

**Champaign Community Unit School District 4**

**Magnet Schools Assistance Program Grant Narrative (2017–2022)**

**Program Narrative**

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#### **Competitive Preference Priorities**

##### **1. Need for Assistance**

*a) The Secretary evaluates the applicant's need for assistance by considering the costs of fully implementing the magnet schools project as proposed.*

#### **Community Profile**

Champaign, Illinois is a culturally and socioeconomically diverse city in east central Illinois surrounded by prairies and equidistant from Chicago and Indianapolis. The city is best known as home to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), which is one of the area's top employers. Among Champaign's 86,000 residents, most (64.8%) are White, and 15.6% are African American, 10.6% Asian, 6.3% Hispanic, and 3.0% two or more races. Only 28.3% of residents live in poverty (U.S. Census American Community Survey 2011-15).

As a "university" town, Champaign is often perceived as a well-educated, affluent community; however, a more accurate description is a "community of contrasts." As outlined in 2011 *Community Report* from the United Way of Champaign County, the community includes one of the most highly-educated populations in Illinois; and yet, a third of kindergarten children enter school without the needed skills to learn. Additionally, the number of residents who earn salaries exceeding \$100,000 increased by 90% over the past decade; and yet the county has the 10<sup>th</sup> highest extreme poverty rate in the state. Furthermore, although the area is home to premier medical institutions and an abundance of commercial farms, more than 20% of residents do not have a permanent medical provider and 16.5% are food insecure (United Way of Champaign County, 2011).

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#### **Unit 4 District Profile**

The Champaign Community Unit School District 4 (Unit 4), the city’s sole local educational agency, serves a more diverse population of students than is reflected in citywide demographics. The population of almost 10,000 students in grades Pre-K–12 is 37.2% White, 35.0% African American, 9.5% Asian, 11.1% Hispanic, 7.0% two or more races, and 0.3% American Indian; more than half (54.2%), and close to twice the citywide rate, are low-income based on eligibility for free- or reduced-price lunch (FRL). The district has a mobility rate of 18%. With funding from the Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP), Unit 4 seeks to develop new opportunities for students in three of its highest-need schools to enable all of its students to benefit from the wealth of educational, cultural, technological, and scientific resources that Champaign and the surrounding communities have to offer.

Unit 4 is requesting a five-year grant in the amount of \$9,690,816 from the MSAP to develop one new whole-school magnet program at Franklin Middle School and significantly revise two whole-school magnet programs at Stratton and Garden Hills Elementary Schools. Taken together, we estimate the magnet program activities will cost \$20,770,116 over five years. The requested MSAP grant will cover 47% of the total project cost, and Unit 4 is prepared to commit the remaining 54% with in-kind personnel and other resources necessary to support full project implementation over the five years.

***b) The resources available to the applicant to carry out the project if funds under the program were not provided.***

Unit 4 views the proposed magnet initiative as a critical strategy for achieving its dual goal of education equity and excellence for all students; however, traditional funding formulas and the

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District's need to do more with less within the context of a challenging fiscal climate will not be sufficient for accomplishing the objectives of the initiative without support from the MSAP.

Unit 4 currently faces a budget climate of increasing costs associated with serving a growing student population in need of specialized educational services and decreasing revenues from the state and local budgets. Over the past five years, the number of English language learners (ELLs) in Unit 4 has increased significantly and now comprises almost 9% of Unit 4 students; and the number of students with disabilities has also increased and is now 13.1% of the student population. At the same time, however, the state education funding has continued to decrease in relation to Unit 4's operating costs. Over the last 10 years, the proportion of revenues provided through state sources has continuously decreased from 16.7% in 2007 to 12.6% in 2016 (Unit 4 FY 2016 Audit Report). As a result, Unit 4 has come to rely more heavily on local funding revenue sources which continues to be a significant challenge for the district.

Critically, the state of Illinois has been operating for the past 20 months without a state budget; and while K-12 education has been funded, general state aid and payments to school districts for programs such as transportation and special education have often been delinquent or reduced. Furthermore, the lack of state funding for social service agencies that serve high-need youth and families has resulted in a significant dearth of community programs and supports, which has increased Unit 4's need to provide essential services to students.

In addition to receiving local tax levy funding, which represent 94% of the school district's revenue, Unit 4 currently receives allocative grants from state and federal sources to support programs and services for our highest-need students, including from Title I and National School Lunch Program, and Illinois Immigration Education Program and Language Instruction Program.

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Increasingly, the district has come to rely heavily on competitive grants to provide the innovative programs and initiatives that will prepare our children for success in college and careers.

*c) The extent to which the costs of the project exceed the applicant's resources.*

The commitment of Superintendent Dr. Judy Wiegand, accompanied by the Board of Education's approval of amendments to the Unit 4's Voluntary Desegregation Plan to reduce or eliminate minority-group isolation (MGI) in each of the three proposed magnet schools, is evident. And yet, the costs of fully implementing the Unit 4 magnet initiative as designed will exceed available resources. Given the current fiscal climate in the district and greatly impacted by the budget impasse at the State level, Unit 4 would be challenged to implement the magnet program as designed without support from the MSAP grant. Importantly, the average per pupil expenditure associated with the implementation of the magnet program is approximately \$2,590 in excess of the standard per capita allocation per student.

*d) The difficulty of effectively carrying out the approved plan and the project for which assistance is sought, including consideration of how the design of the magnet school project—e.g., the type of program proposed, the location of the magnet school within the LEA—impacts on the applicant's ability to successfully carry out the approved plan.*

The three magnet schools targeted for the 2017–22 magnet initiative were selected because they present the most significant challenges in terms of both racial/ethnic and socioeconomic isolation within the school district. As shown in Table 1, each of the three proposed magnet schools currently experiences MGI among African American students and socioeconomic (SES) isolation, based on a definition of isolation that the proportion of these student groups within the total school population exceeds the district-wide average for the school level (elementary or

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middle).

**Table 1: Proportion of African American (AA) and Students Eligible for FRL by Proposed Magnet School and District Average (2015–16)**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Proportion of AA Students</b>	<b>Proportion of FRL Students</b>
Stratton ES	61.1%	70.9%
Garden Hills ES	60.7%	65.5%
District Average (ES)	35.0%	52.9%
Franklin MS	46.9%	60.0%
District Average (MS)	38.2%	57.2%

Moreover, all three schools face significant challenges to raising levels of student achievement, which bears out the research showing the correlation between MGI and SES isolation and lower levels of student achievement (see narrative response to Competitive Preference Priority 4 for supporting research). Data from the 2016 state assessments showed that less than a third of students in each proposed magnet school met the learning standards in English Language Arts (ELA) or Math, and there were significant achievement gaps among students by racial and ethnic background, eligibility for FRL, and students with special needs, namely students with disabilities and ELLs.

The District’s 2017–22 magnet initiative includes a comprehensive plan that will be critical to attracting a more diverse population of families to the three magnet schools, thus reducing minority-group and socioeconomic integration and improving student achievement levels. Support from the MSAP is critical in order to ensure that all aspects of the whole-school magnet

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programs are planned, developed, and implemented with rigor and fidelity, that they are effective in meeting the project objectives, and that they have the capacity to be sustained after federal funding ends. More specifically, MSAP funding will be essential in supporting the following vital components of the initiative.

- **Executing a comprehensive, multi-pronged outreach and recruitment campaign** at the district and school levels to inform families of the new and revised program options and engage community members, which includes the development of magnet brochures and magazines, media releases, upgraded school websites and social media presence, “choice chats” across the city, open houses, and outreach to community leaders and members.
- **Designing and providing intensive and ongoing professional development (PD)** for magnet staff in order to transform teaching and learning across the three schools and support systemic changes in student achievement through research-based strategies, including Habits of Mind and cultural competence, and theme-specific content and instructional practices.
- **Creating and implementing evidence-based thematic programs that will improve student achievement and reduce MGI**, through development of inquiry- and project-based thematic units of study in the proposed magnet themes: Arts at Stratton ES; Mathematics and Engineering Leadership at Garden Hills ES; and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) at Franklin MS.
- **Establishing and expanding partnerships with business, community, and educational institutions** to provide authentic thematic experiences for students and

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teachers, including partnerships with the UIUC, Parkland College, Wolfram Research, Spurlock Museum, and the Champaign County Farm Bureau.

- **Providing a breath of equipment and supplies to support and bring the unique curriculum to fruition such as** Lego Robotics, 3D printers and scanners, Laser cutters, Math manipulatives, Venier (Science) Lab equipment, hydroponic grow tents, musical instruments, art supplies, dance rooms, and related educational materials.
- **Designing and implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process** that includes ongoing formative and summative evaluation and rigorous impact study by the external evaluator, as well as regular convening of the District Leadership Team, Magnet Steering Committees, and Magnet Advisory Councils throughout the five-year grant period.

## 2. New or Revised Magnet Schools Projects and Strength of Evidence to Support Proposed Projects

*The Secretary determines the extent to which the applicant proposes to carry out a new evidence-based magnet school program or significantly revise an existing magnet school program using evidence-based methods and practices, as available, or replicate an existing magnet school program that has a demonstrated record of success in increasing student academic achievement and reducing isolation of minority groups.*

Unit 4 proposes to use MSAP funding to develop one new whole-school STEAM magnet program at Franklin MS and to significantly revise two elementary magnet schools by infusing evidence-based practices into the program designs for each of the three magnet schools. Using MSAP funding, Stratton ES will significantly revise the existing MicroSociety® and Leadership

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magnet program into the Stratton Academy for the Arts, and Garden Hills ES will significantly revise the existing International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) into a new Mathematics and Engineering Leadership Academy. The nature and significance of each of the whole-school magnet programs are described in Table 6 in the Attachments.

As described, each of the magnet programs, including the new program and significant revisions, have been designed based on from lessons learned in Unit 4’s previous MSAP grant. As such, the designs include a strong emphasis on evidence-based instructional strategies to ensure the programs are effective in improving student achievement; and they focus on high-interest themes that were identified through a comprehensive planning process that involved multiple stakeholder groups from the District and school communities to ensure that the programs are effective in attracting a diverse population of families.

To support integration of evidence-based approaches, Unit 4 will engage UChicago STEM Education to provide an intensive five-year PD plan for teachers across each of the three proposed magnet schools on the effective implementation of the *Everyday Mathematics* (EM4) curriculum and instructional practices and to provide annual two-week summer camps for students at each magnet school to provide enrichment math experiences based on the inquiry- and problem-based instruction of the EM4 curriculum. There is strong evidence of the positive impact of *Everyday Mathematics* on student achievement in math, as described in citation 1.

Unit 4 will also engage the University of Illinois, School of Art + Design and the Northern Illinois University (NIU) Center for P-20 Engagement (P-20 Center) to provide extensive PD for teachers at Stratton Academy for the Arts and Franklin STEAM Academy to build staff’s capacity to integrate arts effectively across the curriculum. Arts integration will serve as an

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avenue to foster project-based learning and enhance teaching and learning in core subject areas for all students in both schools. As described in citation 2, there is a wealth of high-quality and ongoing research, including promising evidence of the positive effects of arts integration on student academic achievement; and the U.S. Department of Education (U.S.DOE) has invested substantial resources to build arts integration models in schools through the federal Arts in Education Model Development and Dissemination (AEMDD) and Turnaround Arts grants.

**Citation 1** (included in Attachments):

Waite, R.D. (2000). A study of the effects of *Everyday Mathematics* on student achievement in third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students in a large North Texas urban school district. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 61(10), 3933A.

The study meets What Works Clearinghouse evidence standards with reservations.

**Citation Outcomes:** The study examined the impact of the *Everyday Mathematics* curriculum in a large North Texas urban school district using a quasi-experimental design. A total of six schools were included in the treatment group that implemented the *Everyday Mathematics* curriculum. A comparison group was selected using the following matching student variables: gender, ethnicity, grade level, free and reduced price lunch, and pre-test scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. All schools in the comparison group implemented a district math curriculum. Independent *t* tests of significance and multiple regression analyses were conducted to assess the impact of the intervention on student outcomes using the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills.

Results of the analyses showed that after the intervention, the treatment group outscored the comparison group by a mean of 3.90 points, a difference that was statistically significant. When the data were disaggregated by student subgroup, the scores of the treatment group were

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significantly higher than the comparison group among African American and White students, low-income students, and male and female students. Furthermore, the results of the multiple regression indicated that the use of *Everyday Mathematics* curriculum could be attributed to the gains made by African American and low-income students and to the reduction in achievement gaps for those subgroups.

The outcomes of the study are directed related to the outcomes outlined in the Unit 4 magnet program logic model—to increase student achievement in math based on scores on the state assessments from the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). Increased achievement on the PARCC in math will be achieved by effective implementation of the *Everyday Mathematics* curriculum and supported by intensive professional development.

**Relevance to Proposed Project:** *Everyday Mathematics* in a core math curriculum for grades PreK-6 that was developed by UChicago STEM Education, the former Center for Elementary Mathematics and Science Education (CEMSE). The curriculum has a strong focus on real-world problem solving, communication of mathematical thinking, and integration of technology, as well as collaborative learning and differentiated instruction. As described in the Quality of Project Design, Unit 4 will partner with UChicago STEM Education to provide a five-year professional development plan that includes onsite training sessions for all teachers and hands-on co-teaching experiences in laboratory classroom settings during summer math camps at each school.

Similar to the methods used in the cited study, Unit 4 will gauge the impact of implementation and professional development on *Everyday Mathematics* on math achievement

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of students in grades 3-5 across the target magnet elementary schools using scores from standardized assessments (PARCC tests in math). Additional data will be collected on teachers' participation in professional development provided by UChicago STEM Education to examine variation in student achievement.

**Citation 2** (included in Attachments):

Scripp, L. (2011). Partnerships in Arts Integration Research (PAIR) Final Comprehensive Report Part 2: Impact of PAIR on Student Academic Performance. Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education.

**Citation Outcomes:** The report is part of a four-year longitudinal PAIR study that was funded through a U.S. Department of Education AEMDD grant and implemented by Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE) in Chicago Public Schools (CPS). For the study, six CPS elementary magnet schools were selected as PAIR treatment schools and a matched set of randomly-selected non-PAIR magnet schools served as control schools. All schools implemented arts education programs; the treatment schools also received PAIR professional development on arts integration, including documentation and assessment of student arts integration work in core subjects. Outcomes were assessed using student scores on the state standardized assessment, the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) in reading and math. Findings of the report showed:

- Treatment students demonstrated greater gains in test scores in the longitudinal study than the comparison students and average district scores in both reading and math. The differences were statistically significant:  $p < .005$  for reading, and  $p < .001$  for math.

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- In the follow-up cohort of students in the study, the differences between treatment and comparison students “demonstrated more immediate and more highly significant PAIR treatment student learning outcomes during the second year of the program” (p. 18).

**Relevance to Proposed Project:** This report presented findings related to the impact of arts integration on student achievement in reading and math. These outcomes are directly related to the outcomes that will be assessed in the project, as shown in the project logic model.

The PAIR project was designed with findings from a previous AEMDD Developing Early Literacies Through the Arts (DELTA) grant that developed models of teaching artist residencies in musical, visual, movement, and dramatic arts to improve early literacy skills in CPS. PAIR followed the same model of developing arts integration to enhance skills in core content areas in the upper elementary grade levels. Treatment schools received PD in arts integration provided through teaching artists who worked directly with students and teachers on art-integrated instruction.

The model for arts integration proposed for Stratton Academy of the Arts and Franklin STEAM Academy follow a similar model. All teachers will participate in intensive professional development over the five-year period with University of Illinois Art + Design and NIU to build teacher knowledge, skills, and use of arts integration as strategy for improving teacher and learning (as described in the Quality of Project Design). Additionally, each school will also establish strong partnerships with local artist organizations, including 40 North Champaign County Arts Council to integrate artist residencies into classroom instruction. Arts integration will provide opportunities for students to participate in project-based learning and build motivation and engagement in learning. As a result, student achievement will improve across

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content areas, including student scores on the state assessments in reading and math (as measured on the PARCC tests).

There is currently a growing body of high quality research, including reports produced from projects funded through the USDOE AEMDD and Turnaround Arts programs, examining and demonstrating the positive effects of arts integration on student achievement. A 2015 report prepared for the President’s Committee for the Arts and Humanities from the Turnaround Art initiative, for example, found that “on average, from 2011 to 2014, Turnaround Arts schools demonstrated a 22.55% improvement in math proficiency rates and a 12.62% improvement in reading proficiency rates” (Stoelinga, et al., 2015, p. 46). Additionally the study found that “Turnaround Arts schools had significantly higher rates of average improvement in both math and reading than the cohort of analogous federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools in their districts and states, improving 6.35% more in math and 7.04% more in reading” (p. vii). Furthermore, a 2014 report on the impact of arts integration in 32 Changing Education Through the Arts (CETA) schools in Washington D.C. provided through a partnership with the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts found that CETA students demonstrated more positive outcomes in areas of creative thinking and student engagement, which are measures that have been shown to be predictors of higher standardized test scores (O’Neal, 2014). These studies are two examples of the growing body of research designed to study the relationship between arts integration and student learning outcomes. A number of research organizations, including CAPE, are currently engaged in additional rigorous research studies that collectively will build the body of evidence in this field.

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#### 3. Selection of Students

*The Secretary determines the extent to which the applicant proposes to select students to attend magnet schools by methods such as lottery, rather than through academic examination.*

Since 2009, Unit 4 has implemented the Champaign Schools of Choice Program, as described in Board Policy 705.09, that uses a controlled choice process to assign students to elementary and middle schools. Selection of students to the three magnet schools (Stratton ES, Garden Hills ES, and Franklin MS) will occur in conjunction with this choice process. As described in

Tables 5 in the Attachments, the choice process uses a **race-neutral lottery that does not include academic achievement as a selection criterion.**

At the elementary school level, all families who are enrolling their children in Kindergarten or in Unit 4 for the first time are provided with a choice application on which they indicate, in rank order, their top five different choices for their child's school assignment. The district uses a computerized lottery to match families with their highest ranked school based on availability of seats in each school. Within the lottery, preferences are provided, in the following order, for:

1. Siblings (including foster children and minors residing in the same residence with the guardian) of students currently enrolled in the school of choice;
2. Proximity, meaning the school geographically closest to the child's residence (this preference only applies to an applicant's first choice school); and
3. Socioeconomic status guidelines (SES status is determined by a student's eligibility for free and reduced-price food services).

