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**Absolute Priority:** 2  
**Competitive Preference Priorities:** 1 - 4  
**Requested 5-year Total Award Amount:** \$8,718,525

**Project Description:**

The BEST (Belong, Engage, Support and Transform) teaching residency program at California State University, Chico (i.e., Chico State), a designated Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) in rural Northern California, aims to address the critical need for a diverse and effective educator workforce in high-need elementary schools. By offering comprehensive training and professional development in inclusive pedagogy, social emotional learning, trauma informed practices, along with the pursuit of the Healing Centered Engagement Practitioner certification, BEST will enhance educator effectiveness and student success. Collaborating with local schools and community organizations, BEST strengthens school- community partnerships. It serves as a scalable model for improving educational equity by placing a dual emphasis on the development of academic skills along with student and teacher well-being. The project goals are to: 1. Recruit, prepare, and support 60 pre-service candidates (Teacher Residents), particularly from underserved populations, to serve in high-need rural districts. 2. Prepare Teacher Residents to meet students' social, emotional, and educational needs by developing their expertise in inclusive pedagogy, social-emotional learning, and trauma-informed practices (i.e., Healing-Centered Engagement). 3. Improve the abilities of Mentor Teachers to support teacher residents to effectively use inclusive pedagogy, social-emotional learning, and trauma-informed practices in high-need schools. 4. Provide ongoing support that complements Teacher Residents' induction experiences during their first three years.

**Project Expected Outcomes:**

1. Graduates and mentor teachers will deliver high quality teaching that includes inclusive pedagogy, social emotional learning, trauma informed practices, and healing centered engagement that fosters a sense of belonging and inclusion for underserved students. 2. Graduates and mentor teachers will be part of an ongoing community of practice through the Healing Centered Engagement Practitioner certification. 3. Stronger partnerships between all partners will be created. 4. Student achievement improves across all subject areas and that student subgroup achievement gaps are narrowed. 5. Graduates will have a lower rate of attrition due to strategies learned in the program to prevent burnout.

**Project Special Features:** Deliver inclusive pedagogy, social emotional learning, trauma informed practices, and healing centered engagement for Teacher Residents and Mentor Teachers in the critical need area of elementary education in rural high-needs schools.

**Project Partners:**

The four district and nine public school partners are Palermo Union Elementary: Golden Hills Elementary and Helen M. Wilcox Elementary, Thermalito Union Elementary: Plumas Avenue Elementary, Poplar Avenue Elementary, and Sierra Avenue Elementary, Corning Union Elementary: Woodson Elementary, West Street Elementary, and Olive View Elementary, and Los Molinos Unified School District: Los Molinos Elementary School.

The partner counties include Butte County Office of Education and Tehama County Office of

Education. Cross campus partnerships include the College of Communication and Education, the School of Education; the College of Natural Sciences; and the Office of Graduate Studies.