

Osage County Interlocal Cooperative/Osage Hills

Project Justification*What need, problem, challenge, or opportunity will your project address, and how was it identified?*

Osage Hills public school district in Bartlesville, OK has consented for Osage County Interlocal Cooperative (OCIC) to apply for the Accelerating Promising Practices for the Small Libraries (APPSL) grant on their behalf. The Oklahoma State Board of Education has approved, under state law, OCIC as a “local education agency for state and federal application, reporting and auditing procedures.” Project LINCS (Libraries are the Infrastructure for Change in Schools) will serve approximately **172 PK-8 students** in Northeastern Oklahoma.

In the most recent biennial report released by the Rural School and Community Trust and its partners, *Why Rural Matters 2015-2016: Understanding the Changing Landscape*, Oklahoma landed on the list of the 10 states in greatest need of support for rural schools (The Rural School and Community Trust, 2017). With 75% of 513 school districts located in rural communities and the third highest percentage nationally of students enrolled in special education, yet the second-lowest per pupil spending for instruction and fifth-lowest salaries across rural districts nationally, educators face a particularly challenging task as they seek to overcome the demographic and resource-shortage risk factors facing their students. For instance, the percentage of the population falling below poverty level in the targeted community is 18% (above the state average of 16.5%). Osage Hills has 66% of students who qualify for free or reduced school meals, an average 15% of students on individualized education plans (IEPs) and an average of 45% of students are Native American. When aggregated together, 67% of 3rd-8th grade students at Osage Hills did not meet proficiency on the Reading and Literacy portion of the Spring 2018 Oklahoma School Testing Program (OSTP). In every grade level, the average percentage of students non-proficient in literacy fell above the state average.

Utilizing American Association of School Librarians (AASL) Standards Framework for School Libraries along with the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE)’s Library Standards, the district administrator, Library Media Specialist (LMS), and teachers reviewed the shared foundations and key commitments of the district to evaluate the current state of the library and create an action plan to support an engaging learning environment for all students. The team also focused on the AASL’s Future Ready Librarians’ (FRL) two guiding questions: 1) How can librarians and libraries support Future Ready Schools? and 2) How can librarians and libraries become more Future Ready? Students, parents and teachers were surveyed to provide feedback. Example questions: Why do you visit the library and how often, What’s your favorite thing in the library, What would you want to change, and What you would like the library to look like.

Identified Problem: Need: Increase access to resources and information. Osage Hills struggles supporting the school library sufficiently and effectively to fund activities to address the areas identified as needing improvement based on the analysis of the library and feedback from patrons. The current collection revealed an average publication date of 2003 and approximately 58% of the collection is fiction. Due to budget constraints, the library is only open during the regular school day. Extended hours for the library would provide opportunities for the after school and summer project staff to expand learning experiences, i.e., family literacy nights, book clubs, guest authors and author studies, readers theatre, writing classes, etc. and give equitable access for students who struggle with completing projects within the regular class schedule. To meet the needs of all students, the LMS will partner with the public library to expand resources with virtual, any time access. This will enable access for students and parents to unbiased and unlimited information and resources.

Need: Lack of collaborative spaces. The school library has limited space with outdated furniture and computers

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limiting student collaboration and project-based learning which was identified as a barrier by teachers. Students indicated they would like their library to be a more comfortable, an inviting place to read, research, or meet with other students to socialize or participate in activities. In order for the district to support the goal of engaging and empowering students to become expert consumers of information and producers of knowledge, teachers and the librarian need to have committed spaces for activities and professional development on powerful inquiry-centered pedagogy and effective collaboration across all content areas.

Proposed Solution: Project LINCS will improve and strengthen the school library's ability to promote lifelong learning by updating collections, providing access to digital content/resources, extending library hours, creating a physical environment conducive to inquiry and project-based learning, and professional development for the LMS and teachers.

What best practices or prior IMLS funded work will inform your approach?

Project LINCS will align with the OSDE's Library Standards, the AASL National School Library Standards for Learners, and the FRL Framework to meet the IMLS **Goal 1: Promoting Lifelong Learning**. Specifically, LINCS' activities will be aligned with the FRL principles of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment and Use of Space and Time for this proposal along with expanding on other principles of Personalized Professional Learning, Robust Infrastructure, and Budget and Resources.

According to AASL, educational experiences for students in the 21st Century should go beyond the traditional core content areas and include inquiry-based learning (Levitov, 2016). Research shows the amount of time children spend with books has a major impact on both reading achievement and general school performance, and the number of students scoring at or above proficiency on reading assessments increases with professional librarian services (ALA, 2012). Higher reading scores are also associated with access to larger collections of information resources (e.g., print and digital books, supplemental curriculum, periodicals, etc.) and more computers both in the library and throughout the school (ALA, 2012). Enhanced library media center collections will improve access to books by providing much needed print and digital resources to support classroom instruction, extend learning beyond the classroom and outside of school hours for students, and provide instructional opportunities to empower students to become lifelong learners.