At the middle school level, as described in Policy 705.09, students are assigned to schools based on Unit 4's cluster model. Upon entry to elementary school, students are assigned to a

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“cluster group” based on their elementary school of attendance. Students are assigned to one of Unit 4’s middle schools based on their elementary cluster group, as follows:

- Edison MS: Carrie Busey, South Side, Bottenfield, and International Prep Academy  
Elementary Schools
- Franklin MS: Dr. Howard, Garden Hills, Barkstall, and Booker T. Washington  
Elementary Schools
- Jefferson Middle: Westview, Robeson, Kenwood, and Stratton Elementary Schools

Incoming sixth grade students who seek to attend Franklin STEAM magnet school but who are not in Franklin’s elementary cluster group can submit a transfer request. As stated in Board Policy 705.09, applicants with “a lottery computer assignment [that] is based on seat availability and the Schools of Choice program guidelines.”

#### **4 Increasing Racial Integration and Socioeconomic Diversity**

*The Secretary determines the extent to which the applicant proposes to increase racial integration by taking into account socioeconomic diversity in designing and implementing magnet school programs.*

Numerous studies show a close relationship between SES and racial/ethnic background, suggesting that efforts to integrate schools by SES can have implications for racial diversity, and by extension, the resulting academic outcomes as well (Mickelson, 2016). According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the percentage of children living in poverty varies systematically by racial/ethnic group. For example, while 38% of African American children and 30% of Hispanic/Latino children were living in poverty in 2013, only 10% of White and Asian students were living in poverty that same year (Musu-Gillette, 2016). The patterns are intensified

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when examined at the school level. In 2014, 42% of students of color attended a high-poverty school compared to only 8% of white students (PolicyLink/PERE, National Equity Atlas).

Research findings demonstrate a strong relationship between racially-integrated schools and academic performance in core subject areas such as reading, mathematics, and science. After controlling for individual and family background, attendance at a racially-diverse school is found to be positively correlated with increases in academic exam scores. A February 2016 report by The Century Foundation found that “attending racially diverse schools is beneficial to *all* students and is associated with smaller test score gaps between students of different racial backgrounds, not because White student achievement declined, but rather that Black and/or Hispanic student achievement increased” (Wells, et al., 2016, p.12).

Research also points to the substantial impact of economic desegregation—separate from and in addition to racial/ethnic integration—on student achievement. Recent large-scale studies show a strong correlation between a school’s concentration of poverty and lower levels of student achievement (Poverty & Race Research Action Council, nd). More specifically, low-income students who attend schools with middle-class peers achieve significantly higher academic outcomes than low-income students who are enrolled in schools with concentrated poverty. In fact, at least one study suggests that the overall SES composition of a school has a greater impact on student achievement than an individual’s familial economic background (Kalhenberg, 2013).

Finally, attendance at a racial and socioeconomically integrated school also results in higher gains in 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and resulting outcomes. Students attending a diverse school, for example, are more likely to enter STEM career fields and are more likely to have “higher occupational and income attainment,” in part due to their increased capacity for critical thinking,

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collaboration, and interpersonal competence (Mickelson, 2016; Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, 2009). It is worth highlighting that these interpersonal competencies accrue not only to students of color, but to the white students attending diverse schools as well. According to the National Coalition on School Diversity, “the complex, more flexible thinking that white students develop from these exchanges [that take place in diverse schools] is an essential academic benefit flowing from diverse classrooms.” (Siegel-Hawley, 2012, p. 2).

**Unit 4 has implemented targeted strategies to increase racial and ethnic integration by taking into account socioeconomic diversity.** As articulated in the district’s newly amended Voluntary Desegregation Plan (in Attachments), Unit 4 has a long-standing commitment to implement policies and practices that directly focus on promoting equity. The foundation for the district’s current efforts to increase racial and ethnic integration by taking into account socioeconomic diversity was laid in 1997 with Unit 4’s adoption of a controlled choice student assignment plan that was subsequently incorporated into a Consent Decree approved by a federal district court in Illinois in 2002. At that time, the key elements of the controlled choice plan included: parental choice, racial fairness guidelines to ensure that “minority students” were not over- or under-represented in each school and improved outreach and information sharing with families and the community.

The plan was modified in 2009, at which time SES guidelines were added as a considering factor in student assignments. Modifications to the plan stemmed from the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in the *Parents Involved in Community Schools v Seattle School District No.1*, which restricted districts’ use of individual students’ race in assignment plans. The modified controlled choice plan that was adopted and currently guides student assignment in Unit 4 replaced the

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racial fairness measures with consideration of a number of SES factors in the assignment process. **The new controlled choice SES student assignment policy (“SES-SAP”) was first implemented in the 2009–10 school year and continues to be in force today.** As stated in the SES-SAP, “assignment decisions are made based on a weighted lottery system using an algorithmic formula that takes into account a number of criteria including: projected district-wide school enrollments; the socioeconomic status guidelines; sibling preference; and proximity to the school.” The socioeconomic factors include: applicant gross family income, parent or guardian-reported parent educational attainment level, applicant pre-school experience, and the number of adults and children in the applicant household.

On November 4, 2009, the District Court approved a settlement agreement and terminated the Consent Decree, acknowledging that Unit 4 had satisfied in good faith its obligations under the Consent Decree. Furthermore the court noted that the measures that Unit 4 was implementing to support racial and socioeconomic integration and expanding parental choice equity “represent the best method of continuing the progress made in Champaign schools that was started by the Consent Decree” (Unit 4 Voluntary Desegregation Plan, p. 2) The MSAP grant will continue this progress by creating magnet programs with unique themes capable of attracting a more diverse population to three of Unit 4’s schools that continue to struggle with minority group and socioeconomic isolation (as presented in Table 1 in the Need for Assistance).

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#### **SELECTION CRITERIA**

##### **(a) Desegregation**

*The Secretary reviews each application to determine the quality of desegregation-related activities.*

##### **Background and Context**

Champaign, a mid-sized city in east central Illinois, is home to UIUC, which offers the community enormous resources, diversity, and opportunities. As described in the Need for Assistance section, a majority of Champaign residents are White (64.8%), with lower proportions of African American (15.6%), Asian (10.6%), Hispanic (6.3%), and two or more races (3%), with a 28.3% poverty rate (U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2015). Champaign is, in some ways, a tale of two cities, with the white majority and many of the resources concentrated in the South End where the university is located, and the North End—home to the three proposed magnet schools—which has a higher concentration of the city’s African American, Hispanic/Latino, and low-income families. Within Unit 4, the student population is more racially and ethnically diverse than the community as a whole—there are almost equal proportions of White (37.2%) and African American (35.0%) students, with fewer Hispanic (11.1%), Asian (9.4%), and multi-racial (7.0%) students. The proportion of low-income students (54.2%) is almost twice that of the larger community (28.3%).

The diversity of the city and school district notwithstanding, the city of Champaign has over the past several decades grappled with issues of racial tension and housing segregation, which is reflected in the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic segregation within the Unit 4 schools (Potter, 2016). In the 1990’s, African American community advocates took action against the educational

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inequities resulting from segregation, and in 1996, filed a formal complaint against the district with the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. In response, Unit 4 took an aggressive step to reduce racial and ethnic segregation by adopting a choice-based, diversity-conscious enrollment plan using a controlled choice model (Potter, 2016). The plan essentially eliminated attendance zones for all of the district’s elementary schools and created a process whereby all families could rank each of the elementary school options based on their preferences for their child. Students were then assigned to a school based on a computerized lottery process that accounted for parental choice (ranks). The plan, however, did not provide full choice for families; it was a controlled model meaning that there were priorities built into the lottery model. Students were given priorities in the lottery for having a sibling in the school, geographic proximity (meaning how close their home was to a school), and racial fairness guidelines designed to ensure that “minority students were not over- or under- represented in each school.”

The student assignment plan was implemented over the next seven years, but was modified in 2009 in response to the decision made by the U.S. Supreme Court to limit the use of student race as a determining factor in school assignment (Parents Involved, 2007). To guide the modification process, Unit 4 applied for and received a one-year competitive grant from the U.S. Department of Education Technical Assistance for Student Assignment Plan (TASAP) program. The grant provided funding for Unit 4 to secure the consulting services of a nationally-known expert in controlled choice plans who supported development and implementation of the plan. Grant funds also supported marketing and outreach to ensure that Unit 4 families were aware of the modified plan. The modified plan, which is still in place today, was called the controlled choice, socioeconomic student assignment policy (“SES-SAP”) because it replaced the racial

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fairness guidelines with socioeconomic guidelines to ensure that low-income students are not over- or under-represented in schools.

Two years later, Unit 4, still struggling to reduce the vestiges of racial and ethnic segregation in several elementary schools, applied for and was awarded its first MSAP grant. The grant was implemented from 2011–2014 to create new magnet programs in three elementary schools: Booker T. Washington, Garden Hills, and Stratton. All three magnet programs achieved early successes in reducing MGI and improving student learning outcomes. Booker T. Washington STEM Academy, which benefits from a strong collaboration with UIUC, continues to make progress in increasing student achievement, and in 2015, was recognized as a Magnet School of Excellence by Magnet Schools of America. Stratton and Garden Hills Magnet Schools used grant funding to develop magnet programs in Microsociety and Leadership and IB PYP, respectively. The two programs were initially successful in meeting the desegregation and achievement goals of the grant. However, parents in the Unit 4 community did not fully embrace the themes as rigorous opportunities for their children; and, after the MSAP grant ended, student diversity at both schools started to decline. Additionally, neither school was able to establish the type of strong partnership within the community that was needed to sustain the programs, such as the partnership that Washington had developed with UIUC. Stratton was successful in creating connections with the city's flourishing arts community to support many of its MicroSociety® art-related ventures, but was not able to find comparable partners to support the business-related ventures. As a result of the strong arts partnerships developed through the MicroSociety® program, Stratton parents showed a growing interest in developing a stronger art program at the school.

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#### Commitment to 2017-22 MSAP Initiative

Unit 4 is looking again to the MSAP to help reduce or eliminate MGI in three schools that are not yet reaping the benefits that the district's controlled choice plan is designed to provide. The new grant will develop a new **STEAM Academy** at Franklin MS and will significantly revise Garden Hill ES's IB PYP magnet into a **Mathematics and Engineering Leadership Academy** and Stratton ES's MicroSociety and Leadership program into an **Academy of the Arts**. All three programs have been designed using best practices learned from the successes of the Booker T. Washington STEM Academy which has flourished as a result of its ongoing and strong connection with UIUC. The new and revised magnet programs will each develop strong partnerships with Champaign's higher education community, including UIUC and Parkland College. Furthermore, the Stratton **Academy of the Arts** will build upon the strong foundation in and parent demand for arts programming developed through its existing magnet program.

Unit 4's steadfast commitment to bringing about educational equity and reducing disparities is confirmed by the recent resolution by the Board of Education to approve an amended Voluntary Desegregation Plan "*to expand the variety of choice options it currently offers to its diverse student population*" by creating whole-school magnet programs to increase options for elementary and middle school students across the district. The amended Voluntary Desegregation Plan and approved Board Resolution are included in the required Attachments. In the Plan, the Board acknowledges that although Unit 4 has made progress in achieve the intended goals of the Plan, "*minority group isolation continues to exist in several schools,*" including the three targeted for the MSAP grant. MGI, for the purposes of the Plan and the MSAP grant, is defined by Unit 4 as a *school in which the proportion of one or more racial/ethnic student*

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*groups exceeds the district-wide average of schools at the same level.*

All three proposed magnet schools have populations of African American students who are minority group isolated. In Stratton and Garden Hills ES, the proportions exceed the district average for elementary schools by more than 15 percentage points; and in Franklin MS, the proportion of African American students exceeds that in Unit 4’s other two middle schools by more than 10 percentage points. Furthermore, as shown in Table 2, White students are under-represented in the three schools, when compared with the district averages. All three schools have a proportion of students who are eligible for FRL that exceeds the district-wide average at their respective school level.

**Table 2: Proportion of Students by Race/Ethnicity and Eligibility for FRL, by Proposed Magnet School and District Average by School Level**

<b>School</b>	<b>African American</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Two or more races</b>	<b>FRL Eligible</b>
Stratton ES	61.1%	13.2%	12.0%	7.1%	6.1%	70.9%
Garden Hills ES	60.7%	8.5%	14.0%	9.5%	7.1%	65.5%
District Ave. (ES)	35.0%	34.5%	12.0%	9.4%	9.3%	52.9%
Franklin MS	46.9%	26.3%	8.0%	13.6%	5.3%	60.0%
District Ave. (MS)	38.2%	34.9%	11.0%	9.8%	5.5%	57.2%

**In addition to being minority-group isolated, Stratton and Garden Hills ES are still among the least frequently-chosen schools in Unit 4’s Schools of Choice Program. As detailed in the**

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Competitive Preference Priority 3 Selection of Students narrative, the choice program allows families to rank each of Unit 4’s 12 elementary schools in order of preference for their incoming Kindergarten student. Data from the most recent Kindergarten registration period showed that Garden Hills ranked 10<sup>th</sup> and Stratton ranked 7<sup>th</sup> out of 12 schools in terms of first-choice selections.

Data also show that MGI in the proposed magnet schools is resulting from the number of students who are choosing to attend non-public K-8 schools in the areas surrounding the schools. In 2016–17, a total of 1,933 K-8 students attended private or parochial schools in Champaign, among whom most (75.4%) were White, while 11.3% were Asian, 5.3% were two or more races, 4.9% African American, and 2.9% Hispanic (<http://private-schools.startclass.com/>). These data suggest that the proposed magnet schools could achieve greater diversity and reduce MGI by providing attractive, high-quality school options to Champaign families without the associated high price of private school tuition. The STEAM magnet at Franklin will provide a new option for Unit 4 families; the significant revisions at Stratton and Garden Hills ES will revitalize the programs to better meet the needs of students and families.

*(1) The Secretary determines the extent to which the applicant demonstrates the effectiveness of its plan to recruit students from different social, economic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds into the magnet schools.*

One of the best ways to attract a more diverse population of students to the magnet schools is by developing effective and targeted outreach and recruitment strategies. Research suggests that districts should use a comprehensive approach to outreach that includes information centers, direct mailing of literature in multiple languages, and advertisements in a variety of media

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outlets (Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008). Furthermore, when outreach is effective, magnet school choice programs have been successful in achieving greater levels of integration by race/ethnicity as well as level of parental education (Betts, 2006).

Unit 4 has developed a comprehensive strategy for outreach and recruitment that will include the strategic use of district- and school-level resources to share information about the magnet programs with a diverse group of families and community members through print materials, Web-based and social media promotion, in-person presentations and student showcases, Choice Chats, and word-of-mouth marketing through district parent liaisons and school and community members. The strategy builds on best practices learned from the successes of the Booker T. Washington STEM Academy and the initial successes of the original Stratton and Garden Hill ES magnet programs in meeting the desegregation targets of Unit 4's first MSAP grant.

Outreach and recruitment will be a joint responsibility of the MSAP Project Director and the individual magnet schools. The Project Director will work closely with the Magnet Site Coordinator and administrative leadership at each school to develop and implement targeted and aggressive outreach and recruitment strategies that reflect the unique characteristics of the community. The Project Director will develop and disseminate district-based promotional materials (e.g., brochures, videos), share magnet program information regularly using social media posts; work closely with Choice Specialists at the Unit 4 Family Information Center (FIC) to ensure they are fully aware of the opportunities provided by the magnet schools; oversee the development of a district magnet program website; and submit information to local media including the local newspaper, *News Gazette*, network (CBS, ABC, NBC/Fox) and local public television stations, and the local national public radio affiliate and other popular stations for the

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promotion of magnet schools’ activities.

The Project Director will also support the schools in conducting a wide-reaching set of marketing activities to promote their individual magnet programs, including actively using social media and websites to showcase the magnet program; adding new electronic school marquees to highlight program activities and accomplishments; and installing magnet banners on the outside of school building to advertise the programs. The Project Director will also orchestrate the creation of a series of “spotlight” videos which can stream online or be viewed at parent and community events. Without targeted outreach, the chances of successfully meeting the desegregation goals that are outlined in the project performance measures would be substantially compromised. Unit 4 ensures that its recruitment and outreach for the magnet project will be sensitive and responsive to its diverse constituents and will be fully aligned with MSAP statute and the guidance of the Office for Civil Rights on the voluntary use of race.

The Project Director and Magnet Site Coordinators will collaborate with FIC staff to implement the following marketing events in each year of the grant.

**Table 3. Unit 4 Annual Marketing Timeline**

<b>Month(s)</b>	<b>Activity</b>
October– December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Develop and disseminate magnet promotional activities;</li><li>● Outreach to preschools, libraries, and relevant community/cultural organizations;</li><li>● Maintain active presence on print and social media (Facebook, Instagram Twitter)</li></ul>

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Month(s)	Activity
January– February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Elementary school application period starts</li> <li>● Elementary magnet information sessions at Family Information Center</li> </ul>
February– March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stratton and Garden Hills Elementary Magnet School Open Houses (2 per school)</li> <li>● School day tours (every Tuesday in February and every Wednesday in March)</li> </ul>
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Choice Chats at schools and FIC (small group sessions for parents to meet with district choice specialists)</li> <li>● Elementary application period ends</li> </ul>
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Franklin Middle School Open Houses and school tours</li> </ul>
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Middle School application process held</li> <li>● Elementary and middle school placements made</li> </ul>
May–August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continued outreach and placements (as needed)</li> </ul>

School-based recruitment for the magnet schools will be especially important because the students, teachers, administrators, and parents are the individuals who best know the schools and can best advertise them. The school-based Magnet Site Coordinators will develop a school-based marketing and outreach plan to build on the activities and strategies that are conducted by the district. Targeted marketing will focus on community service agencies, faith-based organizations, daycares and preschools, and Unit 4 families choosing private school options.

