

# **Agenda of Special Called Meeting**

## **The Board of Trustees Abilene Independent School District**

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A Special Called Meeting of the Board of Trustees of Abilene Independent School District will be held Thursday, December 12, 2024, beginning at 5:15 PM in the Boardroom, One AISD Center 241 Pine Street, Abilene, Texas 79601.

The subjects to be discussed or considered or upon which any formal action may be taken are listed below. Items do not have to be taken in the same order as shown on this meeting notice. Unless removed from the consent agenda, items identified within the consent agenda will be acted on at one time.

- I. Call to Order
- II. Board/Superintendent Announcements/Information
- III. Oral Communication from the Public
- IV. The Board will consider approval of the LASO Strong Foundations Implementation Grant Application.  
Mrs. Patti Blue, Associate Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
- V. Adjournment

## Abilene Independent School District Board Document - Agenda Item IV

Meeting Date: December 12, 2024

Meeting Type: Special Called Meeting

Item Type: Action Item

Future Action Required: Yes

If Yes, Month: December

Subject: LASO Grant: Strong Foundations Implementation

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### Background Information:

The [System of Great Schools \(SGS\)](#) Network helps Texas school district leaders ensure that more students have access to better schools every year by increasing the number of high-quality, best-fit options. Abilene ISD has chosen to participate in this network to receive support in building a district of great schools that will result in higher quality options for our students and families.

The Learning Acceleration Support Opportunities (LASO) Grant program opened on October 14th and closes December 13th. Within the LASO grant program, there are several grant opportunities we are pursuing.

Last fall, AISD applied for two grants in the LASO Grant program. The Strong Foundations Planning Grant which allowed the district to build a Framework in Reading Language Arts K-12. An application for the School Action Fund grant for Mann Middle School was also made. Both grants were awarded. The Reading Language Arts Framework can be found in the attachments below.

The Strong Foundations Implementation grant will provide High Quality Instructional Materials for our elementary campuses. A closely related grant entitled, Strong Foundations Implementation School Improvement PLC, will further support the implementation of high quality instructional materials specifically with professional learning communities.

The Technology Lending grant will allow our district additional funds to support the purchase of devices for Mann Middle School to implement their high quality instructional materials.

The School Action Fund grant would allow us to explore the opportunity to plan innovative strategies on one or more of our “targeted” or “comprehensive” campuses. These grants would be planning grants with the possibility of extension for an additional two years. Within the School Action Fund, there is also the opportunity to plan what it would take to consider partner-managed opportunities in our district.

### Attached Supporting Documents:

[Framework Poster - AISD.pdf](#)

### Fiscal Implications:

Administrative Recommendation:

Contact Person:

