. Seawright
Jan. 2020	April 2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluation surveys will be administered to activity participants after each activity. 2. The leadership team will meet at least monthly to monitor progress of the project. 3. Teachers will attend mentoring, presentations and conferences. 4. The team will schedule workshops facilitated by teacher-librarians during the months of February 2020-April 2020 and Library-teachers will facilitate workshops for district educators. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Survey results will be collected, evaluated, recorded and reported. 2. Leadership Team meeting documentation 3. Report on mentoring conferences and presentations 4. Workshop rosters and surveys 	Mrs. Seawright And Library- Teachers
May 2020	May 2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The leadership team will evaluate year 1 activities 2. The leadership will meet to plan year 2 activities 3. All project reports will be submitted as required by the funder 4. Mentoring Meetings 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Documentation of Leadership Team evaluation of year 1 2. Documentation of year 2 plan 3. Copies of all reports will be shared and filed. 4. Mentoring meeting documentation 	Mrs. Seawright And Library- Teachers
June 2020	July 2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review reports from year 1 and year 2 plans with stakeholders 2. Participate in partner summer activities 3. Mentoring Meetings 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Summaries of stakeholder meetings 2. Documentation of partner activities 3. Documentation of Mentoring 	Mrs. Seawright And Library- Teachers
Aug.	Aug.2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct Professional Development for district educators during the 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rosters and descriptions of training 	Mrs. Seawright

Laurens County School District 55 Schedule of Completion

2020	020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> start of school in-service training days. 2. Mentoring Meetings 	2. Documentation of Mentoring Meetings	And Library-Teachers
		Year 2 (September 1, 2020- August 31, 2021)		
Sep. 2020	Dec. 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. District stakeholders and project partners will be informed. 2. The budget will be setup through the district electronic financial accountability system. 3. The project leadership team will schedule on-line and face to face mentor activities provided through the project. 4. As soon as the budget is in place, presenters from outside the district will be contracted and 5. Teacher-librarians will be registered for conferences. 6. The leadership team will meet at least monthly to monitor progress of the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emails to stake holders 2. Electronic Budget 3. Schedule of Mentor Activities 4. Signed contracts with Presenters 5. Conference Registrations 6. Leadership Team Meeting Documentation 	Mrs. Seawright
Jan.2 021	April 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluation surveys will be administered to activity participants after each activity. 2. The leadership team will meet at least monthly to monitor progress of the project. 3. Teachers will attend mentoring, presentations and conferences. 4. The team will schedule workshops facilitated by teacher-librarians during the months of February 2020-April 2020 and Library-teachers will facilitate workshops for district educators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Survey results will be collected, evaluated, recorded and reported. 2. Leadership Team meeting documentation 3. Report on mentoring conferences and presentations 4. Workshop rosters and surveys 	Mrs. Seawright And Library-Teachers
May 2021	May 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The leadership team will evaluate year 2 activities 2. The leadership will meet to plan sustainability activities 3. All project reports will be submitted as required by the funder 4. Mentoring Meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Documentation of Leadership Team evaluation of year 1 2. Documentation of sustainability plan 3. Copies of all reports will be shared and filed. 4. Mentoring meeting documentation 	Mrs. Seawright And Library-Teachers
June 2021	July 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review reports from year 1 and year 2 with stakeholders 2. Participate in partner summer activities 3. Mentoring Meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Summaries of stakeholder meetings 2. Documentation of partner activities 3. Documentation of Mentoring Meetings 	Mrs. Seawright And Library-Teachers
Aug. 2021	Aug. 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct Professional Development during start of school training 2. Mentoring Meetings 3. Submit final reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rosters and descriptions of training 2. Documentation of Mentoring 	Mrs. Seawright And Library-Teachers