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Open Houses and showcases of student learning will be conducted for families and community members; paper and electronic informational flyers and brochures will be shared in the community, including at libraries, play gyms, community centers, and local doctor and dentist offices and health clinics; and presentations will be made by magnet staff at feeder schools and community events ranging from local festivals and park district events to special activities sponsored by local cultural organizations. Furthermore, each school will develop a magnet school website to highlight student and teacher achievements in the magnet program and to share information about the magnet theme and related family resources. The schools will also develop magnet program Facebook pages and Instagram and Twitter accounts to share information with families in real time. School-specific outreach strategies are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. School-Based Outreach and Recruitment Strategies**

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#### **Stratton Academy of the Arts:**

- Participation in and distribution of marketing materials at local arts festivals, including Boneyard Creek Festival, First Friday’s Art Openings, youth theater performances, and farmers’ markets
- Outreach to and presentations at Kindercare, University Child Care Development Center, and Parkland Child Resource Center
- Distribution of marketing materials with program partners, including Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, Springer Cultural Center, and Virginia Theater

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#### **Garden Hills Mathematics and Engineering Leadership Academy:**

- Distribution of marketing materials and presentation through the Savoy Park and
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Business districts, Champaign and Urbana Park District buildings, Marketplace Mall, Lincoln Square Mall, and University of Illinois campus

- Outreach to and participation in meetings with Rotary Clubs and Chambana Moms group
- Advertisements on city buses and active use of social media

#### **Franklin STEAM Academy:**

- Presentations at PTA meetings at Barkstall Elementary School (higher SES elementary school in feeder pattern)
- Distribution of marketing materials and participation in community activities with local faith-based organizations, such as First Christian Church
- Advertisements and distribution of printed materials at the YMCA in Southwest Champaign and Savoy Recreation Center

Unit 4 is committed to ensuring that all families have access to the information they need to make the best educational choices for their children. This can be challenging in communities, such as Champaign, that are home to traditionally “hard-to-reach” families, which may include non-English speaking, low-income, single parents, and families living in temporary housing (Fowler, et al., nd.). Many of these families have limited time or resources to engage in school activities or may face cultural or linguistic barriers in accessing information (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000). For these reasons, strategies such as using print and video communications in a variety of languages, using parents from the community as recruiters, and continued contact with families that have proven effective in reaching “hard-to-

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reach” populations will be employed to ensure access among all families to information about the magnet programs (Fowler, et al., nd).

Additionally, research has highlighted the importance of developing ties to the local community to foster relationships and trust among community members who will serve as important connectors to “hard-to-reach” families. To develop these ties, it is suggested that schools have dedicated staff who build and maintain ongoing connections with community leaders and advocates and regularly attend community events and meetings to better understand issues of relevance within communities. In doing so, staff can build cultural awareness into outreach efforts and gain understanding of potential cultural and linguistic barriers that may hinder families’ access to information or school involvement (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000). It is also important for schools to design the strategies in ways that will be most impactful in reaching families. For example, schools should: 1) personalize their communication with parents, including one-to-one conversations and communications that are informal at first to build relationships; 2) be creative and use a variety of communication formats and tools; 3) be mindful of how they communicate in order to use language and terms that are accessible to families and non-native English speakers; and 4) make involvement easy and exciting by providing food and child care and organizing events that involve the whole family (Cohen, 2011).

Unit 4 is implementing many of the key strategies that research has been found to be successful in communicating with “hard-to-reach” families. Unit 4 strives to ensure that all parents have access to information and can communicate with district and school staff to get answers to questions they have about educational choices. Unit 4’s FIC is a critical component in

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outreach to all families. It was created in 1997 as part of Unit 4’s Consent Decree (described above) to address issues of equity and diversity. The FIC is a welcoming place for families who are new to the District or seeking information from District departments and programs. It is home to the Schools of Choice Registration Center, the Elementary and Secondary Teaching and Learning Coordinators, and Unit 4’s Kids Plus after-school program.

Additionally, the FIC serves as the hub for the district’s new Full Service Community School Initiative which launched in fall 2016. The goal for the initiative is to transform the schools into Community Schools that meet the holistic needs of many of our high-need families based on findings from the District’s comprehensive needs assessment, which is being conducted during the 2016–17 school year to gather input from community organizations, District and school staff, and parents and guardians. Community Schools bring a variety of services and resources to communities, including: health services, counseling, tutoring, after-school programs, mentoring, and exposure to college and career opportunities. Research has found the community schools model, which is being used in more than 5,000 schools nationwide, to have a positive influence on student learning, family engagement, school effectiveness, and community vitality (Jacobson, 2016). The Community Schools initiative will serve as a great resource for families in the proposed magnet schools and will provide opportunities for magnet school-based staff to share information with families and engage them in magnet activities.

The FIC also houses two full-time ELL Parent Liaisons who support parents of English learners to participate in their children's education and success in school by creating and strengthening effective communication and home-school partnerships. Specific to assisting families with school registration, the staff contacts families individually via telephone and email

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to make sure they are aware of Choice Open Houses and information sessions. They also make connections in local communities to distribute informational flyers and school choice materials in languages other than English, and work with the District's translation unit to ensure that marketing and information materials are available in multiple languages. The liaisons also lead Unit 4's monthly meetings of the English Learners Parent Advisory Committee (ELPAC) which consists of parents, community members, bilingual education and English as a Second Language teachers, and district staff members. Together, ELPAC members try to empower families of English learners with information about education, programs, community- and school-based resources, support, and opportunities for students and families.

The three proposed magnet schools will work with the ELL parent liaisons and the ELPAC to recruit native speakers of languages other than English from their staff, parent, and local communities to interact directly with parents so that they feel welcome in the school buildings and understand the information that is shared.

Additionally, Unit 4 takes active steps to ensure that parents, guardians, and community members with disabilities have reasonable access to the content and information on marketing and informational materials online and in print. Staff in the FIC have the resources to meet specific needs of individuals with disabilities and Unit 4's informational technology (IT) staff work continuously to ensure that the core pages of the Unit 4 web site exceed the standards of the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C's) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA and the Web Accessibility Initiative Accessible Rich Internet Applications Suite (WAI-ARIA) 1.0 for web content. The magnet teams at each school will work with Unit 4's IT

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staff to ensure that magnet program information and web-based marketing materials adhere to these same standards.

*(2) The Secretary determines the extent to which the applicant demonstrates how it will foster interaction among students of different social, economic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds in classroom activities, extracurricular activities, or other activities in the magnet schools (or if appropriate in the schools in which the magnet school programs operate).*

The District's aggressive outreach and recruitment plan, in concert with an equitable, efficient, and race-neutral student selection process (described in the Selection of Students Competitive Preference Priority 3), will ensure that the Unit 4 magnet schools attract and enroll an increasingly diverse population of students and families over the five-year grant. However, there is ample evidence to suggest that attracting a diverse student body does not in and of itself guarantee that students of different backgrounds, once enrolled in magnet schools, will develop positive interactions in the absence of educational and structural strategies known to foster positive intergroup relationships and to support all learners to succeed in the magnet program (Bifulco, Buerger, & Cobb, 2012). Some important strategies identified in the literature for promoting positive interactions between students and teachers and among students include implementing a culturally responsive pedagogy and practices of cooperative learning to facilitate learning between students with diverse perspectives.

**Cultural competence** refers to the ability to effectively understand, communicate with, and interact with people of different cultures and involves awareness of one's own cultural worldview, attitude toward cultural differences, knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews, and cross-cultural skills (Ben-Ari & Strier, 2010). Culturally responsive teaching

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requires awareness of the cultural differences of students and an adjustment in teacher attitude (Colbert, 2010). Suggested strategies for developing cultural competencies in the classroom include building relationships with students and parents, listening empathetically, looking for cultural interpreters in the school or community, and using available resources such as books, articles, files, and audio files (Pratt-Johnson, 2006). Research conducted by the organization Teaching Tolerance to create its Anti-Bias Framework highlighted the following critical practices for anti-bias education: use of classroom-reflective texts coupled with nonjudgmental dialogue, sharing stories that make room for student sharing, community studies or student-led walking tours, and inclusive configuration of classroom furniture (Scharf, 2014).

**Cooperative group learning** as a pedagogical strategy has also shown to help students foster positive interactions. While definitions of cooperative learning vary, the key components are the deliberate use of group work with the groups composed of students of varying academic achievement levels, backgrounds, or perspectives. Cooperative learning techniques are student-centered and are designed to increase the achievement of all students involved in the activity. In fact, according to the National Coalition on School Diversity, “classrooms [that] are structured around cooperative group learning...help to maximize the benefits of diversity.” Furthermore, heterogeneous classroom arrangements that facilitate substantive contact between students leads to reduced prejudice and explicit self-reflection about issues such as racial/ethnic discrimination (Siegel-Hawley, 2012). Per Slavin and Cooper (1999), “Because cooperative learning groups encourage positive social interaction among students of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, they have great potential to facilitate the building of cross-ethnic friendships and to reduce racial stereotyping, discrimination, and prejudice” (p. 2). Cooperative group learning is also defined by

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its focus on problem solving as the means through which interaction takes place and its student-centered nature, where students lead group exercises and become teacher-learners themselves. Through activities such as developing solutions to real-world problems (Cornell University Center for Teaching Excellence, 2016), students engaged in cooperative learning are able to “draw on their past experiences and knowledge” and “are invested in their own learning.” Optimally, teachers pair these collaborative learning exercises with resources that assist students in achieving their own project goals (Educational Broadcasting Association, 2004)

Lastly, another key strategy for fostering interactions among students is creating opportunities for **project-based learning** (PBL)—in which students learn through research and applied learning. Cooperative work and team learning, fostered in a PBL learning environment, have a strong and consistent positive effect on relationships between culturally diverse students (Colbert, 2010). A 2012 study, for example, found that students who had higher-quality interactions with peers from other racial groups reported having more positive academic environments and more positive attitudes toward other groups (Bifulco et al., 2012).

Unit 4 understands that in order to foster positive interactions among students, teachers must be equipped with the tools to understand students’ cultural differences, encourage positive relationships, and respect students as individuals. To support the magnet initiative, Unit 4 will build upon a long-standing partnership with Dr. Edna Olive, an educator and executive director of ROCKET, Inc. (Raising Our Consciousness with Knowledge, Expertise and Teaching), who provides staff training across Unit 4 on **Positive Behavior Facilitation (PBF)**. The PBF approach helps adults examine how they interact with youth, understand children’s behavior, and support and encourage them to make positive decisions for themselves, using key tools of

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awareness and management of self, understanding differences, and effective communication. Staff in the three magnet schools will have the opportunity to participate in district PBF training, including a 36-hour course that will enable them to become certified as PBF trainers to provide turn-key training and support to their colleagues in implementing PBF strategies throughout each school year.

Unit 4 also provides training in the area of **restorative justice** to further the skills of staff to encourage positive communication and interactions among students. Restorative Justice (RJ), as a practice, generally concentrates on developing effective alternatives of punitive responses to wrongdoing. There is a growing body of research showing the positive effects of restorative justice practices on reducing student behavior problems, improving school attendance rates and school climate, and supporting academic outcomes (Fronius, et al., 2016). For example, one study found that a group of schools in Denver that implemented restorative circles and conferences reported a 44% decline in suspensions, as well as reductions in student absenteeism (50%) and tardiness (64%) (Baker, 2009). Other studies have reported increases in school grades (McMorris, et al., 2013) and high school graduation rates among RJ participants (Jain, et al., 2014).

In Unit 4, the training focuses on the key practice within restorative justice of **peacemaking circles**. Peacemaking circles, according to Illinois Balanced and Restorative Justice (IBARJ), are “a process grounded in the shared values of those in the circle that creates understanding, builds and repairs relationships and assists with solving conflicts and disputes.” Teachers conduct circles daily to provide environments for students to gain skills as: 1) considerate listeners, 2) confident speakers, and 3) “circle keepers” who are responsible for ensuring that all participants

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can be heard and can listen. The circles are designed to allow for “full expression of emotions, deeper listening, thoughtful reflection, and an unrushed pace” (www.ibarj.org). The use of circles within the magnet program will provide safe environments for students to engage in positive interactions with all peers, including those of different genders and racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. IBARJ has been working with Unit 4 since 2014 to provide staff training on integrating peacemaking circles into their daily class schedule. Staff across the three proposed magnet schools will have access to training and coaching on this practice.

In addition, to help each magnet school develop and ensure effective implementation of **culturally responsive policies and instructional practices**, Unit 4 will develop a new partnership with Dr. Pedro Noguera and his team from the Center for School Transformation at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). A description of the five-year plan of PD and technical assistance to be provided by the Center and how it is intended to improve student learning outcomes is provided in subsection 3 of the Quality of Project Design.

*(3) The Secretary determines the extent to which the applicant demonstrates how it will ensure equal access and treatment from eligible project participants who have been traditionally underrepresented in course or activities offered as part of the magnet school, e.g., women and girls in mathematics, science, or technology courses, and disabled students*

It is the practice of the Unit 4, according to Board Policy 700.01, that “*equal educational and extracurricular opportunities will be available to all students without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religious beliefs, physical and mental disability, or actual or potential marital or parental status*” and to maintain an environment free of unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment, and retaliation. This Policy is in accordance with Title VI and Title

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VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Section 503 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended; the Civil Rights Act of 1991; and the Illinois State Human Rights Act. Unit 4 policies to ensure equal access and treatment are also fully aligned with guidance provided by the USDOE Office for Civil Rights on the voluntary use of race to achieve diversity and avoid racial isolation in elementary and secondary schools (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights and U.S. Department of Justice, 2011).

The Unit 4 magnet schools will be whole-school programs that provide all students with opportunities to participate in rigorous, theme-based instruction and enrichment activities. As described in Table 5: Selection of Students—Competitive Preference Priority 3, Unit 4 will use a race-neutral lottery process that will not include academic-based criterion to enroll students in the magnet programs. As noted earlier, Unit 4 is committed to providing all communications with parents and community members about the magnet program and activities in multiple languages and formats accessible to individuals with disabilities in order to reach a diverse population. Furthermore, participation in magnet activities will not require financial contributions from students or their families.

Unit 4’s leadership subscribes to the belief that the district and individual schools have the responsibility to take a proactive role in providing adequate supports and resources to ensure that all students can attain high levels of achievement—including those who have traditionally been underrepresented in courses or activities that will be offered as part of the magnet school programs. An essential component to ensuring equal access and treatment is setting high standards that all students are expected to meet, regardless of their gender, racial, or ethnic

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background; educational needs; or income level. It is recognized, however, that some students have greater difficulty in meeting these standards when they are confronted by certain academic, social, or emotional challenges.

This section describes some of the major efforts that Unit 4 and the proposed magnet schools are making to ensure equal access and treatment. **These efforts demonstrate that Unit 4 is in full compliance with Section 427 of the U.S. Department of Education’s General Education Provisions Act (GEPA).** This proactive approach to ensuring equitable access to and participation in the magnet schools initiative provides additional support for students with special learning needs, including ELLs, students with disabilities, and struggling learners, and offers guidance support for all students.

#### Support for Students with Special Learning Needs

Unit 4 is committed to meeting the varied educational needs of its student population, including ELLs and students with disabilities. As detailed in the earlier section on outreach, the magnet staff will work with the FIC and District IT and other staff to ensure that families of all ELL students and students with disabilities have access to information about the magnet programs and are invited to participate in the programs at each of the three schools.

**Services for ELLs.** The Unit 4 English as a Second Language (ESL)/Bilingual Education Department supports the District’s mission and Strategic Plan in assuring equal educational access for English learners to develop linguistic, cognitive, and academic skills so to become competitive citizens of our society. It is the goal to ensure that students whose first language is not English have equitable opportunities to participate in academically challenging programs that respect and build upon the unique cultural and linguistic attributes they bring to the learning

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community. Parents can select from the services provided in making decisions about their child's placement. In Unit 4, students are screened for services using the WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) developed by World-class Instrumental Design and Assessment (WIDA). The W-APT is an English language proficiency screener to help Unit 4 make appropriate programmatic decisions for ELLs, including determination of placement and services.

In Unit 4, the **ESL program** serves students of a variety of native languages. ELLs spend the majority of the school day in core classes with native English speakers and receive ESL support in English through a combination of pull-out and push-in instruction based on the model that best meets the needs of the student. During ESL support, students are grouped by grade and level of English proficiency to support development and integration of language and academic content. The ESL program is offered at Garden Hills and Stratton ES. Franklin MS does not have an ELL population that is large enough to support an ESL program; ELL students receive customized push-in and pull-out supports based on individual needs.

The district's **transitional bilingual education (TBE)** programs provide services to ELLs in a self-contained classroom where all ELLs share the same home language. TBE services must be provided in any Unit 4 school that serves a population of at least 20 ELL students of the same native language. Full-time TBE is only offered at the Champaign Early Childhood Center. Several Unit 4 schools—including Garden Hills and Stratton ES—offer part-time TBE programs, which are similar to ESL services in terms of student groupings, pull-out and push-in instructional models, and learning objectives. However, TBE teachers also use non-English language and English instruction to effectively support ELLs' transition from their first language to English. Part-time TBE programs are offered in French and Spanish at Garden Hills ES and in

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French, Spanish, and Korean at Stratton ES. All TBE programs convene a Parent Advisory Council that meets at least 4 times each year to discuss program information, provide an avenue for parents to ask questions and express concerns, and is a resource for support and networking for interested individuals in Champaign.

Unit 4 also offers two **dual language programs** in Spanish-English at International Prep Academy (IPA) and in French-English at Stratton ES (to serve the school’s growing Congolese population). The programs use 50/50 dual language two-way immersion instructional models to integrate native speakers of Spanish or French with native English speakers for instruction through two languages. The students are models for their native language and culture in classrooms that promote and celebrate bilingualism and biculturalism. Students who wish to apply to a dual immersion program must do so after they have gained admission to the school that houses the program (IPA or Stratton). Students are not able to apply directly to the program through the controlled choice process. Students in the French-English program at Stratton ES will be fully-integrated into the Arts Academy.

Lastly, the district offers a Newcomers Essentials program at IPA for ELL students in grades 4-8 with interrupted formal education and limited literacy in their first language. Most students in the program are newcomers to the U.S., so instruction is tailored to their academic and linguistic levels to build a strong foundation for learning. Students receive instruction in all core and elective content areas and socio-emotional elements of a meaningful school experience.

Both Stratton and Garden Hill ES serve substantial ELL populations—21.5% and 18.9%, respectively. The ELL population at Franklin MS is much smaller (1.4%). The schools are dedicated to meeting the unique needs of their ELL students and will provide the same

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opportunities for ELL students to participate in the full range of magnet classes, activities, and programming as their native English speaking peers.

**Services for Students with Disabilities.** The mission of Unit 4’s Special Education Department is to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities by providing individualized instruction and services that will result in measurable and meaningful student growth. In doing so, Unit 4 operates under the core beliefs of: the rights of all students and families to be treated with dignity, equitable access opportunities for students with disabilities, inclusive philosophy of collaboration to guide decision-making toward meeting student needs, and students should be challenged to reach their full potential. In working toward meeting these core beliefs, Unit 4 provides special education services in the least restrictive environment so that children can meet their academic, functional, and transition goals. Unit 4 is committed to working with children and families in providing quality programs to over 1,300 students with disabilities so that they can derive educational benefit from the curriculum and make progress toward meeting IEP and curricular goals and state standards.