Dr. Karen Munoz, Executive Director for Innovation and Program Development





**Innovation Office-Update  
LASO Grant**

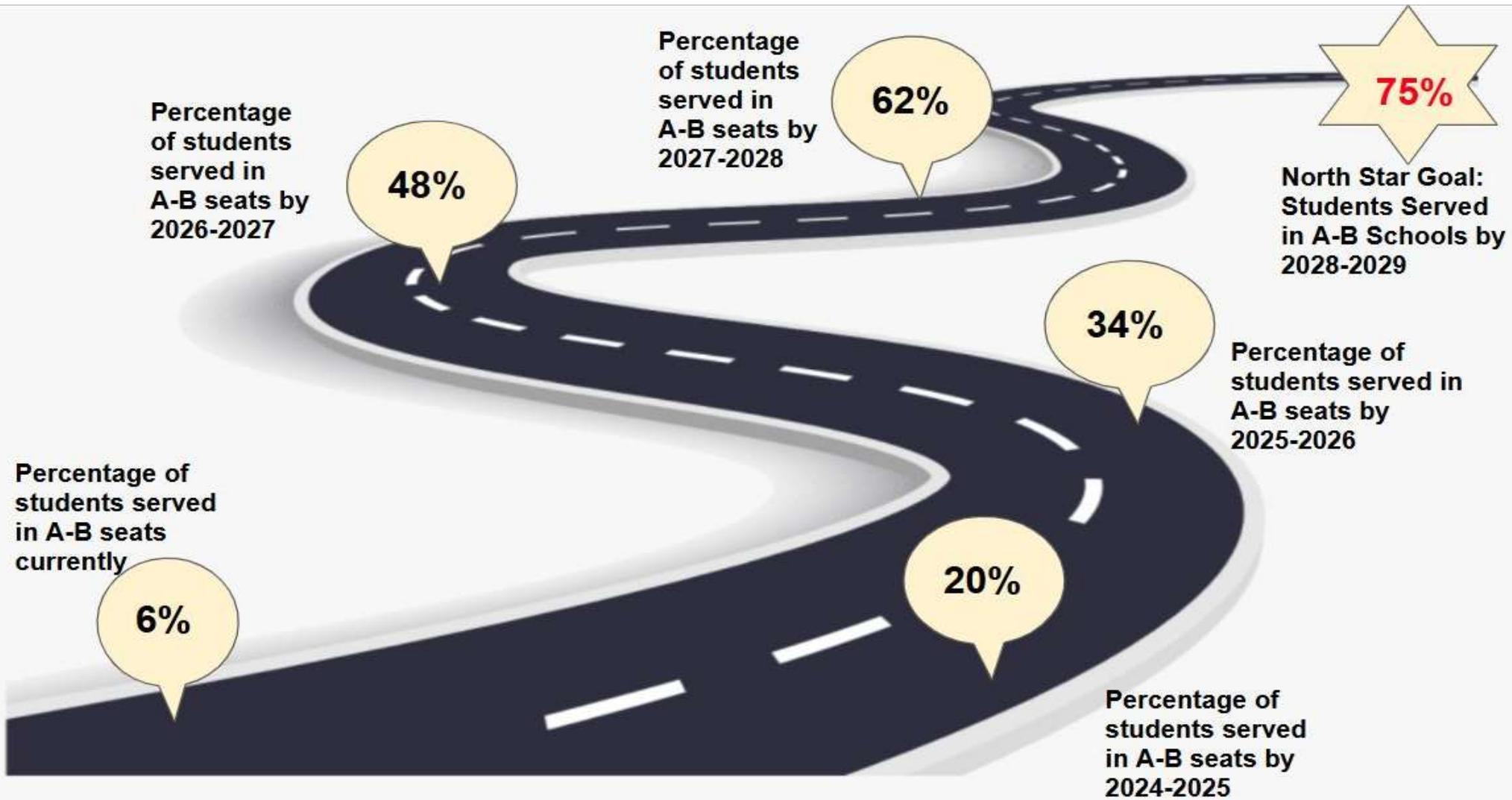
*Mrs. Patti Blue  
Associate Superintendent  
For Curriculum and  
Instruction*

