

NARRATIVE TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGES
<b>A. QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN</b>	<b>1-13</b>
(1) Professional learning will replace mandatory professional development.	1-5
(2) Adequacy of plans to ensure stipends are appropriately used.	6-7
(3) Teacher flexibility and autonomy of choice.	7-8
(4) Simple process to select PL.	8-10
(5) Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes.	10-13
<b>B. ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES AND QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT PLAN</b>	<b>13-19</b>
(1) Sufficiency of stipend to replace mandatory PL.	13-14
(2) Costs are reasonable.	14
(3) Payment will enable teachers to use stipend with minimal burden.	14-15
(4) Qualifications of key personnel.	15-17
(5) Adequacy of management plan.	17-18
(6) Adequacy of procedures for leveraging the stipend program.	19
<b>C. QUALITY OF THE PROJECT EVALUATION</b>	<b>19-24</b>
(1) WWC standards with reservations.	19-22
(2) Evaluation plan.	22-23
(3) Feedback and assessment of progress.	23-24
<b>ADDITIONAL APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>24-25</b>
<b>BUDGET NARRATIVE AND MATCH BUDGET</b>	
<b>APPENDICES: A-Non-profit Status; B-Resumes; C-Letters/MOUs; D-Match Waiver; E-Proprietary Information; F-Eligibility Checklist; G-Match; H-Indirect Cost Rate; I-Other</b>	

## A. QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN

**(1) Professional learning will replace mandatory professional development.** Our proposed EIR early-phase project, **C<sup>3</sup>: Choice in Cultural Competency**, addresses *Absolute Priorities 1: Demonstrates a Rationale* and *3: Teacher-Directed Professional Learning (PL)* and *Competitive Preference Priority 2: State Educational Agency Partnership*. Our study will examine the link between non-mandated teacher-directed PL, culturally relevant pedagogy, and student achievement. ■ **Research Setting:** Our field-initiated innovation will be tested in Charleston County School District in Charleston, South Carolina which serves nearly 50,000 students and offers a robust study environment due to a history of racial disparities that are still prevalent today as with many areas in our country. Students of color are at a disproportionate risk for numerous adverse educational and behavioral outcomes such as academic failure, suspensions, and dropping out of school. Given the research link among teacher expectations and changes in student outcomes over time, teachers' unintentional racial biases and underestimates of the academic abilities of students of color serve as key sources of racial disparities in student educational outcomes.<sup>1,2,3</sup> The Charleston Forum, created to honor the victims of the 2015 Mother Emanuel AME Church shooting, conducted a recent study of over 700 Charlestonians that revealed only 40% of blacks and less than 60% of whites agree that white and black children have equal opportunities to access a quality education. Moreover, only 18% of blacks and 30% of whites believe the education systems are working well.<sup>4</sup> Another study by Clemson University confirms an inequitable education system in our district.<sup>5</sup> Black students are performing significantly lower than white students on standardized tests in math and English language arts, graduation rates, and ACT scores with enrollment in schools not offering gifted and talented classes as predominantly black. In December 2019, our school board adopted a cultural competency policy which emphasizes the

ability of educators to interact effectively with people of different cultures and includes awareness of one’s own cultural worldview, attitudes towards cultural differences, knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews, and cross-cultural skills.<sup>6</sup> Through this cultural competency lens, we will test teacher-directed PL strategies designed to improve instructional practice and its impact on boosting achievement for high-need students (*Absolute Priority 3*). The study includes ten K-12 Sea Island schools (6 elementary, 1 elementary/middle, 1 middle, 1 middle/high, 1 high) with a target population of 5,765 students and 433 classroom teachers. Approximately 75% of target students have Gullah Geechee heritage which provides an exceptional opportunity to research the implementation of culturally competent instructional practices and its effect on student achievement. Often not recognized as the student’s first language, the Gullah language serves as a source of pride for many black students but has also produced scrutiny, racial bias, and confusion in the learning environment.<sup>7</sup> Our target schools have a significant high-need student population as evidenced by the following:<sup>8</sup> (a) 45% of students are in poverty (i.e., qualify for TANF, Medicaid, SNAP, foster care, migrant, or homeless); (b) disproportionate teacher (17% black) to student (32% black) ratio; (c) disproportionate in-school suspension rates per 1,000 students (359 black, 48 white); and (d) disproportionate achievement between subgroups (below):

<b>Table 1. C<sup>3</sup> Student Academic Indicators<sup>9</sup></b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>White</b>
Met (or higher) state expectations for English language arts	22%	71%
Met (or higher) state expectations for math	21%	69%
Earned a C or higher on English 1 End-of-Course Test	35%	82%
Earned a C or higher on Algebra 1 End-of-Course Test	20%	65%

■ **Rationale (*Absolute Priority 1*):** The assumption of our model is based on research that teachers’ expectations and interpersonal behaviors towards students of color are shaped by their

