

Table of Contents

Absolute Priorities 1

1. Need for the project3

2. Quality of the Project Design.....18

 A. Design reflects relevant and evidence-based findings and integrates the four pillars18

 B. Project demonstrates a rationale.....37

3. Quality of the Project Services46

 A. A diversity of perspectives are brought in design and operation46

 B. Services reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice55

4. Adequacy of Resources.....58

 A. Plans for a full-time coordinator and to sustain position, and service description58

 B. Potential for continued support post-project, including demonstrated commitments62

5. Quality of the Management Plan64

 A. A strong plan to have, a broadly representative consortium64

 B. History of effectiveness in working with a diverse range of stakeholders70

 C. Adequacy to achieve the objectives on time and within budget73

6. Quality of the Project Evaluation.....84

 A. Methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate84

 B. Provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment87

 C. Provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes89

Competitive Preference Priority 1.294

Competitive Preference Priority 296

Table of Contents: Figures

- Figure 1: School Enrollment for our FSCSs.....1
- Figure 2: FSCS Requirements Addressed within Proposal2
- Figure 3: Map of Angelina County4
- Figure 4: Socio-Economic Information for the Targeted Population5
- Figure 5: Comparative Educational Attainment6
- Figure 6: Percent failing to Meet/Master End of Course9
- Figure 7: Student to Counselor Ratio.....10
- Figure 8: Educational Pipeline.....11
- Figure 9: Number & percentage of families & students targeted each year for services ..13
- Figure 10: Services to Be Provided to Students and Families13
- Figure 11: Pipeline of Services Provided by the Full Service Community School15
- Figure 12: Learning Policy Institute Synthesis of Alignment of Four Pillars18
- Figure 13: Evidence Basis and Replication of Effective Practices23
- Figure 14: Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes.....31
- Figure 15: Research Base for Evidence Based Practices39
- Figure 16: Satisfaction of Criteria for Meeting Evidence Levels40
- Figure 17: Existing Services to be Immediately Coordinated48
- Figure 18: Project Leadership Structure52
- Figure 19: Strategies to Ensure Diversity of Perspectives for Stakeholder Groups54
- Figure 20: FSCS Coordinator (4 positions, 100%).....59
- Figure 21: FSCS Professional Development Plan59
- Figure 22: Plan to Manage Partnerships within Full Service Community Schools.....73

- Figure 23: Year 1: Project Timeline, Milestones, Responsible Parties76
- Figure 24: Continuous Improvement Framework.....88
- Figure 25: FSCS Data Collection Timeline and Instruments91
- Figure 26: Performance Data and Outcomes92

Absolute Priority 2-- Title IA Schoolwide Program Eligibility and Rural and Low-Income

Partners for Rural Impact, Diboll Independent School District (Diboll ISD), and multiple community partners have designed and will implement this Full-Service Community School program in all Diboll ISD schools. All four of schools are 1) **Title IA school wide program eligible¹** and 2) **eligible under the Rural and Low-Income Schools program.²** Should the status of any of the schools change, we will immediately inform the US Department of Education.

Absolute Priority 3—Capacity Building and Development Grants

Our consortium which includes Partners for Rural Impact, Diboll ISD, and multiple community-based organizations (See Memorandum of Understanding) meets the requirements to be an *eligible entity*. Our project meets the requirements of Absolute Priority 3. School enrollment in our community is illustrated in Figure 1. During 2022-2023, our consortium conducted a needs assessment that deeply engaged community and included a thorough data review (pages 3-18). The needs assessment informs project design, infrastructure, activities, and partnerships necessary to successfully implement FSCSs (pages 18-45). We have established performance indicators and a process for gathering data on and tracking these indicators (pages 31-36).

School Enrollment ³								Figure 1
District/School	Grade Levels	All Students	Economically Disadvantaged	Emergent Bilingual/EL	White (non-Hispanic)	African American	Hispanic or Latino	Two or More Races
H.G. Temple Elem.	K-2	325	77%	15%	35%	12%	51%	2%
H.G. Temple Intermediate	3 rd -5 th	354	75%	13%	41%	12%	44%	3%
Diboll Jr. High School	6 th -8 th	384	67%	20%	31%	11%	55%	2%
Diboll High School	9 th -12 th	521	64%	16%	32%	13%	53%	2%
Total		1,584	70%	16%	34%	12%	51%	2%

We have designed a project that **meets all program requirements**, as seen in Figure 2.

FSCS Requirements Addressed within Proposal		Figure 2
Requirement	Page Numbers	
Description of Eligible Entity	1	
MOU among all partners in the eligible entity	Appendix A	
Capacity to coordinate & provide services at two or more sites	64 - 71	
Comprehensive Plan that includes:		
Student, family, and school community to be served	1 - 2	
Needs assessment identifies students, family, community needs	3 - 17	
Annual measurable performance objectives, including increase in # and % of families and students to be targeted each year, to ensure children are 1) prepared for Kindergarten, 2) Achieving academically; 3) Safe, healthy, and supported by engaged parents	31 - 36	
Pipeline services, including existing and additional services: why services selected; how services will impact academic achievement; how services address objectives & outcomes	13 - 17, 48	
A description of the pillars of FSCS, including those in place and that will be established	13 - 14, 18 - 31	
Plans to ensure that FSCS site has:		
A full-time coordinator, funding source for coordinator	58 - 59	
Plans for professional development of staff	Fig. 21, pg. 59 - 60	
Joint utilization and management of school facilities plan	75	
Annual evaluation plan based upon the objectives and outcomes that includes progress achieved, used to refine, and collect and report data	84 - 94	
Plans for sustaining programs and services beyond grant period	62 - 64	
Assurances to participate in national evaluation	86 - 87	
Assurances eligible entity focuses on schools eligible for schoolwide FSCS	1	

(1) Need for project

East Texas is behind the curve for postsecondary educational attainment, lagging state and national credential achievement. Rapid demographic changes already underway will compound this problem. The populations that are fastest growing are the most underserved by our educational systems. Simply put, our region cannot thrive without improving education and workforce outcomes. Young people will not reach their full potential, families will suffer, and employers will continue to struggle with talent shortages.⁴

To fully present our Need, we provide freestanding descriptions on the following pages. Each section responds directly to elements within the Need criterion.

- Project addresses needs of targeted, underserved populations most impacted *Pages 3-11*
- Project provides support, resources, and services to the targeted population *Pages 11-14*
- Project closes gaps in educational opportunity *Pages 14-18*

Project addresses the needs of targeted, underserved populations most impacted ...

To fully understand the challenges faced by students in Diboll, Texas one must first understand the challenges faced in rural America. One in five poor children in this country live in a rural area.⁵ This group of vulnerable children is seldom on the minds of the public or policy makers when they talk about child poverty in the United States:

Rural poverty is...widespread and diverse. Rural poverty encompasses impoverished rural hollows in the Appalachian Mountains, former sharecroppers' shacks in the Mississippi Delta, and desolate Indian reservations on the Great Plains. The lack of a single image of rural poverty makes it more difficult to describe and discuss.⁶

Our Deep East Texas community of Diboll puts a face on rural poverty and emphasizes the dire need for increased services to students in rural America.

Community Data

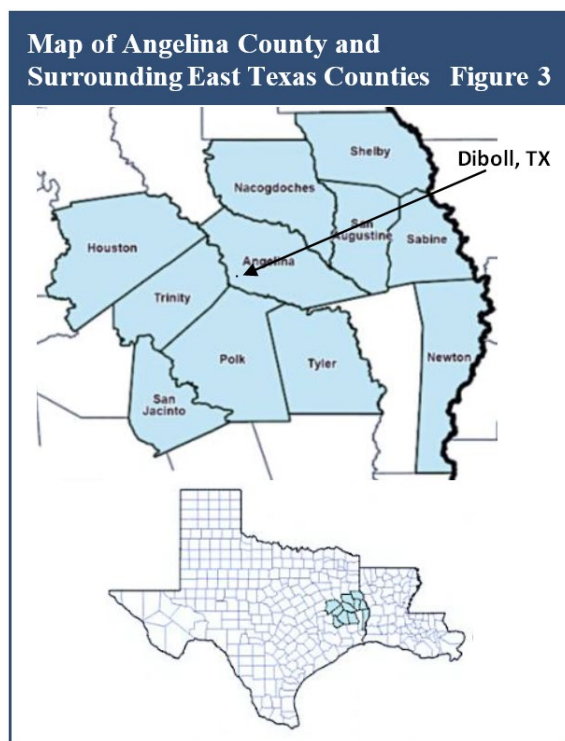
In the vastly rural Deep East Texas region, 11 miles south of the Angelina County seat of Lufkin, Texas, and 109 miles north of Houston, sits the small town of Diboll (Figure 3).⁷ Poverty levels are high; educational attainment and income are low, all exacerbated by the rural nature of the

area. Economic and educational problems are deeply embedded.

The population of the Diboll community is 4,562:⁸ 41% of Diboll residents are Hispanic, 28% are African American/Black, and 29% are white non-Hispanic. Diboll Independent School District serves the children that make up nearly 25% of the city's residents.⁹

“Everything is bigger in Texas” is a popular saying in the Lone Star State. Texas was number six on CNBC's yearly list for America's Top States for Business,¹⁰ and that's big news. However, **Texas was dead last in the state ranking on Life, Health, and Inclusion.**¹¹ That ranking was based on livability factors like crime rates, environmental quality, and health care; worker protections; availability of childcare; and other quality of life categories.¹² Texas is ranked 45th in the U.S. for overall child well-being¹³ and 33rd in education.¹⁴

Poverty is big in Texas, too, particularly in our rural town of Diboll. **Forty-two percent of children living in Diboll, Texas live in poverty.**¹⁵ High rates of childhood poverty, like the poverty experienced in our rural Texas community, have been linked to academic failure, school dropout, and reduced rates of college attendance and graduation.¹⁶ Students living in poverty, on average, start their



educational experience significantly behind their peers in terms of the precursor reading and mathematics skills and the knowledge they bring to school. Dissimilar experiences during the summers between grades widen these gaps. As they grow older, students in poverty tend to have

less academic background knowledge and more limited vocabularies, which further challenge the pace with which they read and absorb academic material.¹⁷

Socio-Economic Information for the Targeted Population			Figure 4
Population	% of Below Poverty	Per Capita Income	% US Poverty Rate
Diboll, Texas	42% children, 21% families	██████	198%
Angelina County	25% children, 13% families	██████	137%
State	20% children, 11% families	██████	111%
Nation	17% children, 10% families	██████	100%

Diboll has had a high poverty rate for more than 21 years, a trend that indicates Diboll is a **place of persistent poverty**. Researchers note profound implications of persistent poverty:

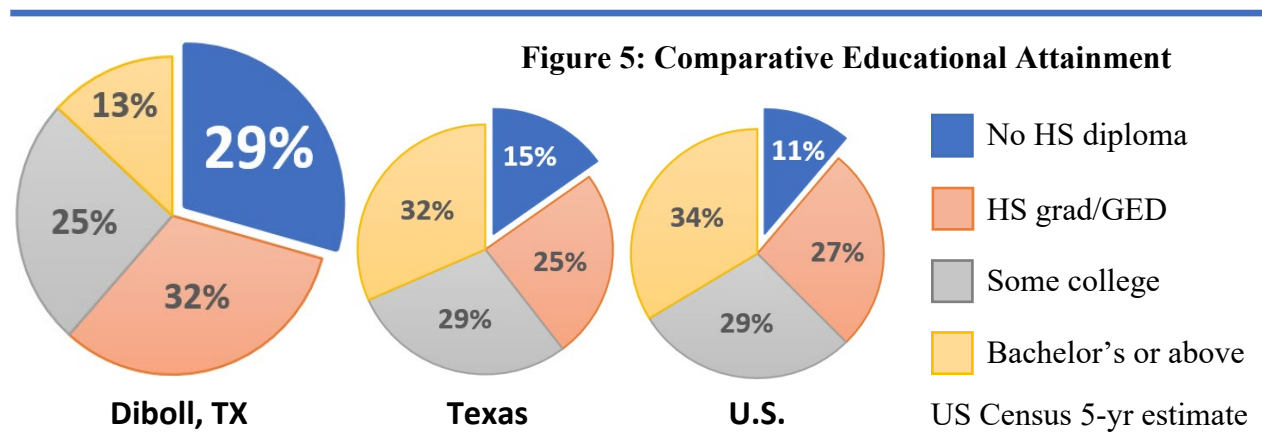
The higher the poverty rate and the longer it endures, the greater the likelihood that associated problems become systemic, affecting both the resident poor and non-poor. For instance, areas of persistent poverty more often lack availability of healthcare, healthy and affordable food, safe and affordable housing, quality education, and adequate protective service and transportation systems.¹⁸

In places where high rates of poverty **persist for decades**, the resources, support, and services like those to be provided by Full-Service Community Schools are critically important.

The unemployment rate for Angelina County as of May 2023 was 4.6% (3.9% in Texas; 3.6% in the nation; Feb 2023).¹⁹ Our residents find building up even a small amount of savings a challenge. According to the February 2023 Prosperity Now Scorecard data, 42% of households in the community, as compared to 27% in the nation, are “liquid asset poor,” meaning they have less than three months of savings to live at the poverty level if they suffer an income loss.²⁰ With liquid-asset poverty comes a lack of capacity on the part of families to financially plan for emergencies, let alone financially provide their children with out of school learning opportunities

or support their children’s participation in school activities. Figure 4 contains socio-economic information for our community.²¹

Persistent cycle of under-education: Only 13% of Diboll residents over the age of 25 have a bachelor’s degree or higher, as compared to 32% in Texas and 34% in the nation. Worse still, 29% of Diboll adults **have less than a high school diploma**—nearly double the state and three times the national rates (Figure 5). These numbers include almost half (48%) of Diboll’s Hispanic residents and nearly 20% of African American/Black residents who have less than a high school diploma. In addition, **less than 1%** of Diboll’s African American/Black and **just 11%** of Hispanic residents have a bachelor’s degree or higher.²²



As our students reach high school and begin the process of preparing for college or the workforce, their families do not have the information necessary to assist their students with making these choices. For those students hoping to pursue postsecondary education, students and their parents need help with educational and financial planning. Schools have limited resources to provide students, or their parents, with the information needed to plan for higher education, including financial planning. Few programs provide low-income parents with the skills necessary for supporting their child in identifying and financing higher education pathways. School counselors have a caseload that far exceeds the student to counselor ratio (see

Figure 7 on page 10). This impedes their ability to spend the needed amount of time to work with students and parents on educational and financial planning for postsecondary education.

Housing Instability: A report by the National Education Association (Feb. 2022) states, “The number of students who have experienced homelessness during the last three school years has risen to 1.5 million—a 15% increase since 2015-16”.²³ In rural areas like our community, these children are hidden from our view. They are living in cars, in relatives’ homes, and campgrounds. While only 1% percent of the students in our community meet the official homelessness definition, Diboll community members identified homelessness as a growing problem.²⁴ During the community listening sessions, our community repeatedly cited the lack of affordable, quality housing in the Diboll community as a serious issue.

In addition, 14,580 of Texas children are in foster care; that equates to 1.9 of every 1,000 children. In Angelina County, including Diboll, the rate is higher at 2.6 per 1,000.²⁵ **Foster care, however, is only one part of this impactful picture.** The statewide advocacy group Texas Grandparents Raising Grandchildren states, “For every one child in foster care, there are 18 children outside of foster care under kinship” care.²⁶ The U.S. Census reports that **32%** of children in Diboll are in foster (10%) or kinship (22%) care, compared to 12% and 13% in the U.S. and Texas, respectively.

School Data

Children begin school behind: Texas children are assessed by the Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment, developed by the Texas Education Agency and Children’s Learning Institute. Thirty-four (34%) percent of Diboll children—1 in 3—were not ready for kindergarten.²⁷ “Children in East Texas are starting kindergarten behind, and once they reach school, they are not getting the instructional literacy and numeracy support they need to catch up.”²⁸

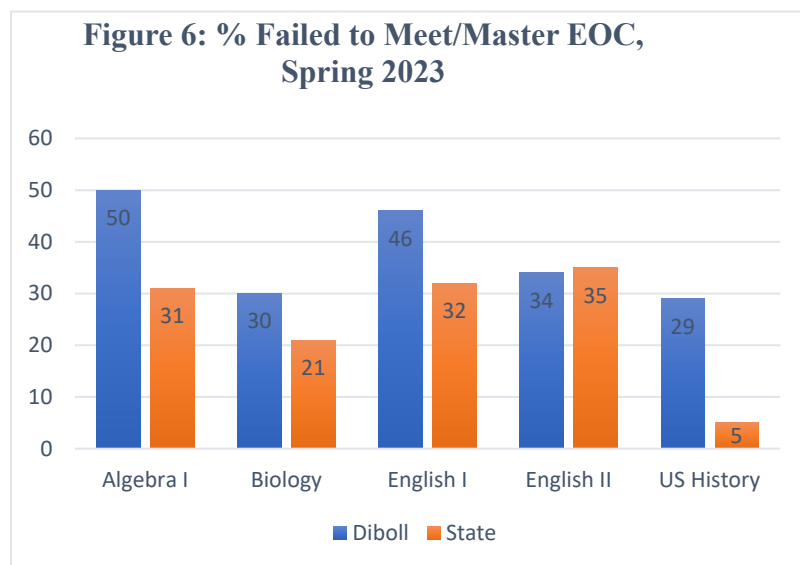
Schools are low-performing: Large numbers of our youth are at risk of academic failure. Texas

ranks **41st** in the nation in an annual report on education quality.²⁹ The Texas Education Agency's Accountability Rating System uses a rating system to determine if schools need support and improvement.³⁰ This system uses a combination of student achievement and school progress to calculate ratings. Diboll schools in 2022 received school accountability marks of B and C on the state's A-C scale,^{31 32} including lowest marks for the middle school. In fact, Diboll Junior High School rated among the **lowest third of all middle schools** in Texas in 2022.

Also, a significant shift in district leadership has placed the Diboll schools in a period of transition, with new leadership in both the superintendent and assistant superintendent roles for the coming year. While transition creates unrest, it can also be a time of fresh starts and new energy for deeper community connections and opportunities for increased collaboration.

High rates of academic failure: Our students are scoring below proficient in reading and math from elementary to high school.³³ To illustrate, in 2021-22, 44% of 3rd grade students were **below** grade level in reading (TX 49%). More than half (55%) of 3rd-graders were **below** grade level in mathematics (TX 57%).³⁴ The trend continues in middle school reading where, in 2021-22, 51% of 8th-graders were **below** grade level in reading (TX 42%) and 61% were **below** grade level for End of Course English I (TX 53%). For all grades in math, 56% of students are not at grade level (TX 58%).³⁵

As students progress through school, the risk of academic failure continues. To illustrate, in 2020-21, the average SAT score for Diboll graduates was 957 across all subjects (TX 1002, U.S. 1060), 471 for English language arts and writing, and 486 for math.^{36,37,38} In 2022, the SAT benchmark was 1010, evidence-based reading and writing was 480, and math was 530.³⁹ The



maximum score on the SAT is 2400. As shown in Figure 6, our students are not meeting the state average for end of course assessments. For instance, in Algebra 50% of students are not meeting or mastering the EOC compared to 31% at the state.

Large numbers of students chronically absent: The Texas Education Agency defines students as being chronically absent if they miss 10% or more of their academic year—typically 18 days. Children at Risk points out that “the pandemic has likely exacerbated chronic absenteeism as more students face new challenges and educational disruptions.”⁴⁰ Research from Attendance Works indicates that with every year of chronic absenteeism, a student’s likelihood of dropping out of school increases significantly.⁴¹ It’s an early warning sign for educators, and high school student absenteeism is a better indicator of school dropout than test scores.⁴² A student is **seven times more likely to drop out** of school if they are chronically absent in any year between 8th and 12th grade.⁴³ Seven percent of all Diboll students were chronically absent, 2020-2021.⁴⁴

Large numbers of students disciplined, suspended: In the 2021-22 school year, 16% of all Diboll students compared to 10% statewide were officially disciplined at school.⁴⁵ The vast majority of disciplinary actions applied in our community schools were attributed to “violations of student conduct,” a Texas catch-all category for everything from classroom disruptions to aggressive language to chronic tardiness and more. Importantly, data indicate a rate of nearly two transgressions per student disciplined; that is, students often have more than one discipline

charged to them **and** were suspended more than one time. And **many Diboll students were suspended;** of the 681 individual disciplines counted, **nearly half (48%) resulted in suspension.**⁴⁶ Specifically, 48% of all suspensions in Diboll schools were of Hispanic students (39%, TX), 32% were white (17%, TX), and 3% were African American/Black (19%, TX). Again, overall, more of our students—60% more—are disciplined than students statewide.