# System of Great Schools (SGS)

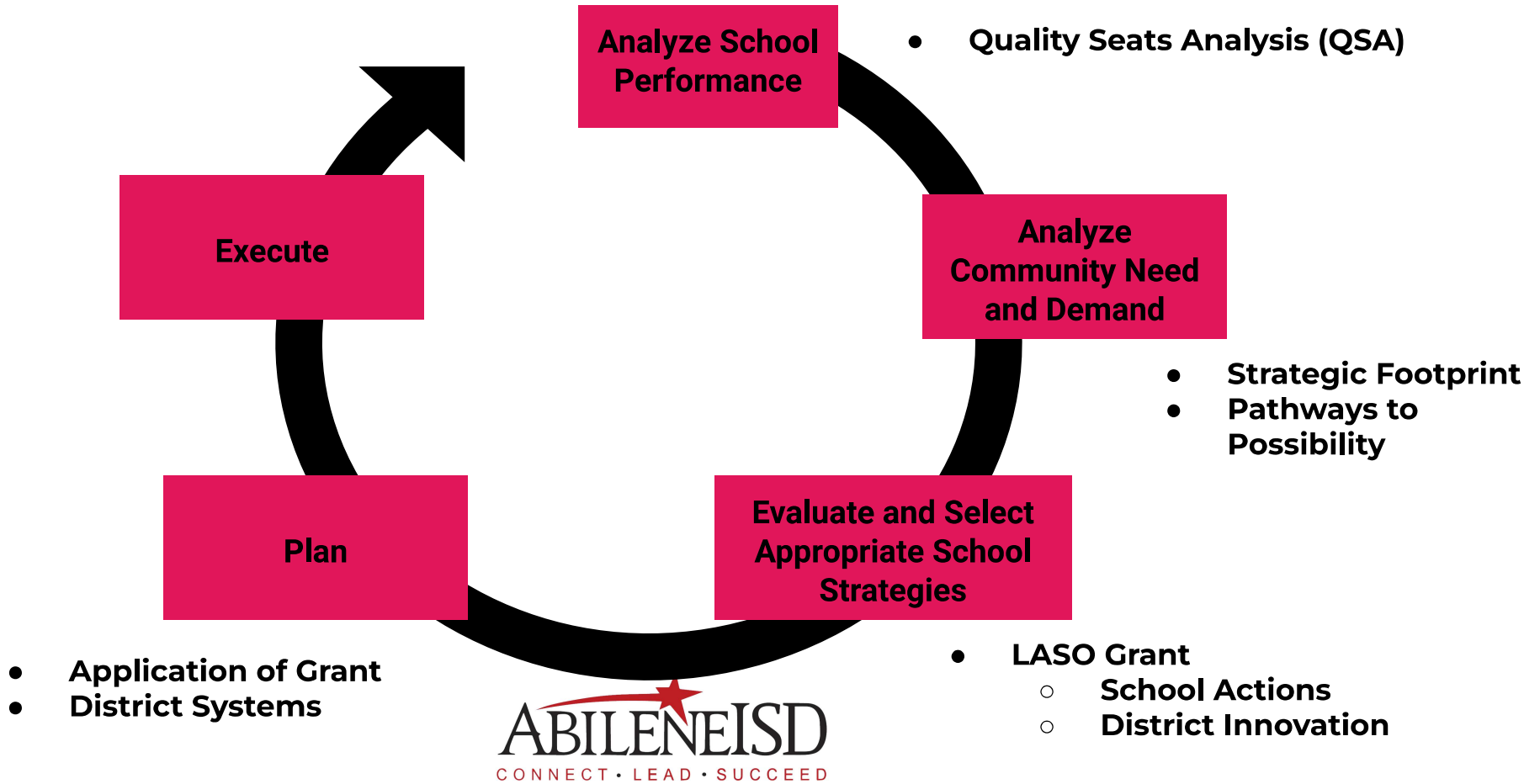
- A System of Great Schools Strategy is a **district-level problem solving approach** that seeks to understand school performance and community demands and use that information to make decisions about improvement strategies.
- It requires systematic thinking and an **openness to pursuing all possible options** to create the set of school options that families want and deserve.
- It empowers educators to design and lead campuses or networks of campuses around **coherent, specialized school models**.
- It **empowers families to make choices** that best fit the needs of their children.

# North Star Goal

By the end of the 2028-2029 school year, 75% of students in Abilene ISD will be in A or B seats.



# Planning Process



# Learning Acceleration Support Opportunities (LASO) Cycle 3 (2024-2025)

TEA is continuing to offer streamlined, consolidated grant applications, focused on a few grant programs that are bundled and that help accelerate academic gains. The Learning Acceleration Support Opportunities (LASO) is a universal consolidated application cycle that **strategically** batches grant funding opportunities that are supporting with continued **learning acceleration** and **innovation opportunities**.