unintentional racial biases, and these behaviors contribute to poorer educational outcomes for students.<sup>10,11,12,13</sup> Thus, mitigating the effects of teacher unintentional bias is critically needed to improve teachers' expectations and behaviors towards students of color and reduce the racial gap in educational outcomes. Our theory of action proposes that if educators have access to teacher-directed PL centered on cultural competency through (a) an effective stipend system, (b) high-quality teacher assessment, and (c) ongoing implementation support, then this change will lead to culturally responsive instructional practices that empower the achievement and attainment of high-need students. For the purposes of this study, culturally responsive teaching is based on theoretical research that is defined as “using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them.”<sup>14</sup> The logic model in *Table 2* summarizes the underlying framework and key components that will lead to relevant outcomes and is informed by the following research findings (see *Appendix I*: detailed logic model; *Appendix C*: letters of support): (a) A culturally responsive education, including culturally responsive practices and pedagogy, has been linked to positive increases in student test scores.<sup>15,16,17</sup> (b) Culturally responsive teaching practices demonstrate a variety of positive results such as academic achievement and persistence, improved attendance, and greater interest in school.<sup>18,19,20</sup> (c) Instructional materials, assignments, and texts that mirror students' experiences serve as essential tools to empower engagement and deep learning.<sup>21,22,23</sup> (d) Culturally competent practices have shown positive effects linked to affective domains that correlate with higher test scores<sup>24</sup> such as growth in student interest in content,<sup>25,26,27</sup> motivation,<sup>28,29,30</sup> confidence during standardized testing;<sup>31</sup> and capability to participate in content area discourses.<sup>32</sup> (e) Culturally responsive teaching positively links to educational reform initiatives such as improving school climate and social-emotional learning.<sup>33,34</sup>

Table 2. C<sup>3</sup> Summary Logic Model [Detailed Logic Model in Appendix I]

Resources	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EIR Management Team</li> <li>• Project Director</li> <li>• PL Specialist</li> <li>• PL Coaches</li> <li>• Instructional Coaches</li> <li>• District Cultural Competency Team</li> <li>• Teacher Stipends</li> <li>• SC SEA (CPP 2)</li> <li>• SC State, MUSC, College of Charleston</li> <li>• Content Specialists</li> <li>• District Diversity and Inclusion Board</li> </ul>	<p><b>Effective Stipend System (AP 3):</b></p> <p>Teacher-directed PL that enables educators to enhance and deliver culturally proficient instruction</p>	<p>Teacher participation in workgroups; teacher-directed learning policy; teachers participating in stipend system</p>	<p><b>Short Term:</b> Teachers satisfied with input into stipend system; satisfied with coaching; reaction to PL; knowledge of strategies</p>
	<p><b>High-Quality Teacher Assessment:</b></p> <p>Teacher cultural competency assessments to identify individual needs and support selection of relevant PL options</p>	<p>Teachers completing assessment; online PL resource bank; teachers receiving help with PL selection; PL participation; stipends administered</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p><b>Mid-Term:</b> Teacher implementation of culturally competent instructional practices and improved student behavior and attendance</p>
	<p><b>Ongoing Implementation Support:</b></p> <p>Learning loop that supports teacher assessment, coaching, and instructional practices that lead to improvements in cultural competency practices</p>	<p>Written procedures describing learning loop; coaches engage in cultural competency training; hours of coaching provided; teachers receiving coaching</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p><b>Long-Term:</b> Increased teacher cultural competency and student academic achievement</p>

■ **Substitute for Mandatory PL:** In response to our district’s policy, the school board mandated cultural competency training for all employees. A Cultural Competency Task Force was formed to begin cross collaboration between departments to ensure this priority is threaded into the day-to-day actions of the district and to create a comprehensive approach to PL for all staff. Our EIR study offers a timely and significant opportunity to test teacher-directed PL strategies and implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices in K-12 schools with high-need students. In addition to helping inform a comprehensive cultural competency PL model across our district, we have also been recognized as an initial leader in our state to inform these practices, and if successful, the C<sup>3</sup> model will have the potential to be replicated in other districts across the state via collaboration with our State Educational Agency (*Competitive Priority 2; Appendix C: MOU*). We will update our policies to offer stipends to EIR teachers so that 100% of existing mandatory cultural competency PL is replaced by teacher-directed PL [**Selection Criteria vi; Requirement D1**]. In the upcoming school year, our district will require two professional development days of cultural competency PL for all teachers. EIR teachers will be released from this requirement to enable teacher-directed opportunities and ensure this learning replaces 100% of existing mandatory PL in cultural competency [**Requirement D1(i)**]. Through the stipend, EIR teachers will be given the flexibility to participate in teacher-directed learning as follows: autonomy to select opportunities based on individual needs, modalities, and frequencies; substitutes to release teachers from instruction during the school day; compensation for PL completed in off-contract hours; and support from PL and Instructional Coaches to select options vetted by the district or new options based on teacher-identified needs [**Requirement D1(ii)**]. Teacher-directed learning opportunities that are approved for a stipend will automatically meet district mandatory PL goals based on the specifics of the training (e.g., certification renewal) [**Requirement D2**].

**(2) Adequacy of plans to ensure stipends are appropriately used.** The following procedures will be executed to ensure our stipend system is managed appropriately to protect against fraud and waste **[Requirement C3]**: (a) Under the guidance of the C<sup>3</sup> Management Team, a full-time *Project Director and PL Specialist* will be responsible for overseeing our system to substantiate that stipends are used for high-quality PL. To support fiscal accountability, our district's Office of Financial Services has designated a Senior Finance Analyst to support monitoring of the stipend system to add an additional layer of protection. (b) A district *policy* will be established in which each participating teacher will receive a yearly stipend of [REDACTED] which must be spent by the end of December for each grant year. The stipend will only be used for allowable expenses such as PL related to cultural competency, course registration, and travel. Teachers may choose to attend one or more PL opportunities so long as the amount does not exceed [REDACTED]. An approval process for additional funding will be established by the C<sup>3</sup> Management Team to cover costs on a case by case basis that exceed that initial stipend amount such as national conferences. Any remaining funds not spent by the teacher each year will remain in the overall EIR budget and reallocated to help cover any increases in items such as the number of teachers eligible and rising PL costs over the five-year period. (c) Each year, a *memorandum of understanding* will be signed by both the teacher and principal which delineates the requirements and procedures to use the stipend. Examples include the PL approval process, allowable and unallowable stipend expenses, notification if unable to attend PL, loss of stipend if transferring to a non-EIR school, and notification of conflicts of interest. (d) Our district uses the Frontline human capital management system which serves as our online *PL management tool* to address teachers' unique professional growth needs.<sup>35</sup> Teachers will submit a request to attend a cultural competency PL opportunity selected either from the district resource bank or options identified by the teacher. PL that is not