Lack of out of school opportunities and counselor support: Help at school is lacking. The student-to-school counselor ratio in our schools is extremely high. All schools save one have ratios higher than the maximum student to counselor recommended ratio of 250:1 from the American School Counselors Association⁴⁷ (Figure 7).

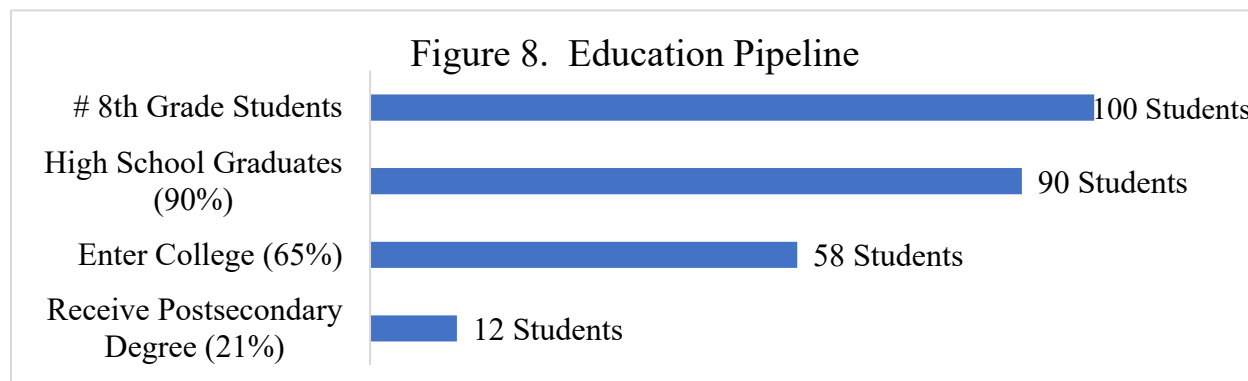
Figure 7: District/School Name	Counselor to Student Ratio
Diboll ISD	
H.G. Temple Elementary School	325 : 1
H.G. Temple Intermediate School	354 : 1
Diboll Junior High School	384 : 1
Diboll High School (<i>2 part-time</i>)	521 : 1.5
Total all Diboll ISD Schools	1,584 : 4.5

Graduates are not academically

ready for college: Diboll High School achieved a 90% High School 4-Year Longitudinal Rate according to the 2022 Federal Report Card.⁴⁸ This graduation rate does not reflect readiness for college or career. **Only 45% percent of our 2021 graduates were academically ready for college when they graduated from high school.**⁴⁹ More alarming, our segmentation analysis reveals that **only 18% of Black/African American students** were academically ready for college upon high school graduation.⁵⁰

Low college-going, attainment rates: Few of our graduates are entering college and very few attain a postsecondary degree. **Sixty-five percent of high school graduates in Diboll enrolled in college,** which compares to state (52%) and national rates (67%).^{51 52} But **only 21%** of our students who enroll in college actually complete and receive a postsecondary certificate or

degree (6-year rate for 4-year institutions and a 3-year rate for 2-year institutions).⁵³ *The status quo predicts a dire future for our youth.* If we maintain status quo, we project **only 12 out of 100** Diboll 8th-graders will receive a postsecondary degree, Figure 8.



Project provides support, resources, and services to the targeted population. Our target population is the students enrolled in our schools and their families. Multiple barriers and challenges impact the children, youth, and families of our target population, as outlined above.

- Priority Student Characteristics**
- Poverty
 - 1st generation college student
 - Chronic absenteeism
 - Kindergarten readiness
 - Homelessness
 - Generational substance abuse
 - Foster, kinship care
 - Youth not working or in school
 - Lack of academic proficiency
 - Unprepared for college
 - Academic failure in 1 course
 - Receiving special education services

We monitor and address these barriers and challenges. Our School Coordinators will monitor and address each of these barriers and challenges through our early warning system and our continual use of data. We will intervene with multiple **direct and comprehensive services** as outlined in Figure 10 (p. 13).

Our FSCS project will serve all students enrolled in our identified schools. And, we will **target services to those students with the most need—priority students.**

Importantly, **our project was designed to ensure with the needs of these priority and their families in mind.** We have developed a slate of resources and services found to be

effective with our priority population. Page 12, Figure 11 provides a detailed view of our services **and** the specific gaps/weaknesses that will be addressed.

Using school level data we will identify the students who fall into a priority category. For example, many of our students qualify for free/reduced lunch—an indicator of lower economic status. Many students live in a family where few adults have achieved their own academic success (low college graduation rates for adults). Our local stakeholders reviewed data, qualitative and quantitative, and talked with residents, educators and community members to identify students with the greatest need.

We have designed a FSCS model **with a tiered intervention system** to ensure that priority students and all students receive appropriate services. Our tiered intervention system is based on the research around Multi-Tier Support Systems. Many articles provide descriptions of responsive, tiered models in their entirety and data to support their effectiveness.⁵⁴ FSCS utilizes the philosophy and framework of tiered support to ensure we provide the **right resources to the right students at the right time**. Our comprehensive model is built on the recognition that all students need varied levels of supports that are targeted and intensive. Across all our services, FSCS utilizes tiered interventions to ensure each student receives supports at the *appropriate level*. More information on our multi-tier support systems can be found in CPP 1.2, page 94. We have developed a slate of resources and services found to be effective with our priority population and with our population as a whole.

It is important to note that **our project is designed to transform every school in Diboll into a community school**. Our approach ensures students in will receive services from cradle to career. The need is consistent across our community and the challenges detailed above permeate each school. Diboll ISD has no outlier schools that are flourishing. Simply put, **our project is designed to reach all students**. To ensure we do so, we have developed a **saturation rate** for

services. That is, we benchmark the anticipated percentage and number of students and family members we expect to reach/serve. For our FSCS project, we anticipate serving the following increasing numbers of students and families annually and over the five years.

Number & percentage of families & students targeted each year for services						Figure 9
	Baseline 2021-22	#/% Year 1	#/% Year 2	#/% Year 3	#/% Year 4	#/% Year 5
Students	1,584	1,188 (75%)	1,220 (77%)	1,251 (79%)	1,283 (81%)	1,315 (83%)
Family Members	1,584	554 (35%)	634 (40%)	713 (45%)	744 (47%)	792 (50%)

Briefly, the services provided to our targeted population will include the following, as **aligned to the Four Pillars of FSCS**:

Services to Be Provided to Students and Families	Figure 10
<p>Pillar 1: Holistic Integrated Student Supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth-5 early childhood programs, including parent engagement; professional learning; early literacy programs • K-12 Academic & Transition Programs, including gaps and solutions identified in each community; professional learning; student interventions; pre-K camps; parent programs; career fairs, financial aid info; job shadowing; college visits; Check & Connect; Waterford Upstart • Social, health, nutrition, and mental health services, including health/wellness programs; nutrition; school safety; mental health referrals; feeding programs • Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness, including Bottom Line Advising; internships; dual enrollment; credentialing; mentoring; parent outreach; pre-apprenticeships • Community-based Support for Students, including GED classes; easy-entry credentialing; housing supports; financial literacy; workforce readiness skills • Juvenile crime prevention, including the Center for School Safety PD for teachers; presentations to students; Check and Connect mentoring; parent outreach; bystander prevention programs (Green Dot); Too Good for Drugs and Violence programs; substance abuse education; Mental Health First Aid for teachers/staff • Health and development services, including wellness checks, dental visits, substance abuse and trauma services, mental health services 	
<p>Pillar 2: Expanded, enriched learning time and opportunities from cradle to career</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postsecondary Readiness, including ACT and FAFSA prep; college visits; dual enrollment • Afterschool and out-of-school programming, including tutoring, mentoring, summer camps, 	

Services to Be Provided to Students and Families	Figure 10
<p>test prep, college going support, arts, music and STEM programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Readiness, including entry-level work credentials while in high school; pre-apprentice opportunities; GED assistance; career fairs; work-based education 	
<p>Pillar 3: Family and Community Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family learning opportunities, including financial literacy, computer classes, access to the internet, parent education • Family engagement and mobilization, including, National Network for Partnership Schools (NNPS) and parent nation training to help families elevate their own leadership skills and voice • Teacher professional learning, including NNPS and Mapp’s Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family Engagement to help educators support families in the schoolhouse • Service referrals for family supports, including food security programs, health and mental health services, housing supports, GED courses and testing, etc. • Early warning systems and supports, including Check & Connect for student attendance, mentors and family connectors to check in with family members, and positive information shared with families related to their child’s engagement in school 	
<p>Pillar 4: Collaborative Leadership & Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting community friendly schools, including developing collective trust at the schools, measured through baseline surveys of families • Share Professional Learning, including learning for educators (Dual Capacity Framework) and families (NNPS and Parent Nation) to support development of family and student ‘voice’ • Diversity of Perspectives via tiered governance structure, including the project-wide engagement of youth, educators, families and community members on Consortium and Partnership Council, and our multiple School Advisory Boards (1 per school) • Targeting services to priority students, including use of multi-tiered interventions, data disaggregation, and community school coordinator focus on priority students 	

Project closes gaps in educational opportunity

Briefly, our strategies to ensure the closing of gaps includes:

- Identifying “priority” students and ensuring they receive services;
- Implementing a cradle-to-career network of support that includes referrals to essential services such as housing assistance, physical and mental health, and food security, as we understand that academic supports are not enough in high poverty schools and challenged geographic areas;

- Expanding the availability of opportunities available to children, youth and families that include opportunities that are not normally available to those living in poverty; and
- Expanding the collaborative and productive relationships between students, educators, parents, and community members and centering the school as the hear of community.

The components of our research-informed, proactive response to our community’s current educational pipeline are as follows:

Pipeline of Services Provided by the Full Service Community School		Figure 11
Services to be Provided	Service Gap/Need for Services	Anticipated Results
<p><u>Early childhood</u> Provide high-quality early childhood education program</p>	<p>34% kindergarteners not ready for kindergarten on Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment</p>	<p>Increase in the number of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority children and their families participating in transition to kindergarten programs • Early childhood students ready for kindergarten
<p><u>Expanded learning</u> Provide high-quality expanded learning time and opportunities with staff and volunteer support</p>	<p>Low performing schools, 56% meeting benchmark in 3rd grade reading; 45% meeting benchmark in 3rd grade math, 49% meeting benchmark in 8th grade reading; SAT avg for all students below benchmark; 55% of students not ready for college</p>	<p>Increase in the number of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority students participating in out-of-school time programs • Staff and volunteers to provide expanded learning opportunities • Students engaged in expanded learning systems • Opportunities in art, music, drama and creative writing • Opportunities in STEM
<p><u>Transition support</u> Provide increased support for student transitions to elementary, from elementary to middle, from middle to high, and from high school into and through postsecondary</p>	<p>Low performing schools; Comprehensive advising, counseling, and academic interventions limited; 55% of HS graduates not college-ready; nearly 7% of all students chronically absent; 21% families and 42% of children live in poverty; 71% of residents have a high school</p>	<p>Increase in the number of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority students and their families participating in transitions programs across grade levels • Priority students receiving mentoring, tutoring and supportive services • Priority students in work-based

Pipeline of Services Provided by the Full Service Community School		Figure 11
Services to be Provided	Service Gap/Need for Services	Anticipated Results
education	diploma	learning opportunities
<p><u>Engagement</u> Activate family and community engagement, including engaging families as partners and supporting families at school or at home</p>	21% families and 42% of children live in poverty; 4.6% unemployment rate; 42% households are liquid asset poor; opioid crisis in community; 22% of students in kinship care/ 10% in foster care; 16% of students disciplined	Increase in the number of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High school students supported in college and career planning by parents • Staff receiving job-embedded training in the Dual Capacity Framework and other programs to effectively engage parents • Priority and other students and families who participate in school activities and leadership roles for the FSCS services
<p><u>College/Career</u> Provide activities that support postsecondary and workforce readiness, which may include job training, workplace learning, and career counseling</p>	55% not academically ready for college at high school graduation; 13% of adults have bachelor’s degree or higher (less than 1% of Black/African Americans with a degree); 71% of residents have a high school diploma; SAT avg for all students below benchmark;	Increase in the number of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority students and their families who participate in transition from high school to college activities • Students who graduate high school prepared for college • Increase in the number of students receiving college credits while in high school • High school students supported in their college and career planning by their parents
<p><u>Connection</u> Provide community-based support for students, facilitating their continued connection to the community and success in postsecondary education and the workforce</p>	55% not academically ready for college at high school graduation; 42% children live in poverty; 21% families live in poverty; 13% of adults have college degree; 4.6% unemployment rate; 42% households liquid asset poor; 22% of our students are in kinship care / 10% in foster care	Increase in the number of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority students who graduate from high school prepared for college • Increase in the number of families referred to services
<p><u>Wellness</u></p>	Few health/mental health facilities	Increase in the number of:

Pipeline of Services Provided by the Full Service Community School		Figure 11
Services to be Provided	Service Gap/Need for Services	Anticipated Results
Provide community-based student and family supports, including social-emotional, health, nutrition, and mental health services.	or services easily accessible; 42% children live in poverty; 21% families live in poverty; 7% of all students are chronically absent; Poor state ranking on Life, Health and Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student assessments conducted to identify needed supports • Students referred for services to support individual needs • School providers, parents and volunteers trained in evidence-based support curriculum • Medical, dental, vision, mental and behavioral health providers
<u>Crime prevention</u> Provide juvenile crime prevention and rehabilitation programs.	Rural poverty with 42% children in poverty; 21% families live in poverty; 13% of adults have college degree; 4.6% unemployment rate; 7% of students chronically absent, 42% households liquid asset poor, 22% of our students in kinship care/ 10% in foster care; 16% of students are disciplined	Increase in the number of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students and families referred for ISS services at the school or from the community • Staff trained in prevention models

Our strategies for addressing **current gaps and weaknesses** are informed by evidence and a long track record of success—not tradition, personal judgment, or other biases - and are further described on pages 37-43 of our Quality of Project Design. From that point, and in close collaboration with community members, the four pillars are applied to the data as noted above. In addition, our services and strategies—described throughout this proposal—briefly include:

- A full-time Community School Coordinator in each of the 4 schools
- Expanded safe and structured learning environments during the afterschool, weekend, summer, community-based experiences/events
- NNPS, Parent Nation and the Dual Capacity-Building Framework (for families and schools) to build family engagement and voice
- An early warning and tiered intervention system combined with evidence-based and research

informed practices

- School Advisory Boards to develop projects locally for local students and families.

(2) Quality of the Project Design

(2) (A) Extent to which design reflects relevant and evidence-based findings from existing literature, includes high quality plan for implementation integrating the four FSCS pillars and the use of appropriate evaluation methods to ensure successful achievement of project objectives

To fully present our project design, we provide freestanding descriptions on the following pages.

Each section responds directly to elements within the Quality of Project Design criterion.

- Relevant and evidence-based findings from existing literature *Pages 18-29*
- Project implementation integrating the four pillars of FSC schools *Pages 29-31*
- Appropriate evaluation methods to ensure achievement of objectives *Pages 36 - 43*

Reflects relevant and evidence-based findings from existing literature

The foundation for our project design is the evidence-based four pillars of a FSCS. The four pillars emerged from a comprehensive review of community schools research conducted by the Learning Policy Institute (LPI).⁵⁵ LPI concludes that the four community school pillars align closely with **evidence-based features of good schools**, derived from decades of research identifying school characteristics that foster students’ intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development.⁵⁶ Figure 12, extracted from the LPI’s 2017 comprehensive review, illustrates the “pillar” to “good schools” connections.⁵⁷

Learning Policy Institute Synthesis of Alignment of Four Pillars With Evidence-Based Features of Good Schools		Figure 12
Community School Pillars	Associated “Good School” Characteristics	
Integrated student supports will provide a dedicated professional staff member to coordinate support to address out-of-school barriers to learning via partnerships with social, nutrition, & mental health service agencies and providers. Some employ social emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attention to all aspects of child development: academic, social, emotional, physical, psychological, and moral • Extra academic, social, and health and wellness supports for students, as needed 	

Learning Policy Institute Synthesis of Alignment of Four Pillars With Evidence-Based Features of Good Schools		Figure 12
Community School Pillars	Associated “Good School” Characteristics	
learning, conflict resolution training, and restorative justice practices to support mental health and lessen conflict, bullying, and punitive disciplinary actions (e.g., suspensions).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate of safety and trusting relationships 	
Expanded learning time and opportunities to implement structured and safe learning environments that enhance what students learn during traditional school hours. We will implement afterschool, weekend, and summer programs to provide individualized academic support, enrichment activities, and learning opportunities that emphasize real-world learning with field trips and tutoring programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning is the top priority • High expectations and strong instruction for all students • Sufficient resources and opportunities for meaningful learning 	
Active parent and community engagement bring parents/community into the school as partners in children’s education and make the school a neighborhood hub with family nights and parent/teacher conferences. Also, grant adults with educational opportunities such as English as a Second Language classes, citizenship preparation, computer skills, art, STEM, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong school, family and community ties, including opportunities for shared leadership Climate of safety and trusting relationships 	
Collaborative leadership and practices build a culture of professional learning, collective trust and shared responsibility using such strategies as site-based leadership/governance teams, teacher learning communities, and a community-school coordinator who manages the multiple, complex joint work of school and community organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture of teacher collaboration & professional learning • Assessment as a tool for improvement and shared accountability 	

PRI has been operating community schools for **more than 10 years**. In 2012, we implemented our first FSCS program in 16 rural schools. Over the next decade, we grew our work to reach 93 schools. For each implementation we completed a needs assessment of the community and solicited input from students, parents, educators, partners, and policy makers. Our model included—and continues to include—analysis of the needs assessment, stakeholder input,

and a research and literature review.

Our experience and practice tell us that **one size will never fit all**—not even in a set of rural communities. Therefore, from the needs assessment, we adopt individual research-based frameworks to deliver the appropriate, individualized, and evidence-based activities, strategies, and interventions to a single school. In everything, we reflect best practices for **improving healthy development and academic outcomes of low-income, rural students**.

For every project and school, we use a continuous improvement model (Figure 24) to advance the project; we assess our impact, continue to review research, and continue to follow the evidence and best practices to ensure our FSCS have positive impact. To be clear, we use a tried and tested model to ensure distinct solutions for each school based upon the needs assessment and stakeholder input, as further described below.

In deciding how best to operationalize the four pillars and determine appropriate services for our FSCSs collectively and individually, we conducted an extensive research and literature review of best practices for improving academic achievement in rural, high-poverty schools with needs similar to ours. We focused on identifying evidence-based interventions that yield the most promising results in rural communities. Additional information on the research and evidence base for our project services and interventions can be found on page 37-43 and 55-58.

Our comprehensive research and literature review, the community needs assessment and stakeholder input are the foundation for why we selected the services to be coordinated by our FSCS sites. The components of our research-informed, proactive response to our community’s current educational pipeline are as follows:

Integrated Student Supports: Evidence suggests^{58, 59} the implementation of our framework of Integrated Student Supports (ISS) at each of our FSCS will lead to increased

student achievement. The National Guidelines for Integrated Student Supports identifies “... intentionally and systematically leveraging and coordinating the resources and relationships”⁶⁰ available to the schools through the community as an **evidence-based strategy** that promotes both healthy child development and learning. Further, the national guidelines stress the importance of addressing the strengths **and** needs of each individual student.

Importantly, the National Guidelines confirm what we have always known. The integration of comprehensive services is not an **extra** thing teachers and leaders must do; it is an improvement of processes and connections for “accelerating student learning and wellbeing by capitalizing on what schools are already doing.”⁶¹

Child Trends conducted a comprehensive and rigorous review of the theoretical, empirical, practice, and evaluation findings that underlie ISS as an approach. In their study, they drew on research in child and youth development, examined the empirical research on factors that affect school success, conducted additional quantitative analyses, examined existing program evaluations, and interviewed numerous leading practitioners in the ISS field. They found “there is emerging evidence, especially from quasi-experimental studies, that ISS can contribute to student academic progress as measured by decreases in grade retention and dropout, and increases in attendance, math achievement, reading and ELA achievement, and overall GPA.”⁶² Key to this finding was high-quality implementation of the following critical characteristics of the Integrated Student Support model:

- ISS staff conduct needs assessments, develop or locate needed supports in the community, and work with providers to coordinate supports so students receive a set of mutually reinforcing supports tailored to their individual needs.
- Supports address both academic and non-academic barriers to student success; these include

supports to a student’s family.

- ISS programs seek close partnerships with school leadership and staff to enhance program effectiveness, so ISS staff are based in schools.
- ISS staff are data-driven and track student needs and outcomes over time.

Our FSCS design, our evaluation plan, and our model of ensuring continuous feedback and modification, will ensure we implement the ISS model with fidelity and quality.

Expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities: Our program is designed to provide students with expanded and enriched learning time, and to ensure they graduate high school prepared to enter higher education **without the need for remediation**. In our rural context we have learned that the work of FSCS must take place during in-school **and** out of school time. Our design expands and enriches out of school learning time while also enriching in-school learning time, and is based on our ongoing work to create good schools (e.g., curriculum alignment, instructional practices).

