

U.S. Department of Education Office of Innovation & Improvement

Full Service Community Schools Program 84.215J

Applicant: Waterbury Bridge to Success Community Partnership

(United Way of Greater Waterbury, fiscal sponsor)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. ABOUT THE LEAD APPLICANT	page 1
II. NEED FOR PROJECT	page 2
III. QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN	page 26
IV. QUALITY OF PROJECT SERVICES	page 45
V. ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES	page 57
VI. QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT PLAN	page 76
VII. QUALITY OF PROJECT EVALUATION	page 81
VIII. PRIORITIES ADDRESSED	page 95

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE – Boost Waterbury! A Community Schools Initiative

I. ABOUT THE LEAD APPLICANT

The United Way of Greater Waterbury (UWGW) has served as the fiscal sponsor/backbone for the Strive Together Waterbury Bridge to Success Community Partnership (BTS) since its inception in 2010. As the backbone organization, UWGW serves as the fiscal sponsor and serves on its governing community council and finance committee. Additionally, as a city-wide collective impact partnership, BTS has its own 21-member cross sector governing board, called the Community Council, which reviews and approves its operating budget, strategies and activities. Waterbury Bridge to Success (BTS), established in 2010 as the state’s first cradle to career entity, with the United Way of Greater Waterbury as its fiscal sponsor, is a cross-sector partnership of over 90 community and civic leaders, educators, and organizations. By centering racial equity, we work collectively to achieve equitable change by empowering Waterbury’s children, youth, and families, to be successful in school, career, and life. To ensure the success of all children in Bridge to Success, we are focused on results, improving upon what works, and changing what does not. We recognize that every individual and organization that impacts our children’s growth, from cradle to career, is accountable, and that our collective voice is a part of a solution. At BTS we believe that by working as a team, we can support Waterbury’s children and youth, birth – 24. To empower children, youth, and families, BTS focuses across four areas:

- Early Childhood and Education — promoting kindergarten readiness.
- Third-grade reading — promoting early literacy and reducing summer learning loss
- High school graduation — addressing youth’s development assets and reducing absenteeism
- Career and college readiness — focusing on youth financial, occupational, and educational development and readiness.

BTS is a member of the nationally acclaimed Strive Together Cradle to Career Network. Strive Together is a national network of nearly 70 community partnerships in 29 states and Washington D.C. working to improve educational success for every child. Together with its partners, Strive Together impacts over 13 million children nationwide. Waterbury Bridge to Success has identified six outcome areas for intense focus. They are points along the cradle to career continuum that are proven to be key levers that need to be moved in order to achieve the cradle to career vision and goals. Within each outcome area, specific measures will be used to track progress and hold the community accountable for its success: Infant Health; Kindergarten; Early Grade Reading; Middle Grade Math; High School Graduation; Post-secondary Enrollment/Completion. Since 2016, BTS has spearheaded the BOOST! Community Schools Initiative, an approach to building partnerships between schools and community resources. The objective is to integrate focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development and community engagement to improve student learning, build stronger families and healthier communities. This framework requires public schools and the public sector to shift from traditional models of segregated services to a collaborative effort, leveraging strategic partnerships and providing an accessible array of services directly at Waterbury Public School's preK-8 institutions - Carrington, Duggan, Gilmartin, Reed, and Wendell Cross.

II. NEED FOR PROJECT

Student, Family & School Community to Be Served. According to 2020 U.S. Census data, Waterbury is located in Central Connecticut and is the state's fifth largest city. Approximately a fifth of the city's population is between the ages of zero and 21. Just over a third of the city's population identifies as non-Hispanic white (38.9%). 36.6% identify as Hispanic/Latine, 21.6%

as non-Hispanic Black, 1.7% as Asian, and 11.4% as some other race. The percentages of black and brown individuals are higher within Waterbury Public Schools (WPS): 52% are Hispanic/Latine, 22% Black, and 6% of students identify with multiple ethnicities and races or with another race or ethnicity. The remaining 18% identify as non-Hispanic White. Waterbury has a relatively large im/migrant population: 12% of Waterbury residents were born in Puerto Rico, U.S. Island areas, or abroad to American parent(s). Fourteen percent (14%) of WPS students are English Language Learners (ELL).

While the state of Connecticut houses one of the richest communities in the country, it also has cities in which a majority of children grow up living below the federal poverty level. Waterbury is one of the state's poorest cities, the median household income is [REDACTED]; thirty-eight percent (38%) of the children grow up below 100% of the federal poverty line and an additional 29% grows up between 100 and 199% of the FPL. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2022) set the Federal Poverty Line at [REDACTED] for a family of four. The unemployment rate for Waterbury fell 0.1 percentage points in December 2020 to 9.8%. For the same month, the metro unemployment rate was 1.8 percentage points higher than the Connecticut rate. (Greater Waterbury Health Partnership, Community Health Needs Assessment 2023). The unemployment rate in Waterbury peaked in July 2020 at 12.0% and is now 2.2 percentage points lower. From a post peak low of 7.6% in October 2020, the unemployment rate has now grown by 2.2 percentage points. Data from our initial survey analysis in 2017 showed that while most (66%) caregivers worked at least 25 hours a week, one in five (20%) was unemployed. And in 2020, surveys showed that 39% of parents were either "unable to work" (8%), "looking for employment" (16%) or "unemployed" (14%).

According to [Data Haven's](#) 2021 Equity Profile of Waterbury Community, Waterbury is a town

of 114,403 residents, 67 percent of whom are people of color. The town's population has increased by 3.7 percent since 2010. Of the town's 40,937 households, 41 percent are homeowner households. Forty-eight percent of Waterbury's households are cost-burdened, meaning they spend at least 30 percent of their total income on housing costs. Eighty-two percent of public high school seniors in the Waterbury School District graduated within four years in 2019. Among the town's adults ages 25 and up, 16 percent have earned a bachelor's degree or higher. Waterbury is home to 39,067 jobs, with the largest share in the Health Care and Social Assistance sector. Waterbury's average life expectancy is 76.8 years. Forty-nine percent of adults in Waterbury say they are in excellent or very good health. In 2020, 103 people in Waterbury died of drug overdoses. Fifty-nine percent (59%) of adults in the City of Waterbury are satisfied with their area, and 28 percent say their local government is responsive to residents' needs. In the 2020 presidential election, 64 percent of registered voters in Waterbury voted. Sixty-four percent (64%) of adults in Waterbury report having stores, banks, and other locations within walking distance of their home, and 60 percent say there are safe sidewalks and crosswalks in their neighborhood. Waterbury Public Schools enrollment has remained consistent at around 18,700 students since 2019-2020. The number of students eligible for free and reduced lunch is around 75% over the past 5 years. This exceeds the state average by about 30%. The district has a higher average percentage of SPED students (~19.5%) compared to the state average of ~17%. The number of students that are chronically absent has increased dramatically from 15.6% in 2018-19 to 39.5% in 21-22. Suspension and expulsion rates are around 13% for the past four years (excluding 2020-21) and exceeds the state average by about 6%. WPS staff is predominately white (83.4%); Latine and Black students make up over 82% of the student population. Next Generation Accountability Index, and District Performance

Index (DPI) for ELA, Math, and Science are all below state averages and below established targets. Post COVID, Waterbury is not immune to a decrease in postsecondary readiness. WPS post-secondary readiness is approximately 13%, which is below the state of Connecticut average of 42%. Additionally, the post-secondary lull for enrollment has been declining (65.1% in 2017-2018 down to 45.9% in 2020-21. (Source: edsight.ct.gov). There are 30 public schools in Waterbury. According to the [Connecticut Report Card](#), in 2022-2023, WPS served 18,701 students from PreK to 12th grade. BOOST! currently focuses on five preK-8 schools – Carrington, Duggan, Gilmartin, Reed and Wendell Cross. These schools were chosen for two key reasons:

- 1) They are the city’s only schools that combine Prek, elementary and middle school. “The continuity of teachers, classmates, programs, and expectations appears to enhance academic, social, and emotional development for students leading to greater academic achievement and improved self-esteem and confidence.” (Rand Study and National Middle School Association Study.) With each passing year, students in Pre-K through 8th grade schools become well known within the student body. This provides a strong foundation to feel safe and build confidence as they transition from lower to middle school. Partnership engagement with these schools will enhance BOOST school to career pipeline efforts.
- 2) The schools are located in five distinct communities and all, but Wendell Cross, are “walking schools” meaning the majority of students walk because they are in densely populated neighborhoods resulting in close proximity to school. The five schools represent the city as a whole.

As shown in Table 1, student enrollment across all five schools is approximately 2,164. 57%

identify as Hispanic/Latine, 22% Black/African American, 15% non-Hispanic White, and the remaining 5% another or multiple races. Twelve percent (11.86%) are English language learners, 16% have disabilities, and 75% are eligible for free or reduced fee lunches.

TABLE 1 BOOST Schools Gender & Race/Ethnicity Demographics					
Schools¹	Carrington	Duggan	Gilmartin	Reed	Wendell Cross
School Pop.	457	475	484	460	446
Gender					
Female	48.6%	50.1%	49.6%	50.4%	45.1%
Male	51.4%	49.9%	50.4%	49.6%	54.9%
Race/ethnicity					
Latine	45.8%	60%	63.6%	67.2%	57.4%
Black	22.0%	24.2%	20.5%	23%	16.1%
White	21.7%	10.1%	9.5%	7.0%	18.4%
Other⁴	10.5%	5.7%	6.4%	2.8%	8.1%
High need students					
English Learner	12.8%	11.6%	10.3%	14.6%	14.65%
Disabilities	15.4%	20.6%	15.5%	19.6%	15.2%
Free/reduced meals	61.0%	74.9%	69.6%	77.2%	59.6%

These demographics are in stark contrast with most of the teachers within each of the schools. As shown in Table 2, most teachers identify as non-Hispanic white (85.18%). This is in addition to the vast majority of teachers not being from Waterbury. Concerning the five

BOOST schools, the demographics of teachers/staff and students correspond with the rest of the district. Although the percentage of teachers of color is above the state average, the gap between the number of teachers of color and the number of students of color is much wider than the state average of 36%.

TABLE 2					
Schools	Carrington	Duggan	Gilmartin	Reed	Wendell Cross
Educator Pop.	38	45	45	42	28 ²
Race/ethnicity					
Hispanic/Latine	5.1%	4.4%	8.9%	11.9%	7.1%
Black	2.6%	4.4%	4.4%	7.1%	3.6%
White	87.2%	88.9%	86.7%	73.8%	89.3%
Other⁴	2.6%	2.2%	0%	7.1%	0%

²1.Data are reflective of SY2021-22 as seen on each school’s Annual Performance Reports via Ed Sight.

2.Wendell Cross enrolled students for grades PreK - 5 for SY21-22 and, thus, has fewer teachers relative to the other four schools.

Plan for Needs Assessment. Boost! Waterbury seeks to serve the whole child, whole school, and the whole community. In an effort to ensure comprehensive services are delivered that address all of the social determinants of health, BTS will utilize the Community Health Needs Assessment conducted by the Greater Waterbury Health Partnership. The Greater Waterbury Health Partnership (GWHP) collaborates with clinical and community partners on a

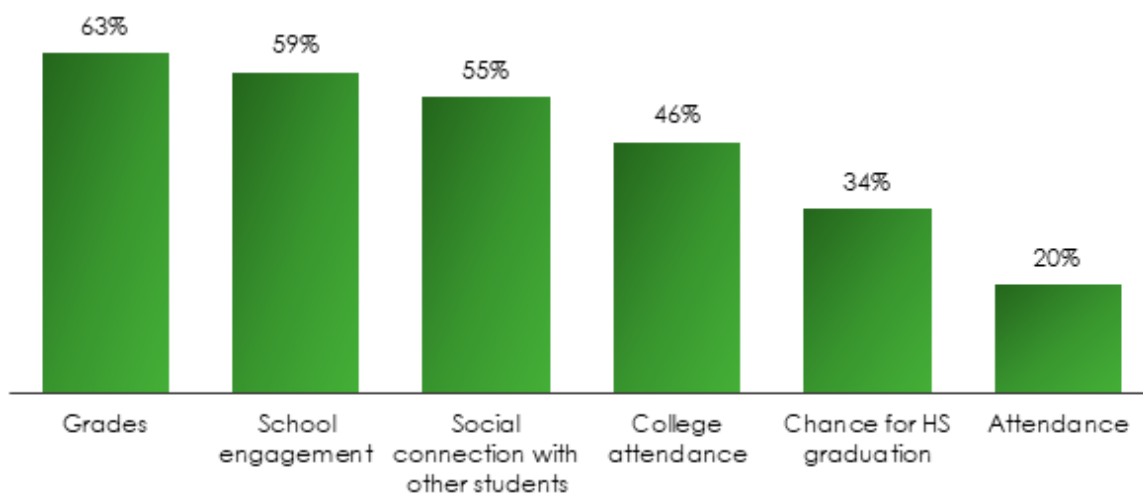
comprehensive Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) to evaluate the health needs of individuals living in and around Waterbury, Connecticut. Waterbury Bridge to Success will utilize the CHNA to establish non-academic needs of and wraparound service for students and the communities that surround the 5 neighborhood schools. The purpose of the assessment is to gather information about local health needs and health behaviors. The assessment examines a variety of indicators including risky health behaviors (alcohol use, tobacco use) and chronic health conditions (diabetes, heart disease). The CHNA process enables the Greater Waterbury Health Partnership to examine community health feedback and data. The findings from the assessment are deployed by the Partnership to prioritize public health issues and develop a unified community health implementation plan focused on meeting community needs. GWHP oversees the community-wide collection of public health data and survey responses. A full technical report is provided for community use and to guide the Community Health Improvement Plan between health systems. Bridge to Success serves as a member of the its Steering Committee and its Maternal Health Workgroup. According to the 2023 GWHP CHNA, income and poverty are closely connected to health outcomes. A higher income makes it easier to live in a safe neighborhood with good schools and many recreational opportunities. Higher wage earners are better able to buy medical insurance and medical care, purchase nutritious foods, and obtain quality child care than those earning lower wages. Lowest income people are particularly vulnerable. 43% of regional residents making [REDACTED] or less reported not having enough money to buy food that they or their family needed. (DataHaven, 2018). Food insecurity is present, especially in Waterbury. 14% of adults in Greater Waterbury and 25% of Waterbury adults report food insecurity (having been unable to provide adequate food for their families at some point in the past year). Many low-income