on the district's list of options will undergo a review process by the district's professional development team to determine if the activity meets the definition of PL and is reasonable **[Requirement F2]**. Key criteria to vet selections include meeting the Federal Register PL definition, alignment with district goals and expectations, demonstration of consistency with culturally responsive teaching content, and use of an asset-based approach to teaching which positions the languages, cultures, and identities of students as strengths to learning.<sup>36</sup> Once approved, the PL provider will be paid directly by the district to ensure payment before the start of the training. For additional expenses related to the PL such as travel or hotel, teachers will submit a reimbursement request with receipts to their principal and will receive payment no later than two weeks after submission. (e) To *validate attendance*, teachers will deliver documentation through an agenda, certificate, or other evidence provided by the PL provider for principal review. Further, teachers will complete an online survey (*Appendix I*) providing an overview of the training including a rating of its effectiveness to support culturally responsive teaching, strengths and weaknesses, and recommendation as a PL option in our resource bank to build a sustainable repertoire of high-quality training opportunities for district-wide use. Teachers will also participate in a fall and spring symposium to share best practices learned across schools.

**(3) Teacher flexibility and autonomy of choice.** We will engage in the following approaches to ensure teachers experience flexibility and autonomy in selecting high-quality, instructionally relevant PL options: (a) Through our Frontline system, we will provide information to teachers about PL options not previously available to teachers **[Requirement D3]**. This resource bank will include a list and description of innovative options, qualified providers, and other tools to aid in selection. This system enables teachers to access a catalog of goal-aligned learning opportunities linked to self-assessment and evaluation results to identify relevant PL related to cultural



competency **[Requirement D4]**. Teachers will also learn about options through flyers in the principal packet and via school-based coaches. To ensure flexibility in choice and individual needs, district options will offer a variety delivery modalities (e.g., online, mentoring, workshops, conferences) that are accessible in the summer, during the school day, or afterschool with varying frequencies (e.g., one-day workshop, two-month course). (b) In addition to support provided by the SC Department of Education’s Office of Educator Effectiveness (*Competitive Priority 2*), PL options suggested by the district will be based on teacher competencies that promote culturally responsive teaching from research and theory that are essential to teaching high-need students with fidelity.<sup>37</sup> These competencies include: reflecting on one’s cultural lens, recognizing and addressing bias in the system, applying students’ culture to form curriculum and instruction, using real-world issues in the classroom, modeling high expectations for all students, encouraging respect for differences, collaborating with families, and communicating in linguistically and culturally responsive approaches.<sup>38</sup> We have identified and vetted a variety of relevant local, state, and national options which have been linked to four quadrants of need using a teacher cultural competency self-assessment tool (described in the next section). Examples include Teacher Unconscious Bias; Engaging Families and Community Partnership; Race, Racism, and Teaching for Racial Equity; Courageous Conversations; and Encourage Me: Gullah Geechee in the Classroom. (c) In addition to district options, teachers will have the autonomy to independently select high-quality, instructionally relevant PL activities based on teacher-identified needs **[Requirement D4]**. Mechanisms to ensure this flexibility of choice and support include collaboration with other teachers through professional learning communities (PLCs), review of self-assessment and teacher evaluation data with coaches, and individual online research.

**(4) Simple process to select PL.** Several resources will be used to engage teachers in a straight-

forward process to obtain PL based on individual needs and those of high-need students: (a) Our *outreach strategy* to communicate the stipend opportunity to eligible teachers includes creating awareness and excitement through information sessions, social media, teacher roundtables, principal meetings, district weekly updates, coaches encouraging participation, and review of the memorandum of understanding of the stipend process [**Requirement B2**]. Outreach will focus on the “why” behind the development of cultural competency and the “how” is this PL relevant. (b) We will use several tools to support teachers in selecting high-quality, instructionally relevant PL activities connected to developing cultural competency and improving the achievement of high-need students [**Requirement D4**]. Providing a snapshot of mindset and skill set toward cultural difference and commonality, the *Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)*<sup>39</sup> will be completed annually and offers teachers an individual profile that examines how one engages cultural difference through reflection of past and current situations and experiences. An individual’s IDI profile report provides a perceived orientation score (how one sees themselves when interacting) and a developmental orientation score (how one actually interacts in situations) that pinpoints where, on a five-point continuum, the individual falls: denial, polarization, minimalization, acceptance, or adaption. An orientation gap is also reported that identifies how likely the user is to misread how effective they are in bridging across cultural differences. The profile report provides next steps an individual would take to further develop intercultural competence. By completing the IDI annually, we hope to observe change over time in issues related to implicit bias in each target school. State *teacher evaluations* and resulting teacher *professional growth plans* will also serve as tools to support teacher identification of needs and selection of relevant PL. We cross referenced SC Teaching Standards which provided a solid alignment to the teacher evaluation rubric and competencies for culturally responsive teaching.<sup>40</sup> These include: Motivating Students,

Thinking, Questioning, Respectful Culture, Grouping, Teacher Knowledge of Students, Assessment, Managing Student Behavior, and Environment. (c) Identifying pathways to build cultural competency capacity, coaches will support teachers in *selecting PL options* based on both teacher-identified needs and those of high-need students at the school [**Requirement D3**]. Coaches and teachers will review options through the resource bank and explore other opportunities the teacher has identified to determine the best match for cultural competency PL. (d) After the teacher participates in PL, coaches will provide *ongoing implementation support* to reinforce a learning loop that supports assessment, coaching, and culturally responsive teaching practices. At least monthly coaching from Instructional and PL Coaches will assist teachers in reflecting on new practices linked to cultural proficiency, incorporating strategies into instruction, and identifying new classroom instructional materials and supplies necessary to implement new practices. To share best practices and new trainings *within* schools, teacher-directed PLCs will serve as a resource to transfer learning to implementation in the classroom. Teachers will also participate in a fall and spring symposium to share best practices learned *across* schools. Principals and coaches in target schools will engage in cultural competency training to reinforce culturally responsive teaching.

