



**Raising Engagement and Attendance through Community Home-school partnerships
(Project REACH)**

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Project REACH (Raising Engagement and Attendance through Community Home-school partnerships)

Project REACH is an innovative initiative rooted in the proven framework of Every Student Every Day Community Schools initiative, launched by New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) in 2014. Born from a strategic collaboration with the Chronic Absenteeism Task Force, Project REACH is poised to tackle chronic absenteeism head-on and transform educational outcomes for high-needs students in grades PreK-1. In alignment with the White House 2024 Student Achievement Agenda, Project REACH is at the forefront of efforts to reduce chronic absenteeism and elevate educational excellence. It meets the **EIR Early Phase Absolute Priorities (AP) 1 and 2**, focusing on demonstrating a rationale and pioneering innovations that enhance student achievement and attainment. Furthermore, it aligns with **Competitive Preference Priorities (CPP) 1 and 2** by promoting equity in educational resources and addressing the impacts of COVID-19. Project REACH will demonstrate promising early-phase strategies to re-engage high-needs chronically absent students in NYC through a comprehensive, evidence-based approach that leverages strategic partnerships between elementary schools and local community-based organizations (CBOs) to provide a holistic approach to chronic absenteeism in the early grades through home visits,¹²³ weekly data monitoring, personalized interventions, coordinated school-wide attendance efforts, academic interventions, and family-community connections. Our comprehensive plan integrates family-community connections and targeted academic support, ensuring that each child receives the personalized attention they need to thrive. With Project REACH, we are not just addressing absenteeism—we are creating a pathway to educational excellence and transforming the future for our most vulnerable students.

Project REACH is a partnership between the New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) Consortium of LEAs inclusive of New York City Community School Districts (CSDs) 4 and 30; NYCPS Attendance, Research, and Innovation (ARI) within the Office of Community Supports and Wellness

(OCSW); three elementary schools: 04M057, 30Q076, and 30Q112; and two CBOs: Roads to Success and Zone 126. Building on the transformative efforts of the NYC Mayor’s Interagency Task Force on Chronic Absenteeism and School Attendance, established a decade ago, Project REACH seeks to revolutionize student re-engagement by addressing chronic absenteeism and fostering academic re-engagement.⁴ What sets Project REACH apart is its novel approach of embedding full-time CBO personnel, known as Attendance Success Advocates (ASAs), directly within local school communities. This model facilitates sustained, collaborative professional learning opportunities for both ASAs and school-based Attendance Teams (ATs), promoting dynamic, continuous learning communities of practice. Working in partnership with minority-serving institutions serving underrepresented groups to promote equity in student access to educational opportunities, the NYCPS LEA Consortium seeks to address the deep impacts of COVID-19 on students, specifically high-needs student populations disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, defined as economically disadvantaged (low SES), persons of color (POC), students in temporary housing (STH), students receiving English language services (ELL), and/or students with disabilities (SWD).

A. SIGNIFICANCE

A.1 Chronic Absenteeism: Barriers to Academic Success. Chronic absenteeism, typically defined as students missing at least 10% of the school year, plagues our school systems nationwide, impacting more than 10 million students each year.⁵⁶⁷ Post-pandemic approximately one third of students are chronically absent in the United States.⁸ Chronic absenteeism is a leading indicator of lower academic performance and lower graduation rates as well as a sign of increased disciplinary issues and disengagement from school.⁹¹⁰¹¹¹² Poor attendance is a better predictor of whether students will finish high school than test scores, and failing to graduate high school strongly correlates to poor health, financial instability, and involvement with the criminal justice system.¹³¹⁴ With one in three students in America at risk of failing

school, chronic absenteeism presents an essential call to action for education professionals to intervene.¹⁵

In high-needs communities impacted by poverty and racial segregation, chronic absenteeism rates in schools are historically much higher, and the pandemic has widened those divides along class and racial lines in schools.¹⁶ Absenteeism has a long-lasting impact on students, persisting into adulthood. Without interrupting these chronic absenteeism trends in high-needs communities, the harmful impacts of absenteeism will continue disproportionately affecting students of color, who are statistically more likely to live in poverty and have chronic health conditions or disabilities, which compound the effects of chronic absenteeism.¹⁷

New York City (NYC) historically has faced absenteeism rates above the national average.¹⁸ Before the pandemic NYCPS's chronic absenteeism rate was 26.5% while the national average was 16.2%.¹⁹ By the 2021-2022 school year, NYCPS chronic absenteeism rates had risen to 40% across the system, and in some higher-needs districts the chronic absenteeism rate approached 60%.²⁰ While chronic absenteeism rates have begun to dip (4% lower in 2023 in NYCPS), they are still above the national average and significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels, impacting more than 353,000 children in NYC alone.²¹²²

Recent migration trends within the U.S. have ushered in waves of newly arrived families to New York City seeking asylum who primarily reside in the NYC shelter system and rely on schools and local CBOs to access basic necessities such as food, hygiene, clothing, counseling, and health and legal services. NYC's Project Open Arms²³ was announced in 2022 to provide wraparound services for new students entering the public school system, including academic, social-emotional, and language-access supports while their families resettled and applied for asylum in the U.S. The NYCPS STH (students in temporary housing) population has grown exponentially in recent years with uneven distribution among schools, some receiving substantial increases in the last two years of new students enrolling with STH

status—over new 36,000 STH-status students from July 2022-March 2024.²⁴ The STH population faces severe barriers to regular attendance with over 70% of STH students chronically absent in 2023.²⁵

A.2 Chronic Absenteeism: NYC School Current Practices and Context. As the largest public school district in the nation, NYCPS has led the charge for over a decade to reverse national chronic absenteeism trends with evidence-based broad strategies (Appendix J.1) that encourage and support students to attend school every day.^{26,27} The NYCPS community schools strategy seeks to address the needs of students, families, and communities by providing a range of services and supports in and outside of school, working in partnership with lead CBO partners to create welcoming, supportive environments that support the whole child and promote academic success, as well as social and emotional well-being. The Community Schools Initiative began in 2024 with 45 schools (21,000 students), expanding to 421 schools (191,000 students) by 2023. A 2020 study published by RAND found that the NYCPS Community Schools strategy positively impacted student attendance across all school types. Additionally, the strategy significantly improved on-time grade progression for elementary and middle school students.²⁸ The NYCPS community schools' strategy is well-aligned to the IES-recommended strategies to address chronic absenteeism in terms of broader practices—creating safe, inclusive environments; engaging families; and providing wraparound services—as well as one specific intervention and strategies reviewed by the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC): early warning systems.²⁹