Waterbury residents live in food deserts. A large percentage of Waterbury is classified as a food desert, meaning that residents lack access to fresh, high-quality food (United States Department of Agriculture, 2018). Additional USDA data shows areas of the city in which residents have low vehicle access. The close correlation between food deserts and areas in which people lack access to cars indicates that residents have difficulty leaving the food desert to find healthy, high-quality groceries in other neighborhoods. In the Greater Waterbury region, 14% of residents reported being transportation insecure, 23% of Waterbury residents reported not having reliable transportation. Transportation affects a person's ability to buy food, pick up medication and drive to medical appointments. In Waterbury, 11% of residents did not attend a medical appointment due to lack of transportation compared to 6% of residents in Greater Waterbury. Early Childhood Education can be a predictor of future child health and well-being. Children in low-income families often are exposed to more adverse early childhood experiences (ACES) and environmental factors that delay or compromise their development and place them at a disadvantage for healthy growth and school readiness. According to the 2023 CHNA, free childcare and early education programs are available in Waterbury, although space is limited for enrollment. The percentage of children enrolled in a Pre-K program in Waterbury and Greater Waterbury has increased over time. Education is connected to health and well-being. Those with a college diploma will live an average of nine years longer than people without a high school diploma. Across the region, 33% of adults age 25 and up have a Bachelor's degree or higher, while only 10% of Waterbury adults have a Bachelor's degree. There are three institutions of higher education in Waterbury: Naugatuck Valley Community College, University of Connecticut, Waterbury campus, and Post University. BTS will continue to work with GWHP to determine health priorities. These

priority areas are determined through an extensive community engagement process that includes focus groups and data walks. Parents/caregivers from each of the schools and their communities have been and will be critical partners in developing the strategies and response to improve the quality of life for students and caregivers. Before COVID, BTS surveyed 1000 students and parents across the four original schools – Carrington, Duggan, Gilmartin & Reed (Wendell Cross was added in 22-23 as it was under construction) – to identify immediate needs and interests regarding programming, services, and resources. Student surveys revealed that a majority of students (83%) go home or to someone else’s house after school. One third of the students attend an afterschool program at least once a week. First graders are most likely to attend an after-school program (36%) and second graders least likely (26%). Despite these numbers, most students (70%) showed interest (responding “surely” or “maybe”) in attending an after-school program. Overall, students are interested in a range of subjects, the most popular being sports and academics. The survey also found that students are also interested in learning to cook and in behavioral health programs such as team building. On the contrary, when caregivers were asked if they would be interested in their child attending an after-school program in the future, 27% were hesitant, and 12% indicated no interest at all. While the majority (62%) did indicate an interest, it was critical to identify any obstacles that parents foresaw for their child attending an after-school program. Indeed, caregivers gave a range of reasons including not having transportation (37%), their preference for their child doing his/her homework (20%), and scheduling challenges (13%). Parents identified another significant barrier to their child attending an after-school program - the cost. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of respondents indicated that programs were too expensive. This remains a major barrier for parents. In 2022, BTS leveraged its partnership

with Porter’s House to facilitate a summer camp at Reed School for 25 kindergarten, first and second grade students. During registration, the mother commented, “This is amazing! I’ve wanted to sign her up for [Porter’s House] programs for so long but couldn’t afford it.”

Figure 1 | Description: Caregivers’ preferred outcomes impacted by afterschool programs



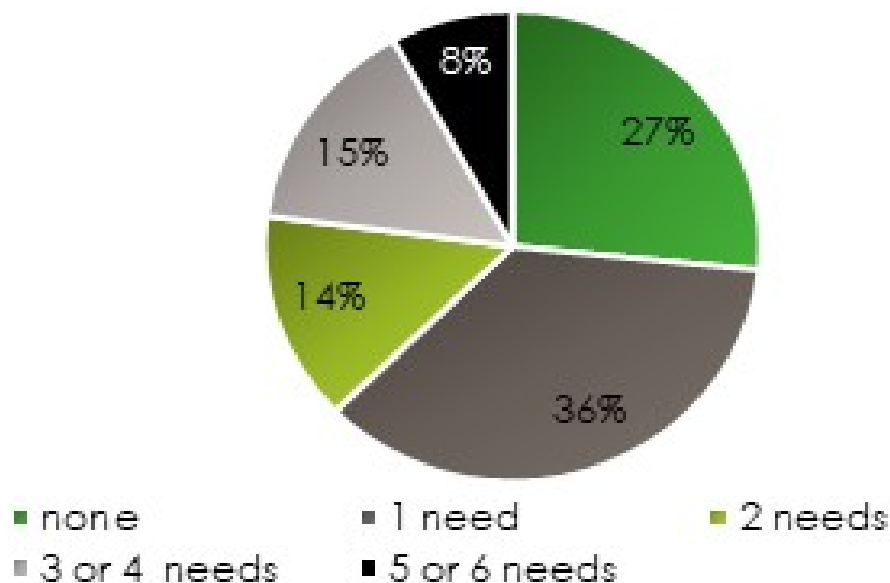
(n=170)

For the majority of caregivers who did identify interest in their child attending an after-school program, 94% were interested in programming that would enhance their children’s academic skills, such as math and science (see Chart 1). Equally, 92% were interested in their child attending an art or music program, followed by cooking, and learning a second language (87%), organized sports (85%) and socio-emotional development such as anti-bullying methods and teamwork (83%). Most caregivers also saw the afterschool program as providing potential academic benefits, specifically on improving their child’s grades (63%).

The surveys also shed light on parents’ basic needs (see Figure 2). For the purpose of this survey, basic needs include food, shelter, medical care, and transportation. Findings revealed that nearly three quarters (73%) of parents/caregivers in Duggan, Gilmartin & Reed communities are struggling to meet one or more basic needs. 23% identified three or more

basic needs.

Figure 2 | Description - Number of basic needs identified by caregivers (n=181)



³1. Caregiver response to survey question: "What did you like most about this event?"
 2. Online surveys were administered via QR code; 43 responses collected.

Of the survey respondents identifying at least one need (n=132), 66% had trouble with paying utility bills.

Other common struggles included:

- limited access to a laundry machine (23%)
- access to healthy foods (23%)
- no reliable transportation to get to work (20%)
- living in an unsafe neighborhood (20%)
- long term unemployment (16%).

Many Waterbury families are unable to meet their basic needs because current systems fail to create effective and equitable infrastructures for support. However, ongoing data collection equips BTS with the data necessary to make informed decisions and leverage strategic

partnerships that can shift the role public school systems can play in advancing equity in Waterbury communities. Since the last school-wide data collection, efforts were attempted to update data in 2020, but were halted by COVID-19 pandemic to which BTS and WPS had to pivot quickly to respond to immediate needs in the community. In this pause, the initiative found itself in a moment of reflection and re-set. As such, the National Center of Community Schools provided professional development and technical assistance (PD/TA) support to Central Office, School Leadership, teachers, and staff and BTS as the Lead Partner. The goal of this re-set was to reinvigorate all partners with a re-introduction to the fundamentals and the long-term vision of the Full-Service Community Schools model to co-create an ambitious and realistic action plan that will inform the Initiative's next steps and long-term vision. As a result, BTS worked closely with WPS and School Leadership to:

- clarify partner roles, responsibilities, and authority over the work.
- assess existing partnerships on two fronts:
 - their alignment with both the District and School Improvement Plans
 - ensure proper integration of diverse and separate programs into a coherent, congruent whole coordinated around an agreed-upon set of results.
- identify new strategic partnerships that address key priorities areas, now informed by the impacts of the pandemic on student engagement (i.e., socio-emotional learning, physical and mental health services)
- update existing surveys to capture additional data that can inform necessary shifts in school policy and culture in addition to partnership selection.

Despite the setback of the pandemic, the initiative has since gained momentum with further buy-in from WPS and the implementation of twelve rigorous partnerships that provide critical,

school-based programming and services to students, families, and faculty. With the addition of a fifth school in 2022, Wendell Cross, it is imperative that BTS has the human and financial capital to effectively coordinate a school-wide data collection that ensures student and parent voices are directly informing the initiative's next steps, while continuing to offer these existing services. Moving forward, student and parent surveys will inquire on the following themes:

Student	Parent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographic Information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographic Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Experience • School Culture & Climate • Student Programs, Services & Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Engagement⁴ • Student Programs. Services/Resources • Family Programs/Services/Resources

Surveys will be available through the Districts Parent Square, BTS online portal and in paper form in both English and Spanish as the primary languages across Waterbury Public Schools.

Table 3 below outlines BTS's course of action:

TABLE 3		
Action Item	Assigned to	Deadline
Launch Student Survey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeroom 	BTS Site Coordinator, Dillinger RAD & School	1 st quarter (Jan-Mar)
Launch Parent Surveys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open House • ParentSquare 	BTS Site Coordinator, Dillinger RAD & School Leadership	2 nd Quarter (Apr – June)
Close Student Surveys	BTS & Dillinger RAD	2 nd Quarter (April)
Close Parent Surveys	BTS & Dillinger RAD	3 rd Quarter (July)
Distribute Gift Cards	BTS Site Coordinators	3 rd Quarter (July- Aug)

Survey Analysis, Review, Reporting (to Staff, Parents &	BTS, School Leadership, LEA & Dillinger RAD	3 rd Quarter (Aug – September)
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As outlined above, the partnership will leverage a multi-tiered communications and outreach strategy to ensure caregivers specifically have several opportunities, incentives and consistent messaging to encourage survey completion. For example, WPS adopted ParentSquare as a simple and collaborative school-home communication platform to reach and engage every parent, ensuring all parents have the opportunity to actively participate in their child’s education. Similar to an Instagram platform, parents are able to keep track of news, activities, and events from all their children’s schools in one place all in one centralized place. BTS’s Community Impact and Marketing team has experienced communication strategists that have and will continue to support the initiative through robust content creation that can be posted and shared school wide via ParentSquare. While virtual platforms expand the organization’s touch and reach, BTS has quickly learned that in-person outreach is the best way to ensure successful data collection. In addition to ParentSquare, emails, phone calls, and text blasts, BOOST Schools have historically leveraged the first Open House of the school year to engage families directly with opportunities to complete the survey on site. Across the District, families are most likely to attend the first Open House relative to all other school-hosted events throughout the school year. Via desktop, tablet, cell phone or paper, BTS has leveraged both staff and volunteers at these events to administer surveys to attending caregivers.

Finally, students and parent data alone will not suffice in capturing a full image of the schools’ needs and areas of opportunity. School faculty are an integral part of the community schools

model and, thus, must be included in this process. All BTS staff are trained Results-Based Facilitators and particularly equipped to lead stakeholder discussions that yield actionable results. Results Based Facilitation (RBF) is a competency-based approach to participating in and facilitating processes in order to get results. It is a specific, hands-on method that enables people to practice the skills for getting different and better results in their meetings, conversations and the work that flows from this. RBF is a powerful way to move people into alignment and have an impact on program results. As such, BTS will leverage staff meetings throughout October to convene a series of five, one-hour focus groups, one per school, to help capture necessary insight on what services, programs, resources, and practices can best support their role as educators and student success.

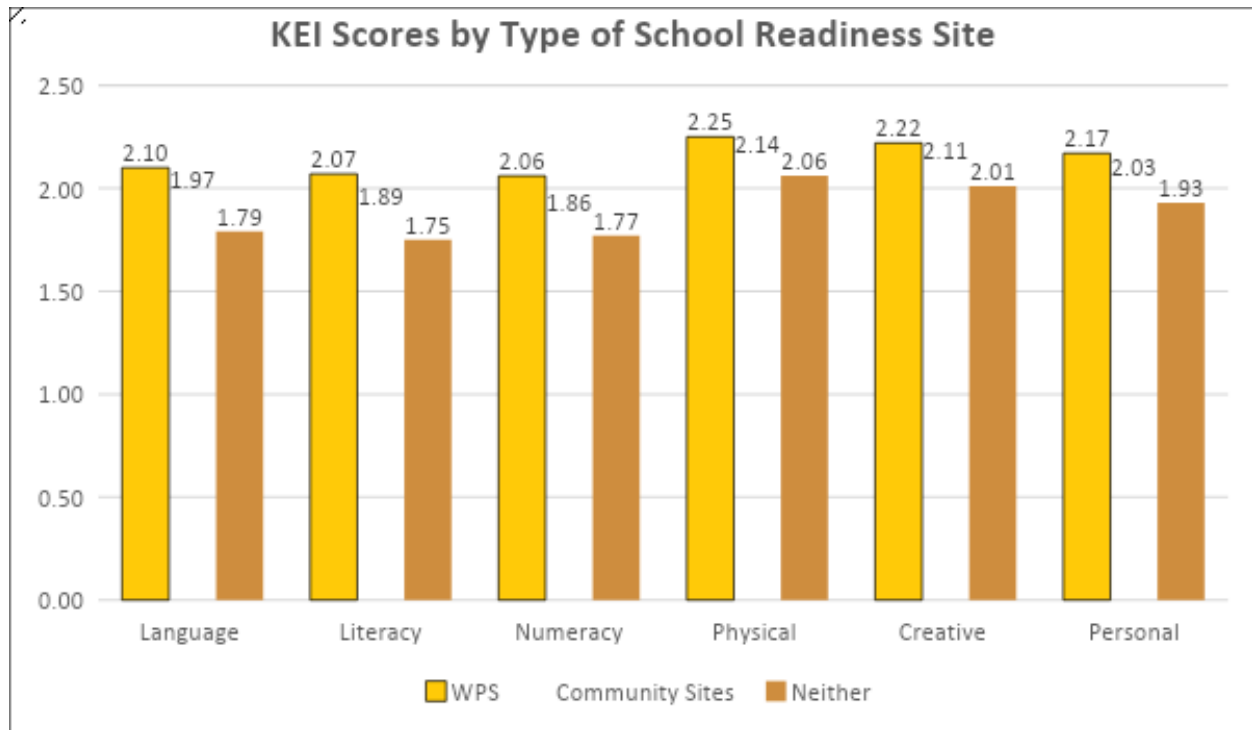
Support, Resources & Services to Close Identified Educational Gaps. In 2017, the Learning Policy Institute released a comprehensive review of more than 140 studies which demonstrate that well-implemented community schools help meet the educational needs of low-performing students in high-poverty schools and lead to improvement in student and school outcomes. As the first Cradle-to-Career site in Connecticut, BTS understands well that the foundation for student success in school starts well before they are enrolled.

A Look at Early Childhood Outcomes & Services. Children's early experiences are foundational to their future development, and research has linked children's readiness to begin school to future academic performance. Improving the quality of pre-school and early school experiences can help to ensure that children are school ready and developmentally on target. In Connecticut, kindergarten readiness is determined by the Kindergarten Entrance Inventory (KEI). The KEI inventory is administered to kindergarten students across Connecticut during

the fall. This inventory assesses students across six indicators: literacy, language, numeracy, physical, creative, and personal. Each indicator is scored according to three levels:

- **Level 1.** The lowest performance level identifies students that need extra support.
- **Level 2.** Identifies students that are in need of some extra support.
- **Level 3.** The higher performance level identifies students that need minimal support.

In the Spring of 2020, the Waterbury Public Schools (WPS) released aggregated KEI scores to BTS. The scores were disaggregated by a range of socio-demographic factors; namely students' current school, pre-school experience, school readiness site, zip code and race/ethnicity. In an effort to increase kindergarten readiness, BTS partnered with the School Readiness Council to assess the impact of School Readiness programs for 3- and 4-year-old children. A total of 1,502 students from SY18-19 were included in this review, and the total number of students assessed across each racial/ethnic group is as follows: Hispanic/Latine (875), Black (277), White (285), and multi-racial (65). KEI scores were compared between students who attended a Waterbury school readiness site (either within the Waterbury Public Schools or a community site) and students who did not attend a school readiness site. As shown in Figure 3 below, a high proportion of kindergarten students across the four racial/ethnic groups scored at performance level one – often ranging between 20%-40%. Notably, a high proportion of Black and Hispanic/Latine students scored at performance level one across the language and literacy indicators. Multi-racial students were also highly represented at performance level 1 within the areas of literacy and numeracy, although constituting a lower number of students. Despite these differences, nearly thirty percent (27.9%) of kindergarten students with school readiness experience were still represented at performance level 1.