Window Opens: October 14th

Window Closes: December 13th

# Strong Foundations Implementation

**Before we can talk about the 25-26  
Strong Foundation Implementation  
Grant...**

**Let us review the 24-25  
Strong Foundations Planning Grant.**



# LEAs need supports across multiple stages



  
**STRONG FOUNDATIONS**  
Planning

  
**STRONG FOUNDATIONS**  
Implementation

Pre-Adoption

Adoption

Pre-Launch

Initial  
Implementation

Deeper  
Implementation

What are our vision and goals for student learning?

Which instructional materials will best support our district to realize our vision and goals for student learning?

How do we create the conditions for successful implementation of the instructional materials and invest all stakeholders?

How do we support teachers in effectively implementing the instructional materials consistently?

How do we strengthen implementation of the instructional materials and empower teachers to use data to help all students access grade-level learning every day?

## Program description



The **Strong Foundations Planning** grant provides support to LEAs to develop a strong instructional framework in **math** or **literacy**, provides optional adoption supports in selecting new high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) if LEAs choose to make a materials switch; and trainings to support creating systems to effectively manage instruction at the district level.



## Strong Foundations Planning...

...**does not include** grant funds for purchasing  
Tier 1 instructional materials

...is **not** tied to use of specific products  
or materials

A 50 member AISD Committee made up of teachers, administrators, and instructional specialist have led the work through the Strong Foundations Planning Grant.

The major portion of Summer and Fall of 2024 has been spent learning more about what good Reading Language Arts instruction looks like and what it should include. Based on this learning, the Strong Foundations Planning Committee developed a learning framework.

## Literacy Instructional Framework

### Our Vision

All Abilene ISD educators will prioritize high quality, intentional literacy instruction through engagement in relevant reading and writing experiences to equip our students to be critical thinkers and effective communicators.

### Our Beliefs

#### Foundational Skills

We believe in the implementation of explicit, systematic foundational literacy instruction for **ALL** students which results in skilled readers and writers. We consistently support students in the transition from learning to read to more thoughtful comprehension.

#### Text Complexity

We believe **ALL** students should have daily engagement with complex, grade level texts leading to analytical thinking. Interaction with complex texts, paired with appropriate scaffolded supports and collaboration, provides greater learning opportunities for students.

#### Knowledge Coherence

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We believe in the importance of closing knowledge gaps by building background knowledge and vocabulary across all content areas in order to increase understanding for **ALL** students.

#### Text-based Responses

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We believe creating text-based written and oral responses across all content areas results in deeper understanding and critical literacy skills for **ALL** students.

### Equipped Students

#### Strong Tier 1 Instruction

We believe students from **ALL** backgrounds and performance levels should have access to strong Tier 1 instruction everyday, while creating a culture that fosters a love for literacy.

## Our Actions

### District Leaders

- Create systems aligned to the shared vision of literacy instruction
- Provide quality materials, intentional professional development for campus leadership and teachers, and consistent instructional support in order to reach literacy goals
- Collaborate with campus leadership and teachers to make necessary adjustments to district support

### Campus Leaders

- Create opportunities for collaborative learning across the campus and grade levels aligned to a shared vision for literacy
- Engage in professional development alongside teachers and provide ongoing support
- Monitor literacy instruction and analyze data in order to guide coaching conversations and professional development opportunities
- Protect time for teachers to effectively plan and implement high quality Tier 1 instruction

### Teachers

- Daily internalize and implement lessons that prioritize a systematic approach to the development of foundational skills, fluency, vocabulary, reading, and writing
- Implement the scope and sequence of high-quality materials with fidelity
- Plan daily instruction around the complex, grade level texts and provide opportunities to engage analytically and build background knowledge
- Identify knowledge demands and vocabulary of each text and plan to systematically build knowledge students need to access the text
- Plan questions and responses that require students to provide text evidence through written and oral responses using academic language in complete sentences
- Provide students daily, authentic writing experiences that build skills to communicate ideas and apply new learning
- Use student data to monitor and adjust instruction to provide strong Tier 1 instruction as well as necessary scaffolds and supports

