

Education Innovation and Research Program (EIR) Project Abstract

Applicant Name: New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) Community School Districts 4/30 Consortium (Submitted by the City of New York Board of Education)

Project Title: Project REACH: Raising Engagement and Attendance through Community and Home-school partnerships

Type of Grant Requested: (select one) Early-Phase Mid-Phase Expansion

Absolute Priorities the Project Addresses: (select all that apply)

Absolute Priority 1-- Demonstrate a Rationale (Early), Moderate (Mid), Strong (Expansion)

Absolute Priority 2-- Field-Initiated Innovations—General

Absolute Priority 3-- Promoting STEM Education

Absolute Priority 4-- Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs

Absolute Priority 5-- Educator Recruitment and Retention

Competitive Preference Priorities the Project Addresses: (select all that apply)

Competitive Preference Priority 1— Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Implementers and Partners

Competitive Preference Priority 2— Addressing the Impact of COVID–19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty

Total number of students to be served by the project: 150

Grade level(s) to be served by the project: PreK-5

Definition of high-need students: The students at James Weldon Johnson, P.S. 112 Dutch Kills, and P.S. 076 William Hallet all meet several criteria designating them as being in high need. This includes being part of racial minority groups and historically underserved and underrepresented populations, and attending schools with high student poverty rates, low state test scores, and high rates of chronic absenteeism.

Brief description of project activities: Project REACH aims to improve student attendance through home visits, and community mapping, academic success academies, and community resource fairs. Additionally, hired staff and school leadership staff will participate in professional learning and coaching sessions and collaborate with community-based organizations to offer support services.

Summary of project objectives and expected outcomes: Project REACH aims to enhance student attendance in NYC schools by reducing chronic absenteeism, improving family engagement, and supporting students with targeted interventions. The program expects to achieve a 20% increase in attendance rates for the treatment group annually. Additional goals include better academic performance, social-emotional skills, reduced unexcused absences and tardiness, lower dropout rates, and higher grade promotion rates, with continuous training and professional development for ASAs and school attendance teams to sustain these improvements.

Summary of how the project is innovative: Project REACH will employ full-time Attendance Success Advocates (ASAs) through CBO partners to conduct home visits and family engagement activities, fostering trust and sustained attendance improvements. This differs from the usual one-time home visits by existing school staff. Additionally, the project innovates by integrating community mapping and canvassing into needs assessments and hosting community resource fairs for families.

Other studies related to the proposed project: Similar studies include research by Balfanz and Byrnes (2013), which evaluated the NYC Mayor’s Interagency Task Force on Chronic Absenteeism and found improvements in school retention and GPA for students who overcame chronic absenteeism. A study by the Center for Connecticut Education Research Collaboration (2022) assessed an intervention that showed a significant increase in attendance rates for participating students.

Proposed implementation sites: 04M057 - James Weldon Johnson, 30Q112 - P.S. 112 Dutch Kills, 30Q076 - P.S. 076 William Hallet

Organizations partnering with this project: NYCPS Office of Community Supports and Wellness, NYCPS LEA Consortium Community School Districts 4 and 30, three highest needs school partners (04M057, 30Q112, and 30Q076), and CBO Partners Zone 126, and Roads to Success.