**(5) Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes.** C<sup>3</sup> objectives are written in a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound) format with annual benchmarks to monitor progress. Aligned with our logic model, goal 1 includes our long-term outcomes; goals 2 – 4 each contain one objective related to implementation and additional objectives measuring short- and mid-term outcomes (STO; MTO). Baseline data is 2018-19 school year because state assessments were not completed in 2019-20 due to COVID-19 school closures. All objectives will be analyzed and reported annually unless noted otherwise below. Validity and reliability information for the assessments below, indicated with an asterisk (\*), is detailed in *Appendix I*.

**Table 3. Goals and Objectives**

**Goal 1: Student Academic Achievement:** Improve academic success and attainment of high-need students through a culturally competent learning environment that adapts to and values diversity and institutionalizes cultural knowledge (long-term objectives).

**1a.** Increase the percentage of Black students who are proficient in ELA by at least 2 percentage points over 2018-19 baseline (24%), in each of Years 1-5 or until the percentage equals or exceeds that of all students (54%). **Measure:** Score of met or above on SC READY ELA Assessment\* (Grades 3-8) or grade of C or better on English 1 EOC\* (Grade 9).

**1b.** Increase the percentage of Black students who are proficient in math by at least 2 percentage points over 2018-19 baseline (20%), in each of Years 1-5 or until the percentage equals or exceeds that of all students (49%). **Measure:** Score of met or above on SC READY Math Assessment\* (Grades 3-8) or grade of C or better on Algebra 1 EOC\* (Grade 9).

**1c.** Increase the percentage of Black students who are college or career ready (CCR) over 2018-19 baseline (43%) by at least 2 percentage points in each of Years 1-5, or until the percentage equals or exceeds all students (68%). **Measure:** CCR indicator on report card (*Appendix I*).

**1d.** In Year 1, at least 50% of teachers will score at least 115 (Acceptance) in developmental orientation on the IDI, increasing to 60% Y2, 70% Y3, 80% Y4 and 90% Y5. **Measure:** IDI\*

**Goal 2: Effective Stipend System:** Provide teacher-directed PL that enables educators to enhance and deliver culturally proficient instruction.

**2a.** In each of Years 1-5, implement activities to provide an effective stipend system with a score of at least 6 out of 8. **Measure:** Fidelity matrix that includes activities, outputs and targets aligned with the logic model (discussed in *Section C* and included in *Appendix I*).

**2b.** In Years 1 and 2, at least 85% of teachers will indicate they were satisfied or very satisfied

with the opportunity to contribute in a meaningful way to the development (YR1) or refinement (YR2) of the stipend system. **Measure:** 5-point Likert scale (STO) using survey in *Appendix I*.

**2c.** In Years 1 and 2, at least 85% of teachers will indicate they agree or strongly agree that the stipend system is a good way to ensure teachers access high-quality PL, increasing to at least 90% in Years 3 - 5. **Measure:** 5-point Likert scale (STO).

**Goal 3: High-Quality Teacher Assessment:** Engage in valid and reliable teacher cultural competency assessments to identify individual needs and support the selection of PL options.

**3a.** In each of Years 1-5, implement activities to provide high quality teacher assessment with a score of at least 10 out of 12. **Measure:** Fidelity matrix aligned with the logic model.

**3b.** Each year at least 85% of teachers will agree or strongly agree that IDI results are discussed during their evaluation and incorporated in SCTS 4.0 rating. **Measure:** 5-point Likert scale (STO).

**3c.** In Years 1 and 2, at least 85% of teachers will agree or strongly agree that their chosen PL was relevant to their needs, increasing to 90% in Years 3-5. **Measure:** 5-point Likert scale (STO).

**3d.** In Year 1, at least 75% of teachers will agree or strongly agree that what they have learned through cultural competency training has reduced racial bias that may have impacted their instruction, increasing to 80% Y2, 85% Y3, 90% Y4-Y5. **Measure:** 5-point Likert scale (STO).

**Goal 4: Ongoing Implementation Support:** Implement a learning loop that supports teacher assessment, coaching, and instructional practices that lead to continuous improvements in culturally competent instructional practices.

**4a.** In each of Years 1-5, implement activities to provide ongoing implementation support with a score of at least 6 out of 8. **Measure:** Fidelity matrix aligned with the logic model.

**4b.** In each of Years 1-2, at least 85% of teachers will agree or strongly agree that Professional Learning Coaches provide support for implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy, increasing

to at least 90% in Years 3-5. <i>Measure:</i> 5-point Likert scale (STO).
<b>4c.</b> In Year 1, at least 50% of teachers will be implementing culturally competent instructional strategies, increasing to at least 60% Y2, 70% Y3, 80% Y4 and 90% Y5. <i>Measure:</i> Average of responses to Student Survey of Teacher Cultural Sensitivity <sup>41*</sup> , matched to teachers (MTO).
<b>4d.</b> Decrease incidents of in-school suspension of Black students by at least 5% below 2018-19 baseline of 359 per 1,000 in Year 1 to 323, 10% below baseline in Y2, 15% below baseline in Y3, 20% below baseline in Y4 and 25% below baseline in Y5, or until the rate equals that of all students (82 per 1,000). <i>Measure:</i> School Records, disaggregated by school (MTO).

