**Willow Public School**

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**Abstract**

Willow Public School should open August 2016 to serve students in grades 6-8 in Walla Walla, Washington. By providing a strong foundation in middle school, our mission is to ensure that all students will excel in college preparatory classes in high school, thus giving them the skills to be successful in college and career.

The project funded by this grant will allow the school to plan, design, and implement our program specifically designed to meet the needs of students. Our anticipated population will be:

• living in poverty: 80%

• English language learners: 37%

• special education: 15%

• highly impacted by adverse childhood trauma: 70%

The Willow Public School program is built around the following core concepts: Project-based Learning: students work for an extended period of time to investigate engaging complex questions built upon the 21st century skills needed to be successful in college and the workplace. Classes are interdisciplinary.

Restorative Discipline: restorative practices emphasize personal accountability with the goal of drastically reducing the number of suspensions, thereby keeping a student in school. Trauma-informed Practices: negative student behavior is often the result of traumatic stress. Trauma-informed practices are designed to mitigate the effects of this stress in the school setting, thereby increasing the chances of student success.

Interventions: each student is provided with the necessary support to meet the goals of their Personalized Education Plan (PEP). The school has created an intervention “learning lab” where students receive the services they need based on their PEP.

Community Connections: the school plan was designed with input from families and community members. The school meets the needs of students and families through a wrap-around services model that taps the resources available in the community.

This grant will assist the school to:

• hire a Director of Finance to ensure that the financial operation and management of the school is strong, and help plan for the long-term viability of the school

• hire a Social Worker to create and oversee the restorative discipline and trauma-informed systems, train the staff, and coordinate wrap-around services.

• purchase equipment and technology to support 21st century skill acquisition and project-based learning.

The school has developed a plan so that at the end of the grant cycle of all of the above positions and equipment purchases can be sustained and have been incorporated into the operating budget and education model.

Willow Public School is led by 25-year education veteran Daniel Calzaretta, who founded and directed an award-winning school in Portland, Oregon based on the same model as Willow. With Mr. Calzaretta’s leadership and the commitment of a dedicated staff and community-connected board, Willow Public School will be able to implement its vision of Equity and Excellence for All Students.