A.3 Project REACH: A Promising Innovation. Project REACH is an innovative intervention designed to transform student attendance and academic performance by integrating proven strategies inspired by the community school model and refined through the Every Student Every Day initiative. The project's main objective is to engage families actively in their children's educational journey to boost attendance rates and enhance academic outcomes. In light of the profound impact of the pandemic, there is an urgent

need to forge a direct partnership between the community and schools to combat the growing issue of chronic absenteeism within NYCPS. This collaborative approach not only underscores the critical importance of family involvement but also highlights the indispensable role of robust home-school connections in fostering student success and well-being. By refining data-driven attendance monitoring practices at the school level, Project REACH is poised to drive improvements in student attendance and academic outcomes while cultivating a "culture of attendance" essential for student achievement.³⁰³¹ To implement this initiative effectively, ASAs will dedicate their efforts full-time in three schools with notable levels of chronic absenteeism, ensuring the targeted delivery of Project REACH to elementary school students in need. Project REACH is field-tested, evidence-based, and deploys WWC recommended strategies to address chronic absenteeism: Early Warning Systems,³²³³ Check and Connect,³⁴³⁵³⁶³⁷ and customized interventions to address root causes of absenteeism.³⁸

Submitted under **EIR Early Phase APs 1 and 2** and **CPPs 1 and 2**, NYCPS LEA Consortium is proposing to implement Project REACH in three NYC schools across two CSDs (4 and 30) and two boroughs (Manhattan, Queens) in to serve high-needs students, defined as low SES, POC, STH, ELL, SWD. Project REACH addresses exiting service gaps in the following ways:

1. **Recruits and trains dedicated staff as ASAs** whose sole responsibility is to implement Project REACH with a group of 25 students at-risk for chronic absenteeism (Y2-Y4). ASAs receive intensive onboarding training and quarterly training with NYCPS Central ARI, OCSW staff (Appendices J.1, J.2, J.3). ASAs will be supervised by their CBO supervisor and work closely with the Project Manager and school-based attendance team.
2. **Professional development and coaching of ASAs and Attendance Teams (ATs)** will focus on shifting from truancy to fostering re-engagement and connection. Training will cover effective home visits, community asset mapping, and needs-assessments (see App. J.5) to identify local

resources and understand the specific needs of students and families. ASAs and ATs will use the *Insight* attendance tool and apply Every Student Every Day strategies, including family outreach, goal setting, and daily checks. They will also receive training on supporting special populations, such as newly arrived students, those in temporary housing (STH), foster care, English language learners (ELL), and students with disabilities (SWD).

3. **ASA program delivery** for students that establishes home visit practices at each school. ASAs will conduct at least 4 home visits for each family each year, as documented in AT PDSA cycles to ensure continuous improvement. ATs at each school will use the *Insight* attendance tool to monitor attendance weekly through a continuous learning approach (App. J.2) to inform attendance intervention strategies and create Student and Family Outreach Plans for each of the ASA's students. ASAs will also assess the feasibility of walking school bus programs, where they pick up a designated group of students along a set route and schedule, which if implemented, can help remove significant barriers to attendance.
4. **Academic interventions** for Project REACH will include ELA and Math Success Academies in the fall and spring, led by licensed teachers. These academies will provide targeted instruction to address individual student needs in reading, writing, and math through small group or one-on-one sessions. Regular assessments will guide instruction and track progress, ensuring effective support and improvement for all participants.
5. **Family outreach** will be conducted by ASAs through home visits and the creation of Student and Family Outreach Plans each year for each student in the program to build a culture of attendance for students, families, and the school community. ASAs will create community asset maps at the start of the program (Y1) and update them annually through community canvassing. ASAs will leverage these community outreach efforts to better coordinate outside services for referral by school staff to

families, specifically by creating an annual Community Resource Event with Project REACH families invited as guests for a community celebration held at the school with booths for all community partners on the asset maps to attend and connect directly with families. At the Community Resource Fairs, families will enjoy food, giveaways, information for basic needs such as access to food, legal assistance, mental health support, and housing.

6. **Evaluation of Project REACH** will include formative, implementation, and outcome evaluation conducted by L&G Research and Evaluation Consulting. A formative evaluation will take place in Y1, Process and Outcome Evaluations in Y2-Y4. Through a participatory, feedback-driven approach, L&G will work closely with the PD/PM to assess the implementation and impact of Project REACH. The project will systematically target and monitor progress against GPRA and Program Measures. The proposed evaluation plan is rigorous, theory-driven, and thorough while also practice-based, feasible, and appropriate to assess project goals and objectives.

A.4 Gaps in the Literature and Evidence Base. Project REACH aims to fill critical gaps in the literature and evidence base of the WWC by concentrating on chronic absenteeism strategies that are tailored to enhance attendance, academic performance, and family empowerment outcomes for high-needs populations in urban school settings. The current body of evidence within the WWC lacks comprehensive information on the efficacy of family engagement as a significant driver of academic success. While research in this specific area is limited in the WWC repository, it is widely acknowledged that involving families is a key component in fostering student achievement and success. Within the WWC, there are only two studies that examine absenteeism,³⁹ both yielding uncertain effects. Existing literature predominantly focuses on preventing dropouts and addressing truancy issues, whereas Project REACH positions itself within the contemporary post-pandemic landscape where students and families face substantial structural barriers in accessing education daily. Project REACH distinguishes itself by

emphasizing the establishment of a deeper home-school partnership embedded within a community-assets mapping approach, which is truly innovative. The focus of Project REACH builds upon recent research that underscores the positive impact of home visits in re-engaging families with the school system post-pandemic, thereby boosting school involvement and attendance rates.⁴⁰

A.5 Project Potential, Scalability, Sustainability, and Impact. Project REACH has the potential to impact up to 1,000,000 students across the NYCPS system. Building on the Every Student Every Day Initiative (Appendix J.1), which began in 2014, Project REACH is poised for expansion beyond the initial grant period. The anticipated improvements in student attendance from its implementation in high-needs communities highlight the initiative’s scalability to all NYCPS schools. NYCPS, a leader in public education reform, will use insights from Project REACH to influence absenteeism practices in other urban districts. The project incorporates key strategies from the Every Student Every Day model—home visits, personalized interventions, and community resource connections—focusing on building sustainable capacity within school staff. The initiative will proceed through research phases that include pilot testing and data collection, followed by transitioning successful strategies to school-based Attendance Teams (ATs) for long-term implementation. Dissemination efforts will include public relations, social media, and presentations at education conferences to promote widespread adoption and continuous improvement in attendance practices.

B. QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN Project REACH will target 450 high-needs students over three years in grades PreK-1 identified as chronically absent across three public schools in CSDs 4 and 30 in Manhattan and Queens. NYCPS’ ARI team possesses the necessary infrastructure and controls to support fiscal, contractual, and programmatic success, as well as years of experience effectively partnering with these two LEAs to deliver responsive and innovative programs, grounded in a shared commitment to supporting historically underserved communities. The partner schools for Project

REACH include James Weldon Johnson (04M057) in CSD 4 and P.S. 112 Dutch Kills (30Q112) and P.S. 076 William Hallet (30Q076) in CSD 30.

