

November 15, 2016

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your son/daughter has been selected to participate in the Texas Performance Standards Project! By participating in this project, he/she will have the opportunity to explore an area of academic interest in depth. Many students graduate from high school, and even college, without a professional experience of this type. For example, a student who is interested in science will have the opportunity to conduct a study comparable to that of a laboratory scientist. A student who would like to be a published author will focus on taking a piece of writing from conception to publication.

The program will give students a structure, but it will be up to them to identify an important question to explore in at least one of the following areas: English language arts and reading, mathematics, science, and social studies.

### **Projects**

A **project** consists of the long-term development of a question or idea that is significant to professionals in the specified field of study. Grounded in the content of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), the project will develop an important content-area question or idea in depth and will not necessarily reflect broad content knowledge of the field. Additionally, the project will demonstrate the use of sophisticated and advanced research methods and the use of technology appropriate to the field of study. The project will result in learning that is demonstrated through products or performances appropriate to and comparable in quality to those of a professional who works in the field of study. A project consists of a **product**, **abstract**, **process record**, and **presentation/question-and-answer session**.

The selection of the format of the product must convey the knowledge and skills learned in the project. The **product** is the focus of the scoring process. This culmination of the student's comprehensive study must exhibit mastery of content and thinking skills. Developing the final product is the focus of the learning process. The final product may be in one of the following formats:

- A **written product** such as a formal paper, website, or literary work
- A **performance** such as an exhibit or theatrical production

Along with the product, the student will submit a **process record** that documents learning advancement. The process record may consist of, but is not limited to, an outline, log, journal, notes of mentor meetings, weekly progress reports, drafts of previous versions, and/or bibliography. The format of the process record should enable a reviewer to follow the student's learning throughout the project.

The student will summarize the project in a formal **abstract**.

The student will also make a **public presentation**, consisting of a brief explanation of the project and a **question-and-answer session** with the audience.

### **Support from the School**

The student will be supported in a variety of ways during the course of this project.

- The educator responsible for guiding each student through the project is the **teacher**.

*The TPSP was originally developed as a pilot targeting grades, 4, 8, and exit level. Most materials have been revised to address Primary, Intermediate, Middle School, and High School/Exit grade levels, however, users may find occasional references to the pilot grades.*

- **Other educators**, such as counselors, library/media specialists, campus administrators, and district and regional gifted/talented coordinators, will help locate resources and provide other support as needed.

### **Timelines**

The student, teacher, and mentor will establish interim timelines for the project and a final completion date. It is the student's responsibility to meet the obligations of the agreed-upon timeline. To receive continued school support for the project, students must show evidence of timely progress.

### **Project Assessment**

A scoring guide will be applied to the final product. You may wish to become familiar with it and help your son or daughter use it to assess his or her progress throughout the project. Along with the teacher and mentor, your son or daughter will regularly assess progress and revise plans, based on the scoring guide.

### **Parent/Guardian Roles**

Because this project represents a significant amount of work on the part of your child, we ask that you be involved in the following ways.

- Help your child make a quality decision on a topic of study and a possible mentor.
- Check in with him or her frequently to see how the project is going and if extra encouragement may be needed to meet interim due dates.

Please sign the student profile in your child's manual to signify your approval of his/her participation in this project. I look forward to working with you and learning from you and your daughter or son as we begin this project! Whenever you have questions, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Cantu