



T.L.L. TEMPLE FOUNDATION

EST 1962

BUILDING A THRIVING RURAL EAST TEXAS

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T.L.L. TEMPLE FOUNDATION GRANTS ADDRESS EAST TEXAS SCHOOL CHALLENGES DUE TO COVID-19

Lufkin, TX: Beginning almost one year ago, the COVID-19 pandemic forced school districts into extended shutdowns and interrupted instructional routines. These disruptions are having significant consequences for student learning. As part of the **T.L.L. Temple Foundation's** effort to address these challenges across rural East Texas, 12 school districts have been awarded grants totaling \$377,000 to accelerate learning recovery in reading and math.

"Pandemic related learning losses threaten our students' academic and career paths and make it impossible for our East Texas communities to recover and thrive moving forward," said **T.L.L. Temple Foundation President & CEO Dr. Wynn Rosser**. "Educational inequities existed before COVID-19, and, unfortunately, the most vulnerable students are bearing the heaviest burdens."

According to recent studies, learning losses associated with COVID-19 disruptions will be significant and will widen underlying achievement gaps.¹ Unaddressed, pandemic learning losses will widen existing inequities and sharply curtail future postsecondary and workforce opportunities. For the vulnerable students who are most affected, all signals point towards an increase in school dropout rates and reduced postsecondary completion at a time when automation is transforming low-skill sectors and higher levels of education have never been more important to workforce competitiveness.² The lifetime economic consequences are immense: "the average K-12 student in the United States could lose \$61,000 to \$82,000 in lifetime earnings (in constant 2020 dollars), or the equivalent of a year of full-time work, solely as a result of COVID-19-related learning losses."³

"The T.L.L. Temple Foundation recognizes the risks that COVID-19 learning losses present to East Texas, and we also understand that the needs of rural communities and rural schools are rarely prioritized during a crisis," said **Dr. Sylvia Leal, the T.L.L. Temple Foundation's Senior Program Officer for Education and Economic Opportunity**. "By tapping into their demonstrated resiliency and innovation, we're committed to ensuring our teachers and students on the frontlines of rural education have the resources

¹ <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2020/05/27/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-student-achievement-and-what-it-may-mean-for-educators/>

² <https://www.sreb.org/news/analysis-millions-need-more-education-training-covid-19-tilts-industries-toward-automation>

³ <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/covid-19-and-student-learning-in-the-united-states-the-hurt-could-last-a-lifetime>

they need to accelerate learning. What our educational leaders develop and achieve in East Texas will be shared as a guiding model for rural communities everywhere that are trying to address COVID-19 learning losses.”

From 34 applications, the following 12 finalists were selected:

- Corrigan-Camden Independent School District
- Diboll Independent School District
- Jasper Independent School District
- Joaquin Independent School District
- Leggett Independent School District
- Nacogdoches Independent School District
- Newton Independent School District
- Orangefield Independent School District
- Palestine Independent School District
- Texarkana Independent School District
- West Orange-Stark Cove Consolidated Independent School District
- Woodville Independent School District.

“We're elated to be a recipient of such a generous grant from the T.L.L. Temple Foundation,” said **Nacogdoches ISD Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Daya Hill**. “This will allow us to provide targeted instruction during what is sure to be a critical summer for learning, as our students work to overcome the challenges of the past year.”

The selected school districts reflect the diversity of K-12 education across the T.L.L. Temple Foundation’s rural East Texas service area:

- Selected school districts span the southeast Texas-Louisiana coastal border to the northeast Texas-Arkansas border
- The smallest participating school district serves less than 200 total students and the largest serves more than 7,000 total students
- Accelerated learning programs focus on varied grade levels, from early elementary to high school, and incorporate unique approaches, from intensive summer sessions to targeted interventions across the school year.

“Our students in Orangefield ISD, like students all across our state and nation, have endured significant challenges due school closures and loss of instructional time brought on by a global pandemic, said **Zach Quinn, Secondary Curriculum Education Director**. “We recognize that our students are experiencing significant learning gaps in math and reading. This grant will help us to provide additional tools, programs and resources to close these learning gaps and increase the success of our students.”

The T.L.L. Temple Foundation is partnering with the E3 Alliance to support selected school districts with collecting data and evaluating the impact of the programs on student learning. The aim of the partnership is to identify what works for accelerating learning recovery in rural schools and to use the findings to improve and scale future programs to address learning loss.

“While systemic gaps have long been recognized between different student groups, the COVID pandemic has both highlighted and exacerbated the learning loss experienced by some of our most vulnerable students,” said the **E3 Alliance President & Executive Director Susan Dawson**. “E3 Alliance is excited to

partner with the T.L.L. Temple Foundation to identify, support, and then expand innovative ways to address these losses by working directly with schools to measure and elevate the best ideas to help all our students succeed in this critical time.”

This grant opportunity supports and elevates rural East Texas school districts at the leading edge of efforts to address COVID-19 learning disruptions. The solutions developed across East Texas will help eliminate the lingering effects of pandemic learning disruptions and prepare the next generation of rural students for success.

About T.L.L. Temple Foundation: The T.L.L. Temple Foundation works alongside rural communities to build a thriving East Texas and to alleviate poverty, creating access and opportunities for all. Since its founding in 1962 by Mrs. Georgie Temple Munz, the T.L.L. Temple Foundation has invested more than \$500 million primarily to strengthen communities in rural East Texas. For more information about the foundation, visit www.tlltemple.foundation.

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