Figure 3 | KEI Scores by Type of School Readiness Site

In response to this data, BTS and partners committed to the coordination of two interventions. The expansion of school readiness slots at the 5 BOOST schools in Waterbury, while simultaneously enhancing their quality. Additionally, students were to receive two years of school readiness experience, as opposed to one year by increased parent and community engagement. Secondly, and in an effort to build upon the Early Care and Education Ecosystem in Waterbury, BTS, Reach Out and Read, United Way of Greater Waterbury and StayWell Health Center partnered to develop and support a community-based system's approach in using the **Ages and Stages Questionnaire® (ASQ)** in Waterbury's pediatric practices and, eventually, all BOOST Schools. The result was Sparkler, a convenient mobile app that features a digital version of the ASQ, a research- and time-tested developmental screening tool that has historically been completed on paper. ASQ helps parents and the people

servicing them learn about children's strengths and access support if needed. The ASQ asks families questions about how children are growing and developing through topics including:

- **Communication skills** — how a child talks, listens, and understands.
- **Fine motor skills** — how a child coordinates his/her hands and eyes.
- **Gross motor skills** — how a child makes large movements, i.e., moving arms, legs, feet, whole body.
- **Personal-Social** — how a child understands him or herself and others; and
- **Problem Solving** — how your child remembers, solves problems, and makes decisions.

The partnership seeks to establish a community-wide screening process that empowers families, aligns all the screenings being done for each child, helps to identify trends at the neighborhood/community level to develop and implement equitable structural supports, maximizes resources and communication among early childhood providers and provides Bridge to Success (BTS) with a developmental overview of Waterbury's young children. Participating partners can log into the Sparkler Dashboard to track which families have taken the ASQ and to monitor results. If the ASQ recommends a referral or two monitors, the family will be referred to the CT 211 Child Development Infoline, operated by United Way, who will follow up. If ASQ recommends monitoring in one or more areas, Sparkler's early childhood coaches will reach out through the app to offer support. Sparkler brings parents and early care providers together to identify and address any potential developmental concerns early. The app also provides play activities and tools to make developmental promotion more fun and meaningful.

A Look at Student Academic Performance. The academic performance in four of the five schools – Carrington, Duggan, Gilmartin & Reed – is below state average. Connecticut implemented Smarter Balanced Common Core testing conducted between 3rd and 8th grade. The scores of the grades are then combined to obtain a sizable sample, bringing to light a stark gap between the percentages of children performing at or above level in the four schools and the students in Connecticut as a whole. As seen in Tables 4, this is the case for both English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics (math).

Table 4 | Percentage of students performing at or above proficiency level, by district and state average⁵

	2017-18		2018-19		2021-22	
Subject	% (CT)	% (WPS)	% (CT)	% (WPS)	% (CT)	% (WPS)
ELA	55.3	26.5	55.7	30.3	49.1	23.5
Math	46.8	19.2	48.1	20.2	40	12.5

51.Source: EdSight (ct.gov)

2.Smarter Balanced Assessments, CT v WPS Trends, ELA & Math, All Grades Combined

There are large academic discrepancies along ethnic/race lines within each school. The ethnic and racial disparities are especially apparent when considering the district. In both the district and Connecticut as a whole, white students are twice as likely to perform at or above their grade level. However, independent of race/ethnicity, students in Waterbury are performing far below the state average. The gap is, in fact, the largest for the white students.

Table 5⁶ | Percentage of WPS students performing at or above ELA & Math

Subject	Race/Ethnicity	2021-22	
		% (WPS)	% (CT)
ELA	Asian	54.3	73.2
	Black/African American	21.6	28.7
	Hispanic/Latine	20.3	29.6
	Two/More Races	25.2	54.5
	White	39.4	63.6
Math	Asian	32.4	70.6
	Black or African American	9.9	16.3
	Hispanic/Latine	10.5	20.2
	Two/More Races	10.5	44.5
	White	25.2	54.8

⁶ Source: EdSight (ct.gov); Smarter Balanced Assessments, WPS Trends, ELA & Math

A Look at Attendance. The correlation between attendance and academic outcomes is intuitive: the more time a child spends at school, the more time she has to learn. This correlation applies to individual students and to schools as a whole. Over the last few years, the chronic absenteeism within each of the four original schools has fluctuated around the state average, with the exception of SY20–21 which was exacerbated by impacts of the pandemic (see Table 6).

Table 6⁷ | Percentage of student chronic absenteeism rates by school and CT

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
	Percentage of Chronically	Percentage of Chronically	Percentage of Chronically
CT	10.4	12.2	19
Carrington	5	10	28.2
Duggan	7.5	21	51.3
Gilmartin	11.9	16.8	42.1
Reed	7	19.6	44.6

Again, despite the pandemic affecting all student populations throughout SY20–21, Black and Latine students were more often chronically absent relative to their white counterparts as shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7⁸ | Chronic absenteeism rates by district and CT and by race/ethnicity

	2018-19		2019-20		2020-21	
	% (CT)	% (WPS)	% (CT)	% (WPS)	% (CT)	% (WPS)
Asian	6.3	9.4	8	12.7	7.6	31.8
Black or African	15.2	16.7	16.7	21	31.4	52.1*
Hispanic/Latine of any race	16.4	16.8*	17.9	22.4*	30.7	50.5Z
Two or More Races	10	15.2	12.1	20.4	19.4	44.9
White	6.7	10.8	8.6	17.1	10.5	32.6

Graduation. As shown in Figure 4 below, ethnic, and racial disparities have begun to close, though Latine students have been less likely to graduate relative to their Black and White counterparts. (Source: EdSight (ct.gov)).

Figure 4 | WPS Four-year Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity (Source: EdSight (ct.gov))

District	Race/Ethnicity	Graduates				
		Four-Year Graduation Rate by Year				
		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Waterbury School District	Asian	100.0	93.3	*	100.0	*
	Black	79.9	75.7	84.1	81.1	85.2
	Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Hispanic	69.6	72.4	78.4	80.6	80.9
	Indian or Alaska Native	*	*	*	*	*
	Two or More Races	89.3	78.9	95.5	81.8	80.6
	White	81.9	86.5	88.2	85.7	87.9

* The data are suppressed to ensure confidentiality.

* N/A is displayed when a category is not applicable for a district or school.

Despite ESSER I, II, & III funds, there still remains a gap in services available in our schools to address these disparate outcomes. Through BOOST, BTS has been able to counter some of these challenges by leveraging partnerships with Lotus Counseling, Porter’s House, and Fitness Fury to name a few. BTS’s nimble nature allows us to engage communities in meaningful ways that districts simply can’t, often restricted by limited bandwidth. BTS’s impact, thus far, in the four original schools demonstrates the importance of having a primary facilitator and coordinator of internal and external support. To sustain these efforts, BTS requires full funding to address educational gaps in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.

Addressing Needs of Underserved and Highly Impacted Populations. BOOST is uniquely positioned to address the needs of student populations highly impacted. Waterbury currently has two diversion programs to keep students from formal involvement in the Juvenile Justice system – The Juvenile Review Board (JRB) facilitated by Waterbury Youth Services and Keeping Individuals Driven for Success (KIDS), facilitated by Waterbury Police Department.

BTS partners with both organizations as members of the local the Racial & Ethnic Disparities (R.E.D) Workgroup, BTS's Positive Youth Development (PYD) Collective Action Network (CAN) and Community Council. The three groups, respectively, address the current data impact all youth and young adults in the city of Waterbury utilizing a racial equity lens. The data informs strategies developed with outputs and outcomes across the cross-sector stakeholders serving on the BTS PYD and/or Community Council. Positive Youth Development (PYD) brings together Waterbury youth providers and youth to improve and promote culturally responsive programming that improves the holistic development of Waterbury's young people. PYD has focused its efforts on cultivating meaningful and equitable opportunities for Youth Leadership at a programmatic, organizational and community level. An example of a collaborative effort is the Waterbury Youth Summit. In its second year, it is one expression of PYD's commitment to ensuring Waterbury's youth have access to the resources they need to become effective leaders of today and tomorrow. Young people, particularly BIPOC and other marginalized groups, have the capacity to become effective agents for equity and justice, to challenge and shift the status quo rather than find ways to succeed within it. The annual Youth Summit held this year in Spring 2023 is a series of interactive workshops that invite youth (grades 6th - 12th) and young adults (18 - 24) to recognize and develop their capacity to enact change through meaningful, effective leadership. Additionally, BTS in partnership with WPS took a child and family centered approach to address the social emotional health of students and families. This school-community partnership was an innovative approach to increase equitable access to behavioral health services, BTS identified a community-based partner with the capacity to integrate a multi-faceted behavioral health approach to address the increasing need for mental and emotional health interventions as a result of the social isolation students

experienced during the COVID pandemic. Porter's House offers both an after-school program during the school year as well as a summer program during summer vacation for youth ages 5-12. Providing a structured environment for youth to learn and practice various Social & Emotional Learning (SEL) skills, Porter's House follows a daily schedule as doing so tends to create a sense of safety and security for many children. Through BOOST, Porter's House has delivered two key services:

- out-patient clinical counseling for identified students (grades 2nd - 8th)
- in-school mediation whereby teachers and students can self-refer for socio-emotional support throughout the school day

In SY 21-22, Porter's House has facilitated mediation, five days a week, for over 100 students and managed a consistent caseload of 14 students receiving out-patient services (twice a week). The majority of referrals have been for male students (56%) in grades 4 - 6 (68%). The vast majority of students receiving services identify as Hispanic/Latine (54%); nearly half (41%) identify as African American/Black and 15% identify as Caucasian/White. Primary reasons for student referrals have included: Anxiety, Depression, Difficulty complying with Directives, Difficulty Sustaining Attention, Difficulty Maintaining Self-Control, Low Frustration Tolerance, Peer Conflict, Mood Dysregulation, Rigid Behaviors, Self-injurious Behavior, Trauma History and Verbal Aggression. Bridge to Success is in full support of this commitment with an explicit focus on racial equity and strategic partnerships with high-quality healing and wellness agencies. BOOST! has the demonstrated potential to strengthen the district's efforts as it responds to the explicit need for integrated wellness services that (1) alleviate teachers and school administrators from the burden of serving as both educator and therapist in the classroom and (2) provide students with the resources they need to be safe.

III. QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN

In April 2023, Waterbury Public Schools and Waterbury Bridge to Success Community Partnership entered into a professional services agreement for before and after school care to fulfill a shared vision for academic, social, emotional, and physical health enrichment opportunities and services delivered at the identified schools as part of the Waterbury Bridge to Success Boost! Community Schools Initiative. As the Local Educational Authority, Waterbury Public Schools' mission is to inspire and prepare every student to be successful in and beyond school. It's vision is that ALL Waterbury Public Schools students will graduate ready to transform their world. More importantly, it holds very clear values for its students, their families, schools, educators, and leaders. Their core values they adhere to:

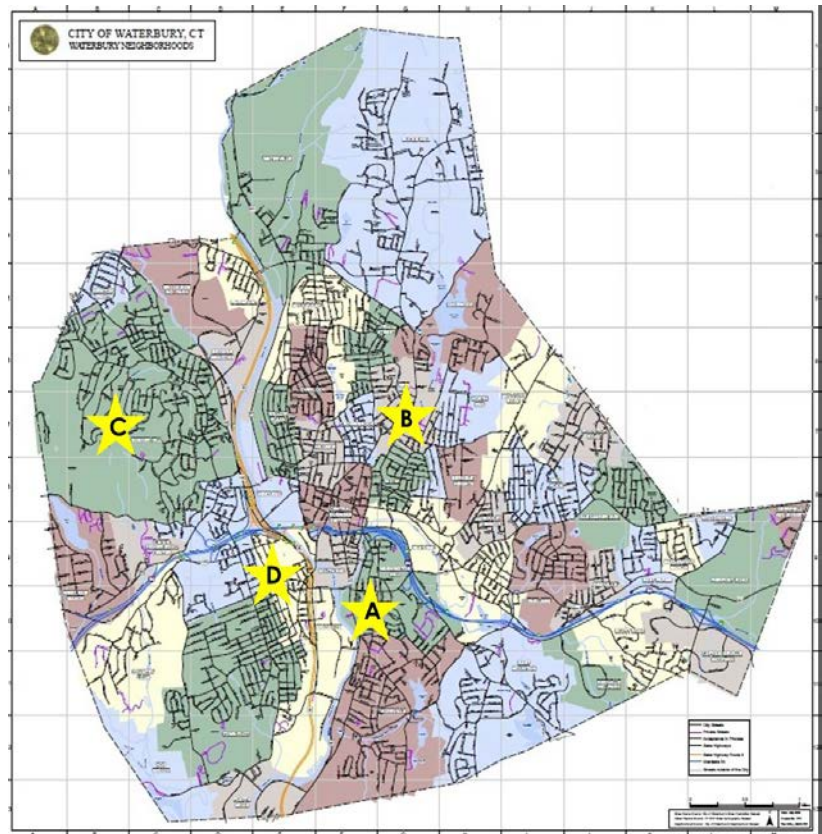
- Holds high expectations for excellence in teaching and learning and promotes equity in policy, practice, and resources.
- Provides students a quality learning experience aligned to our Portrait of a Graduate
- Acts as stewards for community resources and managing our assets to ensure equity and excellence, recognizes that meaningful relationships are the foundation of a high-quality education, is committed to embracing a diverse community, and committed to civility, honesty, responsibility, and transparency.

The Lead Partner, Waterbury Bridge to Success Community Partnership, was established in 2010 to facilitate cross-sector collaborative partnerships designed to improve cradle-to-career outcomes for Waterbury's marginalized children and families. BTS facilitates Collective Action Networks (CANs) and Think Tanks comprised of nonprofit, municipal partners, and community participants that focus on specific youth-focused needs and opportunities. BTS is a member of the national StriveTogether network, which supports community-based collective action to

improve outcomes for youth and families. **In the last five years, StriveTogether and BTS have committed to, and increased focus on dismantling the policies, practices and beliefs that have historically disenfranchised marginalized community members, with the intent to co-create sustainable equitable systems that support BIPOC youth, families, and communities from cradle to career.** The BOOST! Community Schools is part of the Waterbury Bridge to Success (BTS) network of over 90 partners. BOOST! was implemented in 2016 with the objective to identify, and ultimately reduce, ethnic and racial disparities within schools, as well as reduce gaps in academic outcomes between Waterbury and the rest of the state by implementing supportive programs that enrich student's exposure and performance. The success of BOOST! hinges upon strong partnership and collaboration with Waterbury Public School District, local and state government, nonprofits, community-based organizations, leaders, providers, and businesses. There

are 30 public schools in Waterbury, serving over 18,000 students from PreK to 12th grade. BOOST! currently focuses on three preK-8 schools, with the intent to implement the model in two more schools beginning Fall 2025. The five schools represent the city as a whole.