**B. ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES AND QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**(1) Sufficiency of stipend to replace mandatory PL.** All classroom teachers in our target schools, regardless of years of experience or subject area, will receive an annual stipend of [REDACTED] to cover all associated expenses related to their PL, including registration, materials, and transportation **[Requirement C1]**. Additional EIR funds will cover substitute teachers for up to two release days annually for each classroom teacher to participate in PL during the school day and up to two daily stipends for classroom teachers to participate in PL off contract hours. Classroom teachers receiving a stipend will be encouraged to collaborate with other teachers within their PLC, grade level, and subject area to share PL opportunities and will be given the option to pool their stipend to engage in PL and split costs when appropriate. Based on a cost analysis of teacher and school level PL over the past three years, the annual stipend of [REDACTED] is sufficient to ensure access for teachers in our target schools to PL activities that are comparable in quality, frequency, and duration to the PL other non-participating teachers will receive in a given year **[Requirement C2]**. For non-participating teachers, cultural competency PL will be funded locally for two mandatory cultural competency PL sessions at their school annually. Our EIR project will allow us to pilot a

teacher PL stipend system for the first time in our district with a subset of schools and by allowing teacher choice in their learning pathways, has the potential to help identify high-quality PL opportunities, increase the frequency and duration that teachers participate in cultural competency PL, and inform future policy to replace mandatory PL with teacher-directed options.

**(2) Costs are reasonable.** C<sup>3</sup> will target 433 classroom teachers in 10 K-12, Sea Island schools with a significant population of students having Gullah Geechee heritage and high-need students characterized by disproportionate academic achievement. Teachers in our target schools will receive an annual [REDACTED] PL stipend to cover the cost of registration, materials, and travel to support completion of cultural competency PL, a significant increase as the majority of teachers in our district receive [REDACTED] for PL. The stipend program will ensure that these teachers have the tools needed to implement culturally proficient instructional practices that empower the achievement and attainment of high-need students. Teachers will receive ongoing support from the PL and Instructional Coaches and principals will receive PL to foster a supportive environment leading to culturally competent instructional practices. Key anticipated long-term outcomes include increased student achievement and increased cultural competency of teachers. Our detailed budget estimates an average cost of [REDACTED] per teacher and [REDACTED] per student per year.

**(3) Payment will enable teachers to use stipend with minimal burden.** All classroom teachers in our 10 target schools will be eligible for the stipend system. At the beginning of each program period, [REDACTED] per classroom teacher will be transferred from the district-EIR budget to each target school's budget. The Professional Learning (PL) Specialist will provide training to each schools' bookkeeper and work closely with them to follow procedures that ensure teachers are not burdened with fronting the costs of PL nor faced with major delays in being reimbursed for expenses incurred upfront for either district identified options or teacher identified options not on the district list. PL

covered by the teacher stipend will be used to replace mandatory cultural competency training required by the district for all teachers. (a) Teachers will have access to a district-approved resource bank of cultural competency PL options and will submit a “Request to Attend Official Meeting” form within 10 days of the training which will be routed to their principal, EIR Project Director, and PL Specialist. The PL Specialist will review the requested PL option against the resource bank of options and grant approval. Once approval is granted, the school bookkeeper will complete the registration with the teacher and use the school’s credit card for direct vendor payment so as not to burden the teacher with advanced payment [**Requirement F1**]. (b) For PL options selected by a teacher that are not included in the resource bank, teachers will be asked to submit a “Request to Attend Official Meeting” form at least 10 days prior to when the training is scheduled. Teachers will submit a sample agenda and overview of the goals of the training and will describe how it aligns with the goals of the district’s cultural competency policy. Forms will be submitted to the principal, EIR Project Director, and PL Specialist. The PL Specialist and EIR Project Director will review the opportunity and provide a response to the teacher within 2 business days of submission. Once approval is granted, the same process for direct payment to vendors will be used to ensure that burden is not placed on the teacher to cover costs up front [**Requirement F2**]. For PL that requires travel, teachers will submit reimbursement forms for per diem, hotel, transportation, and materials within 3 days upon their return and reimbursement will be processed within 10 days.

**(4) Qualifications of key personnel.** C<sup>3</sup> will be led by the following staff with additional details included in *Appendix B: Resumes and Job Descriptions* and *Appendix C: Letters of Support*: (a) Co-Project Advisors (PA) (0.20 FTE each): Dr. Abigail Woods, Director of Internal Consulting, and Cheri Modeen, PL Coordinator, will serve as the Co-Project Advisors and provide oversight to the Steering Committee. Dr. Woods brings 20 years of experience as a teacher and administrator



including 5 years as a principal at one of our target schools and has completed cultural competency training from the Racial Equity Institute. Ms. Modeen has over 20 years of experience and is responsible for overseeing the district-wide PL platform and catalog of offerings. Dr. Woods and Ms. Modeen currently serve on the district Cultural Competency Training Team and will lead C<sup>3</sup> program activities while EIR grant staff are being hired to avoid implementation delays. (b) C<sup>3</sup> Steering Committee (SC): The C<sup>3</sup> SC will include the Co-Project Advisors, Project Director, PL Specialist, PL Coaches, administrator from each school, a representative from CCSD's Cultural Competency Team, Diversity and Inclusion Board, and SC Department of Education (***Competitive Priority 2***), and content specialists: YWCA, Charleston Forum, College of Charleston, Tri-County Cradle to Career, Charleston Shared Future, Charleston County Council, Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission, Social Justice Racial Equity Collaborative, SC State University, and MUSC. The SC will meet quarterly, analyze implementation and impact data, organize convenings to engage families and the community in conversations about race and equity, and engage in sustainability planning to ensure that activities are continued after grant funding has ended. (c) Project Director (PD): CCSD will hire a 1.0 FTE PD to provide day to day leadership of C<sup>3</sup>; guide program management; lead the SC; supervise PL Coaches and PL Specialist; collaborate with our evaluation team; maintain open communication with partners; ensure fiscal accountability; and lead sustainability planning. The PD will hold at a minimum a master's degree and have at least 5 years of experience implementing large-scale PL projects. (d) PL Specialist (PLS): CCSD will hire a master's level 1.0 FTE PLS to maintain accurate reporting to comply with federal requirements, manage teacher PL data, and engage in specialized tasks related to the stipend system and report development. (e) PL Coaches: We will hire 2.0 FTE PL Coaches – one per feeder pattern. PL Coaches will hold at a minimum a master's degree + 30 graduate hours;