In Unit 4, students with disabilities are eligible for the full continuum of special education services, including instruction by a special education teacher in push-in, pull-out, or self-contained models and appropriate related services, including speech and language services, social work, and occupational and physical therapy. The proportion of students with disabilities at the three proposed magnets is: 9.9% at Garden Hills ES, 10.6% at Stratton ES, and 14.8% at Franklin MS. All three schools will ensure that students with disabilities are provided with the same or comparable opportunities to participate in thematic instruction and magnet activities as their peers.

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**Academic Supports for Struggling Learners.** In its commitment to raising achievement for all students, Unit 4 provides a **multi-tiered system of academic supports**. At the elementary level, academic supports include reading and math intervention by licensed teaching staff. Middle school students have two internal academic support systems: 1) “flex class,” in which all students are enrolled, which provides academic supports based on individual need; and 2) “catch-up” days in which students can receive help in missed work or areas of need throughout the school day. Among the models of support is **Reading Recovery**, an evidence-based program of daily one-on-one tutoring over a 12-20 week period for first grade struggling students to acquire literacy. Additionally, all Unit 4 elementary schools use the **Response to Intervention (RtI) model** which is a collaborative and comprehensive system of differentiated supports that include: a three-tier model of school supports, problem-solving method for decision making, and an integrated data system that informs instruction.

The Unit 4 middle schools also offer **Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)**, an academic support program that fosters preparation for college eligibility and success. AVID students take college preparation coursework and receive support through AVID teachers and tutors. The model is designed to support students from low socio-economic backgrounds, students who will be the first in their family to attend college, and struggling learners. As National AVID Demonstration Schools, Franklin and Jefferson MS have been recognized by AVID as exemplary models of its college readiness system based on a rigorous validation process that assessed level, quality, and fidelity of implementation of AVID strategies schoolwide.

All the aforementioned supports for students with special learning needs will ensure that all

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students at the proposed magnet schools will have the same access to the rigorous instructional programs and enrichment and extracurricular activities offered by the magnet programs.

#### Support for All Students in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Courses

Additionally, Unit 4 is committed to encouraging all learners to participate in rigorous study in the areas of STEM to ensure they are equipped to complete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy. Underrepresentation of girls and racial and ethnic minority groups—particularly of African American and Hispanic students—in STEM fields and courses of study is well documented by research (Chen & Thomas, 2009; National Science Foundation, 2013). At the same time, literature highlights the advantages to pursuing these fields, both in terms of employability and future earnings, as well as the cognitive benefits that STEM brings to all aspects of education (Malcolm & Webster, 2014). For these reasons, strategies that support participation among all groups of students, including both those who are traditionally underrepresented in STEM and groups who participate more frequently, is of utmost importance to providing equitable access and opportunities. Research and literature have highlighted effective strategies for promoting participation in STEM among all groups. Specifically, the following strategies have strong or moderate evidence of their impact on fostering participation among girls and underrepresented groups in STEM: activities that connect math and science to careers of interest among students, explicitly teaching students that academic abilities are expandable and improvable and building students' confidence in math and science performance, and providing students with informative feedback about their performance (Halpern, et al., 2007)

Research further indicates that one of the best ways to build interest in science, technology, engineering, and math among children and adolescents—and especially students from racial and

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ethnic minority groups—is to provide hands-on applications of STEM learning (Hayden et al., 2011; Ilumoka, 2012). Opportunities for students and teachers to engage in explicit teaching and learning of STEM content and concepts within the context of real-world examples have been shown to build interest among students in STEM, including girls and racial and ethnic minority groups (Hayden et al., 2011). And, building interest in STEM is a fundamental component in preparing students to persist in STEM postsecondary and career opportunities (Hayden et al., 2011). Furthermore, supplementing engaging, hands-on classroom experiences with out-of-school STEM activities, which may include extracurricular clubs, competitions, or activities during the school year as well as summer bridge and research opportunities, have proven to increase student engagement and motivation to pursue STEM fields (Maton et al., 2009).

Other best practices include: providing opportunities for students to learn from female and racial/ethnic minority college or graduate students in classroom activities; providing community outreach and recruitment for STEM experiences; use of collaborative learning opportunities, hands-on learning experiences, and differentiation of instruction; and employing strategies actively designed to negate stereotypes, such as inclusive examples and including instructors from a diversity of backgrounds (Hayden et al., 2011).

Understanding that a strong education in STEM content and instructional practice fosters development of academic achievement and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, such as critical thinking, team work, and computational thinking, Unit 4 is actively promoting a focus on STEM education in all schools, including the three proposed magnet schools. All science curriculum and instruction is being aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), which place a strong emphasis on STEM practices and building student experience and understanding of science

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through real-world examples. All Unit 4 Middle Schools are offering a STEM lab course through the elective wheel which empowers students to explore and develop STEM academic skills and career interests. The foundational components that unify instruction at each grade level include computational thinking, engineering design process, rapid prototyping, STEM career connections, and STEM literacy. Students learn coding and benefit from partnerships and resources from UIUC College of Engineering and organizations such as Wolfram Research (see Franklin MS program design for detailed information on Wolfram Research). The STEM lab elective at Franklin MS will continue as part of the STEAM magnet.

Another strategy being implemented to foster high academic achievement within Unit 4 is the district's K-12 Computational Thinking and Computer Science Curriculum. Unit 4, through a partnership with UIUC, is working to bring computer science (CS) and computational thinking (CT) to students at all grade levels across the district. For the elementary grade levels, the UIUC College of Education's Math Science Technology Education (MSTE) Office has been working to develop a model curriculum to integrate CS and CT into the district's *Everyday Math* (EM4) curriculum. The work is being supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation STEM+C initiative and in collaboration with the University of Chicago, developers of the EM4 curriculum. Curriculum development has involved enhancing existing EM4 curriculum units to integrate CS and CT into math instruction. At the high school level, Unit 4 has collaborated with UIUC Departments of Computer Science, College of Education, and Wolfram Research to develop a CS course of study with networking classes to help expose students to advanced levels of CS and prepare them for technology jobs that do not yet exist.

Additionally, since 2013, all schools in Unit 4 have participated in the Hour of Code, a one-

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hour introduction to computer science that takes place each year during Computer Science Education Week. In conjunction with Hour of Code activities, each of Unit 4's middle schools conducts after-school coding activities; and two elementary schools, including Stratton ES, have held evening family coding events to extend exposure to coding to families and the broader community.

*(4) The Secretary determines the extent to which the applicant demonstrates the effectiveness of all other desegregation strategies proposed by the applicant for the elimination, reduction, or prevention of minority group isolation in elementary schools and secondary schools with substantial proportions of minority students.*

Unit 4 maintains an active Education Equity Excellence (EEE) Committee to ensure equitable access and academic outcomes for all students. The EEE was first established in 2009 as part of the district's Consent Decree to address a complaint brought against the district with the USDOE Office for Civil Rights (see earlier in section). The original focus of the EEE was to review and discuss issues of equity related to examining and discussing: student enrollment and achievement data by race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status; academic progress of regular education, special education, gifted, AP/honors, and alternative school students; attendance rates; discipline rates; and graduation rates.

Today, the EEE continues to focus on those issues and driven by student data, establishes task forces and programs in response to student needs. For example, the EEE has spearheaded work on the development of Kindergarten Readiness and Middle School Transition Materials and parent timelines of key dates in multiple languages to help parents find resources needed to ensure their children are ready for important milestones. EEE has also worked with UIUC to

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facilitate annual college career fairs to provide information to Unit 4 families about college options as well as resources available for financial aid and preparing for college applications. The committee also worked to develop materials to help families with summer reading resources, and is currently developing district-wide parent surveys to assess parent needs and creating parent timelines for Special Education programming.

Unit 4 is committed to recruiting and retaining staff from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds in all schools. There is a robust body of research highlighting the importance of a diverse teaching force, as well as the challenges that many school districts are facing in effectively recruiting and retaining teachers from racial and ethnic minority groups (Dilworth & Coleman, 2014). To address specific needs of Unit 4 to recruit and retain non-White teachers, the district established a Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention Committee, which has worked successfully over the past 10 years to attract a diverse group of teacher and staff to Unit 4. The group has sponsored annual district-wide professional development conferences and recruitment fairs, conducts outreach to pre-service educators, and hosts social gatherings where staff members from diverse backgrounds can network with district administrators and members of the Board of Education.

#### **b) Quality of Project Design**

*The Secretary reviews each application to determine the quality of the project design.*

*(1) The Secretary considers the manner and extent to which each magnet school program will improve student academic achievement for all students attending the magnet school programs, including the manner and extent to which each magnet school will increase student academic achievement in the instructional area or areas offered by the school,*

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*including any evidence, or if such evidence is not available, a rationale based on current research findings to support such description.*

Unit 4 has a longstanding commitment to its mission of working “*in partnership with the community to guide all students in gaining knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to direct their lives, improve a diverse society, and excel in a changing world by providing dynamic, resource-rich learning environments and experiences in which people and lifelong learning are valued.*” Six district goals of Unit 4’s strategic plan have been articulated by Superintendent Dr. Judy Wiegand to serve as guideposts for measuring progress toward reaching this mission. These goals lead all aspects of educational programming in Unit 4, and served as the framework for the proposed magnet initiative. With these goals, Unit 4 seeks to:

1. Foster high academic achievement, wellness, and well-being among all learners in a safe, supportive environment;
2. Align District’s priorities and resources through a community-involved planning process implemented through focused action plans with regular progress reports;
3. Retain, hire, and support highly qualified faculty and staff that will best serve the District’s diverse student population;
4. Effectively and efficiently engage parents and other community stakeholders resulting in strong partnerships;
5. Leverage the strength of the District’s diverse population to create a rich academic and social environment in each of the District’s schools; and
6. Revitalize, build, and maintain facilities that are safe, sustainable and allow equitable access to programming services across the District.

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The proposed Unit 4 magnet initiative has been designed to be fully aligned with and supportive of the six district goals—with a specific focus on fostering high academic achievement and well-being among all learners, leveraging the strengths of Unit 4’s diversity, and revitalizing district resources to allow for equitable access to high-quality services across the district. The magnet programs in each of the three schools will provide new and enhanced opportunities for students to gain in-depth knowledge and understanding of core content through an engaging thematic lens. Additionally, the programs are being developed and significantly revised to provide teachers with a better understanding of evidence-based instructional practices and prepare them to integrate these strategies into instruction as a means to foster student achievement gains. At the same time, the programs will provide real-world connections for students, involve them in unique learning experiences, and engage them in exciting school-wide, theme-based initiatives. The thematic curriculum and instruction will be fully aligned with the Illinois Learning and Fine Arts Standards, and national standards including NGSS, the C3 Framework for social studies, and International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Standards to provide students with exposure to rigorous learning that will help prepare them for college and careers.

#### Academic Needs in Magnet Schools

The new thematic and instructional approaches of the proposed magnet programs are needed in the three schools. All three schools struggle with low academic achievement rates among their students. These schools will greatly benefit from the infusion of evidence-based instructional practices to boost achievement so that all students can succeed.

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Results from the PARCC tests in ELA and Math that were administered to all Unit 4 students in Grades 3 through 8 in the spring of 2016 demonstrate the academic needs in the proposed schools. These data are presented in Table 5 for grades 3-5 and Table 6 for grades 6-8. Overall, the data show that the proportions of students who met the standards in ELA and Math are low in each of the three proposed schools; furthermore, there are significant achievement gaps among students by racial and ethnic background, eligibility for FRL, and students with special needs, namely students with disabilities and ELLs.

More specifically, among students in grades 3-5, only 28% of students at Stratton ES and 23% of students at Garden Hills ES met or exceeded the learning standards in ELA in 2016. These rates lagged the district-wide average of 36%—by 8 percentage points at Stratton ES and 13 points at Garden Hills ES. The results for math were similar. At Stratton ES, 29% of students met or exceeded the standards which lagged the district-wide average (39%) by 10 percentage points. At Garden Hills ES, the proportion was 22%, lagging the district-wide average by 17 percentage points.

At both schools, there were gaps in the achievement rates of students by subgroup. In both ELA and math, the proportions of Asian and White students who met or exceeded the standards were at least 11 percentage points higher than those of African American and Hispanic students. Also, the rates for low-income students, ELLs, and students with disabilities lagged those for all students by at least five and up to 22 percentage points.

Results for Franklin MS were similar. Overall, the proportions of students who met or exceeded the standards in ELA and Math were low (29% and 28%); and there were substantial achievement gaps between Asian and White students compared with African American and

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Hispanic students, as well as for low-income students and students with disabilities (the number of ELLs was too small for reporting). Achievement rates for Franklin, however, were similar to those observed for middle schools students district-wide.

**Table 5. Percentage of Students in Grades 3-5 Who Met/Exceeded Standard on PARCC in ELA and Math**

Student Group*	Stratton ES		Garden Hills ES		Unit 4	
	Grades 3-5		Grades 3-5		Grades 3-5	
	ELA N=211	Math N=219	ELA N=249	Math N=260	ELA N=2,29 6	Math N=2,322
All students	28%	29%	23%	22%	36%	39%
Asian	79%	84%	62%	66%	71%	77%
American Indian/Alaska Native	--	--	--	--	--	--
Black/African American	10%	10%	10%	9%	11%	12%
Hispanic/Latino	22%	10%	17%	18%	24%	25%
White	59%	58%	41%	39%	56%	60%
Two or more races	--	--	34%	26%	36%	38%
ELLs	6%	16%	10%	17%	10%	11%
Students with disabilities	19%	23%	4%	7%	7%	12%
Eligible for FRL	13%	16%	13%	12%	18%	20%

\*Data are not presented for subgroups with less than 10 students.

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**Table 6. Percentage of Students in Grades 6-8 Who Met/Exceeded Standard on PARCC in ELA and Math**

Student Group*	Franklin MS		Unit 4	
	Grades 6–8		Grades 6–8	
	ELA N=643	Math N=643	ELA N=1,916	Math N=1,940
All students	29%	28%	28%	26%
Asian	81%	86%	60%	65%
American Indian/Alaska Native	--	--	-	-
Black/African American	9%	5%	8%	6%
Hispanic/Latino	17%	23%	20%	18%
White	46%	41%	43%	40%
Two or more races	27%	36%	29%	29%
ELLs	--	--	11%	8%
Students with disabilities	3%	3%	2%	3%
Eligible for FRL	11%	10%	13%	12%

\*Data are not presented for subgroups with less than 10 students.

District Initiatives to Increase Student Achievement

Unit 4 has outlined a number of strategies and benchmarks to guide the district and schools in meeting its primary goal to foster high academic achievement and well-being among all learners. First and foremost is a commitment to improve academic achievement for all students and to

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outline specific benchmarks for student gains to direct all instructional efforts. These benchmarks include rigorous goals for all students, as well as for subgroups that are currently showing achievement gaps.

Yet, Unit 4 realizes that establishing benchmarks will not, in and of itself, ensure that they are achieved. Instructional practices must be designed and implemented to help students learn to their potential and demonstrate gains that are expected. As such, Unit 4 has committed to implementing **content-specific standards with an emphasis on instructional practices to support the development of higher order thinking skills**. Unit 4 understands this commitment requires a shift in instructional practices to allow students to engage with content and learning in new ways and to participate more actively in their own instruction. To support this shift, Unit 4 has established an expectation that high-yield instructional strategies will be implemented across all classrooms, and has developed a standard process for evaluating the extent to which this is being accomplished. Unit 4 has already begun collection of data on usage and effectiveness of student-centered strategies using the **Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) instructional framework** in all schools. Integration of the GRR into the magnet program design will help support the infusion and effective use of the evidence-based approaches that are being implementing to ensure student academic achievement increases across each of the three magnet schools.

The GRR model was first outlined by P. David Pearson and Margaret Gallagher in their work at the UIUC in 1983 to “provide teachers with an instructional framework for moving from teacher knowledge to student understanding and application” (Fisher, nd). The model involves four interrelated components: 1) focus lessons which allow teachers to model thinking and

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understanding of content for students; 2) guided instruction during which teachers facilitate students through learning tasks and use formative assessment to address needs; 3) collaborative learning to allow students to consolidate their understanding and discuss and negotiate learning with peers; and finally 4) independent work for students to practice applying information in new ways (Fisher, nd). These practices have been shown to have positive effects on student achievement and improving literacy achievement and reading comprehension, and outcomes for ELLs (Fisher and Frey, 2007; Fisher, nd). Unit 4 is using this framework in all schools to establish, monitor, and support practices within the classroom and at the school level that foster learner-centered environments.

#### Unit 4 Magnet Project Design

The Unit 4 magnet initiative will build on district-wide efforts to enhance student learning and will provide each student in the three proposed schools with a rigorous educational experience that:

- stems from a content-based theme that is unique to and draws on the strengths of the individual school communities;
- promotes the development, implementation, and refinement of interdisciplinary thematic curricula mapped to state and national standards;
- embeds into teaching and learning research- and evidence-based instructional strategies that have been shown to promote high levels of student achievement; and
- demonstrates the effective use of state-of-the-art technology to connect students to each other as well as to peers and mentors around the globe.

Each of these components of rigorous instruction is described in the paragraphs that follow. The

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individual magnet school descriptions presented after this overview illustrate how they will come alive in the three school communities selected to become magnets.

Each proposed magnet school will develop an **innovative, theme-based program** that provides rigorous instruction and enrichment activities to all students that are not available in other schools in Unit 4. The magnet themes will be infused into core subject curricula through the development of interdisciplinary curriculum units and lesson plans to provide enhanced, rigorous, and engaging learning opportunities for all students. Furthermore, all of the thematic units will be mapped to and supportive of the Illinois Learning and Arts Standards, as well as the NGSS, ISTE, and C3 Framework.

While the content areas of focus varies across the schools (i.e., Arts, Mathematics and Engineering Leadership, and STEAM), a common thread that connects all of the magnet school designs is their emphasis on **project-based learning** (PBL) and evidence-based instructional practices. Using an inquiry-based approach, each of the magnet programs will integrate PBL into all aspects of the thematic curriculum to guide students in taking ownership of learning and developing critical and higher-order thinking skills. PBL is an innovative approach to education that focuses on creating a student-centered learning environment that supports “deeper learning through active exploration of real-world problems and challenges” (Pellegrino & Hilton, 2013, p. 8). While there is no firm definition of PBL, researchers and practitioners agree upon a set of essential components of a PBL approach. First, PBL units or lessons should be motivated by a driving question or problem to be solved. Secondly, PBL curricula target significant learning goals (Krajcik & Shin, 2014); and lastly, PBL units should use hands-on experiences to promote learning (Condliffe, 2015) and be conducted over a period of time in order for students to delve

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deeply into research (Parker et al., 2013). Researchers agree that if PBL is designed effectively, it produces significant benefits to students' learning including: promoting construction of knowledge, cultivating student engagement, providing scaffolded student learning, encouraging student choice, and supporting student collaboration (Condliffe, 2015).