WHY BOOST! Common sense tells us that children and youth do



better in school when the major influences on their learning and development — family, school and community — work together to provide the foundation they need to succeed. When children and youth are hungry or sick, emotionally distraught or lacking parental support, they often have difficulty succeeding in school — and in life. In contrast, when families and the community play active roles in schools, students achieve higher levels.

WHAT Is BOOST! The programs and services that can help meet these needs are described as "wraparound services" and encompass physical health, mental health, behavioral supports, enrichment activities, and parent engagement. These services can be provided by schools, community organizations or government agencies. BTS partners have developed a better way for coordinating critical wraparound support for our students — Boost! **Boost! is both a place and a set of partnerships between schools and community partners.** It is the philosophy that every child and every school is capable of excellence given the right conditions for learning — and that those conditions include supporting students and families in their out of school lives. It is also a commitment between the BTS partners to change the way they work together, by sharing data, using common strategies and having open communication. It is also a place — a set of 5 schools and over 90 community partners which have committed to fully implementing this belief. Boost! helps to ensure that children receive high quality supports and services to promote their physical, social, and emotional development, that families are welcomed in schools and engaged in their children's educations, and that public and private resources for wraparound services are used efficiently and effectively. By working together to maximize their effectiveness, and implement common strategies and programs, the partnership aims to ensure students are socially and emotionally ready for school, read well by grade three, and graduate from high school on time so they will be ready for the career of their choice.

HOW DOES BOOST Work? BOOST! Facilitates a system of relationships that links academic and enrichment programs and social services so that all students, families, and individuals succeed, and the community is strengthened.



General Objectives & Outcomes

Located within the community, all five neighborhood schools provide continuity between school and home. The neighborhoods, however, are deprived of basic resources, such as physical and mental health care, recreational opportunities, healthy food, etc. We focus on schools in these

“resource deserts” because we envision them becoming community hubs to these neighborhoods; a place families can go to to receive support and resources to meet their basic needs.

Neighborhood schools can glue communities together. We identified where our community school can provide services to make a difference, which are on the student level, family level, and community level:

Student Level (particularly for Black & Latinx students)

- **Improve Student Academic Performance**
 - Annually Increase PreK 4 & 5 enrollment
 - Annually Increase 3rd grade reading levels to match CT average.
 - Annually Increase 8th grade math levels to match CT average.
- **Reduce Chronic Absenteeism**
 - Particularly for Kindergarten, 7th and 8th grade levels
- **Reduce Exclusionary Disciplinary Actions**
 - Via increasing number of viable pathways for SEL & Restorative Justice
- **Family Level**
 - **Addressing Basic Needs -**
 - BOOST Schools will establish at least two (2) partnerships that offer needed, equitable and affordable support and services identified by families.
 - **Improve Parent/Family Engagement**
 - BOOST Schools will implement and utilize a series of communication tools, platforms and strategies to inform, engage and empower parents
 - BOOST Schools will coordinate parent/family-centered, non-academic

events that promote relationship building amongst parents and school personnel

- **Build Parent Power in School**

- BOOST Schools will ensure parent presence at all Governance Council meetings and will implement a robust re-launch of Parent-Teacher organizations (PTO) to expand decision-making power to parents.
- BOOST Schools will establish partnerships that can offer relevant training opportunities to parents/caregivers to develop critical leadership and advocacy skills.

- **Community Level**

- Increase Equitable Access to Services - BOOST Schools will establish partnerships that respond to community-identified needs such as mental health, employment and meal services.

BOOST's Evidence-Based Activities, Strategies, or Interventions - BOOST relies on **(5) key strategies** to execute an ambitious, but realistic strategic plan across all participating schools.

School-Community Partnerships. BOOST facilitates and manages Family-school-community partnerships are a shared responsibility and reciprocal process whereby schools and other community agencies and organizations engage families in meaningful and culturally appropriate ways, and families take initiative to actively supporting their children's development and learning.

Data Collection/Analysis: All of BTS's work is rooted in data-driven decision making to examine partnership effectiveness and impact. BOOST! Utilizes several tools for data collection and analysis to promote continuous improvement -- Bi-annual Needs Assessments, Asset

Mapping, Power Mapping and Pre-post testing to name a few. Linking relevant data to student outcome data (attendance, behavioral referrals, and academic achievements) will allow us to examine impact in real time for continuous quality improvement, increase student outcomes and decrease outcome disparities.

Strategic Communications. It is critical that community schools be able to communicate effectively with all key stakeholders. As such, BTS and its partners use an integrated marketing strategy that leverages several platforms to share key data and information with schools, partners, families and students.

Policy/Advocacy: Our four Cradle to Career Initiatives, collectively and collaboratively, address issues important for child and family success in one of the most economically and racially segregated states in the country. Presently, there is an opportunity to build on this strong Network of infrastructure and highly aligned partners to advance local and state investment and policy efforts. Over the last two years, we have developed an effective working partnership between our four communities, as evidenced by a regional C2C Conference in November 2019 and a joint legislative forum at the Connecticut State Capitol in February 2020.

More recently, with Strive Together support, we have been growing our intercity policy capacity and efforts by:

- Raising awareness of our work with state and local municipal legislators and elected officials and aligning efforts.
- Developing a shared policy agenda with an emphasis on race equity, closing the opportunity gap, and trauma responsive communities and managing strategies to advance shared policy interests in collaboration with other statewide partners.
- Positioning the Partnership to influence Cares ACT and secure state funding for local

C2C infrastructure and supporting individual partnerships, as needed, for specific pieces of lobbying on legislation or policies that impact local work. Also, providing access to credible, local leadership and grassroots organizations for state-wide coalitions.

Fundraising for Sustainability. Due to the Waterbury School District being level funded for over a decade, innovative fundraising and investment strategies have been developed to launch the work. Patient capital and adequate funding is need to provide comprehensive wraparound services to the whole school, whole child and whole community. BTS has been able to leverage in-kind supports and secure public and private dollars for early asset mapping, strategic planning and pilot programming. BTS has been able to secure █████ of the 5 year budget proposed for this project through in-kind and financial supports.

BOOST's Four Community Schools Capacities. Effective community schools continually develop a set of four key capacities. According to the National Coalition for Community Schools, these four capacities are integral to any community school: Comprehensiveness, Collaboration, Coherence & Commitment. BOOST relies on these capacities to guide and define initiative progress.

- **Comprehensiveness.** Programs, services and opportunities respond to a wide spectrum of identified needs by marshalling a full complement of partnership resources Whole Child Developmental Approach Needs Assessment & Resource Allocation Asset-based, High-quality Program Development
- **Collaboration.** All stakeholders are involved in meaningful, permanent roles – including educators, parents, students, funders, community members, elected officials, providers, policymakers, etc. Engagement Partnership Development Shared Leadership
- **Coherence.** Programs, services and opportunities are integrated and aligned to achieve

outcomes beyond the reach of any one entity Program Integration and Oversight
School/Partner Relationships Coordination

- **Commitment.** All partners view the CS as a long-term strategy, not a program, and sustainability planning activities are employed from the start Shared Vision and Results Framework Building Public Will and Participation Strategic Financing Evaluation and Capacity-Building.

We understand that a successful community school depends upon strong collaboration between school administration and staff and the Lead Partner; seamless integration of resources, programs, and services before, during and after the school day; and a Site Coordinator who is empowered to manage partnerships and integration of programs and services within the school(s). We agree that the Site Coordinator will play a leadership role in the community school(s). We will support close communication and accountability between Waterbury Bridge to Success (BTS), its school and community-based staff, Waterbury Public Schools, central office and school administrators and staff, additional partners, and families.

The School Based Site Coordinator will be empowered to guide the needs assessment and resource inventory; report to the District Board of Education and BTS Community Council; oversee outreach to children and families; and to broker relationships with program providers, refer students and families to those programs, and coordinate in collaboration with school leadership and educators the programming, ensuring that what takes place before, during, and after regular school hours supports what happens in the classroom. We agree to collaboratively develop, plan and implement the key components of the community schools framework including program goals and content; to assess student and family needs and identify and collaborate with community partners, leaders and providers to meet those needs; to identify the

students and families to be served; to plan the shared use of school space and equipment; and to identify the roles District and school staff that will participate in supporting this partnership. We further agree that the activities of the community school(s) will encompass our work together with aligned partners consistent with, and in support of, the goals of the District and each school’s improvement plan, and that BTS resources will develop a more complete Memorandum of Understanding with the partners in the first quarter of our funding, to meet the identified needs to ensure all programmatic, communication, evaluation and coordination adhere to the implementation plan. To this end, we are committed to creating and supporting a shared vision, common goals, and a clear communication structure.

We further agree to participate in partnership development activities provided by Waterbury Bridge to Success, Lead Partner of the Boost Community Schools Initiative, with the shared intention of creating a sustainable community schools model. This partnership to implement a comprehensive full-service community schools model aims to retain and support students and their families by providing the school as a hub and service delivery site before and after school, evenings, and weekends as appropriate.

Within this framework of our partnership, we agree to the following responsibilities:

<u>Roles & Responsibilities of the Waterbury Public Schools (LEA) & Waterbury Bridge to Success Community Partnership (Lead Partner)</u>	
<u>District Schools/LEA Agrees to:</u>	<u>BTS/Lead Partner Agrees to:</u>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A school-based Administrator as a key point of contact • Opportunities for Waterbury Bridge to Success/Lead Partner staff to meet regularly with District and/or school leadership, educators, and staff. • Distribution of parent/guardian consent letters for programs coordinated by Waterbury Bridge to Success (BTS) or its designee. • Appropriate student referral information • Office space for School Based Boost Site Coordinator • Program space for identified and contracted partner providers • Access to a phone, fax, and copier • Provide data related to agreed performance goals. • Endorsement of school staff participation in Waterbury Bridge to Success/Lead Partner-sponsored events • Space for service provider meetings • Waterbury Bridge to Success designated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign a Coordinator to integrate school and community resources. • Conduct a full and on-going needs assessment, in cooperation with the District POC, school staff, students, families and other partners. • Identify, coordinate, and monitor existing school and community resources and recruit as needed and identified. • Facilitate communication and interaction between service providers and each school's leadership and point of contact. • Link service providers to school, students, and families and manage the delivery of these services. • Follow up on student performance and progress and provide feedback to each school and program and wraparound services partners. • Provide leadership in Family Engagement, including outreach,
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<p>staff and/or Boost Site Coordinator involvement in staff meetings and/or School Governance Council in development of each Boost School's Improvement Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include the Boost Community Schools outputs in the District Improvement Plan • Complete an interim and annual feedback survey regarding quality assurance and overall impact. • Flexibility of Coordinator's time to fulfill responsibilities to Lead Partner • Direction for accessing district and school-based resources as appropriate for each of the Boost Community Schools to fulfill or advance the implementation plan. • Active participation by District and/or school leadership in BTS Community Council 	<p>communications, events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and document the effectiveness of service provider activities on total school performance. • Convene meetings to promote effective collaboration. • Provide access to national best practices, training, and technical assistance. • Ensure partner activities align with goals of District and school improvement plans. • Will serve as the fiduciary for this initiative, managing current funding and securing additional funds for sustainability beyond FSCS/USDE funding. • Will be responsible for implementing and coordinating all activities pertinent to the grant and this partnership. • Will collaborate and coordinate with the District and/or schools on public
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	<p>engagement and public relations around the community schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be the resource procurer in this initiative
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As part of the Waterbury Bridge to Success Boost! Community Schools core service categories include:

- Academic Support and Skill Development (for youth and adults)
- Family Engagement/Involvement
- Community and Business Involvement
- Service Integration
- Site Management and Provision of Services/Activities

All Boost! services are to be linked with the school day and are planned and delivered in close collaboration with the school principal and staff. The academic outcomes include:

- Improve school attendance.
- Improve academic performance.
- Improve behavior and pro-social skills.
- Increase development assets.

Plan for Annual Measurable Performance Objectives & Outcomes.

Located within the community, all five neighborhood schools provide continuity between school and home. The neighborhoods, however, are deprived of basic resources, such as

physical and mental health care, recreational opportunities, healthy food, etc. We focus on schools in these under resourced communities because we envision them becoming community hubs to these neighborhoods; a place families can go to receive support and resources to meet their basic needs. As such, BOOST has identified the following objectives at the student, family, and community level (**see attached Logic Model, indicators outputs & measurements in Appendix B**):

Student Level	Family & Community Level
<p>Improve Student Academic Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5% increase in students performing at or above level for 3rd grade reading and 8th grade math based 	<p>Addressing Basic Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum of 20% of all partnerships to provide family and resident specific services and programming
<p>Reduce Chronic Absenteeism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5% improvement in the reduction of students missing 10% or more of the school year; particularly for 	<p>Improve Parent/Family Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20% sustained increase of parent participation in Parent-Teacher Organizations; particularly for Black,
<p>Reduce Exclusionary Disciplinary Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5% decrease in the number of students impacted by exclusionary disciplinary actions (i.e., ISS, 	<p>Build Parent Power in School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Parent/Caregiver organizations in 3 of the 5 schools. 20% sustained increase of parent participation on School Governance

As previously stated, BTS and partners committed to the coordination of two interventions to improve early childhood outcomes. To date, BTS has registered approximately 1,100 children and their families to Sparkler, a mobile app with the ASQ and ASQ-SE early childhood development tool embedded. An Administrator since 2019, Bridge to Success is leading the

state with the collaboration with Waterbury Public Schools, Waterbury Office of Early Childhood's School Readiness Council and Providers Network, Naugatuck Valley Community College and the Waterbury Home Visitors Network including local pediatricians, two FQHC's, medical and behavioral health providers. Sparkler offers organizations serving young families a mobile app and related services that help parents, grandparents, and other caregivers harness the science of early child and brain development to make the most of the early years. Sparkler helps families learn how their children are developing — through observation of age-based play activities and through the leading child development screening questionnaire. Sparkler's web-based dashboard to monitor's the child's progress and engages directly with families and/or providers using robust two-way messaging tools. The dashboard enables providers to:

- Promote developmental monitoring with families.
- Conduct developmental screening.
- Engage directly with families using robust two-way messaging.
- Find and share relevant parent tips and play activities with families based on age, interests, and skills.
- Monitor families' engagement and download data and reports on play, engagement, and developmental screening.

Moving forward, BTS prioritizes integrating Sparkler into all five BOOST schools as a staple tool for both educators via the dashboard and parents via the app's array of in-house and referred resources. In July 2022, BTS launched its 4-part Sparkler Summer Series to increase awareness and registration. Families from across the City gathered to learn about developmental screening and early detection. Over 500 families learned through play

while addressing disparities discovered in the data of completed ASQ and ASQ-SE screenings. The Sparkler Summer Series will become an annual event to increase engagement and participation. It will serve as a measure of accountability as the Early Childhood & Education Collaborative Action Network meets quarterly to review the key data points including, but not limited to – number of registrations, percentage of children meeting their developmental milestones, number of referrals by race/ethnicity, gender, and zip code.

Implementation of Full-Service Community Schools Model. BOOST Community Schools are built on four pillars which ensure that students are engaged and that everyone in the school community - parents, teachers, residents - feels welcome and supported. Collaborative leadership and joint decision-making are central to the planning and coordination of integrated student services, expanded and enriched learning opportunities and active family and community engagement.

