

**Full-Service Community Schools Grant Program
El Centro Project**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSOLUTE AND COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITIES	1
ABSOLUTE PRIORITY 1	1
ABSOLUTE PRIORITY 4	3
COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY 1	3
COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY 2	10
SECTION 1: NEED FOR THE PROJECT	16
1. Comprehensive Needs Assessment.....	16
2. Addressing Needs & Closing Gaps in Opportunity	26
SECTION 2: QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN	39
A. Evidence-Based Design, FSCS Pillars, & Evaluation Methods.....	39
B. Demonstrating a Rationale.....	57
SECTION 3: QUALITY OF THE PROJECT SERVICES	61
A. A Diversity of Perspectives.....	61
B. Services Reflecting Research & Effective Practice	67
C. Services Focused on Those with Greatest Need	72
SECTION 4: ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES	73
A. Plans & Responsibilities for FSCS Coordinators and Project Sustainment.....	73
B. Continued Support After Federal Funding & Demonstrated Commitment	77
SECTION 5: QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN	79
A. Broadly Representative Consortium	79
B. History of Effectiveness	81
C. Achieving the Objectives on Time & Within Budget	84
SECTION 6: QUALITY OF THE PROJECT EVALUATION	115
A. Thorough, Feasible, & Appropriate Methods	115
B. Performance Feedback & Assessment of Progress	131
C. Valid & Reliable Performance Data.....	132

ABSOLUTE PRIORITY 1

(a) How the Project Addresses the Absolute Priority:

Introduction: UNIVERSITY CENTER OF LAKE COUNTY (UCLC), is an eligible nonprofit entity that is a consortium-based center of thirteen Illinois public and private universities, located near the College of Lake County Community College campus, and Lake County LEA. It was created by the Illinois Board of Higher Education in 1998 to provide place based and accessible programs for residents to upscale their academic credentials or complete four year or graduate degrees. In 2001, it created the University Center’s Educators Center for professional development and other services to schools, families, students, and teachers, with the purpose of creating a model of “equity into action” committed to serving underserved students and students of color. UCLC, along with a broad and diverse consortium of partners consisting of: **Rosalind Franklin University School of Medicine, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, (SIUC), Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU), College of Lake County, Lake County Regional Office of Education, Mano a Mano Family Resource Center, Boys and Girls Club, Together for Childhood Network, YWCA of Metropolitan Chicago (Lake County), Lake County Health Department, Local Learning, and North Chicago Community Partners** propose a **Full-Service Community Schools (FSCS) Program**, entitled **EL CENTRO**. This project will serve two high needs school districts with majority Latino and African American students and families in Lake County, Illinois, namely the **North Chicago School District 187 in North Chicago and the Diamond Lake School District 76 in Mundelein**. The North Chicago Schools are **Evelyn Alexander Elementary K-3rd and Forrestal Elementary K-3rd**, and the Diamond Lake Schools in Mundelein are **Diamond Lake Elementary Pre-K-2nd, West Oak Intermediate 3rd-5th, and West Oak Middle School 6th-8th**. Partners are aligned with the six objectives, providing direct service to participants and address larger social issues. **As the eligible nonprofit entity**, EL Centro will meet absolute priority 1 by serving these 5 schools, which all meet Section 1114(b) in that the schools have low-income

percentages. The North Chicago Schools have 50%-61% low-income students and the Diamond Lake Schools in Mundelein have low-income percentages from 55%-60%. **See Table 1 in SECTION 1 Need for the Project- for the source of these statistics from the Illinois State Board of Education 2021-2022 School Report Cards.** The full-service strategies used in this project are district and community-wide in their scope and involve 12 partner organizations, including 4 higher learning institutions and 8 community-based or education/cultural/regional organizations transforming these five schools into vibrant hubs of community engagement in teaching and learning. **Through the University Center of Lake County, multiple community resources from the partners will be uniquely combined and integrated** so that a culture can be created for community schools to become systemic vehicles for the cross-fertilization of ideas and catalysts for classroom and community change among teachers, students, and families as well as the partners. Accordingly, collaboration and sharing will be integrated into professional development activities so a culture supporting joint work can be fostered. The Diamond Lake and North Chicago School Districts are majority Latino from Mexico and Central America and have significant numbers of African American, White, and Asian residents. Proposed activities align with the cultural traditions, histories and wellsprings of these rich communities, and care will be taken to connect across racial, language, and cultural lines so families and students can celebrate similarities and learn from differences. In addition, Forrestal Elementary in North Chicago is located on the Naval Station Great Lakes (NAVSTA Great Lakes) Base. This is the home of the [United States Navy](#)'s only current boot camp and includes the Recruit Training Command, the Training Support Center, and Navy Recruiting District Chicago. The Naval Station Great Lakes is the largest military installation in Illinois and the largest training station in the Navy. Some of Forrestal's students live on the base and are children of service members. UCLC will marshal the resources of the 12 community agencies as a consortium to address the five pipeline FSCS services. Based on up-to-date research and effective practice, this program will focus on three existing pipeline services at four elementary/intermediate schools, and one

middle school: (1) high quality integrated expanded and enriched learning time programs and strategies; (2) family and community engagement and supports; and (3) support for a child's transition from Pre-K to kindergarten to elementary school, from elementary school to middle school, from middle school to high school, from high school into and through postsecondary education and into the workforce. El Centro will provide two additional pipeline services; namely, (1) social, health, nutrition, and mental health services and supports, and (2) high quality early childhood education programs. The full-service strategies used in this project will transform these school communities into vibrant hubs of community engagement.

ABSOLUTE PRIORITY 4

El Centro meets **Absolute Priority 4** by proposing to implement and sustain a **Full-Service Community Schools Program serving Multi-Local Educational Agency Grants in two Districts namely, three schools in the Diamond Lake School District in Mundelein, Illinois and two schools in North Chicago, Illinois** forming a consortium of schools with similar challenges, assets, student, family, and school demographics. Both the districts are rated as high need by the Illinois Board of Education, are served by the Regional Office of Education and are public school districts in Lake County, Illinois. The North Chicago School District is currently under an oversight board mandate by the Illinois State Board of Education due to past underperformance and is currently making academic gains and progress will be demonstrated in the history of effectiveness section. UCLC will coordinate the work and partner with community, social service, health, arts, and education organizations in Lake County and have informal partnerships with libraries, museums, park districts, forest preserves, and the UCLC member universities. Together, this partnership will provide the schools with wrap around services that will build the capacity of the schools to be a hub for teaching and learning.

COMPETITIVE PRIORITIES 1 & 2 AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Competitive Preference Priority 1: Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs.

Projects that are designed to improve students' social emotional, academic, and career development, with a focus on underserved students.

El Centro Addressing this First Competitive Priority's Area 1: *Introduction:*

The El Centro Project addresses Competitive Preference Priority #1 through its third, fourth, fifth, and sixth objectives as described in detail on pages 47-51. This Project has been designed so that it creates education settings that are supportive, positive, identity-safe, and inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status, through developing trusting relationships between students, including students from Mexico and Central America, African Americans, Asians, and White students from diverse backgrounds from a range of racial, ethnic, linguistic, low income, special needs, and low achieving backgrounds), educators, families, and community partners. In this regard, the objectives, and activities for the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth objectives form these various dimensions of the first priority (See sections 3 and 5 for a detailed explanation of these dimensions). **First, the third objective's activities** focus on how the arts and folk arts can be a vehicle for developing quality instruction supporting students' emotional, social, and academic needs, especially those students identified as performing academically below grade level, students of color, English language learners, students with disabilities, students of different racial backgrounds, students from various cultures and languages, students in poverty, and first generation post-secondary students. This project will engage students in its 3rd, 4th, and 6th objectives so that they can become engaged in deeper forms of learning employing critical thinking and deeper forms of learning where they can construct or create knowledge meaningful to them, in student learning teams, as well as developing trusting relationships among students, educators, families, and community partners. In summary, under Objective Three, 165 teachers will participate each project year in 30 hours of professional development (PD), involving workshops, coaching, co-teaching, demonstrations, case studies, and sharing in collaboration with artists in residence, and project partners with expertise in the arts, folk arts, and subject matter fields, and their relationship to social-emotional

development, including working with partners, Local Learning, SEIU, and NEIU. This will enable teachers to develop foundational knowledge in the cultural arts of the Americas and modes of learning in academic disciplines to employ in their classroom teaching, which are transformed into inclusive arts and learning studios, with an emphasis on how dance, music, theater, and the visual arts in these cultures can support students in acquiring skills in creating, performing in yearly student productions), and responding to the arts. In addition, teachers will consider how the cultural arts of the Americas through dances can be integrated into the teaching of the arts and state Academic Standards-based reading and mathematics, while assisting students with special needs or disability status, and English Language Learners. El Centro, through its PD, will fundamentally transform how teachers instruct their students by engaging students in thoughtfully constructing their own knowledge through authentic intellectual inquiry rather than merely reporting meaning or knowledge created by others, all enhancing students' critical thinking, academic engagement, and social-emotional development, as well as providing opportunities for students to be as interactive as possible in group learning with teachers and their peers in a supportive, positive, identity-safe, inclusive, and trusting milieu. Under this competitive priority, El Centro recognizes that the arts bring to the fore students' cognitive, artistic skills, social-emotional learning, and cultural heritages. The arts intersect with SEL and culture in a variety of ways for students. For example, issues of identity, cultural codes and values, rituals, historical narratives, locus of control, group dynamics, motivation, persistence, self-awareness, and empathy interface with dance, music, theater, visual arts, and media arts. This multiple perspective view of the arts draws upon and involves teachers, arts educators, students, and families in the hermeneutical study of human narrative, or how one can interpret and understand narratives, whether artistically, psychologically, or culturally (Geertz, 1983; & Sweder & Good, 2003), where the whole explains the parts and the parts explain the whole. By applying narratives to an understanding and meaning of the arts, this opens new avenues of

perceiving and processing, and students will understand the interplay of cognitive and non-cognitive growth in their development over time.

Second, the fourth objective’s activities, in collaboration with the community partners, NEIU, SIUC, YWCA. and North Chicago Community Partners, will focus on this first priority area on how transitioning from grade to grade and into the workforce can be a vehicle for developing quality instruction supporting students’ emotional, social, and academic needs. A detailed discussion of how this transitional process will function to address the first priority is found on pages 49-50. As a first step in this process the El Centro project will establish for students an early warning system and academic/social-emotional monitoring and supports for students at-risk and performing below grade level, and a tracking system as students move from each level from kindergarten through high school and into the workforce. The project will use data derived from this early warning and tracking system (e.g., tardiness, attendance, academic records, and surveys of students’ social-emotional progress) to identify specific academic and social-emotional programming that is needed for students to address the academic and social-emotional challenges that they face. To achieve these ends, students will become engaged with their teachers, families, and community partners in a wide variety of interventions which include expanding home visiting programs from early childhood through to 8th grade, visits in the shelters and temporary housing where a “home” does not exist) and developing mentor and leadership programs. Regarding transitional hurdles from grade to grade and into the workforce, the project will explore ways in which a range of social-emotional issues can be overcome through goal setting, how to seek support and resources when they feel anxious, depressed, or have locus of control issues. Monthly sessions, including, mentoring, and career development will prepare students to meet the academic and social-emotional challenges they face as they move to the next academic level. Specifically, the project will help students to move effectively from one grade to the next, to post-secondary school, or into the workforce through a wide range of career development sessions and workshops on financial planning, applications for post-

secondary admissions and careers, and financial support for career development, (for middle school grades) and students will acquire the ability to plan and focus on functioning effectively in future academic and work settings.

Third, the fifth objective's activities will focus on the first priority area 1 to address how engaging families can be effective in increasing consistent student attendance, engagement and success for underserved students and meet their emotional, social, and academic needs, including providing a supportive, positive, identity-safe, inclusive, and trusting environment. A detailed discussion of how families will function to address the first priority is found on page 50. These family supports include: (1) offering weekly two-hour sessions to foster family involvement in children's learning; (2) assisting families with acquiring leadership skills; (3) conducting monthly family night sessions to support home learning; (4) supporting families on strategies to improve students school attendance; and (5) providing classes to enable families to enhance their own academic skills, and modeling for their children their own struggles and persistence in learning, and valuing education, so they will be better able to assist their children with their learning. Weekly two-hour family nights will be offered to foster family engagement with their children on several dimensions of academic, social-emotional, health, brain, and dietary development for students. These sessions will place a premium on: (1) focusing families and students on ways to develop personal agency, self-efficacy, and home learning; (2) developing strategies for conflict resolution and collaborative problem-solving; (3) learning financial planning; (4) attending workplace English and foundational communication skills classes; (5) developing academic language; (6) learning job readiness skills; (7) setting personal and family goal setting, in the areas of academic and social-emotional development, which build on the developmental coping skills; (8) learning how to set up visits to libraries, computer facilities, and museums; (9) developing learning centers and quiet spaces for learning at home and problem solving about spaces in shelters or in temporary housing, (10) understanding how to make educationally productive learning games; (11) learning ethnic dances and the culture of

American dances and other forms of exercise to set the stage for aerobic family physical activity. Finally, weekly two-hour academic support classes will assist families in engaging their children with learning from cradle to college at school and home. Classes and workshops will be held when and where parents can access them, at varying times during the week, weekends, morning, daytime, and evenings, and free childcare will be offered to all children across age levels.

Fourth, the sixth objective's activities, in collaboration with the following community partners, Mano a Mano, The Lake County Health Department and Rosalind Franklin University Medical School, will focus on this first priority area 1 to address the enhancement of student social-emotional development can be a vehicle for developing quality instruction supporting students' developmental needs, regardless of their academic level, any disabilities they might have, and whether they are living in poverty. A detailed discussion of how programs will be offered to address the first priority is found on page 50. These student social-emotional supports include offering: (1) teacher PD; (2) case study PD sessions; (3) student program building social-emotional developmental skills; and (4) establishing a school-based referral system and an external referral system to address students in need of mental health and violence supports.

First, 80 project teachers will participate each of the five years in 30 hours of sustained and intensive PD (including monthly sessions, coaching, and sharing) on addressing students' social, emotional issues. By the end of the fifth year, all 194 teachers in five schools will have been supported through PD, which include topics as: addressing such fundamental psychological and social issues as anxiety, stress, trauma, bullying, cyber-bullying, substance use, depression, suicidal ideation, individuation, identity-safe issues, creativity, mastery, loss, locus of control, personal boundaries, conflict, emotional self-regulation, violence, defense mechanisms, and group dynamics, all of which contribute to creating a supportive, positive, identity-safe, inclusive, and trusting system of relationships among educators, students, and families. **Second**, each semester the project will offer two-hour, once a week case study sessions for 15 teachers at each school. By the fifth year, all teachers will have had several opportunities to understand how

social-emotional and mental health issues are having an impact on the contextual psychological development of students, regardless of their backgrounds. While discussing individual cases, teachers will delve deeply into how psychological processes unfold in the lives of their students. A major emphasis will be placed on uncovering or unpacking the meaning of personal and social conflicts implicit in student interactions with their peers and authority figures, which moves beyond surface understanding into a deeper unfolding of how individual narratives play out in the day-to-day interactions, underlying how students react and are influenced by and respond to their participation in social relationships. Moreover, teachers and students will learn how to probe into the meaning of interactions and how they view the multiplicity of meanings within their relationships. When teachers understand their own reactions to a child, they can translate those insights to develop more effective and impactful approaches to their teaching practice. Through these case study sessions, teachers will become more aware so they can make mental health referrals for students to receive more extensive psychological support. **Third**, student social-emotional development programming will include how students from a variety of ethnic, income, and academic levels can learn how to function within group processes, including: adventure education; team building through Teams, and Tournaments; cooperative learning; and Motivational Interviewing. Adventure education, as an approach to improving students' self-concept, decision-making and their ability to function effectively within groups through problem-solving challenges facing a group, regardless of their disabilities, ethnicities, culture, income levels, or facility with using English. **Adventure Education** is a strategy for groups of students that including activities designed so students must confront and meet physical challenges at school and field sites where they overcome physical barriers and discuss the effectiveness of the group's decision-making, and the development of future alternative approaches to meeting group challenges. **Teams, Games, and Tournaments (TGT)** is an approach to team learning, encouraging cooperation and competition to improve social-emotional skills, and to achieve physical fitness and improved nutrition. Under TGT students

acquire positive attitudes towards cooperation and academic achievement. In **Cooperative Learning** students work in cohesively to achieve shared learning objectives. In the process, students take responsibility for their own learning and group learning. In cooperative learning, students listen attentively, raise questions, resolve conflicts, or negotiate outcomes to help the group reach consensus. **Motivational interviewing (MI)** is a client-centered counseling program directed at analyzing and resolving ambivalence about changing behaviors. Rather than imparting information, it emphasizes exploring and reinforcing individual and group motivation toward positive social and emotional development, including self-management, self-awareness, responsible decision-making, while developing and maintaining healthy relationships through empathy and appreciating diversity, and utilizing resources including working effectively with peers. **Fourth**, the El Centro project will establish a referral system for students in need of more intensive social-emotional and mental health supports. Mano_a Mano, the Lake County Health Department, and Rosalind Franklin University will conduct three two-hour monthly family sessions in the fall, winter, and spring of each project year to increase teachers, school staff, and families' ability to understand and utilize what school-based mental health teams, local mental health agencies and facilities are available in their communities, and how to make referrals. During the sessions, participants will learn about the diagnostic criteria of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-V)*. This will assist them to identify individuals in need of psychological intervention. **Finally**, participants will learn what the signs are for individuals who may exhibit suicidal ideation, be victims of sexual or physical abuse or neglect, be engaged in self-harming behaviors. Participants will learn about resources to share with students such as peer to peer support groups, on-line, text, phone, and crisis lines for children and teens and other resources for at-risk students.

Competitive Priority 2: Strengthening Cross-Agency Coordination and Community Project
El Centro Addressing this Second Competitive Priority Area 1: Engagement to Advance

Systemic Change to Prevent and Treat Violence

Introduction: The El Centro Project has been designed to take a systemic evidence-based approach to improving outcomes for all students including students in coordinating efforts with community organizations and agencies as well as federal, state, that support students, to address mental health concerns, trauma, gang and community violence prevention and intervention. Specifically, to address trauma, gang and violence prevention, the project will collaborate with the Boys and Girls Club of Lake County, Mano a Mano, the YWCA, and the Lake County Health Department on positive intervention and enforcement as identified by the Community Violence Prevention and Intervention and Treatment team. Based on the longitudinal data collected by the CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention), the Bureau of Justice Community Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative, SAMSHA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) and the NCSMH (National Center for School Mental Health) and others, the El Centro will provide interventions and services in three interrelated areas: Universal (all students), Individual and Family (students and families at risk) and Community. Universal school-based gang and violence prevention and treatment, and mental health and trauma curricula El Centro will train 25 teachers -- 5 from Diamond Lake School from the intermediate school and 5 from the middle school, and 5 teachers from Forrestal and 5 from Alexander Elementary schools in North Chicago, 4 occupational and physical therapy staff, 2 school nurses, 2 social workers, and 5 families each from the two communities on mental health awareness from Rosalind Franklin University and the Lake County Health Department with expertise in curriculum design in developing and teaching a mental health, violence prevention and treatment, and wellness and trauma school-based curriculum will conduct these sessions. During 2004–2006, the CDC Task Force on Community Preventive Services conducted a systematic review of published scientific evidence concerning the effectiveness of these programs. The results of this review provide strong evidence that universal school-based programs decrease rates of violence and aggressive behavior among school-aged children.

Program effects were demonstrated at all grade levels. An independent meta-analysis of school-based programs confirmed and supplemented these findings. Specifically, the Task Force found a “15% relative reduction in violent behavior among students in Pre-K through high school. Using different outcome measures, the median relative reduction in aggression and violent behavior associated with universal school-based programs varied by grade level, with a 32% reduction for Pre-K and kindergarten students, 18% reduction for elementary students, 7% reduction for middle school students, and 29% reduction for high school students.” Researchers suggest the benefits of these school-based approaches could be strengthened if programs implemented at early grade levels are continued into the critical middle school and high school years. These programs were effective in reducing youth violence in different school environments, including ones with varying socioeconomic status, crime rates, or predominant race/ethnicity of students. The mental health, social-emotional, and violence prevention curricula educates children of all ages about human development, to normalize and destigmatize psychological problems, to recognize symptoms in themselves and their friends and how and where to seek help.

Building teacher capacity and infrastructure is the next step towards gang and violence prevention, positive community engagement and mental health supports. Students need to know where to seek help, but the help must be trustworthy and be there consistently. El Centro recognizes that not only school social workers and psychologists, but also school personnel including teachers and other adults in the school need to be prepared on how to be caring and responsive to students who seek them out, how to recognize when a student is dealing with issues and the best ways to seek the student out, how to provide caring and support and have a clear understanding of school-based process for internal referral to the school mental health staff. The El Centro project, as described under Competitive Priority 1 will provide 25 teachers and school staff with 20 hours of PD workshops, case study sessions, and best practices in experiential education, and collaborative group learning (including: Adventure Education; Teams, Games, and Tournaments; Outdoor Education, Community Engagement and Community

Based Service Learning and Youth Research, cooperative learning; practices in Restorative Justice and Motivational Interviewing) to enable teachers as preventative measures for students to engage with their peers and their community in a positive way and to express themselves in groups non-violently. In addition, the project will focus on how bullying, cyberbullying, and substance abuse can be prevented and identify signs that children are being neglected, required to assume adult responsibilities that are not developmentally appropriate, or are physically or sexually abused or neglected at home or by members of their community.

To support the prevention and treatment of gang and community violence, the El Centro project will form Teacher Trauma Informed Collegial Inquiry Groups. Beginning in March of Year 1, small groups of 10 teachers from each school will participate in during, after and before school bi-monthly collegial inquiry circles facilitated by school licensed clinical social workers and psychologists from Rosalind Franklin University, the Lake County Health Department, and Mano a Mano. The inquiry circles will be constructed to build teachers understanding how trauma, violence, loss, and mental and emotional injuries experienced by students from families or community because of their opiate abuse, gang involvement, or other causes, impacts behavior and learning. As a result of their experiences in the collegial circles teachers, will be better able to provide high impact trauma informed practices in teaching the children who have been negatively affected with the added benefit of increasing their effectiveness with all students. Teachers will learn how to collaborate with the school social workers, mental health services and student support colleagues. These collegial inquiry circles will build the capacity for teachers to be effective, responsive, and empathetic individuals with the traumatized students. The collegial inquiry circles provide a safe space for teachers to explore their own experiences with teaching students who have experienced traumas. Teachers will increase their self-knowledge and understanding of the emotional health impact teaching traumatized students has on themselves, examine their family's or communities' experiences with trauma and how this influences the way they react toward students. They will also explore their personal experiences with trauma,

and the effects of secondary experiences of trauma including the impact the pandemic had on their mental health and wellness. Together they will explore ways to help themselves and each other establish a culture of empathy, respect, and trust to support wellness practices.

As part of the El Centro project family and individual students an at-risk program will be formed to have a comprehensive understanding of students' social-emotional and mental health needs that in some cases might lead to suicide, gang membership or violence. The project will employ a variety of social-emotional and mental health and trauma assessments to set the stage for gang and other violence prevention and when necessary, interventions to address violent acts when they occur. In this regard, El Centro, in collaboration with Rosalind Franklin University, Mano a Mano, and the Lake County Health Department, will provide an on-school site and school based mental health program for students and families impacted by family or community members drug abuse, violence, trauma or loss. Teachers and staff will be prepared in process and procedures for this internal referral program to assist students who display the need for help. In addition to self- identification and referral, students who could benefit from assistance will be identified by Universal screeners, SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment) or other research-based instruments, staff observations and analysis of student's functional behaviors identified in early screening through the identification of students having been disciplined by the school through suspensions or other disciplinary actions. In addition, childhood trauma and Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD) screening will be undertaken by professionals using the Traumatic Events Screening Inventory Parent Report (TEFI-CRF-R), The Traumatic Inventory for Children (TEFI-PRR), and the Child PTSD Symptoms Scale Instrument (CPSS). Children will be referred to services for treatment and supports according to the Public Health measures of Tiers 1, 2 and 3 based on the outcomes of survey instruments. School-based mental health professionals will provide therapeutic services as Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) or Trauma Focused Therapy (TFT). These programs address treatment barriers, such as stigma and access to services, by offering treatment in the school

setting. The treatment is associated with improvements in symptoms of PTSD, depression, and family-reported behavioral problems. The school-based program will have 6 parts: universal curriculum, universal and situational supports, individual therapy and small group therapy, school based cognitive behavioral interventions for trauma and depression, and small group collegial programs for teachers with the dual purpose of building their capacity to teach traumatized students and support them in the PTSD and wellness issues that arise from being the secondary victims of trauma or violence.

Connecting with Caring Adults to Prevent and Treat Violence: In collaboration with its community partners, El Centro will provide one-on-one mentoring to connect students to caring adults and engage them in activities to reduce violence perpetration and victimization. A national evaluation of school-based mentoring programs (the Center for Disease Control, 2021) found that mentored youth performed better academically, had more positive perceptions of their academic abilities, and were more likely to report having an important adult in their lives for support relative to a control group of non-mentored youth. Higher-quality mentoring relationships were associated with improvements in family and student-teacher relationships, and were associated with better youth outcomes, such as an increase in prosocial behavior and a decrease in problem behaviors like fighting, vandalizing, and joining gangs.

Community Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative of the Bureau of Justice Assistance (CBVIP) – The Sixth Objective Pipeline Team will form a task force, based on CBVIP findings and protocol, to include community stakeholders such as youth, families, social service agencies, law enforcement among others who will conduct a landscape analysis to determine the strengths, resources, and needs of the community. The information gathered will be used to map the school and community's assets, needs, and aspirations. They will also gather information about where and when violence is occurring. Plans and activities to address the violence will be responsive to community members and will be based on their discussion and analysis of the data. Other Community initiatives will focus on bringing community members

together and forming positive relationships through such activities as creating community murals, sculptures, and public arts performances and celebrations.

Application Requirements: How the applicant Addresses Application Requirements: 1) Matching Funds, 2) Use of Funds, 3) Evaluation, and 4) the Final MOU listed under the RFP.

UCLC in its El Centro proposal has responded to Absolute Priorities 1 and 4 and has responded to all requirement in the context of the UCLC response to the selection criteria of this notice.