PBL will be supported across the three schools through the development of strategic partnerships with organizations with expertise in bringing thematic content alive with the integration of hands-on approaches and use of technology. Unit 4 will partner with the **UChicago STEM Education Center** to support a higher level of implementation of the *Everyday Math* (EM4) curriculum through the integration of PBL activities and technology applications to support greater student learning. EM4, as described in the Competitive Preference Priority 2 narrative, is an evidence-based program developed by UChicago STEM Education that will be a key component of the Unit 4 magnet initiative to improve student achievement in math across all three magnet schools. Specifically, the partnership, as described later in subsection 3, will provide teachers with intensive, high-quality mathematics PD focused on how students learn mathematics at all levels, incorporating student-centered learning approaches to mathematics instruction as a means of increasing student engagement and achievement.

Additionally, UChicago STEM will also provide opportunities for students at all three magnet schools to experience an annual two-week summer math camp that will build upon students' mathematics knowledge, foster confidence, and nurture interests in STEM-related fields through a PBL approach. Offered during the summer of each year of the grant, the camp will serve 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students across the three magnet schools with 180 minutes per day of devoted mathematics instruction that will serve as a platform for students to build passion

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and confidence in mathematics through a deep dive into targeted mathematical content. The camp will also provide experiences in real-life applications of STEM fields through field trips and guest speakers from the UIUC Fab Lab, Illinois Geometry Lab, and Siebel Center for Computer Science. The camp will serve up to 100 students at each school and in each year, at no cost to their families. The camps will also serve as laboratory settings for the annual Teacher University at which 50 teachers per year will have the opportunity to develop and deepen their understanding of relevant K-8 mathematical content, national standards for mathematical practices, and teaching skills.

The **Engineering is Elementary (EiE)** curriculum will also foster PBL approaches to teaching at Garden Hills. EiE is a literacy-based elementary engineering curriculum composed on science-focused units that teach students STEM concepts by engaging them in hands-on projects using the engineering design process. Each unit includes four lessons and begins with a storybook presenting an engineering challenge with a multicultural perspective. Lesson 1 is centered on the engineering story; lesson 2 includes study of the engineering and scientific concepts presented in the story; lesson 3 engages students in data collection to give them a broad understanding of how data informs engineering; and lesson 4 engages them in an engineering design challenge. These challenges will be conducted in the new Engineering Design Lab to engage all Garden Hills students in PBL.

Unit 4 will also build upon an existing partnership with **Wolfram Research** to provide PBL experiences for middle school students at Franklin STEAM Academy. Wolfram is a Champaign-based computer, web, and cloud-software company with an international reputation for scientific and technical innovation. The company, founded in 1983 by Stephen Wolfram, is a

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pioneer in computation and computational knowledge and has been a partner to Unit 4 in the development of the middle school STEM elective course. Wolfram will support the new Franklin STEAM Academy through professional development and teacher training, and curricular materials and resources that support computational thinking in the classroom.

Arts integration will be a key strategy for infusing evidence-based strategies into the magnet programs at Stratton ES and Franklin ES. As described in the Competitive Preference Priority 2, there is strong evidence and a growing body of high-quality research findings that arts integration has positive and statistically significant effects on student achievement outcomes. The arts magnet program at Stratton ES and the STEAM Academy at Franklin MS will develop partnerships **UIUC School of Art + Design** and **40 North Champaign County Arts Council** to provide real-world, PBL experiences in a variety of art disciplines.

In each year of the grant, the UICU School of Art + Design Education Program will provide a seven-week, after-school visual arts program at Stratton ES for up to 120 of its students in Grades K-5 at no cost to their families. The program will engage students in the practice and creation of visual art to help strengthen their artistic proficiency and build skills in critical thinking and creative problem solving.

40 North, a local organization dedicated to cultivating arts and creativity in Champaign, supports collaboration of artists and local businesses and public sector entities by facilitating cross-sector communication and convening. The partnership will connect Stratton ES with local artists with expertise in a variety of art forms who will provide support during the studios or classroom artist residences for all grade levels. Artists may include traditional artists such as sculptors, painters, dancers, musicians, or digital artists from the UIUC Community Fab Lab. For

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example, an African dance Group will work with the 8<sup>th</sup> grade cultural dance studio for a three-day residency to demonstrate movements, discuss the history of African dance, and teach the dance to the students. The UIUC Community Fab Lab staff will provide an eight-week residency for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students to integrate arts into the study of energy and waves using engineering tools such a circuit tape, 3D printers, and arduinos. Through these arts partnerships students will learn standards-based content through an art-integrated approach. Students will create a variety of art formats to build artistic proficiency and develop important skills, such as communication and creativity.

PBL will be facilitated in each magnet school with the development and enhancement of **learning spaces dedicated to hands-on learning**. These spaces, which are described in greater detail within each of the school-specific magnet program descriptions, will be equipped with a variety of technologies and equipment that will allow students to explore and manipulate materials as they engineer solutions to ideas or problems. The learning spaces will include a new Engineering Design Lab at Garden Hills ES into which all grade levels will rotate on a weekly basis to participate in EiE lessons. At Franklin, a new Maker Space will be designed to allow all students to participate in engineering and STEAM challenges. Classes will rotate through the Maker Space on a bi-weekly schedule. Lastly, at Stratton ES, each of the school's three art rooms (visual art, music, dance, and drama) will be transformed with new materials and equipment and a new Media Arts Center will be created within the library to provide ample opportunities for students to engage in PBL and arts-integrated activities.

The project-based learning approach that will be fostered through these key partnerships will also support student development of important **non-cognitive, 21<sup>st</sup> century skills**. Preparing

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students for college and careers requires not only rigorous academic knowledge but also experiences that equip students with skills that will help them adapt and excel in any learning or workplace environment they encounter. These skills include those that are often referred to as 21st-century skills or “learning and innovation skills,” such as creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration, and information media, as well as technology skills (Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century, 2009). The development of non-cognitive skills is especially important among low-income students and students of racial and ethnic minority backgrounds. Studies have shown that success goes beyond intelligence, and that a child’s character in areas of “perseverance, curiosity, conscientiousness, optimism, and self-control” matters more (Tough, 2013). When applied to academics, these non-cognitive skills can help reduce disparities in achievement and educational attainment based on race, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and gender (Farrington, et al., 2012). However, research also suggests that low-income students and students of color may encounter challenges in developing such character traits because they do not have the social support that more affluent students may have to keep them on the path to higher education and success in a career (Strauss, 2012). The Unit 4 magnet programs will provide expanded opportunities for all students to participate in curricular and extracurricular experiences that will foster valuable college- and career-ready skills and expose them to new ideas and prospects.

#### Magnet School Program Designs:

Each of the proposed magnet schools will implement a whole-school magnet program that integrates evidence-based instructional practices and unique thematic curriculum and PBL experiences that in combination will work to improve student achievement in all instructional

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areas and meet the needs of all students. The process for identifying the magnet themes was a collaborative effort by the school communities, with support and guidance provided by the district planning team. Each school convened a core planning team of 5-9 teachers and staff to conduct extensive research and data analysis to identify exciting and rigorous magnet themes. The planning teams involved school staff and families in discussions and decision-making, resulting in the identification of the magnet themes. Below are descriptions of the proposed plans for each magnet program.

#### **Stratton Academy of the Arts**

Stratton ES will significantly revise its existing MicroSociety® and Leadership magnet program and transform into a whole-school Academy of the Arts. The new program will build upon the successes of MicroSociety® program in which students worked collaboratively in business ventures to plan, prototype, and create goods and services that were traded through magnet “market days.” Some of Stratton’s most well-designed and popular ventures have been arts-related, such as improvisation theater productions and a mini-masters painting studio. To support the arts ventures, Stratton has fostered numerous collaborations with well-known artist organizations in Champaign’s vibrant arts community, such as 40 North and the Champaign-Urbana Design Organization. These partnerships will be used to leverage new opportunities for the new Academy of the Arts to become a robust arts program that provides students with unique opportunities in a wide variety of art disciplines that are offered in no other schools in Unit 4.

Academic instruction at Stratton ES will be grounded in the principles that arts integration is a powerful instructional methodology and providing arts-related enrichment can be an impactful equalizer of opportunities for low-income students (Catterall, et al., 2012). Curriculum

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development across core content areas will be guided by extensive academic research on the strong connection between arts education and academic success (Ruppert, 2006). The evidence base for arts integration as a tool for improving student achievement is described in the Competitive Preference Priority 2.

At the Stratton Academy of the Arts, arts concepts and content will be integrated into core content areas across all grade levels—with a specific focus on the science and social studies curriculum. For example, units will integrate the study of art and artists that have been inspired by different scientific concepts and inventions or periods of history to create an interdisciplinary approach to thematic instruction. Over the five-year grant, teachers will engage in intensive curriculum development work to review all curricula to identify and develop explicit connections between core content and arts concepts. With these connections, teachers will develop arts-integrated units of study that will engage students in learning core curricula through the lens of active and participatory arts integration. This work will be supported in part by the annual week-long Summer Institute provided by the UIUC School of Art + Design and throughout the year by the Teaching Specialist, fine arts team, and visiting artists.

As with all three magnet schools, the MSAP budget will provide additional time for grade-level teams to meet to plan, develop, and write new curriculum. In Year 1, all grade levels will develop two arts-integrated units—one for science and one for social studies. In each of Years 2 and 3, teachers will revise existing units and develop two additional science and social studies units. In Years 4 and 5, teachers will have a full complement of arts-integrated science and social sciences units and will begin to develop similar units focusing on reading and math.

Classroom teachers will collaborate with the visual art, music, and drama teachers to connect

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core content and arts instruction in specials classes. Each unit of study will culminate with a showcase where students display their learning through performances and completed art pieces for parents, peers, teachers, and community members.

All units of study will be aligned with Illinois Learning and Arts Standards and National Core Arts Standards and will provide opportunities for students to extend learning through experiential, hands-on learning experiences, such as field trips or performances. Table 7 presents some examples of the thematic units that will be developed in science and social studies.

**Table 7. Sample Thematic Units, by Grade**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Examples of Thematic Activities</b>	<b>Extension activities</b>
K	Social Studies: What is Family?	To explore the role of and cultural differences between families, students will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Participate in photography project for which students to take photos of their family to examine differences and similarities of cultures</li> <li>● Examine cultural traditions of families through music and dance</li> <li>● Create family trees and tableaus representing individual family traditions and songs and lullabies from around the world</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Final photography show at end-of-year</li> <li>● Art Show with a family photo booth</li> <li>● Field trip to Spurlock Museum to view photographs of families from</li> </ul>

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<b>Grade</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Examples of Thematic Activities</b>	<b>Extension activities</b>
			different time periods
4	Science: Energy and Waves	To examine the physical movement of energy transfer in everyday life, students will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Manufacture paintings using circuits</li> <li>● Engineer pendulums and use them to create splatter paintings</li> <li>● Create different sound waves by filling glass jars with varying levels of water and tapping them with drumsticks</li> <li>● Perform movement pieces that represent scientific properties of energy waves</li> </ul>	●Field trip to the UIUC “Fab Lab” to learn how to create “circuit paintings” that use energy to in transform images
5	Social Studies: World War II and Justice, Freedom	Study different groups and individuals affected by WWII through memorials, photographs, and music, by examining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● War memorials, including Sadako Sasaki and the 1,000 cranes project memorial and victory gardens and creating own 100 cranes project and drawings of victory gardens</li> </ul>	●Virtual field trip to National World War II Museum in New Orleans, LA ●Guest speakers in classroom with survivors of the

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<b>Grade</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Examples of Thematic Activities</b>	<b>Extension activities</b>
	and Equality in wartime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Portraits and biographies of WWII heroes and Holocaust survivors</li> <li>● History of the famous photograph of the flag raised at Iwo Jima and writing a monologue or tableau to recreate the photograph’s story</li> </ul>	Holocaust and WWII

All students will also participate in daily arts instruction provided through a specials curriculum that is aligned with Illinois Learning and Arts Standards and provides scaffolded instruction across K-5 in visual arts, dance, and music. All students will also participate in weekly arts studios to gain in-depth exposure to various art disciplines and apply creativity and problem-solving to the creation of artistic works. Studios are elective classes assigned to students based on individual interests. Studio time will vary by grade level, with increasing frequency, as follows: Kindergarten (1 hour/week); 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades (40 minutes/2 times a week); and 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> (40 minutes/3 times a week). K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade students will rotate through two studios; 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grades will focus on one year-long studio. Instruction in the studios will be scaffolded to provide opportunities for students to build knowledge and skills within one or more arts disciplines over their K-5 career at Stratton. Examples of studio courses will include: dance, sculpture, guitar, painting, community arts, fashion design, recording studio, and community theatre studio.

For 5<sup>th</sup> grade students, all studios will include a community and philanthropic focus in which students learn to apply an arts project to a social cause. For example, for a studio based around a

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sustainable agriculture project, students will research local gardens, plant a plot in a local community garden, and create artwork to promote awareness within and around the Stratton community of the value of sustainable agriculture. At the end of the studio, students will be able to sell their plants at a local farmer's market or donate to the local soup kitchen.

The Academy of the Arts will benefit from strong partnerships with a variety of arts resources within the Champaign community. Champaign is home to a large and growing art community comprising local artists and students and faculty in a range of art departments at UIUC. Stratton will build partnerships with local artist organizations to connect with artists in various disciplines who may be interested in providing support during studios or artist residencies with classroom teachers. For example, Stratton will work with the **40 North Champaign County Arts Board** and **Champaign-Urbana Design Organization** to connect with local professional artists who will provide experiential learning opportunities for students. Examples of artist residencies and other learning experiences will include a 16-week residency with a dance specialist from the University of Illinois School of Fine and Applied Arts who will work with Grades 3-5 and Special Education students in Stratton's Functional Life Skills classrooms on a variety of dance forms that will enhance students' skills, as well as confidence and self-expression. In addition, artists from a local screen printing company will conduct a three-day residency with studios for Grades 1-2 and 3-4 to learn the art of screen printing through the study of Andy Warhol's paintings.

Stratton will also partner with UIUC's **Krannert Art Museum** and the **Krannert Center for the Performing Arts** to provide field trips for students to attend exhibits and performances by professional and college artists as well as the **UIUC College of Fine and Applied Arts'**

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**School of Art and Design** to provide an annual Summer Institute in arts disciplines and integration for all teachers (see section 3 of Quality of Project Design).

Stratton has the space and the facilities to support intensive arts instruction and studios, including art, music, and drama rooms. Funding provided through the MSAP, however, will provide a valuable opportunity for Stratton ES to transform these learning spaces into innovative art studios with up-to-date equipment, including drafting tables, a variety of musical instruments, theater props and costumes, and clay and sculpture materials. Additionally, Stratton ES will transform an area of the school library with outdoor access into a **Media Arts Center** where students can create art pieces and use natural elements to produce and display their work. The center will consist of an indoor digital media area with 3D printers, laser cutters, and desktop computers with design and photoshop software; and an outdoor courtyard space where natural materials, such as leaves, plants, and rocks will be available for artistic inspiration and play in the style of a Reggio Emilio studio space. Sculptures and artwork will be displayed in both indoor and outdoor areas and the outdoor space can provide opportunities for presentation of plays and dances.

Stratton will actively engage parents in students' artistic and academic learning through showcase nights and performances. These types of events have proven effective with the Stratton ES community—many of the past magnet showcase nights have been well-attended and have attracted large majorities (up to 75%) of Stratton families. The school will host several informational sessions for parents throughout the year to inform them of program activities, and parents will be given the opportunity to provide feedback during those sessions. Presentations will be conducted at PTA meetings and open houses, as well as during showcases. Additionally,

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the school will partner with UIUC and the PTA to develop free family arts activities and experiences to engage parents and students together in arts-related learning experiences and field trips.

#### Garden Hills Mathematics and Engineering Leadership Academy

Garden Hills ES will significantly revise the IB PYP magnet program and adopt a school-wide thematic focus on Mathematics and Engineering Leadership. The new theme will incorporate the instructional focus of inquiry and student-guided learning that were fostered with the IB PYP theme to build a program of project-based and technology-integrated instruction and equip learners to be future leaders in mathematics and engineering fields. The new magnet theme will provide the needed resources, professional development, and academic supports to help raise student achievement in math—an area that Garden Hills ES has struggled to improve.

The revised magnet program at Garden Hills will be built upon an interdisciplinary, thematic curriculum with a content focus on engineering with curricular connections to science, social studies, and mathematics. The program will teach students to apply the Illinois Learning Standards in mathematics effectively to engineer solutions to real-world issues and problems using technology connections from the district EM4 curriculum. As described in the Competitive Preference Priority 2, there is strong evidence of the effect of *Everyday Math* on student math achievement outcomes.

In addition, the magnet program will infuse leadership principles identified by the Stephen Covey *Leader in Me* curriculum, such as creativity, problem-solving, initiative and self-direction, and responsibility into project-based engineering challenges into the study of math and engineering. The leadership principles will help guide students to work effectively on PBL

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activities, communicate as team members, and persist through the challenges of the engineering design process which require students to embrace failure as a learning experience. Fostering leadership skills among all students will support teachers in making the transition toward student-guided, teacher-facilitate learning, which is a critical component in STEM education.

Garden Hill’s engineering focus will be bolstered through the use of the Engineering is Elementary (EiE) curriculum which provides multi-lesson units to integrate the engineering design process and studies of cultures around the world into the district science curriculum. As described earlier, each unit covers topics related to life, earth and space, and physical sciences through a literacy-based story book, classroom lessons and study guides, and a design challenge. All units will have connections for ELLs and students with disabilities and be fully aligned with Illinois Learning Standards, NGSS, and ISTE Standards. To provide students with real-world learning experiences, each unit will include extension activities, such as field trips to UCIC Solar Farm, UIUC Engineering Open House, and the UIUC Pollinarium, or lab experiences provided by UIUC College of Engineering. Two examples of the thematic curriculum are presented in Table 8.