Step 1 | Partner Recruitment & Selection. BTS utilizes a Request For Information (RFI) process to identify and vet potential community-based partners. Available on BTS's website, interested agencies and invited partners are required to complete an RFI for consideration. The online form includes the following themes:

- Contact Information
- Organization Information
 - Mission, Vision & Values
 - Years serving Waterbury communities.
 - Alignment with Racial Equity
- Program/Service Details
- History of Program Impact

- Requested/Existing Funding
- Agreements
 - Pre-post Data Collection
 - Program Evaluations
 - Participation in Collaborative Action Networks
- Uploads
 - Organization Literature
 - Facilitator Resumes

Upon completion of this RFI, BTS staff conduct in-depth interviews with candidates that align with community needs and interests. Historically, priority has been given to existing BTS partners and Waterbury-based organizations. However, interviews are an opportunity to share the overall vision of the community schools model as well as partner expectations to determine if candidates' organizational values and approach correspond. Vetted and approved partners are then introduced to school leadership to review program/service specifics and determine opportunities for partnership as it aligns with the School's Improvement Plan (SIP).

Step 2 | Initial Planning. Once vetted and selected by school leadership, BTS works closely with selected partners to plan and co-create an initial partnership proposal which is later shared with school leadership for review and editing. Upon approval, BTS generates a Partnership Agreement which includes:

- a program/service description, objectives and expected outcomes.
- a detailed timeline for promotion, enrollment, implementation, and assessment
- partnership budget and invoice processes
- roles, responsibilities and expectations of the provider, the school and BTS

Additionally, selected partners are required to complete a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), confirming that Partners understand their role in a larger vision and that they will deliver services and share relevant data that are in alignment with the initiative's goals and objectives. High-level partnerships, such as those requiring health insurance coverage to acquire services, require approval from both the school and district, whereby MOU's are reviewed and approved by WPS's legal counsel before any steps are taken for program/service rollout.

Step 3 | Promotion & Outreach. Promotion and outreach are fundamental to guarantee successful backend coordination, specifically for student and family programs. BTS's Community Impact and Marketing (CIM) Team plays a critical role in the success of program enrollment and rollout via mass content creation and strategic communications. Utilizing an array of content creation platforms such as Canva, Google Suite, JotForm and Mailchimp, each partnership is supported by its own unique, bilingual (English & Spanish) promotion package which includes:

- Social media graphics for posting to ParentSquare and BTS platforms.
- Text blasts and targeted emails to parent and student listservs
- Paper flyers for in-person and mail distribution
- Online and paper enrollment forms

Once ready, BTS shares all promotion packages with school leadership and the provider via email with detailed instructions for posting, sharing and/or distribution. As program applications are received via the online enrollment or paper form, BTS utilizes Google Sheets to generate and share necessary program documents including a program roster, attendance, and dismissal sheet. Providers are responsible for connecting with families via email or

phone to provide important program information at least 72 hours before the program is scheduled to begin:

- a general welcoming and introduction to partner agency and program
- information about the program facilitator
- a reminder of program dates, times, and expectations
- program contact information

Step 4 | Program Launch & Management. As capacity allows, BTS is present on the first day of programs to perform an initial site evaluation and identify any immediate areas of improvement regarding program management and facilitation. BTS regularly reviews program attendance records to ensure active and consistent participation. Google Sheets allows for multi-user file sharing, and thus, rosters and attendance records automatically update as the provider inputs daily program data. Should a participant miss three consecutive classes, BTS coordinates with the provider and school to identify existing barriers to attendance and/or continued interest in participating. Participants with more than 3 absences may be pulled from the program to allow others an opportunity to participate. Student and family programs alone do not make a full-service community school. School staff support and ongoing, yearlong student community engagement are integral to the success of this model. BTS coordinated the registration, implementation and evaluation of these partnerships adhering to the aforementioned process. The pandemic has weighed heavily on educators across the country, Waterbury being no exception. With proper funding, BTS and BOOST partners are prepared to facilitate wellness support for faculty on a weekly, rather than monthly basis. While these resources are not a complete solution to teacher burnout, they can play a significant role in helping faculty manage the daily stressors of teaching in a post-COVID world. Yearlong

student and community engagement is also a priority, especially as BOOST schools work diligently to mitigate summer slide. Between July 5th and 28th, 2022, BTS coordinated a pilot 4-week summer enrichment pilot program at Reed School for 25 kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade students across the district. BOOST Partner, Porter's House, facilitated the programming, Monday through Thursday, from noon to 3:30pm. Post surveys indicated that parents (100%; n = 7) would enroll their child in the program the following year if offered. BOOST Partners are ready! With proper funding, BTS can support the coordination and roll out of summer enrichment programming across all five schools featuring not one, but an array of partners who can deliver fun, engaging, culturally responsive programming for students PreK - 8.

Annual Evaluation. Bridge to Success seeks federal funding to strengthen our ability to collect, analyze and link real-time data with specific interventions that support student academic achievement. BTS has contracted with Dillinger Research and Applied Data (DillingerRAD), a Connecticut based non-profit applied data consulting firm to perform an independent evaluation that includes a design and implementation evaluation that will, at a minimum, (1) include annual evaluations of progress achieved with the grant; (2) be used to refine and improve activities carried out through the grant; (3) collect and report data that includes, but is not limited to, the select indicators (see Table #); and (4) make the results of the evaluation publicly available.

IV. QUALITY OF PROJECT SERVICES

Plan for Pipeline of Services. In response to the data collected in 2017, BTS put out a call to action to all BTS partners interested and able to deliver services that addressed four key focus areas: Early Childhood Development, Expanded Learning Opportunities, Health & Social

Support Services and Family & Community Engagement. Fifteen partners responded. Approval of this grant will allow for a planning period to co-develop and identify other essential partners, providers and practitioners for this expanded work. Currently, BOOST Schools have access to 17 unique community-based organizations who have been vetted and approved by BTS staff, school and district leadership. This is not inclusive of the over 90 community partners involved and represented on BTS's Collaborative Action Networks.

One such partner is Neighborhood Housing Services of Waterbury (NHSW). As part of the national network, NeighborWorks America, NHSW builds strong neighborhoods and communities of choice through affordable and comprehensive housing development, education, and furthering community ownership. Their purpose reflects the organization's embrace of a broad range of business lines and programs to meet its objectives of community revitalization and individual economic empowerment. A key example of their programming is the Resident Leadership Training (RLT) Program, designed to support and develop local residents' engagement, leadership, and participation in their communities. It is based on the national Community Leadership Training from Neighbor Works which NHSW is a member. This philosophy of engaging residents to establish positive relationships allows the community to solve its own problems, obtain resources and influence change. The primary goals of this program are to transfer concrete leadership skills and increase people's sense of being agents of change. Co-created with thirteen NeighborWorks network organizations, the curriculum includes eight training modules:

- **Unit 1 | The Art & Importance of Leadership.** This course will provide skills to identify strength-based leadership and the ability to recognize those characteristics in yourself and others.

- **Unit 2 | Waterbury Civics 101.** This course will provide you with an understanding of democracy, knowledge of local city government practices/policies, the importance of voting, and resources for local city departments.
- **Unit 3 | Connecting Generational Experiences.** This course will help you identify strategies to bridge generational divides in your neighborhood and develop greater trust and connection among participants of different generations.
- **Unit 4 | Identifying & Mapping Our Community.** This course will provide the skills and knowledge of how to understand and recognize assets within the community.
- **Unit 5 | Keeping Cool in Conflict.** This course will help you recognize the stages of conflict and the different opportunities for intervention.
- **Unit 6 | Communication Approaches.** This course will assist residents with strengthening their communication skills.

Unit 7 | Creating Community Change. This session will help you to identify what power is, how it works and steps to effective coalition building.

- **Unit 8 | Action Planning.** This course will bring your RLT coursework together and provide you with the space needed to reflect, celebrate and appreciate you and your teams' hard work.

From registration to graduation, the entire course spans nine months. Participants are required to attend all classes in order to receive their Resident Leadership Graduate Certificate; with the potential to participate in a national, all-expenses-paid, conference. In addition, all participants are expected to volunteer their time, once per month, contributing to a group project, upon completion of the course. With adequate funding, BTS is prepared to implement RLP across all five schools with the explicit intent to build a cadre of skilled, equipped Resident Leaders and

Caregivers that have the core skills needed to strengthen their communities. Bridge to Success is also thrilled to be in partnership with Vision to Learn (VTL), a national non-profit organization that offers vision services to students in support of their academic achievement, free of charge. With VTL's 10 years of experience in delivering services in 19 states, the coordination process is simple and streamlined. Due to a shortage of nurses, meeting the state mandate for vision screenings has been delayed. However, with over 2000 students across all five schools, this mass effort requires BTS to have a well-resourced team of school-site coordinators who can execute effective planning and communication with school leadership and caregivers. In addition to NHSW, below are the SY22-23 community-school partnerships selected by School Leadership, and informed by students and parents, to address initiative objectives at the student, family and community level.¹⁴ A reminder that while each vendor might have established their programmatic learning objectives, all selected partnerships are selected by how well they align with each building's school improvement plan and addresses the BOOST goals and measurable objectives. The services and support were not provided to all 5 BOOST schools due to the limited resources both financial and human capital to support the coordination, management and oversight of expanded enrichment services.

¹⁴ Domain categories: Early Childhood Development (ECD), Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO), Health & Social Support Services (HSSS), & Family & Community Engagement (FCE).

PARTNER AGENCY & PROGRAM/SERVICE DESCRIPTION	DOMAIN
CT Kids Play Chess, Inc. is a non-profit public charity whose mission is to provide high quality chess lessons to Connecticut school students.	ELO
Brass City Gamers Coding is a local non-profit whose mission is to educate our local community in STEM learning including Digital Media, Gaming, Coding, and Information Technology.	ELO
June Archer School of Performing Arts brings real-world experience into the classroom by allowing students to interact with established recording artists, writers, filmmakers and multimedia artists through its original STEAM curriculum.	ELO
*Porter’s House is a multifaceted Behavioral Health agency that provides children and families, within their communities, easy access to extracurricular programming and mental health services. PH facilitates out-patient clinical counseling for identified students (grades 2nd - 8th) and in-school mediation .	HSSS
Local Civics: Local Civics equips students with skills and opportunities to participate meaningfully in all dimensions of civic life.	ELO
Neighborhood Housing Services of Waterbury builds strong neighborhoods and communities of choice through affordable and comprehensive housing development, education, and furthering community ownership.	FCE
*Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA). The VITA program provides free tax preparation assistance to families and individuals. Helping families get a full refund is one of the most effective poverty-reduction tools available in the United States.	HSSS

<p>Lotus Counseling of Connecticut's mission is to be unique in its approach and to consider the whole person seeking treatment. Kids RISE Up is a 24-week Yoga + Mindfulness Program for students focused on socio-emotional and behavioral development.</p>	HSSS
<p>Literacy Volunteers. Residents will have access to three key learning programs: Basic Literacy, ESL and Citizenship Test Preparation. Parents and residents are also invited to become trained LC tutors should there be interest.</p>	ELO/FCE
<p>Circle of Security® Parenting Program is designed to help parents better understand and respond to their child’s emotional needs; help their child manage their emotions and behaviors; and increase parents’ understanding of the importance of secure attachment for</p>	
<p>Parent Leadership Training Institute: Mission is educating families on positive civic leadership. It is an annual free 20-week civics-based program for families.</p>	FCE
<p>Vision to Learn (VTL): Vision To Learn’s program model makes it easy for students to access eye care, and easy for schools. Following full school screenings, a licensed optometrist will provide eye exams for all students who failed the initial vision screening. Students who are prescribed glasses choose their frames, with the guidance of VTL’s optician.</p>	HSSS

Systems of Accountability. There are several models of community schools that share a dedication to the goal of giving every child the best possible chance to succeed. One model is led by community-based organizations with expertise in youth and community development. BOOST is such a model whereby BTS can provide third-party support and accountability for the design and execution of the proposed initiative. This model has positioned BTS as both champion and challenger, allowing us to critically assess the existing successes within the school

buildings while co-developing with the school district strategies for increased student success.

District Equity Leadership Team. In 2018, WPS released its Equity Policy which directly supports the values and lens by which BOOST is executed. The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework for educational equity for all students to ensure the elimination of bias, particularly institutionalized racism - and cultural bias, as factors affecting student achievement and learning experiences, and to promote teaching and learning and work environments that welcome, respect, and value strength in diversity. The policy is enforced by the District Equity Leadership Team (DELT) which is facilitated by the District's Director of Equity and Inclusion. It is responsible for facilitating and coordinating professional development to staff specifically designed to strengthen employee's knowledge and skills for eliminating opportunity and achievement gaps between groups of students. Ultimately, DELT is a system whereby WPS must remain accountable for its commitment to advance equity. BTS has remained an active member of the DELT since its inception. A community schools model is not possible without cultural and pedagogical shifts *within* the participating schools. DELT coordinates efforts to increase school capacity to effectively teach a culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse student population and serve culturally, racially and ethnically diverse families and communities. In 2019, DELT launched a three-stage professional learning roll-out plan that focuses on engaging different school levels into the conversation of racial equity:

- **Stage 1** (2019-2020) focused on middle school and central office staff.
- **Stage 2** (2020-2021) focused on high school and alternative programs.
- **Stage 3** (2021-2022) focused on elementary schools.

Since 2019, BTS supported DELT in coordinating the following efforts:

- **Leading for Equity and Social Justice with District Administrators** - School-based

principals, vice-principals and house principals explored how race shapes their leadership at the school level and how they can leverage an awareness of race and equity factors in their decision-making.

- **Development of School Equity Leadership Teams (SELT) at the Middle Schools -**

In order to prepare for the Phase II continued support of middle school staff, DELT and SERC worked together on a process for creating teams at each middle school that would establish a professional learning community at their respective buildings to examine culture and develop the requisite skills of staff to eliminate barriers to student success.

Data-Sharing. Per the data sharing provision in the professional services agreement with WPS, BTS having access to individual-level data for participating students and families will allow us to link the work and outcomes of partners (e.g., afterschool program providers, mental health providers, physical health) to youth's academic outcomes. In our duty to comply with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), student-serving vendors will collect student ID numbers to protect the identity and privacy of the student upon program enrollment. Using the evidence-based approach to meeting and program delivery, BTS utilizes the Results-Based Accountability Approach (RBA) to adhere to all goals and objectives for the aforementioned partnerships. Additionally, the following is also considered when measuring impact:

- How much: Attendance sheets at workshops, meetings, trainings, etc.
- How well: Satisfaction Surveys for all services, trainings, workshops, etc.; and
- Better off: Pre-post surveys, secondary student data derived from the state (disaggregated by race, gender, special education status)

Collaborative Action Networks. As a backbone organization guided by a collective impact approach, BTS hosts three Collaborative Action Networks (CANs) composed of a broad representation of stakeholders who have content expertise, knowledge as well as influence in the community and have an understanding on how to leverage their resources to move racial equity work forward. Each CAN sets individual goals and executes an action plan to help guide the work.

- **Early Care & Education (ECE)** is focused on centering parents and children from 0-8 years old by providing educational and community resources/support for the parents to understand and be intentionally involved in their child's development.
- **Positive Youth Development (PYD)** brings together Waterbury youth and youth-serving providers to cultivate meaningful and equitable opportunities for Youth Leadership at the programmatic, organizational and community level.
- **College & Career Pathways (CCP)** is comprised of 17 core partners including Waterbury Public Schools and all four local colleges/universities in the city to continue building upon existing efforts that improve post-secondary and career opportunities for students and families.