SECTION 1: NEED FOR THE PROJECT

(a) A plan for conducting a comprehensive needs assessment that identifies the academic, physical, nonacademic, health, mental health, and other needs of students, and definition of needs, as well as the needs of families to be able to assist the learning of their children, and the need for a collaborative system among the project's community partners to support a full-service community school. To identify the needs of the target population as well as other identified needs, a comprehensive needs assessment of the five project community schools, based on 2021 & 2022 North Chicago and Diamond Lake LEA statistics was undertaken. Data includes student, family, school administrator and teacher quantitative and qualitative surveys; interviews and focus groups with key participants; school; school and partner documents; and meetings with UCLC's community school partners. (b) The student, teacher, and family, and collaborative system needs identified by the project's comprehensive needs assessment. El Centro Project plans to serve 1,682 students in grades Pre-K-8 and 1,177 parents each year of this project at the five schools.

(b) The student, teacher, and family, and collaborative system needs identified by the project's comprehensive needs assessment **Table 1** shows that data from the Illinois State Board of Education and it provides demographic data on these five schools and demonstrates the pressing need for this FSCS grant. Needs assessments and surveys with parents, teachers, and administrators were undertaken for this project, and this data is herein included in this needs section. All 5 schools have over 64% of their students from either Latino or African

American backgrounds, have over 48% of their students from low-income (a)backgrounds and performance is low as evidenced in the school report card below. The three elementary schools have large percentages of students who are Limited English Proficient (54%, 40%, and 35%), and significant percentages of students have Individualized Education Plans, from 11% to 21%. The two North Chicago elementaries (Alexander and Forrestal) are facing enormous academic challenges, with at least 92% of students performing below the Illinois Assessment Readiness (IAR) standards in mathematics, while at least 95% are performing below IAR standards in reading. Diamond Lake Elementary did not have available IAR data, but internal school data from NWEA Map Assessment data shows that 39% were performing below standards in mathematics and 46% below standards in reading. West Oak Middle School faces similar academic challenges, with 84% and 83% of students perform below average in math and reading respectively in 2022. Emerging data portrays low scores while the term approaching is in the yellow. Because of the negative impact of remote learning during the pandemic era of 2020-2021, students who were already performing below standards are facing greater challenges to catch up. Until this year, there were no public pre-school options for children outside of programs for developmentally delayed and disabled children and there was limited space at Head Start and the YWCA. El Centro proposes to address this need through the proposed early childhood pipeline work.

TABLE 1: Descriptive School Statistics

(Source: Illinois State Board of Education and District Enrollment Summary Data, 2022)

School Name	Alexander Elementary	Forrestal Elementary	Diamond Lake Elementary	West Oak Intermediate	West Oak Middle School
# Of Students in Schools (^)	394	428	302	263	295
# Of Students to be Served	394	428	302	263	295
Grades to be Served (^)	K-3	K-3	PreK-2	3-5	6-8
Racial/Ethnic Background of Students (^)	White: <1% Black: 34% Hispanic: 64% Asian: 0% Multi-Racial: 2%	White: 1% Black: 34% Hispanic: 47% Asian: 1% Multi-Racial: 2%	White: 25.8% Black: 0% Hispanic: 64.2% Asian: 3.3% Multi-Racial: 4%	White: 20.8% Black: 0% Hispanic: 67.3% Asian: 4.9% Multi-Racial: 4.2%	White: 19.7% Black: 0% Hispanic: 67.1% Asian: 7.5% Multi-Racial: 0%
Low Income	99.7%	99%	47.7%	54.8%	51.9%
Limited	53.9%	35%	39.7%	49.4%	33.2%

English Proficient (^)					
Attendance (^)	87.6%	87.6%	91.5%	92.4%	92.2%
Mobility Rate	12.%	23%	10.1%	7.3%	7.3%
Individual Ed. Plan (^)	11%	14%	21%	17%	17%
Chronic Truancy Rate	61%	60%	8.7%	4.8%	13.4%

Table 2: ISTEP+ Academic Performance by School

(Source: Illinois State Board of Education, 2022)

***Due to data from Diamond Lake Elementary not being available, percentages of students performing below grade level on the NWEA Map Assessment was used.**

School Name	Percentage of students who have not met grade-level standards and expectations in	
	Mathematics	Reading
Alexander Elementary (K-3)	95%	97.5%
Forrestal Elementary (K-3)	91.9%	94.9%
Diamond Lake Elementary (PreK-2)	38.5%*	46%*
West Oak Intermediate School (3-5)	85.4%	75.5%
West Oak Middle School (6-8)	83.8%	82.6%
State Average	74.5%	69.9%

Approximately 14% of the students in North Chicago are military connected and the district provides support services for students transferring in and out of the schools and employs a full-time social worker dedicated to supporting military families. In fact, students who have parents in the military may experience six to nine different schools during their K-12 education, and Forrestal, located on the Naval Base, has a mobility rate of 23%. A military parent in a focus

group said that although this mobility is part and parcel of being a military family, this mobility takes an academic and a social-emotional toll on the children of service members. Constant movement is difficult, and the school does a “good job” transitioning students in and out of the school, he said, but it is difficult for many students. In addition to the challenges outlined above, students face numerous obstacles in the community including high truancy rates of 60% and 61% in North Chicago. An incoming middle school student stated that there is a lot of bullying in the schools and that’s why “some kids skip school a lot.” Some families in both districts leave the area in the winter months and go back to their native countries and this affects school attendance, reported some parents and teachers. When students leave, they lag academically, and it is difficult to catch up upon their return. Further, parents reported teen drug use and gang activity around North Chicago High School, and they are worried these problems will affect their children as they get closer to entering high school. Parents reported from both districts that they want more academic tutoring as there is just not enough, and” teachers cannot do it all.” Both parents and students expressed an interest in more enrichment classes in out-of-school time-STEM, robotics, drama, music, and art were mentioned as interests. Additionally, parents expressed a desire for teachers to believe in their students’ abilities to aspire to postsecondary and higher-level jobs. They said some teachers have low expectations for students and this has a negative effect on the students and the community.

This negative culture of low expectations, say parents in the recent focus groups, could be ameliorated somewhat if more teachers, staff, and administrators came from Latino or African American backgrounds. Parents expressed concern and frustration for this low percentage of teachers and support professionals with a similar ethnic and cultural background and who do not reflect the school demographics. Parents say this causes a disparity of services and low participation rates on the part of participants due to this lack of teachers of color. Teachers echoed this sentiment that more representation from these rich and diverse communities is essential for Latino and African American learners to better thrive. The UCLC is a valuable

resource as they are increasing representation in the education field through programs detailed in the History of Effectiveness Section, and UCLC has actively worked with paraprofessionals and teacher aides in a “Build Your Own “cohort where staff of color invested in their communities pursue bachelor’s degrees in education. Funding is a factor as this staff often has families, are lower wage earners, single parents, and do not have the extra funding to continue college coursework. UCLC is seeking tuition assistance from grants and foundations for this purpose, and addressing this challenge when they market education careers to prospective college students and undergraduates of color at career and college fairs. Further, teachers requested classes in Spanish and cultural awareness workshops to build their understanding, sensitivity, and empathy for their students. Research has demonstrated that academic achievement amongst students of color improves significantly when they are taught by teachers who come from similar backgrounds (Carver-Thomas, 2018).

These challenges in the community are compounded by matters of race and poverty. According to estimates from the 2022 U.S. Census Bureau, in the neighborhoods surrounding the five project schools, 13% of the total population lives in poverty. Minority populations live in higher levels of poverty, as 18% of Latinos across the two communities live in poverty, and 19% of African Americans live in poverty. In the Diamond Lake Schools, there is income disparity as some students live in two affluent suburbs of the district; however, the majority live in high levels of poverty and many families, said parents in focus groups “feel like they are being pushed out of Mundelein as there are few affordable homes or apartments available.”

Academic achievement is an additional challenge in the communities. Fifteen percent of the total population do not have a high school diploma or equivalent. There is a marked ethnic/racial disparity in academic achievement in the project neighborhoods, with 69% of community African Americans lacking a high school diploma, while 50% of Latinos have not received a high school diploma or equivalent. For some Latino residents of North Chicago and Diamond Lake, one of the major impediments to higher academic achievement comes in the form of a

language barrier. The three areas of the larger community with 40% of households that are limited in their English proficiency as they speak a different language other than English at home. This leads to difficulties for elementary school students, as they navigate through the myriad social, emotional, and academic difficulties that all children face, although these children, are also struggling with an unfamiliar language.

Taken together, these challenges faced by the El Centro students underline the point that supporting students with academic, social-emotional, health, mental health, and violence challenges, requires the kind of systemic collaboration among schools, teachers, parents, and community partners which is why this Full-Service Community Program is necessary to alleviate these pressing needs in the two community school districts.

(c) Addressing the Needs of the Target Population for the Project’s Community School Sites and Other Identified Needs: The North Chicago School and Diamond Lake School Districts underwent a needs assessment survey in July of 2023 in preparation for this application, and surveys were completed by teachers, parents, staff, and administrators. Respondents were asked a range of questions in categories that correspond to the four pillars of full-service community schools. These four pillars inform and support the five pipeline services. Project objective 1 establishes and maintains a system of collaboration among the partners and stakeholders in the project. These categories contain questions about the need for: 1) Integrated student supports; 2) Expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities for students; 3) Active family and community engagement for parents and residents; and 4) Collaborative leadership practices.

The figures provided in the attached tables signify the number of respondents (out of the total number of respondents in each category) that rated the listed resources and opportunities available in their school community as “inadequate” or “very inadequate”. The sample size for each respondent category is provided. The surveys were completed anonymously, and respondents were given the opportunity to leave free-form comments in the areas they felt presented the highest need in their school communities. In addition to the responses on the needs

assessment survey, the comprehensive needs assessment included open-ended responses. An issue that was raised several times was the lack of communication between schools and families. One teacher said, “We offer lots of things that much of the community doesn’t know about,” which accounts for the difference in survey responses from teachers and families. Teachers expressed that they are stretched and pulled in so many directions to make up for the lack of adequate staff in both districts. Further, they stated that the Spanish speaking population in North Chicago schools is growing as well as the number of hearing-impaired students. They are frustrated as there is not enough communication with both groups. Subsequently, the teachers reported, “this poor communication with parents potentially can lead to misunderstanding and students not getting the services they need.” Both teachers and parents expressed frustration about how long the process is for special needs students to be tested and serviced. One teacher commented, “If they qualify for services, they may not get them because there isn’t the staff to provide the services and the students fall behind in school because of the wait.” Teachers from Diamond Lake and North Chicago said that many parents of EL students often do not advocate for themselves and that culturally many believe the teachers and the school know what’s best for their student, and this “prevents parents from speaking up about their needs.” Parents agreed that they need more ESL classes, more Spanish speakers at the schools, to provide information about school and community resources. They expressed an interest in having more academic tutoring and after school enrichment opportunities. In the areas of health, and nutrition, teachers expressed their frustration, and according to them, “the community is a food desert, a medical desert, a dental desert, and there is a need for mental health resources.” Parents echoed the need for mental health services stating, “these services are so important for their children especially after the pandemic and they are not receiving these necessary services.”

TABLE 3: Needs Assessment Survey – Percentage Rating Services as Inadequate

	Teachers (n = 41)	Parents & Families (n =12)	School Support Staff (n = 39)
Integrated Student Supports			
mental and behavioral health services	65.9%	58.3%	61.5%
awareness of mental health issues	73.2%	50.0%	59.0%
support services for trauma	78.0%	50.0%	61.5%
housing security	70.7%	75.0%	48.7%
Transportation	48.8%	16.7%	53.8%
Nutrition	68.3%	25.0%	48.7%
Expanded and Enriched Learning Time and Opportunities for Students			
real-world project-based learning	65.9%	83.3%	59.0%
Drama	75.6%	16.7%	56.4%
creative writing	68.3%	66.7%	43.6%
tutoring and homework help	39.0%	33.3%	51.3%
opportunities for students with special needs	56.1%	41.7%	53.8%
access to programming during out of school time (e.g. after/before school, weekends, summers)	65.9%	83.3%	48.7%
Active Family and Community Engagement for Parents and Residents			
family involvement in schools' decision-making processes	73.2%	83.3%	61.5%

English as a second language classes for families and community residents	56.1%	75.0%	46.2%
citizenship preparation for families and community residents	53.7%	83.3%	56.4%
computer skills for families and community residents	63.4%	75.0%	64.1%
arts programs for families and community residents	58.5%	83.3%	56.4%
housing assistance for families and community residents	53.7%	75.0%	53.8%
child abuse and neglect prevention supports	61.0%	66.7%	51.3%
literacy programs for families and community residents	65.9%	41.7%	46.2%
digital literacy training for f and community residents	68.3%	75.0%	48.7%
mental health services for families and community residents	61.0%	83.3%	59.0%
Collaborative Leadership and Practices			
family voice and representation in school leadership	63.4%	75.0%	71.8%
community school coordinator	56.1%	41.7%	46.2%
community-wide leadership team	51.2%	58.3%	59.0%
educator learning communities and other staff to manage the multiple, complex joint work of school and community organizations	58.5%	66.7%	56.4%

(c) The Needs of the El Centro Project and how the project will provide support, resources, and services to close gaps in educational opportunity will address the needs of the targeted population and the populations impacted by challenges or opportunities to be addressed by the project objectives.

(i.a) **A Lack of a Systemic Culture of Collaboration:** The Needs: In this project, families, teachers, and school support staff indicate there is a lack of communication and collaboration between the nurses, counselors and social workers, other school support staff and teachers and families. In addition, they expressed a concern for the lack of staff who reflect the demographics of the children and families with only 8% of the teachers being Latino and a low percentage of support professionals with similar ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Thus, there is a disparity of services and low participation rates due to this perceived miscommunication about family traditions. Teachers and paraprofessionals indicate that families rarely meet with the nurses, counselors, and social workers except when there is a problem, so the expertise is not shared generally. Moreover, teachers and support staff do not meet regularly with school partners to develop effective strategies for addressing student, family, and teacher needs. The project has many community service providers who make up El Centro's focus on health, nutrition, technology, social and emotional supports, arts, and early childhood development; however, the existing partners largely work independently of one another, and as a result there is a lack of a continuum of coordinated supports, services, and opportunities. Further, information from partners revealed that there is little collaboration where partners can share implementation needs and discuss data that have been collecting on community school effectiveness. These partners expressed the need to work together on teams to deliver services more effectively, and to add informal community partners to be able to provide a more comprehensive system of supports for the community members. Finally, due in part to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the collaboration between the University Center of Lake County and its existing partners has been difficult to maintain, and there are personnel shortages at the partner organizations and no shared policies exist on continued restrictions on gatherings of people. Virtual meetings have continued, but they are not as effective as in-person meetings. This need can be addressed with the FSCS and staff and partners will meet regularly at the UCLC's Educators Center to discuss and support the schools needs and to put in place programs which will ameliorate the lack of early childhood

education, afterschool programs which provide mentoring, expanded academic tutoring, enrichment, and support the mental health and health related needs of students, families, and residents, transitions from birth through high school to post-secondary, identify safe supports, career development, violence prevention, and the other needs as described in the Four Pillars.

(i.b) How the UCLC Project will Address the Needs for Collaboration as Described Above:

The Needs: To meet this collaboration need seven teams will be established to foster a more comprehensive systemic culture of collaboration, including: a Leadership Team, a Management Team, and 5 individual teams for each of the project's five pipeline services, and these pipeline teams include student, teacher, administrator, project staff, family, and community members. In concert, these teams will: (1) share data assessments based on evaluation outcomes; (2) mutually adjust and revise program strategies to develop a system of continuous program improvement for all project components; and (3) the Leadership Team will take steps to create a detailed plan to reallocate funds and to raise grant monies to sustain the El Centro project after federal funding ends.

(ii.a) A Lack of High-Quality Early Childhood Education Programs: The Needs:

A review of early childhood programming, including focus groups, interviews, and surveys, has demonstrated that there is only one public school district early childhood education program in the Diamond Lake School District and limited space in the Head Start, Together for Childhood Network, YWCA programs, and subsidized day care. These programs are overwhelmed, understaffed and under resourced. Some parents mentioned in the focus groups that they are often working two jobs, but the cost of childcare in the community is still prohibitive as they are low-wage earners. As a result, there are few services in home visiting, early intervention, parenting, and physical, cognitive, and emotional development. The Family Center in nearby Round Lake (near Mundelein) provides services for children with only developmental delays or disabilities. Families state that no coordination exists between Head Start, area day care centers, home day care and the kindergarten teachers. They expressed the need for a network of

coordinated support to be developed to support child development and make the transition from home or day care to pre-school to kindergarten more seamless. El Centro, along with Mano a Mano, Together for Childhood Network, and the Lake County Regional Office of Education will conduct a mapping of current programs available in the area surrounding the Diamond Lake Schools. UCLC will bring together agencies, parents, parent educators, early childhood teachers, nurses, counselors, social workers with service providers and stakeholders to design an integrated, coherent family education and home visiting program beginning with the early child program at Diamond Lake School pre-school through kindergarten to second grade and then expanding to the broader school communities. In Diamond Lake there is one Pre-K-2nd grade school and project schools in Diamond Lake are intermediate and middle; however, the families in those schools have younger children at home or in a day care. Parents discussed multiple and competing demands of having young children at home and older children in school. Studies on the impact of the pandemic show the disparate negative effect on families of having to care for babies, young children, school aged children along with work and other pulls. Many students in a previous focus group, who are in intermediate grades, middle school, and high school, talked about caring for their younger siblings. When asked why more students do not participate in the existing extra-curricular activities, parents and students said they have responsibilities at home. One suggestion from a parent was to have both workshops in English and Spanish for parents at the same time there is art, music, sports, or other out of school enrichment activities for student. Parent education, early childhood supports, and home visits are important to the school community not only because of the positive effect on the pre-school and young children, but because of the impact it will have for older siblings, and it will reduce the pressures to care for siblings, improve the quality of life, and reduce negative factors that may impede the older student's success at school. Families have expressed a desire for more monthly family hands-on "make and take" sessions with coaching and follow-up support in developing effective learning environments in homes and adapting learning spaces to accommodate new learning technologies.

Families state that there is a need to help themselves and their children deal with the trauma because of the losses and social isolation of the last two years. Additionally, the large numbers of families who have incomes below the federal poverty level increased during the pandemic and lower income families have not recovered, especially due to recent increased rates of inflation. As a result, there is an increase in homelessness, and housing and food insecurity. School health, support staff and community organizations are stretched, and a lack of qualified staff has made it difficult to meet community needs due to increased demands and scarce resources.

(ii.b) How the UCLC Project will Address the Needs for Early Childhood as Described

Above: The Needs: El Centro will address the early-childhood needs in a number of ways. Professional Development (PD) for 16 early childhood educators and family leader/mentors: First, collaborative team of early childhood educators, paraprofessionals, school support staff from Diamond Lake School and from organizations in North Chicago and Mundelein along with El Centro partners such as the Lake County Regional Office of Education, North Chicago Community Partners, Together for Childhood Network and family leaders/mentors will provide a new form of leadership for the development of a culture focused on educator and family partnerships through a minimum of 30 hours of professional development for the educator/family teams. Secondly, nurses and social workers from across all 5 schools will participate in professional development sessions on culturally responsive practices specific to their roles and in the family/teacher PD to collaborate and share. Steps will be taken to ensure that the PD can be in person or virtual to accommodate family schedules. This PD will provide providers, educators and family/mentors with a variety of expanded and new skills, including: (1) fostering mother-child and father-child attachments; (2) creating in-person and on-line social networks among families to reduce social isolation that has to date been most common in recent immigrants and families below the poverty line, but as a result of the pandemic, at some level, it has affected all families; (3) helping families learn to play with their children for cognitive and social emotional development and modeling developmentally appropriate discipline practices; (4) establishing

school site place-based playgroups and developmentally appropriate “play dates” and (5) developing expertise and practices that are culturally, ethnically, racially and linguistically responsive and address current and historical inequities. Monthly family sessions and coaching for 250 families provided by early childhood educators and family leaders/mentors: The early childhood educators and the family leaders/mentors together will participate in monthly two-hour family sessions for 150 families at Diamond Lake and 100 families in North Chicago to share ideas and receive follow-up support and coaching. Important topics during the workshops will be to discuss ways families can problem-solve together, exchange stories and experiences, network and find approaches to parenting when raising children of different ages with different social emotional, academic, and scheduling needs. Strengthening the Early Childhood, the project by creating a program for early childhood home visits: Currently the project schools provide no home visits to families of children from birth through second grade. Under this project, 250 families per year will receive home visits. El Centro, along with its partners, Mano a Mano, Together for Childhood Network, the Lake County Regional Office of Education, will train 16 educators who will be of the same cultural or racial background of the families, and speak their native language. Visits will follow a curriculum manual targeting three domains of early childhood social-emotional and language-literacy and numeracy skills, and home visitors will visit homes in pairs with teachers or staff from the schools. Principals reported that there is a great need for additional after-school programming, but that additional funding is not available. Current programs have had considerable trouble with recruitment and retention indicating that there is a need for enhanced strategies to recruit more students and for more high-quality out-of-school programming to attract more students.

(iii) How the UCLC Project will Address the Needs A Lack of High-Quality In-School and Out-Of-School-Time Programming and Strategies Described Above: The Needs: To meet in-school and out-of-school needs, El Centro will provide 30 hours of sustained and intensive professional development each project year to 25 teachers, 5 from each of the project schools,

provide inquiry-based standards aligned academic, design, STEAM and arts PD program for deeper learning, and engage in two-hour case studies as a part of these sessions which will include workshops, classroom demonstrations, teacher sharing, case study sessions, and co-teaching. The case study sessions will enable teachers to discuss in detail how inquiry-based forms of instruction can be contextualized using individual student vignettes to meet the cognitive needs of students in their classrooms. This PD will include how to integrate the arts into reading and mathematics, engage students' meaningful learning, and for students to develop critical thinking skills. The PD materials will be designed for individual classrooms to increase teachers' abilities to offer inquiry, constructivist, and critical thinking forms of learning, all aligned with standards-based academic and arts programming and arts integrated curricula in dance, theater, visual arts, and music to increase student reading and mathematics achievement, all of which are aligned with rigorous academic standards, including State and National Academic Standards, and national standards in the arts. Out-of-School Programming: Each project year of El Centro, 750 students (150 students from each project school who have the need for supplemental academic support) will be given the opportunity to attend after-school cultural arts and academic enrichment programming led by Teaching Artists with expertise in traditional artforms and teachers from the project schools from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Mondays and Thursdays of each week for 28 weeks, divided into two 14 week blocks. Each class will have from 15-20 students, depending on the activity. Teachers from the schools will assist with instruction during these out-of-school-time sessions and lessons will be coordinated with classroom instruction.

El Centro staff and partners will offer classes for dance, theater, visual and media arts, and music. In each out-of-school-time class, Teaching Artists and instructors will support students to become invested in inquiry-based arts projects aligned with Federal and Indiana Academic Standards. These projects, based on the Harvard Project Zero Artful Thinking program (2008), will demonstrate how such critical habits of mind as questioning and investigating; observing

and describing; reasoning and providing evidence; exploring multiple viewpoints; comparing and connecting; and uncovering complexity can be developed. Such constructivist and critical thinking approaches will focus on students' deeper inquiry into the arts and content disciplines.

(iv.a) A Lack of Supports for Children's Transition from Pre-K to Kindergarten to Elementary School to Middle School, from Middle-School to High-School, and from High-School to Post-Secondary Education and Into the Workforce: The Needs: There is a need for a more extensive system to track students from grade to grade to identify problems that students might have in transitioning through the elementary grades to middle and high school. Over 50% of teachers overwhelmingly expressed the need for better supports both emotionally and academically to transition students from grade to grade. To help students, manage the transitions between levels of their education and into the workforce, El Centro will employ several strategies. The first is the creation of an early warning and tracking system which will identify students who are at-risk for absenteeism, social emotional problems, and low academic achievement, so that the appropriate interventions, including mentorship matching and counseling services will support students. In Diamond Lake's Pre-K -2nd and North Chicago's for K-3rd programs, El Centro will promote a range of parent education strategies as well as developmental markers, children's spatial and language skills, increase children's focused attention, manage behavior using positive strategies, and increase interactive book-reading and early numeracy activities both in school and at home. Supports and scaffolding will be provided for students at all stages, from early childhood through middle school. To support students' readiness for high-school, post-secondary education and the workforce, El Centro will employ a multi-faceted approach tailored to the project's 3 elementary schools, 1 intermediate school, and 1 middle school and will include: support for students to acquire high school academic and coping skills, career development interests, workplace skills, study skills, work habits, time management, help-seeking, collaboration and teaming, cross cultural understanding, and social/academic problem-solving skills. The project will provide students the tools to make

informed decisions about school and careers and offers programs for students and their families to explore local post-secondary institutions, job shadowing, intern and externships and vocational opportunities. The “Taste of College” for middle schoolers is hosted by UCLC will be expanded under this project.

(iv.b) How the UCLC Project will Address the Needs for Effective Transitions The Needs:

In order to meet the need of students to manage the transitions between levels of their education and into the workforce, El Centro will employ several strategies, including: 1) Creating an early warning and tracking system which will identify students who are at risk for absenteeism, or truancy, and low academic achievement, so that the appropriate interventions, including mentorship matching, can be employed to help them as early as possible with academic monitoring, counseling services to support academic success; 2) Providing services to help students deal with the transition from Pre-K to Kindergarten and then Kindergarten to elementary school, El Centro will promote children’s language skills, increase children’s focused attention, manage behavior using positive strategies, and increase interactive book-reading and early numeracy activities both in school and at home; 3) Providing supports and scaffolding to students at all stages, from early childhood through middle school; 4) Supporting students’ readiness for high-school, post-secondary education and the workforce, including strategies to help them acquire high school and post-secondary prep skills, study skills, work habits, time management, help-seeking, and problem-solving skills, which are critical at this stage in students’ lives, 5) Providing families and students with the tools and information needed to make informed decisions about school and career choices.

(v.a). A Lack of Family and Community Engagement and Supports: The Needs: In the project schools, 48-99% percent of children come from low-income families across the five project schools. In the community surrounding Diamond Lake and North Chicago, the population at large is Limited English Proficient. While Diamond Lake Schools in Mundelein are gentrifying in certain areas, Diamond Lake schools serve students from the nearby housing

projects and trailer parks with lower incomes, who work as essential workers, and are primarily Spanish speaking or African American. Parents stated the need for increased literacy and overwhelming there is a need for increased computer and digital literacy, 75% indicating so in both communities. Given these percentages, families in the project's five school communities have requested family supports, support in developmentally and culturally responsive parenting skills as well as ways to inspire their children to achieve strong social-emotional skills, high educational and occupational levels. Eighty percent of the families, in surveys, indicated that they wished for more access to out-of-school programming. District administrators have expressed a great need for technology classes for families, especially since the district plans to continue to offer some instruction, family sessions, and teacher PD remotely. A 2019 INDoE School Climate Survey of families indicated that there are significant problems with families becoming involved in the schools, and with other families. In interviews, the principals at each school also emphasized that there is a significant lack of family engagement at all school sites. For example, 73% of teachers, 83% of families, and 61% of administration reported that family involvement in schools' decision-making as inadequate. In the needs assessment survey, half of all teachers said that there was a need for: 1) family involvement in schools' decision-making processes; 2) ESL courses for families and community residents; 3) computer classes for families; 4) Literacy programs for families and the community; 5) digital literacy training for families and the community; and 6) mental health services for families and the community. The need for ESL classes came up repeatedly in discussions with family members and administrators. Currently, little supports of this type are offered in Mundelein, where the Diamond Lake School District is located, or in North Chicago. The College of Lake County offers programming, but parents say their work and parenting duties prevent them from attending.