**Table 8. Examples of Curricular Connections to EiE Units, by Grade**

<b>EiE Unit and Design Challenge</b>	<b>Cross-Curricular Connections</b>	<b>Extension Activities</b>
<b>Grade 1 Unit:</b> Sounds Like Fun:	<b>Science:</b> Test the physics and properties of sound using tuning forks and analyzing	Field Trip to tour Prairie Fruits Farms

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<b>EiE Unit and Design Challenge</b>	<b>Cross-Curricular Connections</b>	<b>Extension Activities</b>
<p>Seeing Animal Sounds</p> <p><b>Design Challenge:</b> Create representation systems for real bird calls</p>	<p>spectrograms and pictures of waveforms</p> <p><b>Social studies:</b> Research culture, geography, and sound of natural wild life of different countries, and the use of musical sounds in various cultures</p> <p><b>Math :</b> Using tools (such as rulers) to measure and compare lengths of spectrograms and waveforms</p>	<p>and Creamery (a sustainable working farm); Guest speaker from local audiology office</p>
<p><b>Grade 4 Unit:</b> Now You're Cooking</p> <p><b>Design Challenge:</b> Designing Solar Ovens</p>	<p><b>Science:</b> Examine principles of transfer and conversion of energy by sound, heat, light and electric currents</p> <p><b>Social studies:</b> Research impact of industrialization on environment and distribution of food and resources</p> <p><b>Math:</b> Measurement for oven designs, using area and perimeter Calculation and graphing of intervals in time and temperature</p>	<p>Field trips to solar farm at UIUC and Jefferson MS</p> <p>Guest speaker from Institute of Sustainability, Energy and the Environment at UIUC</p>

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In Year 1 of the grant, teachers in each grade level will implement at least one EiE unit and create 1-2 lessons with related social studies and math curricular connections. In Years 2 and 3, all teachers will implement two EiE units and develop 1-2 related social studies lessons and 1-2 related math lessons. By Years 4 and 5, teachers at each grade level will have a full complement of thematic curriculum comprising 2-3 EiE units, each with two related social studies lessons and two related math lessons.

As part of the magnet program, students will also have opportunities to participate in **theme-based enrichment clubs**. The clubs will provide opportunities for students to take on leadership roles within the school and surrounding community and participate in hands-on learning experiences and competitions in math and engineering-related activities. The clubs will be offered during the school day to allow for all interested students to participate. Three clubs will focus on fostering students' leadership skills, such responsibility, communication, and accountability. In the clubs, Gentleman's Club (for boys), Girls on Fire (for girls), and Student Council (co-ed), students will take on issues and causes of interest to them and the community and collaborate to identify and implement solutions. The clubs will also provide opportunities for students to foster positive interactions by learning social and conflict resolution skills. The Garden Hills staff who facilitate these clubs will attend the annual *Leader in Me* conferences for training on the curriculum and how to infuse it into the clubs.

In addition, Garden Hills will also offer math and engineering-focused clubs, including a STEM club where students engage in hands-on science learning activities with professors and students from UIUC's College of Engineering. Another club, Mathletes, will provide opportunities for students to work on math skills and compete against other students across Unit

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4 in mathematics competitions. A broadcast communications club will teach students about video and audio technologies within the context of conducting the school's daily morning announcements. Lastly, the Young Explorers club will engage students in hands-on engineering activities such as bridge building and tower design.

In addition to the clubs, staff from the St. Elmo Brady STEM Academy at UIUC will conduct weekly visits to Garden Hills throughout one semester in each year to conduct hands-on activities with students (after school) and families (Saturdays). The activities will focus on various experiments in electrical and chemical engineering, such as using circuitry and wiring to turn a potato into a battery or mixing household liquids to create chemical reactions.

Garden Hills ES, which underwent major renovation and expansion in 2010–11, has excellent facilities that are conducive to the magnet program and theme, including a modern library, gymnasium, science rooms, and cafeteria. In addition to the many open and bright classrooms there are multiple collaboration areas where students and/or teachers can convene for small-group activities. To help transform the school into a school-wide Mathematics and Engineering Leadership Academy, Unit 4 will use funding from the MSAP to modify an existing classroom into a state-of-the-art **Engineering Design Lab**. The lab will be used to conduct hands-on projects and engineering design challenges and support implementation of the EiE and EM4 curriculum lessons. The lab will be equipped with curriculum manipulatives, Lego Robotics materials, Erector sets, K'Nex supplies, equipment to design and build simple machines, other building supplies such as wood and cardboard, and arts supplies. In addition to the lab, Garden Hills will transform three collaboration areas into new Exploration spaces—grade K-1, 2-3, and 4-5—with flexible seating and portable technology and equipment to allow

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for collaborative work and research, as well as hands-on learning activities.

Garden Hills ES will engage parents through showcases of student learning during PTO meeting and events; monthly newsletters to show student learning activities and share magnet information; interactive class websites to showcase curriculum and learning; and Open Houses and Family Nights. Each year, Garden Hills ES will sponsor school-wide Engineering Nights and Mathematics Nights to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate engineering and math skills and guide their parents through stations with hands-on activities and experiments. These nights will provide opportunities for family members to make first-hand observations of the magnet program and what their children are learning. In addition, the leadership clubs will create and host community service activities and events for families to learn about the work being conducted in the clubs and participate in social causes. Examples may include park clean-up events, school beautification activities, and support to a local food pantry that is located within the school to provide food to Garden Hills families and other community members in need.

#### **Franklin STEAM Academy**

With support from the MSAP, Franklin MS will transform into the Franklin STEAM Academy, with the goal of empowering 21<sup>st</sup> century learners through discovery and exploration. The new STEAM program will be implemented school-wide to engage all learners in inquiry and exploration of core content through the lens of the artistic and engineering design processes, both of which will be supported by students' use of cutting-edge technology. It will infuse evidence-based practices of arts integration and *Everyday Math* training, both described earlier, to improve student learning and achievement outcomes. The magnet program will include: 1) an

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interdisciplinary, thematic curriculum focused on quarterly school-wide themes; 2) a newly-designed Maker Space to support project-based learning and engineering design challenges; 3) a STEM elective course; 4) new arts elective curricula and courses; and 5) STEAM-related enrichment activities.

The thematic curriculum will be developed to guide students in learning core content and standards through an interdisciplinary and inquiry-based lens. Over the five-year grant, teachers across all content areas will engage in intensive curriculum development work to unpack math, science, and arts standards and use them as the foundation upon which to build units of study that address these standards through the lens of STEAM. Each unit of study will focus on a school-wide quarterly theme that will engage all students in the examination of a common topic. Some quarterly themes may include Water (see sample unit below) and Exploration on Earth and Beyond. In Year 1, social studies, sciences, and arts elective teachers across grade levels will collaborate to develop one interdisciplinary unit for each grade level. In Years 2 and 3, these teachers will work with math and ELA teachers to revise the existing unit and add connections to reading and math; and will collaborate to develop 1-2 new units. By Years 4 and 5 of the grant, teachers across all content areas will have collaborated to develop and implement 4 units of study for each grade level—one in each quarter of the school year.

All units of study will be aligned with Illinois Learning Standards, C3 Framework, and NGSS, and will include engineering, technology, and artistic design challenges and extension activities such as field trips. The Maker Space will serve as resources for classroom teachers and students to engage in hands-on learning and experimentation for the design challenges. Table 9 presents sample units for grades 6, 7, and 8 on the theme of Water.

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**Table 9. Sample Thematic Unit: “Water is Life,” by Grade Level**

<b>Grade/ Essential Questions</b>	<b>Cross-Curricular Connections</b>	<b>Maker Space Challenges</b>
<p>6<sup>th</sup> grade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What is water made of?</li> <li>● Where does our water come from and where does it go?</li> <li>● Why is it important?</li> </ul>	<p>Science: Analyze chemistry of water</p> <p>Math: Measuring, graphing, surveying bodies of water on Earth</p> <p>Arts: Exploration of imagery of water in the arts using a water color study</p> <p>Social studies: Explore geographic locations of bodies of water, and how these locations impact the communities surrounding them</p> <p>ELA: Learn informational writing unit by drafting articles based on their findings from the other content areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create models of aquifers</li> <li>● Prototype and test personal portable water filter</li> </ul>
<p>7<sup>th</sup> grade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What role does water play in ecosystems?</li> <li>● Why are different bodies of water important?</li> </ul>	<p>Science: Examine ecosystems and their relationships with organisms, including human connections of ecosystems</p> <p>Math: Calculate volume of aquifers, water meter reading and rationing</p> <p>Arts: Exploration of imagery of water in the arts</p> <p>ELA: Conduct fictional and non-Fictional writing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Prototype and build hydroponic system using recycled materials</li> </ul>

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<b>Grade/ Essential Questions</b>	<b>Cross-Curricular Connections</b>	<b>Maker Space Challenges</b>
	units using “water” as the surrounding theme	
8 <sup>th</sup> grade  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How does human activity affect our water resources?</li> <li>● How can we design a water system to be used in our school where water is currently not provided?</li> </ul>	Science: Interrelation of salt-water and climate and human impact on water pollution  Math: Scaling bodies of water with maps  Arts: Song writing and instruments to represent sounds of water  Social studies: Study human geography and its impact on water resources, supply and demand  ELA: Create research and argumentative to debate issues relate to world water shortages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Design irrigation systems</li> <li>● Prototype desalination machine using recycled materials</li> <li>● Develop tools to map ocean currents</li> </ul>

To support the thematic unit on water, Franklin will develop partnerships with the **Champaign County Farm Bureau** and the **Master Naturalists of Champaign County** to provide student field trips to local farms, including the Barnhart Prairie (an 80-acre restoration prairie); the Heartland Pathway (a 33-mile ribbon of trails and wildlife habitat near the Sangamon River); Allerton Park and Pong; the Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District; American Water Company Treatment Center; UIUC Agricultural Engineering department; and Mahomet Aquifer. The field trips will support the thematic units by engaging students in real-world study of theme-based content.

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With funding from MSAP, the new **Maker Space** at Franklin will be fully equipped with the materials that students need in order to engineer solutions to real-world issues and problems. These materials will include desktop computers with DVD writers and capability for CAD and graphic design software, iPad air, digital printers, Ozbot coding robots, Sphere-O robotic coding sets, Mindstorm Lego robotics materials, poster makers, dry erase boards and markers, sewing and embroidery machines and accessories, rolling cutting boards, laser cutters, and other engineering supplies. The Maker Space will be staffed by the Magnet Teaching Specialist who will be responsible for collaborating with classroom teachers to develop design challenges that connect to the thematic units. The specialist will create a schedule for each class to cycle through the Maker Space on a bi-weekly or as-needed basis. The school's art, music, and drama rooms will also serve as key resources for implementation of the design challenges. Through the grant, these rooms will be upgraded with new technologies and equipment to support hands-on, project-based exploration including Macbook Air computers, laser cutters and 3D printers, digital recording equipment and monitors, and electric keyboard and guitars.

Thematic instruction will also be integrated into the elective ("encore") wheel which currently allows all 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students to participate in one quarter of instruction in STEM, art, music, and drama. The STEM elective for all grade levels will continue to follow the district's existing STEM curriculum, designed to empower students to explore and develop STEM academic skills and career interests. In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, students select two semester-long electives. Instruction in encore electives is scaffolded and vertically-aligned across the grade levels. In the new magnet program, the encore wheel will be revised to allow 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to focus on semester-long electives to allow them to study topics of interest in greater

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depth. Additionally, the curriculum for the arts electives will be rewritten over the five-year grant period to include new units of study or mini-electives on topics such as photography, song-writing, music production, graphic design, and fashion design. The new mini-arts electives will provide unique opportunities for Franklin students to be exposed to new art disciplines and state-of-the-art technologies that professionals in these fields are using, such as video and audio-recording equipment, 3D printers, and graphic design and digital art software.

In addition to the electives, students will have opportunities to expand their knowledge and skills in the areas of STEAM through a variety of theme-based clubs and competitions, such as Lego Robotics and Science Olympiad after-school clubs, which will be open to all interested students and facilitated by Franklin teachers. The STEAM Academy will also provide an opportunity for students to participate in the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy (IMSA) Fusion program, an inquiry-based, problem-centered, and integrative curriculum that offers learning experiences focused on helping students "learn how to learn" and emphasize logic, mathematical thinking, and experimental scientific thinking.

Lastly, Franklin STEAM Academy will develop strong partnerships with community organizations, institutions of higher education, and business to provide new opportunities for students to engage in real-world, thematic experiences and activities. For example, Franklin will expand its existing partnership with **Wolfram Research** (described above) to provide opportunities for students to use state-of-the-art technologies and software programs, such as Mathematica and Programming Lab, and student site licenses to Wolfram Programming Lab (WPL). WPL is an immersive programming environment in which students learn programming skills through Explorations which are activities based on code that can be modified to create new

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concepts. Explorations cover a variety of content including physics, math, geography, English, graphics, and music, which align directly with the interdisciplinary STEAM thematic focus. Additionally, a new partnership with **Parkland College** will support extension activities of the thematic units, with opportunities for Franklin students to take field trips to the college's planetarium and learn from guest speakers from the departments of meteorology, agriculture, and Parkland's thriving Fine Arts & Theatre. The **Krannert Art Museum** and **Krannert Center for the Performing Arts** will provide student field trips, opportunities for students to attend performances, and presentations at Franklin by professional artists and musicians.

Franklin will work to build parent involvement in the new magnet program through a variety of theme-based family events. At the culmination of each quarterly unit, an "Exhibition" will take place where students will present and showcase products and artifacts from engineering design challenges in Family STEAM Nights. During these events, students will display, present, and test prototypes that they created to solve real-world issues and problems (such as water collection and filtration systems). Parents will be able to participate in mini-design challenges to gain first-hand understanding of the magnet curriculum. Additionally, Franklin will create monthly magnet newsletters, e-mail blasts, and student videos to provide information to families about magnet events, activities, and topics. Magnet staff will also present regularly at PTA meetings and share information during school and district events, such as athletic competitions, performances, parent-teacher conferences, and Board of Education Meetings.

#### Family and Community Connections

Unit 4 understands that parents play a critical role in supporting students to reach their academic potential, and thus has built a **strong parent and family engagement strategy** into the

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District-level magnet initiative that will support the individual schools' strategies. The benefits of involving parents in educational decision making have been well documented. Education researchers assert that children learn more and succeed at higher levels when home, school, and community work together to support their learning and development, and that such collaborations are a key factor in children's educational success (Epstein & Sanders, 2006; Lara-Cinisomo et al., 2008).

The Project Director and Magnet Site Coordinators will take an active role in convening parents to participate in various activities that will support their involvement in the magnet initiative and school choice process. Such activities will include parent meetings, topical workshops related to the magnet themes, and family events. Each school's magnet labs and art rooms described above will also be used to expand parental involvement and engagement strategies to meet the unique needs of all families in the school communities. These hands-on learning spaces can also serve as a way to strengthen the home-school connection, allowing families to access and engage in exciting, real-world learning experiences during family and community day and evening events held throughout the school year.

Parents of students in the magnet schools will be asked to provide support to the outreach and recruitment efforts designed to attract new students to the magnet schools. They will be recruited to speak to prospective families about the magnet program during open houses, school tours, and other district- and school-level outreach events. Furthermore, parent feedback will be solicited throughout the school year by administering parent surveys, facilitating question-and-answer sessions at meetings, participating in PTA and School Improvement Team meetings, and informally communicating with parents at school-wide family events.

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*(2) The Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, including a multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success; or more than one of these types of evidence.*

#### Commitment to Magnet Project

Unit 4 is strongly committed to ensuring the success of the proposed magnet initiative and has already garnered widespread support for the programs from the highest level of district leadership to each of the proposed magnet schools. Each school selected to participate in the new magnet initiative engaged in a broad-based, collaborative planning process in developing its program. To structure the process, each school established a magnet planning team composed of teachers, administrators, staff developers, and parents and carried out numerous school-based planning activities to solicit the input of all key stakeholders in the design. The school-based teams met individually with the district planning team several times during the planning process to: provide updates and get feedback and support in designing their programs; ensure that the plans aligned with the district vision and goals for the grant; and leverage partnerships and resources that were common across the three schools.

Recognizing that awareness and ownership at the proposal development stage would set the stage for a seamless transition to implementation, each school-based planning team asked parents and teachers to indicate their support for the magnet program. Table 10 shows the number of parents and staff in each school who expressed support for the magnet program (see

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documentation in Optional Narrative Attachments)—representing substantial proportions of the parent and staff stakeholders in these communities.

**Table 10. Number of Parents and Staff Who Signed Support Forms for the Magnet Programs**

<b>School</b>	<b>Enrollment (N)</b>	<b>Parents (N)</b>	<b>Staff (N)</b>
Stratton ES	476	151	41
Garden Hills ES	504	128	46
Franklin MS	638	125	52

Moreover, as highlighted throughout this proposal and as evidenced in letters of support, Unit 4 and the three schools have **garnered support for their proposed programs from external partners**, including the Institute for Habits of Mind, Dr. Pedro Noguera of UCLA, UChicago STEM Education Center, Museum of Science, Boston, Wolfram Research, 40 North, Parkland College, among others.

Capacity-Building Strategies to Support the Sustainability of Magnet Programs

Built into the Unit 4 magnet program design—and funded by the MSAP grant—are numerous activities that, starting upon receipt of the grant, will help to establish a solid foundation for the sustainability of the three magnet programs. These activities include (1) developing and refining innovative, thematic curricula; (2) offering extensive PD and support to magnet teachers and school leaders; (3) building strong and lasting collaborations with outside partners; (4) working with parents to enhance their decision-making roles; (5) designing and

implementing formative evaluation tools to measure the programs’ progress as they grow; and

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(6) providing staff from the magnet schools to disseminate and share lessons learned from magnet implementation. These capacity-building activities, which are described throughout this application and are summarized in the following, will provide each school with the support and resources to sustain and grow the magnet programs even once the federal magnet funds expire.

**Curriculum Development.** Over the five-year grant period, with the support key partnerships developed through support of the grant, the school-based MSAP Teaching Specialists and district-based MSAP Curriculum Specialist, will work with staff in each of the three schools to develop and disseminate theme-based curricular materials that will become living documents to guide instruction in each of the schools. These curricular products, which will be developed by each school over the course of the project, will contain standards-based goals and objectives, activities, resources, and assessments that are tied to each school’s magnet theme and will serve as an important tool for guiding and sustaining the magnet programs beyond the funding cycle.