All BOOST Partners are required to participate in at least one CAN that aligns with their service area. Most currently fall under Positive Youth Development (PYD). Their participation guarantees that partners are receiving ongoing professional development, regular insight from youth and colleagues on existing practices and outcomes and are in alignment with BTS frameworks that inform service design and delivery. PYD, in particular, focuses its efforts on streamlining partners' approach to youth leadership development and utilizes the Ladder of

Youth Participation (LYP) as its guiding framework. The Ladder was adapted from Robert Hart's, *Children's Participation: The Theory And Practice Of Involving Young Citizens In Community Development And Environmental Care*, by Adam Fletcher and The Freechild Project (2008). It includes 8 unique rungs that describe varying levels of youth participation:

- **1st Rung | Manipulation.** Happens where adults use young people to support causes and pretend that young people inspires the causes. It is form of tokenism.
- **2nd Rung | Decoration.** Happens when young people are used to help or "bolster" a cause in a relatively indirect way, although adults do not pretend that the cause is inspired by young people.
- **3rd Rung | Tokenism.** When young people appear to be given a voice, but in fact have little or no choice about what they do or how they participate.
- **4th Rung | Assigned but informed.** This is where young people are assigned a specific role and informed about how and why they are being involved. This rung of the ladder can be embodied by community youth boards.
- **5th Rung | Consulted and informed.** Happens when young people give advice on projects or programs designed and run by adults. This rung of the ladder can be embodied by youth advisory councils.
- **6th Rung | Adult-initiated, shared decisions with youth.** Occurs when projects or programs are initiated by adults, but the decision-making is shared with the young people. This rung of the ladder can be embodied by participatory action research.
- **7th Rung | Young people-initiated and directed.** This step is when young people initiate and direct a project or program. Adults are involved only in a supportive role. This rung of the ladder can be embodied by youth-led activism.

- **8th Rung | Young people-initiated, shared decisions with adults.** This happens when projects or programs are initiated by young people and decision-making is shared between young people and adults. This rung of the ladder can be embodied by youth-adult partnerships.

Over the course of SY21-22, PYD adapted the Ladder to generate a logic model that identifies and outlines four competency areas across the eight rungs¹⁶:

- **Diversity in Leadership.** Leadership comes in many forms at the personal, programmatic, organizational and community level. It is the responsibility of adults to help youth uncover, develop, and leverage their natural affinity towards leadership.
- **Youth-adult Relationships.** Youth are most successful when nurtured within the context of supportive and accountable relationships. This requires special attention to building meaningful connections with young people, culturally responsive networks of care for ongoing support and guidance and access to training so youth feel confident in their knowledge and skills.
- **Decision-making Power.** Young people bring unique interests, visions and skills to positive youth development and community change. Traditional gatekeepers must (1) recognize how they currently wield power to shape youth realities and (2) identify opportunities to share and/or shift power in the hands of young people who can move from visioning to actualization.
- **Pursuing Equity & Justice.** There are always opportunities to align systems for long-term and sustainable impact. Young people, particularly BIPOC and other marginalized groups, have the capacity to become effective agents for equity and

¹⁶ PYD referenced the School-Based Health Alliance and the People’s Institute for Survival & Beyond to identify the four competencies identified in the logic model.

justice, to challenge and shift the status quo rather than find ways to succeed within it.

The logic model allows partners to readily identify where existing programming falls on the ladder, possible areas of misalignment and improvement across the four competencies.

Think Tanks. BTS also convenes two community-led think tanks, Parents of Waterbury (POW) and Let Youth Lead (LYL), whereby parents and students (middle school and high school) directly inform the organization's work and serve as community advocates that champion on behalf of their children, families, and communities. Let Youth Lead, in particular, is composed of 7 core leaders who create and execute an ambitious, but realistic action plan to build youth power in Waterbury. As such, LYL regularly attends Waterbury Board of Education meetings to report back to their base major decisions or discussions affecting WPS students and to provide and/or coordinate mass testimony on said issues. Both POW and LYL play a critical role in Bridge to Success' ability to hold systems accountable to the needs, interests, and visions of Waterbury residents.

Diversity of Perspectives in Co-creation, Planning, Implementation & Evaluation. No entity acting alone can improve educational outcomes for all students. BTS works hand-in-hand with school and district leadership to develop a set of shared goals and a system to accomplish those goals. Teachers and faculty have also been enveloped into this process. In fact, BTS and the National Center for Community Schools co-facilitated a series of presentations to the faculty on the fundamentals of the community schools framework during the SY2020-21 reset. As a result, school personnel receive regular updates on partnerships and programs at staff meetings for questions, feedback, and recommendations. Conversely, due to limited staff capacity, parents and students have not been involved in the decision-making process outside of

school-wide surveys and program post surveys that provide insight into program impact and planning. The addition of school-based coordinators is paramount to the successful integration of parent and student voices. In an effort to increase and expand parent/caregiver engagement, the School Based Site Coordinators would be expected to work closely with each school's parent liaison and family engagement committee to engage school governance councils and parent-teacher organizations for increased parent/caregiver participation in the decisions impacting the creation, planning, implementation and evaluation of community-school partnerships. This would help to facilitate a an environment of co-creation with school leadership, educators and parents to contribute to and share the responsibility of student outcomes with a wide array of community stakeholders.

V. ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES

Lead Applicant Capabilities and Commitments. As Lead Partner (LP), we work closely with BOOST schools and other partners to lead the development and sustainability of the community school strategy. Since 2016, BTS has demonstrated our capacity and commitment to serving in four key roles to support our BOOST Schools:

- **Broker and Coordinator** - brokering new relationships, coordinating partnerships and fostering collaboration.
- **Employer and Supervisor of the BOOST Team** -systems hiring, training, supervising, and supporting a Community School Coordinator
- **Resource Developer** - experienced grant-writers or development offices that can facilitate the acquisition of additional public and private funding streams, including non-education dollars and/or resources for which schools or other partners may not

have the capacity or the eligibility to apply. An LP may also elect to serve as a fiscal agent for the partnership on particular grants, an arrangement that can create flexibility and facilitate coordination of large-scale or complex projects.

- **Community Schools Advocate** - create opportunities—in concert with its partners—for families, staff, community residents, district officials and other key stakeholders to better understand the work of the community school through open houses, celebrations, orientations, special events and publications.

The BTS team is composed of lead staff with demonstrated experience in effective project implementation and management, and, thus, is uniquely positioned to coordinate a robust community-schools initiative. One hundred percent (100%) of its staff are previous or current Waterbury residents with established relationships in Waterbury communities. Three are specifically trained in community organizing with experience in mobilizing youth and resident power to enact local and state-wide systems change. All of the upper management staff have a Master's Degree or greater. It is this experience that made it possible for BTS to release the *2018 Community Impact Report*¹⁷ and become the first non-profit in the city to explicitly prioritize a racial equity agenda. Despite tremendous pushback, BTS traved forward and released its first publication in partnership with My Reflection Matters (MRM). In 2019, BTS and MRM co-published *Let's Talk About Race: A Family Guide to Raising Kids with Positive Racial & Ethnic Identities*. The purpose of this guide is to acknowledge the racialized experiences many students of color and their families face in and outside educational settings and provide them with strategies and resources to counter systems that historically have marginalized and/or disenfranchised communities of color. Taboo topics such as colorism, white-washing, racial microaggressions, and post-traumatic slave syndrome are addressed head

on and paired with steps families can take to raise liberated children. The Guide includes a three-day workshop series for parents/caregivers and providers raising and/or serving brown and Black children to deep dive into the following topics:

- An Introduction to Culturally Responsive Education
- The History of Public Education
- Racial & Ethnic Identity Development
- Moving to Action

BTS believes that youth are equally capable of understanding and identifying historically racist structures. On October 26, 2018, shortly after the official premiere, BTS organized a private screening of, *The Hate U Give*, followed by youth panel discussion. More than 90 youth providers and youth attended. This event sparked the creation of what would become a series of frank discussions called “*Youth Talk BACK.*” *Youth Talk BACK* is a **BTS-original training curriculum** for middle school and high school students that engages participants in critical learning about race, racism, oppression, equity, and liberation. Its main objectives are to provide (a) youth with the language and knowledge they need to best articulate their realities, their histories, and current events surrounding race and (b) a safe and equitable space where honest and transparent conversations around these topics are a key strategy in building community and youth civic engagement. By building young people’s capacity to name and unpack the personal and systemic intricacies of white supremacy, they will in turn recognize their own power to build grassroots, youth-led movements, and ultimately, a community they have a recognized and valued part in creating and nurturing. The curriculum is organized into six (6) main themes, or modules:

- **Heal Yourself, Heal the Collective.** As the curriculum introduces heavy topics about

macro and micro violence, it's important to explore with participants the importance of individual and collective healing before hitting those very topics.

- **Speaking Equity.** The second session introduces participants to basic terms and definitions that will prepare them for all future sessions.
- **Identity | Reclaiming our own Stories.** Participants engage in discussions and activities that explore the ways our understanding of race and interaction with racism impact self-image.
- **Reimagining a Liberated School Culture & Climate.** The session introduces participants to the skill of naming the practices and values of the current school culture and how to use that same skill to envision and create a new school culture that is equitable, liberatory and joyful.
- **Violence: Unpacking Oppression.** Participants explore three forms of racial violence - physical, psychological & economic.
- **Liberation: Movement Building as a Form of Healing.** On the final day, participants walk through a visual gallery of photos taken during iconic racial justice movements (i.e., Civil Rights Movement, Black Power Movement, Black Lives Matter). Participants identify the similarities and differences in strategies, desired and achieved outcomes and basic components to building and sustaining a movement.

Currently, BTS is designing the Youth Talk BACK Toolkit that will include a participant workbook and a facilitator's guide and training for partners interested in delivering the curriculum in their own programs. Since then, Bridge to Success has published a Spanish edition of *Let's Talk About Race* (2020) and the *COVID-19 Response Report* (2021) highlighting the many initiatives the organization led in response to the pandemic, including

over 30 virtual events held within a 10-month period. Community events and publications are only two examples of our capacity to advance a racial equity agenda in Waterbury. BTS is a lead partner on the Advancing Health Literacy Grant (2021-2023). In partnership with the City of Waterbury Department of Public Health, BTS facilitated professional development for healthcare providers across the state to deepen their understanding of the historical and persisting conditions that contribute to health disparities for BIPOC communities and how their practice can mitigate or exacerbate those disparities. Additionally, BTS partnered with Staywell Health Center, The Waterbury Links, Inc., Greater Waterbury Health Partnership, St. Mary's Hospital, and the American Heart Association to spearhead the #Day43 Campaign. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Foundation, roughly 20% of pregnancy-associated deaths happen between 43 days and one year postpartum. This percentage is further exacerbated when disaggregated by race for Black mothers. Launched in 2021, #Day43 is a campaign that strives to create solutions to combat Black maternal mortality and to support an all-around equitable environment for all women, birthing people, and their babies. By transforming systems, #Day43 is committed to raising awareness on Black women's maternal health in the city of Waterbury through training, research, technical assistance, policy, advocacy, and community-centered collaboration.

Role of Full-Time Coordinator at Each School. If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a

team to actualize a vision. Since 2016, BTS has worked with Waterbury Public Schools and various stakeholders including United Way of Greater Waterbury and various funders and stakeholders to bring comprehensive, wraparound services to our Waterbury's neighborhood schools. BTS has managed this effort with 1.5 FTE for the first 5 years of the project.

The day-to-day coordination and support of community-school partnerships requires both

financial and human capital. BTS's intent is to recruit and onboard six School-Based Coordinators, one embedded in each community-school and a sixth to directly support the Director to co-manage the other five. Like many school districts across the country, WPS has experienced high losses in faculty as a result of the compounding pressures and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. BTS is intent on working collaboratively with the district and school leadership to identify highly qualified candidates that are familiar with Waterbury's academic landscape and communities.

The Boost! Coordinator is responsible for leading their school's effort to provide coordinated wraparound services to support the social, physical and academic development of students and reduce barriers to learning. The Boost! Coordinator communicates and collaborates with school staff, students, parents and community partners, working to develop a school culture and systems that support high quality wraparound services. Each Boost! school must designate an existing staff member to be the Boost! Coordinator. Coordinator is responsible for the following:

- **LEADERSHIP** – the Coordinator works with school leadership and their designees as members of the Boost! Work Team (utilize an existing committee or team, such as school-wide data team, SGC, CAT team or PBIS team) to assist in making decisions regarding wraparound needs. The Coordinator will organize and facilitate all Boost! Work Team meetings. Also, work closely with the Boost! Work Team to select and manage collaborative partnerships that will allow the school to achieve their desired results. Additionally, they will coordinate all Boost! programming that is provided by partner agencies in the school, maintain and update school's Asset Map and Gap Analysis and develop a school-level plan to strengthen and develop wraparound services
- **RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT** – **The Coordinator will** serve as point of contact

for external service providers/nonprofits and facilitate regular check-ins with partners.

- **ACCOUNTABILITY** – **The** Coordinator will review data on programs and share with the school-based management team, and participate in monthly meetings with Boost! Coordinators from other schools.

Once hired, the school based coordinators add necessary human capital and would be responsible for:

- remaining knowledgeable about current and pending partnerships, programs and services offered at CS so to connect students, families, and residents with available resources.
- coordinating with the Community Impact & Marketing team to support promotion of programming and services via regular communications to student/parent/community listservs and social media.
- coordinating regularly with fellow Coordinators to discuss strategy and support mutual efforts.
- assisting with Program & Service Evaluations by distributing and collecting routine pre/post surveys (when applicable) and sharing findings with the Assistant Director to improve program delivery efficiency by internal and external resources.

Upon approval of this proposal, BOOST will have the appropriate funding to build a team of all full-time staff that corresponds with the level of work this initiative demands.

Key Leadership, Professional Development and School Resources. BOOST has a shared leadership structure with key personnel from Waterbury Public Schools (LEA), BTS as a Community Partner, and the BOOST Schools themselves, including:

- Superintendent of Schools

- Assistant Superintendent of Schools
- School Principals & Vice Principals
- Parent Liaisons. Educators and Building Staff
- Executive Director (BTS)
- Deput Director of Community Impact (BTS)
- Director of Community Schools (BTS)
- School Based Site Coordinators (BTS)

Throughout the school year, all schools are required to provide professional development and technical assistance coordinated by WPS. BTS supported these efforts in with the approval, coordination and facilitation of original training curricula and co-learning spaces. In SY2019-20 and SY 20-21, BTS engaged over 250 educators across the district via the following:

- **Introduction to Race & Education (IRE) | New Teachers Cohort.** A year-long professional development cohort that introduces critical concepts concerning racial equity in education and develops educators’ capacity to critically assess and improve their practices. All educators were welcome, though 1st & 2nd year teachers and their mentors are highly encouraged to enroll in accordance with TEAM Program requirements. All workshops were created to integrate a racial equity lens into one or more of the 4 Domains identified by the Connecticut Common Core Teaching (CCT) Rubric for Effective Teaching:
 - Classroom Environment, Student Engagement & Commitment to Learning
 - Planning for Active Learning and Instruction for Active Learning
 - Professional Responsibilities & Teacher Leadership
- **Deepened Practice.** For educators who have participated and completed Introduction

to Race & Education and are interested in deepening their learning and commitment to equity with featured content experts on anti-racist pedagogy and education as a practice of freedom.