The students at 04M057, 30Q112, and 30Q076 all meet several criteria qualifying them as being in high need. This includes being part of racial minority groups and historically underserved and underrepresented populations; and attending schools in districts with high poverty rates, and schools which are underperforming and have high rates of chronic absenteeism. Table 1 provides a visual representation of relevant demographics⁴¹ for NYCPS overall, each LEA (district), and each school. Indicators include percentages of students in poverty, students of color (SOC), English Language Learners (ELL), Students with Disabilities (SWD), students in temporary housing (STH),⁴² and rates of chronic absenteeism (CA),⁴³ defined as missing 10 percent of school days within one academic year for any reason.

Table 1. LEA Demographics

LEA(s)	Students	Poverty%	SOC%	STH%	ELL%	SWD%	CA%
NYCPS	937,118	73%	85%	9%	14%	21%	36%
CSD 4	10,148	82%	94%	12%	9%	26%	43%
04M057	477	92%	99%	20%	15%	30%	57%
CSD 30	33,281	67%	82%	9%	19%	15%	33%
30Q076	333	88%	87%	12%	16%	36%	59%
30Q112	361	86%	93%	22%	31%	20%	56%

Each of the three schools will have 50 students each who participate in Project REACH, defined as a one-year program (Grant Years 2-4), as depicted in Table 2. Data collection for the quasi-experimental design begins in Year 2 of the program implementation and continues in Years 3 and 4, for a total of three years of comparative data. At each of the three schools, *students who were chronically absent (CA) in the prior school year within the range of attending school (60-90%)* will be matched and assigned to treatment or business-as-usual (BAU) groups.

Table 2. Project REACH QED Student Treatment Groups Assignment by School

Schools	CA Assignment Y2	CA Assignment Y3	CA Assignment Y4
04M057	50 students	50 students	50 students
30Q076	50 students	50 students	50 students
30Q112	50 students	50 students	50 students
Total #	150 Total Students Y2	150 Total Students Y3	150 Total Students Y4

B.1. Conceptual Framework. The logic model in Appendix G depicts the conceptual framework for Project REACH. Inputs provided by the grant and matching funds will allow Project REACH implementation to hire one dedicated, full-time Project Manager and 6 full-time ASAs (2 at each school)—all supported by the NYCPS ARI, OCSW team, leadership at each public school, committed CBO partners, and an expert, external evaluator. Together, this robust team will utilize strengths-based approaches to support students and families of chronically absent students to understand and address barriers to school attendance and success. Further details about each key stakeholder group are outlined in Section D.

Activities for Project REACH will be carried out over three phases: planning, implementation, and post-implementation evaluation. The Planning Phase will begin Y1 (January-June 2025), inclusive of finalizing research protocols and IRB approval, completing a Y1 fidelity check, hiring the Project Manager and ASAs, recruiting students for evaluation from each school, CBO staff activation in school communities, creating community-asset maps, setting up team access to *Insight* data tool, ordering supplies, and scheduling implementation phase trainings, partnership meetings, and evaluation assessment timeline. The Implementation Phase will last Y2-Y4 (August 2025-June 20, 2028) with three years of implementation at 3 school sites: 1) ASA and AT training in Project REACH techniques quarterly for ASAs and ATs jointly (facilitated by NYCPS ARI, OCSW); 2) ASA program delivery for students (detailed *Section A.3*), 3) family outreach, and 4) formative evaluation. The Post-Implementation Evaluation Phase will take place in Y5 (July 2028-June 2029) and L&G’s formal evaluation of the project described in *Section E* as well as dissemination of findings.

B.3. Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes. Project REACH’s measurable goals, objective, and outcomes are included in Exhibit 1 from Appendix J.5 Project REACH focuses on four goal areas: 1) data-driven attendance monitoring practices, 2) better attendance for chronically absent students, 3) academic attainment and achievement for high-needs students, and 4) family empowerment.

Project REACH will leverage CBOs who are embedded in the school communities selected for the study, serving as strategic partners and key stakeholders of Project REACH. Partner CBOs include: Roads to Success and Zone 126. In Y1 CBOs will orient ASAs to the broader ecosystem of supports available in the school community, supporting ASAs to attend key school community events, shadowing students, and gathering community resources critical for supporting the specific demographic needs of students at each school. Each CBO partner will hire 2 full-time ASAs (Appendix J.4) per school site. In Y2, starting in the summer, ASAs will work year-round providing the same level of support over the summer as during the school year. ASAs will conduct outreach and home visits for students identified for summer intervention and engage in conversations with them and their families about the previous year’s absences, the benefits of regular attendance, barriers to attendance and resources to remove barriers, and goal setting for the upcoming school year. Advocates will continue to meet weekly with school staff working over the summer to engage in PDSA cycles for the students identified for summer intervention.

As active members of their school ATs, ASAs will meet with ATs weekly to support implementing the Project REACH by:

- Regularly reviewing and analyzing attendance data to identify students who are chronically absent and would benefit from Project REACH.
- Developing and implementing attendance improvement plans through the PDSA cycle (App. J.3). This will include setting specific, achievable goals for improving attendance and monitoring progress in partnership with the key stakeholders including L&G, based on the goals and

objectives of the project, and tailored to the unique needs of the students. The PDSA cycle includes four stages: The Plan stage includes reviewing objectives, making predictions, confirming plans to carry out the cycle (i.e. defining who, what, where, and when), and planning for data collection. The Do stage includes carrying out the plan, documenting observations, and recording data. The Study stage allows for analysis of data, comparing results to predictions, and summarizing what was learned. The Act stage asks what changes need to be made before implementing the next cycle. Utilizing this model will allow for formal and continued reflection and improvement to ensure the program is continuously aligned to the project goals and objectives and sufficiently and appropriately meeting the needs of the target populations.

- Providing relevant updates to the school attendance team regarding student progress and barriers to attendance discovered during student engagement sessions.

ASAs will conduct at least four home visits per year with each family during the implementation phase (Y2-4). As an additional core intervention activity, ASAs will participate in PDSA cycles for their students in partnership with the AT, completed in four-week cycles. ASAs will identify barriers to attendance and connect students to supports and interventions in a coordinated manner by creating Student and Family Outreach Plans. These plans will be supported by the process of **community asset-mapping** and **canvassing** led by ASAs each year. ASAs will canvass the community surrounding their assigned school sites to identify relationships and services that are in place beyond the four walls of the school building. Community supports and services might include access to food, legal assistance, mental health support, children and youth services, health and wellness, community activities and resources such as cultural institutions, family services, adult education services, and housing. To do this successfully, ASAs will utilize Community Mapping checklists developed based on research from the National Coalition for Community Schools, and The Citizens Committee for Children. This aspect of the proposed

project is innovative and distinctive with such a focused effort to connect families to community resources, culminating with yearly community resource fairs at each site where families can access food, giveaways, free legal assistance, and connect with a host of agencies on the community-asset map for each school.