### Students

- Actively engage in learning by participating in class discussions, asking questions, seeking clarification when needed, and collaborating respectfully in order to deepen comprehension
- Be willing to take risks, give your best effort, accept feedback, and believe that mistakes are a part of learning
- Embrace challenges in literacy by reading complex texts, engaging in authentic writing experiences, and thinking critically
- Take ownership of your learning and academic achievement

### Families

- Prioritize student attendance
- Read and discuss books with your student(s)
- Communicate openly with students, teachers, and school
- Encourage your student to actively participate at school in order to reach their goals



**Through this process, we have also  
looked at student achievement data.**

		12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24
Reading-3rd	TX	81	76	77	73	73	77	76	67	76	76	74
AISD		78	75	78	73	71	76	70	61	69	71	69
Reading-4th	TX	72	74	74	75	70	73	75	63	77	77	82
AISD		72	71	70	77	67	66	71	54	67	71	76
Reading-5th	TX	87	86	87	81	82	84	86	73	81	81	78
AISD		87	89	85	80	81	80	82	66	75	73	72
Reading-6th	TX	72	78	77	69	69	69	68	62	70	77	75
AISD		73	74	70	66	64	65	60	52	56	69	68
Reading-7th	TX	78	76	76	71	73	74	76	69	80	78	72
AISD		79	77	72	61	67	68	70	59	70	70	60
Reading-8th	TX	90	90	88	87	86	86	86	73	83	83	78
AISD		91	91	88	83	82	84	83	63	70	77	68
E1	TX	69	67	71	65	64	65	68	67	65	72	67
AISD		68	70	69	66	60	60	63	62	60	67	62
E2	TX	79	69	72	67	66	67	68	71	72	74	75
AISD		75	68	71	71	64	67	64	67	71	72	72
Writing- 4th	TX	70	73	70	69	65	63	67	53	X	X	X
AISD		71	69	63	68	62	54	60	45	X	X	X
Writing- 7th	TX	71	72	73	69	70	69	70	63	X	X	X
AISD		75	73	64	61	59	62	60	55	X	X	X

	3rd Grade				4th Grade				5th Grade			
	2023	2022	2021	2019	2023	2022	2021	2019	2023	2022	2021	2019
<b>State</b>	76	76	67	76	77	77	62	79	81	81	73	86
Abilene	71	69	61	70	71	67	54	73	73	75	66	82
Amarillo	79	81	74	80	81	82	68	79	85	86	79	90
Lubbock	81	79	71	71	79	77	61	69	81	82	74	85
San Angelo	69	71	60	70	71	69	56	69	74	76	67	81
Temple	71	66	57	66	71	69	52	69	74	73	66	83
Tyler	72	73	65	68	75	76	62	69	78	80	69	83

**Through this process we have looked at the TEA designated High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) for K - 5 Reading Language Arts.**

- **SAVVAS**
- **Bluebonnet**

**Abilene ISD started using SAVVAS in 2019. We are currently still using SAVVAS as our designated curriculum.**

**Bluebonnet was new to the committee and what they focused a great deal of time analyzing**

# Strong Foundations Planning

- TEA Learning Labs are opportunities for other districts to come and observe HQIM in classrooms.
- On October 2nd, 17 elementary teachers and administrators went to Crowley ISD.
- On October 23rd, 6 secondary teachers and administrators went to Lubbock ISD.
- On November 14th, 17 elementary teachers and administrators went to Lubbock ISD to observe Bluebonnet (piloting).