The job of the LMS has evolved from literacy instruction to encompass multiple platforms and tools to providing access and instruction to support new technologies like makerspaces (Abram, 2015). Makerspaces in schools provide a means to engage learners in creative, higher-order problem-solving through hands-on design, construction and iteration and impacts student learning and skill building to empower students to change their communities (Johnson, et al, 2015). Students in rural low-income areas can acquire skills necessary to be competitive with peers across the state and nation through interactions with makerspaces.

How would you qualify your library as small and/or rural?

An LEA is defined as rural by the state of Oklahoma according to the following criteria: 1) Twenty percent or more of the children ages 5 through 17 years served by the LEA are from families with incomes below poverty; and 2) All of the schools served by the LEA are designated with a school locale code of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43. Osage Hills meets the criteria with 66% of students below poverty and a school locale code of 32.

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Who will benefit from your project? How have you engaged them in your planning?

The LMS, teachers, students and parents will benefit from project LINCS with access to updated resources and learning opportunities that are currently unavailable. The LMS will be able to support the district with programs, services and spaces to foster a culture of collaboration and innovation to meet the needs of all students. Surveys and informal feedback were the key components in evaluating the current state of the library and developing the action plan for a future ready school. Feedback will continue to drive the implementation and evaluation of the project.

How will your project address the goals of APP, your selected project category, and the agency-wide goal you selected on the IMLS Program Information Sheet?

Project LINCS addresses the APPSL goal of transforming school library practice in K-12 programs with schools by promoting lifelong learning. Across an array of measures, Oklahoma recently ranked as one of the top 10 states in greatest need of support for rural schools (The Rural School and Community Trust, 2017). These needs arise from and are magnified by the unique challenges of educating all students in rural settings. While research has sought to demonstrate the positive impact of libraries on academic achievement, most rural school libraries remain outdated and limit students ability to collaborate, explore, and gain skills they need to be successful. Providing collaborative spaces, professional development, updated devices, extended library hours, and access to high-caliber digital content and resources will allow the LMS and teachers to utilize new instructional strategies and increase student engagement. Restructuring the library to support personal learning experiences and expanding access to other community resources provides more opportunities to meet the diverse needs of students and families and may improve literacy achievement.

Project Work Plan

What specific activities will you carry out?

Goals, Objectives, and Activities
Goal: Create and implement a comprehensive plan to transform the school library into a inquiry-based learning and resource hub to prepare students for the future and empower them to reach their full potential.
Objective 1: <u>Increase access and use of resources and information by 20% as measured by library circulation records and student and teacher surveys by the end of Year 2 of the project. Baseline data will be established at the beginning of Year 1. (Surveys will be developed to reflect performance measures for lifelong learning)</u>
Activities: 1) Purchase print and digital books to update and expand collection; 2) Partner with the public library to provide any-time access to additional resources; 3) Purchase chromebooks to replace outdated computers; 4) Extend library hours before/after school and during summer and 5) Host family literacy nights, book clubs, guest authors and author studies, readers theatre, writing classes, etc.
Objective 2: <u>Inquiry-based lessons in multiple content areas will increase by 25% each year of the project as measured by teacher and librarian lesson plans and student portfolios.</u>
Activities: 1) Purchase tables and/or furniture to encourage collaboration and comfortable reading spaces; 2) Contract with consultants to provide professional development for collaboration of the librarian and teachers

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to promote inquiry-based learning (*Surveys will be developed to reflect performance measures for lifelong learning*); 3) Develop makerspace activities for all content areas; and 4) Extend library hours to allow students opportunities for pleasure reading and independent research.

Who will plan, implement, and manage your project? Will partners be engaged and, if so, for what purpose?

Osage Hills LMS, D. Sutterfield, has over 20 years experience in teaching and the last 10 years as a library media specialist (see D. Sutterfield resume). Ms. Sutterfield in collaboration with teachers and administrators will plan and implement all activities of the project. Debbie Enos, OCIC Assistant Executive Director, has over 8 years experience managing all aspects of grant activities, including writing the proposals, managing budget, ensuring annual reports are submitted, and evaluating program activities in relation to proposed timelines. Ms. Enos has a proven record of managing large federally funded programs (see D. Enos curriculum vita). For Project LINC, Ms. Enos will serve as the Project Director, working with Osage Hills’ LMS and administrator to ensure roles and responsibilities are carried out in accordance with the project objectives in a timely manner.

What time, financial, personnel, and other resources will you need to carry out the activities?