coordinate activities provided by C<sup>3</sup> in their schools; conference with teachers to discuss the results of their cultural competency assessments; and provide support in identifying PL based on individual needs. (f) Instructional Coaches (IC): Existing ICs (0.20 FTE each) in our target schools will provide coaching to teachers in integrating culturally competent strategies into the classroom. (g) EIR Management Team (MT): The MT will meet monthly to provide overall project direction and include the Co-Project Advisors, PD, PLS, and PL Coaches. (h) Independent Evaluation: The Evaluation Group (TEG), a firm with over 30 years of experience, including 12 i3/EIR evaluations, was identified through a procurement process in compliance with 2 CFR 200.317-326, EDGAR 75.135, and local policies. The lead evaluators, Dr. Catherine Snyder and Christy Derrick, MPH, are experienced in conducting partner-focused, participatory evaluations in education and PL.

**(5) Adequacy of management plan.** Table 4 is a timeline of activities including responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. Activities put in place during Year 1 will continue being implemented each year with refinements made as the program matures.

Table 4. C <sup>3</sup> EIR Management Plan (January 1 – December 31)		
Timeline	Milestone	Responsibility
<b>Overall Project Management (2021-25) [Objectives 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d]</b>		
1/2021	♦ Confirm grant timeline and partners, order supplies, and hire staff (PD, PLS, PL Coaches); ♦ Convene MT (monthly) and SC (quarterly)	MT
	♦ Compile baseline data; ♦ Conduct independent evaluation (ongoing)	TEG
2/2021	♦ Design teacher feedback and input plan	PD, TEG
	♦ Maintain reporting to EIR Program Office and TA partners (ongoing)	
	♦ Oversee stipends and C <sup>3</sup> PL database (ongoing)	PLS, PA
4/2021	♦ Provide evaluation updates and disseminate findings (quarterly)	TEG, MT

6/2021	♦ Attend required EIR meeting in Washington, DC (annually)	PD, TEG
2/2022	♦ Complete annual performance report (annually)	PD, TEG
1/2023	♦ Develop written sustainability plan (quarterly)	MT, PD
12/2025	♦ Complete grant closeout activities and final reporting	MT, PD
<b>Effective Stipend System [Objectives 2a, 2b, 2c]</b>		
1/2021	♦ Refine stipend process (monthly through 4/2021)	MT
4/2021	♦ Provide training to target schools on stipend process (annually)	MT, PD, PLS
5/2021	♦ Release PL request forms and stipend to school accounts (annually)	PD, PLS
12/2021	♦ Closeout stipends for program year (annually)	PD, PLS
12/2021	♦ Solicit teacher feedback on stipend system (annually)	PD, TEG
1/2022	♦ Refine stipend system based on teacher input (annually)	MT, PD
<b>High-Quality Teacher Assessment [Objectives 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d]</b>		
3/2021	♦ Administer cultural competency assessment to teachers (annually)	PD, PL
	♦ Link assessment results to SCTS 4.0 (ongoing)	Coaches
	♦ Launch development PL resource bank (ongoing)	PD, PLS
	♦ Meet with teachers to discuss assessment results (ongoing)	PL Coaches
<b>Ongoing Implementation Support [Objectives 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d]</b>		
3/2021	♦ Provide PD on cultural competency coaching (ongoing)	PD, IC, PL
	♦ Identify and provide PD for school leadership (ongoing)	Coaches
	♦ Lead PLCs with focus on cultural competency (ongoing)	IC
5/2021	♦ Provide coaching based on assessments and teacher-directed PL (ongoing); ♦ Model effective instructional strategies (monthly)	PD, IC
5/2021	♦ Launch PL Symposiums and Community Convenings (fall/spring)	PD, PLS

**(6) Adequacy of procedures for leveraging the stipend program.** To ensure continuous improvement and systematic changes, we will solicit feedback from the C<sup>3</sup> MT, SC, and stakeholders over the 5-year period via surveys and focus groups. Feedback will be reviewed annually to identify areas of improvement and enhancement of the stipend system, including the processes for how PL opportunities are selected and vetted by the grant team and the payment process **[Requirement G1]**. Results from our independent evaluation will also ensure that data is provided on a regular basis to refine implementation and make programmatic changes as needed. Our C<sup>3</sup> logic model's feedback loop will help guide continuous improvement and provide information to our C<sup>3</sup> staff, district leaders, and stakeholders to inform changes in project activities.

## C. QUALITY OF THE PROJECT EVALUATION

**(1) WWC standards with reservations.** The Evaluation Group (TEG), our independent evaluator selected via a procurement process in compliance with 2 CFR 200.317-326, EDGAR 75.135, and local policies, has capacity to conduct a rigorous evaluation making them highly qualified to serve as our evaluator with qualifications including: over 30 years of experience evaluating K-12 education programs, including 12 former or current i3/EIR grants; a multi-disciplinary team with expertise in all evaluation areas; and expertise creating and using project-specific, quantitative instruments and qualitative data collection techniques. TEG's mixed-methods approach combines qualitative and quantitative data to triangulate results to increase the validity of findings and ensure results are useful for continuous quality improvement.<sup>42</sup> TEG has extensive proficiency with fidelity matrices and has participated in invited panel discussions nationally.