**Professional Development and Support for Teachers.** The comprehensive PD initiatives will enable staff at each of the magnet schools to develop and implement evidence-based instructional strategies that will transform their classrooms into innovative and effective learning environments. The MSAP Project Director and Site Coordinators will arrange opportunities for teachers to share the skills and knowledge learned through PD with their colleagues in workshops, inter-visitations, cross-school in person and teleconferences and meetings, and study groups, as well as through digital media. The Site Coordinators and Teaching Specialists at each school will use established structures for planning and collaboration with key staff within the school—such as inquiry teams, professional learning communities (PLCs), and grade-level

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collaboration teams—to support effective implementation of the magnet program.

**Enhanced Decision-Making Roles for Parents.** Unit 4 is strongly committed to developing collaborative and supportive relationships with parents, and that commitment extends to the magnet program. As part of the planning phase for this proposal, each of the three magnet schools conducted outreach to its parent communities to disseminate information and mobilize support for the program (evidence of parental support for the magnet programs is documented in the parent sign-off sheets that each school has collected and is summarized in Table 10).

The schools will provide opportunities for parents to expand their role through participation in a wide variety of magnet-related parent involvement events. As discussed in the individual magnet program descriptions, each magnet school has already begun developing such activities. The role of the existing school advisory councils, in which parents are involved, will expand to include that as serving as an advisory committee to ensure that parents have an opportunity to play a meaningful role in magnet planning. As noted in the management plan, each school's Magnet Steering Committee will host a public input meeting at least once each quarter. Additionally, each school's Site Coordinator will facilitate regular meetings with the Unit 4 Parent Liaisons based at the FIC so to strengthen the school's capacity to support and empower parents.

**Continuous Improvement Process.** Unit 4 will implement a process of continuous improvement that incorporates real-time data, feedback from various stakeholders, and rigorous research to test, refine, and scale the models and practices that define the magnet programs. Continuous improvement will be achieved through an iterative cycle that includes six steps: goal setting, testing models of innovation, timely and regular feedback, monitoring and measuring

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quality of inputs, information sharing, and opportunities for ongoing corrections. The cycle will be repeated continuously throughout and beyond the grant term to spur ongoing innovation.

The Project Director will work closely with the three Site Coordinators and other magnet staff and in conjunction with teachers and administrators to complete continuous improvement of activities. For example, the Teaching Specialists will meet regularly with teachers to obtain formative feedback on their experiences with the magnet program. The school-based Magnet Steering Committee, in collaboration with school administrators, will use teacher feedback as well as feedback obtained from other key stakeholder groups (e.g., parents, students, and program partners) to identify ineffective practices and implementation challenges and inform midcourse corrections to program activities. Feedback on implementation best practices will be shared among and within the five schools through cross-school magnet meetings, school-based PLCs, and other collaborative forums.

A program evaluation is a key mechanism supporting the continuous improvement process. As discussed in the Quality of Project Evaluation, the evaluation is to be carried out jointly by the project staff and the project evaluator and is designed to gather formative and summative findings on program implementation and outcomes in order to ensure that project activities are being carried out as planned and to address challenges or issues as they arise.

**Dissemination Strategies.** Unit 4 will use a wide variety of strategies to disseminate lessons learned and best practices in magnet implementation. These activities will use well-established networks at the district level as well as national and virtual venues to support institutionalization and contribute to the knowledge base of effective magnet practices. Monthly meetings of school-based magnet staff convened by the Project Director will provide an invaluable opportunity for

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the magnet schools to discuss implementation experiences, challenges, and effective practices with their peers and to share the curricular products that have been developed. In addition, the Project Director and other district- and school-based magnet staff will actively participate in USDOE and Magnet Schools of America-sponsored conferences throughout the five-year project period to learn about the experiences of magnet districts and schools across the nation and to share best magnet practices from Unit 4 in these venues.

Finally, the District will capitalize on its information technology structure to support the project's dissemination goals. Magnet webpages on Unit 4's website will be developed as the overarching umbrella to unite the magnet schools in their endeavors and facilitate communication and information sharing between the schools, parents, and the larger community. The webpages will include information about each school as well as student- and teacher-generated materials, such as a blogging site for sharing information and for teacher and student collaborations; lesson plans and student work products, including multimedia projects; PD opportunities and resources; links to specific subject-related resources; links to the websites of all partners involved in the grant; and student-created public service announcements, advertisements, and posters that show the types of activities and partnerships that each magnet school has cultivated.

#### Ongoing Funding Commitment to Magnet Programs

Unit 4 and each of the magnet schools are committing to provide significant in-kind resources to support the development and implementation of the magnet programs throughout the five-year grant period. The in-kind staff resources provided by the district and the schools will continue after federal funding in order to ensure that the programs are sustained and

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effective. Once the federal funding ends, Unit 4 is committed to continuing to provide local support through funding from the Superintendent's budget for magnet programs.

The three magnet schools receive funding from federal, state, and local funding sources that are aligned with the MSAP objectives and that may be used to help sustain magnet programming. For example, Title I funding for elementary and middle schools is used to support schools in efforts to reduce achievement gaps, increase parent involvement, and build teacher capacity through program monitoring and technical assistance. The schools also receive funding from the Special Education, Immigration Education, and Language Instruction Programs to provide extra supports and resources for students with special learning needs and their families. The district has also been successful in securing grants from state funding sources that will help support the goals of the magnet programs, including funding for arts education, advanced placement and rigorous academic coursework, and facilities renovation.

Unit 4's grant writer will continue to work with the three magnet schools to seek out funding sources in order to replenish supplies and equipment that are needed for the programs and to continue to provide student field experiences related to the theme. The district has worked successfully to secure numerous competitive grant awards from a state and federal agencies as well as national and regional foundations such as the Monsanto Foundation, United Way, Champaign-Urbana Schools Foundation, and the Dart Foundation. In the past two years alone, these grants have allowed Unit 4 schools to purchase new equipment for science and STEM classroom projects, support hundreds of hours of professional development district-wide, and resulted in the creation of Gift of Music arts endowment. Additionally, Unit 4 and its schools regularly partner with UIUC and other institutions of higher education to secure state and federal

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funding for programs that directly benefit teaching staff and students.

*(3) The Secretary considers the extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.*

Research on effective teacher PD suggests that training should be intensive, supportive, engaging, content-specific, and aligned with school improvement goals. Intensive PD is often defined as ongoing and for duration of at least 14 hours (Yoon, Garet, Birman, & Jacobson, 2007). A meta-analysis of nine experimental studies of teacher PD found that the duration of a program was positively associated with changes in teacher practice and student learning (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). In fact, one study found that mastery of new teaching skills requires, on average, a minimum of 20 instances of practice (Joyce & Showers, 2002).

PD strategies that provide job-embedded support through coaching are highly effective in providing opportunities for teachers to implement and master new skills (Knight & Cornet, 2007). Furthermore, expert demonstration of a new skill through modeling has proven to be an effective technique for teacher learning (Desimone, Porter, Garet, & Yoon, 2002; Snow-Renner & Lauer, 2005). It is equally important that teacher PD be highly engaging and applicable to instruction—for example, by employing varied approaches such as reading, role playing, classroom observations, and discussions—to help teachers see and make direct connections to their own teaching practices (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Yoon, Garet, Birman, & Jacobson, 2007).

Research also suggests that teachers benefit more from PD that is directly tied to discipline-

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specific concepts that they can easily apply in their own classrooms (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009), and that discipline-specific PD has been shown to have strong positive impacts on student learning (Blank, de las Alas, & Smith, 2007). Lastly, PD has been shown to be more effective in improving teachers' knowledge and skills when it is integrated into a wider set of opportunities for teacher learning and development (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001).

The PD plan for the Unit 4 magnet initiative will provide experiences that are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in teacher practice. In order to support the transformation of teaching and learning across the three magnet schools, Unit 4 will provide intensive PD to school leaders, MSAP-funded staff, classroom teachers, and other support staff in each school. The training will focus on evidence-based instructional strategies that will equip teachers with knowledge and skills to design and deliver culturally-responsive pedagogical instruction, develop and implement thematic curriculum units, and integrate project-based approaches in cooperative learning environments. Unit 4 will develop strong and ongoing partnerships with well-respected and qualified organizations, including the Institute for Habits of Mind, Dr. Pedro Noguera (UCLA/Center for School Transformation), and UChicago STEM Education whose staff development programs have proven effective based on practice and research. Unit 4 will also support each of the three schools in their work with organizations that provide theme-focused and tailored professional development, including EiE, UIUC School of Art + Design, and Northern Illinois University STEAMWorks. Descriptions of the PD that will be provided through partnerships with each of these organizations is presented later in this section.

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Unit 4 understands that opportunities for teachers to gain exposure to new concepts from educational experts are important; yet are not entirely impactful if they are not supported by **ongoing and job-embedded professional learning**. As such, the Unit 4 magnet initiative includes structures to foster ongoing learning through support provided by the full-time Magnet Curriculum Specialist and the school-based Teaching Specialists, whose roles are described in the Quality of Management Plan and Quality of Personnel sections. The Curriculum Specialist will provide ongoing assistance to the magnet staff across each school to implement PD plans that provide support for classroom teachers. The school-based Magnet Teaching Specialists will be responsible for providing support through job-embedded coaching, co-teaching, and lesson modeling, as well as identifying instructional and professional learning resources and assisting with curriculum development.

Additionally, the Teaching Specialists will help facilitate conversations in grade-level and/or subject-level PLCs about implementation of magnet curricula and instructional practices highlighted through magnet staff development. During the PLCs, teachers will share evidence-based practices, lessons, and curriculum connections to build collective knowledge and resources. The embedded professional development will expand teachers' exposure to concepts provided during training and create a culture that fully supports the transformation of teaching and learning.

#### District-Level Professional Development Partnerships

Unit 4 will engage **The Institute for Habits of Mind** to offer an intensive program of professional learning that will benefit all teachers in all three magnet schools. The Institute for Habits of Mind is a consulting organization based in California and directed by Bena Kallick, a

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former Yale professor of education and board member of Jobs for the Future, and Arthur Costa, professor emeritus at California State University, Sacramento and former classroom teacher and administrator. The Institute employs 12 PD trainers who reside and work throughout the county to provide customized, hands-on training to district, schools, and teachers on the Habit of Mind instructional philosophy and practices. Habits of Mind (HOM) are dispositions that empower creative and critical thinking to enable students and teachers to resolve real-world problems effectively and consciously. Within the instructional framework, 16 dispositions, or habits of mind, are developed to equip individuals with the skills and mindset to handle changing and sometimes unstable situations effectively. These dispositions include, for example, persisting; thinking about thinking; gathering data through all senses; and creating, imagining, and innovating, among others.

The professional development will start in Year 1 with a one-day launch PD session with all three schools to provide administrative and instructional staff with an understanding of the philosophy and language of HOM. Following the launch session, a core group of 12 staff and teachers from each of the three schools will be selected to serve as a leadership cadre for their school to lead implementation of the HOM framework. They will work with Institute trainers in Year 1 to create a multi-year plan for integrating HOM across instructional practices in the schools and will complete the full sequence of four HOM on-line professional learning paths/modules that will equip them with skills to conduct turn-key training in their buildings. In Years 2 and 3, all classroom teachers participate in training provided by members of the leadership cadre on content from the HOM learning paths/modules (Modules 1 and 2 in Year 2, and Modules 3 and 4 in Year 3). In addition, Institute trainers will conduct a full-day site visit to

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each school in each year to conduct classroom observations and provide modeling on HOM domains for classroom teachers and school administrators. In Years 4 and 5, Institute trainers will provide three full days of customized PD for staff at each of the three schools and begin development and implementation of a sustainability plan that will lead to each school's certification as an Institute for HOM International Learning School of Excellence. In addition, four members of the leadership cadres from each school will attend the annual IHOM presenter's forum. Over the five years, each of the three school leaders will receive ongoing support from a cadre of retired Unit 4 staff who has been trained in HOM to guide effective implementation of the HOM learning paths throughout their buildings.

Unit 4 will also engage **UCLA Professor Dr. Pedro Noguera** and his team from the Graduate Schools of Education and Information Studies/Center for School Transformation to provide a five-year plan of professional development across the three schools on effective strategies for developing and implementing culturally-responsive professional learning teams. Dr. Noguera is a distinguished educator and sociologist whose work examines the influence of social and education conditions on schools and identifies strategies for building culturally responsive pedagogy and practices to provide equitable education for all students. Dr. Noguera and his team have worked in school districts across the country, including Los Angeles and San Diego Unified School Districts as well as districts in New York, Florida, and Virginia.

Over the five-year grant, Dr. Noguera's team will facilitate twice yearly PD workshops with instructional leadership teams from all three participating schools, followed by half-day, on-site visits at each school to work with staff to implement best practices around culturally responsive learning environments and professional learning communities. In Year 1, the team will conduct a

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baseline survey of cultural awareness and needs among the teaching and administrative staffs at each of the three schools and will analyze each school's data to develop a customized program of scaffolded workshops to build staff understanding, awareness, and skills in implementing culturally-responsive pedagogical practices. Implementation of the twice yearly workshops, which will be conducted in Years 2-5 of the grant, will address the following topic areas, among others: science of learning, culturally responsive pedagogy, and the relationship of cultural awareness to whole school improvement strategies. In each year, all staff at each of the three schools will participate in each of the two customized workshops.

**UChicago STEM Education Center** will provide a five-year plan of professional development to support elementary classroom and middle school mathematics teachers in integrating project-based learning approaches within the math curriculum. In each year of the grant, 50 teachers from across the three magnet schools will participate in an intensive week-long summer Teacher University during each school's summer math camp. The Teacher University will provide teachers with intensive, high-quality mathematics professional development focused on how students learn mathematics. The professional development will incorporate opportunities to observe in laboratory classrooms, and engage in sessions facilitated by UChicago STEM Education staff. This professional development will develop teachers' understanding of relevant K-8 mathematical content, the national standards for mathematical practice, growth mindset beliefs, and teaching skills featured during their classroom observations. Teachers will benefit from immediate transfer of research into practice and will have opportunity to hone their abilities to collaboratively plan and deliver high-quality mathematics instruction. Daily reflection opportunities will help teachers consolidate their

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learning during the intensive experience and consider implications for their own classrooms. District Teaching and Learning staff along with Magnet Teaching Specialists will continue to support teachers throughout the school year in the strategies provided in the UChicago STEM Education Center trainings.

#### School-Based Professional Development Programs

Stratton will partner with a variety of arts education organizations to foster a deeper understanding and knowledge base of art integration strategies within the teaching faculty and to provide opportunities for teachers to hone their own artistic and arts education pedagogical skills. In each year of the grant, all Stratton teachers will be invited to participate in a one-week intensive summer institute with **UIUC School of Art + Design** designed to expand teachers' knowledge of the arts and effective methodologies for arts integration. In addition, in each year of grant, UIUC will continue the training with a series of five skill-building workshops during the school year in which up to 20 teachers will learn practical applications for arts integration.

Garden Hills ES will participate in training provided by the **Museum of Science** in Boston on the Engineering is Elementary curriculum to support integration of the curriculum and materials and the engineering design process into magnet instruction. In Years 1 and 2 of the grant, teams composed of one teacher from each grade level and the Magnet Teaching Specialist will attend a three-day intensive Teacher Educator Institute at the Museum of Science to be trained in the curriculum and to provide turn-key training to colleagues. In each of Years 2-5, these lead teachers and the Teaching Specialist will conduct quarterly trainings for all Garden Hills ES teachers on the EiE curriculum and provide support during grade-level planning and meetings and through lesson modeling for effective implementation of the curriculum.

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Additionally, in Year 2, EiE trainers from the Museum of Science will provide a two-day, on-site workshop for all Garden Hill ES teachers on the topic of “Linking the E & M in STEM.” The workshop will be differentiated by grade level—K-2 and 3-5—to meet the different needs of teachers in primary and intermediate elementary levels. Additional on-site workshops will be provided by the lead teachers and the Magnet Teaching Specialist, and by EiE trainers in Years 3-5 for new teachers, to support effective implementation of the curriculum school-wide.

To providing ongoing PD to support the development and implementation of the new STEAM Academy, Franklin MS to partner with **Northern Illinois University’s (NIU’s) Center for P-20 Engagement (P-20 Center)**. The P-20 Center was established in 2008 to coordinate a pre-school to graduate school continuum of STEAM programming, referred to as NIU STEAM Works programs. NIU STEAM Works programs are events for students and educators that build participants’ interest in STEAM concepts and foster skills in creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking. In each of the five years of the MSAP grant, the P-20 Center will conduct a one-week summer institute for 59 Franklin MS teachers to participate in training and curriculum development on STEAM thematic units, and eight days of on-site coaching, co-teaching, and class demonstrations to support teachers in the development and implementation of the thematic units. The center will also provide web-based resources for Franklin teachers to use as they develop and implement STEAM units, including webinars, an open education resources library, and online videos and games to support technology integration in the classrooms.

Franklin MS will also partner with **Wolfram Research** who will provide PD to up to 60 teachers in each year of the grant. The training will build teacher knowledge and skills related to integration of Wolfram technologies and resources into thematic STEAM units. Three groups of

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20 teachers each will participate in 10 hours of training each school year. The training will be scaffolded to build teachers' capacity to use and expose students to the technologies to build computational thinking, critical thinking, and coding skills.

With the comprehensive plan for PD, all MSAP-funded staff and school leaders and instructional staff in each of three magnet schools will be exposed to a minimum of 50 hours of PD in culturally-responsive pedagogical and instructional practices, project-based learning, theme-based instruction and curriculum development, including job-embedded coaching. As a result, teachers and staff will demonstrate increased collaboration in developing and implementing thematic instructional units of study and improved knowledge, skills, and use of evidence-based practices and PBL approaches.

*(4) The Secretary considers the extent to which the proposed project is supported by strong theory.*

The Unit 4 magnet initiative is designed with a strong theory of change that is fully aligned with the district's six goals and will serve to advance the mission to guide students in gaining knowledge and skills and excel in a diverse and changing society. **The theory of change states that by enhancing teaching and learning across three whole-school magnet programs through evidence- and research-based programs of instruction with a thematic focus, Unit 4 will improve academic achievement and other outcomes for all students, promote teachers' use of innovative teaching practices, and reduce or eliminate minority group isolation among African American students in the magnet schools.**

To support the theory of change, Unit 4 developed a comprehensive logic model for the initiative which include inputs and outcomes for the district and the magnet schools (see below).