Goal 1 – Attendance Team capacity building will be supported by regular training and coaching (Y2-Y4) for school ATs at all three schools. ATs typically include the principal (or their designee), district Attendance Teacher, Parent Coordinator, guidance counselors and social workers, and Community School Directors (in Community Schools). Quarterly training for ATs will be provided by NYCPS ARI, OCSW resulting in the school ATs’ ability to effectively monitor and analyze attendance data on a weekly basis using the *Insight* data tool and four-week AP2 cycles to monitor and ideate personalized interventions for each student. Training will also engage ATs and ASAs in learning about research-based chronic absenteeism strategies, including: PDSA cycles, home visits, community-asset mapping and canvassing, and community resource fairs, and working with vulnerable populations.

Goal 2 – Better attendance for chronically absent students will be facilitated through the AT capacity building and the work of ASAs with home visits and weekly attendance checks, resulting in students increasing the amount of time in school, having higher attendance and a reduction in chronic absenteeism, unexcused absences, and tardiness. ASAs will be able to monitor the attendance patterns of students in the treatment group and work with the AT to develop individualized interventions to address the root causes of student chronic absenteeism, tailoring to student need based on family SES, asylum status, temporary housing status, disability, and/or language barriers.

Goals 2 and 3 (academic attainment and achievement for high-needs students) go hand in hand; as ASAs monitor and support improved attendance trends for students flagged for chronic absenteeism, they use a strengths-based approach to highlight attendance milestones with mentees and

advocate for their students within the school community to successfully connect with faculty, peers, and CBO staff to access tutoring, academic recovery, and afterschool enrichment opportunities as they re-engage at school. Project REACH participants will also participate in ELA and Math Success Academies each year in the fall and spring with licensed teachers. Project REACH will serve as a critical bridge to academic success by helping students to stay in school, be promoted to the next grade on-time, increase their GPAs and content area grades, and report higher academic motivation and engagement. Students with ELL and SWD status in particular benefit from the ASA's approaches to re-engaging students academically with the Success Academies.

Goal 4 – Family empowerment is critical to Project REACH as ASAs develop student and family community outreach plans each year to strategically build a “culture of attendance” across home and school. ASAs visit student homes at least four times per year to build awareness around attendance, build trusting relationships, and build a stronger partnership between parents and the school community. Home visits will support trust and relationship building as the ASAs will serve as a consistent, culturally responsive, trustworthy source of support for the students and their families. ASAs work to empower and connect families with resources and supports to sustain student engagement and achievement through community-asset mapping, canvassing, and organizing the resource fairs each year. Family engagement includes referrals to support services for basic needs, such as access to food, legal assistance, mental health support, and housing to minimize attendance barriers. These activities are essential for high-needs STH, ELL, and low SES populations.

C. KEY PERSONNEL

C1. Employing persons from underrepresented groups. The NYCPS's commitment to diversity is reinforced by workplace policies, including the Non-Discrimination Policy – Chancellor's Regulation A-830, which upholds principles of equal employment opportunity for all employees and applicants. To

further this commitment, Project REACH will implement targeted recruitment strategies to attract a diverse pool of candidates. This will include actively promoting job openings through community-based organizations and networks that serve culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse groups. Recruitment efforts will focus on hiring individuals from the communities we aim to support, leveraging NYCPS's established partnerships with local schools and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). These partners possess deep connections within the communities, ensuring that recruitment efforts are both effective and reflective of the community's diversity. By embedding these practices into our hiring processes, Project REACH aims to create a workforce that not only mirrors the community but also brings valuable perspectives to enhance the program's impact.

C2. Qualifications of Key Project Personnel

Program Key Personnel. **Project Manager (One FTE, To Be Hired):** NYCPS will hire one full-time Project Manager (PM) to oversee and manage all aspects of implementation of Project REACH. Once hired and onboarded, the PM will work closely with the school principals and CBO leadership, facilitating best practice sharing, community building, and professional development for all partners, and will also be responsible for developing tools and materials to support attendance improvement. Key qualifications for this role will include a baccalaureate degree with two years of relevant community work experience; a high school diploma with six years of relevant experience; or equivalent education and experience, with a minimum of one year in community work. Preferred qualifications will include knowledge of NYCPS policies on student attendance, proficiency in NYCPS data systems, understanding of the diverse needs of NYC students, ability to work collaboratively and strategically, and strong computer skills. **ASAs (6 FTEs; To Be Hired):** NYCPS will hire six full-time Attendance Success Advocates (ASAs) upon being awarded funding for this project. NYCPS will assign two ASAs per school site. ASAs will play a critical role in supporting the implementation of the program at their

respective schools. They will plan and facilitate key program activities such as home visits, family engagement activities and community resource fairs; conduct community mapping and canvassing; and serve as active participants on their schools' attendance teams. ASAs will also support continuous improvement by participating in ongoing PDSA cycles, continuously evaluating and adjusting intervention strategies based on student progress and ensuring sustained improvements in attendance. Key training and qualifications of individuals hired for this role will include: a Bachelor's degree in education, counseling, social work, or a related field required; at least 2 years of experience working with young children and families from diverse backgrounds, including immigrant families; fluency in Spanish or other primary languages spoken in the communities we will serve is highly desirable; experience in conflict resolution, crisis counseling, and de-escalation strategies; strong background in developing programs, particularly in the context of educational or community settings; demonstrated cultural sensitivity and the ability to work effectively with families from diverse cultural backgrounds; strong organizational skills, with the ability to manage multiple tasks and priorities effectively; and excellent written and verbal communication skills. The ability to work both independently and as part of a collaborative team will be important as well, and all hired staff will meet DOE fingerprinting clearance requirements.

Supervisory Key Personnel. Project Director: [REDACTED], MPA, Director of Attendance Improvement, NYCPS, will supervise the Project Manager and provide oversight for the successful implementation of the project from start to finish. [REDACTED] is a highly experienced education professional with extensive expertise in project management, strategic planning, and community engagement. In her current role, she has successfully expanded attendance improvement strategies from 300 to over 1600 schools. She has experience developing policies, coordinating professional learning conferences, and providing leadership in best practices for attendance, student engagement, and dropout prevention.

██████████, Esq., Executive Director of Attendance, Research, and Innovation, Office of Community Supports and Wellness, NYCPS, will provide additional support and oversight for Project REACH. ██████████ is a results-driven executive with extensive experience in educational project and program management, making her well-suited to oversee a large-scale innovative attendance improvement program. Her qualifications include leadership in attendance and innovation, policy and compliance, professional development, program and project management, community engagement and stakeholder collaboration, and legal and educational expertise. In her current role, ██████████ leads teams to set citywide policies for attendance and chronic absenteeism. She organizes partnerships, leads research initiatives, and pioneers innovative solutions to improve student attendance. **Leadership staff at community-based partner organizations** (Zone 126 and Roads to Success) will supervise the ASAs. These leaders bring a wealth of experience and qualifications that will contribute to the success of the ASAs and Project REACH overall, including extensive experience working with NYCPS, managing youth development and family engagement programs, and developing and implementing SEL-based curricula.