■ **The impact study** will test the effectiveness of C<sup>3</sup> through **three confirmatory research questions**: What is the impact of: (1) culturally relevant pedagogy on ELA achievement of high need students; (2) culturally relevant pedagogy on math achievement of high needs students; and (3) teacher-directed PL on the implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy?

**For questions 1 and 2**, beginning in Year 1 (2021) 414 teachers in 9 treatment schools, will participate in a rigorous longitudinal impact study that meets WWC 4.1 evidence group design standards with reservations to provide a moderate level of evidence assessing the effectiveness of the C<sup>3</sup> model.<sup>43</sup> We excluded Murray-LaSaine Elementary, a Montessori school, from the study based on qualitative differences from other treatment schools. Little to no school or cluster-level attrition is anticipated because there are no planned school closures impacting these sites during the program period. Additionally, little individual-level attrition is expected based on a teacher turnover rate of 11% in treatment schools compared to 13% district-wide. Cases will be listwise deleted prior to analysis if they are missing key variables with no imputed data. An a priori power analysis (*Appendix I*) indicates our study has enough power to test for statistically significant program effects on math and ELA (MDES = .28,  $\alpha = .05$ ). We will use a quasi-experimental design (QED) to assess the impact of C<sup>3</sup> on the rate of academic achievement in math and ELA after 2½ program years, comparing 9 treatment schools (5 elementary, 1 elementary/middle, 1 middle, 1 middle/high, 1 high) to 18 comparison schools within the district (10 elementary, 4 middle, 4 high). Comparison schools and students will be selected using 1:2 nearest neighbor propensity score matching (PSM) models without replacement. The pool of possible comparison schools will include all CCSD schools that are not included in the treatment group. Comparison students will be selected from the matched comparison schools. The PSM is designed to aid in assuring similar treatment and comparison students and schools. The PSM will include exogeneous key variables, such as baseline test scores, free and reduced lunch rate, percent of minority group students, geographic location (rural, urban, suburban), pupil-teacher ratio, teacher demographics, and enrollment<sup>44</sup>. Academic achievement in math and ELA will use SC Ready (Grades 3-8) and SC standardized EOC exams (Grade 9) which were selected as they do not over-align with the

proposed program. We will use student-level standard scores in ELA and math (2014-19) to test baseline equivalence of the treatment and comparison groups. **Mediator impacts** will determine how teacher knowledge and behavior influence the relationship between culturally relevant pedagogy and ELA and math achievement of high need students using teacher reaction and satisfaction surveys, student school records, the IDI Assessment, and student survey of teacher cultural sensitivity. Data will be analyzed after the program has been in effect for 2½ years at the end of 2023-24 school year and each year thereafter. Outcome data for the QED will be analyzed using a 3-level hierarchical linear model on students (level 1), nested in teachers (level 2), nested in schools (level 3). Effect sizes will be computed, and exploratory analyses will be conducted and reported for subgroups. The impact model is below (mediator analysis is detailed in *Appendix I*):

$$\begin{aligned}
 Y_{ijk} = & \alpha + \beta_1 Treatment_k + \beta_2 Baseline_{ijk} + \beta_3 EconomicStatus_k \\
 & + \beta_4 MinorityStatus_{ijk} + \beta_5 RuralStatus_k + \beta_6 TeacherMinorityStatus_{ij} \\
 & + \beta_7 Enrollment_k + \mu_k + \epsilon_{ij} + e_{ijk}
 \end{aligned}$$

Our **third confirmatory research question** will determine the impact of teacher-directed PL on the implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy using the teacher-completed IDI and a student survey of teacher cultural sensitivity (*Appendix I*), both completed in treatment and comparison schools. We will use the same design and comparison schools as for the first two confirmatory questions. **Mediator impacts** will determine how teacher satisfaction with autonomy influences the relationship between teacher-directed PL and implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy through the analysis of PL records, teacher reaction and satisfaction surveys, the IDI, and a student survey of teacher cultural sensitivity. Data will be analyzed after the program has been in effect for 2½ years at the end of 2023-24 school year and each year thereafter. Outcome data for the QED will be analyzed using a 2-level hierarchical linear model teachers (level 1), nested in schools

(level 2). Effect sizes will be computed, and exploratory analyses will be conducted and reported for grade, gender, race, and disability subgroups. The impact model can be found in *Appendix I*.

**(2) Evaluation plan.** The C<sup>3</sup> evaluation plan includes an implementation study and qualitative study to complement the impact study. The C<sup>3</sup> fidelity matrix (*Appendix I*) will assess implementation compared to the program as planned. Our fidelity matrix will allow us to answer

**3 formative research questions:** To what extent has: (1) an effective stipend system been implemented with fidelity to provide teacher-directed PL; (2) the teacher assessment process been implemented with fidelity to identify individual needs and support the selection of relevant PL options; and (3) ongoing implementation support been implemented with fidelity to include a learning loop that leads to continuous improvements in culturally competent instructional practices? This fidelity matrix will: (a) allow for separate measurement of fidelity of implementation for each of the three key program components in the logic model (Effective Stipend System, High-Quality Teacher Assessment, and Ongoing Implementation Support); (b) measure fidelity annually for the entire sample; and (c) identify thresholds for determining whether, for the entire sample, each component of the intervention was implemented with fidelity. For each component in the fidelity matrix, the following will be indicated: activity, data source, data collector and timeline, scoring criteria for levels of implementation at unit level, expected sample for fidelity measure, and years of measurement. Table 5 provides a sample fidelity matrix for one component with a detailed fidelity matrix included in *Appendix I*. To the extent data are available, we will also collect fidelity data on comparison schools to determine the *achieved relative strength* of C<sup>3</sup> in comparison to the business-as-usual schools.<sup>45</sup>