Our students and their families face the impact of pervasive poverty each day. Robert Balfanz, PhD—research professor at the Center for the Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins University School of Education, director of the Everyone Graduates Center, and co-founder of Diplomas Now—points out in *Overcoming the Poverty Challenge to Enable College and Career Readiness for All: The Crucial Role of Student Supports*, that the poverty challenge **must be addressed differently** in schools like ours where the majority of students live in poverty.⁶³ With appropriate program design, challenges of poverty can be overcome, ensuring students will be ready for higher education without the need for remediation. Figure 10 illustrates the evidence base of our framework and the related **effective practices that we will replicate**.

To be clear, the work of Balfanz on the crucial role of student supports—referenced above—is both pioneering in its practicality and seminal to the field of education. First published

in 2013, it remains unrefuted and is, in fact, supported in the literature by countless researchers and practitioners. Therefore, in addition to explicitly citing pages from the Balfanz work⁶⁴, we **also footnote/cite relevant studies aligned to his findings** (see Figure 13, endnotes).

Evidence Basis and Replication of Effective Practices		Figure 13
Evidence Basis	Replication of Effective Interventions	
Amass the additional people needed to provide coordinated, consistent, evidence-based supports <i>Balfanz, page 7</i> <i>Also see Henry (2017)</i> ⁶⁵	We recognize the importance of consistent caring individuals providing evidence-based support . Our FSCS coordinator and volunteers will provide direct services, academic and non-cognitive, during expanded learning time, and will implement evidence-based practices.	
Use data to identify students' needs <i>Balfanz, page 18</i> <i>Also see Flannery (2019)</i> ⁶⁶	Through our partnership with schools, School Coordinators will utilize data in real time to evaluate student needs, and to ensure they receive appropriate services during expanded learning times.	
Implement early warning systems (EWS) <i>Balfanz, page 19</i> <i>Also see Faria (2017)</i> ⁶⁷	Our Early Warning System , based on real-time data, signals that a student is falling off track to graduating without the need for remediation in postsecondary. School Coordinators will regularly monitor the early warning system to ensure students are on track.	
Adopt preventative, real-time intervention and rapid recovery student support strategies <i>Balfanz, page 20</i> Progress monitoring key to tiered interventions <i>Also see Klingbeil (2016)</i> ⁶⁸	School Coordinators are key to our real-time intervention . Their continual review of student progress enables rapid intervention. For example, if an 8 th grader is below benchmark on math, which puts them "off track" for graduating without the need for remediation, the FSCS coordinator will ensure the student is provided extended learning opportunities where math supports will be immediately provided. As importantly, the FSCS Coordinator will monitor to ensure they move back "on track."	
Employ a disciplined multi-tiered approach with built-in continuous improvement tools <i>Balfanz, page 20</i> <i>Also see Arden (2017)</i> ⁶⁹	We employ a tiered intervention system : At 1 st level, practices are in place school wide. At 2 nd level, school and program staff use targeted, small group interventions. At 3 rd level, staff and volunteers undertake one-on-one, efforts. School Coordinators continually review data to determine level of interventions.	
Deploying volunteers to provide coordinated, consistent, student supports <i>Balfanz, pages 8, 21</i>	Our FSCS will use trained volunteers and to provide support to our students. Examples are our use of the Check and Connect evidence-based intervention to support students in the transition from 8 th to 9 th grade and the Bottom Line Advising	

Evidence Basis and Replication of Effective Practices		Figure 13
Evidence Basis	Replication of Effective Interventions	
<i>Also see Henry (2017b)</i> ⁷⁰	evidence- based intervention to support 12 th grade students	

Active family and community engagement: Our design is informed by research and practice around active family and community engagement as well as family and community mobilization. Research has consistently shown that academic achievement increases if parents are involved and engaged in a child’s learning.⁷¹ Further, we adhere to the **complementary learning approach** of the Global Family Research Project (formerly the Harvard Family Research Project), based on decades of research exhibiting the effectiveness of integrated supports in promoting children’s learning and contributing to their school success.⁷²

Learning that occurs at home can complement and extend what children learn in school. When families are involved in children’s learning, no matter what their income or background, they have a positive influence on student social and academic outcomes.⁷³ Family involvement in education holds promise for fostering academic achievement and healthy development among children. To facilitate family involvement, schools and communities can draw from exemplary practices, such as projects that **train parents as leaders for other parents’ learning**⁷⁴ and organizing that engages families to focus on school performance/accountability.⁷⁵ Students with involved parents, no matter their income or background, are more likely to earn high grades and test scores and enroll in higher-level programs; pass their classes, earn credits, and be promoted; attend school regularly; and graduate and go on to postsecondary education.

A literature review by Wood and Bauman (2017)—a partnership of the Nellie Mae Education Foundation and the American Institutes for Research—confirms positive indicators **and** found parent engagement at home around learning was a **statistically significant predictor** of both grades and days missed in schools.⁷⁶ “Students with more engaged parents had higher

academic achievement and missed fewer days of school” (p. 10). This latter point confirms the research of Balfanz and Byrnes around the impacts of absenteeism on achievement. They note, for students to be successful in school, they must first be **in** school. In their ground-breaking, national report, Balfanz and Byrnes (2012) credit attendance with success at some level for **all students**; attendance affects everything. This is especially true for students of poverty. Multiple studies have confirmed Balfanz’s work over the past decade, including that of Gottfried (2014, 2019)⁷⁷, who also implies an impact on learning outcomes for non-absent peers due to redirected classroom resources to help absent students catch up.

Core to our approach is Dr. Karen Mapp’s **Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family School Partnerships**⁷⁸ which provides a picture of what engagement should be. Trust and respectful practices are at its core. School and home partnerships flourish when both families and educators have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to interact in positive, productive, and intentional ways. As the Dual-Capacity Framework is introduced, each school leadership team will identify the barriers for strong home and school partnerships (Asset Mapping, Year 1).

The Dual Capacity Framework has been adopted by the U.S. Department of Education. Importantly, Partners for Rural Impact (PRI) was an **early implementer of the Framework**, having been trained by Dr. Mapp at a U.S. Department of Education convening in 2014. Our partners agree that it is the appropriate foundation for our FSCS.

We will **activate that framework** through **The National Network for Partnership Schools’** (NNPS) model of six types of family involvement strategies: Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Decision Making, and Collaborating with the Community.⁷⁹ The NNPS evidence-based model, developed at Johns Hopkins University, is a key anchor for **how** to support parents and schools as they support children. It is peer-reviewed and is a **What Works Clearinghouse identified strategy for parental involvement**. The NNPS model is distinguished

by its practical and growing examples of activities and practices to support schools, CBOs, families, and stakeholders to determine specific actions to support family engagement. Key PRI staff and dozens of support staff are trained in the NNPS model; all Community Schools Coordinators will receive training in Mapp’s Family Engagement Framework, the NNPS implementation framework, and in Parent Nation (p. 28).

Collaborative leadership and practice: No single program, voice, nor a single participating entity can accelerate results for all children. PRI’s approach brings together a wide range of groups committed to student success—not just families and teachers, but also businesses, civic organizations, nonprofits and investors. These cross-sector partners adopt common goals and expand on best practices for their local community. Cross-sector partners work daily—in our historic work and going forward in these FSCS sites—to find resources and supportive organizations/agencies to fill identified gaps in services. This includes listening to individual concerns of schools and their grassroots activists (families, teachers, students, leaders) regarding missing pieces for healthy student development and ongoing learning.

As research notes, **each place is unique** and has its own assets, resources, and strengths that can be built upon. In our 25 years of work in rural communities, we have come to deeply understand this fact. Since community needs are locally based, place-based initiatives like community schools **must be locally driven**.⁸⁰

PRI’s place-based, results-oriented frame will increase the likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement. Our experience has been that place-based work can be accelerated when all organizations align around shared results and a shared plan. Each FSCS School Coordinator—four coordinators in all—will incorporate PRI’s results-based leadership approach. Core to our approach is Theory of Aligned Contributions as a change

model.⁸¹ The Theory of Aligned Contributions contends that it is more likely that population-level change will occur when a critical mass of leaders uses a set of collaborative skills and tools to (1) focus on a single result, for which they have a sense of urgency to improve, (2) create a culture of accountability, and (3) align and execute actions and strategies across agencies and programs at a high enough scope and scale to contribute to measurable improvements.

As illustrated in Figure 18, our FSCS schools will be supported by **three separate-but-aligned** committees/councils focused on remedying gaps now, and in sustained ways. These three groups—Consortium, Partnership Council, and School Advisory Board—are focused on:

- Project-wide results, such as the fiscal efficiency and project outcomes (**Consortium**)
- Project-wide solutions to support students, families, teachers, leaders (**Partnership Council**)
- School-based engagement and implementation for students, families, teachers, leaders, and partners (**School Advisory Board**)

A full description of our collaborative governance begins on page 64.

Job Embedded Professional Development for Educators: Teacher quality is the strongest school-related factor that can improve student learning and achievement.⁸² Researcher Linda Darling-Hammond has defined teaching quality as “instruction that enables a wide range of students to learn.”⁸³ Our FSCS will support teachers by connecting educators and instructors in extended school programs to job-embedded professional development (JEPD). Our School Coordinators will ensure professional learning will be of the intensity needed to impact teacher quality. When instructors receive well-designed professional development for at least an average of 49 hours over 6 to 12 months, they can **increase student achievement** by as much as 21 percentile points.⁸⁴ Our professional learning activities expand the capacities of instructors to present in-school and extended learning classes with increased rigor and greater efficacy.

Parent Mobilization: We will work side-by-side with parents to support **identification of systemic barriers to family engagement, along with mobilization of solutions to barriers.**

We have adopted *Parent Nation* mobilization practices based on the science of early brain development. The vision and strategy are informed by neuroscience, political science, and the lived experiences of families.⁸⁵ In simple terms, the *Parent Nation* movement is a nonpartisan movement to motivate, educate, and engage parents with young and school-age children in ways that will help them advocate for their children’s success. It has often been compared to AARP, similarly formed around a need to equip adults to advocate nationally for themselves and others.

Parent Nation provides flexible (not prescriptive) methods for developing the non-political voices of parents and families. Central to *Parent Nation*’s work is the network of Parent Villages—small groups of parents who come together to foster community, forge collective identity and leave inspired to fight for change so they can succeed in raising their children. The curriculum facilitates conversations within small groups of parents in local communities, and champions parents as their children’s primary brain architect, first teacher, lifetime advocate, and coach.

Core to the *Parent Nation* framework is the belief that **parents can and should lead.** Therefore, key to our work with parents—across all strategies and activities—is to hold parents as the leaders and experts they are. We will provide learning and leadership opportunities for parents led by parents, as we understand the power of **peer-to-peer learning.**

Project implementation integrates the four pillars of FSC schools

PRI has vast experience in the successful implementation, operation, and sustaining of FSC schools in rural communities. Our continually refined implementation model integrates the four pillars. PRI’s CEO Dreama Gentry, J.D., served on the Brookings FSCS Taskforce 2.0 which

contributed to the design of the Four Pillars model. In 2022, Gentry participated in discussions with the Domestic Policy Council and the U.S. Department of Education’s leadership around the pillars and the relevance to rural spaces. Dr. Couch, our Principal Investigator, has participated in roundtables and forums related to the design and roll-out of the pillars. More importantly, as a current FSCS grantee, we have been at the table as the Department prepared us for a strong implementation process with the Pillars. Like our own FSCS implementations over the years, the Pillars build up an evidence base of what works for children, students, youth, and their families. We have developed a high-quality implementation plan that integrates the four pillars of FSCS.

Essential to our FSCS plan is the Learning Policy Institute’s **research-based lessons** for guiding implementation,⁸⁶ which we utilize in both our design (above) and implementation.

- **Lesson 1.** Integrated Student Supports (ISS), expanded learning time and opportunities, active family and community engagement, and collaborative leadership practices reinforce each other. A comprehensive approach that brings all of these factors together requires changes to existing structures, practices, and partnerships at school sites.
- **Lesson 2.** Implementation **fidelity** matters. Results are much stronger when programs with clearly defined elements and structures are implemented consistently across different sites.
- **Lesson 3.** For expanded learning time and opportunities, student access to services and the way time is used make a difference. Students who participate for longer hours or a more extended period receive the most benefit, as do those attending programs that offer activities that are engaging, are well aligned with the instructional day (i.e., not just homework help, but content to enrich classroom learning), and that address whole-child interests and needs (i.e., not just academics).
- **Lesson 4.** Students can benefit when schools offer a spectrum of engagement opportunities

for families, ranging from providing information on supporting student learning at home and volunteering at school, to welcoming parents involved with community organizations seeking to influence local education policy. Doing so can help establish trusting relationships building on community-based competencies, and support culturally relevant learning opportunities.

- **Lesson 5.** Collaboration and shared decision-making matter in the community schools approach. That is, community schools are stronger when they develop a variety of structures and practices (e.g., leadership and planning committees, professional learning communities) that bring educators, partner organizations, parents, and students together as decision makers in development, governance, and improvement of school programs.
- **Lesson 6.** Strong implementation requires attention to all elements of the community schools model and to their placement at the center of the school. Community schools benefit from maintaining a strong academic improvement focus, and students benefit from schools that offer more intense or sustained services. Implementation is most effective when data are used in an ongoing process of continuous program evaluation and improvement, and sufficient time is allowed for the strategy to fully mature.
- **Lesson 7.** Educators and policymakers embarking on a community schools' approach can benefit from a framework that focuses on creating school conditions and practices characteristic of high performing schools and ameliorating out-of-school barriers to teaching and learning. Doing so will position them to improve outcomes in communities facing poverty and isolation.
- **Lesson 8.** Successful community schools do not all look alike. Therefore, effective plans for comprehensive place-based initiatives leverage local assets to meet local needs, while

understanding that programming may need to be modified over time in response to changes in the school and community.

Our experience implementing community schools, these lessons, and our continuous improvement model will ensure that our project implementation integrates the pillars and achieves our stated outcomes.

Appropriate evaluation methods ensure achievement of objectives

To ensure impact, we provide the following ambitious and attainable goals, objectives, and performance measures (outcomes), Figure 14.

Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes		Figure 14
Objectives with Available Baseline	Performance Measures (Outcomes)	
<p>Goal 1: To improve academics for all students—cradle to career—including students who are underserved and those identified as most at-risk (priority students)</p>		
<p>Obj 1.1 25% increase in the number of students ready for kindergarten</p> <p>2021-22 School Year Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment → 34% of students not K-ready</p>	<p>PM 1.1.1: #/% of priority students and their families participating in <u>transition to kindergarten programs</u></p> <p>PM 1.1.2: #/% of priority students at <u>kindergarten readiness</u> on assessment;</p>	
<p>Obj 1.2 20% increase in the number of students scoring proficient in math on State/US assessments</p> <p>2021-22 School Year → State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 55% 3rd grade students below grade level • 56% All students below grade level <p>Baseline Established during the first half of Year 1</p>	<p>PM 1.2.1: #/% of priority students participating in <u>out of school learning time</u></p> <p>PM 1.2.2: #/% of priority students and their families who participate in <u>transition programs</u>—elementary to middle, middle to high, high to college and career</p> <p>PM 1.2.3: #/% of priority students, receiving <u>mentoring, supportive services</u></p> <p>PM 1.2.4: #/% of priority students at <u>proficient or above</u> in math on STAAR assessment</p> <p>PM 1.2.5: #/% priority students at/above</p>	

Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes		Figure 14
Objectives with Available Baseline	Performance Measures (Outcomes)	
	<u>benchmark</u> in math on the SAT	
<p>Obj 1.3 25% increase in the number of students scoring proficient in Reading</p> <p>2021-22 School Year → State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 44% 3rd grade students below grade level • 51% 8th grade students below grade level • 61% below grade level EOC English I <p>Baseline Established during the first half of Year 1</p>	<p>PM 1.3.1: #/% of priority students participating in <u>out of school learning time</u></p> <p>PM 1.3.2: #/% of priority students and their parents participating in <u>transition programs</u></p> <p>PM 1.3.3: #/% priority students receiving <u>mentoring, supportive services</u></p> <p>PM 1.3.4: #/% of priority students at <u>proficient and above</u> in Reading on state assessment</p> <p>PM 1.3.5: % priority students <u>at/above benchmark</u> in reading on the SAT</p>	
<p>Obj 1.4 20% increase in number of students who graduate high school prepared for college</p> <p>2021-22 School Year 2021-22 School Year Individual student college readiness is determine using a variety of indicators including the SAT</p> <p>→ SAT reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 471 average score <p>→ SAT math</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 486 average score <p>Baseline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established during the first half of Year 1 	<p>PM 1.4.1: % of priority students <u>at/above benchmark</u> on SAT in Reading and in Math</p> <p>PM 1.4.2: #/% of priority students and their families who participate in <u>transition from HS</u> to college activities</p>	
<p>Obj 1.5 25% decrease in the number of students who are chronically absent</p> <p>2021 Chronic Absenteeism in Texas Report Chronic absentee data → 7% of all students (2019) chronically absent</p> <p>Baseline</p>	<p>PM 1.5.1: #/% of <u>chronically absent</u> priority students, measured annually</p>	

Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes		Figure 14
Objectives with Available Baseline	Performance Measures (Outcomes)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established during the first half of Year 1 		
<p>Goal 2: To increase cradle to career integrated student supports</p>		
<p>Obj 2.1 Increase in number of partnerships with social and health service agencies</p> <p>Baseline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established during the first half of Year 1. Data collected: Initial asset mapping of communities; survey of all schools, districts, Family Resource/Services Centers (FRYSCs) and Partnership Committee members 	<p>PM 2.1.1: # partnerships with medical, dental, vision, and mental and behavioral health services</p> <p>PM 2.1.2: # partnerships with housing, transportation, and food security providers</p> <p>PM 2.1.3: # partnerships with orgs. assisting with criminal justice issues including re-entry and expungement</p>	
<p>Obj 2.2 Increase in number of parents referred to appropriate support services (e.g., housing assistance, health, mental health, food security providers)</p> <p>Baseline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established during the first half of Year 1 Data collected: Initial asset mapping of communities; survey of all schools, districts, Family Resource/Services Centers [FRYSCs], and Partnership Committee members 	<p>PM 2.2.1: # of programs identified for family members</p> <p>PM 2.2.2: #/% of families who participate in FSCS programs</p> <p>PM 2.2.3: #/% of families referred to appropriate services</p>	
<p>Goal 3: To expand and enrich out-of-school learning time and opportunities for K-12</p>		
<p>Obj 3.1 Increase by 25% the #/% of students participating in out-of-school learning</p> <p>Baseline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established during the first half of Year 1. Data collected: Initial and annual pre/post surveys to all schools and students to determine existing opportunities and hours of student participation 	<p>PM 3.1.1: Increased # of <u>priority students</u> who participate in out-of-school learning time</p> <p>PM 3.1.2: Increased # of <u>hours</u> priority students participate in out-of-school learning time</p> <p>PM 3.1.3: Increased # of <u>opportunities</u> in art, music, drama, and creative writing available in all schools</p> <p>PM 3.1.4: Increased # of <u>opportunities</u> in STEM available in all schools</p>	
<p>Obj 3.2 Improve the <u>quality</u> of out-of-school learning time opportunities</p>	<p>PM 3.2.1: Increase in the # of out-of-school providers <u>trained</u> in evidence-based practices and curriculum (families,</p>	

Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes		Figure 14
Objectives with Available Baseline	Performance Measures (Outcomes)	
<p>Baseline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established during the first half of Year 1 Data collected: Initial and annual pre/post surveys, training registrations for schools, community members, families, and volunteers 	<p>educators, community members, and volunteers)</p> <p>PM 3.2.2: Increase in the # of <u>evidence informed programs</u> offered during out-of-school time K-12 learning</p> <p>PM 3.2.3: Increase in <u>tutoring</u> available and provided that aligns with classroom success including homework help</p>	
<p>Obj 3.3 Increase in the # of work-based learning opportunities tied to high quality employment opportunities in local labor market</p> <p>Baseline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established during the first half of Year 1 Data collected: Initial and annual pre/post surveys and training registrations for schools, community members, families, and volunteers 	<p>PM 3.3.1: Increase in the # of work-based learning <u>opportunities</u></p> <p>PM 3.3.2: Increase in the # of <u>priority youth</u> participating in work-based learning</p> <p>PM 3.3.3: Increase in the # of work-based learning opportunities <u>completed</u> by priority youth</p>	
<p>Obj 3.4 Increase in the # of high school students participating in and receiving college credit through dual enrollment courses</p> <p>Baseline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established during the first half of Year 1 Data collected: Initial and annual # of courses at each school, # of participating students, # of credits earned 	<p>PM 3.4.1: Increased # of <u>dual enrollment courses offered</u></p> <p>PM 3.4.2: Increased #/% of priority students <u>taking dual enrollment courses</u></p> <p>PM 3.4.3: Increased #/% of priority students <u>receiving college credit</u> via dual enrollment courses</p>	
<p>Goal 4: To increase active family and community engagement</p>		
<p>Obj 4.1 Increase by 25% the number of families and community members (adults) who come into the school building for meetings, events or programming</p> <p>Baseline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established during the first half of Year 1 Data collected: Initial and annual # and type of school visitors 	<p>PM 4.1.1: Increased # of <u>opportunities</u> for families, parents, and community members to come into the school building (engagement)</p> <p>PM 4.1.2: Increased #/% of <u>attendance</u> (families, community members) for school-based meetings, events or programming</p> <p>PM 4.1.3: Increased #/% of <u>attendance</u> for families of priority students for school-based meetings, events or</p>	

Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes		Figure 14
Objectives with Available Baseline	Performance Measures (Outcomes)	
	programming	
<p>Obj 4.2 Increase by 25% the #/% of families/parents who see the school as a “hub of service”</p> <p>Baseline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established during the first half of Year 1 Data collected: Initial and annual pre/post surveys; registration/attendance; evaluation rubric on framework and engagement 	<p>PM 4.2.1: Increased #/% of <u>positive responses</u> from families/parents to aligned questions on pre/post surveys</p> <p>PM 4.2.2: # of <u>educators trained</u> in evidence-based Framework for Family and Community by Dr. Karen Mapp</p> <p>PM 4.2.3: # of <u>schools implementing</u> the Framework for Family and Community (Mapp) with fidelity</p>	
<p>Obj 4.3 Increase by 25% the #/% of parents/caregivers (adults) who participate as advocates and/or volunteers in their local schools and districts</p> <p>Baseline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established during the first half of Year 1 Data collected: Initial and ongoing annual measurement of activities by type and by number of participants in local schools through Parent Nation 	<p>PM 4.3.1: Increase in the # of <u>overall volunteers</u> in each school</p> <p>PM 4.3.2: Increase in the # of <u>priority volunteers</u> (i.e., from families of priority students) in each school</p> <p>PM 4.3.3: # of <u>all adults who advocate</u> for and support student programming via local leadership roles</p> <p>PM 4.3.4: # of <u>priority adults who advocate</u> for and support student programming via local leadership roles</p> <p>PM 4.3.5: # of <u>adults attending Parent Nation</u> meetings to learn about and become advocates for children and students</p> <p>PM 4.3.6: # of <u>priority adults attending Parent Nation</u> meetings to learn about and become advocates for children and students</p>	
<p>Goal 5: To establish and sustain collaborative leadership processes and practices</p>		
<p>Obj 5.1 Increase in number of educators, family members, community members participating in collaborative leadership processes and practices at multiple levels</p> <p>Baseline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established during the first half of Year 1 Data collected will include initial and ongoing 	<p>PM 5.1.1: # of <u>Consortium participants</u> (overall project leadership, fiscal responsibility)</p> <p>PM 5.1.2: # of <u>Partnership Council participants</u> (diverse mid-level group of parents, students, educators and partners focused on the effectiveness of</p>	

Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes		Figure 14
Objectives with Available Baseline	Performance Measures (Outcomes)	
annual measurement of participation by types of members (e.g., family, educators, students, community members)	implementation and scope) PM 5.1.3: # of <u>School FSCS Committee participants</u> (grassroots group of parents, students, teachers, school leaders shaping the work in their own school)	
Obj 5.2 Sustain participation to at least 80% or higher attendance over the course of the 5-year project Baseline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established during the first half of Year 1 • Data collected will include initial and ongoing annual measurement of participation by types of members (e.g., family, educators, students, community members) 	PM 5.2.1: % of Consortium members <u>attending</u> meetings and work sessions PM 5.2.2: % of Partner Council members <u>attending</u> meetings and work sessions PM 5.2.3: % of School FSCS Committee members <u>attending</u> meetings and work sessions PM 5.2.4: # of new <u>members added</u> each year to each group to ensure diversity of perspectives throughout the project PM 5.2.5: # of <u>groups and members</u> continuing to meet in Year 6 of the project as the work is sustained	

In addition, our Evaluation Plan (page 84) includes a high-level evaluation team—selected in January 2024 from our established Evaluator Pool that includes experienced researchers and evaluators from nationally renowned firms. The Evaluator Pool follows the Uniform Guidance’s procurement rules for selection of such contractors while enabling us to put a team in position within **twelve weeks of funding**.

Regardless of who is selected, the evaluation team will perform a formative and summative evaluation, enabling ongoing and iterative assessment of the project as a whole, and at the local, school-based level. As a matter of practice PRI uses a **continuous improvement framework/cycle** (Figure 24) for all initiatives, including existing and future FSCS work. PRI applies data gathering, analysis, review, feedback, and iterative application to refine services and service delivery. During that process **we also ensure integration of the four pillars** in a manner

that continuously meets project goals, objectives, and performance measures (outcomes). This model ensures our staff do not work in a vacuum, feedback is utilized to improve the partnership, and our community schools continue to meet the needs of students, parents, teachers and schools. Components of our improvement framework are in Figure 24. The process applies to project staff and all three leadership groups (Consortium, Partnership Council, School Advisory Boards).

(2) (B) Extent to which project demonstrates a rationale.

Our project design demonstrates a rationale. It is important to note that according to ED definitions in the FSCS notice (34 CF 75.210):

demonstrates a rationale means a key project component included in the project's logic model is informed by research or evaluation findings that suggest the project component is likely to improve relevant outcomes.

Multiple key project components included in this project are informed by research or evaluation findings and suggests that the project component is likely to improve relevant outcomes. The following and Figures 15 and 16 describes three of our project components, their evidence based and their connection to our population:

Bottom Line College Advising and Support: We will use the research based Bottom Line approach to provide intensive advising for priority high school students who are identified as needing intensive support (i.e. students experiencing homelessness, students from persistent poverty household, etc.). Bottom Line advising is designed to help students apply for college and financial aid and select a high-quality affordable institution. We will start implementation of Bottom Line at 11th grade and continue the support through the summer following high school graduation. FSCS School Coordinators and partners will work with 11th and 12th grade students to provide personalized one-on-one guidance and mentoring throughout the college application and decision process.

Check & Connect: Among the strategies integral to our project design is Check and Connect, a strategy that meets the evidence-level of *demonstrates a rationale* and *moderate evidence*. Check & Connect works through two main components: “Check” and “Connect.”

- The “Check” component continually monitors student performance and progress (including the student’s attendance, incidence of suspensions, course grades, and credits).
- The “Connect” component involves mentors giving individualized attention to students. Our FSCS School Coordinators, school staff, college students and community volunteers will serve as our mentors and be trained in Check & Connect.

Check & Connect will focus on FSCS participants at that critical time of transition between 8th grade and 9th grade. Check & Connect mentors will begin mentoring these students at the end of their 8th grade year and continue mentoring them through the summer following their 9th grade year. By providing students with a mentor as they transition into, thru, and out of 9th grade, we are increasing the likelihood that these students will graduate high school and transition to postsecondary education without the need for remediation. Recognizing the importance of this intervention, **all** students transitioning from 8th to 9th grade will receive a Check & Connect mentor. We have the staffing, community support and resources allocated to deploy a mentoring program of this size and scope.

Dual enrollment programs allow high school students to take rigorous college courses and earn college credits while still attending high school. These programs help boost college access and degree attainment, especially for students typically underrepresented in higher education. We have seen the success of Dual Enrollment programs in rural populations similar to our population. Dual enrollment programs allow high school students to experience college-level courses which helps them prepare for the social and academic requirements of college while

having the additional supports available to high school students. Researcher Brian P. An found dual enrollment has “significant benefits in boosting rates of college degree attainment for low-income students.”⁸⁷ Particularly relevant in the context of our persistent poverty region is that dual enrollment programs offer discounted or free tuition, which reduces the overall cost of college and may increase the number of low socioeconomic status students who can attend and complete college.⁸⁸

We will support higher education institutions to deploying dual enrollment courses, both virtual and in-person, in order to increase the number of dual enrollment opportunities for our high-school students, with a specific focus on increasing access for priority students (first generation college students, low income, experience homelessness, etc). We will support partner schools with logistics to ensure these are not a barrier to dual enrollment.

Research Base for Evidence Based Practices linked to FSCS Activities		Figure 15
FSCS Activity & Research Study	Evidence Based Practice	
Provide comprehensive mentoring, outreach, and supportive services to students Sinclair, Christenson & Thurlow, M. L. (2005). Promoting school completion of urban secondary youth with emotional or behavioral disabilities. <i>Exceptional Children</i> , 71(4), 465–482.	Check and Connect	
Encouraging student enrollment in rigorous and challenging curricula and coursework, in order to reduce the need for remedial coursework at the postsecondary level. Barr, A., & Castleman, B. (2017). The bottom line on college counseling. Boston, MA: Bottom Line. Retrieved from The Bottom Line on College Counseling RCTPaper 10 2017.pdf	Bottom Line Advising	
Supporting dual or concurrent enrollment programs between the secondary school and institution of higher education partners. Edmunds, J., Unlu, F., Glennie, E., Bernstein, L., Fesler, L., Furey, J., & Arshavsky, N. (2015). Smoothing the transition to postsecondary education: The impact of the Early College Model. Retrieved from the SERVE website: http://www.serve.org/	Dual Enrollment	

It is important to note that we selected practices with study designs that overlap with our priority populations, page 11.

Satisfaction of Criteria for Meeting Evidence Levels		Figure 16
Criteria	WWC Review	
Bottom Line: Strong Evidence (Level 1)		
A statistically significant favorable impact on a relevant outcome (with no statistically significant unfavorable impacts on that outcome for relevant populations in the study or other studies reviewed by and reported on by the WWC)	<p>The WWC review for Transition to College area includes student outcomes in the domains of college enrollment and progressing in college as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *The Barr & Castleman study (2017) showed evidence of a positive and statistically significant effect on both college enrollment and progressing in college, each achieving an improvement index of +13. *Bottom Line students were significantly more likely to enroll in a 4-year college and remain continuously enrolled for three semesters following high school. <p>Result: WWC rating of potentially positive effects.</p>	
Includes a large, multisite sample that overlaps with the populations and settings proposed to receive the process, product, strategy, or practice.	<p style="text-align: center;">Bottom Line Study Populations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Included 2,422 11th and 12th grade students in Boston, New York City, and Worcester, MA schools. *Included low-income and first-generation college students. <p style="text-align: center;">Our Program Population</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Includes rising 11th and 12th grade students. *Includes some students living in towns/cities. *Includes low-income, first-generation college students. 	
Check and Connect Strong Evidence (Level 1)		
A statistically significant favorable impact on a relevant outcome (with no statistically significant unfavorable impacts on that outcome for relevant populations in the study or other studies reviewed by and reported on by the WWC)	<p>The WWC review for the Dropout Prevention area includes student outcomes in the domain of staying in school as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *The Sinclair (1998) study reported that 9th grade students in Check & Connect were statistically significantly less likely than similar comparison group students to drop out of school by the end of 9th grade *The Sinclair (2005) study reported Check & Connect students were statistically significantly less likely to have dropped out at the end of the 4th follow-up year. *For the progressing in school domain, both showed statistically significant positive effects, resulting in an improvement index of +30. *For the staying in school domain, both studies showed statistically significant positive effects, resulting in an improvement index of +25. <p>Result: WWC rating of positive effects.</p>	

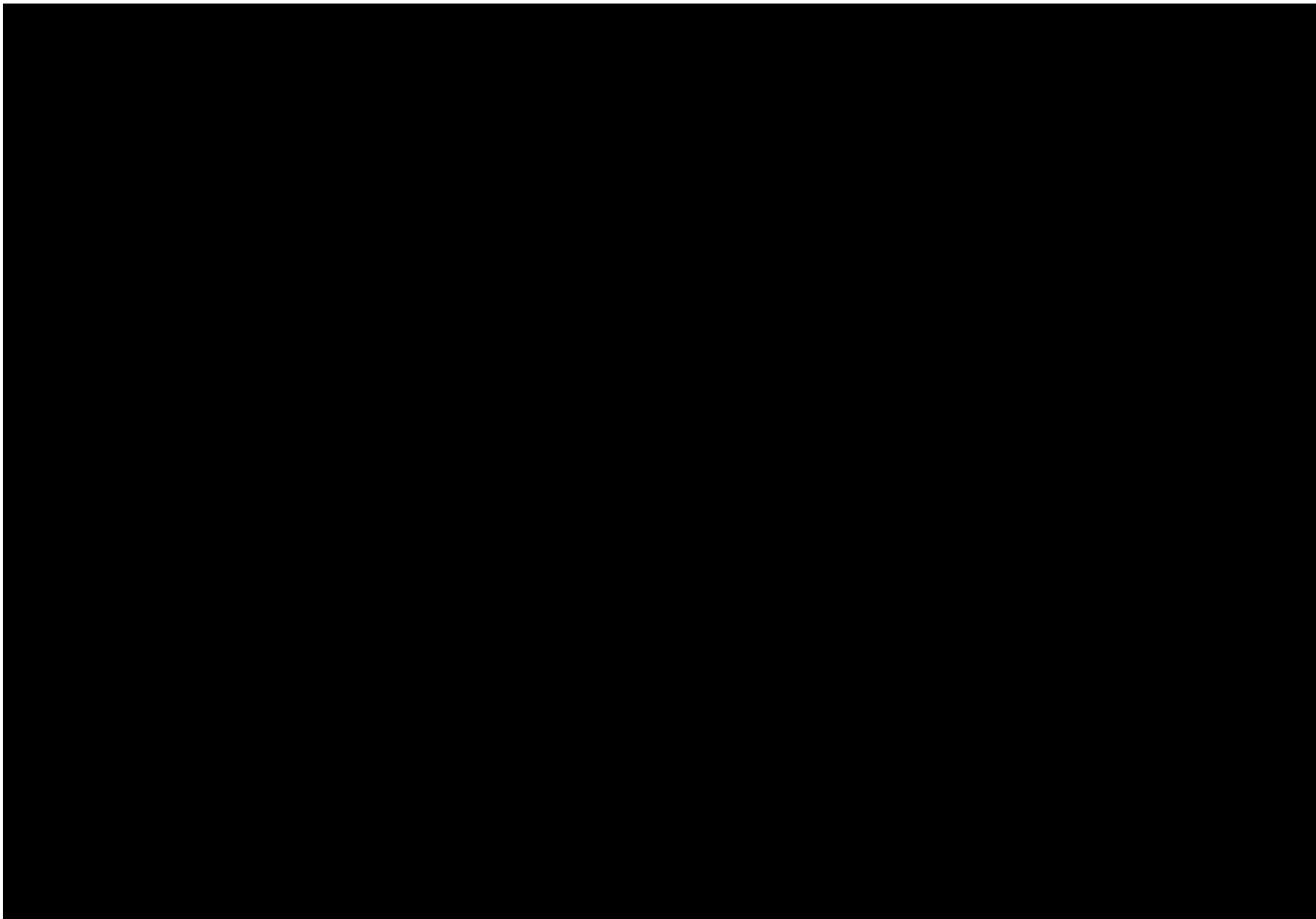
Satisfaction of Criteria for Meeting Evidence Levels		Figure 16
Criteria	WWC Review	
<p>Includes a large, multisite sample that overlaps with the populations and settings proposed to receive the process, product, strategy, or practice.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Check and Connect Study Populations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Included 238 students who attended Minneapolis high schools & entered program in the beginning of 9th grade. *Included students receiving special education services. <p style="text-align: center;">Our Program Population</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Includes rising 9th and 10th grade students. *Includes some students living in towns/cities. *Includes students receiving special education services. 	
Dual Enrollment: Strong Evidence (Level 1)		
<p>A statistically significant favorable impact on a relevant outcome (with no statistically significant unfavorable impacts on that outcome for relevant populations in the study or other studies reviewed by and reported on by the WWC)</p>	<p>The WWC review for Transition to College area includes student outcomes in seven domains as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The Edmunds et al. (2015) study reported that there was a statistically significant positive effect on degree attainment (college) (improvement index +42), college access and enrollment (+16), completing high school (+5), general academic achievement (high school) (+13), staying in high school (+16), college readiness (+14), and attendance (+8) between intervention students and the comparison students. * The Berger et al. (2014) study reported that there was a statistically significant positive effect on degree attainment (college) (improvement index +38), college access and enrollment (+12), completing high school (+9), and general academic achievement (high school) (+3) between intervention students and the comparison students. <p>Result: WWC rating of positive effect, with medium to large extent of evidence for the following outcome domains: degree attainment (college), college access and enrollment, credit accumulation, completing high school, and general academic achievement (high school). WWC rating of potentially positive effects, with small extent of evidence for the following outcome domains: staying in school, college readiness, and attendance (high school).</p>	
<p>Includes a large, multisite sample that overlaps with the populations and settings proposed to receive the process, product, strategy, or practice.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Dual Enrollment Programs Study Populations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The Edmunds et al. (2015) study included 1,651 students in grades 9 – 12, in several districts in North Carolina, who had applied to early college high schools in the 8th grade. Students included first-generation college students, those from low-income families, and/or members of underrepresented racial or ethnic minority groups. *The Berger et al. (2014) study included 2,458 students in 5 states which included: 5 in urban areas, 3 in small towns, and 2 in mid-sized cities. <p style="text-align: center;">Our Program Population</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Includes 10th – 12th grade students. * Includes students living in towns/cities. * Includes low-income, first-generation college students. 	

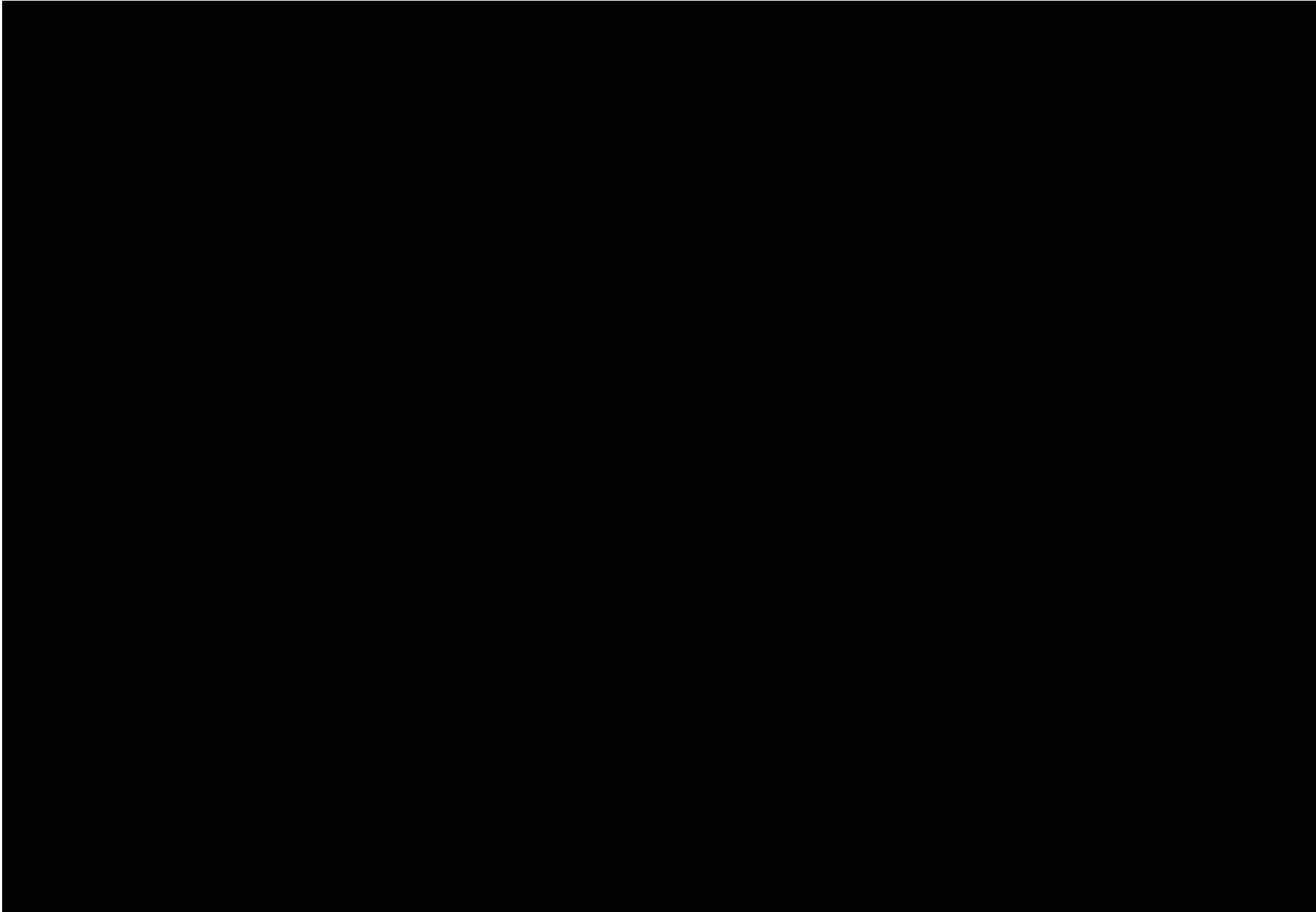
Additional key project component included in our logic model that are informed by research or evaluation findings that suggest the project component is likely to improve relevant outcomes include:

- **The National Network for Partnership Schools'** model framework developed at Johns Hopkins University, is a key anchor for **how** to support parents and schools as they support children. It is peer-reviewed and is a **What Works Clearinghouse identified strategy for parental involvement**. The NNPS model is distinguished by its practical and growing examples of activities and practices to support schools, CBOs, families, and stakeholders to determine specific actions to support family engagement. Key PRI staff and dozens of support staff are trained in the NNPS model; all Community Schools Coordinators will receive training in Mapp's Family Engagement Framework, the NNPS implementation framework.
- **Too Good for Violence (TGFV)**. TGFV is a school-based violence prevention and character education program. **Crimesolutions.org and What Works Clearinghouse rate the program as promising evidence-based program**. Bacon (2001) found that there was a 45% reduction in intention to engage in aggressive behavior for students that participated in the TGFV program.⁸⁹ Furthermore, Bacon (2003) found that those students that were engaged in TGFV self-reported higher score for **emotional competency skills**.⁹⁰ School Coordinators and educators will be trained in Too Good For Violence, and the age-appropriate programming will be available to each school.
- **Too Good for Drugs (TGFD)**. TGFD is a school-based drug prevention program designed to mitigate the risk factors and enhance protective factors related to alcohol, tobacco and

other drugs. The program teaches five essential self-efficacy building skills for making healthy choices. Studies have been published in peer-reviewed journals and presented nationally. A study by Bacon (2013) indicate the effectiveness of the TGFD school-based program in diminishing reported smoking behavior, alcohol consumption, binge drinking and marijuana use among high risk 6th grade students.⁹¹ School Coordinators and educators will be trained in Too Good For Violence, and the age-appropriate programming will be available to each school.