(v.b) How the UCLC Project will Address the Needs for Effective Family Engagement and Programming Described Above: The needs: Offering Weekly Activities to Foster Family Involvement in Children's Learning: To meet the need for families to become engaged with

schools, weekly Interactive Family Sessions will be held on such home learning support topics as: strategies for reading to children, and for early numeracy and mathematical thinking, for talking about schoolwork, systems for monitoring learning, helping their children with technology, approaches to social media, TV, cell phone and computer use, and the creation of home learning centers that now also incorporate the new on-line resources and learning.

Supporting Leadership Development for Families: To meet the need for family leadership, a family mentoring team of 10 from each school will acquire best practices to team with teachers in classrooms and during out-of-school activities. Family leader/mentors, and project staff in collaboration with Mano a Mano, Together for Childhood Network and others will offer a series of monthly two-hour family sessions for groups of 10-15 families and teacher teams at each partner school on developing practical strategies for families to increase family engagement with project schools.

Providing Family Nights Focused on: Family Engagement and Education to Enhance Family and Parental Development: To meet additionally family needs requested by families, a variety of topics chosen by families will be offered, e.g., Financial Planning,

Workplace English, Real-Life ESL, Job Readiness, Family Goal Setting, Mental Health, Legal Support, Homework Help, and Career Development. **Academic Support Classes:** for English as a Second Language (ESL), GED Attainment, and Computer Skills to Support Families with

Engaging Their Children with Learning at School and Home: To meet family learning needs, 350 family members per project year, 70 per each school program sites, will have the

opportunity to take ESL, GED and computer skills in English and Spanish (including digital skills to support children's use of instructional technologies) classes. Classes (with 15-20 family members in each class) will be offered for a total of 16 weeks twice a year and will meet for two hours two times a week. Free childcare will be offered to assist families attend these classes.

(vi.a) A Lack of Social, Health, Nutrition, Violence Prevention, and Mental Health Services and Supports: The Needs: The social, health, nutrition, and mental health needs of students in the project schools are of special importance to school and district leaders. Social Needs:

Principals and teachers in interviews at the schools have rated the schools' ability to meet counseling needs as very low and they expressed their concerns that the needs have increased because of the pandemic straining the resources even more. The schools currently offer no family sessions for families on social-mental health needs. Collectively, these areas demonstrate the enormous need to provide students with the services such as those proposed by the project.

Health Needs: Additionally, administrators have indicated that there are great difficulties for low-income families gaining access to healthcare. 75% of parents indicated they don't have enough access to medical care. Parents stated the need for more nurses, social workers, and psychologists, in the schools, and many families do not know what services are available, and do not know how to make appointments for services. Some parents said they have been on long waiting lists for this type of medical or mental health services. The gap in services for these residents includes primary care, vision, dental, and more general health, and fitness needs.

Nutrition Needs: In the area of nutrition, access to healthier food options and maintaining proper health were identified as areas of concern by families and they have expressed the need to learn more about how to shop and cook for healthy eating. These needs have been exacerbated by the aftermath of the pandemic. By partnering with the YWCA, the Boys and Girls Clubs, and Mano a Mano, project school families can not only obtain free healthier food options but receive quarterly family sessions on purchasing lower cost healthy foods, growing their own fruits and vegetables, and informing them of the ingredients in their daily food intake that may be harmful to their health.

Mental Health Needs: Teachers in the project supported by faculty from Rosalind Franklin University Medical School will design a developmentally and culturally responsive mental health curriculum for students' Pre-K-8 to recognize a range of mental health problems including depression and suicidal ideation, destigmatize having mental health problems, to help them recognize needs in themselves and their friends and knowing how to seek help in the school. Teachers will receive PD responding to a child in need and the school-based referral process. The project will connect students with health partners, such as Rosalind Franklin

Medical School University, the YWCA, and Boys and Girls Clubs that can provide them with trauma and mental health screening, resources, information, and referrals. The Lake County Health Department provides telehealth mental health services and referrals to teen crisis lines, peer to peer support groups, and other resources for students who are more comfortable getting support from peers.

(vi.b) How the UCLC Project will Address the Needs: Lack of Social, Health, Nutrition, Violence Prevention and Treatment Needs, and Mental Health services and supports as previously described. **The Needs:** To meet social, emotional, health, violence prevention, and mental health needs, El Centro will engage 80 teachers on groups of 15 in 30 hours of PD with coaching and intensive case study sessions providing opportunities for teachers to explore and understand how students function effectively socially and psychologically in their classrooms. **Social, Emotional, and Violence Prevention and Treatment Needs:** Other program components offered to meet student needs will be: 1) Adventure Education improving students' self-concept, decision-making and their ability to function within groups; 2) Cooperative Learning, which is used in this project to improve students' collaboration and mutual respect; and 3) Motivational Interviewing, which aids in the development of decision-making skills. See Competitive Preference Priority 2 for a detailed description of how violence prevention and treatment needs will be met. **Health Needs:** To meet student health needs, The project will design and use a survey to identify the needs for health services in such areas as primary care, vision, dental, nutrition education, and physical fitness, all of which have the potential of undermining students' academic performance at school. This survey will allow El Centro to connect students to available services provided by project partners. **Nutrition Needs:** By partnering with Mano a Mano, project school families can not only obtain free healthier food options but receive quarterly family sessions on purchasing lower cost healthy foods, growing their own fruits and vegetables, and informing them of the ingredients in their daily food intake that may be harmful to their health. Resources such as a healthy foods recipe book will be created by families that

takes account their cultural culinary heritage but blends it with healthier substitutes. Mental Health Needs: The El Centro project will connect students with the project's health partners that provide them with mental health screenings and create a developmentally and culturally responsive mental health curriculum for grades K-12.

SECTION 2: QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN

(A) Evidence-Based Design, FSCS Pillars & Evaluation

(i) The extent to which the objectives to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.

The objectives and the outcomes below are clearly specified and measurable in that they meet the SMART standards of being (S) specific, (M) measurable, (A) achievable, (R) relevant, and (T) time related.

Outcomes for Objective 1 through 6 (See Section 6: Evaluation Design for a list of quantitative performance measures, including percentage of early childhood educators, families, teachers, and students who have increased their performance over the baseline and at a statistically significant level with an alpha of at least .05 and effect sizes of .25SD; and qualitative assessments for each of these outcomes):

FIRST OBJECTIVE—Developing and Implementing a Systemic Culture of Collaboration and Evaluation Among El Centro's Consortium Partners. By December 31, 2028, a system of collaboration and culture supporting the capacity of the project's high-poverty elementary and middle schools will be established to support the implementation and evaluation of full-service community schools' program at the project schools, with 80% of the team members rating the partnerships as functioning effectively.

SECOND OBJECTIVE—Developing and Implementing High-Quality Early Childhood Education Programs. By December 31, 2028, 80% of 350 students will be adequately prepared for entrance into kindergarten at one of El Centro's elementary schools and complete the academic requirements of kindergarten.

THIRD OBJECTIVE—Developing and Implementing High-Quality School and Out-Of-School-Time, Expanded and Enriched Programs, Strategies and Learning Times. By December 31, 2028, 750 students at the 5 schools in Diamond Lake and North Chicago who have participated in the project’s after-school programming will have had an 80% increase in their academic performance and these students will be performing at grade level in reading and mathematics, at a statistically significant rate of achievement.

FOURTH OBJECTIVE—Developing and Implementing Supports for Children’s Transition into Kindergarten, and from Kindergarten to Elementary School to Middle School, from Middle-School to High-School, and from High-School to Post-Secondary Education and Into the Workforce. By December 31, 2028, 80% of the students from the five project schools will successfully advance from pre-Kindergarten to kindergarten, from kindergarten to first grade, from elementary school to middle school, and be ready to transition once they attend and finish high school into postsecondary programs and into careers.

FIFTH OBJECTIVE—Developing and Implementing Family and Community Engagement and Supports. By December 31, 2028, there will have been an 80% increase in the ability of project school families to support the development of their children both at school and at home in the subjects of reading and mathematics and an increase in families’ knowledge about their personal, social, emotional, and academic development, physical, and mental health.

SIXTH OBJECTIVE—Developing and Implementing Social, Emotional, Health, Nutrition, Violence, Trauma, and Mental Health Services and Supports. By December 31, 2028, 80% of the Total Number of Students (1,682) will have increased their social, emotional, health, nutrition, violence prevention, and mental health in alignment with state standards of social-emotional, health, nutrition, and mental health standards, at a statistically significant higher rate of achievement.

(A Continued) Relevant Evidence-Based Findings from Existing Literature to support the implementation of the project’s objectives.

1. Evidence-Based Practices to Support a Systemic Culture of Collaboration, Including WWC Approved Research for the Objective 1 project component relevant to its outcomes:

The El Centro plan to develop a system of collaboration among administrators, teachers, families, and community partners is informed by a WWC approved study conducted by New York City’s Urban Advantage (UA) program (Weinstein & Shiferaw, 2017), a collaboration between the New York City Department of Education and 8 science education institutions intended to improved science education in middle schools. That study investigated whether the UA system of collaboration led to increases in students’ science achievement in New York City public schools. Using a quasi-experimental design, with unique teacher-student linkage data, the study found that students of teachers participating in the UA collaborative partnership demonstrated significant improvement in science achievement outcomes (as measured by New York State’s standardized 8th grade science exam) vs. business as usual. Moreover, students benefited from teachers who were prior but not active participants in the UA partnership – signaling longevity of the positive effects of teachers’ experiences in this collaborative model. An informal partnership between schools and external institutions became common, and it was concluded that evaluations such as those in this study can be used to guide collaborative changes in program implementation and education policy. This study employed a quasi-experimental design and meets WWC standards as moderate evidence with a statistically significant positive effect on the relevant outcomes for this objective on collaboration. Study assessed and approved by WWC in 2018: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Study/86087>. Consistent with the FSCS RFP definition of promising evidence, the El Centro model has also been informed by the quasi-experimental study of Bryk et al. (2010). This research demonstrated that for student achievement to be improved, collaboration needs to occur among teachers, principals, and community partners. Accordingly, El Centro is designed to facilitate collaboration across all partnership stakeholders and views the school as an organizational system composed of five essential supports (effective school leadership, the development of teacher professional capacity,

strong community ties, a climate for authentic student learning, and standards-based curricula). Bryk identified key predictors for accelerated student learning and public-school success in a ground-breaking seven-year research study. This research's statistically significant findings (with effect sizes of at least .25SD) provide valuable evidence on what factors are critical for schools to accelerate learning, which is relevant to this project's objective on collaboration. This research, as well as those described for the professional development below, persuasively makes the case that for schools to have the most effective impact on student learning, all the above essential supports need be included in El Centro's collaborative system.

2. Evidence-Based Strategies to Support High-Quality Early Childhood Education

Programs, including WWC Vetted Research for the Second Project Objective 2: The El Centro model implements high-quality, evidence-based early childhood education activities, strategies, and interventions, particularly those that help families to become involved in preparing their children for success in school, including both cognitive and non-cognitive development. A WWC Practice Guide entitled *Preparing Young Children for School* was recently released that offers 7 recommendations of early childhood and preschool education practices, all supported with moderate or strong evidence. These recommendations were developed by an expert panel upon a comprehensive review of studies that meet WWC standards and include: 1) Providing regular, intentional, and engaging instruction and practice focused on social-emotional skills; 2) Strengthening children's executive function skills using specific games and activities; 3) Providing intentional instruction to build children's understanding of mathematical ideas and skills; 4) Engaging children in conversations about mathematical ideas and support them in using mathematical language; 5) Planning intentionally activities to build children's vocabulary and language; 6) Building children's knowledge of letters and sounds; and 7) Using shared book reading to develop children's language, knowledge of print features, and knowledge of the world. Accordingly, El Centro and its partners, *Mano a Mano* and *Together for Childhood Network* will address early childhood needs by modeling its programming on these

critical recommendations, including an emphasis on language and vocabulary, mathematical language and skills, social emotional development, and executive functioning. This WWC Practice Guide was developed from an evidence base of individual studies that met WWC standards. These 7 recommendations are supported by moderate and strong evidence for this objective on early childhood education. WWC Practice Guide published in 2023:

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/30>. This project draws upon the studies in the Practice Guide to ensure that strategies are based on the highest quality available evidence likely to improve impact on relevant early childhood outcomes.

3. Evidence-Based Strategies to Support High-Quality School and Out-Of-School-Time Programs and Strategies, including WWC Vetted Research for the Third Project

Objective: Intensive professional development activities focused on inquiry-based, constructivist, and arts learning are central to achieving this objective, during both school time and out-of-school-time. In this regard, the project draws upon a randomized controlled study (Parkinson, 2015) that investigated the effects of the Children’s Literacy Initiative, an intensive professional development program on low-income students. In providing literacy resources, professional development, coaching, and sustainment, the program demonstrated improved language and literacy and classroom environment outcomes. El Centro’s programming seeks to replicate these interventions and will incorporate professional development and on-going coaching for its educators. This study employed a randomized controlled trial and meets WWC standards without reservations as strong evidence with statistically significant positive effects student’s academic performance for this objective on in-school and out-of-school programs. Study assessed and approved by WWC in 2016: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Study/81569>. A central focus of the project model is on arts-integrated learning through its activities and partnerships. Accordingly, El Centro draws upon a randomized control trial (Bowen & Kisida, 2019) that found positive effects in literacy outcomes of students participating in a school-community arts partnership program by advancing student access to the arts. A critical aspect of

this intervention was the collaborative, strategic planning undertaken by principals in designing and tailoring the program to address each school's needs. El Centro will replicate these practices of arts-integrated learning and collaborative planning in its design. This study employed a randomized controlled trial and meets WWC standards without reservations as strong evidence with statistically significant positive effects on student's academic performance for this objective on in-school and out-of-school programs. Study assessed and approved by WWC in 2021: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Study/88827>. Additional research has demonstrated how arts programming can improve students' emotional well-being, confidence, self-awareness, and self-efficacy (Karkou & Glasman, 2004; Atkinson & Robson, 2012). Drawing upon these rigorous studies, El Centro's model of arts integration in school and out-of-school-time learning strategies and instruction is well-suited to yield positive and significant student achievement outcomes. The PD practices and strategies are supported by moderate to strong evidence. The project's theory of action reasons that centralized and school-based PD within a professional learning community will develop knowledge and attitudes supportive of standards-based arts instruction in dance, music, theater, visual arts, and media arts and art integration with reading and mathematics, and the use of digital tools.

4. Evidence-Based Strategies to Support Children's' Transition from Elementary School to Middle-School, from Middle-School to High-School, and from High-School to Post-Secondary Education and Into the Workforce, including WWC Vetted Research for the

Fourth Project Objective: This objective, focused on supporting children's transitions from elementary school through the work-force, and into career development is supported by high-quality research, including an experimental study vetted by WWC. Edmunds et al. (2017) studied a program supporting high school students' transition to postsecondary education entitled Early College High Schools. This program focused on postsecondary readiness, high-quality teaching and learning, personal relationships between students and staff, high expectations, and staff commitment to a shared mission. Results showed statistically significant positive effects in

graduation rates and continued enrollment among treatment students in comparison to a control group. This study employed a randomized controlled trial and meets WWC standards without reservations as strong evidence of effectiveness for this objective on student transitioning. WWC Study assessed and approved in 2017: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Study/82192>. El Centro's pipeline support system is aligned with the above WWC study and is also based on developmental research into the ways in which transitions can be more successful through bridge programs. A study of similar programs by Song and Zeiser (2019) found that in such programs, participating students were: (1) more likely to enroll in and graduate from 2-year colleges and (2) more likely to complete a bachelor's degree and did so earlier in their academic careers. Further, these positive impacts were similarly observed for students from different family backgrounds and did not differ significantly by gender, race, ethnicity, or eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch. Research from the Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy Center for Education and the Workforce (2023) entitled "What Works: Ten Education, Training, and Work Based Pathway Changes That Lead to Good Jobs" highlights the potential long-term effectiveness of career development strategies that will be a focus of this program in the intermediate and middle school grades. In a study of grade-level transition programs nationwide, Smith (1997) found that programs targeting a combination of students, families, and school staff in assisting students to make the transition have a significant and positive impact, even after accounting for student demographics, family characteristics, and student behavior. Students participating in such a program were less likely to drop out of high school and performed better academically. This holistic approach, involving students, families, and staff, emphasizes participants' full commitment to students' transition. The project's theory of action draws upon this research in its program design and will target and engage not only students as they prepare for grade-level transitions, but also their teachers and families in intensive support.

5. Evidence-Based Strategies to Support Family and Community Engagement, including WWC Vetted Research for the Fifth Project Objective: The continuation and expansion of

the family learning environment outside of the classroom to support home learning in coordination with school instruction is a key part of the El Centro model and is supported by WWC vetted research. Pakulak et al. (2013) found that a family-based preparation program targeting child attention was highly effective in changing lower socioeconomic status children's neuro-cognitive functioning (nonverbal intelligence and language development) and social-emotional development. The evidence suggests that targeting multiple pathways (including families and the home environment), which are integrated into El Centro's design, has the potential to narrow the large and growing gap in school readiness and academic achievement between higher and lower SES children. This study employed a randomized controlled trial and meets WWC standards without reservations as strong evidence for this objective on family engagement. WWC Study assessed and approved in 2015:

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Study/80698>. Moreover, the project will function as a family-school-community partnership, providing after-school enrichment and family engagement. These practices, which leverage community, family, and school resources, were found to have a significant, positive impact on students' literacy achievement in a WWC-vetted study (Jones, 2018). This study employed a randomized controlled trial and meets WWC standards without reservations as strong evidence for this objective on family engagement. WWC Study assessed and approved in 2021: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Study/90325>. Finally, a study (Miller et al., 2017) of the Parent Engagement Project, a school level intervention to increase parent engagement using a system of ongoing communication notifying parents about upcoming tests, important deadlines, missing homework, and lesson summaries. Students in the intervention group demonstrated significantly higher achievement in mathematics as well as school attendance vs. the control group. This study employed a randomized controlled trial and meets WWC standards without reservations as strong evidence for this objective on family engagement. WWC Study assessed and approved in 2017:

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Study/84224>. El Centro will leverage the information management

systems of participating schools to keep families informed about their children’s learning to enhance and sustain engagement. This evidence suggests that family and community engagement, including the specific strategies delineated above, are important factors contributing to students’ success in school and are accordingly integrated components of the project.

6. Evidence-Based Strategies to Support Social, Health, Nutrition, and Mental Health

Services, including WWC Vetted Research for the Sixth Project Objective: El Centro will employ sustained and intensive professional development in its interventions and this objective is aligned with evidence-based research. The WWC recently released an Intervention Report on Good Behavior Game, a Pre-K-12th grade classroom management strategy designed to help teachers create a positive learning environment by placing students into teams and rewarding them for demonstrating appropriate behaviors and following classroom rules. The reviewed studies provide evidence that Good Behavior Game improved not only student behavior, but also teacher practice and writing conventions. The project’s design emphasizes team and reward-based learning, inspired by Good Behavior Game interventions, and will integrate these practices in all professional development. This WWC Intervention Report was developed from an evidence base of individual studies that met WWC standards and provide strong and promising evidence for this objective on social and mental health. WWC Intervention Report published in 2023: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/InterventionReport/728>. In Gilliam et al.’s (2016) randomized controlled evaluation of a program providing educator childhood mental health consultation, employed in the design of El Centro, children who received services focused on their social, emotional development, health, and nutrition had significantly lower ratings of hyperactivity, restlessness, externalizing behaviors, problem behaviors, and total problems compared with children in the control group. Accordingly, the project’s partnership design incorporates the provision of educator consultation on classroom management and students’ behavior with mental health clinicians. This study employed a randomized controlled trial and meets WWC standards without reservations as promising evidence for this objective on social and mental health. WWC

Study assessed and approved in 2018: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Study/84106>. Adventure education, an experiential approach to outdoor learning and a component of El Centro's programming, has been found to improve social functioning and foster positive mental health (Baena-Extremera et al., 2012; Mutz & Muller, 2016). Similarly, Teams, Games, and Tournaments are research supported strategies that have been found to positively impact academics and behavior (Panggabean, 2021). Additionally, El Centro's programmatic strategies incorporate the evidence-based practices of cooperative learning, which has been found to improve students' time intrinsic motivation to learn and interpersonal relationships (Johnson & Johnson, 2009), and motivational interviewing, which has been found to be effective in reaching behavioral goals (VanBurkirk et al., 2014). Food insufficiency is a serious problem affecting students' learning as Taras (2005) has demonstrated that adequate nutrition is critical to cognitive performance. Children with iron deficiencies perform significantly worse, both cognitively and academically, than children who do not. The project will emphasize the importance of nutrition and work to address food insufficiency with students, teachers, and families, which is supported by this high-quality research. El Centro's violence prevention and treatment interventions are all evidence-based practices and draw upon high-quality research: 1) universal school-based programming (in a systematic review, Hahn et. Al [2007] found that universal school-based violence prevention programs are effective and identified a 15% relative reduction in aggression and disruptive behavior), 2) mentoring (Herrera [2011] demonstrated that mentored youth are less likely to engage in violence), and 3) treatment to lessen the harms of violence exposure (Cary et al. [2012] found that trauma-focused treatment models employing cognitive behavioral therapy were effective in reducing PTSD, depression, and behavioral problems in a systematic review). These strategies are informed by the CDC guidelines on best practices in violence prevention and treatment programming (David-Ferdon et al., 2016).

(b) A High-Quality Plan for Project Implementation Integrating the Four Pillars of Full-Service Community Schools

The following four pillars of the Full Service Community Centers program will be integrated into each of the El Centro's 6 objectives; namely, for each objective there will be: (1) integrated student supports at schools that provide in-and out-of-school support for students, address well-being, and address out-of-school barriers to learning through partnerships with social and health service agencies, including mental and behavioral health agencies and providers, and coordinated by a full time community school coordinator; (2) expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, through evidence-based strategies, including before-school, after-school, during-school, weekend, and summer programs that provide additional academic instruction, individualized academic support, enrichment activities, or learning opportunities; (3) Active family and community engagement; (4) Collaborative leadership and practices that build a culture of professional learning, collective trust, and shared responsibility.

Described below are descriptions of how this integration of the above four pillars will occur for each of the project's objectives and its activities. The project's detailed plan in the Management Section supports in a more detailed way the points made below. A full-time site-coordinator at each school will take a leadership role at each school in implementing the objectives and their associated activities to ensure that each objective addresses the four pillars.

FIRST OBJECTIVE—Developing and Implementing a Systemic Culture of Collaboration and Evaluation Among El Centro's Consortium Partners. Through this objective and its activities, El Centro's 12 partners including institutions of higher learning, social and health service agencies, mental and behavioral health agencies namely: NEIU, SIUC, the College of Lake County, Rosalind Franklin University Medical School, Together for Childhood Network, YWCA, Mano A Mano, the Boys and Girls Club of Lake County, the Lake County Health Department, the Regional Education Office, Local Learning, and North Chicago Community Partners, will undertake a leadership role, through the Leadership and Management Teams in providing direction and oversight for pillars 1-3 focused on integrated student supports focused on student well-being and overcoming academic and SEL barriers, expanded and enriched

learning time, family and community engagement, and refining the project's based on a quarterly review of evidence-based program strategies and evaluation findings in conjunction with the Independent Evaluator. In addition, all teams under this objective and its activities will nurture mutual respect and a trusting culture supporting professional learning and the development of community learners with shared responsibility. For example, each objective will have a design and implementation team that will discuss how shared and trusting relationships can be developed as the partner agencies collaborate on grant implementation. To support the continuation of all four pillars after federal funding has ended, the project's Leadership and Management Teams will develop detailed plans for the continued funding of the project.

SECOND OBJECTIVE—Developing and Implementing High-Quality Early Childhood Education Programs.

First, in order to effectively implement a high-quality early childhood program, El Centro will address the first pillar, in collaboration with Together for Childhood Network, Mano A Mano, and YWCA, by emphasizing in its early childhood educator professional development, monthly family sessions, and home visit components how academic development can be integrated, and learning focused on student well-being, social and emotional development, health, nutrition, mental health, and overcoming barriers to development and progress in the early childhood years. Second, expanded and enriched evidence-based learning opportunities, described in detail previously, will be provided for early childhood educators, for families in these sessions, and through the expansion of home visits to support the developmental growth of their children. Third, by its very nature this objective focuses on the third pillar by expanding the engagement of families with children of the Pre-K level as well as children into 3rd grade. Fourth, because there is a team for this objective, families will have the opportunity to participate in a culture fostering collaboration and leadership.

THIRD OBJECTIVE—Developing and Implementing High-Quality School and Out-Of-School-Time, Expanded and Enriched Programs, Strategies and Learning Times. The third objective places a focus on the first pillar through the integration of cognitive learning and social

and emotional development, health, nutrition, and mental health by infusing those topics into all the group inquiry-based, constructivist, and critical thinking learning through the teaching of the arts of the Americas of music, drama, dance, the visual arts into student academic and social-emotional learning. Through in and out-of-school learning, NEIU, SIUC, the YWCA, the Girls and Boys Clubs, and Local Learning will consider such issues as student well-being, barriers to student development, identity-safe practices, shared cultural codes and rituals, historical narratives, locus of control, cultural values, group dynamics, motivation, persistence, self-awareness, and empathy, and how these social-emotional dimensions interface with dance, music, theater, the visual arts, and media arts. For the second pillar, offering sustained and intensive evidence-based professional development (as previously described in detail in the research section) to teachers on how teaching and learning can provide group and individualized learning, in and out of school, the project will expand and enrich learning for students through team building and individualized tutoring and referrals for counseling to NEIU and the YWCA. In the third pillar, this objective and its activities extensively engage families in how to most effectively coordinate school and home learning focused on reading, Mathematics, the sciences, technology, and the arts, and assist students to deal with such social-emotional issues as locus of control, anxiety, and managing emotions. Finally, for the fourth pillar, this objective and its activities will be led by a team which collaborates with students, families, school leaders, and community agencies, providing support for the arts, folk arts, health, nutrition, and mental health, such as Local Learning, NEIU, YWCA, and Mano a Mano.

