

LinkED ORGANIZATIONAL SUMMARY 2017-18

Vision: We believe each individual deserves a community that honors the competencies and potential of every learning style. **Mission:** The Learning Center of North Texas (dba LinkED) provides practical, accessible, and affordable resources to increase the success of individuals with learning differences and disabilities.

During the 1998 school year, Hill School of Fort Worth, a private nonprofit school founded in 1973 to meet the needs of area students who have learning differences and disabilities, initiated a long-range planning process involving parents, staff, board members, and community leaders who identified service gaps and areas of need regarding individuals with learning disabilities in the Fort Worth and North Texas community. One of the two unmet needs uncovered was for a centralized resource center that could provide evaluations, diagnoses, parent/educator training/resources, and information on learning disabilities. With the commitment of area philanthropists, education experts and community leaders, **The Learning Center of North Texas** was founded as a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit and opened on January 4, 2001. In August 2017 TLCNT rebranded to become **LinkED: Linking Ability to Learning**. It serves North Central Texas by offering these programs:

a) **Educational Evaluation & Support Program** – The Pat and Don Williamson Evaluation Center’s Director of Diagnostic Services and 9 part-time diagnosticians, 2 part-time speech-language pathologists, and part-time consulting psychologist provide comprehensive diagnostic educational evaluations for children age **birth through adults**. LinkED’s evaluation is distinguished by its strengths-based approach to learning and helping clients succeed. Last year we provided multiple evaluation services for 464 (unduplicated) children and adults. Each evaluation uses cognitive, achievement, visual-motor, attention, and executive function (self-awareness and control) assessments to identify the unique profile of strengths and weaknesses that impact a person’s learning. This information can be used to determine whether a student has a learning disability, ADHD, speech/language difficulties, or developmental delays. Specific accommodations are provided for the classroom as well as strategies to follow for learning success. Each evaluation incorporates current brain research. LinkED has given over 3,600 evaluations. To further address learning needs, LinkED offers dyslexia tutoring, speech therapy, aptitude testing for college and career (LinkED is a Highlands Ability Battery affiliate and gives CliftonStrengthsfinder), and educational consultations.

b) **Brain-Based Professional Development for Educators** - LinkED offers brain-based professional development for educators to improve their skills in teaching and understanding all learners in their classrooms, including those with learning differences and disabilities. One-day seminars for educator professional development have featured internationally and nationally-known educators and speakers such as Edward Hallowell, M.D., Eric Jensen, Don Wettrick, Dr. Ross Greene, Marcia Tate, Dr. Rebecca Isbell, Dave Burgess, George Couros, and Dr. Jean. During each summer for the past 17 years, LinkED has delivered the research-based Schools Attuned to All Kinds of Minds (SATAKOM) Professional Development Program to educators in north and central Texas. A three-day training session, SATAKOM teaches education professionals how to recognize, understand, and manage student differences in learning. SATAKOM immerses educators in the neurocognitive constructs of learning: language, attention, memory, neuromotor function, spatial ordering, temporal-sequential ordering, higher-order cognition, and social cognition. LinkED has trained more than 4,250 educators, who have touched the lives of thousands of students. Continuing Professional Education (CPE) units are offered for all professional development. LinkED maintains a website at www.link-ed.org and daily provides links to many articles on learning issues through its Facebook and Pinterest pages.

d) **Adult Services Program** – Adult Services serves the needs of adults for whom low-literacy is a barrier to education or employment. Adult Services works in partnership with community agencies to support individuals and to strengthen programs in Tarrant County by providing professional development, resources, instructional support, and assessment. In addition, LinkED works to serve adults in education and employment through strategic partnerships with public agencies such as Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County, Fort Worth Independent School District, and Tarrant County College District as well as community partnerships with the Tarrant Literacy Coalition and Literacy Connexus. These partnerships are dedicated to creating and/or expanding opportunities to provide direct services to adults who are struggling with learning or literacy issues. In FYE17 LinkED became certified as a pencil-and-paper HiSET (High School Equivalency Test) testing facility. The HiSET exam gives out-of-school youth and adults with identified

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learning disabilities the best opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and earn a state-issued high school equivalence (HSE) credential. The addition of LinkED as a preferred provider for the HiSET instrument is a reflection of our mission through the Tarrant County Adult Education and Literacy Consortium to assess and support adults with learning differences by providing an individualized or small group testing environment, extending testing time, and/or private reader services. Response from the community has been overwhelming.