Our **logic model** provides an at-a-glance demonstration of specific, integrated inputs and activities that will lead to stated outcomes





(3) Quality of the Project Services

(3) (A) The extent to which the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives is brought to bear in the design and operation of the project, including those of students, youth, families, educators, staff, beneficiaries of services, school leadership, and community leadership.

To fully present our Project Services, we provide freestanding descriptions on the following pages. Each section responds to elements within the Project Services criterion.

The following information is included in this Project Services section:

- Strategies for equal access and diverse perspective in *design* *Pages 46-48*
- Strategies for equal access and diverse perspective in *operation*, including:
 - Equal access and treatment of participants *Pages 48-51*
 - Project leadership structures, vision, and accountability *Pages 51-55*

Strategies for ensuring equal access and diverse perspectives in project *design*.

PRI engaged partners, families, students, and educators in the project design. First, the design is built on PRI's foundation of nearly three decades of experience working in and with rural communities. This FSCS project design includes lessons learned over the years, especially those lessons learned from PRI community schools in rural communities.

Second, this design has been informed by multiple Diboll stakeholders including parents, students, families, and educators to ensure it fits their current realities. In 2022, PRI assisted a multi-sector group from the Diboll community, including youth and families, through development of a community action plan. Listening sessions were conducted with these stakeholders for input on student and overall community needs, as well as for input on what they would like to have in place during and post-project. Current stakeholder realities include persistent poverty as well as the toll taken by the pandemic and its devastating economic aftermath.

The community expressed its deep concern a lack of a seamless pipeline of services

from early childhood to career to prepare students to thrive in the workplace and in life. It is this community planning process that led to the design of this district-wide community school proposal that transforms every school into a community school. In addition, the resulting design recognizes this reality by focusing attention on **priority students**, those the community thought most likely to stumble on the path to economic mobility and a choice-filled life.

Additional methods of data collection and analysis are noted here:

- **Archival data:** We reviewed archival data covering a six-year time-period that measured educational outcomes, including postsecondary success.
- **Surveys:** We reviewed parent surveys and school climate surveys including those administered by our school and higher education partners from 2022 to 2023.
- **Youth Voice:** PRI continually elevates youth voice to the leadership table. During the 2022-23 academic year we implemented student surveys and youth listening projects to ensure youth perspective was captured and have continued that to help inform the project design.

Increased focus on data during the Pandemic. Many of the standard data sources used to measure student success were disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, yet it is vital to understand the breadth of the pandemic's impacts and design a FSCS program to address those impacts. Our strong partnerships with Diboll Independent School District ensures that our proposal is relevant within the frame of COVID-19.

Throughout engagement with our diverse group of stakeholders during design, we identified gaps in services that warrant **immediate attention**, including in-school and out-of-school programs to support **student academic achievement and dynamic transition programs** at all levels; this will immediately begin to increase student and family awareness of skills and

knowledge to succeed across each grade level. For high school students, the immediacy includes working with each student to ensure they have developed an individual learning plan with a pathway to **college and career or workforce** and have identified support, finding mentors or other resources needed to succeed. A final pressing need is to design and implement robust **family and community engagement** activities to ensure families have the information and skills needed to fully support their students.

During our engagement with diverse stakeholders, **the stakeholders identified existing services and programs that should be immediately aligned and coordinated by FSCS.** Figure 17 summarizes the services to be coordinated immediately upon implementation.

Existing Services to be <u>Immediately</u> Coordinated		Figure 17
Early Childhood Programs	Parent outreach; reading programs for parents; educator professional development; reading and literacy programs for young children; feeding programs	
School and Out-of-School Time Programs	Camps, tutoring, mentoring, test prep; family engagement; dual enrollment professional development and student courses	
Family and Community Engagement	Parent leadership training; open houses; parent/teacher conferences; financial literacy; financial planning; personal budgeting and financing	
Postsecondary and workforce readiness	Entry-level work credentials while in high school; pre-apprentice opportunities; GED assistance; career fairs; SAT prep; college visits; work-based education	
Community-based support	Financial literacy; personal budgeting; computer classes; access to internet; parent education	
Social, health, nutrition, and mental health services	School based clinics; health and wellness programs; Mental health, substance abuse and trauma services; feeding programs	
Juvenile Crime Prevention	Juvenile justice programs (Too Good for Violence); substance abuse education (Too Good for Drugs); Mental Health First Aid; professional development with partners; bystander prevention programs (Green Dot)	

Strategies for equal access and diverse perspective in operation

PRI brings to each project, including our current and future FSCS schools, a *diversity of*

perspectives in project implementation and operation through a formal leadership structure, described below. PRI has a well-developed FSCS plan of operation for ensuring equality access and diverse perspectives in project operations that includes: 1) a plan to ensure equal access and treatment for all participants, and 2) a collaborative leadership structure.

1) Plan to ensure equal access and treatment for all participants. We have a well-developed plan to ensure equal access and treatment for all participants including those that are members of groups that have been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, or disability. Upon notification of funding, the Principal Investigator will work with schools and partners, including local newspapers, social media sites, and radio stations, to announce FSCS and its services. Annually, FSCS will mail a letter to each family informing them that their student is eligible for services and that special accommodation will be made for participants as needed. A translated version of this letter will be sent to all students identified as Limited English Proficiency. To ensure equal access, **all students enrolled in the school and all children living within the community will be presumptively eligible for services** (based on overall poverty, chronic absenteeism, and other high-risk characteristics noted on pages 4-11) with an avenue for opting-out available to families or youth who do not want to participate.

Special attention will be placed on informing special populations of their eligibility for services. For example, we will work with the McKinney-Vento representatives to ensure that all homeless youth and their families are informed of the program and their eligibility for services.

We recognize that intensive, personalized recruitment and outreach is necessary to engage participants and their families, particularly when participants are from groups traditionally underrepresented. Our staff and community partners will actively seek engagement from underrepresented populations through home visits and recruiting in partnership with the

faith-based community and other community groups that serve the underrepresented populations. It is not enough to let young people and their families know they are eligible for services. We also will identify and address barriers to participation. During our prior programs, we developed the capacity to understand and meet accommodation needs. Examples of accommodations provided include: tailored materials to meet the needs of vision impaired participants, translators to meet the needs of hearing-impaired participants, and specialized transportation to accommodate wheelchair-bound participants as they seek to attend events. Particular attention will be paid to gauge participation of individuals from under-represented groups to determine if they are participating at the same rates as other students. Similarly, attention will be paid to the progress of participants of underrepresented groups to determine if they are having gains at the same rates as other students. Continual review of the data will lead to modifications in recruitment or service delivery as needed.

Within the first quarter of program implementation, PRI and our partners will meet and adopt shared strategies for ensuring equal access to and participation in the program for youth and their families, community members, staff of partnering agencies, and employees. During our planning we began this work and the following list emerged:

- Develop and administer a pre-participation survey with event activity registration materials to identify special access requirements—such as wheelchair access, signers, and interpreters.
- All program-related sessions will be held in ADA accessible facilities.
- Coordinate and offer cultural sensitivity and ADA training for program staff and partners.
- Develop or acquire and disseminate culturally relevant curriculum and materials that can be understood and accessible to all potential participants, regardless of their challenges.
- Offer transportation vouchers for families who must use personal transportation to attend

meetings, activities, and workshops, as needed.

- Arrange for assistive technology devices to translate materials for participants.
- Post information materials, schedules of events, and program assessments on the internet – which will enable assistive computer devices to interpret the materials for users.

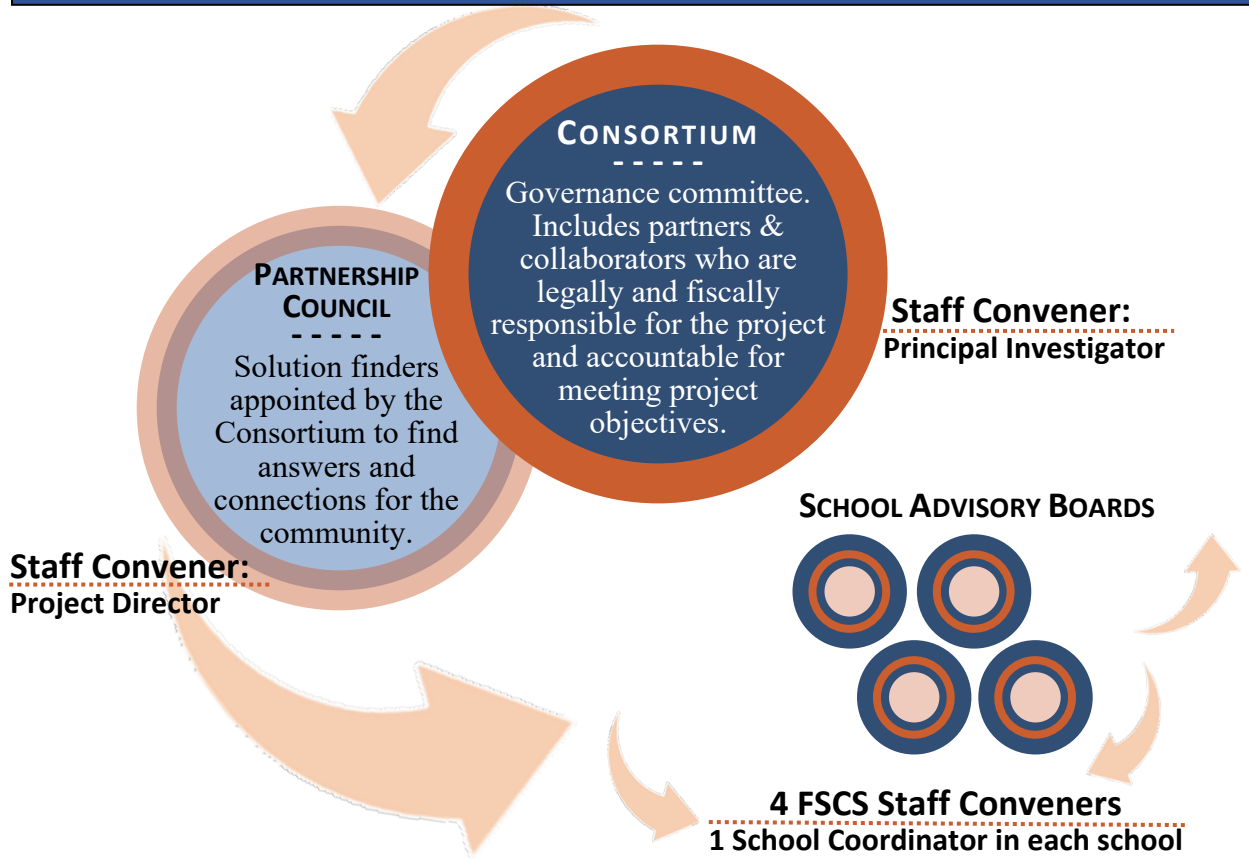
Once adopted, the strategies will be implemented by partners and monitored with the intent to reduce access barriers based on gender, race, national origin, color, disability, and age.

Project Leadership Structures, Vision, and Accountability

For nearly three decades, PRI has used collaborative leadership structures—like those recommended for FSCS via the four pillars—to ensure authentic and diverse perspectives are engaged in leadership, vision and accountability. As noted earlier, core to our approach is the use of the Theory of Aligned Contributions as a change model (pages 26-27).⁹²

The three vital components of our collaborative leadership structure as a whole are as follows and are represented in the graphic, Figure 18. In its simplest form, the graphic demonstrates the **connected autonomy and voice of each group**. The Consortium ensures we operate with accountability, continually working toward our proposed objectives; the Partnership Council identifies solutions and resources to close identified gaps in schools based on their own research and feedback from schools; and School Advisory Boards focus on their students and families, developing the agency needed to build local momentum at the grassroots level. Reporting will occur through project staff members (liaisons) including the Principal Investigator (1), Project Director (1), and FSCS School Coordinators (4). In particular, School Coordinators will each month share with one another the challenges and successes from the field, enabling improvements across each of the FSCS communities.

Project Leadership Structure **Figure 18**



The Consortium: Each member has agreed to serve as the overall legal and fiscal leadership of the project and has each signed the attached Memorandum of Understanding related to the committee’s work. Consortium members are described in detail beginning on page 65. They will monitor the overall accomplishments of the project related to the objectives and performance measures and recommend specific improvements to operation as needed. They will meet formally and informally throughout the year with the project evaluator to receive direct updates related to data points. The members will also monitor expenditures year-round. The Consortium will—upon award—determine specific members of the Partnership Council.

Partnership Council: In discussion with community leaders and parents from throughout the community, we realized the services available to students and families are not well-coordinated. Persons working with the same client base—students and their families—were often unaware that others were working with the same group. Parents said service providers were often unaware about other programs that provided complementary services. Currently, no structures exist to bring together such community groups to discuss programs, assets, needs, and gaps.

Upon notification of funding, The Consortium will create the FSCS Partnership Council focused on achieving the result—**All Students Succeed at School**. Representatives from each Consortium member’s organization have agreed to serve on the Partnership Council as outlined in the MOU. Consortium members have committed to active participation in this group, meeting regularly to coordinate efforts so all children and families are provided needed services to achieve the result. The FSCS Partnership Council will bring together leadership from all parts of the community and set the direction for the work throughout the community. The FSCS Project Director will convene the Partnership Council and facilitate its bi-monthly (Year 1) and quarterly (Years 2-5) meetings. A key role of the Partnership Council will be in identifying partnership and service providers from throughout the community, then working with project staff to develop partnership agreements that secure services for individual FSCS schools.

Core membership of the Partnership Council will include one representative from each school district and one representative from each School Advisory Board, one representative from each Consortium member agency, two parent or family representatives from each school, and two high school students from each school. The voice of families and students is critical to the success of FSCS, and full parent and student participation in decision making will be actively cultivated. Other members of the Partnership Council can be added by the group’s members and may include local, county, and state service agencies, and nonprofit and for-profit providers of

services who have agreed to help meet the needs of students and districts.

The Partnership Council will work closely with the Principal Investigator (PI), Project Director (PD), and other staff and will be actively involved in the planning, coordination, and evaluation of the FSCS project. Within 90 days of notification of funding, the principal investigator, project director, and school districts’ points of contact (district employees) will jointly convene the first meeting of the Partner Council.

School Advisory Board: At their first meeting, the Partnership Council will form 4 School Advisory Boards—one for each FSCS school. The School Advisory Board will be responsible for local planning, project implementation and operation, and gathering feedback to guide the FSCS program at the school. Membership of the School Advisory Board will include local youth, parents, and residents, and will include community partners with connections specifically to the individual school site (Figure 16, below). The School Advisory Board will focus on ensuring the FSCS meets the needs of the school and their students. The School Coordinator will convene the School Advisory Board and support its facilitation each month.

To be clear, project staff—Principal Investigator, Project Director, School Coordinators—will be facilitators and convenors of these groups, not members. We do this to further ensure agency for families, students, and teachers. Figure 19 below summarizes our strategies during design and operation to ensure a diversity of perspectives to the project now, during its five years, and beyond.

Strategies to Ensure Diversity of Perspectives for Various Stakeholder Groups Figure 19		
Stakeholder Group	During Project <u>Design</u>	During Project <u>Operation</u>
Students and youth	Surveys, youth listening projects, focus groups	Surveys, listening projects (student voice), Partnership Council and School Advisory Board membership

Strategies to Ensure Diversity of Perspectives for Various Stakeholder Groups Figure 19

Stakeholder Group	During Project <u>Design</u>	During Project <u>Operation</u>
Families including caregivers	Surveys, focus groups	Surveys, focus groups; Partnership Council and School Advisory Board membership
Young children	Caregiver discussions, stakeholder meetings	Stakeholder membership in all three groups (Consortium, Partnership, School), Waterford
Educators and school staff	Focus groups, meetings, surveys over multiple years	Surveys, focus groups, Partnership Council and School Advisory Board membership
School leadership	Meetings, ongoing discussions	Ongoing working with School Coordinator; Partnership Council and School Advisory Board membership
School district leadership	Meetings, ongoing discussions	Partnership Council and School Advisory Board membership
Beneficiaries of services	Focus groups, archival data related to services provided, academic outcomes, barriers	Focus groups, surveys, ongoing needs assessments, academic data collection; Partnership Council and School Advisory Board membership
Community Leadership	Meetings, ongoing discussions	Consortium and Partnership Council membership
State/National partners	Meetings, ongoing discussions	Consortium and Partnership Council membership

(3) (B) The extent to which the services provided reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

We have developed a holistic, cradle to career spectrum of services to ensure the success of all students. Information on our services that demonstrate a rationale – Bottom Line Advising, Check and Connect, Dual Enrollment, The National Network of Partnership Schools, and Too Good for Violence – can be found on pages 37-43. The research base for our services connected directly to the four pillars of effective community schools can be found on page 18. The

following services reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practices and are essential to our design.

Consistent caring individuals providing evidence-based support: Additional person power is essential to effectively implement student supports at the scale and intensity required in high poverty schools. As Balfanz states (p. 8):

In order for schools to fully integrate direct student supports at the scale and intensity their students require, especially in a tight fiscal environment, schools will have to harness the power of the nonprofit sector and well-trained community volunteers. These groups are uniquely positioned to cost-effectively deliver direct student supports that are aligned with classroom learning, rooted in student data, and integrated into each school's design. Critical to the success of this deployment is employing different combinations of nonprofit organizations and community volunteers depending on the scale and intensity of student needs.⁹³

Working with our schools, we developed a plan for deploying consistent caring individuals to provide evidence-based supports during extended learning times. Our plan includes School Coordinators, college students, volunteers, and school personnel.

College and Career Ready (CCR) Curriculum and Targets: *Helping Students Navigate the Path to College: What High Schools Can Do*, an IES Practice Guide, recommends that schools offer courses and curricula that prepare students for college-level work and that schools ensure that students understand what constitutes a college-ready curriculum by 9th grade.⁹⁴ Our FSCS is focused on ensuring students are prepared for a college-ready and a career-ready curriculum by 9th grade **and** that students intentionally enroll in a college and career-ready curriculum. FSCS staff will work with families and students to ensure both understand what constitutes a college and career ready curriculum and the importance of students taking and succeeding in this more rigorous curriculum.

CCR performance targets are test scores that indicate a student is on track to be academically prepared for college by the time they finish high school.⁹⁵ In partnership with our

schools, we utilize student level data to establish CCR targets for individual students and to monitor their progress. Once CCR performance targets have been set individually, students can be organized into academic preparation groups, and services can be targeted to students based on the size of students' academic preparation gaps. Research shows the importance of early monitoring of student achievement and appropriate interventions. *Staying on Target* found that students who are monitored early are more likely to be college and career ready than those not monitored early, regardless of the high school they attend and their level of prior achievement.⁹⁶

As part of our **cradle-to-career focus**, this monitoring effort begins with the Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment K-readiness screener as children rise to their first elementary schools. K-readiness is a key benchmark for learning; students who arrive unprepared for early literacy and numeracy practices often do not catch up to their K-ready peers. This creates additional benchmark points in 3rd-grade, 8th-grade, high school reading and math —critical points in the learning continuum.