FOURTH OBJECTIVE—Developing and Implementing Supports for Children’s Transition to from Kindergarten to Elementary School to Middle School, from Middle-School to High-School, and from High-School to Post-Secondary Education and Into Career Development and the Workforce. The fourth objective infuses the four pillars into the delivery of services focused on transitioning from grade to grade and into career development and the workplace. In the case of the first pillar focused on integrated learning, transition from

grade to grade and into postsecondary, career development and the workplace will occur smoothly from grade to grade in that students will be monitored and tracked so that students at-risk can be identified early so that a range of academic and social-emotional supports can assist students who have health, nutrition, and mental health problems, issues of well-being or difficulties in managing the academic and social emotional barriers they face as they transition through school and into career development and the workforce. In this way, the supports offered to students will be well-integrated to serve students at-risk. These activities under this fourth objective address this objective. Once students at-risk are identified, El Centro will provide additional evidence-based school supports and enriched and expanded learning opportunities, all of which fall under the second pillar. Family engagement under pillar three is a key component of the project in supporting students making transitions from grade to grade. Finally, by establishing a transition team, composed of NEIU, Mano a Mano, and other and social service agencies, including mental and behavioral health agencies, will underline how collaboration and a community of learners' approach is critical to the implementation of the project's fourth pillar.

FIFTH OBJECTIVE—Developing and Implementing Family and Community

Engagement and Supports. El Centro's fifth objective has a heavy focus on the first pillar in that family activities have been designed so they integrate cognitive as well as student well-being, social, health, emotional, nutrition, and mental health aspects of learning. Family Interactive and Friday Night sessions (where free childcare will be available), are offered to provide an integrated approach to teaching and learning as families support the learning of their children at home and how barriers to academic learning can be overcome, as well as social-emotional issues such as developing a locus of control, addressing anxiety, depression, and loss, managing emotions, and functioning in diverse group settings. The second pillar is addressed under this objective in that evidence-based opportunities (see research section above for details) for enriched and expanded learning are embedded in family Interactive and Friday Night sessions and home learning. This fifth objective involves the increased engagement into

teaching and learning through home educational support as well as through literacy, GED, and computer classes, providing families with added skills to support the learning of their children. Finally, the operation and design of this objective includes extensive collaboration and follow-up sharing, and leadership on the part of families, teachers, students/youth, educators, and community agencies as specified in the section below on how multiple perspectives contribute to expansion and enrichment of family programming. The College of Lake County which specializes in adult education is the partner for this objective.

SIXTH OBJECTIVE—Developing and Implementing Social, Health, Nutrition, and Mental Health Services and Supports. This sixth objective by its very nature and focus emphasizes how teaching and learning under the first pillar can be integrated by combining cognitive, as well as social-emotional, health, nutrition, violence and trauma prevention and treatment, and mental health components of effective learning in collaboration with Mano a Mano, Boys and Girls Club of Lake County, YWCA, and the Lake County Health Department. Expanded and enriched learning opportunities under the second pillar are central to the implementation of this objective and its activities, including evidence-based adventure education, team building, motivational interviewing, the development of a referral system for nutrition and personal health issues like the need for dental and eye care, hearing assessments, and mental health. The third pillar is addressed under this objective in that families are engaged in supporting the physical and emotional well-being of their children, including how students can better face issues such as: identity-safe development, anxiety, depression, managing emotions, working in diverse groups, and resolving interpersonal conflicts. Finally, like all the objectives, this is designed through a collaborative process where students, families, teachers, school leaders, and community agencies pool resources and expertise to support student development in all its facets as partners collaborate under the fourth pillar to develop a community of learners where all voices are heard, and relationships of respect and trust are nurtured.

(c) Appropriate Evaluation Methods to Ensure Successful Achievement of Project

Objectives

A common set of evaluation strategies will be employed to ensure the successful achievement across all 6 project objectives as described in detail in the Evaluation Section. These evaluation methods, which are summarized here, will include summative strategies, employed by the Independent Evaluator in collaboration with the Project Director and its Management Team to quantitatively assess each of the project's objectives as well as formative evaluation strategies to provide on-going feedback to the teams organized under each of the objectives to ensure that the project's objectives are successfully achieved. Evaluation strategies for each objective are appropriate, pre and post assessment surveys and quantitative data (e.g. student academic achievement and measurement of project outputs), and qualitative evaluation questions will be aligned with the type of data that need to be collected under a particular objective. In addition, in the Evaluation Section, percentage targets have been set for each objective as performance measures to be reported in Form 524B to the U.S. Department of Education. A detailed description of how each of the common evaluation strategies are aligned with each objective is provided in Evaluation Section 6.

Valid and Reliable Assessment Measures: Valid and reliable performance survey data will be generated for the outcomes associated with each objective. Survey validity will be established through construct and criterion assessments. To establish construct validity, a panel of experts will review all questionnaires and surveys and ensure that they are assessing the concepts which are being measured. To establish criterion validity, extant valid assessments that measure relevant constructs will be administered and correlated with the newly developed instruments during piloting. Special attention will be paid to drafting test questions or items fully aligned with the goals and activities of the grant's outcomes. Finally, the above review will include: discussing, editing, and refining all of the surveys individual items to ensure they are: (a) fully and clearly aligned with the project's outcomes; (b) items providing a range of responses to the

concept in question; (c) a level of difficulty that those taking the survey would understand what the items meant; (d) questions that are unambiguously stated; and I replaced as necessary with items more appropriately and clearly aligned with the project's outcomes. ***Providing Reliable Survey Performance Data:*** To establish the reliability for each of the project's surveys, pilot assessments of each of the project's instruments described below will be conducted with a minimum of 30 participants to determine whether a given instrument has an adequate degree of reliability. The internal statistical reliability of an instrument, used for this grant's surveys, will establish the extent to which an individual survey produces the same results on repeated trials. The reliability for the test will employ Cronbach's internal statistical reliability assessment, which will yield a reliability alpha coefficient of at least .70 or above for each of the project's surveys listed below, which is an accepted level of reliability by researchers that will ensure that the instrument has sufficient consistency over time. ***Pre-Post Assessments for Each Objective Employing Appropriate Quantitative Statistics First Objective Outcomes:*** A pre-post instrument rating the effectiveness of the functioning of the project's various leadership groups will be employed. ***Second Objective Outcomes:*** Pre and post surveys assessing the impact of the project's PD, workshops, and home visits on early childhood educators and families will be conducted. ***Third Objective Outcomes:*** Pre and post surveys assessing the impact of school-wide teacher PD on teacher and student performance, and surveys assessing student academic achievement, social-emotional development, knowledge of technology, and college readiness will be administered. ***Fourth Objective Outcomes:*** Pre and post teacher and student surveys assessing the degree to which students are successfully transitioning from one grade to the next, and into post-secondary education, and the workplace will be implemented. ***Fifth Objective Outcomes:*** Pre and post surveys assessing the impact of monthly family sessions and classes on participants. ***Sixth Objective Outcomes:*** Pre and post surveys assessing the impact of school-wide teacher PD on teacher and student social, emotional, nutritional, physical, and mental health development will be administered.

Measuring the Degree of Pre-Post Impact: For each objective, to determine whether project impact has been significant, the following statistics will be conducted for each objective; The addition of repeated pre- and post- series of assessments for the treatment and comparison schools will provide an additional check on some of the threats to internal validity, especially history. Such a design will use several waves of assessments in both groups (treatment and comparison groups) before and after the introduction of the independent variables into the treatment group. Fifth, the evaluation design will use a statistical alpha standard of significance of .05 with an effect size .25SD difference between treatment and comparison groups to determine that a favorable association has occurred. This project will demonstrate evidence of promise by ruling out alternative explanations for its results.

Maintaining a Quantitative and Qualitative Data Base to House Data for Measuring Each Project Objective: A digital data capture system will be established and maintained to systematically keep track of all quantitative data on participants. Housed in the database will be baseline, and repeated pre- and post- assessment data on all participants, as well as achievement test scores and academic performance of Pre-K and K-12 students as well as family, and student post-secondary and workforce measures of success.

A. Quasi-Experimental Comparison Group Design to Determine the Degree to Which the Project's Objectives had been Attained: El Centro's Independent Evaluator will choose 5 schools equivalent to the treatment schools on major demographic variables to function as a comparison group to effectively rule out or control for alternative explanations for the treatment effects that the project has. That quasi-experimental design considers the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards and criteria. First, that according to those criteria, that design will identify equivalent comparison schools for the project's 5 treatment or project schools. Equivalency between treatment and comparison schools will be established by identifying comparison schools that are equivalent on both observable and unobservable characteristics, e.g., low-income status, low levels of academic performance in reading and mathematics, chronic

truancy, ethnic composition, Limited English Proficiency, student mobility rates, teacher years of experience and degrees held, and student individual education plans. Baseline equivalence of the analytical sample will be demonstrated on observed characteristics using these WWC criteria. These include establishing that: (1) the reported difference of the characteristics must be less than 0.25 of a standard deviation (based on the variation of that characteristic in the pooled sample), and (2) the effects must be statistically adjusted for baseline differences in the characteristics if the difference is greater than 0.05 of a standard deviation. Second, attrition will be monitored so that it does not exceed WWC standards. Third, to strengthen the quasi-experimental design, a repeated series of pre-post assessments will be collected. The addition of repeated pre- and post- series of assessments for the treatment and comparison schools will provide an additional check on some of the threats to internal validity, especially history. The statistical design described above for the project will demonstrate evidence of promise by ruling out alternative explanations for its results.

(B) The Extent to Which the Proposed Project Demonstrates a Rationale (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1 (c)). (34CFR 75.210). Under this sub-section B, El Centro will demonstrate how its project design provides a logical basis and rationale for actions undertaken through the El Centro FSCS project. El Centro's graphic logic model, provided in the project's attachments, illustrates in general terms how El Centro's inputs, outputs, and outcomes are logically and theoretically connected and flow from one set of categories or relationships to the next to provide the project's rationale. This narrative sub-section on rationale provides a framework for the project's theory of action and demonstrates in detail what the very specific inputs, outputs, and outcomes of its rationale are that are represented in the graphic logic model.

The following logic model inputs and outputs are likely to achieve the logic model's outcomes because the inputs and outputs have been formulated according to the What Works Clearing (WWC) House evidence-based practices and theories and recent research that have been aligned with each of the project's objectives and pipeline services (see Section 2A-Continued

for a detailed description of WWC evidenced-based practices and Section 3B describing extensive recent research used in designing the inputting of resources and project outputs to ensure that the interconnected actions of the logic model's outcomes are likely to be achieved.

SOME INITIAL THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF THE LOGIC MODEL:

Underlying the project's five pipelines and six objectives and services are several theoretical perspectives derived from the evidenced-based and recent research just referred to, which will be expanded upon and become more clearly elucidated as the project moves through its five years of mutual learning and teaching. These theoretical underpinnings, drawing from the above, research emphasize the following conceptual perspectives: collaborating and sharing of ideas, engaging students in becoming deep learners invested in their educational futures and career development, conducting group problem-solving, interpreting academic and personal narratives, developing a sense of agency and self-reflection, thinking critically, making meaning in one's life, building nurturing and empathic relationships, constructing academic and personal knowledge, being inclusive and supportive of one another, developing inclusive, trusting relationships, and developing a deep understanding and mastery of the modes of inquiry in disciplines, drawing upon the arts to inspire and give deeper meaning to learning, respecting differences, creating new solutions, and recognizing the interdisciplinary connections, and insights in the learning of the modes of inquiry in disciplines of learning. *Keeping these theoretical and evidence-based research in mind, El Centro's inputs include the following resources that are organized around each of El Centro's project major activities.*

LOGIC MODEL INPUT RESOURCES: (1) Establishing a Leadership Team (PLT), the Management Team (MT), and the 5 Pipeline Teams (PT), which is inclusive and collaborative; (2) 12 community partners being recruited to provide a wide range of integrated cognitive, SEL, health, nutrition, and mental health services to teachers, students, & families; (3) Recruiting of 16 early childhood educators and designing early childhood workshops and home visits; (4) Recruiting 250 families for early childhood workshops; (5) Recruiting 165 teachers per school site, 33 per

school, for PD to support instruction: (6) Establishing a monitoring and tracking system to support 1,682 students from Pre-K through the middle school and on to high school, post-secondary, and the workplace; (7) Recruiting 80 teachers for PD to support the health, nutrition, mental health, SEL, and violence programs and 35 after-school program instructors; (8) All 1,682 students per year will participate in adventure education, cooperative learning, Teambuilding, and Motivational Interviewing; (9) 750 students, 150 per school, who are functioning at below grade level will be recruited to participate in out-of-school programming; and (10) A referral system being designed for students' health, emotional, proclivity to violence, mental health, and nutritional needs and the system provides to physicians, dentists, and psychologists. *El Centro's outputs include the following sets of activities:*

LOGIC MODEL OUTPUTS TO IMPLEMENT AND DEVELOP EL CENTRO BASED ON PREVIOUSLY INDICATED EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES AND RECENT RESEARCH: (1) El Centro's project teams will meet monthly and initially every other week to implement the El Centro project; (2) 16 Early childhood educators participating in 20 hours of PD focused on early childhood development; (3) 250 Pre K to 3rd grade early childhood families participating in interactive workshop sessions, (4) 1,177 families participating in family workshops to support home academic learning, SEL, health, and children's mental health; (5) 350 families taking GED, ESL, and computer coursework; (6) 250 early childhood families receiving home visits on early child development and; (7) teachers engaging in 30 hrs. of PD (including workshops, sharing and case study sessions, demonstrations, co-teaching) to support learning in academic disciplines, arts integration, critical thinking, constructivist and inquiry-based learning, team learning, and 35 after-school program instructors offering instructional support to those students most in need; (8) 750 at-risk students per FSCS site engaging in 10 hours per week for 28 weeks in academic, tutoring, and arts out-of-school programming; (9) A referral system being offered to address for students' health, emotional, proclivity to violence, mental health, and nutritional needs and the system provides to physicians, dentists, and psychologists; (10) 80 El Centro

teachers attending 30 hrs. of PD to assist students in improving their SEL skills, health, nutrition, and mental health; (11) All 1,682 students participating in adventure education, cooperative/team learning, and motivational interviewing programs to support their social-emotional learning and well-being in their classrooms; (12) All 194 teachers at all 5 schools using a system to refer students to physicians, dentists, and psychologists; (13) 1,682 students being supported in improving their health, nutrition, mental health, SEL and violence prevention and treatment skills. *El Centro's outcomes include the following:* **LOGIC MODEL**

OUTCOMES: SHORT TERM OUTCOMES: (1) 80% of project's teams will have rated the collaborative partnership as functioning effectively; (2) 80% of all project families (including early childhood families) will have increased their abilities to support the learning of their children at home and at school; (3) 80% of the teachers will have acquired the ability to offer integrated authentic teaching and learning programs through the arts to enhance students' academic and SEL development; (4) 60% of project students will be achieving at grade level on state tests in reading & math, and developed mastery in academic disciplines they are studying, and (5) 80% of the students will have increased their ability to transition across grade levels into postsecondary schools and the workforce, and (6) 80% of project students improving their cognitive, health, nutrition, mental health, and SEL needs, including addressing violence prevention and intervention needs **LONG TERM OUTCOMES:** (1) A systemic, ongoing culture and climate of trust and respect will have been established to create a vibrant school learning community, coordinated with federal, state, and local agencies and sustain the project is after federal funding ends; (2) All project families will have engaged their children in deep learning and SEL development at home and at school; (3) Project teachers will have acquired the ability to offer integrated authentic teaching and learning thru the arts and the study of academic disciplines and team building, critical thinking, and self-reflection to enhance students' cognitive SEL, and career development; and (4) Students will have improved their cognitive abilities, their ability to transition across grade levels to postsecondary education and into the workforce, and to

construct knowledge, think critically, collaborate, and meet, their health, nutrition, mental health, and SEL needs, within a trusting, supportive, non-violent, identity-safe milieu.

SECTION 3: QUALITY OF THE PROJECT SERVICES

(A)The Extent to Which the Applicant Ensures that a Diversity of Perspectives Will Be Brought to Bear on the Project’s Design, and in the Operation of the Proposed Project, Including those of Students, Youth, Families, Educators and Staff, Beneficiaries of Services School Leadership, and Community Leadership

In order to ensure that a diversity of perspectives is brought to bear on the project design, Design and Operation Teams, as described in detail below will be organized for each of the project’s 6 objectives and their associated activities. As appropriate, each of the teams will have members representing the diverse perspectives of students, youth, families, teachers, educators, and staff (including the full-time Full-Service School Program Director, 2 Pipeline Coordinators, and 5 school-site Coordinators, and school and community leadership). These teams will meet monthly to discuss, plan, and assess how the activities under each objective can best be designed and implemented. As educators the Independent Evaluators will provide feedback to each of the teams below on pre-post survey outcomes, interviews and focus groups of participants, and data collected for student and family cognitive and social-emotional outcomes, as well outcomes related to social functioning, health, nutrition, and mental health supports.

(i) A diversity of perspectives brought to bear on the implementation of Objective One’s Activities: Developing and Implementing a Systemic Culture of Collaboration and Evaluation Among El Centro’s Consortium Partners: The Design and Operation of the El Centro Leadership Team for this objective’s activities will focus on representing multiple perspectives of students and youth, families, teachers and staff, and school and community on issues related to the following (see the Management Section 5c(i) for a detailed list of this Leadership Team’s membership, which includes students, youth, families, teachers, educators, and staff (including the full-time Program Director, and school and community leadership): (a)

developing a community of learners among the diverse partners, including students, teachers, and families benefiting from El Centro's services so that there can be an open exchange of ideas in a non-hierarchical manner where there is a high degree of collaboration and sharing so individual expertise can be extensively shared; (b) integrating the five pipeline services so they do not function as silos and so all of the partners and stakeholders can draw upon their funds of knowledge to effectively create an integrated full service school hub of services meeting the needs of partners when diverse perspectives are brought to the table; (c) refining the evaluation so that all constituency voices are represented; (d) enlisting the full support of this diverse group of perspectives; (e) developing data-informed decision-making based on points of view shared by the diverse partners; and (g) collaborating on how each partner can contribute expertise and resources to ensure the continuation of the project after federal funding ends, especially in funding a full-time school coordinator, while applying for resources from a wide range of foundations and agencies with specific targets set for each year.

(ii) A diversity of perspectives brought to bear on the implementation of Objective Two's Activities: Developing and Implementing a Quality Early Childhood Pipeline Program: At each project school, the Design and Operation of the Quality Early Childhood Team for this objective's activities will focus on representing diverse perspectives. Members of this team at each school will include the full-time School Coordinator, four representatives from families with early childhood year children, as well as four representative teachers, and educators, and two school leadership administrators with degrees in early childhood education, and community agency representatives from Mano a Mano, and Together for Childhood Network with expertise in delivering early childhood programming in the community. Examples of the types of unique perspectives that will be shared in the design and operation of early childhood programming include: First, families sharing what problems they are facing in raising their children and feedback on how they can effectively interact with and learn from workshop leaders and home visitors. Second, early childhood teachers, educators, nurses and social workers, and school

leadership administrators will discuss with the teams how an assessment of current early childhood programming and screening can contribute to the development and planning of family sessions, what evidence-based research has revealed about what materials and types of interactions improve a child's cognitive and affective development, home visits, refining the mission of early childhood education, and the development and delivery of early childhood professional development for educators. Third, community leaders will contribute knowledge and skills they have acquired in delivering hands-on programming that families can employ in developing positive relationships with their children enhancing their cognitive and social-emotional growth, as well as health, nutrition, and mental health services and supports.

(iii) A diversity of perspectives brought to bear on the implementation of Objective Three's Activities: Developing and Implementing In-School and Out-of-School Pipeline

Programming: At each project school, the Design and Operation Professional Development (PD) Team for this objective's activities will focus on representing diverse perspectives.

Members of this team at each school will include the full-time Project Director, 2 Pipeline Coordinators, the 5 Site-Coordinators, four student/youth representatives from grades 3-8 who are in school during the day and participate in after-school programs, four teachers, curricular specialists (in reading and mathematics), and school leaders, who are responsible for administering teaching in grades 3-8 at each school, four family members, and four community agency representatives, including those from NEIU and Local Learning with expertise in delivering innovative instruction in the arts, folk arts, student academic and social-emotional development, and out-of-school programming. Examples of the types of unique perspectives that will be shared in the design and operation of in-and out-of-school programming include: First, students will share the degree to which they their cognitive and affective learning, whether in small or large groupings, to be challenging, engaging, meaningful, and motivating during the school day and in after school hours. Second, teachers, educators, and school administrators will draw upon evidence-based research to consider how sustained and intensive PD, with follow-up

coaching, sharing, and classroom demonstrations, can respond to teacher and student academic and social-emotional needs, including inquiry-based, constructivist, authentic, on-line, digital, literacy, mathematics, science, group, special needs, and cultural arts. Third, community agency representatives will discuss and how community artists, and those with expertise in mental health services, nutrition, and the corporate and not-for-profit world demonstrate how student learning can respond to relevant real-world problems and issues. Fourth, family members will draw upon their “funds of knowledge” (Moll, 2021) to contribute to how their backgrounds and experiences can better align teaching to student and families cultural and racial heritage.

(iv) A diversity of perspectives brought to bear on the implementation of Objective Four’s Activities: Developing and Implementing Programming for Transitioning from Grade to Grade, and into the Workplace: At each project school, the Design and Operation Grade and Workplace Transitional Team for this objective’s activities will focus on representing diverse perspectives. Members of this team at each school will include four student/youth representatives from grades 3-8, five teachers, five curriculum specialists, and 5 administrative school leaders who are responsible for teaching or leading at each school, five family members with children at the project’s schools, and five community representatives from NEIU, Mano a Mano, the Regional Educational Office, the YWCA and others with expertise in field-based community workplace programming. Examples of the types of unique perspectives that will be shared in the design and operation of grade and workplace programming include: First, former students in high school or postsecondary who will share the degree to which they have been able to successfully move from grade to grade, into career development initiatives, and into the workplace, and discuss any barriers they may have faced along the way. Second, teachers, educators, and school leadership administrators will draw upon evidence-based research and student cognitive and non-cognitive assessments and monitoring tracking systems for the early identification problems that students are having in making academic and social and emotional transitions, and to consider how sustained and intensive PD, with follow-up coaching, sharing, and classroom demonstrations

focused on the issues of transitioning through school and work, can respond to teacher and student academic and social-emotional needs and readiness skills in making the transition from grade to grade, and into the workplace, including students with special needs, cultural differences, and working effectively in large and small group settings, and individual counseling. Third, community agency representatives will discuss and plan how community and representatives with expertise in mental health services, and nutrition, and career development to address school and real-world problems moving from grade to grade and into the workforce, including contributing how future internships in the community can enhance student transitional development. Fourth, family members will draw upon their rich cultural and socio-economic backgrounds and experiences to assist students in transitioning through the educational system.

(v) A diversity of perspectives brought to bear on the implementation of Objective Five's

Activities: Developing and Implementing Family Programming: At project schools, the Design and Operation of the Family Development Team for this objective will focus on representing diverse perspectives. Members of this team at each school include four student/youth representatives from grades 3-8, teachers, four teachers, educators, and administrative school leaders and have expertise in collaborating with families to coordinate school and family learning, five family members with children at the project's schools, and five community representatives from NEIU, Mano a Mano, the College of Lake County, North Chicago Community Partners, Local Learning with expertise in how families can develop their academic and enrichment skills. Unique perspectives that will be shared in the design and operation of family programming include: First, students will share how well school and home learning are coordinated, what their home learning needs are, and how helpful their families have been in contributing to their academic and social-emotional development, all of which will contribute to the planning of family collaborative and interactive programming. Second, teachers, educators, and administrators will draw upon evidence-based research and student cognitive and non-cognitive assessments to consider how family Interactive Sessions, with

follow-up coaching can effectively support homework and learning issues with the type of strategies families can undertake at home to support the academic and social-emotional development of their children, including students with special needs and those needing small group or individualized instruction. Third, community representatives will discuss and plan how community expertise can improve family learning in areas as child development - from cradle to college, parenting strategies, family leadership, and ESL, ABE, and GED classes, and computer and technological skills development. Fourth, family members will complete needs assessment surveys and participate in focus groups so family perspectives on their needs are identified, and programs can be designed to best meet their needs.

(vi) A diversity of perspectives brought to bear on the implementation of the Objective Six's Activities: Developing and Implementing Strategies to Support Social, Health, Nutrition, and Mental Health Services:

At each project school, the Design and Operation Social, Health, Nutrition, and Mental Health Services Team for this objective's activities will focus on representing diverse perspectives. Members of this team at each school will include four student/youth representatives from grades 3-8, teachers, five educators, and administrative school leaders who are responsible for teaching in grades Pre-K-8 at the schools, four family members with children at the project's schools, and six community representatives from Mano a Mano, the Boys and Girls Club of Lake County, YWCA, North Chicago Community Partners, Rosalind Franklin University, NEIU, with expertise in field-based community programming. Examples of the types of unique perspectives that will be shared in the design and operation these types of programming include: a random survey will be given to students, and then they will participate in interviews to discuss whether they have faced such challenges as bullying, cyber-bullying, substance abuse, and social and emotional issues such as managing emotions, anxiety, depression, loss, locus of control, and establishing proper boundaries between themselves and others. Second, teachers, educators, and school leadership administrators will draw upon evidence-based research on social, health, nutrition, and mental health supports in

planning how sustained and intensive PD, with follow-up coaching, sharing, and classroom demonstrations focused on these issues can most effectively be addressed in the classroom and when necessary, through tiered supports and/or referrals to community agencies. Third, family members will contribute to team planning by sharing what health, social, nutritional, and mental health issues their children are facing, and collaborate with the team on how the families can support the programming provided in these critical developmental issues.

(B) The Extent to Which the Services Provided Reflect Up-To-Date Knowledge from

Research and Effective Practice (34 CFT 75.210.) The El Centro project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice for each of its five pipeline services as follows:

(1) Recent research on high quality early childhood programs pipeline services for the following areas: The El Centro model implements high-quality, evidence-based early childhood education activities, strategies, and interventions, particularly those that help families to become involved in preparing their children for success in school, including both cognitive and non-cognitive development. The El Centro model will adopt 7 recommendations of early childhood and preschool education practices from the WWC Practice Guide (2022) *Preparing Young Children for School* including: 1) Providing regular, intentional, and engaging instruction and practice focused on social-emotional skills; 2) Strengthening children's executive function skills using specific games and activities; 3) Providing intentional instruction to build children's understanding of mathematical ideas and skills; 4) Engaging children in conversations about mathematical ideas and support them in using mathematical language; 5) Intentionally planning activities to build children's vocabulary and language; 6) Building children's knowledge of letters and sounds; and 7) Using shared book reading to develop children's language, knowledge of print features, and knowledge of the world. By emphasizing language and vocabulary, mathematical language and skills, socio emotional development, and executive functioning, El Centro's services draw upon high-quality research and effective practice that are likely to improve its impact on early childhood outcomes. *Research on Home Visits:* The design of the

early childhood home visit pipeline component drew upon several recent research articles and documents, including those from the Office of the Administration for Children and Families (2023); the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (2021); Stemler, et al. (2022); and Sheldon and Young (2018).