Research and Evaluation Key Personnel. Project Evaluator: L&G Research and Evaluation Consulting, Inc. (L&G) is a NYS and NYC certified M/WBE business co-founded by ██████████ ██████████, CEO of L&G, who will serve as Lead Evaluator. ██████████ has over 16 years of experience directing research and evaluation studies in education at the local, state, and federal levels. She has directed development of study designs employing mixed methods, instrument design, multi-site data collection, and reporting on large-scale data sets using various statistical and interpretative methods. ██████████ is supported in all projects by ██████████, Co-Founder and President of L&G, and ██████████, Senior Director of Research and Evaluation, and a team of highly trained, highly qualified evaluators. ██████████ has over 15 years of experience in applied quantitative and

qualitative research methodologies, and is an expert in directing all phases of program evaluations across diverse settings, developing theory of change and logic models, designing data collection instruments and databases, performing advanced statistical analyses, and more. [REDACTED] is a sociologist of education with over 18 years of experience in youth development and community partnerships and significant expertise in research and evaluation.

D. MANAGEMENT PLAN

The management structure of Project REACH operates under the auspices of the NYCPS ARI, OCSW, who will hire and supervise a highly qualified and competent PM. The plan builds upon the NYCPS' six decades of experience managing multiyear contracts from New York State and the federal government. Being part of the NYC Department of Education, the NYCPS' ARI team already possesses the necessary infrastructure and controls in place to support fiscal, contractual, and programmatic success for Project REACH. Further, our carefully selected strategic partnerships will help ensure project success. The key stakeholders for Project REACH include: NYCPS: [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] of NYCPS Attendance Improvement Team will provide oversight for Project REACH from start to finish. Together with CBO and school partners, they will finalize the job descriptions and begin recruitment of the PM by the end of the second month of Year 1 (October 2024). They will also oversee the finalization of job descriptions and hiring of the six ASAs. For the first six months of the project, between January 2025 and April 2025, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] will hire and onboard the PM. Throughout year 1, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] will conduct weekly check-ins with the PM. As described in Section C above, [REDACTED] will supervise the PM. The PM will be housed in the same office as [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. This will allow for easy and consistent communication. In years 2-5, the management plan for this role will transition to biweekly in-person check-ins and monthly team meetings, to be held in person but which can be held virtually if needed, to discuss project progress and address any issues. The PM will be in communication with all school principals and the ASA

Supervisors at each CBO partner. The PM will be primarily responsible for the smooth and successful implementation of the project and help ensure that the program meets all grant requirements and is in line with the proposed project design and all goals and objectives. Once the PM has been fully onboarded and is functioning in their role, they will be responsible for elevating any programmatic issues that may arise to [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] will help to troubleshoot and loop in any other key partners as necessary.

Attendance Teams (ATs): Under the direction of the principals at 04M057, 30Q112, and 30Q076, the AT at each school will meet weekly, in person, at the school site. AT members lead the attendance improvement work at every school. ATs are composed of school leadership (e.g. Principal and Assistant Principal), guidance counselors and social workers, teachers, community partners, parent coordinators, staff that support students in temporary housing and foster care, and anyone else that works to improve attendance at the school (e.g. paraprofessionals). ASAs will become key members of these teams. **CBO**

Partners: Each CBO partner (Roads to Success and Zone 126) will hire, house, and supervise the ASAs. The ASA Supervisors will be present at all key stakeholder meetings throughout all phases of the program. **L&G Evaluation Team:** Serving as the expert, external evaluator of Project REACH will support NYCPS with all critical components of the evaluation process. [REDACTED] and her team will

meet with the PM, ASAs, and their supervisors biweekly for least one hour each time during the project planning period, and at least once monthly for one hour each time through the remainder of the project. L&G will support the PM and their supervisors in meeting all grant requirements, ensuring fidelity, and engaging in continuous improvement to ensure the project continues to meet all goals and objectives.

D.1. Project Completion Within Budget: NYCPS designed the Project REACH budget to be modest while covering all essential expenses for a successful program. The budget reflects the inclusion of sufficient personnel for successful implementation, offers competitive salaries for all staff positions to be hired from the communities we are aiming to serve, and allocates sufficient funds for a robust program

evaluation. We have included other necessary components as well such as funding for training for all program staff and travel to conferences as mandated by the U.S. DOE. **Project Completion on Time:** NYCPS LEA Consortium, in collaboration with its partners including L&G, created the timeline for Project REACH based on their years of experience as referenced above, and to allow for adequate time for each stage of the project to be completed. We have carefully considered each essential project component, including a rigorous evaluation process to occur throughout the length of the five-year grant. One important consideration was the selection of Every Student Every Day and PDSA cycles for program implementation, which have proven to be a successful model across the NYCPS. Utilizing this model will allow for continuous improvement as well as the effective delivery of core program activities.

E. QUALITY OF PROJECT EVALUATION

The evaluation will be conducted externally by L&G Research and Evaluation Consulting (L&G), a national, independent firm that evaluates evidence-based projects serving high-need communities. L&G has been evaluating NYCPS programs for over 15 years and has extensive expertise with multi-systemic educational initiatives aimed at improving instructional practices, school climate, and student achievement. L&G's independent evaluation is tailored to an early-phase EIR grant and will include formative, implementation, cost and impact analyses to address evaluation questions that prioritize the Standards for Excellence in Education Research (SEER; <https://ies.ed.gov/seer/>). Project REACH is grounded in the well-established CIPP (**Context – Input – Process – Product**) evaluation model (Stufflebeam, 2003), and this evaluation framework is fully aligned with the logic model. CIPP creates a rigorous framework for program evaluation before, during, and after implementation via three interconnected evaluations (**formative, process, and outcome**) in full alignment with established goals and objectives. All three processes are necessary to make judgments about the effectiveness of Project REACH. Table 3 below provides a summary of our evaluation methodology.

Table 3: Project REACH Evaluation Model

Context Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · During context evaluation, formative evaluation methods will be used to develop and refine the intervention before implementing it fully with the priority population. · Diagnostic system-level information will also be collected, such as strategy feasibility, perceived utility of the intervention, anticipated stakeholder buy-in, and any other contextual factors that might impact implementation. · Each contextual factor will be evaluated for its likelihood of 1) being a potential barrier (or facilitator) to implementation; or 2) having sufficient variation across the units of analysis (e.g., students). · Includes a demographic profile of students in the intervention and comparison groups each year, characteristics of their classrooms, information on prior exposure that any participant has with home visits, and technological resources available to assist with attendance monitoring · Provides insight into the environment associated with implemented project activities - homes and schools - and as such, can be useful when considering issues of program improvement, scalability, comparability, and sustainability.
Input Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Focuses on program planning, stakeholder engagement, and identification of suitable strategies for program execution. · Provides a context for how fiscal and personnel resources will be allocated within Project REACH to support both program objectives and GPRA goal attainment. Such data will further inform the need for program improvement and sustainability of the project.
Process Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Used to gather information during the implementation of Project REACH. It concentrates on the extent to which: a) project activities are delivered as expected; b) project activities involve the types/numbers of participants targeted, and 3) the project observes the established timeline for the delivery of activities. · Used to measure how the participants receive the intervention.
Product Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Measures the degree to which targeted outcomes were achieved for both teachers and students.