Table 5. Sample Fidelity Matrix for 1 Indicator of Component 1: Effective Stipend System					
Activity	Source	Schedule	Scoring Criteria	Score	Met
Teachers provide input into stipend system during workgroups	Attendance records	Ongoing	2 = $\geq$ 90% of target teachers attend		Y / N
			1 = 80% - 89% of target teachers attend		
			0 = $<$ 80% of target teachers attend		

**Our qualitative study** will allow us to answer **2 additional formative research questions**: What are the strengths of and barriers to implementation of: (1) teacher-directed PL; and (2) culturally relevant pedagogy? Data collection includes focus groups with program leaders and teachers, follow-up interviews with a subset of teachers, and open-ended survey questions analyzed through qualitative data analysis via thematic coding by two or more evaluators and member checking.<sup>46,47</sup>

**(3) Feedback and assessment of progress.** Each year, C<sup>3</sup> will report on required GPRAs and program objectives aligned with our logic model (*Table 2*). Goal 1 includes long-term outcomes; goals 2-4 contain one objective related to implementation and other objectives measuring short- and mid-term outcomes. Quarterly review of the logic model and monthly review of progress on goals and objectives during regularly scheduled check-in meetings will allow us to continually gauge progress and identify needed program changes. Our goals and objectives, in tandem with our logic model, articulate components and measurable thresholds for acceptable implementation as outlined in *Table 3*. Our evaluation plan details the data collection tools and timelines, measures, analysis, and reporting schedule. Together, the logic model, performance measures, fidelity data, qualitative study, and outcome data will help us determine the extent to which C<sup>3</sup> is effective at increasing student achievement and improving culturally relevant pedagogy. Results will be shared using interim and annual performance reports; reports of student and teacher surveys, focus groups, and interviews; infographics; and presentations. To ensure scalability and replicability, research



findings (including our fidelity matrix with thresholds of implementation) will be shared via ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) and conferences. C<sup>3</sup> will test our theory that providing stipends for teacher-directed PL in cultural competency has a positive impact on the academic achievement of high-need students and the implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy.

## ADDITIONAL APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

■ **Pool of Eligible Teachers [Requirement A]:** The pool of eligible teachers to request a stipend includes all classroom teachers employed at 10 K-12 Sea Island schools. These 433 teachers will be targeted to help meet our district's new cultural competency policy for all educators. These schools were selected due to their significant high-need student population with 45% of students in poverty and disproportionate suspension rates and achievement between black and white students. ■ **Level of Teacher Participation:** Data from the most recent teacher school climate surveys revealed over a quarter of teachers were not satisfied with the learning environment and felt that students were not interested in learning.<sup>48</sup> Teachers were represented on our EIR planning team and a focus group was conducted to gather feedback. In August 2020, all teachers from each target school were invited to participate in a survey to gather feedback on satisfaction with existing PL [**Requirement B1**] and provide input into the development of our project [**Requirement B3**]. Results revealed marginal satisfaction: only 34% of teachers are satisfied with current PL options; 60% agree high-quality PL is available to support educator growth; and 60% agree that the district offers one-size-fits all PL options. For our project, 93% of teachers indicated they are interested in participating in teacher-directed PL and currently view PL provided by the district as tailored to meet individual needs (37%); providing autonomy in the selection of PL (53%); and supporting cultural competency (33%) - which offers room for improvement in satisfaction among teachers. During the project, teachers will be included in key decisions about the stipend system through

**[Requirement B4]:** (a) teacher surveys and focus groups; (b) principal visits to PLCs to monitor satisfaction with the system; and (c) one-on-one meetings with Coaches. ■ **Stipend Structure**

**[Requirement C4]:** C<sup>3</sup> is designed to allow all classroom teachers in our target schools the opportunity to participate in our stipend program. In the event that current levels of EIR funding do not support increases in the number of teachers in the target schools over the 5-years, priority will be based on teacher need for PL determined by achievement data reviewed annually by the Project Director and PL Specialist. ■ **Supporting Implementation [Requirement E]:** Teachers will be supported in a myriad of ways to ensure that changes in instructional practice are observed as a result of their PL: (a) Instructional Coaches will work one-on-one with teachers to apply the knowledge gained through PL into the classroom; (b) PL Coaches will help teachers interpret results of their cultural competency assessments and guide them in the selection of PL aligned to their needs; and (c) School leaders will participate in cultural competency PL to support the culture shift in their buildings. ■ **Expanded PL Stipends [Requirement G2]:** C<sup>3</sup> provides us with the unique opportunity to test the use of teacher-directed PL stipends in a subset of schools with the greatest opportunity for positive outcomes. We will use results from our research study to make improvements and provide recommendations to district leaders on how this model can be expanded district-wide after the grant period. ■ **Assurances [Requirements H1, H2, H3]:** Through C<sup>3</sup>, CCSD will maintain current fiscal and administrative levels of effort in PL and allow the PL funded through the stipend to supplement existing PL. EIR funds will only be used for instructionally relevant PL and will allow teachers to use the stipend for a variety of PL options. CCSD and partners will not be the primary financial beneficiary of the PL stipends nor is there any identified conflict of interest in allowing teachers to select their own PL. Through EIR funding, C<sup>3</sup> will examine the link between teacher-directed PL, culturally relevant pedagogy, and achievement.