- **Black Educators Matter.** A racial affinity space for Black educators interested in exploring decolonized pedagogy and co-creating a community rooted in peer-support, advocacy and joy. BEM is open to all educators who identify as Black, inclusive of all intersecting identities across the Diaspora (i.e., ethnicity, gender, ability, religion, etc.).

As a member of the District Equity Leadership Team (DELT), BTS has presented at WPS's Racial Equity Conferences held in March 2020 thru 2022:

- **SY2019-20 & SY2020-21 | Building Meaningful & Equitable Teacher-Student Relationships.** Drawing on data collected directly from Waterbury students of color via Youth Talk BACK and Let Youth Lead, educators explored how to build meaningful & equitable teacher-student relationships by identifying the beliefs and practices of a liberated school culture & climate.
- **SY2021-22 | Let's Talk About Race with Children.** BTS introduced foundational concepts concerning children's racial awareness and identity development as a precursor to the need for schools to engage in grade-appropriate, safe conversations about race.

Bridge to Success has and continues to partner with several organizations and content experts who can facilitate professional development for the community-schools partnership:

- **The People's Institute for Survival & Beyond | Undoing Racism.** An intensive workshop designed to educate, challenge, and empower people to "undo" the racist structures that hinder effective social change. The training is based on the premise that

racism has been systematically erected and that it can be “undone.”

if people understand where it comes from, how it functions, and why it is perpetuated.

- **Dr. Maysa Akbar | Urban Trauma Certification.** Developed by Yale-trained psychologist, best-selling author, and healer, Dr. Maysa Akbar ensures that educators:
 - are well-informed about racial trauma.
 - are able to assess and identify urban trauma.
 - acquire the practical tools needed to promote students' healing process.
 - are prepared to take measurable and actionable steps that enable students to envision what a healed, whole person looks like.

Plans for Sustaining Coordinator Role & Ongoing Collaboration. Proper funding is critical to sustaining this work. Since 2016, BTS has fundraised operational dollars to coordinate and implement nontraditional and academic enrichment courses and educator support. In addition, the funding has increased parent engagement, backbone coordination and management of partnerships across the five schools. BTS currently has multi-year commitments from two national and three regional philanthropic organizations – Strive Together, Nellie Mae Foundation for Education, Connecticut Community Foundation, William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund and American Savings Foundation. The key sustainability strategy is to phase in the Coordinator and wraparound services expenditure by continually leveraging and securing public and private dollars. However, sustainability means more than fundraising – it means leveraging community assets and resources for making permanent changes in daily practice and in institutional arrangements, both human and financial

resources. Sustained funding and community partnerships are equally important which reinforce one another. Our partnership with WPS, schools and community stakeholders is critical to sustaining ongoing collaboration. Additionally, BTS has and will continue to prioritize this work from a whole school, whole child, and whole community approach. Through strategic partnerships with BTS's Parents of Waterbury, Neighborhood Housing Services and Connecticut Leadership Center's Parent Leadership Training Institute, BTS will build a cadre of skilled, equipped Resident Leaders and Caregivers to operate and manage the programs delivered to the community in conjunction with this initiative.

VI. QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT PLAN

Broadly Representative Consortium. All partners view community schools as a long-term strategy, not a program, and sustainability planning activities are employed from the start. BOOST consists of nearly 20 available partners representing an array of public sectors and institutions including: education, business, healthcare, social services, legal/justice system, housing, etc. All program, wraparound services and community partners are required to complete a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with BTS, confirming that Partners understand their role in a larger vision and that they will deliver services and share relevant data that are in alignment with the initiative's goals and objectives. High-level partnerships, such as those requiring health insurance coverage to acquire services, require approval from both the school and district, whereby MOU's are reviewed and approved by WPS's legal counsel before any steps are taken for program/service rollout.

History of Effectiveness. In 2014, BTS and the City of Waterbury were the first Cradle to Career network in Connecticut to obtain "Sustaining" status. As a StriveTogether community,

we collect and share data annually on the progress we are making on at least six cradle-to-career goals. We use local data to identify gaps by race, gender, and other demographics to understand the needs of the most marginalized and vulnerable students. BTS Partners use these findings as evidence to make decisions in real time, improve and scale practices and target resources to support what works. Rather than working in silos, the partner organizations work together to maximize their effectiveness and implement common strategies and programs at their individual organizations. The effectiveness of their work is analyzed by measuring kindergarten readiness scores, third grade reading scores, and high school graduation rates. Achieving large scale change involves working in new ways. Bridge to Success has adopted five conditions for collective impact in Waterbury:

- **Common Agenda.** All partners involved share a common vision for change.
- **Shared Measurement.** All partners agree on how success will be measured and agree to share data.
- **Mutually Reinforcing Activities.** All partners coordinate actions to support the common agenda.
- **Continuous Communication.** All partners communicate openly and honestly to build trust, motivation, and shared accountability.
- **Backbone Support.** The organization helps facilitate and drive the process, but the community leads the decision making.

Using a Collaborative Action Approach, BTS and its Partners work together towards the same outcome using disaggregated student level data to continuously improve practices over time. Moreover, BTS has transitioned almost effortlessly to the changing demands resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 19, 2020, BTS & MRM co-hosted our first webinar, *How*

to Support Your Child's Education Now That You're All Home Together. Little did we know that this webinar was the precursor to BTS hosting a total of 30 virtual events over a 10-month period to over 1500 attendees. While webinars have allowed BTS to expand its engagement across key stakeholders, the real work gets done in the streets. The following is a brief overview of only a few outreach events successfully coordinated since 2020:

- **Basic Needs Initiative.** In response to the growing needs of children and families due to the various impacts of COVID-19, Waterbury Bridge to Success was happy to donate [REDACTED] of groceries and basic necessities to 90 undocumented families in July 2020. Funded by the William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund and Cherry Valley Marketplace.
- **#CountUsIn – Census Outreach.** BTS understands the incredible importance the census holds on community access to resources and services. 40+ Partners joined efforts to raise the rate in Hard-to-Count (HTC) communities across Waterbury, hosting 12 informative and joyful public events within a three-month timespan.
- **Farmers to Families.** At the tail end of 2020, the USDA partnered with farmers, distributors, and nonprofits to ensure that everyone has access to the fresh produce, meat, and dairy they need during the COVID-19 crisis. BTS is proud to have donated 1,850 22-pound boxes of produce to Waterbury residents.

Management Plan: Roles, Responsibilities, Timelines and Milestones. The following outlines the standard process for partnership selection, coordination, and implementation for one school year, including roles and responsibilities of key personnel:

Milestone	Assigned to	QTR
Planning Phase Finalize Partnership MOUs and Selection Needs Assessment	Waterbury Public Schools – District and School Leadership Executive Director, BTS Deputy Director, BTS Dir. of Community Schools, BTS School Based Coordinators Dillinger RAD	Jan – Mar
Program/Service Planning, Goal Setting & Coordination	Dir. of Community Schools, BTS Partner Agency/Provider Dillinger Research and Development	Jan – June
Review Draft Partnership Agreements/MOUs	School Leadership Director of Community Schools, BTS	Mar - June
Confirm all Partnership Agreements	School Leadership Director of Community Schools	June
Program/Service Promotion & Enrollment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School Faculty Presentation ● Open House ● ParentSquare 	Dir. of Community BTS Community Impact & Marketing Team Partner Agencies/Providers	
Provider Readiness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School/program space tour (<i>as needed</i>) ● Program documentation (i.e., program 	School Leadership Dir. of Community Schools	On-Going

Parent/Student Enrollment Confirmation	Partner Agencies/Providers School Based Site Coordinator	On-going
Program/Service Launch (ongoing) <ul style="list-style-type: none">1st-day evaluation	Partner Agencies/Providers School-based Coordinators	July - Sept
Interim Program Evaluations (as needed)	School-based Coordinators	Oct - Dec
All Schools Leadership Forum <ul style="list-style-type: none">A community practice that meets quarterly to share highlights, lowlights, and best practices across participating schools	Dir. of Community Schools District Leadership (Ass Super) School Leadership School-based Coordinators	January annually
Mid-year Partnership Evaluations <ul style="list-style-type: none">School Leadership Teams will review relevant data to inform continuous improvement (i.e., academic performance, attendance, referrals, pre-posttests, participant surveys, program evaluations)	Dir. of Community Schools School Leadership School-based Coordinators Partner Agencies/Providers	Mar annually
End of Year Partnership Evaluations	Director of Community Schools	June annually
BOOST Partnership Retreat <ul style="list-style-type: none">Review of annual outcomesIntroduction to new partnersStrategic planning for upcoming school year	BTS Executive Director Dir. of Community Schools District Leadership (Asst. Sup.) School Leadership School-based Coordinators	July annually

Bridge to Success has grounded its work in data through the partnership with Dillinger Research and Applied Data ([DillingerRAD](#)). DillingerRAD is a Connecticut based non-profit focused on supporting youth-based organizations (e.g., school districts, individual schools, community based nonprofits) around all things data. DillingerRAD has experience with both large and small organizations, helping to develop sustainable data systems that enables organizations to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of various programs and to improve on those impacts through continuous improvement cycles. BTS, in collaboration with DillingerRAD, has created and implemented a [Data Strategy](#) that helps to organize and coordinate BTS's teams and activities across Waterbury and will be the bedrock for evaluating and improving upon the FSCS grant.

BTS's Data Strategy is organized around the principles that it takes a rich set of stakeholders (Waterbury Public Schools, Community Partners, and Providers, BTS, Parents of Waterbury) to make meaningful systematic change across Waterbury. Through specifically designed teams or Collaborative Action Networks (CANs), BTS looks to empower Community Partners, assess current needs across the continuum of youth and implement tailored supports. As BTS looks to implement the FSCS, an initial needs assessment will be conducted building on BTS' current work and existing needs assessment to better organize, prioritize and support the work. These existing assessments include a Community Health Needs Assessment, Culture & Climate surveys administered throughout Waterbury Public Schools, BTS' Parent/Guardian Survey, as well as numerous other projects. In coordination with these efforts, BTS grounds its work across

a set of system wide measures which help BTS, and other stakeholders assess impact, identify areas for support, and prioritize the work. Some system wide measures that BTS currently tracks that align with the FSCS grant are:

1. Early Childhood (ECE):
 - a. Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ Scores): The Ages & Stages Questionnaires is a way to help assess the development of a child through a parent report. BTS utilizes the Sparkler App to help provide the tools and resources for parents and providers to assess their children while aggregating results across multiple providers.
2. K-8 Academic & Social & Emotional:
 - a. Student Chronic Absenteeism Rates: Measuring attendance & chronic absenteeism through daily attendance reports and state level reporting can be a great initial indicator for youth who are struggling in school. After school activities, community engagement, and mentorship all look to positively impact and improve student attendance.
 - b. Assessment of School Climate & Culture: BTS in concert with WPS regularly assess the culture and climate across the district and within each school for both students and teachers. To help better assess the needs, challenges, and barriers facing students, parents, and staff, surveys administered at the beginning of the year can be a great direction for both school goals and priorities.
 - c. Grade 3/8 ELA/Math Proficiency: The Connecticut Smarter Balanced assessments are aligned to Connecticut Core Standards in English language

arts/literacy and mathematics and help provide a clear measure of student academic achievement and need across the district.

- d. Program Attendance & Quality: BTS has implemented a set of rigorous data collection methods for participating providers to better track program engagement, quality, and stratification. Through the collection of such data, BTS and the provider can help assess the impact on participating students and make improvements to future programming.

3. Secondary & Post Secondary:

- a. High School Graduation Rates: Four- & six-year graduation rates help high school staff and providers focus 9th-12th grade intervention at the highest need areas whether that is academic, attendance, etc. As BTS looks to engage secondary students more effectively, moving from graduation rates to on-track rates for graduation will help focus interventions more effectively across specific students.
- b. Access & Rates of college participation: Given the decreasing levels of college entrance across the Waterbury Community, BTS is looking to make meaningful connections and impact around student ability to access post-secondary institutions and fund such endeavors.

BTS recognizes the key for long term success and effective growth is grounding our work and direction in a data driven framework. BTS has worked to collaboratively develop a [Logic Model](#) that looks to help organize and communicate how the work across the continuum of youth will be supported. Over the next 5 years, BTS will work to reinforce a comprehensive data collection system across all of our partners to ensure we are measuring the impact of our programs and that

we are adapting and adjusting practices to meet the needs of our students and families. An expanding network requires our organization to have a clear understanding of the Waterbury youth and family landscape which can help to develop a better picture of the path forward. Some considerations that exist are:

- **Community Engagement and Representation:** As we continue to support the students, parents, and community of Waterbury it will be vital that their voices are heard and that they are empowered to not only take part in the process but to help guide the work as well. Through various teams (Collaborative Action Networks, Parents of Waterbury, Community Action Teams) we look to partner with members of the community so that they are able to prioritize the needs and take ownership in the work.
- **Identifying the Right Questions:** It is important to understand and acknowledge that all organizations within our network have different interventions, support various youth and families, and ultimately are working towards different goals and objectives. Ensuring that these Provider's missions are aligned to the goals of community schools will be key!
- **Role of Data:** Generally, there are two broad uses for data when thinking about measuring impact:
 - **Short Term (Progress) Metrics:** These can help refine organizational operations, help prioritize resources (people, time, and money), and provide real-time actionable information that all stakeholders can utilize to ensure continuous positive impact.
 - **Long Term (Outcome) Metrics:** These can help determine whether interventions are effective and whether the organization is making a positive impact.

- **Types of Data:** Most data falls into two categories:
 - **Qualitative Data:** Qualitative data is generally utilized to better measure and understand situations; increasing student's level of classroom empowerment, working to improve culture and climate within a school or the social and emotional health and well-being of students represent areas that require a more nuanced measure and don't necessarily have clear cut metrics.
 - **Quantitative Data:** Quantitative data is more grounded in stable, fixed, and verifiable measures such as attendance, enrollment, or participation.
- **Data Democratization:** Bridge to Success is in the challenging position to not only collect, manage, analyze, and utilize data but to also think strategically around who within their network of many stakeholders can best leverage the data. Priorities and strategies must be developed to help guide the decisions going forward.

The above framework and Logic Model help BTS plan and design a strategic approach to how we will leverage data and evaluate our network's efficacy. Our approach begins and is grounded at the individual intervention level and will build towards understanding and analyzing the interconnected system we are creating across all of our community schools. The following is a tentative approach to ensuring that data is both helping set the foundation and informing our work going forward.