2) Recent research on high quality in-school and out-of-school programs and pipeline

services strategies: A unique focus of the El Centro model is on arts-integrated learning through its activities and partnerships, which is infused throughout its in-and out-of-school programming. Recent research (Bowen & Kisida, 2019) has demonstrated how arts programming, inquiry-based learning, team learning, and students constructing their own knowledge, delivered through school-community arts partnerships like El Centro's project (Mehta and Fine, 2019; Dolfin, 2020), can have significant positive impacts on both student academic achievement and social development, including: 1) improvements in school engagement, academic achievement, and college aspirations; 2) increased empathy and admiration for others while learning; and 3) a reduction of disciplinary infractions. In a meta-analysis of arts integration interventions, Ludwig, Boyle, and Lindsay (2017) concluded that one can expect a child participating in an arts integration intervention to gain four percentile points in achievement. Their findings also suggest that these effects may be magnified for students from racial/ethnic minority groups, low-income families, and urban settings, all targeted by El Centro. Drawing upon these rigorous studies, El Centro's model of arts integration in both school and out-of-school-time learning strategies and instruction is well-suited to yield positive and significant student cognitive and non-cognitive achievement outcomes. Clearly, the arts play a central role in this El Centro project, but the project will also integrate the arts with the disciplines of math, science, technology, and engineering. In this Next Generation of Science Standards aligned approach Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics serve as access points for guiding students' inquiry, dialogue, creative and critical thinking. The disciplinary integration of the arts with STEM supports students in taking thoughtful risks, engaging in experiential learning, persisting

in problem-solving, being active participants of real-world discovery and knowledge building projects (Connor, Karmokar, Whittington, 2015), and embracing collaboration and work through the creative process. (Education Closet, n.). This approach builds students intellectual and academic skills and their social emotional development in the areas of empathy and agency, provides an experience to impact their communities in a positive way, and it engages them in developing civic responsibility through design projects that address issues of human concern in their communities and the world at large (Stanford model of Design Thinking--Plattner, 2015). Finally, extensive research supports El Centro's approach to PD, which includes extensive follow-up in the form of sharing, case studies, demonstrations, and co-teaching (Grasley-Boy, 2019; Boulay, 2020; Bryk, 2022). **(3) Recent research on support for a child's transition to elementary school, from elementary school to middle school, from middle school to high school, and from high school into and through postsecondary education and into the workforce** Pipeline services for supporting children's transition from elementary to middle-school, middle-school to high-school, and high-school into the workforce are supported by current research on effective practice. Transitioning from Pre-K to elementary and additional transitions during grades 3-12 is enhanced through parent engagement, including improved home literacy and self-directed learning (The Annie Casey Foundation, 2022). Additionally, Potosky (2019) and DeVoe (2022) found that programming supporting high school students' transition to postsecondary education that focuses on postsecondary readiness, high-quality teaching and learning, personal relationships between students and staff, high expectations, and staff commitment to a shared mission, as in the case of El Centro, can improve graduation rates and continued student enrollment. El Centro's pipeline services focused on transitioning throughout the educational system to the workplace uses a comprehensive system to monitor and assist students at risk, which include evidence-based strategies that are likely to improve students' socio-emotional development and academic achievement, including motivation as they transition

through their education and career development (Bufford and Nestor, 2020; Hariko, et. al. 2019; Akos et. al. 2021; Georgetown

University McCourt School of Public Policy Center for Education and the Workforce 2023).

(4) Recent research on family and community engagement and supports pipeline services:

The major components supporting family and community engagement have been supported by a wide range of research studies. In the case of Family Nights and Family Workshops, the project has designed its activities to assist families and community members in enhancing their ability to provide support for their children at home in the areas of both cognitive and social-emotional development. In this way, parents and community members are partners in the process of supporting students with their academic and social-emotional development. Research articles that have been critical in the design of these family and community supports are as follows: Sim and Toumborou, et al (2021); Thomspson (2017); and Rosenbledt and Ribera (2020). Moreover, several research studies have been drawn upon to develop strategies to increase family engagement with schools. These studies include Sommer, et al. (2018); Mapp and Bergman (2021); Epstein, et al (2018); and Kelty and Wakabayashi (2020). Finally, the family engagement pipeline will provide opportunities for families and community members to improve their academic skills by attending ESL ABE, GED, and computer classes. Several studies have shown that when families attend programs where their own academic skills are enhanced this has a profound and positive effect on their children's learning. Research supporting such classes include Augustine (2017); Shiffman (2019); and Davis-Kean, et al (2021).

(5) Recent research on social-emotional, health, nutrition, and mental health services and supports, violence prevention, and intervention pipeline services:

To address student social-emotional, health, nutrition, violence prevention, and mental health needs, the El Centro project will employ a wide range of strategies based on the most recent research. *Social-Emotional Research:* The PD offered to teachers and their involvement in case studies will draw upon recent research studies supporting the employment of Adventure Education (Griffin, 2020),

Motivational Interviewing (Hui, et. al, 2021), Cooperative Learning (Klang, 2020), Cognitive Behavioral as well as some more psychodynamic strategies and mental health referral strategies (Jackson, et.al. 2021; Greenberg et. al. (2023) utilizing narrative to enable teachers, students, and families to better assist the social psychological development of their students and children (Gagnier, et. al. 2022) to create an identity-safe, inclusive, and trusting milieu. *Health research supporting student improvement:* Program services focused on improving student health were informed by the following research studies: Kolbe, L (2019) and Lee, et. al. (2020). *Nutrition research supporting student improvement:* To ensure that programs designed to improve student nutrition were up to date, research was consulted in designing student nutrition programming: Van Horn, (2019) and Contento & Koch (2012). *Mental health research supporting student wellness:* Teacher PD under this project was designed according to recent effective school-based practices and how teachers could effectively make referrals to mental health professionals. Richter, A. (2023) and Villareal, A. (2018). A survey of Mental Health Referral Practices. School Psychology Forum, Vol. 12, 2, 2018. *Violence prevention and treatment research supporting student improvement:* Under this project, prevention strategies will include inquiry circles to assist teachers and students in understanding how trauma, violence, loss, and mental and emotional injuries, as well as family or community violence, drug abuse, and gang involvement profoundly impacts behavior and learning. The project's approach to addressing the treatment of violence has been informed and guided by the following research, which includes situational supports, school-based cognitive behavioral interventions, and small group programs to build student capacity that arise from being victims of violence. David-Ferdon, C., Vivolo-Kantor, A. M., Dahlberg, L. L., Marshall, K. J., Rainford, N. & Hall, J. E. (2016). **(6) Recent What Works Clearinghouse Research Supporting Project Collaborative Services:** El Centro plans to develop a system of collaboration among administrators, teachers, families, and partners, informed by a WWC approved study conducted by New York City's Urban Advantage (UA)

program (Weinstein & Shiferaw, 2017). In addition, the recent research of Byrk (2022) clearly demonstrates how developing a system of collaboration can enhance the quality of services.

(C) The Extent to Which the Services to be Provided are Focused on Those with Greatest Need (34 CFR 75.210.) Tables 1 and 2 of this proposal and Section A on the needs section make it clear that the El Centro's project's 6 objectives are focused on serving those students with the greatest need in that: (1) 83-95% of students at the five FSCS schools are currently performing below grade level; (2) on average 48-99% of the students are from low income backgrounds; (3) 33-54% of the students are identified as not being English Language Proficient; (4) on average 51% of the students' families do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent, and 69% of African-Americans and 50% of Latinos have not received such a diploma; (5) over 25% come from families that are recent migrants; (6) students live in neighborhoods where violence and trauma are common with 15% of violent crimes being committed against children from 10-19 years old; (7) 68% of teachers and families on a survey indicated that nutrition was a major problem; (8) 58% of parents and 73% of teachers surveyed said that mental health and socio-emotional services were issues for them; (9) over 40% of families need assistance in supporting the education of their children because they are not proficient in English; (10) 50% of the families on a survey indicated they were in need of services to enable them to successfully transition their children from grade to grade, to postsecondary school, and the workplace and only 30% of families being prepared to assist their children with preparing for postsecondary education; and (11) interviews teachers indicated that those who have the highest of behavioral and behavioral problems is because of the pandemic and poverty conditions. Finally, Section A provides for each of the project's needs in detail and the El Centro project will focus on the greatest needs like those mentioned previously through an extensive array of programming for early childhood students, students with academic needs both through in-and-out of school programming, a monitoring system, and extensive supports in the form of workshops and academic tutoring to assist students with transitioning from grade to grade, into postsecondary

education and career development, and into the workforce. In addition, family nights will sponsor workshops on how families can assist their children academically and with social and emotional needs. The project will provide adult education classes in ESL, GED, and computer classes, and provide free childcare for family nights and classes. Together with the schools and the community partners, El Centro will set up a system of social and emotional supports for students, procedures for mental health referrals, and extensive nutrition and health activities to promote wellness.

SECTION 4: ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES

(A) Plans for a Full-Time Site Coordinator at Each School and Plans to Sustain the Position Beyond the Grant Period and How this Position Will Service to Plan, Integrate, Coordinate, and Facilitate Programs and Services at Each School

The project will employ a full-time Project Director, 2 full-time, Pipeline Services Coordinators, and at the 5 full time School-Site Coordinators, as required by the Full-Service Community Schools program. As the budget narrative states these positions and the five full-time Site-Coordinators have been established to ensure the successful implementation of the project. The implementation of the activities will be supported by in-kind contributions listed on the budget narrative in the amount of approximately [REDACTED] per project year. El Centro will provide two hours per month of PD for key personnel and relevant partner liaisons.

Regular Meetings of the Project Leadership Team: *First*, to ensure that there is strong leadership, collaboration, direction, and communication for the project, a Project Leadership Team will be formed, and it will consist of the Project Director, the district representatives, school principals and staff, community partners, representatives from teachers and families, and the independent evaluator. *Second*, the Project Leadership Team's will meet, at least monthly, and will provide a forum in which members can work together to discuss broad issues and needs across the school-sites, share and receive updates from other members of the Leadership Team, discover ways to improve programming and services, ensure the project is being implemented

with fidelity, and support the project implementation with the UCLC Liaison, Project Director, 2 Pipeline Services Coordinators, and the 5 School Site-Coordinators. The Leadership Team will set the tone for overarching mission, vision, and policies for the El Centro Project.

The Program Management Team: El Centro will also have a Program Management Team consisting of the Project Director, 2 Pipeline Services Coordinators, the 5 School Site-Coordinators, Principals, Partners, and Teachers and the goal will be to set actual activities, timelines, staffing, and schedules, and logistics. These members will dialogue on professional teams and will create a culture of mutual learning at the North Chicago and Diamond Lake school and classroom levels. These meetings will provide members with the opportunity to contribute ideas and learn from one another as the project implements a myriad of academic, arts, folk arts, social-emotional, health, nutrition, violence prevention, and adventure education programs to all stakeholders.

Description of the School Pipeline Coordinator Position: The 2 Full-Time Pipeline Services Coordinators, who report to the project director, will provide overall direction, guidance, and leadership to the 5 site-coordinators, will work across the schools to make certain that all the pipeline services are being implemented, and supervise the 5 site-coordinators across the Lake County schools. This position will, along with the Project Director, facilitate the Project Leadership Team to bring together all the major stakeholders in collaboration to design, implement, and ensure the fidelity of the implementation of the project. The pipeline coordinators will work across the schools to: (1) provide high quality integrated expanded and enriched learning time programs and strategies including support, manage, guide, and mentor the site-coordinators who in-turn will hire academic tutors, teaching artists, and PD specialists who work in the individual schools (2) coordinate family and community engagement and supports; and plan overall educational workshops with families, and work with the CLC to implement the adult education class offerings and manage overall logistics; (3) facilitate high quality early childhood education programs with the partner organizations and manage the work of the 16

home visitors who are responsible for visiting a total of 250 families across the 5 schools (4) facilitate the partners to provide access to participants to social, health, nutrition, and mental health services and supports, and (5) support the local school site-coordinator and team transition students from Pre-K to elementary school, from elementary school to middle school, from middle school to high school.

Description of the School Site-Coordinator Position: Full-time Site-Coordinators will form the cornerstone of the project at each of the partner schools. The Site-Coordinators will lead the development, implementation, coordination, and oversight of all activities within their respective school sites, and serve as the liaison between the principal, families, teachers, school staff, project staff, and partners. In partnership with the Management Team, site-coordinators will coordinate scheduling, logistics, and infrastructure support. They will lead recruitment efforts, work with school staff and partners on participant retention, service delivery, and collaborate to guarantee program equity, quality, and consistency. They will each report to one of the 2 Pipeline Services Coordinators who respond directly to the Project Director.

Site-Coordinators' Responsibilities for Facilities, Equipment and Supplies to Plan

Integrate, Coordinate, and Facilitate Programs at Each School: *First*, Full-Time School Site Coordinators will work with the schools and partners to coordinate facilities, equipment, and supplies for the project. Since most of the program activities will occur at the 5 project school sites, the schools have agreed to support the project with appropriate facilities and equipment during after-school hours and on Saturdays; including: multipurpose rooms for meetings, family sessions and after-school classes; meeting rooms for staff meetings and professional development; libraries; storage space; computer labs with 30 computers per lab; auditoriums or large performance/activity spaces akin to an auditorium; gymnasiums; courtyards for assemblies; access to smart-boards, projectors, and screens; access to lunchroom areas, sharing of basic supplies, copiers, computer networks, and family communication. *Second*, the LEAs will provide access to the main office, meeting, and computer rooms, and to school-based offices at

each partner school site; as well as storage space; computers, printers, photocopiers, file cabinets, desks, and office supplies; and the sharing of office and computer supplies. El Centro project schools are 100% accessible for students with physical disabilities. **Finally**, school-based staff will have appropriate work areas, meeting space, and storage at the schools. Coordination and scheduling of these facilities, equipment, and supplies will be managed by site-coordinators in consultation with the and school administrators.

A. Description of How the Full-Time Coordinator Will Serve to Plan, Integrate, Coordinate, and Facilitate Programs and Services at Each School

The Site Coordinator at each school site will plan, integrate, coordinate, and facilitate the services at school sites. The planning of the project services will comprise two main components. *First*, in the initial stages, the site coordinators will work with the Project Leadership Team, under the direction and guidance of the Pipeline Coordinators, to implement the proposed objectives in the schools. This involves examining the responses to the needs assessments completed by students, teachers, school staff, administrators, families, and community members that were administered for this proposal. This allows the site-coordinators, in conjunction with the leadership team, to align the specific details of each of the five pipeline services with what is most needed at the schools. This collaborative and coordinated planning at the beginning of the project will ensure that El Centro will have high impact by tailoring all programming and services to the greatest areas of need. *Second*, throughout the five-year term of the grant, the site-coordinators will meet with the Project Leadership Team monthly to address problems with implementation, or new needs that arise as circumstances change. Additionally, the Independent Evaluator will be collecting both quantitative and qualitative data on the impact of El Centro's programming and services throughout each year. These data will be used both for the reporting required by the Department of Education on the project's outputs and outcomes, but it will also be used to help the Project Leadership Team, and in particular the site-coordinators, respond quickly to additional needs, issues with fidelity, or any needed changes in

implementation to increase the impact of the project’s programming. The site-coordinators will be responsible for the integration of programming and services at the schools described under Objectives 2-6 in Section 2(a)(i). Integrating programming and services into the school community requires deeper connections with the already-existing academic, social-emotional, health, mental health, wellbeing components that students encounter every day. These deeper connections avoid placing these topics in “silos,” which then implies that mental health and academic achievement are unrelated, or that learning only happens in school. The project will make it easier to provide much-needed services to students who would otherwise find it much more difficult to access them—such as: medical, dental, vision care, mental and behavioral health services, trauma-informed services. Additionally, when students and families are facing problems with housing, nutrition, citizenship preparation, or criminal justice issues, the school under the leadership of the site-coordinator, will coordinate partners to offer these services.

Third, the site-coordinator will facilitate the services in school sites. This includes facilitating regular meetings with the school teams including principals, staff, teachers, and partners. Since the site-coordinator is responsible for facilitating the day-to-day running of the project services in the school, this means that they are regularly checking in with the teachers to ensure that the academic and non-academic programming is being implemented to have the most impact on students’ cognitive and non-cognitive learning. The site-coordinator works with the schools and partners, so the timing and location of the events are convenient for attendees. This ensures that schools become integral and vibrant hubs of learning for students, families, and the communities.

(B) Continued Support After Federal Funding & Demonstrated Commitment to Sustain the Full-Time Site Coordinators Positions and the Project beyond the Grant Period and the Commitment of Entities to Support Such Support: The El Centro project will build capacity and demonstrate the importance of the pivotal and crucial role of the school site-coordinators who will have yielded results beyond the period of funding. The schools will sustain this role even when grant funding ends, in the following ways.

Building Project Capacity and Reallocating Resources for Sustaining the Project: Building project capacity will be successfully undertaken because funds received from the U.S. Department of Education to launch programming will be conceived of as seed monies. Staff hired with federal funds will no longer be needed once federal support ends, as new organizational structures, and capacities (e.g. the Leadership Team, Management Team, and five Pipeline Teams) will have been established to continue the project. After the grant ends, the district staff, project teachers and partners, will continue their participation as part of their regular professional assignments. Accordingly, monies required to sustain this project will be substantially less than yearly grant awards. It is estimated that once the federal grant ends, approximately [REDACTED] will be needed to sustain the project. It is anticipated that about [REDACTED] will be reallocated by the districts, [REDACTED] per school) by the project's schools, and [REDACTED] between the other major project partners. In addition, plans are to raise [REDACTED] from private foundation funds and fundraising efforts. These funds will enable the project to institutionalize or build capacity for the five Full-Time School Site Coordinators, two Full-Time Pipeline Services Coordinators, and maintaining the school as a hub for the students, families, and the community.

Setting the Stage for External Funding to Extend the Project: UCLC and its partners will approach foundations and funding sources in support of programming in high need schools, the stage has been set to acquire state and private funding to support this project once federal funding ends. All partners have an established record of receiving funding from foundations such as Chicago Community Trust, Schreiber Family Foundation, and Lake County Community Trust. UCLC and its partners will apply to these foundations and others locally and nationally to continue the project. The fund-raising plan will set grant targets totaling [REDACTED] in grant years 1 and 2 and [REDACTED] in years 3 to 5.

A Commitment to Institutionalization: First, the project partners have indicated that they are committed to the institutionalization and to use their own resources, while at the same time

building school resources and capacity, to continue the project. Principals of target schools indicate that improving schools through integrating standards-based arts education into the curriculum, for at-risk students, is a long-term priority. Having Established On-Going Organizational Teams: Second, the project will establish organizational units in the form of leadership, management, teacher, and family teams through seed funds under this grant that will build school capacity and sustainability for this community school project. El Centro's Leadership Team, Management Team, and the 5 Pipeline Teams will develop detailed plans on how to sustain the project through school funds and private grants. Having Planned for the Institutionalization of the El Centro Project: Third, the 15 Teacher Leaders will play a critical role in the development of the project because they will have learned how to organize, develop, and facilitate PD sessions and follow-up, and collaborate with community organizations, work effectively with their teacher colleagues on arts integration projects, thus providing each school with teacher leaders who have the skill sets to continue the project after funding ends. Having Planned for Continued Funding to Support Arts Programming: Fourth, during years 4 and 5, specific plans will be developed to identify how funds can be allocated within the partner institutions to support the work of the project. Specifically, (1) Project personnel will collaborate with schools to include program components into their yearly discretionary funds budget; (2) Seek Funding State's 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program, and private foundations will also be targeted; (3) It is anticipated that the project's products (e.g. mental health curriculum, family cook book, manuals, tool kits, websites, and lesson and unit plans) finances for program continuation through resource re-allocation or fund-raising will be minimal and will consist in funding at an average cost of [REDACTED] per agency, per school year.

SECTION 5: QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

(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. The project has a strong plan with a broadly representative consortium and its stakeholders. There are two categories of partners in the El Centro consortium. First, there are the community partners who will be the backbone of the consortium and work together to provide the direct services to the students, teachers, school staff, community, and families. The second group of partners will deliver specialized educational services. All the partners are part of the consortium, meet and work together with the other partners who access them for their specific expertise. resources needed by the consortium, to participate directly in the work to implement Competitive Priority 2. **The Partner Charts is found in the “Other Attachments” section as are the partner MOUs and the Letters of Support.** The chart indicates by objective which partners are supporting the implementation of that objective. Rosalind Franklin University Medical School, Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC), Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU), the College of Lake County (CLC) are all institutions of higher learning, and they will lend their expertise on professional development, adult education, mental health, and medical, dental, and nutrition, parent programming, and transitions initiatives. Mano a Mano Family Resource Center, the Boys and Girls Club, Together for Childhood Network, the YWCA of Metropolitan Chicago (Lake County), and the North Chicago Community Partners are community-based organization which will provide direct services in areas of early childhood, childcare, afterschool programming, academic tutoring, parent sessions, and adventure education. Local Learning (LL) is an arts provider which dives deep into art and cultural learning connections, and their mission envisions a nation of lifelong learners who understand traditional arts and knowledge as critical tools for transformative solutions to the complex challenges of today’s world. The Lake County Health Department and the Lake County Regional Office of Education will spearhead the early childhood training, provide free medical care for low-income families, and provide PD. **The Partner’s Roles and Responsibilities Chart delineates all partner roles and responsibilities in further detail.**

(B) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates a history of effectiveness in working with a diverse range of stakeholders, including students and families. Overview: As the applicant, the University Center of Lake County (UCLC), in collaboration with its partners, has a history of effectiveness in establishing and maintaining partnerships with a diverse range of universities, school districts, and community organizations. The UCLC is a model of equity into action and is committed to serve students and students of color and ensure that the educational programs offered by its 13 member universities provide a flexible learning option, are affordable and convenient. The UCLC's History of Effectiveness is demonstrated in that it has been a stable consortium since 1998 of universities, superintendents, and community organizations whose effectiveness has been recognized by the Illinois Board of Higher Education which continues to fund UCLC. In 2017, the UCLC was awarded **Innovative Initiative Award by the Illinois Council on Continuing Higher Education** in recognition of its "**First Generation College Outreach Program**" which included parent and student workshops. The Educators' Center is a consortium-within-a-consortium, created in 2001 to address the academic and professional development needs of P-20 educators and to provide customized training to high needs school districts. It is a one-stop-shop for information and programs on continuing education and professional development options (both credit and non-credit) in Lake County. **The UCLC has served over 3,017 educators in Lake County** through different types of programs. Specifically, UCLC has: 1) Served approximately 800 educators and their students in a Small School grant project with the Waukegan High School. 2) Graduated approximately 200 Latino bilingual bio culture teachers with BA /BS degrees. 3) Trained over 200 teachers in new strategies for teaching math and science. 4) Trained over 300 teachers in new strategies in teaching the importance of climate change with the College of Lake County 5) Assisted over 300 licensed teachers to complete their ESL and bilingual endorsements 6) Facilitated, along with Illinois State University a **Transitions to Teaching program** for paraprofessionals to address the lack of Latino teachers in the schools with large Latino student populations. 7) Sponsored the

8th Annual Conference: *Bullying: How Educators Can Respond* at Northern Illinois University for 30 Lake County Educators in October of 2018. 8) Conducted needs assessment surveys to Lake County school districts; organized open houses; and hosted conferences for Latino families of middle and high school students about the college process and how to pay for and succeed in college. 9) Provided advising to students in selecting their high school courses and learning about what they need to do to prepare for the transition to postsecondary education. 10) Provided academic advising to college students.

ESL Cohort: As a response to the need by the North Chicago School District, UCLC was instrumental in forming an ESL Endorsement Cohort for 14 North Chicago School District 187 teachers to successfully complete an ESL endorsement from National Louis University in May 2022. The endorsement program started in January 2020, and 70 % of the teachers' completed coursework despite the course being offered during the pandemic.

Technology Specialist Endorsement Cohort: Due to UCLC's pivotal influence in the county, 10 North Chicago teachers are currently taking technology coursework from Northern Illinois University. The teachers are scheduled to complete all their course work by May 2024. The UCLC's support for teachers to enroll in these endorsement courses directly supports teachers to enhance their skills and this supports the School District to train and retain qualified teachers.

North Chicago Independent Authority Board and Oversight Panel: The Illinois State Board of Education placed the North Chicago Community School Consolidated School District 187 under the supervision of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) over 10 years ago with an oversight board appointed by the State because the district had financial issues and many students were not meeting or exceeding academic standards. The UCLC is an integral member of this independent board and takes this State Mandate and accompanying responsibilities with the reference and gravity it requires. Responsibilities include: 1) administering and overseeing the district programs and expenditures; 2) hiring and renewing the superintendent's contract; 3) overseeing schools, student policies, and student dismissals; 4) reviewing curriculum; 5)

approving personal hiring and dismissals; and 6) approving and recommending extracurricular and summer programs for the schools. Members serving on the Board were appointed and selected by the Illinois Board of Education, and have strong ethics, credibility, and are well-known and respected in Lake County and the State. Recent data shows K-8 students are on-track in Reading, but Math performance has dropped 8% and students are not on-track. There are some hopeful signs, but the district still faces extensive challenges, as mentioned in the needs section. **A table illuminates this data in the “Other Attachments” section.**

Small Schools Grant: UCLC was awarded two grant projects funded by the **U.S Department of Education** to serve the Waukegan Consolidated School District 60. The grant had three primary objectives: 1) to develop leadership skills in teachers and administrators to improve capacity for organizational improvement. 2) to increase student attendance and reduce discipline rates and suspensions so they become invested in learning. 3) to provide professional development to teachers in the areas of collaboration, personalization of learning, making trusting supportive relationships with students, cultural relevance, principles of advisory and other topics related to increasing their capacity for understanding community with the goal of providing culturally responsive and relevant academic materials and instruction. UCLC saw grant impacts-over time including: 1) Dropout rates went down from 7.6 % to 5.2%, and graduation rates rose from 66.8% to 73.5%. 2) Attendance went up from 82.2 % to 87.2%; and truancy rates went down from 17.5 % to 3.3%. and showed significant improvement. 3) Teachers reported discipline rates and incidences of insubordination and disrespect dropped from 8863 incidents to 1660. 4) Student to student violence dropped from 318 incidences to 179. 5) Academic progress was not as dramatic, but there were measurable results including PSEA scores in mathematics went from 20.4% to 25.4%; and PSEA scores in reading and language arts, while still very low, stayed at 24.4% holding stable while the state dropped by 6 percentage points over the same period (56.9-50.5). 6) ACT College readiness scores rose from 24% to 32

% in English, and ACT College readiness scores in mathematics rose from 11%-15%; and ACT College readiness scores in reading rose from 13% and 16% in STEM.