Early Warning System: Research has shown that students who eventually leave high school before graduating exhibit strong predictive warning signs, such as infrequent attendance, behavior infractions, and course failure. These warning signs more accurately predict whether a student will drop out of high school than any socio-economic factors and can be used to predict high school graduation as early as the start of middle school.⁹⁷

In partnership with our schools, we will implement an early warning system that tracks individual student data: socio-economic status, school data, achievement data, college and career readiness targets, and benchmarks. The early warning system dashboard will alert School Coordinators of this critical warning point. The staff will then determine the appropriate intervention and implement the best practice to offset these warning signs.

Parent Nation: We have adopted *Parent Nation* mobilization practices based on the

science of early brain development. The vision and strategy are informed by neuroscience, political science, and the lived experiences of families.⁹⁸ In simple terms, the *Parent Nation* movement is a nonpartisan movement to motivate, educate, and engage parents with young and school-age children in ways that will help them advocate for their children’s success. It has often been compared to the 64-year-old AARP which was similarly formed around a need to equip adults to advocate nationally for themselves and others. In collaboration with our schools, our School Coordinators, we will implement Parent Nation to motivate, educate and engage parents.

(4) Adequacy of Resources

(4) (A) The extent to which the grantee has plans for a full-time coordinator at each school, a plan to sustain the full-time coordinator position beyond the grant period and a description of how the full-time coordinator position will serve to plan, integrate, coordinate, and facilitate programs and services at each school.

To fully present our Adequacy of Resources, we provide freestanding descriptions on the following pages. Each section responds to elements within the Adequacy of Resources criterion. The following information is included in this Adequacy of Resources section:

- Plans for a full-time coordinator at each school *Pages 58-60*
- Plan to sustain the full-time coordinator position *Page 60-61*
- Coordinator will serve to plan, integrate, coordinate, facilitate... *Page 61-62*

Plans for a full-time coordinator at each school

We have learned through research and experience that a full-time FSCS School Coordinator is essential for a community school to yield desired outputs and we have used full-time School Coordinators in our rural FSCS schools. Again, **we have developed a plan to place a full-time School Coordinator in each of FSCS schools.** Each coordinator will spend 100% of effort on FSCS. The coordinator will be hired within 90 days funding and paid from FSCS funds. PRI, Consortium members, and principals will take part in the hiring. Placing a School

Coordinator in each and every school is a strategy PRI has included in all of our FSCS programs for more than a decade. Based on our experience operating 93 community schools in similar communities, our qualifications prioritize the selection of School Coordinators who understand local context and can develop trust with residents. Education requirements are a postsecondary degree with a Bachelor’s degree required. Figure 20 summarizes the qualifications and responsibilities.

FSCS School Coordinator (4 positions, 100% FTE)		Figure 20
QUALIFICATIONS	RESPONSIBILITIES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A minimum of five years of experience in partnership development engagement with preference for school-community partnership ● Skills and knowledge coordinating a multi-faceted program ● Demonstrated knowledge in best practices to support students to and through school ● Experience partnering with families ● Excellent written and oral communication and presentation skills ● Exceptional organizational skills and the ability to multi-task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide leadership for a single school while working collaboratively with the school principal to implement the comprehensive program plan ● Continually assess needs of students and families, evaluating the impact of the FSCS program on these groups and continually modifying services to best meet needs ● Serve as primary liaison with all community partners; ensure partners are trained, understand their role, and implement according to their role ● Communicate FSCS mission to community, parents, staff, and students ● Facilitate the School Advisory Board 	

A **professional learning plan** will be developed for each FSCS School Coordinator and for the FSCS Project Director. The principal investigator will work with the US Department of Education and their technical assistance providers to ensure our personnel have opportunities to participate in required and recommended training events. Our learning plan for the project’s key positions—project director, School Coordinators—is summarized in Figure 21.

FSCS Professional Development Plan		Figure 21
New Hire Onboarding	New Hire onboarding addresses all minimum topics that an employee must know to perform required duties of the current role. Onboarding	

FSCS Professional Development Plan		Figure 21
	begins the first week on the job and progresses over a six-month period. Topics addressed include workplace expectations, Code of Conduct, organizational mission and grant commitments, privacy requirements, data systems, record keeping standards, organizational policies and procedures, activity reporting, purchasing and financial guidelines for federal programs, and Results Counts™ training.	
School Training	The FSCS director and school coordinators will work within area schools and will, therefore, participate in the local school training process. The process begins prior to arriving at a school and progresses over a 30-day period. Onboarding topics addressed include workplace expectations, confidentiality protocols (FERPA), Code of Ethics, school mission, purchasing and financial guidelines, and school safety protocols.	
FSCS Technical Training	Each employee will receive technical training based on the federal terms and conditions of the FSCS project, including budget and financial management protocols, project reporting, and the data collection system. This begins within the first 30 days of employment and will continue across the life of the project. Training is provided in-house and by outside technical assistance organizations or grant program officers. Project staff will complete training modules and attend required grantee meetings. Staff will receive training through trained PRI staff on key activities and strategies (e.g., Check & Connect, Dual Capacity Framework, Bottom Line Advising, Too Good For Drugs and Violence).	
Developmental Trainings	Employees will attend training to enhance their individual and collective capacity to administer FSCS and/or serve the priority population. Examples include Early Warning System Analysis; grant development and fundraising; and/or Mental Health First Aid. These activities will be reviewed prior to attendance to comply with FSCS objectives.	
Annual Plan	PRI has a well-developed staff evaluation and assessment process. Each year performance goals will be established for FSCS staff and discussed during an annual evaluation meeting. Using a continuous improvement process, employees and their supervisor will have a minimum of one check in each month to review progress.	

Plan to sustain the full-time school coordinator

School Coordinator positions **will not end** with federal funding. PRI is a well-established organization with a more than 30-year history of program implementation and sustainability including 10+ year history with FSCS. We have the resources and partnerships necessary to sustain this program, and **to sustain the 4 School Coordinator positions**, as evidenced by key elements of our sustainability plan pages 62-63. We have a **proven track record of sustaining**

School Coordinator positions after the end of federal funding as illustrated by our 2014 FSCS program in Knox County, Kentucky. When Knox FSCS federal funding ended in 2019, and after we achieved all project goals, PRI implemented the sustainability steps noted above and **secured additional funding used to continue the School Coordinator positions**. PRI has shown that School Coordinators are a solid return on investment making requested private and state investments in FSCS reasonable. Importantly, PRI works with our LEA partners to fiscally map their existing funding streams. This process has been successful in creating possibilities for LEA's to uncover existing funding streams that can sustain the school coordinator position.

Coordinator will plan, integrate, coordinate, facilitate programs & services at each school

The Community School Coordinators will report to the Project Director and will assume leadership of a single FSCS school. Within their respective schools, the Community School Coordinator will work collaboratively with the school principal to implement the FSCS program. This joint planning with the principal encourages: (1) identification of and support for mutually defined results and outcomes that are responsive to students' needs; (2) alignment of services with those needs; and (3) shared accountability for achieving intended outcomes and results. With the support of the project director, our School Coordinators will work collaboratively with the school principal and the School Advisory Boards to plan, integrate, coordinate, and facilitate programs and services for students, families, and the community. As noted above, our School Coordinators will focus on the needs of their individual schools within the greater FSCS community, learning from partners, educators, families, and students about the barriers related to healthy development and academic achievement.

The PRI model is based on the effectiveness of the local School Coordinator. To illustrate, we professionally develop School Coordinators to help schools find the **available**

resources to support their programs, services and supports. Our partners, like the T.L.L. Temple Foundation, are critical supports to the School Coordinators as they seek local funding for their programs and activities. Our model places full faith and ongoing support **in the position of the School Coordinator** to create critical relationships and find resources and connections needed to support children, students, youth, and families. In our rural places, we have a history of retaining staff for many years. Simply put, we invest in the School Coordinator and their ability to make **longstanding community connections** that will last for decades.

(4) (B) Potential for continued support for the project after Federal funding ends, including the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support.

PRI is a well-established organization with a nearly 30-year history of program implementation and sustainability including a ten year history with FSCS. We have the resources and partnerships necessary to sustain this program, as evidenced **by key elements of our sustainability plan:**

- An established PRI leadership and fundraising team committed to garnering resources to support the continuation of FSCS services after funding ends;
- Partnerships with private philanthropy, like the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who are committed to supporting the community school model;
- Collaborating with LEAs and consortium members to continually review their funding streams to ensure optimization of resources for continued funding of the FSCS model;
- Utilizing strong evaluations to illustrate the value of the FSCS model and the value of the school coordinator position, and;
- Partnerships with elected leaders and providing them with the data and information they need to advocate for state and local funding for FSCS.

Our sustainability planning has **a proven track record of success**. Our focus on sustainability planning originated in 2012 when we launched our first federally funded Promise Neighborhood. When federal funding ended in 2017, PRI implemented sustainability steps similar to those we have planned for FSCS. We secured funding to maintain Promise Neighborhood's pipeline of services. Importantly, **we continue to see student outcomes increasing in this original Promise Neighborhood**. To illustrate, when we began our work in 2012 only 16% (80 of 492) of our neighborhood children were ready for kindergarten. In 2021, 49% (214 of 439) were ready for kindergarten—a rate that nearly matches the state average of 53%. Kindergarten readiness and other indicators continue to trend upward due in large part to the sustainability efforts of PRI and our partners.

Our sustainability planning has been successful in **securing state dollars to sustain the efforts of our current community school efforts**. In early 2022, we received a significant investment of state dollars - [REDACTED] over three years – to sustain multiple efforts including the work of community schools that were slated to end in December of 2021.

We have obtained demonstrated commitment of our key partners that evidence broad support and commitment to the long-term success of FSCS. A key partner in our work is our partner school districts. We have designed FSCS to ensure we provide schools with the operational flexibility, including autonomy over programs, leadership and budget, needed to effectively carry out and sustain the FSCS services and activities. We have partnerships with multiple community organizations, local and state agencies, higher education, workforce, and businesses. We will continue to connect with and engage these partners and new partners throughout the five years of funding.

Collectively our partners have committed non-federal dollars to match the FSCS federal funds at [REDACTED]. Documentation of matching contributions are in Appendix A. The match contributions from partners signify long-term commitments to the project.

PRI will refine our sustainability plan to sustain this FSCS. The Harlem Children Zone grappled with how to sustain their model when it began its cradle-to-career work. Geoff Canada continues to mentor PRI CEO Dreama Gentry and assist her in scaling and sustaining our cradle to career work in rural communities. As suggested by Canada, PRI has developed a **multi-year financial and operating model** to ensure we have the capacity to continue cradle-to-career work in rural places like Diboll after the end of federal funding. As we launch new community school sites, we modify this plan to meet the assets and needs of each specific place.

(5) Quality of the Management Plan

To fully present our Management Plan, we provide freestanding descriptions on the following pages. Each section responds to elements within the Management Plan criterion. The following information is included in this Management Plan section:

- A. A strong plan to have, a broadly representative consortium ... *Pages 64-70*
- B. History of effectiveness in working with a diverse range of stakeholders ... *Pages 70 - 73*
- C. Adequacy to achieve the objectives on time and within budget ... *Pages 73 - 84*

(5) (A) The extent to which the grantee has, or demonstrates a strong plan to have, a broadly representative consortium that reflects the needs of the community and its stakeholders, and a description of the roles and responsibilities of the broadly representative consortium outlined in the required preliminary MOU.

Leadership, vision, and accountability for our FSCS initiative rests with a broadly representative consortium (Consortium) that reflects the needs of our community. Our Consortium has developed an intentional collaborative leadership structure to ensure all aspects of FSCS are informed and guided by community members. PRI has used this collaborative leadership

structure in our prior community schools, and for this initiative, we refined the model with our stakeholders to ensure responsiveness to the needs of this community. Our collaborative leadership structure engages a broadly representative group of stakeholders at multiple levels—both the management level and the operational level, both the community level and the school level—to ensure all perspectives are heard and valued.

Our FSCS Consortium includes these organizations, all of whom are well-respected for their accountability to promised services, as well as for their willingness to listen to the local voices and their understanding that local voices are critical to meet local needs. Our inaugural Consortium members share the core belief that **schools must be the center of the community**.

As described in the Quality of the Project Services section (above), Consortium members are accountable for the scope of work and for meeting project objectives. The Consortium members will work closely with Dr. Amon Couch, the project's Principal Investigator (see page 78), to launch the project, monitor its effectiveness, and ensure that the project is meeting its goals and objectives throughout the grant cycle.

To formalize their commitment, Consortium members signed an initial, shared Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that clarifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of each member related to FSCS development and implementation. The MOU, included in Appendix A, describes each Consortium member's role in FSCS including in the pipeline of services. A final MOU will be signed within six months of notification of funding. At that time, **additional Consortium members will be added including the addition of two family members and two high school students**. Our inaugural Consortium members are as follows:

- **Diboll Independent School District:** The success of FSCS depends in great part on the commitment of the partner school. Diboll ISD is committed to FSCS. Importantly, the

district is committed to collaborating on this community wide FSCS. The district shares a common leadership philosophy with PRI, has a history of successful collaboration with PRI, and is committed to the success of FSCS.

- [REDACTED]
- **Angelina County and Cities Health District:** Angelina County and Cities Health District is committed, in partnership with the family, students and community, to assist all students in the pursuit of their individual educational goals and enable them to lead a successful life. For more than 50 years, the Angelina County & Cities Health District continues to Work Toward A Healthier Tomorrow by protecting and promoting the health and safety of the people in Angelina County. The Health District offers a broad range of public health services and provides a comprehensive medical home for lower income and uninsured families who reside in Angelina county. Angelina County & Cities Health District is Working Toward A Healthier Tomorrow by protecting and promoting the health and safety of the people in Angelina County.
- **Burke Center:** Burke Center is committed, in partnership with the family, students and community, to assist all students in the pursuit of their individual educational goals and enable them to lead a successful life. Founded in 1974 and originally known as Deep East Texas Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services, Burke was formed by the area's county commissioners' courts to make community care possible for citizens of this

region. Burke is governed by a nine member Board of Trustees and has been accredited by the Joint Commission since 1980. Burke serves a twelve county region, providing mental health and developmental disability services to over 10,000 people each year. The organization's namesakes, Ward and Anna Belle Burke, were tireless advocates for persons with mental illness and developmental disabilities and were instrumental in making community care possible in Texas.

- **Communities Unlimited:** Communities Unlimited is committed, in partnership with the family, students and community, to assist all students in the pursuit of their individual educational goals and enable them to lead a successful life. Communities Unlimited is unwinding generations of inequity and disinvestment. Communities Unlimited ignites hope by bridging racial, economic, and geographical boundaries in Southern communities emerging from generations of persistent poverty. In this nation, access to opportunity should not depend on where you live, what you look like, or what you have in the bank. In the communities with which we partner, we witness perseverance, talent, and strength to create solutions and opportunities for all.
- **Diboll Chief of Police:** Diboll Police Department is committed, in partnership with the family, students and community, to assist all students in the pursuit of their individual educational goals and enable them to lead a successful life. The Diboll Police Department is dedicated to serving our community through the protection of life and property and the prevention of crime. The Department will work to enforce the laws, maintain order, educate the public and provide public assistance for the purpose of ensuring the highest quality of life.

- **Family Crisis Center of East Texas:** Family Crisis Center of East Texas is committed, in partnership with the family, students and community, to assist all students in the pursuit of their individual educational goals and enable them to lead a successful life. The Family Crisis Center of East Texas is a non-profit organization that empowers survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault by providing crisis intervention and advocacy services. The FCCET also engages the community through education to build awareness and prevent domestic violence and sexual assault.
- **T.L.L. Temple Memorial Library:** T.L.L. Temple Memorial Library is committed, in partnership with the family, students and community, to assist all students in the pursuit of their individual educational goals and enable them to lead a successful life. The T.L.L. Temple Memorial Library's mission is to enhance the quality of life for area residents by providing access to print, non-print, and online resources and programs that support lifelong learning and the love of reading.
- **Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas:** Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas is committed, in partnership with the family, students and community, to assist all students in the pursuit of their individual educational goals and enable them to lead a successful life. Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas is an association of business, education, work, government, and organizations of the community dedicated to provide services to individuals to prepare them to take advantage of the opportunities of work and career and to provide business with a qualified workforce. Our mission at Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas is to provide solutions for quality workforce development. To carry out this mission, Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas is guided by the following principles: offer services to the diverse needs of the jobseekers and employers; treat people with

interest, dignity, respect, and courtesy; require people to share responsibility of the results.

- **National Center for Families Learning (NCFL):** NCFL has led family literacy and engagement efforts across the United States for 32-years. They have worked with families and communities to provide literacy strategies, programming, and resources. Engaging multiple generations in learning together is a fundamental and distinguishing aspect of NCFL's work. NCFL promotes **family education solutions** by engaging families, educators, administrators, and advocates to drive results and ultimately reduce education inequities. NCFL's work supports **multigenerational learning** for families from early childhood through **adult education**. NCFL will provide expertise in intergenerational learning with a focus on supporting families of our students in continuing their own education.
- **Waterford:** Waterford knows that every child deserves an equitable, high-quality early education, and combines the science of learning, the power of mentoring, and the promise of technology to build family and community partnerships that deliver access, excellence and equity in early education. Waterford will build capacity in each school by engaging stakeholders with easily understandable data and information, and by offering **parent and early childhood provider trainings**. The goal is to support and educate families so their children are ready and eager to learn when entering kindergarten.
- **Partners for Rural Impact:** A national organization, PRI supports educational aspirations of rural students by implementing high-quality programs, supports and services, cradle to career. PRI has a deep understanding of the evidence-based practices that work in rural places and has refined extended school-to-college access and success

programs and practices to fit the rural landscape. PRI will provide leadership and management of the project to ensure all program goals and objectives are met.

We have **demonstrated commitment** from Consortium members that validate their broad support and dedication to our long-term success. Their commitment includes financial support to match the FSCS federal funds at [REDACTED]. Documentation for each matching contribution is included in the Memorandum of Understanding in Appendix A. The significant match contributions signify the long-term commitments the Consortium members bring to the project.

(5)(B) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates a history of effectiveness in working with a diverse range of stakeholders, including students and families.

PRI, the lead applicant and fiscal agent for this FSCS project, has a history of effectiveness in working with a diverse range of stakeholders including students and families through past consortia and partnership structures. In 1995, Dreama Gentry established PRI, under the name of Partners for Education, to increase educational outcomes in children and young people in rural Appalachia.

In 2014, Gentry convened partners to design and implement a Knox FSCS project to provide a continuum of services, cradle to career, in rural Knox County. Knox FSCS met all of its goals; all objectives and outcomes under the federal grant that ended in in 2019. Importantly, outcomes for children and youth improved and continue to improve. As we began our work in 2014, only 27% of children in Knox FSCS were ready for kindergarten (2014 data). By 2021, 45.3% of the children in Knox FSCS were K-ready (pre-COVID data). We see similar improvements in reading proficiency. As importantly, **two years after FSCS federal funding ended, the community school model is being sustained and Community School Coordinators remain in schools to serve the community.**

Dr. Amon Couch, Associate Vice President at PRI, leads the Knox community school work and is instrumental in efforts to sustain the community school coordinators. Dr. Couch will serve as Principal Investigator for this project and Gentry will serve on the Consortium. Resumes are included in Appendix E.

PRI pulled together Consortium members and developed this FSCS project. FSCS is built upon our collective commitment to the success of all children and youth in Diboll, Texas. Since the Summer of 2022, our organizations have gathered to collectively review data, host listening sessions and focus groups, and engage residents, families and youth. We are committed to a long term partnership where we work together to garner results for children. In our time together we have conducted a community wide results planning process, and created opportunities for professional development for community educators and leaders, and supported the public library in a planning process that resulted in specific community strategies to accelerate 3rd grade reading.

Partners for Rural Impact has extensive experience in managing formal and informal partnerships with multiple non-profit and government partners, both locally and nationally, through private and federally funded projects. PRI has effectively implemented several major projects demonstrating our experience in effectively managing partnerships, holding partners accountable for outcomes, and managing federal and private grant-funded projects, including the following which engaged schools served by this consortium:

- The development and implementation of six U.S. Department of Education Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) partnership grants that engaged partners in more than 33 rural school districts.
- Serving as the backbone organization for the nation's first rural Promise Zone and

integrating a shared results framework and data collection across eight rural counties.