Project Management Plan			
Activity	Person Responsible	Timeframe	Milestones
Notify stakeholders of grant award	Project Director	09/2019	District is prepared to begin implementation.
Contract with consultants for PD	Project Director	September of each year	Consultants are hired. and have training materials and supplies prepared.
Schedule and implement 3 trainings per year	Project Director, LMS, and Administrator	Fall, Spring and Summer 2019, 2020 and 2021	Consultants have training materials and supplies prepared.
Purchase books and resources	LMS	09/2019-08/2021	Weeding and analysis of the collection is completed.
Schedule extended library hours	LMS	09/2019-08/2021; June each year for summer program	Students and families are aware of new library hours and afterschool and summer staff collaborate with LMS for activities.
Plan and host Family literacy nights/book clubs/, etc.	LMS	09/2019-08/2021	Communication with families on dates/times; students and family members are willing to participate.
Purchase technology and furniture	LMS	09/2019-08/2021	Outdated equipment and furniture is repurposed and/or moved to other areas and design of new area is completed.
Collaborative learning projects are implemented	LMS and Teachers	09/2019-08/2021	Collaborative spaces are available and teachers and LMS have opportunities to meet and plan activities.
Annual reports are completed and published	Project Director	Aug 2020 for Year 1; Aug 2021 for Year 2	Activities are completed within designated time frames and LMS and district administrator supply data needed for reports.

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A detailed budget and narrative has been provided for the two years of the project. The budget includes funds for managing and evaluating the grant; stipends for the LMS for extending library hours and professional development; stipends for teachers; 30% of the total budget for supplies to carry out the activities of updating the library collection and physical space; and consultants to provide professional development.

What are the risks to the project and how will you mitigate them?

The only potential risk identified in the project would be retaining the same teachers over the two year project period. Rural districts in Oklahoma are under-supported across a variety of dimensions. Overcrowded classrooms, lack of financial support for classroom supplies, and overall frustration with the state of education are all factors leading to substantial teacher attrition. The project management plan will include training for any new teachers on the goals and objectives of the grant as well as the professional development for cross-disciplinary inquiry-based lessons.

How will you measure your progress and evaluate your project performance goals?

Evaluation Plan			
<u>Objective 1:</u> Increase access and use of resources and information by 20% as measured by library circulation records and student and teacher surveys by the end of Year 2 of the project. Baseline data will be established at the beginning of Year 1.			
Data Collected	Person Responsible	Instruments	Time Frame
Library Management System reports; teacher and student surveys	LMS and Project Director	Follett LMS; Digital and/or paper projected developed surveys	Baseline data (Fall 2019); Annually (Spring 2020 and 2021)
<u>Objective 2:</u> Inquiry-based lessons in multiple content areas will increase by 25% each year of the project as measured by teacher and librarian lesson plans and student portfolios.			
Number of lesson plans implemented district-wide	LMS, Classroom Teachers	Lesson plans; student portfolios	Baseline data (Fall 2019); Annually (Spring 2020 and 2021)

Project Outcomes

What are intended results and outputs? How do they address the need articulated in your Project Justification?

Project Outcomes		
Outcomes	Milestones	Need Addressed
Staff are efficient and effective at cross-disciplinary inquiry-based instruction.	Trainings are completed in a timely manner for key personnel.	Increase access to resources and information; Lack of collaborative spaces.
The school library is the hub for	The library is a welcoming,	Increase access to resources and

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student learning.	comfortable space for students, parents and district personnel.	information; Lack of collaborative spaces.
Students are college and career ready with critical skills necessary to be users and creators of information and ideas.	Demographic barriers are overcome and students/families are utilizing the resources available to them.	Increase access to resources and information; Lack of collaborative spaces.

How do you define success for your project?

Success indicators for Project LINCS will include positive feedback on surveys designed by the project director and LMS; successful completion of project activities within the designated timelines; increased activity in the library through collaborative learning and teaching experiences, circulation records, and students/families utilizing the public library resources; evidence of cross-disciplinary inquiry-based learning; and increases in student achievement data.

What is your plan for collecting and reporting data on your performance goals and outcomes?

The Project Director and LMS will inform and ask for feedback from district administrators, teachers, and parent representatives on an annual basis through parent teacher conferences for specific student performance, social media posts, and/or other forms of communication deemed appropriate for overall project performance. *(Surveys will be developed to reflect performance measures for lifelong learning)* Project’s purpose, trainings, events, program highlights, and reports will be disseminated through various formats including newsletters, informational meetings with stakeholders, social media, and announcements at staff meetings. Annual reports will be disseminated and will include: an executive summary on overall grant progress, project objectives performance, fidelity measures, project progress towards meeting established timelines and milestones, sustainability incorporation, professional development being provided along with training evaluations, and student academic performance.

How will you sustain the benefits of your project beyond the funding period?

District funds are currently being used for the full time LMS’s salary and will continue throughout the grant time period and after the grant ends. Additional funds from the local budget will be allocated to parent involvement and outreach by continuing book studies and family literacy nights. Rural schools are less likely to be provided support by peers due to small school size, geographic distance from other teacher networks and a limited number of teachers sharing similar professional interests or providing expertise; therefore, OCIC will facilitate follow up trainings on cross-disciplinary inquiry-based learning and enable peer support across districts by hosting and coordinating trainings and establishing professional networks among other rural districts.