Computer Science Engineering Design Program (CSED): UCLC received a **U.S. Department of Education Innovation Grant** in a collaboration with Math, Science and Technology Program, and the Northeastern Illinois University's computer science department. The STEM CSED program included computer science education, robotics, and engineering and design curricula: Students in the elementary STEM CSED pilot STEM pilot school instruction one day per week from Fall 2017 until Spring 2018. These students were compared to students at elementary schools without the STEM CSED program. To measure the impact on student achievement from the STEM CSED program quantitative data was used from the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Math RIT score growth Spring 2017 to Spring 2018. To measure the impact on interest and motivation of students, qualitative data was used from a survey of (49) teachers, (85) students and (8) administrators. On average, elementary students who had STEM instruction (M= 12.85, SD = 9.367) had higher NWEA math growth than the elementary students that did not have STEM instruction (M= 10.64, SD =7.859) An independent sample was performed on the data to examine if the difference was statistically significant, and results indicate that STEM instruction did influence NWEA Math performance for Spring 2017 to Spring 2018, $t(552) = 2.979$.

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

1. A Description of a Comprehensive Plan for the Project's Management, Which Provides a detailed Explanation of how the System of Collaboration Will Function Under the Project's First Objective The conceptual design of this proposal--focused on developing a hub of community partners supporting teacher, student, and family performance—has been heavily

influenced and inspired by the concept of a community of learners. Such a concept, articulated by recent research on best educational practice, places an emphasis on the importance of breaking down hierarchy in educational organizations so that all members of the community contribute ideas and learn from one another. To implement this ‘community of learners’ concept, El Centro proposes a comprehensive plan for management of the project, including: (1) the Leadership Team; (2) the Management Team, and (3) The Pipeline Leadership Teams (PLT) for project objective and activities. The membership of the PLTs is described in Management Section 5c(i).

Leadership Team, providing overall planning and oversight: The Leadership Team will provide overall leadership for the project, which includes the following members: the Project Director, four teacher representatives, two student representatives, four family representatives from the family leadership team, the school principals, the School Site Coordinators, a school mental health coordinator, and one representative from each community partner. The Leadership Team will meet quarterly to: (1) set overall policies for the program; (2) monitor the implementation of the project’s objectives and its services and budget; (3) assess the adequacy of resources; (4) review evaluation reports and make recommendations to staff; (5) provide quality control and discuss the effectiveness of the project with the Management Team; and (6) develop and monitor plans to sustain the project after federal funding ends.

Day-to-Day Coordination of the project through the Project Management Team: The Project Management Team, meeting bi-weekly, will provide day-to-day management and coordination of the project. The Management Team will consist of the Project Director, the 2 Full-Time Pipeline Coordinators the 5 School-Site Coordinators, the school principals, and a teacher representative from each project school, key project personnel; and representatives from each of the community partners. This Management Team will: (1) review timelines and milestones; (2) monitor the budget; (3) define the responsibilities of all staff, (4) implement and carry out an ongoing review of the project’s components; (5) modify the activities of the project

based on feedback received from the project's staff; (6) collaborate with the Independent Evaluator (see Evaluation section) to implement the project's evaluation design, including the development of assessment measures, the collection of data, and the review and analysis of evaluation results as part of on-going performance feedback and consultation; and (7) assist with the preparation of all annual reports to the U.S. Department of Education with the Independent Evaluator.

(d) Role of the principals in project management: The principals along with the School Site Coordinators will be responsible for recruiting teachers, students, and families, so that the necessary logistics, school personnel, rooms/spaces, equipment, are in place to support El Centro student, teacher and family project activities, and all evaluation reporting.

(e) Role of community partners in project management: The community partners will serve as a cornerstone of the project in that they will provide academic and enrichment services to students, monthly family sessions, personnel development activities, and leadership institutes and programs to families.

A summary of plans to achieve objectives two through six of the proposed project responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing tasks under each objective are listed in the Management chart at the end of this activities section for each objective).

2. A Description of a Comprehensive Plan to Deliver Early Childhood Programs Under the Project's Second Objective: By December 31, 2028, 250 students will have been adequately prepared for entrance into kindergarten at El Centro's elementary schools and have satisfactorily completed the requirements of kindergarten.

(i) Having Offered Professional Development (PD) for El Centro Early Childhood Educators and Family Leader/Mentors, Delivering the Early Childhood Education Programs, Based on the Above Assessments and Aligned with the Latest Research on Early Childhood Programs

Ten early childhood educators (2 from each school), and 16 family mentors contracted from the schools, will participate in 30 hours of PD, including two hours of monthly in-person and virtual

family sessions from August through May of each year and one hour monthly follow-up sessions for coaching from September through June provided by Together for Childhood Network. Teachers and families as partners working together in support of several aspects of young children's development. These domains of development include cognitive skills, social, mental health, and behavioral skills, and self-regulatory processes. Cognitive skills entail oral language and early literacy (e.g., letter knowledge, phonological awareness) skills and early numeracy skills (e.g., counting, sorting, measuring, comparing, recognizing patterns, number sense), while social and behavior skills will include behaviors such as cooperation, social engagement, and comfortableness with new situations.

(ii) Having Provided Interactive Monthly family sessions and Follow-Up Coaching to Families as Necessary on Early Childhood Education in the Home, and Playgroup Activities.

Each project year 50 families with children in El Centro's Pre-K, Kindergarten - 2nd grade programs will participate in 15 two-hour interactive monthly family sessions a total of 30 hours per project year, where families, early childhood educators and family mentors come together as partners, a Community of Learners, sharing ideas and monthly follow-up support and coaching.

These interactive family sessions will be facilitated by partners, Together for Childhood Network, Mano a Mano, the YWCA, and the Lake County of Regional Office of Education, will involve families and early childhood educators in collaboratively planning how to foster rich learning environments at home. For example, the language arts benchmarks are: understanding that pictures and symbols have meaning and that print carries a message; identifying labels and signs in the environment; identifying some letters, including those in own name; making some letter sound matches; predicting what will happen next using pictures for a guide; reading a story and predicting what will happen next; developing phonological awareness by participating in rhyming schemes; recognizing separable and repeating sounds in spoken language; retelling information from a story; and responding to simple questions about the material. In addition, families will learn how to provide opportunities at home through inquiring into the world around

them by taking digital photos, drawing, and talking about what they have seen, and representing their observations in developmentally appropriate ways.

(iii) Creating a Program for Early Childhood Home Visits

El Centro will facilitate a program for home visits from March through September in the first year, and from October through September each ensuing project year will be offered for 250 families each project year by early childhood staff and specially trained Family Mentors together in collaboration with YWCA, Mano a Mano, Together for Childhood Network, and the Lake County of Regional Office of Education. El Centro will use the HIPPI Model of home visiting that focuses on family involvement in family-involved early learning. The model consists of four distinct features: (1) developmentally appropriate curricula, (2) home visits and group meetings, (3) use of role playing as a method of instruction, and (4) the provision of home visitors from the community that is served and who are culturally sensitive professionals. Following that approach the home visits component has been designed to increase family support for learning at home as children navigate the transition between Pre-K into kindergarten. A home visitor mentor and a teacher will work in pairs to conduct the home visits in a non-judgmental, culturally sensitive manner. Visits will follow a curriculum manual and will be coordinated with curricula targeting the three domains of child social-emotional, numeracy and language-literacy skills. To support social-emotional skill development, the El Centro home learning curriculum will include activities such as compliment lists and the use of feelings faces, as well as interactive stories for families to read with their children featuring familiar characters and teaching basic social-emotional skill concepts.

3. A Description of a Comprehensive Plan for Enriched Programming for Students both In and Out of School to Achieve the Project's Third Objective: By December 31, 2028, at the community five elementary schools there will have been an increase in the academic performance and socio-emotional development of students who have participated in the project's

after-school programming, such that those students will be performing at grade level in reading and mathematics.

(i) Having Provided Sustained and Intensive Professional Development to School Teachers at the Five Project Schools to Assist Them with Improving the Quality of School and Out of School Strategies and Instruction.

By December 31, 2028, all the 197 teachers in the 5 schools will have increased their ability to implement inquiry and standardized-based academic, arts programming, and arts integrated curricula in dance and music, to increase student reading and mathematics achievement.

Components Supporting the Third Area of Major Impact Focused on Teacher Professional Development:

(a) Overview of Integrated Professional Development having been offered in years one through five – Workshops, Coaching and Sharing PD, intensive case studies, and cultural immersion learning opportunities: Aligning Project PD to take into account the need for offering PD and Instruction: In all of the PD sessions teachers will develop strategies, in collaboration with Local Learning, NEIU, SIUC, and Rosalind Franklin University that will enable instruction to be become engaged in inquiry-based and constructionist authentic arts integration and socio-emotional forms of instruction that are deeply meaningful to them.

(b) Workshop, Coaching, and Sharing Sessions for All Teachers: During the first through the fifth years the 80 project teachers at each school augmented by 10 Teacher Artists (2 per each school) will participate in 30 hours of sustained and intensive inquiry-based standardized academic and arts PD program for deeper learning, which will include workshops, sharing sessions, classroom demonstrations, case sessions, and coteaching. Fifteen of these teachers will function as leaders of Teacher School-Based Teams (TST) to provide on-going coordination and support for the workshops and coaching. Accordingly, all teachers will participate in 20 hours of PD sessions each year, in two-hour workshops August through May. The PD sessions will be led

by the **10** teaching artists and subject matter specialists in reading and Mathematics, and partners Rosalind Franklin University, Mano a Mano and the Lake County Health Department with expertise in socio-emotional and mental health development, violence prevention.

(c) Follow-up PD and Mentoring having been offered in Years 1- 5: El Centro's 10 Teaching Artists, together with Local Learning, NEIU, SIUC, and specialists in reading, writing, and Mathematics, will demonstrate modes of inquiry in academic disciplines and mental health and socio-emotional development, and violence prevention. Subject matter specialists will provide 20 hours of on-going monthly training and one hour follow-up coaching to assist teachers with modes of inquiry.

(d) The Focus of PD Programming in Years 1-5: During the PD sessions teachers will develop foundational knowledge in the cultural arts of the Americas. Academic disciplines integrating the cultural arts can support students to develop skills in creating, performing, and responding to the arts. These PD sessions will demonstrate strategies for the inclusion of students with special needs or disabilities and EL Learners, so they can fully participate in cultural arts programming. Through tapping into the cultural arts, academic disciplines can become more relevant as students navigate from concrete operations to formal operations thinking.

(ii) Employing the Arts and Rigorous Academic Standards Focused in Cultural Arts of the Americas, Including Students with Limited English Proficiency and Special Needs: To prepare teachers with the knowledge and skills they will need to employ dance and music arts in their classrooms, in the PD sessions, teachers of K through 4th students and teachers of 5th through 8th grade students, will focus on different sets of dances and music, and their connections to theater and visual arts as follows: kindergarten through 3rd grade teachers will focus on the Huayano of Peru, the Bomba of Puerto Rico, and the Samba of Brazil. Fourth through 8th grade teachers will focus on the Folklorico of Mexico, African influenced dances from Haiti, and the Charleston and the Lindy of the jazz age in the United States.

(iii) Having developed an On-line learning community: An online learning community will be created including a facilitated blog for teachers to share reflections and post their lesson plans; including a resource bank of lesson plans and instructional materials.

(iv) Authentic Teaching and Learning Provided to Project Students Both In - and - Out of School Programs with an Emphasis on Integrating the Arts

(a) Regular School Day Programming and Strategies Students Having Been Engaged in Inquiry-Based, Constructivist, Authentic Teaching and Learning

Student learning in El Centro, in collaboration with Local Learning, NEIU, SIUC, the Lake County Regional Office of Education, and others will place a major emphasis on students becoming immersed in authentic teaching and learning where students conduct deeper and visible inquiry into the arts and content disciplines through deeper inquiry-based constructivist learning, where students critically create their own knowledge. ***Having Addressed English Language Learners and Under-served Students with Special Needs:*** This project, through Universal Design for Learning Curriculum Development, also will provide specific techniques, described in the arts and academic content connections below, for using the arts to increase vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and writing for EL students, and for students with special needs or disabilities and those performing below grade level. ***Having Taught the Culturally Relevant Arts Using Digital Tools in Classrooms:*** Digital tools, as appropriate, will include photography, video, audio recording equipment, sound and video editing, media arts production such as scriptwriting, and graphic design. ***Having Developed Specific Components or Activities Supporting the Student Achievement Third Objective:*** A year-end culminating performance and family night: In June of each project year, all the students who have studied the dances and music will perform them in assemblies in Family Nights. Field Trips to live performances: Students 3Rd - 8th grade will attend live dance, theater, or music performances at local theaters, and this will motivate, encourage, and inspire them. ***Having integrated the arts into core curricular areas in the first through the fifth years: For grades K-3rd grades:*** Students in

grades K-3 will engage in introductory arts and authentic learning activities, which highlight the visual arts, literacy through readers theater, and basic dance taught by teaching artists. Activities will be modified to meet the developmental needs of all students and those with disabilities. **For 3rd-8th grades:** During each school year in 3rd through 8th grades, teachers and students will learn a different art form of the Americas every trimester or 9 weeks.: **1st through 3rd grade** students in years 1 through 4 will focus on the Huayano of Peru, the Carnival of the Caribbean, and the Samba of Brazil. Students will learn the choreographic process by focusing on the patterns that emerge in dancers. They will draw graphs that depict the relationships between the position of each dancer and note the geometric forms. In the Caribbean, dance is an integral part of culture and life. Each island has its own rhythms, but the result is the same: dance. Some of these styles fuse to become new styles, but many of the elements remain the same. Bomba, a highly improvised style using percussion, maraca, and guiro is a folk musical style of Puerto Rico, and students will make cultural connections between this, hip hop, and break dancing. The Samba of Brazil is an old style of dance, African in origin, it is performed as a street dance at carnival, and students learn cultural connections between African culture and Brazil, as well as studying the visual arts of carnival, from costumes to depictions of dances. Students in **5th through 8th grade students** will learn the Folklórico of Mexico, the Charleston and the Lindy of the United States, and the African-influenced dances of Haiti. Learning the folkloric dance traditions of Mexico enables them to understand the subtext of dances and theatrical music to illustrate sub-text in reading and using visual arts to understand geometric design, measurement, and proportion. In the Charleston, students will learn the frequencies of beats by drawing bars, learning digital graphic depiction of data, calculating percentages, and averages (means and medians), and using mathematical equations to interpret and understand rhythm. Analyzing rhythm, students will be introduced to the mathematical concept of lowest common denominators. Haitian dance is a melding of African and French music, styles, and culture, and

students will learn how these two histories formed modern-day Haitian dances and culture. Music and dance provide an enjoyable way to study fractions and equations.

(b) Out-of-school-time and extended learning with a focus on the arts and technology: The after-school instructional design of this project, collaboratively supported in its implementation by partners, Local Learning, Boys and Girls Club, Lake County Regional Office of Education, NEIU, and Rosalind Franklin University is likely to improve student achievement and socio-emotional development through students constructing their own knowledge through authentic intellectual inquiry rather than merely reporting meaning or abstract knowledge.

Accordingly, each year of El Centro, 750 (150 students from each school who have the need for supplemental academic support) will be given the opportunity to attend after-school cultural arts and academic enrichment programming, led by Teaching Artists (drawn from Local Learning and NEIU and the project's partners who have expertise in the art forms of dance, theater, music, media and visual arts) and teachers from the five project schools from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Mondays and Thursdays of each week for 28 weeks, divided into two 14 week blocks. Classes will be organized into groups of 20 students, depending on the activity. Teachers from the project schools will assist with instruction during these after-school programs. El Centro will offer classes in the art forms of dance, theater, the visual arts, media arts, and music. Students will learn about the connections between the arts and academic subjects in the same manner as during the school day. In each out-of-school-time class, Teaching Artists and instructors will help students to become invested in inquiry-based arts project, which are aligned with the State Academic Standards. These inquiry-based projects, based on the Harvard Project Zero Artful Thinking program (2008) will demonstrate how critical habits of mind such as questioning and investigating; observing and describing; reasoning; exploring multiple viewpoints; comparing and connecting; and uncovering complexity can be developed.

TABLE 3: El Centro Activities, Rationale, Description, Frequency, Sessions, Length, & Target Group

Activity	Rationale	Description	Frequency	Sessions	Length	Target
Academic Enrichment: Literacy, Math, and Science	Academic support activities provided by teachers and instructional specialists in core content areas to increase achievement grades, test scores, and overall academic performance.	Standards and evidence-based and school curricula aligned instructional, learning, and academic support activities driven by critical strategies via “thinking routines” & inquiry and project-based learning, including homework/academic support.	2 days per week	Year-round (56 sessions)	2 hours	Students in PreK-8th grades
Arts Integration	Integrating the arts in core content areas of literacy, math, and science to increase student motivation & academic achievement	A host of curricula aligned arts (visual art, dance, music, drama & digital media) classes, workshops, and activities provided by arts teachers and partners.	2 days per week	Year-round (56 sessions)	2 hours	Students in PreK-8th grades
Technology	The continued promotion of	Technology specialists	2 days per	Year-	Integrated	Students

	technology, internet, and digital media to strengthen student academic success across all school and project content areas.	integrate technology into student learning enabling them to use software, applications, websites, learning games, and tools to enhance their learning.	week	round (56 sessions)	across all program areas	in K-8th grades
Social-Emotional Learning	Support student development where students apply knowledge, attitudes, and skills to understand/manage emotions, set & accomplish positive goals, feel & demonstrate empathy for others, develop & maintain positive relationships, & make responsible decisions.	The integration of cooperative learning into all after-school learning in literacy, math, & science. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) assisting students in addressing social and emotional issues in their lives to develop socio-emotional skills.	2 days per week	Year-round (56 sessions)	Infused through-out programming	Students in PreK-8th grades

Providing Tutoring and Academic Support to Under-served Students: A core of 25 trained high school and college tutors (5 for each school) will be an integral resource for the students participating in the El Centro out-of-school-time programming. The tutors, who will be selected by the site coordinators and school teams will take on this role as part of their service-learning projects and will undertake a leadership role in the after-school inquiry-focused coaching sessions. By having these high school and college students join the artists during the third hour in the afternoon in an Open Studio, the students will be more likely to make connections with the inquiry-based arts. Ten hours of training by the Boys and Girls Club and Mano a Mano will be required for the tutors prior to the school year and continued training will be offered monthly in one-hour follow up sessions.

(c) Providing students with cultural experiences for academic enrichment: To further motivate students in the after-school sessions, they will attend local theatre productions, concerts, dance performances, and art exhibitions which will be focused on celebrating the role of the arts in life and society, which they have been learning about in their after-school classes.

(d) Fostering teamwork through the arts: During the out-of-school-time, students will work in teams. One of the 2 hour after-school sessions will be devoted to assisting the student teams each project year with developing authentic inquiry-based arts projects. Assisted by the Teaching Artists, teams will undertake two inquiry-based art projects each year that requires students to research cultural and family histories to present proposals for public art displays.

4. A Description of a Comprehensive Plan to Support Students to Transition from Pre-K Through Post-Secondary and Into the Workforce to Achieve the Project's Fourth

Objective: By September 30th, 2028, students from the five project schools will successfully advance to kindergarten from Pre-K, from kindergarten to elementary school, from elementary to middle school, from middle to high school, and from high school to post-secondary school and eventually into the workforce.

(i) Early Warning System and Academic Monitoring and Supporting Students At-Risk, and Tracking Their Progress from Each Level of the Educational and Workforce.

(a) Early Warning System and Tracking of Students

Project staff will use data systems that record attendance, grades, developmental markers, and socio-emotional, mental health, and behavioral referrals to identify at-risk students from Pre-K through 8th grade. Ongoing monitoring of attendance, including an automated notification system that informs Site Coordinators who will alert teachers and families about counseling students into the project's integrated expanded and enriched learning programming at the schools.

(b) Academic Monitoring, Counseling, and Support

(i) Academic Path Monitoring

NEIU, SIUC, and the College of Lake County along with the 2 pipeline coordinators, 5 site-coordinators, school staff, the school-based mental health team, and families, will respond to early warning signals when students are at-risk and will develop a plan for improving students' academic performance and if needed, make referrals.

(ii) Transition from Pre-K to Kindergarten and Elementary School

A central focus of El Centro is that children benefit from the interactive effect of providing both high quality, responsive instruction in Pre-K and kindergarten and a responsive parenting intervention. El Centro teachers in Pre-K through 2nd grade will implement organizational strategies, activities, and responsive interactions with children that promote language development, pre-literacy and early numeracy skills, and self-regulation. As part of family sessions, facilitated by NEIU, SIUC, Together for Childhood Network, the College of Lake County, Mano a Mano, and the Lake County Regional Office of Education, families will learn to apply related skills at home, including promoting their children's language skills, increase children's focused attention, manage behavior using positive strategies, and increase interactive book-reading and play around counting, sorting, shapes, patterns, and numbers.

By providing monthly family sessions for families, the project will highlight the advantages of the implementation of more global family responsiveness interventions versus one specifically targeting home activity (e.g., shared book reading). Home visits will prepare families to use responsive interactions, dialogic reading and various language, literacy, and numeracy activities. A teacher and the home visitor will work with families on-on-one family home visits and will support the use of new behaviors across everyday activities.

(iii) Transition from Elementary School to Middle School

NEIU, SIUC, and the College of Lake County will collaborate on implementing this transition component. In order to address the specific issues related to the transition from elementary school to middle school, teachers, as part of their professional development will be introduced to the expectations that middle school students need to meet, bridge the gap between what will be expected of young adolescents in middle school and what was expected of them in elementary school, and consider the procedural, social, and academic changes that young adolescents face when transitioning. The middle school personnel will collaborate with the feeder elementary schools to gain information from the teachers about students through meetings and from students through a survey. Using this information, El Centro will create a program that features: (a) a shadowing experience in which one fifth grader spent the day with a sixth grader and reported back to his/her fifth grade class about his or her observations, (b) school tours, (c) family and student meetings to discuss the differences between elementary and middle school, (d) question and answer sessions, and (e) open house activities such as: opening lockers, practicing lunch room procedures, walking through the student's schedule. After collecting background information and ideas, families and students will be invited at two two-hour out-of-school-time sessions in April and May of each project year to share their issues and concerns about the middle school transition. Improvements will also include having elementary school counselors meeting with middle school counselors at two two-hour sessions in January and February of each project year to discuss the needs of the upcoming middle school students, having meetings with

the students and families to discuss their questions and concerns, touring the middle school, shadowing a sixth grader and reporting back to his/her fifth grade class about his or her experience, holding family-to-family meetings where families could discuss their concerns with each other and network, and constantly evaluating the transition program so that changes could be made. Extended Transitional Support: El Centro's transition program will be ongoing, including in January of each project year, surveying the students to see what concerns they have and addressing these concerns through activities and meetings; continuing activities that focus on communication between families and students and families and schools, and building rapport with teachers and students. Continuing to support transition issues across the school year allows students opportunities to be included in the process, especially since some of them may not feel comfortable with participating and giving input at the beginning of the transition process.

(iv) Transition from Middle School to High School to the Post-Secondary Level

A program providing academically college and career readiness skills: **First**, to support students' readiness for high school, project staff will support students to navigate the transition to high school and arrange shadow days and transition to high school workshops. **Second**, project students will develop individualized high school plans aligned with the Diamond Lake and North Chicago Schools Transition to High School guidelines and 21st Century Standards, focusing on acquiring high school prep skills, including: study skills, work habits, time management, help-seeking, and social/academic problem-solving skills, and teaming skills. Although the project does not work with the high schools, informal transition plans are in place through the UCLC. Objectives include: (a) Align community, culture and family values to the educational aspirations of youth; (b) Guide youth in creating life plans focused on future education and career goals; (c) Provide bilingual counselors through UCLC and its partners to guide students on selection and courses to take to prepare for postsecondary; d) Provide families the tools and information needed to make informed decisions about school and career choices; and (e) Leverage partnerships to create a larger network of student support for transition. Middle School

students will participate at year-round College Passport activities at the UCLC to begin shadowing and connections even before entering high school. **Third**, during high school visits, guided by mentors, students will learn about how the school functions and familiarize themselves with the buildings. They will engage with panels of high school students, often alumni from the schools, who share their experiences with transition to high school and the eighth graders will be introduced to staff at the high-schools and learn about available programs; this supports them in getting engaged during their freshman year and to be on-track as freshman year is a pivotal year in students' academic lives. **Fourth**, students will learn academic readiness skills and positive youth development that transfers to college and job readiness, will include collaborative learning, trusting teacher-student relationships, investment in learning, problem-based learning, and rigorous and critical thinking. **Fifth**, students' families will gain strategies to assist their children to pursue the best high school option for their children and to begin thinking ahead about career development and attaining post-secondary aspirations. **Finally**, the UCLC will provide tools, and information to parents so they can help their children make informed decisions about high school, postsecondary options, career development, and future career choices that fit their goals.

(v) Transition from Post-Secondary Level to the Workforce. The project will help to enable students to make a smooth transition from high school or from post-secondary institutions to the workforce. Although this program does not serve high school students, the tracking system will allow staff to communicate with students to assist them in this transition process.

5. A Description of a Comprehensive Plan to Develop and Implement Family and Community Engagement and Support to Achieve the Project's Fifth Objective: By

December 31, 2028, there will have been an increase in the ability of project families to support the development of their children both at school and at home, and increase families' knowledge about how they can support the social - emotional, health, and mental health of their children:

Project staff, in collaboration with the College of Lake County, Lake County Regional Office of Education, and Mano a Mano will increase family engagement at the five project schools

through five strategic programs, described below.