- Launching a Performance Partnership Pilot to serve 1,000 disconnected youth that blended multiple federal funding streams to meet shared objectives.
- Implementation of three federal Promise Neighborhood programs in five communities.

Each of these projects improved outcomes and held partners accountable through systems of formal and informal MOUs, contractual and reimbursement agreements, and continuous communication with our partner organizations.

Specifically, PRI has extensive experience managing partnerships with **families and students**. PRI developed and implemented Partners for Appalachian Families, a resource center to provide training and support to parents of children and youth in 54 counties of Appalachian Kentucky and the New Hampshire Statewide Family Engagement Center to support parents of children in New Hampshire. These centers engage family members as leaders and provides multiple opportunities for family members to hold leadership positions within the school and the community. PRI collaborated with parents and caregivers to respond to a stated need to support children while schools were closed as a result of the pandemic. PRI curated age-appropriate, interactive, free resources to aid families in assisting their student's learning in the areas of language arts, math, STEM, and in services supporting their well-being. The New Hampshire Statewide Center provides training to schools and parents to support the development of 'family friendly schools'.

PRI has a cross-organizational team focused on **student voice and student leadership**. This team coordinates leadership groups in middle and high schools. Youth leaders sit on all advisory groups within PRI and each PRI program has youth participation in program, design, implementation, and evaluation. For example, our arts program worked with youth to use the arts

to answer the question “what is rural?” and to present their art to educators at a national summit. Our GEAR UP program provides multiple opportunities for youth to engage and influence program opportunities.

PRI goes into this FSCS work prepared to work in partnership with multiple stakeholders. Figure 22 illustrates the lessons learned from our previous FSCS and related work and our plans for maintaining strong FSCS partnerships, both formal and informal, with stakeholders.

Plan to Manage Partnerships within Full Service Community Schools		Figure 22
Lessons Learned from Previous Partnerships	Steps to Build Strong Partnership	
Successful partnerships come together first and foremost to meet a need in the community and because they are committed to shared mission and vision.	We have created a shared mission, vision, theory of change and theory of action with our partners who are committed to achieving this vision. The Consortium members have strong, mutual accountability to our shared goals and will discuss our progress in an open, constructive forum. We will provide ample resources for building capacity to reach our shared vision. The Consortium will hold the FSCS vision and culture for all involved.	
Strong partnerships and accountability are built on consistent, clear communication, trust, follow-up, follow-through, and structure.	We will be clear in our agreements (MOUs, work plans and budgets), our mutual commitments and responsibilities. We will monitor results frequently and use data to continuously improve results and processes. We will allocate time and resources to partnership development, coordination, and evaluation to ensure that organizations have the resources to build strong partnerships.	
Effective partnerships are mutually beneficial and have buy-in from multiple levels of staff.	Our system of coordination is designed to develop substantive relationships with staff of partner organizations and school districts at multiple levels. All our staff will receive training so that they are committed to the partnership, outcomes, and process.	

(5)(C) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve project objectives on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones

PRI’s history for managing complicated, federally funded, collaborative projects is well-established. We do this in part through community offices, well-trained and highly qualified staff, and, most importantly, a **clear understanding of the population we serve**. Our

management plan includes:

- **Adequate procedures for program management & reporting:** Policies and procedures are in place for data collection, recordkeeping, and reporting (financial, student, program services). Personnel, financial and management policies are in place to provide compliance with all federal and state regulations. To comply with Department of Education regulations, all personnel certify time and effort monthly to PRI Finance, which checks to ensure compliance.
- **Professional development for the personnel managing, coordinating, or delivering pipeline services:** Based on our experience managing FSCS programs, we know staff professional development is critical in successful program implementation. All employees will receive training and information necessary to develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities to meet the performance expectations of their roles effectively and efficiently. Training programs align with the organizational mission and institutional values of PRI, including the full development and utilization of our human resources, and making certain project staff have the tools needed to meet requirements.
- **Reasonable and comprehensive fiscal plan:** This FSCS project will transform 4 low-income schools through full implementation of the community school model, improving the coordination, integration, accessibility, and effectiveness of services for 1,584 students and their families. The budget is adequate for this implementation, and costs are reasonable in relation to the high quality of services described, the number of students served, and the results and benefits derived from the program. We have included a five-year total project budget that details the project expenses, categorizing each expense as federal or match. As required, we have included a detailed budget narrative. All costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives and the scope of the program and are linked back to the project goals, absolute

priorities, and stated objectives.

- Plans for joint utilization and management of school facilities:** Processes are in place to develop a plan between partner schools and FSCS for the joint utilization and management of school facilities. The initial plan includes the following considerations: (1) existing space needs for each required school activity; (2) current utilization rates for each space; (3) space needs to deliver pipeline services; (4) available community space and accessibility of space by students and families, and (5) existing plans for renovations, new buildings, construction, or expansions. Once funded, the school principals and district administration will work with the FSCS principal investigator, project director and school coordinator to together develop a final space use plan that ensures the access and safety of students, parents and the community while optimizing the available space for services. A calendar, aligned with our management plan, will confirm shared spaces do not overlap and that daily maintenance can occur. The school principal, district administration, school facility manager and FSCS school coordinator meet quarterly to evaluate the plan, make recommendations for improved use of space, and share clear communication about the space necessary to meet project goals and objectives.

We developed a comprehensive plan to meet the objectives of the project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities for accomplishing project tasks. Figure 23 includes the Year 1 timeline with milestones for accomplishing project tasks and the parties responsible. Timelines for Years 2-5 are included in Appendix K. The timeline provides two separate views of our activities: Ongoing tasks across time (e.g., weekly, quarterly) and tasks occurring each month.

Year 1: Project Timeline, Milestones, Responsible Parties **Figure 23**

Key for Responsible Parties: Principal Investigator (PI), Project Director (PD), District Contact (DC), Schools’ Coordinators (SC), Principal (P), Partner Agencies (PA), Families (F), Students (S), Community Members (CM), Evaluator (E), Consortium Members (C), Partnership

Year 1: Project Timeline, Milestones, Responsible Parties		Figure 23
Council (PC), School Advisory Board (SAB)		
<u>Weekly Ongoing Activities</u>	<u>Milestones</u>	<u>Responsible Parties</u>
Leadership Meetings	Review of data and discuss caseloads of individual students	P, SC
Principal and School Coordinator Check-In	Project integration planned with school site and FSCS	P, SC
Eligible services provided	Students and families receive services during academic year, during school and afterschool hours, and for two weeks in summer	SC, PA, PC, CM, F, S
Weekly reporting for each school	Early Warning reports, maintenance of time and effort logs, and service reports completed	SC, PD
FSCS staff Meetings	Integration of services across all school sites	DC, PD, P, SC
Staff Training and Development	Staff trained to deliver all services and programs with care and fidelity	PD, SC, DC, P, PA
Communication	FSCS newsletter mailed, social media, texting, one-calls delivered	PD, SC
<u>Monthly Ongoing Activities</u>	<u>Milestones</u>	<u>Responsible Parties</u>
School Advisory Board meetings	Schools—families, students, teachers, staff—confirm services are delivered; additional needs are determined and addressed through board assignments, actions	SC, SAB, CM
Staff Training and Development	Staff trained to develop services and programs delivered with care and fidelity	PD, SC, DC, P, PA, PC
Finance	Reconciled federal/match expenditures with project accounting office statements	PD
Communication	FSCS newsletter mailed, social media, texting, one-calls delivered	PD, SC
<u>Quarterly Ongoing Activities</u>	<u>Milestones</u>	<u>Responsible Parties</u>
Partnership Council Meetings (Jan., Apr., July, Oct.)	Schools and Partners confirm that services are delivered; additional partner needs determined	PC, SC, CM, E
Consortium Meetings (Jan., Apr., July, Oct.)	Governance meeting to monitor implementation benchmarks, data collection, financial documents, and reporting requirements	PI, C, E
Financial monitoring and	Quarterly review of federal/match	PD, PI, C

Year 1: Project Timeline, Milestones, Responsible Parties		Figure 23
reconciliation review	expenditures with project accounting office statements	
<u>Summer</u> Activities	Milestones	Responsible Parties
Extended Learning	Students are provided additional opportunities for learning to achieve academically, increase preparation for college, and develop workforce skills	PD, SC, PA, PC, CM
Transition Programs	Students at all levels are provided additional opportunities for academic learning and are prepared for grade level transitions	PD, SC, PA, PC, CM
Parent Institutes & Villages	Parents are provided opportunities to increase their learning on topics that will help their children	PD, SC, PA, PC, CM
Activities by <u>MONTH</u> —Year 1		
January 2024 Hire PD, establish office (PI) (DC) Meet with school officials (PD) (PI) Introduce FSCS program (PI) (PD) (PA) (PC)		February 2024 Administer parent & student survey (PD) Receive data from Diboll ISD (PD) School utilization plan (PD) (DC) Identify evaluator (PI) (PD)
March 2024 National FSCS Project Meeting (PD) (SC) (E) Hire School Coordinators (PD) (P) (PI) (DC)		April 2024 Set final project benchmarks, targets (PD) (E) School team planning retreat (PD) (SC) (P) Plan for spring afterschool (SC) (P) (PA) (PC) Professional development for staff (PD) (SC) (DC) (P) (PA)
May 2024 Collect data from schools (E) Begin longitudinal study (E) Plan for summer (SC) (P) (PA) (PC) (PD)		June 2024 Collect data on performance (PD) (E) Summer session (ALL)
July 2024 Evaluation of all staff & contractors (PD)		August/Sept. 2024 File financial performance report (PD) Plan fall afterschool (SC) (P) (PC)
September 2024 Conduct assessments of impact (PD) (E) Year 2 planning retreat (ALL)		October 2024 Confer with partners regarding match & year 2 commitments (PD) (PC) Conduct focus groups (E) (PC)
November 2024 Preparing for reporting period		December 2024 Year-end evaluation (PD) (E)

As noted, the timelines for Years 2-5 are included in Appendix K.

Appropriate and Adequate Personnel: This FSCS project is designed to ensure the commitments of all personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the outcomes. The coordinator at each school is essential to the success of the FSCS and information on that role can be found in Adequacy of Resources Section, page 58. The time commitments of the project director and principal investigator are appropriate and adequate to meet the project objectives.

Dr. Amon Couch will serve at the project's Principal Investigator to launch the project, monitor its effectiveness, and ensure the project is meeting its goals and objectives throughout the grant cycle. Dr. Couch is a fulltime employee with PRI currently working as Principal Investigator in two existing FSCS projects where he commits 25% FTE in total. For this FSCS project, he will commit 15% FTE. Given the role of the PI and his existing knowledge of FSCS, the 15% effort is appropriate and adequate to meet FSCS's objectives.

Principal Investigator qualifications, relevant training, and experience. Dr. Couch reports to the PRI Vice President for Place Based Partnerships. As principal investigator, his responsibilities will include articulating FSCS' strategic direction and theory of change, facilitating the partnership between PRI and school and community-based partners, collaborating with the evaluation team, and aligning the FSCS program to other PreK-16 initiatives. Dr. Couch has received training in grants management and fiscal management and is familiar with the mission and goals of the program. Couch's resume is in Appendix E.

Dr. Couch brings over 30 years' experience in school leadership where he served as superintendent; elementary, middle, and high school principal; and teacher. His expertise includes resource and organizational development, human resource management, performance measures, school climate and budget management. Dr. Couch's dissertation, "The Relationship Between Trust and Student Achievement in a K-12 Public School Setting," focused on how

culture affects the climate in schools. Further, Dr. Couch has extensive knowledge of school improvement plans and is well-versed in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by Every Student Succeeds Act. As Associate Vice President, Dr. Couch provides leadership, vision, and oversight to PRI's community school portfolio.

In the event that Dr. Couch is unavailable to serve as Principal Investigator, PRI, in collaboration with Consortium members will conduct a search for a PI seeking the following **qualifications, training, and experience:** A terminal degree in education, management, or related field, with a minimum ten years' experience in personnel, program, and fiscal management; demonstrated experience with federal grants management, including budget responsibility; demonstrated knowledge and leadership in developing partnerships among diverse stakeholders; expertise in program evaluation; demonstrated history of achieving performance goals and outcomes for projects; experience in capacity building for partners; belief that all students can succeed; familiarity with community schools.

The **Project Director** will be a full-time employee and will dedicate 100% of their effort to this project. A program of this scope and scale requires a full-time position with 100% effort on FSCS. Upon notification of funding, PRI, in collaboration with Consortium members, will begin a search for a full-time, 12-month Project Director. The PI will meet weekly with the Project Director to ensure success; the PI will assist the Project Director with program start-up, evaluation, and continuous improvement.

Reporting to the Principal Investigator, the Project Director has responsibility for the management of the project; program development and refinement of program operations to ensure that objectives are met; ensuring that the program is in compliance with U.S. Department of Education guidelines; management of daily operation of the program through hiring, supervising,

training, and guiding staff in the development, implementation, and evaluation of program activities; and operating the program in a fiscally prudent manner that is in compliance with all federal requirements. Additionally, the Project Director will work with the Diboll ISD, evaluators and data contractors to implement the data system, affirming data drives services, and documenting continuous project improvement.

Project Director qualifications, relevant training, and experience include a minimum of a Master's degree in educational administration, or related field, with a doctorate preferred; minimum ten years' experience in personnel, program, and fiscal management; demonstrated experience with federal grants management, including budget responsibility; demonstrated knowledge and leadership in school reform, college/career readiness, and evaluation; belief that all students can succeed; and familiarity with the full services community school model.

As noted in the Adequacy of Resources section (page 58), within 90 days of being notified of funding, we will hire **4 School Coordinators**—one Coordinator for each school. School Coordinators will be employed by the project with input from the school. The School Coordinators will all serve full-time (100% FTE). Qualifications include Bachelor's degree; a minimum of five years of experience in partnership engagement; skills and knowledge coordinating a multi-faceted program; demonstrated knowledge in best practices to support students to and through school; experience partnering with families; excellent written and oral communication and presentation skills; exceptional organizational skills and ability to multi-task. Among the School Coordinators' duties will be their ongoing leadership and support for the School Advisory Board; liaising with community partners; continually assessing the needs of students; and leading the work at the school site.

Support staff paid from matching funds will support the PRI FSCS project—a project

analyst and project coordinator. The analyst and coordinator work full-time for PRI and will dedicate a reasonable percent of their effort to this FSCS project. This amount of effort will be adequate given their responsibilities and contributions to the project's outcomes.

Project Analyst (15% 1 FTE) reports to the project director and will use their expertise of federal regulations, non-federal entity's policies, and grant terms and conditions to analyze and examine transactions to support financial and data collection activities. The analyst will confirm expenses are allowable, necessary, reasonable, and allocable. The analyst will assist in data collection, analysis and in federal grant reporting. The analyst will work with the project director and program staff to examine financial data to complete timely and accurate annual financial reporting, monthly account reconciliation, cost-share reports, and Budget-to-Actual comparisons. The analyst will disseminate reports and use historical cost analysis and data analysis to make budget and future planning recommendations to the project director.

Qualifications, including relevant training and experience: A bachelor's degree in business, accounting, or related area is required, two years' financial and/or budgetary experience as well as experience in data collection, analysis and reporting.

The **Project Coordinator (15% 1 FTE)** reports to the project director and provides program assistance to all FSCS staff. The project coordinator will develop and monitor project timelines, due dates and milestones for national events, including drafting contracts, initiating purchase requests, and creating registration sites; provide regular progress reports to teams to ensure work is compliant and progressing as expected; perform general clerical/administrative support; manage communications/correspondence with internal and external partners; coordinate meeting logistics for training programs and special events; oversee and maintain weekly schedules of staff on Outlook and coordinates with partners to determine engagement dates and

times; meeting preparation and onsite meeting support activities; manage project budgets, ensuring all expenditures are allowable and within scope of work; and contributes to budget projections; prepare and track necessary contracts and agreements. Qualifications include an associate's degree or five to seven years of related experience. Experience required, administrative experience within a professional office setting; experience working with data collection, meeting planning/coordination, event planning, budgetary monitoring, and scheduling of events and teams; minimum two years' experience in complex project management from initiation to completion. All position descriptions have been approved by the Consortium and are included in Appendix E.

PRI will build capacity of the management structure and the project director to make data-informed decisions to support continuous improvement and ensure results for our children. PRI's Organizational Results and Data Office (ORD), led by Sherry Horner, Associate Vice President of Continuous Improvement, will provide training to ensure all program leaders, staff, stakeholders, and management team members have the capacity to collect, analyze, and use data for decision-making, learning, continuous improvement and accountability (See Horner's resume, Appendix E.) A core data team, including the principal investigator, project director, project analyst and the external evaluator will meet monthly to continually oversee the implementation of the data management plan, including data collection management, the case management system, and the longitudinal data system. This data team will confirm FSCS's compliance with privacy and security controls and provide support and recommendations for system improvement. The team will guide the continuous refinement of the FSCS plan, ensuring the plan is implemented with fidelity and compliance with all privacy requirements and security controls and supports continuous program improvement. The principal

investigator will share all findings and analyses with Consortium members each quarter or more frequently as warranted.

PRI has an existing data system that integrates student-level data to measure progress. Essential security controls are included, and those systems comply with all requirements related to informed consent processes and all applicable privacy laws. Written informed consent will be obtained from every parent (or other caregiver with custodial control or supervision) of a student on whom additional, child-specific information is collected. All staff sign a confidentiality statement and receive on-going training on data security procedures.

Our custom-designed data system allows us to measure progress across all services. The data system gives us not only the ability to collect and monitor the data, but it also provides the necessary elements to analyze the data, allowing for real time program improvements. Producing summary reports, the data system provides the necessary tools to assist staff and partners in monitoring program results. Project staff meet monthly to discuss summary data reports and share the summary results with the Consortium, the Partnership Council, and the School Advisory Board to gather feedback from multiple perspectives for program improvements.

We have worked with our partner school superintendents and their data teams to develop a plan whereby, with requisite permission and data sharing agreements, we will be able to access record-level data on students in FSCS schools. Our data team and the school district will meet to align data services, develop new data reports and sources and share program level results. The data system portal will incorporate, through data downloads from the partner schools and the National Student Clearinghouse, record-level data on student demographics and performance, CCR targets, attendance, graduation rates, college matriculation and college remediation.

(6) Quality of the Project Evaluation

To fully present our Evaluation, we provide freestanding descriptions on the following pages.

Each section responds to elements within the Evaluation criterion as follows:

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| A. Methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate ... | <i>Pages 84 - 87</i> |
| B. Provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment... | <i>Pages 87 - 89</i> |
| C. Provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes ... | <i>Pages 89 - 94</i> |

(6)(A) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

The evaluation plan will include a mixed methodology, integrating quantitative and qualitative data. Instruments will be developed or acquired to measure program accomplishments, performance indicators, collect data for Annual Performance Reports, and implement a model for continuous improvement. Data will be collected to measure impact on students, parents, and schools, and the analyses will be disaggregated by race, gender, ethnicity, and school. Data will also be collected to assess fidelity to program design and organizational health to secure the vigor of program implementation. There are four goals to the proposed evaluation:

1. To produce a valuable process evaluation that will assess the quality of the components of the project and service delivery, and its fidelity to the program model
2. To develop an effective summative evaluation that will measure impact on students, parents, and teachers, particularly academic achievement, and postsecondary attainment
3. To generate comprehensive, useful, and erudite data derived from a robust methodology
4. To create practical and functional tools that stakeholders will be able to utilize.

Annually, the design will be re-visited by the evaluator, principal investigator, and project director to ensure the evaluation is meeting the needs of the program. An annual evaluation report will be submitted to the principal investigator and project director.

Our evaluation—as with all federal programs—will be led by the project director and an **independent evaluator** will be selected who from the PRI pool of evaluators. PRI has established procurement policies which comply with the Uniform Guidance. In keeping to guidance related to open and fair competition, PRI has established a pool of highly qualified evaluators to call upon as needed for large projects. The pool was established using a Call for Qualifications; additional evaluation firms or sole proprietors are welcome to join the pool at any time—again in keeping with the ideals of open and fair competition.

Upon funding, PRI's PI and PD will review the experience of each evaluator within the pool. They will consider the experience of each evaluator in light of this FSCS project. We are confident that we have an excellent pool of evaluators for this project as we have evaluators within the pool who have evaluated FSCS projects, and who are familiar with the research of community schools. As importantly, our pool is diverse with a significant number of firms that are minority owned and operated. The majority within the pool have significant experience as external program evaluator for the U.S. Department of Education programs (USDOE). Evaluators are typically selected within 30-days of solicitation.