Thus, we will conduct four studies across the grant’s five years: 1) **Formative Evaluation** during the program development phase (Years 1–2) to give program developers iterative feedback that supports planning, implementation, and improvement; 2) **Implementation Evaluation focused on fidelity to the model** (Years 2–4) to determine if the program is meeting implementation objectives based on tracking a predetermined set of program activities and outputs specified in the logic model (Appendix G); 3) **Cost Analysis and Cost Effectiveness** study using the ingredients method (Levin et al., 2017) to support sustainability and scalability and to understand how resources may be directed to achieve maximum benefit; 4) **Impact Evaluation** (Years 2–4) to assess confirmatory and exploratory research questions that determine program’s effects on students, parents, and educators, incorporating multi-level modeling and moderation and mediation analysis techniques.

E.1. Methods of Evaluation Produce Evidence of Effectiveness that Meets WWC Standards. The evaluation protocol for Project REACH was developed after careful consideration of the *WWC Review Protocol for Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools Practice Guide Version 3.0 (September 2017)*, the only WWC review protocol designed to help students stay in school, progress in school, and/or complete school. WWC reviewed a study that employed Success Mentoring to reduce chronic absenteeism in NYC public schools (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2013), suggesting that the WWC does evaluate research on interventions aimed at reducing chronic absenteeism, even if there isn't a dedicated protocol for this specific issue. Our evaluation methodology is fully consistent with the *WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook (version 5.0)* and *Institute of Education Sciences* recommended strategies for designing and executing rigorous quasi-experimental studies yielding moderate evidence of effectiveness. **E1.1. Evaluation Design.** The impact study will examine the effects of Project REACH on outcomes for 150 students per treatment year in comparison with 150 business-as-usual peers recruited from 3 NYC schools spanning grades PreK through 5^h. A nonequivalent control group switching replication with intervention removal design was chosen for Project REACH for its high validity among quasi-experimental designs with post-test comparisons, controlling for pre-test data. Our design meets WWC standards with reservation (WWC, 2022). In this design, the intervention students will be compared with waitlisted students who will receive the intervention the following program year. One of the strengths of this design is that it includes a built-in replication. In other words, at the end of Year 3 of Project REACH, we will get evidence for the effectiveness of the intervention in two different samples of students. The switching replication helps to control for other threats to internal validity, such as maturation and instrumentation. Demonstrating a Project REACH effect in two groups staggered over time and showing the reversal of the intervention effect after the intervention has been removed can provide strong evidence for the efficacy of the intervention. Besides providing evidence for the

replicability of the findings, this design can also provide evidence for whether Project REACH will continue to show effects after being withdrawn. Randomization was not considered feasible for our study, considering that home visits are a core intervention of Project REACH. Some considerations in our decision included: a) *logistical challenges*: Home visits require more resources and coordination, potentially making it difficult to randomize on a large scale; b) *variability in implementation*: The effectiveness of home visits can vary greatly depending on factors like the visitor's skills, home environment, and family dynamics. This variability makes it harder to ensure consistent treatment in a randomized trial; c) *ethical considerations*: Randomly assigning some families to receive home visits while withholding them from others may raise ethical concerns, especially if there are perceived immediate benefits; and d) *self-selection bias*: Families who agree to home visits may differ systematically from those who don't, introducing potential bias that is better addressed through QED methods. Careful attention was paid to four key factors to meet WWC standards for quasi-experimental designs: (1) group design and formation, (2) baseline equivalence, (3) confound analysis, and (4) outcome measures. (1) **Group design and formation.** Group formation will be carefully considered during formative and process evaluation. The impact evaluation will use a student-level matched comparison QED design with propensity score matching that will meet *WWC standards with reservation*¹. First, L&G will create a BAU group using statistical matching within each cohort. The matched BAU students will attend the same schools as treatment participants and will be matched on demographic and academic characteristics, such as ELA and Math iReady scores, involvement in extracurricular activities, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and other covariates that are likely associated with the outcomes of interest. Next, L&G will analyze the outcomes of students receiving *Project REACH* against those of matched non-participating students with similar demographic and academic characteristics. (2) **Baseline equivalence.** Following WWC standards, QEDs must

demonstrate that the groups are similar before the intervention on key characteristics that are likely to be correlated with the outcomes. To ensure baseline equivalence for the intervention and comparison student groups, WWC strongly suggests using data to establish baseline equivalency, because differences could be carried through to the outcomes and be mistaken for an effect of the intervention. Baseline equivalence will be determined on each outcome measure using the pretest measures of the outcome used in the analysis. Given the clustered nature of the student sampling (students are nested within schools), baseline equivalence will be established on the analytic sample, not on the initially assigned sample. L&G will look at the size of the difference between the groups measured in effect-size units on each key measure of interest. Hedge's g will be used to measure the size of the effect. If baseline equivalence is not established (the standardized difference is between 0.05 and 0.25 standard deviations), L&G will use statistical adjustment to satisfy the baseline equivalence. Regression models, such as an OLS, ANCOVA, or HLM that include the baseline measure as a covariant to statistically adjust for the baseline level will be considered for analysis. If L&G finds differences between the groups that are greater than 0.25 standard deviations, baseline equivalence will not be established for that measure and we will derive a comparable sample using a subset of the data and matching techniques for exact matching. L&G will employ a variety of matching methods (Propensity Score Matching, Mahalanobis Distance Matching, and Coarsened Exact Matching) to identify similar subsets of students in the control and intervention groups. We will use the best matching results that optimize similarity in the control and intervention groups and maximum matched sample size. (3) **Confound analysis.** Potentially confounding factors will be controlled. For example, in our comparisons, we will be using multiple units (i.e., students) rather than a few, and this intervention will not be bundled with any other services. Also, measurement of performance scores among intervention and BAU groups will occur simultaneously (rather than staggered). Finally, the legitimacy of the impact of the intervention will be assured because

of the rigorous nature of the control group switching replication with intervention removal design and the measures being employed, such as iReady and Acadience standardized measures of academic success. These measures will help assure veracity in the validity and reliability of the data. (4) **Outcome measures.** All outcome data will be collected similarly for both groups. WWC does not allow imputed data for quasi-experimental design studies, therefore no imputations will be performed during the outcome analysis. Additionally, all students with outcome data will also have baseline data in order to establish baseline equivalence. Only complete cases will be included in data analysis.

E.1.2. Research and Evaluation Questions. The evaluation, confirmatory, and exploratory research questions listed in Table 4 below, address key program components, outputs and outcomes from the logic model included in Appendix G. L&G’s comprehensive evaluation will assist in the formative program development process, track program implementation, and determine what impacts the program has on participants.