(i) A Collaborative Model of Family Engagement: The El Centro model of family engagement and involvement begins with certain assumptions of integrating families and families into the fabric of the school community. First, El Centro views families as “adult learners who are autonomous, self-directed, and have a foundation of life experience” (Knowles, 1970). Second, families and families are honored and recognized for their “funds of knowledge” which refers to their “historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being.” (Moll, 2021) In this model, families are viewed as partners along with teachers, administration, and other staff, and this enables a foundation of trust among all stakeholders which builds a strong community partnership. Thirdly, because El Centro views families and families from an asset-based lens (not a hierarchical top-down model). Understanding these factors will ensure that activities and services are relevant, responsive, and make use of the resources families and families can bring to the school community. Whenever possible, families will work as home visitors and family advocates to outreach to other families and community members as they are uniquely qualified as they live in the community, often share the same cultural and language backgrounds of families and families, and know first-hand the social emotional, educational, economic, financial, safety, and societal issues which confront neighbors in the community.

(ii) Interactive Family Engagement Sessions with Follow-Up Collaboration and Support: As the result of El Centro’s family needs assessment results, a series of two-hour interactive sessions or activities at El Centro’s school sites will be held two times per month for 10 groups of 10-15 family members, which will involve the active participation of families in discussing and learning about various about a range of child development issues. Rather than being didactic sessions, the weekly events will be followed up with an exploration of how families and teachers together can collaborate on addressing issues under consideration. In this way, families and teachers will work as partners to benefit the development of their children. These interactive

sessions will include topics as: (1) the family role in their children's academic learning in reading, mathematics, writing, and science; (2) social emotional issues such as separation, self-control, anxiety, depression, identity-safe practices, suicide prevention, managing emotions, and a child's ability to function in diverse cultural and ethnic settings; (3) arts-integrated family literacy activities (which will emphasize how the cultures of the Americas can be celebrated); (4) volunteer opportunities in the community; (5) the coordination of health, mental health, and nutrition; (6) presentations by community organizations which offer resources to families on children's academic and socio-emotional developmental progress, and (7) how home learning can interface with and coordinated with school learning. Families will learn to identify and address a range of their children's social-emotional issues, such as developing skills promoting autonomy, locus of control, identity safe issues, the ability to cope with issues of anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, trauma, bullying, substance abuse, and conflict.

(iii) Family Leadership and Advocacy Programming: To develop the leadership and advocacy skills of families a Family Leader/Mentoring Team of 10 families from each school will acquire best practices to team with teachers in classrooms and during out-of-school activities both in person and on-line. Family leader/mentors, and project staff in collaboration with partners, Together for Childhood Network, Mano a Mano, and the Lake County Regional Office of Education, will offer a series of monthly two-hour family sessions for groups of 10-15 families and teacher teams at each partner school on developing practical strategies that families can use, including how to increase family involvement in school events, how to involve families in planning school events, and how to collaborate with other families to become advocates for their children's academic and socio-emotional development.

(iv) Family Night Programming: Weekly two-hour family nights will be offered by Rosalind Franklin University Mano a Mano, and others on Fridays for two hours to foster family engagement with their children on several dimensions of academic, social-emotional, health, and nutrition development. These sessions will place a premium on: (1) creating optimal challenges

for families and students, e.g. personal agency, self-efficacy, and home learning; (2) developing strategies for conflict resolution and collaborative problem-solving; (3) financial planning; (4) the use of workplace English; (5) and job readiness skills; (6) setting personal and family goal setting, in the areas of academic and social-emotional development, which build on the developmental coping skills described above in more detail; (7) learning how to set up visits to libraries, computer facilities, museums; (8) developing learning centers and quiet spaces for learning at home, (9) understanding how to purchase educationally productive learning games; (10) learning ethnic and culture of the Americas dances and other forms of exercise to set the stage for aerobic family physical activity; (11) comprehending how the body functions (including describing and explaining the structure and functions of the human body systems and how they interrelate); (12) explaining the effects of health-related actions on body systems; (13) adopting optimal eating habits including the consumption of vegetables and fruit; (14) learning about the food groups, portion control, reading food labels, and the importance of eating breakfast; (15) acquiring healthy eating habits and providing useful tips to supporting a healthier lifestyle; and (16) making traditional recipes with healthier food substitution suggestions; and (17) the opportunity to begin a family-led book club will would focus on books of great interest to families as they nurture and raise their children in an ever-changing, dynamic environment.

(v) *Interactive Family Activities:* Interactive and Friday night sessions will take place in-person and virtually; and will focus on activities that families can undertake at home emphasizing literacy and reading, and numeracy to support children’s social-emotional development, health, and nutrition. During these Family Nights, families and teachers will interact as a community of learners far beyond the traditional report card pick up or discipline related intervention.

(vi) *Academic and Personal Supports for Families:* Weekly 2 hour academic support classes will be offered to 350 family members for ESL, GED, and computer skills to support families to engage their children with learning at school and home. Higher level ESL classes (from 10-16 weeks in duration) will be offered at the school sites with College of Lake County instructors.

(vii) Academic Support Classes for English as a Second Language (ESL), GED and Computer Skills to Support Families in Engaging Their Children with Learning at School and Home: Comprehensive ESL, GED, and computer skill classes will be provided to families at the project's schools. These courses will include examples of real-life experiences that will make the courses more meaningful and applicable to the adult participants. In this project, 350 families per project year, 70 per school site, will have the opportunity to take ESL, GED, and computer skills classes in English or Spanish. The College of Lake County will support this initiative. Courses will consist of 15-20 family members per class, will be offered for a total of 16 weeks twice a year, and will meet for two hours twice a week with additional open hours for extra support from instructional staff.

(a) Component one: Computer Literacy Skills: These courses will be provided at both the basic and advanced levels to assist families based on their pre-existing skills. Basic courses will include such activities as word processing, accessing the Internet, web search, email, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Advanced courses will focus on information literacy, advanced skills in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, and creating multi-media presentations, as well as learning about internet safety, cyber-bullying, and social, legal, and copyright issues related to the use of technology in English and Spanish.

(b) Component Two: English as a Second Language Literacy (ESL) Assessments: To place participants in the correct level of ESL, the BEST Plus and BEST Literacy Tests will measure listening and speaking skills and reading and writing skills. Families and community members will take these pre-post assessments prior to enrollment in a course, and once they have completed the course. The literacy level will support those who function minimally in English, and participants will learn foundational literacy skills in their own language before they begin ESL courses. Level 1 ESL will include basic communication skills using simple phrases or sentences, and Level 2 classes will prepare participants to use English on-the job, communicate with others, and complete work, health, and other forms.

(c) Component Three: Assessment for Adult Basic Education (ABE): The TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) Assessments will be given to adults who have not earned a high school diploma. This test determines whether an adult will enroll in the Pre-GED or GED course.

(d) Component Four: ABE and Pre-GED: Participants who test at a first through eighth grade level will further develop their basic skills in Reading, Math, Language, Language Mechanics, Vocabulary, and Social Studies will enroll in ABE to prepare for the GED course.

(e) GED Math & Science: Participants who test above the eighth-grade level will begin the GED course to prepare them for the Math and Science sections on the GED test.

6. A Description of a Comprehensive Plan to Develop Social -Emotional, Health, Nutrition, Violence Prevention, and Mental Health Development to Achieve the Project's Sixth

Objective: *By December 31, 2028 a total of 1,682 students will have increased their knowledge of making healthy choices and acting proactively for their social-emotional and mental health.*

(i) Providing Teacher Professional Development to Support Student Social, Emotional, Health, Nutrition, Violence Prevention and Treatment and Mental Health. (a) Overview of Professional Development in years one through five. A total of 165 project teachers will participate each of the five years of the project in 30 hours of sustained and extensive professional development overlapping and integrated modules on: (1) how to address students' social, emotional development and needs; (2) physical health, nutritional needs including the learning science issue of impact on brain development; (3) violence including community violence impact, prevention and treatment; (4) bullying, substance abuse, prevention, (5) impacts of social media on student psychological health; (6) school based mental health program mental health needs; (7) developmentally, linguistically and culturally responsive discipline and classroom management including restorative justice, talking circles and pro-social classroom management approaches; (8) the importance of parent, family and community wellness; (9) the importance of teacher wellness; and (10) secondary trauma and supports. In addition,

family/mentors and teacher leaders will participate in the webinars and seminars by the Bureau of Community Violence Prevention and Intervention, the School-Based Health Alliance, and the National Center for School Mental Health groups organizations to gain a deeper level of expertise on trauma and violence prevention and treatment. **(b)Workshops, Coaching, and Sharing PD:** Accordingly, all teachers will participate in 30 hours of PD workshop sessions on the topics of the 9 modules and 24 hours of coaching each year on applying this knowledge to instructional teaching and learning practices and developing strong student teacher and parent teacher relationships, engagement and learning alliances beginning with two 2-hour monthly workshops in August through May and two hours of coaching each month. Twenty hours of family sessions (one two-hour session per month) will be provided to support parents in their understanding of student development, as well as the development of responsive curricula. Coaching for families will be offered as part of the family sessions. These teacher and family PD sessions and follow-up coaching (described below) will be provided by professionals from Rosalind Franklin University, Mano a Mano, YWCA, Boys and Girls Club, the College of Lake County, and the Lake County Health Department. To ensure that the professional development offered on social, health, nutrition, violence prevention and treatment, and mental health issues is as intensive as possible, each semester the project will offer two-hour, once a week case study sessions for 25 teachers. While discussing individual cases, teachers will delve deeply into how psychological processes unfold in the lives of their students by inquiring into the meanings of family narratives, social narratives, interpersonal and intra-personal patterns of thinking, and life histories. These sessions will assist teachers to develop a better understanding not only of how their students cope socially and psychologically, but also how they as teachers can respond more empathically to social and mental health needs. A major emphasis will be placed on unpacking the meanings of personal and social conflicts implicit in student interactions with their peers and authority figures, which moves beyond surface understanding into a deeper unfolding of how individual narratives play out in the day-to-day interactions, underlying how students react and

are influenced by and respond to their participation in social relationships. As individual cases are being discussed, teachers will learn how students address such fundamental psychological and social issues as anxiety, stress, trauma, substance use, depression, suicidal ideation, individuation, identity, creativity, mastery, loss, locus of control, personal boundaries, conflict, sexual maturation and orientation violence, emotional regulation, defense mechanisms, and group dynamics. In these sessions, teachers will learn how to support their students in dealing with these issues. Teachers, and subsequently students, will learn how to probe into the meaning of events and interactions and how they view the multiplicity of meanings within their relationships with others. When teachers become aware of and understand their own reactions to a child, they can translate those insights to develop more effective and impactful approaches to their teaching. Through these case study sessions, teachers will become more aware as to when they need to make mental health referrals. Finally, during these sessions teachers will be able to talk about and understand their own experiences with secondary trauma and wellness issues to develop a more emphatic understanding of psychological issues that their students are facing and to begin to master their own psychological narratives that will improve their well-being and support one another. ***(c) Follow-up PD and mentoring having been offered in Years 1- 5 supporting the social, emotional, health, nutrition, violence prevention, and mental health well-being of students:*** El Centro's social, health, nutrition, violence prevention, and mental health partners will provide on-going monthly one-hour follow-up coaching sessions at the classroom level for teachers. The follow-ups will include 10 hours from September through June of observations, coaching, reflection sessions, data collection and analysis, the development of case material and collaborative strategy sessions on how to apply skills acquired from the sessions. ***(d) Having Utilized a Research-Based PD Approach that Up-Dates and Enhances Health and Nutrition Instruction and Curricula for Continuous Improvement:*** The instructional and curricular design of this project will be infused throughout the PD sessions are based on cutting edge research physical fitness and nutrition. This PD approach will demonstrate

how critical it is to: (1) assess student physical and health needs on an on-going basis with an understanding of procedures for obtaining family permission; (2) provide optimal physical and health challenges matching a student's capabilities; (3) create a mastery motivational climate promoting personal agency where mistakes are viewed as part of the learning process; (4) understand how physical activity can be enjoyable and meaningful; and (5) provide teachers expertise on how to teach physical and nutritional skills that appeal to the ethnic backgrounds of students, e.g. folk and ethnic dances of the Americas, soccer, and nutrition that take into account their ethnic heritage.

(ii) Employing social, emotional, and mental health strategies through Adventure Education, Team Building, and Motivational Interviewing:

(a) Adventure education: This project will employ adventure education in its design as an approach to improving students' self-concept, decision-making and their ability to function effectively within groups through group problem-solving to solve challenges facing a group. specifically, adventure education is a strategy for groups of students that includes activities designed so that students must confront and meet physical challenges at school and field sites where they overcome physical barriers, move from one place to another while being physically encumbered, or being challenged to climb walls. A key component of adventure education is group processing after the challenges have been concluded, when the team gathers to discuss the effectiveness of the group's decision-making, and the development of future alternative approaches to meeting group challenges. The processes inherent in Adventure Education are especially important given the cognitive, social, emotional, and mental health issues students are confronting because of the pandemic.

(b) Team Learning: The project's use of mixed ability teams through Teams, Games, and Tournaments (TGT), which encourages cooperation and competition to improve social-emotional skills, and to achieve physical fitness and improved nutrition. Under TGT students can acquire more positive attitudes towards cooperation and academic achievement as their mixed ability team competes against other mixed ability teams. Likewise, students improved their abilities to be cooperative, use

critical thinking skill sets, and collaboratively problem-solve and develop conflict resolution skills in groups when engaged in TGT. Moreover, students involved in TGT will be able to develop more positive attitudes towards academic learning, and their understanding of their peers, and achieve at high levels, while at the same time acquiring such social skills as resolving differences and working with peers with perspectives other than their own. **(c) Cooperative Learning:** Under cooperative learning students work together in cohesive groups to achieve shared learning objectives. In the process, students take on responsibility for their own learning and the learning of group members. Under cooperative learning, students listen attentively, raise questions, resolve conflicts, or negotiate outcomes to help the group reach agreed upon outcomes. In the process, students begin to trust each other, communicate more clearly and unambiguously, accept support from one another, and make decisions about what to change in the future. **(d) Motivational interviewing (MI):** MI is a client-centered counseling style program directed at analyzing and resolving ambivalence about changing personal behaviors. Rather than just imparting information, it emphasizes exploring and reinforcing individual and group motivation toward positive physical and nutritional behaviors while supporting their autonomy. This approach has been found to be an especially good fit for pre-adolescents who need to exert their independence and make decisions for themselves. Partner Support: Teambuilding and Motivational Interviewing will be facilitated by PE teachers, the district instructors, and staff from NEIU, the YWCA, and the Boys and Girls Clubs. In cooperative learning, students work together in cohesive groups to achieve shared learning objectives, and as appropriate, address issues of sexual identity and sexual orientation.

(iii) Programs to Improve Student Physical Health, Fitness, and Nutrition

(a) Having Assessed student health and nutritional needs at the school level and targeting the most at-risk students for referrals to physicians and dentists: Partners organizations YWCA, Mano a Mano, Rosalind Franklin University Medical School, the Lake County Health Department will work with the project's schools to assess students' needs, using a health survey

to identify the need for health services in such areas as primary care, vision, dental, nutrition education, and health, all of which have the potential of undermining students' academic performance at school. This assessment process will provide valuable data for the design of the El Centro health component. This needs assessment process will be used to design the health and fitness programs described below. Based on the schools' health surveys. Rosalind Franklin, Mano a Mano, the Lake County Health Department, the Boys and Girls Club, and the YWCA will collaborate with the Site Coordinator to implement a school-wide referral system to link students with physical needs to services. The surveys will identify students who are out of compliance with immunization requirements, in need of yearly physical examinations, and who need additional health services to bring their physical and nutritional functioning to an optimal level to support academic achievement. **(b) Having referred students at project schools to resources to address their needs:** Students who have been identified as out of compliance with immunization requirements and need health physicals will be referred to local health clinics and physicians for primary care. **(c) Having implemented family programming focused on improving nutrition and physical health:** Throughout each project year, monthly cooking classes will be offered for families to improve nutrition. Cooking classes will be held on-line or in-person and will be recorded and posted so families can refer to them. Sessions on nutritional grocery shopping on a budget will be conducted by Mano a Mano, the Lake County Department of Health, and Rosalind Franklin. **(d) Students Having Acquired Healthy Eating Habits and Good Nutrition:** During each school's after-school sessions and in their classrooms, the project's teachers will implement integrated curricular lessons, and in collaboration with Mano a Mano, Rosalind Franklin, and the Lake County Department of Health to support healthy nutrition habits by combining human anatomy and physiology with proper dietary guidelines to support healthy development. In addition, nutrition strategies that will be presented in the after-school sessions and include experiential and inquiry-based learning cross-curricular instruction, and having students set nutritional goals and documenting the results of those nutritional

changes. As with fitness, students will be organized into diverse teams to support one another in meeting their goals. *(e) Developing and implementing promising new health strategies that build on existing strategies: Introduction:* All the strategies below meet the Department of Education's definition of "evidence of promise" since they are supported by either quasi-experimental or experimental research with citations as described in detail under Competitive Priority 4. The project's promising new strategies will build upon existing strategies, and they will be presented to students in an integrated manner. Health/Fitness needs will be met through:

(1) Promising new health strategies: The health strategies taught to students under this project have been chosen from what recent research has demonstrated are effective approaches to engaging students in healthy lifestyles. The project will emphasize how students can develop resilience and executive functioning. Key themes under this objective include the development of health literacy, while at the same time coupling that literacy with thinking and the establishment of personal qualities that are essential for learning -- perseverance, resilience, tolerance, and determination. Finally, the project will employ such strategies as: behavioral self-management of health activities; providing age and developmentally appropriate materials; and teaching students the behavioral change skills necessary for self-monitoring, behavior contracting, and decision-making, all with on-going weekly follow-up support. *(2) Promising new nutrition strategies:* Nutrition strategies that are promising include experiential and inquiry-based learning (e.g. trying new and more nutritious diets, developing school gardens, food preparation activities, and exploring alternative diets, and implementing those diets and assessing them, cross-curricular instruction (having nutrition taught across the curriculum in such subjects as mathematics, science, reading, art, and writing, as well as in physical education classes), and having students set nutritional goals and documenting the results of those nutritional changes. The project will work to adapt school policies to support nutritional lunches and offerings in vending machines. Project teachers will implement integrated curricular lessons to support

healthy nutrition habits by combining human anatomy and physiology with proper healthy dietary guidelines.

(iv) Implementing A Teacher, School Staff, and Family Referral System for Mental Health

Services for Students at the Five Project Schools: Rosalind Franklin University Medical School, the YWCA, Mano a Mano, and the Lake County Health Department will conduct three two-hour monthly family sessions in the fall, winter, and spring of each project year to increase teachers, school staff, and families' ability to understand and utilize what school-based mental health teams, local mental health agencies and facilities are available in the North Chicago and Mundelein/Diamond Lake community, and how to make referrals. These family sessions will provide participants with an elementary understanding of the criteria needed to identify a range of disorders such as, depression, anxiety and trauma and stress related symptoms, bi-polar and psychosis. Based on these understandings, participants will learn proper school-based internal and community referral procedures in alignment with state and federal laws. Finally, participants will learn what the signs are for individuals who may be exhibit suicidal ideation, be victims of sexual or physical abuse or neglect, and be engaged in self-harming behaviors. Participants will learn about resources to share with students such as peer to peer support groups, identity safe practices, on-line, text, phone, and crisis lines. Additional violence prevention and treatment activities are described under Competitive Priority Two.

7. Management Plan for the Project's Six Objectives. Activity Milestones, Timelines, and Persons Responsible for Each Project Objective

Key for Persons Responsible for the Six Objectives Below: Project Director (PD); 2 Pipeline Services Coordinators (PSC), 5 Site-Coordinators (SC); the Project Leadership Team (PLT); 5 Pipeline Teams (PT), the Management Team (MT); and the Independent Evaluator (IE).

FIRST OBJECTIVE— Developing and Implementing a Systemic Culture of Collaboration and Evaluation Among El Centro's Consortium of Project Partners. Milestones: 1) Monthly and weekly PLT, MT, and PT meetings are held. PLT, MT, and PT participants will rate the

partnership as functioning effectively to support effective functioning of the full-service project in North Chicago and Mundelein/ Diamond Lake schools: (Yr.1: 70%; Yr.2: 75%; Yr.3: 80%; Yr.4: 85%, Yr.5: 85%). 2) These meetings are conducted and pipeline service implementation and integration are reviewed and improved each project year; 4 needs assessment surveys are administered each project year and findings are used by project teams to improve El Centro full-service pipeline programming, and to provide monthly on-going project improvements and feedback; 3) A revised evaluation plan is written and distributed to all project staff by March 2024; and 4) A systemic planning process for sustaining the project year-by-year is developed. **Timelines:** 1 & 2) Monthly and weekly PLT, MT, and PT meetings from Jan.-Sept. 2024 for Year 1, and Oct.-Sept. each subsequent project year; 3) June 15th, 2024; 4) July 2024 – Sept. 2024, and ongoing planning each project year from Oct.-Sept. **Persons Responsible:** PD, MT, IE, PLC, SC, PLT, PSC.

SECOND OBJECTIVE—Developing and Implementing High-Quality Early Childhood

Education Programs. Milestones: 1) An assessment of the current early childhood programs is conducted with recommendations for PD for early childhood educators, pre-K screening, monthly family sessions and coaching to be offered to families, and a proposal for expanded early childhood home visits; 2) Sixteen early childhood educators will participate in El Centro PD activities; 3) 120 families participate in monthly two-hour family sessions and follow-up support as deemed necessary through home visits; and 4) 250 home visits per year are conducted at family homes in pairs, a teacher and a home visitor. **Timelines:** 1) Jan-Sept 2024, and Oct-Sept of each subsequent project year; 2) March – June 2024 and Oct.-Sept of each subsequent project year; and 3 & 4) Monthly of each project year. **Persons Responsible:** SC, PSC, PLT, IE, PD, PLT

THIRD OBJECTIVE—Developing and Implementing High-Quality School and Out-Of-

School-Time Programs and Strategies. Milestones: 1) 80 teachers in El Centro’s five FSCS project schools will participate in 30 hours of sustained and intensive PD to enhance student

school and out-of-school-time learning; 2) Three sets of instructional materials are developed each project year; and 3) 1,682 students participate in school day programming, and 750 students will participate in out-of-school-time programming two hours per day, two days per week for 28 weeks. **Timelines:** 1) Feb.-June 2024 and Oct.-Sept. of each ensuing project year; and 2 & 3) Monthly of each project year. **Persons Responsible:** PD, PSC, SC, PLT

FOURTH OBJECTIVE—Developing and Implementing Supports for Children’s Transition from Pre-K to Kindergarten, from Kindergarten to Elementary School to Middle School, from Middle-School to High-School, and from High-School to Post-

Secondary Education and Into the Workforce. Milestones: 1) Early warning system monitoring, student support and tracking are being implemented; and 2) Years one through four, students from the five project schools transition from level to level. In year five, at least 80 % of high-school students transition to post-secondary education. In year 9, 80 % of the college students obtain employment in the workforce. **Timelines:** 1) Feb.-Sept. of the first project year, and Oct. – of ensuing project years; and 2) Transitions are completed by Jun. in the first five years, and by Oct. in the 9th year. **Persons Responsible:** PD, SC, PSC, IE, PLT

FIFTH OBJECTIVE—Developing and Implementing Family and Community

Engagement and Supports. Milestones: 1) 120 families of students in the five project schools participate in monthly family sessions to provide home learning support strategies; 2) Monthly family nights are provided at each project school to foster family engagement with children on academic, social-emotional, health, dietary, and social development; and 3) Courses are offered two times per week for 16 weeks twice each project year. **Timelines:** 1) Weekly of each project year; 2) Monthly of each project year & beginning in March of the 1st. project year; and 3) Eight times a month each project year & beginning in March of the 1st. project year. **Persons Responsible:** SC, PSC, PD, PLT

SIXTH OBJECTIVE—Developing and Implementing Social, Emotional, Health, Nutrition, and Mental Health Services, Violence Prevention and Treatment Supports. Milestones: 1)

80 teachers participate in 30 hours of PD sessions, and 1,177 families participate in 20 hours of monthly family sessions; 2) All 1,682 students participate in adventure education field-site programs. Adventure Education, cooperative learning, Team learning, and Motivational Interviewing are integrated into school and after-school instruction to support social-emotional learning and to prevent violence; 3) Students referred to physicians, dentists, and psychologists based on assessments; 4) 50 project students each year will participate three times a week for two hours in after-school health and fitness programming; and 5) Three two-hour monthly family sessions are conducted for teachers, school staff, and families. **Timelines:** 1 and 2) Monthly each project year, with a March start date for Yr. 1; and 3, 4, & 5) Weekly of each project year.

Persons Responsible: SC, PSC, PT, PD, PLT.

SECTION 6: QUALITY OF THE PROJECT EVALUATION

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

(1) Thoroughness of the Evaluation Methods

The purpose of this project's evaluation plan is to provide a thorough analysis of whether the El Centro's objectives have been met through a summative assessment, and how the project can be improved as it is being implemented through a formative assessment. Objectives, milestones, and timelines will be set annually and reviewed to gauge whether the project's activities are meeting the El Centro's Full-Service Community Schools' objectives. Throughout the programs, families, teachers, educators, principals, school staff and children's performance will be assessed using summative quantitative and formative qualitative measures.

(a) Employing Appropriate Quantitative Methods of Evaluation, Data Collection, &

Methods of Analysis: A repeated measures design (with pre assessment baseline points in October of the first year and August of ensuing years, and post assessments in June of each project year, resulting in multiple baseline and post assessments over the project's four years) will determine the degree to which the project has had an impact on El Centro participants and

the degree to which the program's objectives have been achieved. Where appropriate, paired samples t-tests, ANOVA (analysis of variance and repeated measures analysis of variance), and regression analyses will be used to measure the significance of impact. The threshold for rejecting the null hypothesis will be set at .05 for all tests of significance, a level deemed appropriate in related research and evaluation. Appropriate effect size indices (e.g. omega square, Cohen's d) will be calculated to estimate the magnitude of program effects on the quantitative outcomes, with an effect size standard of .25SD.

(b) Establishing the Validity and Reliability of Assessment Instruments: Using appropriate psychometric metrics and qualities for the project's assessment instruments, see Section C for additional details.

(c) Addressing Annual Evaluation Indicators: El Centro will collect a wide array of quantitative and qualitative data for the summative assessment of the project, which are described in detail under each of the project's outcomes and performance measures described on Section 3. Quantitative measures will include pre-post survey assessments each project year to determine whether statistically significant progress has been made for each objective. Qualitative data will include: student and teacher school and district records for teacher qualifications and student absenteeism and disciplinary rates, and graduation and promotion rates; attendance data maintained for all El Centro project PD, monthly family sessions, meeting agendas, and minutes; needs and assets assessment surveys; feedback and satisfaction surveys administered to the participants at all El Centro project events; school and district accounting records; and pre-post student, teacher, consortium partners, and family surveys measuring the degree of improvement in collaboration, student and teacher performance, school climate, descriptions of project events, instructional units, teacher and administrator logs or journals, content analysis of documents such as instructional curricula; agenda; case studies of schools, teachers, families, and students; the partnership's web site; non-structured interviewing; self-assessment; and peer observations.