Our 2023 selection of Policy Studies Associates (PSA) as the evaluator for a PRI federal grant project illustrates the depth of our evaluator pool. We launched a federally funded project in 2023 and used the evaluator pool to select an evaluator. After review and interviews of multiple evaluators, PSA, a woman-owned business with more than 40 years of experience in research, evaluation, and technical assistance in education and community programs, was selected. Their expertise includes working with programs at federal, state, and local levels. Since their founding, PSA has studied federally funded grants programs for the USDOE, informing policymakers and practitioners of the successes and challenges of delivering services and

supports to high-need, low-resourced schools and communities operating in varied geographic, cultural, and economic contexts. PSA is committed to strengthening education ecosystems and working with various agencies to identify and build capacity to implement evidence-based solutions to high-leverage problems. A summary of PSA's key staff is in Appendix E.

Based on our existing processes and history in grant implementation, PRI will select the evaluator for this project and enter into a contract for services within twelve weeks of the funding award. Again, our evaluator pool enables us, in advance of the award, to consider skilled evaluation firms that comply with the Uniform Guidance and our own procurement policies.

The evaluation will provide guidance on/or strategies suitable for replication.

Annually, findings from the evaluation will discuss in detail the implementation, analysis, and limitations of the study. We will identify key practice areas that we will study for replication in rural and small town community schools. The PI, PD, and evaluator will present findings at relevant conferences as well as submit written papers to scholarly journals and professional publications, regionally and nationally. All efforts will be made to share and disseminate findings, and to learn and receive feedback from the research and education community.

In addition, **PRI is committed to participating in a national evaluation to assess the implementation of the FSCS program.** If funded, the PI, Consortia, PD and PRI's external evaluator will collaborate with national evaluator to complete all requested surveys of service providers and schools (including the principal and teachers). PRI has a long history of partnering with education agencies and local schools and has the data sharing agreements to make certain we can provide administrative data, such as student absenteeism rates and high school graduation rates, to the national evaluator. Further, our experienced internal data team regularly cooperates with federal program officers to collect relevant data points for federal programs before, during, and after project performance periods. We will ensure our external evaluation partner's scope of

work includes a requirement for cooperation with the national team. PRI will make every effort to facilitate connections among partners, schools, national and external evaluators, and beneficiaries to accelerate continuous improvement and advance the project goals and objectives.

(6)(B) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

Our evaluation effort will have two major purposes: first, it will provide the Consortium as a whole, along with the Partnership Council and the School Advisory Councils, with formative feedback, helping to shape FSCS as it proceeds; second, the evaluation team will assess ways and the degree to which FSCS is meeting project objectives.

Quarterly written updates will be provided to the project director, encompassing summaries of data collection, progress on project implementation, and next steps. Annual written progress reports will include data by project, by student, and by school. School data will be disaggregated where appropriate based on priority student classification including economic status, gender, race/ethnicity, and more. Finally, discussions of progress toward meeting goals and objectives will be included as part of the summative evaluation. In combination, these measures will be used to gauge overall project efficiency and efficacy.

Formative: Our evaluation team will independently study all components of the FSCS work each year – eligible services to students and families, and implementation of the four pillars. Using a logic model approach, they will document the evolving theory of action for each pillar and compare those strategies with realities observed in the field and through data. Annually, the evaluator will meet formally with the Consortium and the Partnership Council to report findings and facilitate a discussion on the implications for change; fewer formal sessions will be held quarterly. In addition, the evaluator will be given the responsibility and license to assess and document the health of the FSCS, and to report out both strengths and weaknesses.

Summative: Our evaluator will study the pillars and their components and the degree to which they are interacting with and supportive of each other. Upon selection, the evaluator will assist in establishing baseline data and targets to measure progress toward objectives. The evaluation will assess the degree to which FSCS is achieving its stated benchmarks and targets.

PRI developed and will continue to use a continuous improvement and assessment model for the FSCS that refines services and service delivery to make certain we continuously meet project goals and objectives. This model will ensure we stay on track to meet objectives, we are within the project scope, and within the proposed budget parameters. Our continuous improvement framework is shown in Figure 24.

Continuous Improvement Framework		Figure 24
Procedure	Improvement	
Services to students, families continually evaluated using debriefings, surveys, pre/posts.	Results compiled by evaluator shared with staff; used to refine service delivery.	
Stakeholders (e.g., School Advisory Board), annually give feedback on program and specific services in focus groups, interviews, surveys.	Stakeholders recommend 1) new services, 2) service modifications, and 3) services that may no longer be needed.	
Project director with evaluator continually reviews individual, student-level data (assessment and attendance data). Education agency and schools provide student data in timely to use in a customizable database.	Project director provides regular feedback to all staff to ensure students receive appropriate services and that services have desired impact.	
Staff stay up to date on current research and best practices, participating in trainings by the USDOE, education agencies, SAT, and other service providers.	At monthly staff meetings, staff share what they have learned and discuss ways to incorporate knowledge into project.	
Project director provides monthly updates to partners and shares information on activities and modifications to services and service delivery.	Slack, or similar service, will be used to share information, discuss challenges, and disseminate best practices in real time.	
Project director reports to the Partnership Council the feedback received and improvements made in services and delivery.	Partnership Council will comment and recommend improvements.	

We have used our continuous improvement framework in community schools for several years and credit the framework as a key to the success of our community schools, including the success of the Knox Community Schools project. The framework ensures feedback is provided up, down, and across all stakeholder groups; that communication is ongoing, effective, and constructive; and that the program results in positive changes. Critically, the framework ensures actions are taken as needed by assigning specific responsibility to staff (project director and principal investigator) and stakeholders (Partnership Council, Schools' Advisory Boards).

(6) (C) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes.

We will measure the USDOE's single performance measure for this program: **The percentage and number of individuals targeted for services who receive services during each year of the project period.** On pg 13, we established annual targets for the number of students and families to be served each year of the project (saturation levels, Figure 9). We will track the individuals who receive each service and calculate the percentage of individuals targeted for services who receive services each year. Our staff will ensure compliance with the Government Performance and Results Acts by submitting data on this Performance Indicator **and by participating in ED national evaluations.** As required by USDOE, **we will collect data throughout the project period for all indicators** established by the FSCS NFP as follows:

student chronic absenteeism rates; student discipline rates, including suspensions and expulsions; school climate information, which may come from student, parent, or teacher surveys; provision of integrated student supports and stakeholder services; expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities; family and community engagement efforts and impact; information on the number, qualifications, and retention of school staff, including the number and percentage of fully certified teachers, disaggregated by race and ethnicity, and rates of teacher turnover; graduation rates; changes in school spending information; collaborative leadership and practice strategies, which may include building the capacity of educators, principals, other school leaders, and other staff to lead collaborative school improvement structures, such as professional learning communities; regularly convening or

engaging all initiative-level partners; regularly assessing program quality and progress through individual student data, participant feedback, and aggregate outcomes to develop strategies for improvement; and organizing school personnel and community partners into working teams focused on specific issues identified in the needs and assets assessment.

Data collection processes and systems are in place to ensure adequate collection of this data and the data team will support the PD to ensure data collection and analysis. Importantly, these indicators align with our project defined goals, objectives and outcomes, Figure 14.

The collection and effective use of both quantitative and qualitative data is essential in demonstrating the efficacy of FSCS, assessing student outcomes, and taking immediate action toward improving student performance. PRI will develop a data sharing agreement with Diboll ISD that makes data more accessible, and that standardizes state and school-wide data interfaces for FSCS staff and our evaluator. The project analyst will coordinate data entry, access, reporting of data, and serve as the data clearinghouse, routing data to FSCS.

We will collect a variety of quantitative and qualitative data to provide the information necessary to evaluate the project's success in meeting our goals. The collection and effective use of quantitative and qualitative data is essential in demonstrating the efficacy of FSCS, assessing student outcomes, and taking immediate action to improve student performance. PRI will partner with the Diboll ISD per our ongoing data-sharing agreement to make data accessible and to standardize state and school-wide data interfaces for our staff, schools, and our evaluator. We will collect a variety of quantitative and qualitative data on participating students, teachers, parents, and schools. Data will provide the information necessary to evaluate the project's success in achieving goals and objectives. Figure 20 illustrates our data collection timeline and instruments to be used. Our previous experience effectively implementing FSCS provides us with the instruments and experience needed to effectively and efficiently implement this program.

FSCS Data Collection Timeline and Instruments		Figure 25
Collection Date	Evaluation Dimensions	Collection Vehicle
Jan (3rd Week)	Characteristics of students	PRI/School Data download report
Feb (4th Week)	Health, Safety, Engagement	Student and Parent Survey
Mar (2nd Week)	Outcomes & Performance	PRI/School student academic report
Mar (3rd Week)	Academic Support Program	Academic Support Form
Apr (2nd Week)	Referrals to Service	Parent Survey
June (1st Week)	Delivery of Services	Project Services Form
	Alignment of Services	Community & Site Alignment Report
	Parent Engagement	Parent participation form and survey
July (1st week)	Segmented pop. observations	Interviews & focus groups
	Training & development of Staff	Professional Dev. Form
May (3rd week)	Participant Inactiveness	Inactiveness Form

The evaluation process will study FSCS carefully, both its operation and impact, at different levels of the system. These levels include individual student achievement, quality of instruction, local school system capacity, and partnership activity. At the first level, the evaluation will carefully monitor the influence of FSCS on student achievement. For the second level, the evaluation will look at the nature and quality of integrated student supports, out-of-school learning opportunities, and family and community engagement and its correlation with FSCS activities. At the third level, the summative evaluation will include an assessment of staff, leadership, and the Partnership Council's collaborative leadership and practices. The results of the summative evaluation will be utilized to measure the efficacy of FSCS.

Analytic Strategy. The basic logic behind the analytic strategy is to assess the outcomes of students participating in the FSCS program. The primary unit of analyses is the student. Propensity scores will be calculated utilizing logistic regression analysis, testing for meaningful differences as a result of participating in FSCS. Regression analysis will be used to determine the

value of participation in FSCS in contributing to academic achievement. In addition, Multivariate Analysis of Variance will be used to evaluate the broader impact of the significance of participation in FSCS and effect on graduating high school prepared for college.

The evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes. The relevant outcomes of the program will be tracked and assessed by the project objectives. Baseline data will be collected at the individual student- and parent-levels using valid and reliable performance data that is directly measurable to the relevant outcomes, Figure 26.

Performance Data and Outcomes		Figure 26
Valid & Reliable Performance Data	Relevant Outcomes	
Goal 1: To improve academics, cradle to career, for all students and those most at-risk		
✓ Texas state assessment that measures kindergarten readiness	Obj 1.1: 25% increase in the number of K students who are ready for kindergarten.	
✓ State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR), math ✓ SAT assessment, math	Obj 1.2: 20% increase in the number of students scoring proficient in math.	
✓ State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR), reading ✓ SAT assessment, reading	Obj 1.3: 25% increase in the number of students scoring proficient in reading.	
✓ SAT assessment, % of students at/above benchmark	Obj 1.4: 20% increase in the number of students who graduate from high school prepared for college.	
✓ School district attendance data reported annually	Obj 1.5: 25% decrease in the number of students who are chronically absent	
Goal 2: To increase cradle to career integrated student supports.		
✓ Asset mapping (baseline) & updates (annual) ✓ Evaluator developed or procure surveys	Obj 2.1: Increase in number of partnerships with social and health service agencies	
✓ Asset mapping (baseline) & updates (annual) ✓ Evaluator developed or procured surveys	Obj 2.2: Increase in number of parents referred to appropriate support services (e.g., housing assistance, health, mental health, food security providers)	
Goal 3: To expand and enrich out of school learning time and opportunities for K-12.		
✓ Initial and annual pre/post surveys (evaluator developed or procured)	Obj 3.1: Increase by 25% the #/% of students participating in out-of-school learning	

Performance Data and Outcomes		Figure 26
Valid & Reliable Performance Data	Relevant Outcomes	
✓ Initial and annual pre/post surveys (evaluator developed or procured)	Obj 3.2: Improve the <u>quality</u> of out-of-school learning time opportunities	
✓ Initial and annual pre/post surveys (evaluator developed or procured)	Obj 3.3: Increase in the # of work-based learning opportunities tied to high quality employment opportunities in local labor market	
✓ School level data (initial, annual)	Obj 3.4: Increase in the # of high school students participating in and receiving college credit from dual enrollment courses	
Goal 4: To increase active family and community engagement		
✓ School level data (initial, annual)	Obj 4.1: Increase by 25% the number of families and community members (adults) who come into the school building for meetings, events, or programming	
✓ School level data (initial, annual) ✓ Initial and annual pre/post surveys (evaluator developed or procured) ✓ Evaluator developed rubric on framework and engagement	Obj 4.2: Increase by 25% the #/% of families/parents who see the school as a “hub of service”	
✓ Initial and annual attendance data by type and by number of participants	Obj 4.3: Increase by 25% the #/% of parents/caregivers (adults) who participate as advocates and/or volunteers in their local schools and districts	
Goal 5: To establish and sustain collaborative leadership processes and practices		
✓ Initial and annual attendance data by type and by number of participants	Obj 5.1: Increase in number of educators, family members, community members participating in collaborative leadership processes and practices at multiple levels	
✓ Initial and ongoing annual measurement of participation by types of members	Obj 5.2: Sustain participation to at 80% or higher attendance over the course of the 5-year project	

Competitive Preference Priorities

Our FSCS project addresses both competitive preference priorities (CPPs). To fully present our CPPs, we provide freestanding descriptions on the following pages. Each section responds to elements within the CPP criterion. The following information is included in this CPP section:

- CPP 1.2: Providing multi-tiered systems of support addressing barriers ... *Pages 94-96*
- CPP 2: Strengthening cross-agency coordination, community engagement... *Pages 96-99*

CPP 1.2 Providing multi-tiered systems of support addressing learning barriers

Our PD will work closely with each school coordinator to ensure all students receive the appropriate level of services from cradle to career with specific focus on transition points—as students transition into elementary school, to middle school, to and through high school, and on to college or career. Our approach reflects the examples of effective practices and supporting systems outlined in:

- The Center for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports technical brief, “Every Student Succeeds Act: Why School Climate Should Be One of Your Indicators”⁹⁹
- The Department of Education’s “Parent and Educator Guide to School Climate Resources.”¹⁰⁰

Our staff and partners will ensure that related interventions, practices, school personnel, and programs are organized around the unique needs or desired outcomes of the school rather than addressing student behaviors (e.g., bullying, disruptive behaviors, chronic absence, etc.) as **separate** initiatives. Because positive school climate has been linked to several important outcomes—for example, decreased absenteeism, positive academic outcomes, and increased school completion¹⁰¹—we will measure these types of outcomes.

We adopt and integrate a **Multi-Tiered System of Support** that encompasses both Response to Intervention and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (RTI and PBIS), which creates a “whole-school, data-driven, prevention-based framework for improving learning outcomes for every student...”¹⁰² (p. 4). Each school coordinator will work with the school principal to create the connections needed to link these systems schoolwide. In doing so, we will

create both prevention and intervention systems that avoid deficit-based approaches.

The philosophy and framework of RTI creates within our multi-tiered system of support the **right resources to the right students at the right time**. Response to Intervention is an instructional framework that focuses on addressing problems early with students who show signs of academic weakness.¹⁰³ Similarly, positive behavioral interventions and supports (**PBIS**) operates upon a tiered methodology. In our FSCS projects and schools, all students are taught certain behavioral expectations and are rewarded for following them. Students with more needs are provided increasingly intensive interventions.¹⁰⁴

Many articles provide descriptions of response to intervention and positive behavioral interventions models in their entirety and data to support their effectiveness.¹⁰⁵ Our comprehensive model is built on the recognition that all students need varied levels of supports—academic and behavioral, targeted and intensive. Across all our services, FSCS will use tiered interventions to ensure each student receives supports at the **appropriate level**.

In addition, all work with teachers, instructors and leaders is provided through a “student possible” lens, or as noted in the research, an **asset-based approach**. For example, we understand the term “disconnected youth;” we do not, however, routinely use it. We use “opportunity youth” instead because, in all we do, we see **opportunities** available to all young children, students, and youth. We embed that philosophy in our language and actions. This particularly includes our work with teachers and leaders at school and district levels. Enabling teachers to see students from an asset-based perspective flips the perspective that, for example, students from high-poverty homes or student of color/ethnicity automatically arrive unable to learn alongside their peers. In asset-based schools, teachers and leaders understand that **all students** arrive with a set of assets that can be employed/expanded/utilized to support learning.

CPP 2 Strengthening cross-agency coordination, community engagement...

Our FSCS project is designed to take a systemic, evidence-based approach to improving outcomes for underserved students through our **coordinated, cross-agency approach** to address healthy development and student success. That includes **providing pro-active responses for community violence prevention and intervention.**

Violence prevention and intervention, it is important to note, are **typically overlooked** in both the policy arena and in academic scholarship.¹⁰⁶ To illustrate, in 2015, we collaborated with Dr. Charlotte Gill, the Deputy Director for the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy at George Mason University on a Department of Justice funded Community Based Crime Reduction project.¹⁰⁷ The research team initially worked to identify “hot spots” where crime involving young people was most concentrated. However, **they found no research** on how the concept of hot spots operates in rural places, or whether the crime prevention benefits of focusing interventions on these places is as effective as it is in urban areas.

Recognizing this, the team arrived at the concept of “bright spots,” which is derived from “anchor points”—physical spaces that serve as a gathering place for communities where the social bonds that underpin collective efficacy can be built.¹⁰⁸ As a result, Dr. Gill began translating criminological theory and research for rural communities. She received a Carnegie Fellowship in 2017 to explore how young people in our rural region experience crime and safety.

As Dr. Gill stresses, the creation of bright spots is crucial in rural areas. Bright spots reduce the attractiveness of the hot spots. Bright spots provide service providers places where they can more effectively provide support, and positive interactions. Bright spots draw young people away from locations where crime is happening.

We recognize that schools are “bright spots.” Our design builds upon Dr. Gill’s research.¹⁰⁹ We agree that in the rural context, “bright spots” are essential to providing youth support and opportunities.¹¹⁰ Rural schools are the heart of community and the most logical place to begin creating the trust and efficacy that is foundational to a safe environment for students. Our designs support the school (physical space) as a “bright spot.” When entire communities are part of the undergirding to build an anti-bullying, supportive environment around youth, outcomes will move in a more positive direction.¹¹¹ Training school personnel, partners, and students and their families in evidence-informed practices is a critical component to schools being the “bright spot” that ensures students are safe and supported.

As noted in our project narrative, **we will build collective capacity** through coordinating efforts with Federal, State, and local agencies, including community-based organizations and nonprofits to ensure all students are safe and supported. **We recognize that services alone will not create opportunities for youth and nor will they alone decrease violence.** It takes a school, working with the community, to provide an ecosystem where students are safe and supported. Collective efficacy—the interplay between social cohesion (bonds between community members) and willingness to intervene to solve problems—underpins our approach. Key to our project design is our connections with stakeholders from multiple sectors including school, social services, faith-based community and youth and their families.

Evidence-based and evidence-informed practices related to violence prevention will be embedded within our work. Our initial planning has resulted in the following core programs to address violence prevention and intervention:

- **Green Dot.** According to CrimeSolutions.org, Green Dot is a bystander intervention program

that is an evidence-informed practice to increase active-bystander behaviors and reduce violence.¹¹² Research shows that Green Dot has an effect on reducing violence acceptance at the school level and it has been tested in rural communities like ours.¹¹³ Within our community, school staff, educators, and community partners will be trained as instructors. They will train students and implement Green Dot in the community.

- **Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA).** YMHFA was developed to address gaps in mental health literacy by teaching skills to identify and help individuals experiencing emotional distress.¹¹⁴ Numerous studies, including those in rural places, have found YMHFA to be effective.^{115, 116} Rural-specific supplemental materials, and curricula were developed to train instructors on the disparities regarding mental health conditions and treatment in rural areas.¹¹⁷ The School Coordinators and community leaders will be trained as instructors and will provide YMHFA training for families and community partners.
- **Too Good for Violence (TGFV).** TGFV is a school-based violence prevention and character education program. **Crimesolutions.org and What Works Clearinghouse rate the program as promising evidence-based program.** Bacon (2001) found that there was a 45% reduction in intention to engage in aggressive behavior for students that participated in the TGFV program.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, Bacon (2003) found that those students that were engaged in TGFV self-reported higher score for **emotional competency skills.**¹¹⁹ School Coordinators and educators will be trained in Too Good For Violence, and the age-appropriate programming will be available to each school.
- **Too Good for Drugs (TGFD).** TGFD is a school-based drug prevention program designed to mitigate the risk factors and enhance protective factors related to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. The program teaches five essential self-efficacy building skills for making

healthy choices. Studies have been published in peer-reviewed journals and presented nationally. A study by Bacon (2013) indicate the effectiveness of the TGFD school-based program in diminishing reported smoking behavior, alcohol consumption, binge drinking and marijuana use among high risk 6th grade students.¹²⁰

As part of our cross-agency operation, the Partnership Council will be on continual lookout for additional ways to support individual schools and communities. Cross-school successes, for example, will be shared to add new evidence-based solutions to the project's toolkit.

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