# Strong Foundations Planning

- In the Learning Lab classrooms, we observed the following:
  - Consistent curriculum and instruction across the campuses
  - Engaged students asking relevant and thoughtful questions
  - Significant time spent on reading and writing tasks
  - Lessons centered around complex texts
  - Higher order questions asked by teachers and students

# **Now we will move into discussing the Strong Foundations Implementation Grant**

# Strong Foundations Implementation

- Implement a High Quality Instructional Material (HQIM) in Reading Language Arts at all elementary campuses. Bluebonnet is the required curriculum for K-5 RLA.
- Includes professional development for teachers, instructional coaches, school leaders, campus administrators and district leaders
- Must have board approval because it involves curriculum adoption

# Strong Foundations Implementation

## Grant Amount:

- Base amount for first 30 participants: \$200,000
- \$3000 per additional participant over 30:  
Total number of AISD participants:  $305 - 30 = 275$  additional  
 $\$3000 \times 275 = \$825,000$
- Total Grant Award Anticipated: \$1,025,000

# Strong Foundations Implementation

- 50% must go to approved TEA providers for Technical Assistance (For the Planning portion, Region 14 ESC has been our provider.)
- 20% must go for salaries to employee additional support of implementation (For example: Dedicated Instructional Coaches)
- 30% for other allowable expenses (For example: print materials, digital licenses, assessment licenses, teacher stipends, instruction coaches)

# Bluebonnet Curriculum

- We have identified some lessons with Biblical references within all units K-5 (aims to teach literature, not theology).
- Lessons based on TEKS
- We are currently piloting Amplify (former version of Bluebonnet) in two grade levels at one campus.

# Bluebonnet Curriculum

State law (TEC Sec. 28.002) requires that curriculum includes “religious literature, including the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) and New Testament, and its impact on history and literature.” While public schools may not provide religious instruction, guidance from the United States Department of Education (DOE) indicates that public schools may teach about religion and promote religious liberty and respect for the religious views of all. **Bluebonnet Learning materials adhere to both state statute and this federal standard**

1. “RLA gives students access to rich texts that further their understanding of our society, including our history, economy, and culture.
2. Included: content from various monotheistic and polytheistic faiths around the world.
3. Many canonical works of Western literature cannot be fully understood without a background in biblical narratives, requiring students to be taught these narratives to fully engage with the literature.
4. Teachers should focus class discussions on the lesson's learning standards, objectives, and activities.”

# Bluebonnet Curriculum

## Part of a Classical Approach

“Through its integration of literature, science, the arts, and history, classical education encourages students to deepen their understanding of **how our society has changed over time.**”



“This holistic approach not only enriches students' intellectual development but also nurtures **positive character traits and civic responsibility.**”

Bluebonnet Program and Implementation Guide, p 7

# Bluebonnet Curriculum

## Instruction Resource Funding from TEA:

- If using TEA designated HQIM: \$40 per student
- If using TEA designated OER (Open Educational Resources): \$20 per student

# **Strong Foundations Implementation-Professional Learning Communities (PLC)**

**(Only eligible to apply for if we apply for Strong  
Foundations Implementation Grant)**

# Strong Foundations Implementation (PLC)

**(Only eligible to apply for if we apply for Strong Foundations Implementation Grant)**

- Estimated amount: \$225,000
- Focuses on building strong professional learning communities (PLCs) to support the implementation of high quality instructional materials (HQIM)
- Support our federally identified campuses (targeted/comprehensive)

# Recommendation

- ▶ To allow AISD to move forward with applying for the Strong Foundations Implementation Grant (Bluebonnet) to implement a high quality instructional material in all elementary campuses.

# Grant considerations

- Strong Foundations Implementation
- Strong Foundations Implementation School Improvement PLC Supports
- Technology Lending Grant
- School Action Fund Grant
  - District-Managed
  - Partner-Managed

# Technology

# Technology Lending Grant

- Provides student the equipment necessary to access and use digital instructional materials at school and at home
- Apply for Technology Grant (implement their high quality instructional materials)

# School Action Fund

# School Action Fund

- Whole school-wide strategies districts use to increase access to high-quality schools, meet the community needs and address chronic underperformance
- Federally designated campuses (targeted/comprehensive)
- District-Managed
- Partner-Managed

**QUESTIONS?**