Table 4. *Evaluation and Research Questions and Data Sources*

Evaluation Questions	Data Sources
Are all components of Project REACH implemented with fidelity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implementation logs ▪ Observation logs ▪ <i>Insight</i> Tool utilization logs ▪ Fidelity checklists
What are the barriers and supports to successful implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews with ASA and School Attendance Team Members ▪ Focus Groups with ASAs and School Attendance Team Members ▪ Student focus groups and interviews ▪ Parent focus groups and interviews
Confirmatory Research Questions	
What is the intent-to-treat (ITT) impact of Project REACH (treatment) relative to business-as-usual (control) on participating students?: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Average daily attendance ▪ Chronic absenteeism ▪ Number of unexcused absences ▪ Tardiness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Official NYCPS records
Exploratory Research Questions	

<p>What is the impact of Project REACH relative to the business-as-usual group on participating students’:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grade promotion ▪ ELA and Math iReady scores ▪ ELA and Math Acadience scores ▪ Academic Motivation ▪ Academic Enrichment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Official NYCPS records ▪ iReady Assessments ▪ Acadience Assessments ▪ Student self-report on pre/post student survey ▪ Teacher report on pre/post student survey ▪ Parent report
<p>What is the impact of Project REACH on School Attendance Team’s attendance monitoring practices?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Insight</i> Tool utilization logs ▪ Fidelity of implementation logs and checklists
<p>What is the impact of Project REACH on Attendance Success Advocates’ ability to sustain student engagement?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ASAs self-report on post survey
<p>What is the impact of Project REACH on the families of participating students?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Referral logs to support services ▪ ASA/Family communication logs ▪ ASA home visit logs ▪ Self-report on family survey ▪ Interviews ▪ Focus groups
<p><i>Impacts on potential mediators</i> Do components of fidelity of implementation (i.e., adherence, dosage, quality, ASA practices, family involvement) influence the effect of Project REACH on students’ outcomes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implementation logs ▪ Observation logs
<p>How does the implementation of Project REACH differ across contexts, such as school and ASA characteristics? What factors hinder or facilitate the implementation of Project REACH?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ASA visit logs, observations, interviews, feedback surveys for students and ASAs, relevant background and demographic data
<p><i>Moderating/differential impacts</i> Does Project REACH’s impact on student outcomes vary by students’ baseline ELA and Math scores and/or demographic and socioeconomic characteristic?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student demographic and ELA and Math iReady data collected from schools
<p>To what extent does the impact of Project REACH differ across school contexts, ASA characteristics, and student characteristics?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews ▪ Focus groups ▪ ASA surveys ▪ Student surveys ▪ Teacher surveys ▪ Parent Surveys

The program will run for three years (Years 2-4), studying three separate cohorts of K/1st graders for a total of 450 students over three years [ESSA Tier 1 compliant with >2sites and >350 students]. The year-by-year progression of each cohort is presented in Table 5 below. Cohorts 1 and B will have a one-year post intervention follow-up to test for longitudinal effects.

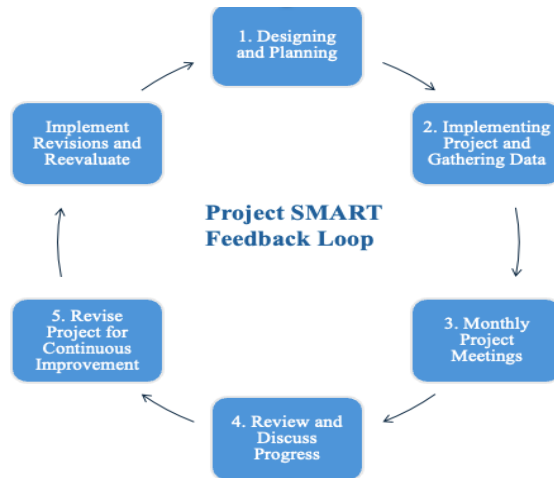
Table 5: *Year by Year Progression of Study Cohorts*

YR 1 (Jan 2025- July25)		YR 2 (2025-26)		YR 3 (2026-27)		YR 4 (2027-28)		YR 5 (2028-29)	
F	W	F	W	F	W	F	W	F	W
Pre-Intervention Year Program Development		No data collection activities. Analysis, reporting, and dissemination.							
		Cohort 1/ Participant Group		Cohort 1/ Follow-up Year					
		Cohort 2/ Comparison Group		Cohort 2/ Participant Group		Cohort 2/ Follow-up Year			
				Cohort 3 Comparison Group		Cohort 3 Participant Group			
						Cohort 4/ Comparison Group			

E.2. Methods Provide Performance Feedback and Periodic Assessment

L&G will establish a continuous feedback loop by sharing available evaluation data with the Project REACH key personnel on an ongoing basis. To monitor progress and make continuous project improvements, L&G staff will have monthly meetings with the PD, PM and other key personnel to review progress, current issues, and upcoming program tasks, events, and advising needs as illustrated in Figure 1. Following these meetings, L&G will hold debriefs to discuss progress, assess roadblocks, address all other pertinent evaluation issues and tasks, and plan next steps. Feedback provided by program participants will be obtained through quarterly advisory meetings, in which L&G staff and partner members share and discuss progress, issues or supports that arise as participants progress throughout the school year. Participants will also provide feedback through annual surveys, interviews, and focus groups to discuss objectives and support, as well as issues, concerns and potential adjustments necessary to support their needs. L&G will use this formative feedback to make adjustments based on both the quantitative and qualitative data described above. A database containing all project evaluation data, including demographics, self-assessments, attendance rates, academic score, survey data, and content area grades will be maintained to facilitate data analyses.

Figure 1. *Evaluation Feedback Loop*



E.3. Evaluation Plan Clearly Articulates Key Project Components, Mediators, Outcomes, and Measurable Implementation Threshold

Exhibit 2 in Appendix J.5 summarizes our proposed evaluation timeline that will be employed for a rigorous, valid, and reliable assessment of Project REACH effectiveness. A five-member advisory committee consisting of both L&G and Project REACH staff with expertise in both education and research design and measurement will critically review data collection procedures and analytical plans on a quarterly basis. Throughout the life of the project, this committee will rigorously assess the appropriateness and robustness of all evaluation tools/methods against the most current WWC standards to ensure the collection of reliable and valid evidence. As highlighted in section E.1., data collection will employ mixed methods and triangulation to increase the validity of the results.

E.3.1. Data collection will include two major data points per cohort: pre-testing (baseline) and end of year (post treatment). Continuous data collection efforts will take place during the entire academic year, focusing on monitoring of implementation fidelity. Data collection procedures will be identical for both treatment and control conditions. Academic records for the previous school year will be requested by L&G from all partner schools in the fall of each grant year; data-sharing agreements with all study schools and NYCPS will be formalized prior to collecting any academic records. Pre-testing will be done to establish baseline equivalency on survey outcomes (WWC, 2022), to add precision to our statistical

analyses of program impacts and collect participant data to run mediation and sensitivity analysis. ASAs and School Attendance Teams will participate in online and paper and pencil surveys (based on preference to maximize response rates) and individual interviews and focus groups three times per year, and their responses will be tracked using a unique ID system without attaching personally identifying information to their response data. Teachers, parents and family members will participate in online or paper and pencil surveys, as well as interviews and focus groups. Outcome measures for Cohorts 1 and 2 will be followed for another year post implementation.