Finally, throughout the program, such measures as questionnaires, observations, focus groups, and interviews will be used to assess program modifications to be undertaken.

El Centro will also collect a variety of annual quantitative indicators, including: 1) Student chronic absenteeism rates; 2) Student discipline rates (including suspension and expulsion); 3) School climate information from student, family, and teacher surveys; 4) Provision of integrated student supports and stakeholder services; 5) expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities; 6) Family and community engagement efforts and impact; 7) Information on the number, qualifications, and retention of school staff, including the number and percentage of fully certified teachers, disaggregated by race and ethnicity; 8) Rates of teacher turnover; 9) Teacher experience; 10) Graduation rates.

(2) Feasibility of the Evaluation Methods (a) Management of Project's Evaluation: An Independent Evaluator, the Complément Consulting Group (CCG), will be responsible for managing the project's evaluation design. This Independent Evaluator in collaboration with the Project Director and the Leadership Team will refine the project evaluation design and implement it. CCG's lead consultant and founder is Jerry B. Olson, a former Associate Dean for School Relations at Northeastern Illinois University with a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. Dr. Olson has over 40 years of experience as an evaluator and a director of numerous federal, state, and privately funded grants, as well as other student, family, community, and school improvement and PD projects. The 10-member evaluation team that Dr. Olson leads has extensive expertise in the areas of evaluation design, assessment development, psychometrics (establishing scale reliability and validity), and both cognitive and social-emotional dimensions of student development. CCG's expertise in mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) research, in addition to evaluating community schools programming in school in the greater Chicago area, uniquely qualifies them to function as the El Centro Independent Evaluator.

CCG has no affiliation with either North Chicago or Diamond Lake school districts, and as a result will be able to conduct an independent and objective evaluation of the project. As

evaluator, CCG will prepare reports periodically each year to assist the project in making adjustments in its design based on formative evaluation data. They will also provide technical assistance on the design of evaluation instruments, their administration, and the analysis of evaluation data. Assisting the Independent Evaluator with data collection and analysis will be the School Site Coordinators who will be responsible for statistical data collection and the returning of surveys. The Project Director and the Independent Evaluator will be responsible for assembling all federal accountability reports.

(b) Objective Quantitative Performance Measures and a Timeline for Their

Implementation: The objective quantitative performance assessments in the 6 tables described below include such measures as: repeated survey assessments (multiple pre or baseline and post assessments over the five project years) will be developed, piloted, and checked for reliability and validity in the project's first year from October of 2024 through February of 2025

(3) The Appropriateness of the Project's Evaluation Design

(a) Methods established for project objectives and their outcomes: The evaluation methods for the project are appropriate because specific evaluation strategies have been designed for each of the project's 6 objectives. These specific methods are described in detail later in this section.

(b) Employing A Quasi-Experimental Design: El Centro's Independent Evaluator will choose 5 schools equivalent to the treatment schools on major demographic variables to function as a comparison group to effectively rule out or control for alternative explanations for the treatment effects that the project has. That quasi-experimental design takes into account the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards and criteria. First, that according to those criteria, that design will identify equivalent comparison schools for the project's 5 treatment or project schools. Equivalency between treatment and comparison schools will be established by identifying comparison schools that have are equivalent on both observable and unobservable characteristics. Equivalent comparison schools will be chosen by selecting schools that are observably comparable on the following traits: low-income status, low levels of academic

performance in reading and mathematics, chronic truancy, ethnic composition, Limited English Proficiency, student mobility rates, teacher years of experience and degrees held, and student individual education plans. Baseline equivalence of the analytical sample will be demonstrated on observed characteristics using these WWC criteria. These include establishing that: (1) the reported difference of the characteristics must be less than 0.25 of a standard deviation (based on the variation of that characteristic in the pooled sample), and (2) the effects must be statistically adjusted for baseline differences in the characteristics if the difference is greater than 0.05 of a standard deviation. Second, the project's evaluation will show promise because it will employ assessment instruments that meet WWC standards for reliability and validity. Third, attrition will be monitored so that it does not exceed WWC standards. Fourth, to strengthen the quasi-experimental design, a repeated series of pre-post assessments will be collected. The addition of repeated pre- and post- series of assessments for the treatment and comparison schools will provide an additional check on some of the threats to internal validity, especially history.

(c) Availability of Results, and Timelines and Reporting to the U.S. Department of Education to Meet GPRA Requirements: The Management Team and the Independent Evaluator will be responsible for conducting the evaluation activities in a timely manner. Baseline and post assessment data for summative measures will be collected according to the schedule described above. Formative assessments will be administered quarterly throughout each project year. Each project year, GPRA requirements as well as APR and AdHoc reports will be addressed based on the quantitative and qualitative data collected under the evaluation and submitted to the U.S. Department of Education.

(d) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible on student outcomes and equitable treatment of project participants

The tables and assessments below explain how the objective performance measures are clearly related to the outcomes, and how quantitative and qualitative psychometric measures will be employed.

Project Objectives with Objective Performance Measures Clearly Related to Intended Outcomes, and Assessment Instruments Producing Quantitative and Qualitative Data

Full statements of the objectives appear in the Project Design Section B.1.

1. Table 5 for Aligned Outcomes and Objective Performance Measures for Objective 1

(a) Objective 1: Developing and Implementing a Systemic Culture of Collaboration and Evaluation Among El Centro’s Consortium of Project Partners.	
Outcomes	Performance Measures
By September 30th of each project year, the El Centro Project Leadership Team (PLT), the Management Team (MT), and the five Pipeline Teams will have been established and meeting at least monthly.	By September 30th of each project year, El Centro Project Leadership Team (PLT), the Management Team (MT), the Teacher Teams (TT), the five Pipeline Teams, & community partners will have, on the average, met 12 times per project year to plan, develop, and implement the collaborative partnership system.
By December 15, 2024, El Centro’s pre/post evaluation instruments will have been designed, reviewed, and assessed for their reliability and validity with consistency coefficients of at least .70.	By December 15, 2024, El Centro’s pre/post evaluation instruments will have been designed so that they demonstrate adequate face and construct validity and Cronbach internal consistency measure reliability coefficients of at least .70.
By September 30th of each project year, collaborative community	By September 30th of each project community agencies, teachers, principals, project personnel, and families will

<p>learning community partners will have quantitatively rated the partnerships as functioning effectively.</p>	<p>have rated on a survey that the collaborative partnership is functioning effectively to support an integrated full-service community schools project in North Chicago and Diamond Lake schools at the following rates: (Yr.1: 70%; Yr.2: 75%; Yr.3: 80%; Yr.4 and Yr.5: 85%).</p>
<p>By September 30th of each project year, planning for the institutionalization of El Centro full-service community schools services project will have been undertaken plans to raise at least [REDACTED] in reallocated, foundation, and governmental agency funding over the course of the 5 years of the grant</p>	<p>By September 30th of each project year, an increasingly more detailed documented plans for institutionalizing the project and continuing El Centro will have been developed specific targets for raising funding from reallocated, foundation, and governmental agency funding. Funding Targets: [REDACTED]</p>

Quantitative and Qualitative Assessment Instruments for Objective 1: Repeated each project year: (1) pre-post Likert surveys assessing the partnership’s collaborative functioning and the effectiveness of the project’s mentors; (2) PD sessions will be administered in October and June of each project year; (3) documents describing the detailed evaluation plan, as well as policies & practices, & organizational units in the community partnership; (4) attendance records, minutes; (5) Feedback, satisfaction, and outcome questionnaires assessing the effectiveness of the project’s programming sessions; (6) plans & reports documenting the work of the Leadership Team, the Management Team, the five Pipeline Teams, community partners; and (7) Content analyses of documents produced.

2. Table 6 for Aligned Outcomes and Objective Performance Measures for Objective 2

(b) Objective 2: Developing and Implementing High-Quality Early Childhood Education Programs	
Outcomes	Performance Measures
By December 15, 2024, North Chicago and Diamond Lake’s current early childhood program will have been assessed and rated, including its birth to five-year-old programming, Pre-Kindergarten screening, monthly family sessions, and home visits.	By December 15th, 2024, a report will have been developed assessing the quality of North Chicago and Diamond Lake’s current early childhood program, including early childhood educator and community partner assessments of the quality of current programming.
By September 30th of each project year, El Centro’s 16 early childhood educators will have participated in 30 hours of intensive and sustained professional development (PD) focused on delivering the early childhood education programs, and implementation of the early childhood activities.	By September 30th of each project year, 80% of the 16 treatment early childhood educators will have participated in at least 30 hours of PD, as documented in a project Excel Attendance spreadsheet, over at least an 8-month period, focused on implementing the El Centro early childhood component of the program in project classrooms (including monthly follow-up coaching).
By September 30th of each project year, 16 early childhood educators will have increased at a statistically significant level their ability to offer high-quality early childhood programs.	By September 30th of each project year, 80% of El Centro’s early childhood educators, according to reliable and valid pre and post surveys that they will have inducted effective early childhood programming (as measured by a 5-point scale from never using a practice to using the practice almost daily) at a statistically

	significant .05 level with effect sizes of at least .25SD in contrast to comparison schools.
250 families will have participated in monthly two-hour family sessions on early childhood education in the home, and have increased their ability, at a statistically significant level, to provide early childhood education in the home.	By September 30th of each project year, 80% of El Centro’s families, according to reliable and valid pre and post surveys that they will have inducted effective early childhood home support (as measured by a 5-point scale from never using a practice to using the practice almost daily) at a statistically significant .05 level with effect sizes of at least .25SD in contrast to comparison schools.
Early childhood visits will have increased the ability of families, at a statistically significant level, to provide effective early childhood education in the home.	By September 30th of each project year, 80% of El Centro families, according to reliable and valid pre and post surveys that they will have inducted effective early childhood home support (as measured by a 5-point scale from never using a practice to using the practice almost daily) at a statistically significant .05 level with effect sizes of at least .25SD in contrast to comparison schools.

Quantitative and Qualitative Assessment Instruments for Outcomes for Objective 2: See Section 6.C below for a discussion of the appropriate psychometric reliability and validity qualities for the following quantitative assessment instruments. Repeated each project year: (1) a content analysis of the early childhood assessment report; (2) records of educator attendance at PD and follow-up sessions recorded on an Excel spreadsheets; (3) a pre-post survey assessing

early childhood educators' knowledge and record in applying the PD skills that educators have acquired on assisting families to effectively create home learning environments for their children; (4) the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills), a series of tests that assess early childhood (K-6) literacy such as phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, accuracy and fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension; (5) pre and post assessments determining the degree to which families have acquired and implemented skills enabling them to provide home support to their children to prepare those children for kindergarten; (6) pre and post assessments measuring the degree to which families have implemented early childhood supports based upon home visits by El Centro early childhood educators; (7) units and lesson plans of early childhood educators; (8) early childhood educators reporting on the results of their home visits to project families.

3. Table 7 for Aligned Outcomes and Objective Performance Measures for Objective 3

(c) Objective 3: Developing and Implementing High-Quality School and Out-Of-School-Time Programs and Strategies	
Outcomes	Performance Measures
By September 30th of each project year, El Centro's teachers at the five project schools will have acquired authentic teaching and learning skills using the arts to increase those skills, at a statistically significant level, in their teaching to increase student achievement in reading and mathematics.	By September 30th of each project year, 80% of El Centro's treatment teachers according to reliable and valid pre and post surveys that they will have increased their ability to use authentic teaching and learning in their instruction and acquired teaching skills to integrate those arts into their teaching of reading and mathematics at a statistically significant .05 level with effect sizes of at least .25SD in contrast to comparison schools.

<p>By June 30th of each project year, students at El Centro’s five project schools will have increased their academic achievement in reading and mathematics, at a statistically significant level.</p>	<p>By June 30th of each project year, 1,682 El Centro students will have performed statistically significantly higher than students at comparison schools on state standardized state tests for reading and mathematics, at a .05 alpha level with effect sizes of at least .25SD in contrast to comparison schools.</p>
<p>By September 30th of each project year, El Centro after-school instructors at the five project schools will have acquired authentic teaching and learning skills using the arts to increase those skills in their teaching to increase student achievement in reading and mathematics, at a statistically significant level.</p>	<p>By September 30th of each project year, 80% of El Centro after-school instructors according to reliable and valid pre and post surveys that they will have increased their ability to use authentic teaching and learning in their instruction and acquired teaching skills to integrate those arts into their teaching of reading and mathematics at a statistically significant .05 level with effect sizes of at least .25SD in contrast to comparison schools.</p>
<p>By June 30th of each project year, students at El Centro’s five project in and out-of-school-time programs will have increased their academic achievement in reading and mathematics, at a statistically significant level.</p>	<p>By June 30th of each project year, 80% of El Centro students will have performed statistically significantly higher than students at comparison schools on state standardized state tests for reading and mathematics, at a .05 alpha level with effect sizes of at least .25SD in contrast to comparison schools.</p>

Quantitative and Qualitative Assessment Instruments for Outcomes for Objective 3: See Section 6.C below for a discussion of the appropriate psychometric reliability and validity

qualities for the following quantitative assessment instruments. Repeated each project year: (1) Equivalent pre-post measures will be developed and administered in October and June of each project year focused on the teacher integration of authentic teaching and learning employing the arts into core curricula; (2) pre and post measures of valid and reliable state standardized tests of student achievement in reading and mathematics; (3) a reliable and valid survey to be developed by the Independent Evaluator to capture students' ability to become engaged in authentic teaching and learning experiences requiring students constructing knowledge, possessing the skills to deliberate about their learning, and the degree to which learning has become relevant and meaningful for them; (4) a protocol with quantitative rubrics to interpret the quality of students' academic work and creations; (5) a reliable and valid survey to be developed by the Independent Evaluator to capture students' ability to think critically and become deeply engaged in learning; (6) video recordings of student performances; and documentation of student choreography and lyrics for student dance and musical productions; (7) satisfaction surveys on teacher and student programming sessions; teacher instructional units and lesson plans; (8) teacher and student attendance records for teacher PD and student out-of-school-time sessions; and (9) copies of student inquiry-based projects.

4. Table 8 for Aligned Outcomes and Objective Performance Measures for Objective 4

(d) Objective 4: Developing and Implementing Supports for Children’s Transition to Elementary School to Middle School, from Middle-School to High-School, and from High-School to Post-Secondary Education and Into the Workforce	
Outcomes	Performance Measures
By September 30th of each project year, an early warning system and academic and supporting of students at-risk and tracking the percentage of students making progress through each level of education and into the workforce	By September 30th of each project year, a detailed early warning system plan, describing what strategies, information, and instructional materials of El Centro necessary to track students through El Centro levels of academic

will have been implemented.	transition will have been implemented and will have tracked 80% of the El Centro project students.
By September 30th of each project year, transition pipeline services from Pre-K to Elementary, from elementary to middle-school, from middle-school to high-school, and from high-school to post-secondary school, and from post-secondary school into the workforce will have been effectively implemented and rated by students as having been highly successful.	By June 30th of each project year, the effectiveness of student transitions will be determined by documenting that at least 80% of the students will have successfully been able to make appropriate academic and workplace transitions.

Quantitative and Qualitative Assessment Instruments for Outcomes for Objective 4: Collected each project year: (1) a manual describing how the El Centro transition tracking system functions; (2) academic records indicating that El Centro students have successfully progressed through transition points from kindergarten through placement in workforce positions; (3) feedback and satisfaction surveys (with Likert-type scales and open-ended items) administered to a representative random sample of students at each transition point to determine the degree to which El Centro has been effective in supporting students in making the transition through the educational system and into the workforce; and case studies documenting how El Centro students have been able to navigate through transition points and problems encountered.

4. Table 9 for Aligned Outcomes and Objective Performance Measures for Objective 5

(e) Objective 5: Developing and Implementing Family and Community Engagement and Supports.	
Outcomes	Performance Measures
By September 30th of each project year,	By September 30 of each year of the project,

<p>families will have improved their ability, at a statistically significant level, to support the development of their children both at school and at home in the subjects of reading and mathematics.</p>	<p>80% of the families will have demonstrated a statistically significant (at the .05 level) increase in their ability to support the development of their children both at school and at home in the subjects of reading and mathematics, with an effect size of at least .25.</p>
<p>By September 30th of each project year, families will have improved their ability, at a statistically significant level, to support the social-emotional, physical, and nutritional development of their children.</p>	<p>By September 30 of each year of the project, 80% of the families will have demonstrated a statistically significant (at the .05 level) increase in their ability to support the social-emotional, physical, and nutritional development of their children, with an effective size of at least .25SD.</p>
<p>By September 30th of each project year, there will have been an increase in the ability of project school families, at a statistically significant level, to acquire competencies in ESL and GED attainment and computer skills to support the academic development of their children both at school and at home in the subjects of reading and mathematics.</p>	<p>By September 30th of each project year, 80% of families will have demonstrated a statistically significant increase (at the .05 level) in the ability of project school families to employ computer skills to support the academic development of their children both at home and at school, based on pre-post assessments with a final effect size of .25SD.</p>

Quantitative and Qualitative Assessment Instruments for Outcomes for Objective 5:

Collected each project year: (1) pre and post family assessments determining how successful families have been in acquiring skills to assist their children at home to succeed to school in reading and mathematics; (2) pre and post assessments determining how successful families have been in providing support to their children's social-emotional, physical, and nutritional

development; (3) Excel spreadsheets attendance records for monthly family session attendance; (4) feedback or satisfaction surveys administered to families on how effective the El Centro family sessions have been; (5) family instruction units and lessons plans documenting the topics that have been addressed in family sessions on families' assisting students with home learning and family school leadership; (6) a pre-post assessment document the degree to which families have been engaged and utilized the support of teachers at their children's schools; and (7) academic records documenting the degree to which family members have successfully completed El Centro's ESL, GED, and computer class programming.

4. Table 10 for Aligned Outcomes and Objective Performance Measures for Objective 6

(f) Objective 6: Developing and Implementing Social, Health, Nutrition, Violence Prevention/Treatment, Trauma, and Mental Health Services and Supports.	
Outcomes	Performance Measures
By September 30th of each project year, El Centro teachers at the five project schools will have increased their ability, at a statistically significant level, to assist students in improving their socio-emotional skills, health, fitness, and nutrition, violence prevention/treatment, and mental health.	By September 30th of each project year, 80% of El Centro teachers, according to reliable and valid pre and post surveys, will have increased their ability to assist students in improving their socio-emotional skills, health, fitness, and nutrition, violence prevention/treatment, and mental health at a statistically significant .05 level with effect sizes of at least .25SD.
By September 30th of each project year, students at El Centro's five project schools and in the our-of-school-time programming will have increased their ability, at a statistically significant level, to: (1) employ social and	By September 30th of each project year, 80% of the 1,682 will have improved their social and emotional skills, physical fitness, nutrition, and physical and mental health, and violence prevention/treatment, at a statistically

<p>emotional skills, (2) become physically fit, (3) improve their nutrition, and (4) maintain their physical and mental health. (5) increase their ability to address issues of violence prevention/treatment.</p>	<p>significantly higher than students at comparison schools on state standardized tests for reading and mathematics, at a .05 alpha level with effect sizes of at least .25SD in contract to comparison schools.</p>
<p>By September 30th of each project year, an internal, school-based, and external referral systems for mental health Services for Students at the five project schools will have been implemented and rated as highly successful by program students and families.</p>	<p>By September 30th of each project year, the El Centro mental health services internal school-based and external referral system will have been implemented to serve 1,682 students and the number of referrals each project year, and 80% of students will report the referrals as being highly successful.</p>

Quantitative and Qualitative Assessment Instruments for Outcomes for Objective 6: (1)

Pre-post-assessments of students served by the grant who meet the standard of a healthy fitness zone as established by the assessment for the Presidential Youth Fitness Program (PYFP) in at least five of the six fitness areas of that assessment. (2) Pre-post student surveys and weekly student logs with questions on the frequency of fruit and vegetable consumption. Pre and post assessments of nutrition will be evaluated using the Youth Risk Behavior Survey and the National Youth Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey; (3) A pre-post socio-emotional survey will be developed by the Independent Evaluator and will be administered to measure students' cooperative learning skills, ability to work effectively on teams and/social emotional skills (e.g. self-awareness, decision-making, relationship skills, and social awareness); (4) pre-post multiple time-series surveys assessing teachers' acquisition of knowledge for nutrition, team building, cooperative learning, and nutrition skills; (5) questionnaires on teacher PD; (6) PD curricula lesson plans; and (7) PD attendance using Excel;(8) standard school climate/violence surveys.

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

To provide regular or periodic performance feedback on period progress in meeting the project's intended outcomes, a variety of summative (pre-post assessments) and formative methods of analysis will be employed to assess whether intended outcomes are being achieved. The pre-post quantitative assessment instruments are specified in Tables 6-12 above. The formative elements of the evaluation design will provide on-going feedback to staff for timely and valid information on the management, implementation, and efficiency of the project, including interviews, focus groups, and instructional records. Systems providing feedback and on-going assessment will be established and measures of on-going progress. For example, the Project Director and the El Centro Project Leadership Teams for each objective will receive feedback from the Management Team and the Independent Evaluator to ensure that timely and valid information is provided on intended formative and summative outcomes. Summative data will be reported, based on yearly Annual and Final Performance reports. At the end of each program session the leaders will meet to reflect upon and provide data (including feedback or satisfaction questionnaires from teachers and families) on how effective the program components were implemented. The feedback surveys, using Likert scales and open-ended items, include items on the effectiveness of the professional development sessions.

Not only have benchmarks and timelines been set to annually gauge the extent to which project's activities are meeting the objectives, but a range of summative and formative evaluation measures (as described above) will be employed to provide on-going and continuous feedback on the project's progress to project teams aligned with each objective. The following formative assessment strategies will be provide feedback to the El Centro Project Leadership Team, and the Management Team: (a) focus groups convened quarterly to discuss how what impact the project is having on students' academic performance, teacher instruction, and family support; (b) structured and unstructured interviews, and case studies administered bi-annually with

representative students and family members, providing in-depth analysis of project development; (c) staff will review evaluation data, including teacher, student, and family time series pre-post assessments, standardized student achievement results, curricula development, and sample lesson plans and units posted on the website to consider changes; and (d) the Management Team will convene monthly to review the data to assess how efficiently the project is being managed.

Information will be used in a variety of ways to manage progress towards the project's objectives. First, the Management Team will determine during each year the degree to which benchmarks, milestones, and performance measure targets have been met. The quantitative and qualitative intended measures and results, for both formative and yearly summative evaluations will be shared on a quarterly basis by the Management Team. Second, the Project Director will meet with staff to share the formative and summative evaluation findings and in consultation with the El Centro Project Leadership Team, and the Management Team to determine which modifications should be undertaken. Third, after implementation of these modifications, the Project Leadership Team, and the Management Team will determine, in collaboration with the Independent Evaluator, the impact of the changes. Fourth, this process of providing continual feedback loops on summative and formative intended outcomes will be repeated each project year to ensure continual progress towards meeting project outcomes.

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

Valid and reliable performance survey data will be generated for the outcomes associated with each objective. The following procedures will be employed to establish face and construct validity for each of the project's surveys (see below for the surveys for which validity and reliability will be calculated). Providing Valid Survey Performance Data: Survey validity will be established through construct and criterion assessments. For construct validity, a panel of experts will review and conclude that the questionnaire or survey instrument that is assessing the concepts which are being measured. This panel of experts will establish the degree to which an

instrument measures the trait or theoretical construct that the instrument is intended to measure using their own expert knowledge as well as via review of the appropriate research literature. To establish criterion validity, extant valid assessments that measure relevant constructs will be administered and correlated with the newly developed instruments during piloting. The following procedures will be employed: (1) A panel of experts on content and constructs in question, teacher education, test construction, and evaluation will meet to discuss the overall design of the assessment instruments; (2) The survey experts and educators include: the Project Director, representative specialists on the content area in question, North Chicago/Diamond Lake area PD educators, as well as the project's Independent Evaluator with expertise in test construction as well as the conduct and evaluation of professional development for teachers and school improvement program; (3) The surveys will be designed with the following rubrics or principles, so that each will have at least 20 items (with, as appropriate, at least 5 items per subscale), a rubric to score responses to the questions, items that required participants to demonstrate their knowledge of the subject area being assessed, pre and post assessment scores that could be calculated for each participant, and alignment with the content being addressed; and (4) In line with the previously listed rubrics, the panel will write a first draft of the survey instrument, and attention will be paid to drafting test questions fully aligned with the goals and activities of the grant's outcomes. The above review will include discussing, editing, and refining all the surveys individual items to ensure they are: (a) fully and clearly aligned with the project's outcomes; (b) items providing a range of responses to the concept in question; (c) a level of difficulty that those taking the survey would understand what the items mean; (d) questions that are unambiguously stated; and replaced as needed with items more appropriately and clearly aligned with the project's outcomes. These procedures will ensure that the final survey versions can be attested as valid by a panel of art experts and professional educators, with full alignment with the project's outcomes. Providing Reliable Survey Performance Data: To establish the reliability for each of the project's surveys, pilot assessments of each of the project's instruments described below will

be conducted with a minimum of 30 participants to determine whether a given instrument has an adequate degree of reliability. The internal statistical reliability of an instrument, used for this grant's surveys, will establish the extent to which an individual survey produces the same results on repeated trials. In short, it is an approach that determines the stability or consistency of participant scores over time. Participants' responses for each survey will be entered into a spreadsheet and coded to indicate the range of responses for each survey item. Standard internal consistency analysis for the entire instrument will be conducted by the Independent Evaluator using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The reliability for the test will employ Cronbach's internal statistical reliability assessment, which will yield a reliability alpha coefficient of at least .70 or above for each of the project's surveys listed below, which is an accepted level of reliability by researchers that will ensure that the instrument has sufficient consistency over time. Survey performance data instruments for which validity and reliability will be calculated: First Objective Outcomes: An instrument rating the effectiveness of the functioning of the project's various leadership groups. Second Objective Outcomes: Pre and post surveys assessing the impact of the project's PD, family sessions, and home visits on early childhood educators and families. Third Objective Outcomes: Pre and post surveys assessing the impact of school-wide teacher PD on teacher and student performance, and surveys assessing student academic achievement, social-emotional development, knowledge of technology, and college readiness. Fourth Objective Outcomes: Pre and post teacher and student surveys assessing the degree to which students are successfully transitioning from one grade to the next, and into post-secondary education, and the workplace. Fifth Objective Outcomes: Pre and post surveys assessing the impact of family sessions and classes on participants. Sixth Objective Outcomes: Pre and post surveys assessing the impact of school-wide teacher PD on teacher and student social, emotional, nutritional, physical, and mental health development.