Year 1 - Priority Goals

- Kindergarten Readiness
- Students have environments that are holistically supportive.
- **Key Actions:**

- Design and establish data collection methods and pipelines for collecting *system-wide* short term and long-term metrics.
 - Continue to support community wide continuous improvement cycles through the Early Childhood Education (ECE) CAN around data collected and analyzed through the Sparkle App.
 - Establish protocols and support for community wide continuous improvement cycles for the Boost! Coordinators, Staff, and participating principals.
 - Identify theory of action and map specific key questions, project plans & required data to the needs of 3 community schools.
 - Identify and align multiple community providers to provide in and after school support for 3 out of the 5 K-8 Waterbury Public Schools ensuring alignment with school level goals/objectives.
 - Establish pre/post surveys for measuring student impact and program quality for all participating programs.
 - Develop and align intermediate & outcome metrics that are directly related to BTS established outcome metrics.
 - Establish secure data pipelines from Waterbury Schools to data warehouse (focused on supporting quantitative metrics)
 - Establish data collection processes for all qualitative outcome metrics tied to students, families, and community.
 - Measure and assess *system-wide* annual outcome measures.
- **Deliverables:**

- Annual Pre/post assessment of needs of the school
- Structured and automated data pipelines between program participants, participating schools and BTS
- Pre/Post surveys and analysis for participating schools
- Detailed summaries of convenings and shared agendas
- **Approach & Considerations:** One of the most difficult aspects of creating a comprehensive evaluation system is organizing the data. With 5 participating schools (initially 3 for year 1) and up to 23 partners, BTS will need to identify, prioritize, and develop secure data pipelines to aggregate, organize and analyze the needed data. Based on the current design, data will be organized across the 4 CANs and 2 Think Tanks in order to help organize structure and focus the work. The first year will be creating a clear understanding and map of all actions, objectives, and required data.

Year 2 - Priority Goals

- Kindergarten Readiness
- Students have environments that are holistically supportive.
- **Key Actions:**
 - Continue to support community wide continuous improvement cycles through the Early Childhood Education (ECE) CAN around data collected and analyzed through the Sparkle App.
 - Continue to support community wide continuous improvement cycles for the Boost! Coordinators, Staff, and participating principals.
 -

- Identify and align multiple community providers to provide in and after school support for 5 out of the 5 K-8 Waterbury Public Schools ensuring alignment with school level goals/objectives.
- Establish pre/post surveys for measuring student impact and program quality for all participating programs.
- Continue to support secure data pipelines from Waterbury Schools to data warehouse (focused on supporting quantitative metrics)
- Establish data collection processes for all qualitative outcome metrics tied to students, families, and community.
- Measure and assess *system-wide* annual outcome measures.
- **Deliverables:**
 - Annual Pre/post assessment of needs of the school
 - Structured and automated data pipelines between program participants, participating schools and BTS
 - Pre/Post surveys and analysis for participating schools
 - Detailed summaries of convenings and shared agendas
- **Approach & Considerations:** BTS, in collaboration with DillingerRAD, will work closely with individual partners to help develop pipelines, tools, and processes to help track, measure, and adapt practices. One important aspect that needs to be kept in mind is understanding that many organizations lack the capacity and skills to accurately and efficiently analyze and leverage data. This work will involve supporting partners to strategize and develop tools and data feeds that meet organizations where they are so they

can best adapt current practices to real time data. By working with a smaller subset of the partner organizations, BTS can ensure that our approach is tailored to the specific organization's needs and that the evaluation system is designed around how each organization operates and supports its youth and families.

Year 3 - Priority Goals

- Strong community with positive mental health and high employment
- Kindergarten Readiness
- Students have environments that are holistically supportive.
- **Key Actions:**
 - Design and establish data collection methods and pipelines for collecting community-based *system-wide* short term and long-term metrics.
 - Continue to support community wide continuous improvement cycles through the Early Childhood Education (ECE) CAN around data collected and analyzed through the Sparkle App.
 - Continue to support community wide continuous improvement cycles for the Boost! Coordinators, Staff, and participating principals.
 - Establish community based continuous improvement cycles incorporating and elevating community voice and participation. Stakeholders can include parents, students, and town officials.
 - Establish pre/post surveys for measuring student impact and program quality for all participating programs.
 -

- Continue to support secure data pipelines from Waterbury Schools to data warehouse (focused on supporting quantitative metrics)
- Establish data collection processes for all qualitative outcome metrics tied to students, families, and community.
- Measure and assess *system-wide* annual outcome measures.
- **Deliverables:**
 - Annual Pre/post assessment of needs of the school
 - Structured and automated data pipelines between program participants, participating schools and BTS
 - Pre/Post surveys and analysis for participating schools
 - Detailed summaries of convenings and shared agendas
 - Community Based Needs Assessment utilizing P20Win data system.
- **Approach & Considerations:** Ultimately, BTS is looking to establish an analysis plan that will help inform decisions and drive the organization forward in a way that provides the most impact to youth and families. Given the complexities and scope of this project, we will not be able to establish a true control group that would provide a true comparison for analysis. Instead, we will focus our efforts on conducting a longitudinal study with youth and families and focus on pre vs post analysis as a function of participation in Boost! over time and assess and compare the rate of growth across families/students within the same district while constantly adhering to our identified intermediate and outcome metrics. The metrics will help provide guidance and benchmarks to ensure we are achieving what we set out to do.

Years 4 & 5 - Priority Goals

- Strong community with positive mental health and high employment
 - Prepared high school graduates with aligned post-secondary plans and/or careers
 - Kindergarten Readiness
 - Students have environments that are holistically supportive.
- **Key Actions:**
 - Expand beyond K-8 grade levels and partner with secondary institutions within the Waterbury Public School system.
 - Design and establish data collection methods and pipelines for collecting community-based *system-wide* short term and long-term metrics.
 - Continue to support community wide continuous improvement cycles through the Early Childhood Education (ECE) CAN around data collected and analyzed through the Sparkle App.
 - Continue to support community wide continuous improvement cycles for the Boost! Coordinators, Staff, and participating principals.
 - Establish community based continuous improvement cycles incorporating and elevating community voice and participation. Stakeholders can include parents, students, and town officials.
 - Identify and align multiple community providers to provide in and after school support for 5 out of the 5 K-8 Waterbury Public Schools ensuring alignment with school level goals/objectives.

- Establish pre/post surveys for measuring student impact and program quality for all participating programs.
- Continue to support secure data pipelines from Waterbury Schools to data warehouse (focused on supporting quantitative metrics)

Pilot: Pre/Post Impact Results 6 week program: Chess			
1 program (<10 students)*	Pre	Post	Change
Impact Area			
Increase Knowledge	62%	79%	
Building Skills	79%	100%	
Net Promoter	n/a	25%	Goal: >0

- Establish data collection processes for all qualitative outcome metrics tied to students, families, and community.
- Measure and assess *system-wide* annual outcome measures.
- **Deliverables:**

- Annual Pre/post assessment of needs of the school
 - Structured and automated data pipelines between program participants, participating schools and BTS
 - Pre/Post surveys and analysis for participating schools
 - Detailed summaries of convenings and shared agendas
 - Community Based Needs Assessment utilizing P20Win data system.
- **Approach:** The end goal is to create a comprehensive, interconnected set of stakeholders all working to learn, grow, and adapt efforts to support youth and the community at large. To get there we will have to develop customized tools that not only help inform but engage stakeholders through the work. We will identify additional opportunities to systematically collect inputs and other data that can help guide the work and develop

processes and tools to collect that data. This expansive data and engagement should work to strengthen relationships and efforts to support the youth.

Performance Feedback and Periodic Assessment of Progress. BOOST! is a core component of BTS’ collective impact strategy, and we are beginning to systematize collection, analysis, and use of data to drive decisions. **By the end of June 2023 (SY 22-23), we wanted to answer:**

- **How many** kids have we worked with across the BOOST programs.
- What was their **average attendance**?
- What can **impact** data look like for a 6-week program? **Our goals were to:**
- Support BTS to **organize, manage, and leverage** JotForm.

Original Post-Survey Impact Results % Very Satisfied or Satisfied (SY22-23)		
6 programs with data	#	%
Overall Satisfaction	61 <i>Responses</i>	91% <i>Satisfied or very satisfied</i>
Satisfaction % by self-identified ethnicity		
African American/Black	11	89%
Hispanic/ Latino	34	91%
Multiracial or Other	7	91%
Caucasian/White	9	96%
Satisfaction % by self-identified gender		
Female	26	87%
Male	35	94%

- Continue to build out **BTS' database** through the collection, standardization of community, partner, and student level data.
- Begin to create organizational structures to closely **collaborate with and share data with district and school leadership and** community partners/stakeholders. A lens toward continuous improvement is paramount for overall student improvement and

sustainable success/impact. In the table, the data provides insight into 6 of the 17

programs provided. The provider assessed was randomly selected by our Research and

Development Partner, Dillinger RAD. The results provided insight into the utility, desirability and impact on students enrolled in the services provided. The next steps in our data management are: (a) **Systematizing data collection** by standardizing/updating all forms for all SY23-24 Boost programs and to add/modify form fields, if necessary, based on expected analytics; (b) **Data Pipeline Buildout (JotForms -> BTS Database)** to connect forms to Google Sheets as a staging area for uploading to the BTS database, and as a data source for dashboards; (c) **Multi-year data collection** to internally track Boost program attendees from year to year using customized ID code and establish MOUs for individual partnerships; and (d) **Data Sharing** by establishing processes and protocols to share-back insights from data including designing and developing BOOST! Dashboards.

Select services follow a separate evaluation process. Services protected by FERPA and/or HIPPA regulations, such as clinical counseling and/or mediation, cannot be evaluated while students receive services. Instead, providers are required to complete quarterly reports detailing:

- Number of students served.
- Client demographics by grade, gender, and race/ethnicity
- Reasons for referral and summary of needed support
- Challenges and successes in meeting quarterly objectives

Services that do not meet their quarterly objectives are subject to immediate debrief with the provider and school to discuss highlights, lowlights, and recommendations/resources for improvement. As programs near their conclusion, BTS and the provider prepare to distribute

post surveys to participants. Student programs serving students in grades 4 or below are required to share post surveys with parents to complete alongside their child. Programs serving grades 5 and above distribute post surveys to student participants to complete. Historically, parent surveys for student programs have been the most difficult to collect due to limited staff capacity and equally difficult to analyze as parents prefer paper copies that require manual input.

IX. PRIORITIES ADDRESSED

Absolute Priorities #1 and #3. BTS meets and seeks the consideration under the following priorities, respectively, Absolute Priority 1 and 3, for full funding for the proposed project herein. **BTS meets Absolute Priority #1** because it currently serves 5 schools and seeks to expand to full-service community schools for 5 Prek-8 neighborhood schools in the City of Waterbury (CT). All 5 schools are Title 1 school and are eligible for a school wide program as defined in notice 87 FR 41688 for CFDA 85.215J and align with the LEA's District Improvement Plan. Additionally, as provided and described herein, **BTS meets the criteria for Absolute Priority #3.** We propose, if awarded, to (a) conduct initial and ongoing development, needs assessment, analysis of opportunities for continuous improvement and coordination of activities, including extensive community engagement, as noted, across 5 communities. This plan proposes to serve approximately 2,500 students and their families and leverages the findings of our needs assessment that has informed the co-development of our Community Schools Initiative, BOOST, its infrastructure, activities, and partnerships in order to successfully implement full-service community schools in five (5) Prek thru 8th grade schools in the City of Waterbury (CT), and (b) gather data on academic, social, emotional,

physical and community performance indicators and outcomes.

CPP #1 – Meeting Social, Emotional and Academic Needs. As schools across the world recover from a global pandemic, now more than ever it is critical to prioritize students’ social emotional development. BOOST seeks to facilitate two interventions to address this need: Health and Wellness supports for school staff, educators and leadership. BTS is NOT a SEL content expert and thus, leveraged our partner network to support Reed School in SY21-22. Through a year-long partnership with Lotus Counseling, a BOOST partner and local behavioral health agency, thirty-seven of Reed’s educators and faculty participated in a 5-part introductory training, each session exploring one of the five competencies – Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Responsible Decision-making, Relationship Skills, and Social Awareness, as demonstrated in the included image. The primary objective of this learning cohort was to ensure teachers personal development across each competency with the intent to shift to practice integration in SY22-23.

In-school, Clinical Services. Many Waterbury Public Schools are understaffed, particularly as it relates to socio-emotional support faculty. Community- school partnerships with mental health agencies, such as Porter’s House and Lotus Counseling, have filled these gaps with evidence-based, trauma-informed practices including in-school, out-patient therapy and mediation. have left student needs unattended. Strengthening student academic and career development is equally important. BTS has leveraged its relationships with all four post-secondary institutions in Waterbury the City – Post Universities, University



of Connecticut, Bridgeport University & Naugatuck Valley Community College – to co-create accessible pathways for academic and post-secondary achievement. This includes hosting a 4 Summer Camp for students for a pre-exposure to the Advanced Manufacturing Program at Naugatuck Valley Community College. Additionally, during COVID, BTS hosted a “Meet the Deans” webinar with the Admissions Departments for all for institutions along with GEAR Up and Upward Bound to afford local seniors the opportunity access these services despite the campuses being closed SY 20-21.

CPP #2 – Strengthening Cross-Agency Coordination and Community

Engagement to Advance Systemic Change. BOOST relies on five evidence-based strategies to strengthen cross-agency coordination and community engagement:

- **School-Community Partnerships.** BOOST facilitates and manages family-school-community partnerships as a shared responsibility and reciprocal process whereby schools and other community agencies and organizations engage families in meaningful and culturally appropriate ways, and families take initiative to actively support their children's development and learning.
- **Data Collection/Analysis.** All of BTS’s work is rooted in data-driven decision making to examine partnership effectiveness and impact. BOOST! Utilizes several tools for data collection and analysis to promote continuous improvement --, including Bi-annual Needs Assessments, Asset Mapping, Power Mapping and Pre- and post-post testing. to name a few. Linking relevant data to student outcome data, such as (attendance, behavioral referrals, and academic achievements,) will allow BTS to examine impact in real time for continuous quality improvement, increase student outcomes, and decrease outcome disparities.
- **Strategic Communications.** It is critical that community schools are able to

communicate effectively with all key stakeholders. As such, BTS and its partners use an integrated marketing strategy that leverages in-house (i.e., social media, BTS newsletter, text blasts) and external platforms (i.e., ParentSquare) to share key data and information with schools, partners, families and students.

- **Policy/Advocacy.** BTS' four Cradle to Career Initiatives, collectively and collaboratively, address issues important for child and family success in one of the most economically and racially segregated states in the country. Presently, there is an opportunity to build on this strong Network of infrastructure and highly aligned partners to advance local and state investment and policy efforts. Over the last two years, BTS has developed an effective working partnership between the four communities served, as evidenced by a regional C2C Conference in November 2019 and a joint legislative forum at the Connecticut State Capitol in February 2020. More recently, with Strive Together support, BTS has increased intercity policy capacity and efforts by:

- Raising awareness of BTS' work with state and local municipal legislators and elected officials and aligning efforts.
- Developing a shared policy agenda with an emphasis on race equity, closing the opportunity gap, and trauma responsive communities and managing strategies to advance shared policy interests in collaboration with other statewide partners.
- Positioning the Partnership to influence Cares ACT and secure state funding for local C2C infrastructure and supporting individual partnerships, as needed, for specific pieces of lobbying on legislation or policies that impact local work by providing critical and efficient access to credible, local leadership and grassroots organizations for state-wide coalitions.