E.3.2 Measurement models will be refined during the planning (YR 1) and pilot years (YR 2), but our proposed quantitative outcome measures include independent (as defined on the *Study Review Protocol*, Version 5.0, March 2023), nationally validated instruments, such as the *iReady and Acadience*, that have well documented national reliability and validity. All outcome domains have been selected to meet the eligibility criteria of the *Study Review Protocol 5.0* and are approved domains on the *WWC Review Protocol for Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools Practice Guide Version 3.0 (September 2017)* and *Systematic Review Protocol for Academic Interventions Version 4.1 (June 2021)*. All outcome measures and data sources are listed in Exhibit 3 from Appendix J.5 and expressed in S (Specific), M (Measureable), A (Attainable), R (Realistic), and T (Time-bound) terms in the logic model included in Appendix G.

E.3.3. Data analysis. The evaluation will use appropriate, viable and reliable analysis methods and statistical techniques that focus on the process and products of Project REACH. Data analysis will involve both descriptive and inferential analyses between business-as-usual and treatment groups and measures of central tendency and variability will be calculated for each variable in the conceptual framework, and for aggregate variables. Data analysis for the impact evaluation will be based on a two-level random effects multi-level model where students (level 1) are nested in schools (level 2). Multi-

level models have been widely employed to investigate educational outcomes, such as student outcomes, and school-level influences, and help to disentangle the individual and contextual factors contributing to a program's success. L&G will regress level 2 outcomes onto pretest (baseline) scores, treatment status and blocking variables (i.e., cohort x school) while accounting for the nested structure of students within schools. Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) will be used for estimates of intent-to-treat impact and to analyze all student outcome variables given the nested structure of the data whereby students are nested within schools. Such models can accommodate one or more levels of nesting by considering relationships between variables at level 1 (student) and level 2 (school) separately. A strength of HLM is that it accounts for the correlations between the level 1 observations through the estimation of random effects. The following student-level covariates (measured in the baseline period) will be included in the analysis: race/ethnicity, gender, disability status, EL status, SES, eligibility for free and reduced lunch, and pre-treatment academic performance. To address missing data, we will use the sequential modeling imputation approach,⁴⁴ which uses Markov chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) methods to estimate the parameters of the imputation models and sample imputations for the missing data from the conditional distributions of the variables.⁴⁵ For the confirmatory impact analyses, we will follow WWC topic-area review protocols to report all necessary statistics, including obtaining sample sizes at each stage in executing the study design, determining baseline equivalence on demographics and pretests, and calculating standardized mean difference effect sizes. For exploratory analyses, we will assess differential impacts on confirmatory outcomes for important student moderators (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, disability status, EL status, SES). Moderation models will include interaction effects at the level of moderation (e.g., student [level 1], school [level 2]). We will estimate mediators using a multilevel structural equation modeling (ML-SEM) framework. Specifically, we will examine whether intervention-level factors, such as fidelity of program implementation, mediate the direct effect of Project

REACH on student outcomes. To conduct these analyses, we will use *lme4*,⁴⁶*Lavaan*.⁴⁷ and other packages in *R*. Effect size calculations in conjunction with power analyses & hypothesis testing p-values will be used to determine the statistical and meaningful magnitude that the proposed home visiting program has on improving school day attendance, and academic achievement and dispositions. L&G will report the significance and magnitude of the direct effects, indirect effects, and total effects. We will consider a treatment effect size (Hedges' *g*) of .25 or above as showing a meaningful effect. Qualitative data gathered through the interviews, focus groups, & document review and observations will be synthesized through content analyses. Qualitative and quantitative results will be integrated to provide a rich analysis of the project. Each year, the evaluation team will determine Project REACH's progress in meeting GPRA and project measures. As mandated by the USDOE, such progress will be reported in quarterly reports, APRs, and the Final Performance Report in Year 5 of the grant.

E.3.4 Cost Effectiveness. L&G will conduct a cost analysis based on the Resource Cost Model⁴⁸ to provide information regarding the cost of implementing Project REACH and whether it is cost effective relative to the business-as-usual condition. Costs will be identified in both the treatment and the business-as-usual conditions using the "ingredients method."⁴⁹ Analyses will identify the costs associated with each component of the program, distinguish start-up costs from on-going costs, and convert totals to per-student costs. We will then combine the cost information and effect size estimates to describe the impact of Project REACH on a per-dollar basis following the most up-to-date recommendations for cost analyses.⁵⁰

E.3.5 Fidelity of Implementation (FOI). To collect FOI information, the impact study will use an incorporated FOI reporting system. This system includes Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely (SMART) thresholds for monitoring objective performance measures and integrating feedback. These are listed on the grant application form for *Project Objectives and Performance Measures*

Information. This system will rely on the Home Visit FOI Checklist (ASA and AT logs and direct observation versions) to be developed during the project's formative YR 1. L&G will assess adherence to an on-going adaptation of the program logic model (Appendix G), including key components, outputs related to inputs, and attainment of fidelity thresholds listed in the Outputs column on the logic model. Findings will be regularly shared with the Project REACH design and implementation team to decide whether key components of the program and fidelity thresholds have been met and to make necessary adjustments.

E.3.6 Variation in Implementation. During the impact study, L&G will collect monthly ASA and AT practice logs regarding their attendance monitoring practices and routines and will interview all six ASAs and AT to expand on themes in survey responses and to identify barriers and supports to implementation. Additionally, a survey will gauge ASAs' confidence in effectively engaging students. The log information will be reported to the Project REACH team to support program implementation and to inform the development of a replicable model and refined logic model.

E.3.7 Potential for Sustainability and Scale-Up. Surveys and focus groups of key participants will establish the classroom-level conditions for sustaining Project REACH program components. This information will inform program adjustments and support scaling for new contexts.

E.4 Evaluation Performance Feedback. A primary goal of the evaluation is to provide frequent performance feedback to project staff and assessment of progress toward intended outcomes that will allow on-going adaptation and improvement of the Project REACH model and its implementation. Through a participatory evaluation framework, L&G evaluators will maintain a clear communication protocol to monitor progress and serve as a critical and independent thought partner, helping the Project REACH team refine its logic model, confirm fidelity thresholds, develop measures, and establish which program components are implemented successfully or in need of refinement. Working together with the

implementation team, L&G will identify specific questions that are critical to the continuous improvement of the program. The long-term goals are to refine the Project REACH logic model and to provide data to support a viable and scalable process that is suited to mid-phase validation, dissemination, and scalability.

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