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## Magnet Schools Assistance Program Grant Narrative (2017–2022)

UNIT 4 MAGNET PROGRAM LOGIC MODEL

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Context:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District commitment to integrated and equitable education (evidenced in modified Voluntary Desegregation Plan)</li> <li>District-wide controlled choice process that promotes racial integration by taking into account socioeconomic factors</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Need:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minority group and socioeconomic isolation in proposed magnet schools</li> <li>Low proficiency rates and achievement gaps between student subgroups across Unit 4 schools</li> <li>Under-selection of proposed elementary schools in choice process</li> </ul>
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Resource/Inputs	Program Activities	Program Outputs	Short Term Outcomes	Long Term Outcomes
<p><b>District Resources (in-kind)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—Superintendent</li> <li>—Assistant Superintendents</li> <li>—Directors of Teaching and Learning and academic departments</li> <li>—Family Information Center</li> </ul> <p><b>MSAP Grant</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—Funded staff</li> <li>—Supplies/Equipment</li> <li>—Contractual services</li> <li>—External evaluation</li> </ul> <p><b>School Leaders and Staff</b></p> <p><b>Community Input</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—Magnet Advisory Councils</li> <li>—MSAP program partners</li> <li>—Unit 4 students and families</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>District</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and manage magnet programs</li> <li>• Implement 5-Year PD Plan (Habits of Mind, Dr. Noguera, EM4 math)</li> <li>• Implement marketing and outreach plan</li> <li>• Foster community and family engagement</li> <li>• Conduct rigorous evaluation</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Magnet Schools</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement magnet themes/programs</li> <li>—Unique thematic curriculum</li> <li>—Evidence-based practices (UChicago STEM – EM4)</li> <li>—Student enrichment activities and summer camps</li> <li>• Theme-specific PD</li> <li>• Family and community engagement plans</li> <li>• Targeted marketing</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>District</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50 hours of PD for all principals and instructional staff in 3 schools (each year)</li> <li>• Applications to magnet programs</li> <li>• Placements through race-neutral lottery with no academic criteria</li> <li>• Evaluation data and results to support</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Magnet Schools</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New thematic units (1 in Y1, 2 in Y2/3 and 4 in Y4/5)</li> <li>• PBL activities in magnet labs/rooms</li> <li>• Quarterly showcases of learning</li> <li>• Marketing materials, open houses and school tours, social and news media, magnet website</li> <li>• Job-embedded PD and ongoing coaching</li> </ul>	<p>Increased staff use of evidence-based instructional practices and PBL</p> <p>Increased interest and demand from Unit 4 families</p> <p>Reduced minority group isolation in magnet schools</p> <p>Improved student achievement (ELA and math)</p> <p>Increased student proficiency in theme-specific professional and marketable skills</p> <p>Increased family and community involvement</p>	<p>Effective implementation of evidence-based instructional practices</p> <p>High-demand, sustained magnet programs</p> <p>Increased racial, socioeconomic integration across Unit 4</p> <p>Leveraged resources from community and business partners</p> <p>Increased student achievement and reduced gaps</p> <p>Increased student demonstration of college/career readiness</p>

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#### c) Quality of Management Plan

*The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.*

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

#### **Unit 4 MSAP Project Management Framework**

The management plan for Unit 4 magnet initiative is grounded in the district’s vision as stated in its *Great Schools Together* strategic plan, “to work in partnership with the community to be an exemplary district that promotes each student’s opportunity to succeed in a global environment.” The management plan has several core elements that in combination will ensure the success of the project’s objectives and performance measures:

- A leadership and accountability structure in place that fosters innovation but holds all instructional and administrative leaders to rigorous performance standards.
- An efficient staffing and management structure for the magnet initiative within and across Unit 4 magnet schools, including reporting and accountability mechanisms to ensure the timely, effective, and efficient implementation of all key magnet activities.
- A detailed project implementation plan to achieve the project’s objectives and performance measures, supported by a reasonable and cost effective budget and leveraged in-kind resources designed to promote capacity building and sustainability of the project beyond the federal funding period; and
- A continuous improvement process that engages Unit 4 MSAP stakeholders in ongoing feedback, assessment and refinement of project activities.

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### Magnet Schools Assistance Program Grant Narrative (2017–2022)

#### **Leadership and Accountability Structure**

Unit 4's **Magnet District Leadership Team** will provide guidance and support to the initiative and make available to the MSAP Project Director and the magnet schools under their purview the knowledge, expertise, and support of this team. Members of the Leadership Team will include the:

- Assistant Superintendent of Achievement and Curriculum and Instruction who oversees the district's 12 elementary campuses and will serve as the Chair of the Magnet District Leadership Team;
- Assistant Superintendent for Achievement & Equity who provides oversight to Unit 4's three middle school campuses;
- Director of Secondary Teaching and Learning (T&L) and the Director of Elementary T&L, who provide instructional vision, guidance, and support to building leaders focused on student outcomes;
- Director of Data, Assessment and Digital Learning who manages and coordinates District's assessment, data reporting and analysis, program evaluation, and digital learning processes; and
- Principals of the three proposed magnet schools.

The Leadership Team, MSAP Project Director, and Curriculum Specialist will meet on a quarterly basis to foster open communication, gather feedback on project progress and challenges, and facilitate coordination and collaboration of efforts across magnet schools and the district so to ensure ongoing and continuous improvement of the magnet program.

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#### Magnet Steering Committees

Each magnet school will establish a **Magnet Steering Committee** composed of the Principal, Magnet Teaching Specialist, Magnet Site Coordinator, and teacher representatives. At the elementary level, teachers will include a representative from each grade level, as well as a special education and ESL teacher. At the middle school level teacher representatives will include a representative from each core subject area and the fine arts and special education staff (Franklin does not have an ESL Program). The Magnet Site Coordinator will serve as Committee Chair.

Magnet Steering Committees will meet monthly, either before or after school hours, throughout the school year to facilitate planning, communication, coordination of efforts, ensuring that diverse voices (including the teacher’s union, parents, students, and members of the larger school community) help inform program design and implementation. During each year, one meeting each quarter will be designed as an evening public meeting to which program partners, parents, and community members will be invited. The purposes of the public meeting will be to provide an update on magnet planning, showcase accomplishments to date, gather input and feedback from attendees, and encourage expanded engagement in program activities. A representative(s) of each Steering Committee will also present annually to the school’s Parent Teacher Organization for the same purposes stated above.

#### Project Staffing and Management Structure

The proposed staffing structure for Unit 4’s magnet initiative is summarized in the Table 11 and is followed by detailed description of the roles and responsibilities of these key MSAP-funded staff. Based on Unit 4’s previous MSAP grant and reaffirmed by research from other

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MSAP programs, we believe that the staffing plan provides the optimal infrastructure at both the district and school levels needed to achieve our MSAP initiative’s objectives and outcomes.

**Table 11. MSAP Staffing Structure**

<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Level of Effort</b>
<b>District Level Staff</b>		
Project Director	1	1.0 FTE
Magnet Curriculum Specialist	1	1.0 FTE
Project Secretary	1	1.0 FTE
<b>School-Based Staff</b>		
Magnet Site Coordinator	3	1.0 FTE (1 at each school)
Magnet Teaching Specialist	3	1.0 FTE (1 at each school)

**District Level Staffing**

The **Project Director** will report to the Assistant Superintendent of Achievement and Curriculum and Instruction, who serves as Chair of the MSAP District Leadership Team. The Project Director, in partnership with the Magnet Curriculum Specialist, will meet and work with magnet staff at each school to ensure that the magnet programs are developed and implemented in alignment with the purposes of the MSAP statute and the approved grant application and that staff are using best practices that will ensure the objectives, outcomes, and performance measures of the MSAP grant are met in a timely, effective, and impactful manner.

The overall responsibility of the Project Director is to manage and provide support to the

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Curriculum Specialist, Site Coordinators, and Teaching Specialists in the planning and implementation of the magnet program at each school. Specific duties include the following:

- Recruit and supervise district magnet staff;
- Monitor programmatic requirements of the grant to ensure fidelity of implementation;
- Monitor all project expenditures and provide school staff with technical assistance in meeting fiscal and budgetary guidelines;
- Participate in grantee meetings and related conferences (e.g., Magnet Schools of America);
- Coordinate regular meetings with magnet school staff and collaborating partners to disseminate pertinent information regarding MSAP guidelines and build a professional support network/professional learning communities among school-based staff with similar responsibilities and interests;
- Participate in quarterly meetings of the District Leadership Team (see above);
- Participate as a member of the District’s EEE Committee to present and gather feedback on program plans and outcomes;
- Present an annual program update and gather input from Unit 4 Board of Education and audience members in attendance;
- Coordinate district-wide and school-based staff training activities including those facilitated by external providers;
- Develop a strategic communications plan that includes both school-based and district-wide outreach and recruiting strategies and provide technical assistance to help magnet schools implement their marketing plans, including the development of print and web-

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based promotional materials, traditional and social media, marketing and awareness campaigns, school-based open houses and tours, and participation in community events such as farmers markets, community fairs and activities;

- Monitor applicant pool and enrollment data;
- Provide guidance and support to the school-level Magnet staff to implement, monitor, and maintain specific programs, projects, and courses of action related to the grant program;
- Strengthen community awareness of and support and interest in the District magnet initiatives through public presentations throughout the community such as the Chamber of Commerce and other business associations, service groups such as the Rotary and Champaign-Urbana Junior League, and other public agencies;
- Serve as the primary liaison to the federal MSAP Program Officer and ensure compliance with all requirements laid out by the USDOE and the Office for Civil Rights;
- Oversee a rigorous and ongoing process of continuous improvement, which will entail convening regular meetings with magnet principals, parents, teachers, students, and project partners to solicit and share feedback on program activities; and
- Serve as a liaison to the project evaluator: assisting schools in the collection of required program data and documentation; providing feedback to the evaluator on the evaluation design, instrument development activities, and data collection procedures; preparing required reports; and disseminating results to key stakeholders within and external to the district.

The MSAP grant will be used to support a full-time **Curriculum Specialist** who will work

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under the direction of the Project Director. The Curriculum Specialist's overarching responsibility is to support school initiatives through the design, facilitation, and oversight of curriculum development and thematic integration activities, ensuring that all magnet curricula are fully aligned with Illinois Learning and Arts State Standards, NGSS, and C3 Framework.

Specific duties include:

- Collaborate with each school's magnet team and staff on the development and alignment of new magnet-themed instructional curricula, units, and assessment, and train staff in their use;
- Schedule, develop, and participate in professional development activities in collaboration with the Magnet Teaching Specialists and Site Coordinators;
- Create and maintain partnerships with external partners/professional service providers, community-based organizations, and others participating in the project;
- Facilitate program development activities related to the magnet themes, research- and evidence-based instructional strategies, standards alignment, program implementation, and reflection and refinement;
- Collect and analyze student achievement data including MAP, AIMSweb, and PARRC testing; and
- Collaborate with magnet school personnel, the Project Director, and external evaluators in program evaluation.

Finally, the **Project Secretary** will support the Project Director on projects related to outreach and recruitment, student selection, preparation of MSAP budgets, and internal meetings and external trainings. The Secretary will maintain all administrative and data files to support

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program implementation, fiscal monitoring, and the program evaluation. The Secretary will be responsible for communicating with program stakeholders, including families, external partners, and the USDOE and for assisting the Project Director in scheduling and convening project staff meetings, staff development sessions, and marketing events.

#### **School-Based Staffing**

Principals of each magnet school will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the magnet programs in their building and ensuring that magnet school staff and steering committee communicate regularly. They will supervise both the Magnet Site Coordinator and Magnet Teaching Specialist, whose responsibilities are described below. Principals will serve on their school's Magnet Steering Committee and participate in and contribute to the quarterly meetings of the District Magnet Leadership Team.

The MSAP grant will support a full-time **Magnet Site Coordinator** at each school who will have primary responsibility for all administrative aspects of the magnet program including budget management, data collection activities, outreach and recruitment, and parent, family, and community engagement. The Site Coordinator will be responsible for sharing information about the magnet program with members of the school and larger community through the development of program brochures and other outreach materials, speaking with parents and participation in magnet-related parent involvement activities. S/he will develop and monitor student recruitment plans in conjunction with the principal and staff; and organize and conduct open houses, schools tours, and other activities designed to support student recruitment, including collaboration with the FIC Choice Specialists staff. S/he will serve as the primary spokesperson for the magnet program at School Choice Forums, community meetings, and with the media. The Site

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Coordinator will also be responsible for coordinating the monthly meeting of the school Magnet Steering Committee, which serves as the core planning team at each school.

The MSAP grant will also support a full-time **Magnet Teaching Specialist** at each magnet school who will have major responsibility for planning, implementing, and refining the magnet instructional program and for coordinating all school-based, magnet-related PD initiatives. Although their roles will be customized to the curricular and instructional needs at each school, in general the duties of the Teaching Specialists include:

- Working with regular classroom teachers to develop or modify magnet-theme-related enrichment materials;
- Working with the Curriculum Specialist to coordinate development of magnet program curricular units, assessments, and other materials, including curriculum maps;
- Facilitate design and implementation of and participate in professional development necessary to develop and implement new curricular materials;
- Design and provide theme-based instruction to grade or subject-area teacher teams during collaboration time or through co-teaching/modeling or other push-in strategies;
- Participate in the school's Magnet Steering Committee and bi-monthly all-magnet school meetings convened by the Project Director; and
- Meet on a regular basis with the school Principal to review program progress toward goals, discuss and devise solutions to any challenges, and in general ensure high quality implementation of the school's magnet program.

Throughout the five-year grant, the Project Director will convene bi-monthly meetings with the MSAP core staff including the Curriculum Specialist, the Site Coordinators, and Teaching

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Specialists from the three schools. The meetings will be held on a rotating basis at the three schools so to provide staff the opportunity to experience their colleagues' programs firsthand. Initial meetings will focus on formative evaluation of each school's strengths and weaknesses that will help inform the program design at each school. This evaluation will also help focus future meeting topics such as effective strategies for outreach and recruitment, theme-based curriculum development and implementation, resources for PD, successes and challenges of working with outside partners, strategies for engaging hard-to-reach and non-English speaking parents, and evaluation activities and findings. At each meeting, the Site Coordinators will provide an update of their school's progress in implementing the various components of the program, share effective strategies, and brainstorm solutions to challenges encountered. Meetings will also provide an opportunity to plan for upcoming professional development opportunities. Depending upon the topic(s) of focus of the meetings, other district leadership such as Director of Communications, ELL, SPED, and T&L will be invited to participate.

#### **Project Implementation Plan**

Unit 4 has identified four key overarching objectives for the MSAP initiative which are directly aligned with the stated purposes of MSAP and the Government and Performance and Results Act (GPRA) measures that have been established by the U.S.DOE for the program. This section lists the four grant objectives (and how each is aligned with the program purposes) along with a summary of the magnet program activities that will be carried out (a detailed description of the activities is provided in the Desegregation and Quality of Project Design sections). Following this discussion is a detailed project implementation timeline that includes key activities, responsible parties, and target dates by project objective.

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**Project Objective #1: Reduce minority group isolation of African American students.** This objective is aligned with the purpose of the MSAP to support *the elimination, reduction, or prevention of minority group isolation (MGI) in elementary and secondary schools with substantial proportions of minority students.*

All three proposed magnet schools meet Unit 4's definition of MGI (i.e., the proportion of a student group within the total school population exceeds the district-wide average for the school level). In the case of three proposed magnet schools, the percentage of African American students at Stratton ES and Garden Hills ES is 61.1% and 60.7% respectively, which is more than 25 points above the district-wide average for elementary schools (35.0%). The proportion of African American students at Franklin MS is 46.9%, which exceeds the district-wide average of middle schools (38.2%) by almost nine percentage points. The MSAP grant will help reduce the isolation of African American students by attracting a new and more racially diverse population of students to the schools through the implementation of a multi-faceted approach:

- Creation of unique magnet themes which staff and the district are committed to developing that will be attractive to students of diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds and academic needs and interests and that are not available at other Unit 4 schools;
- A strategic, targeted, and aggressive outreach and recruitment plan to be carried out by district- and school-based magnet staff that extends throughout the community and penetrates the north/south side boundaries that have traditionally isolated the three proposed schools; and
- A race-neutral student selection process that will ensure equitable access for all students

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to the magnet program.

**Project Objective #2: Ensure that all students attending the magnet schools meet challenging academic standards and are on track to be college- and career-ready.** Objective 2 supports the MSAP purpose for *the development and implementation of magnet school programs that will assist local educational agencies in achieving systemic reforms and providing all students the opportunity to meet challenging state academic and achievement standards.*

The three proposed magnet schools have not yet been successful in helping all students meet learning standards. For example, in spring 2016, less than 30% of students at each of proposed magnet schools met or exceeded state learning standards in ELA and Math based on PARCC results; and 10% or less of African American students at each of the three schools met or exceeded ELA and Math standards.

The magnet programs at each school will provide new opportunities for students to meet and exceed learning standards by providing a rigorous, enriched theme-based magnet curriculum that focuses on project-based learning and is integrated across core subject areas. The creation of an **Engineering Design Lab** (Garden Hills ES) and **Maker Space** (Franklin MS), and a **Media Arts Center** (Stratton ES) are key components designed to facilitate interaction between students and deepen student engagement in the learning process. The instructional programs at each school will be further enriched by District-level initiatives that will bring the innovative, research-based and evidenced-based work of the UChicago STEM Education Center, Institute for Habits of Mind, and the Center for School Transformation (UCLA) to all three magnet schools to help teachers address the learning needs of all students, including students with special needs, such as ELLs and students with disabilities.

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**Project Objective #3: Ensure that all students attending the magnet schools benefit from the magnet’s educational offerings and participate in unique theme-related coursework and learning opportunities designed to equip them with knowledge and skills that support success in college and careers.** This objective aligns with two purposes of the MSAP: *to ensure that all students enrolled in magnet school programs have equitable access to high quality education that will enable the students to succeed academically and continue with postsecondary education or employment and to provide courses of instructions that will substantially strengthen the knowledge of academic subjects and the attainment of tangible and marketable career, technological and professional skills.*

The three magnet schools will provide whole-school programs that will expose all students to theme-based curriculum and enrichment opportunities. The magnet planning teams understand that the needs and interests of students can vary drastically depending upon the opportunities and experiences (or lack thereof) prior to enrolling in the magnet schools. Therefore, the programs will align with other services in the school and across the District to address the needs of students including learning, language, economic, behavioral and other needs. The instructional staff who provide services to students with disabilities and ELLs at the proposed magnets will have representation on each school’s Magnet Steering Committee and participate in magnet curriculum development to ensure that instructional units and materials are designed to meet the learning needs of all students.

In addition, through existing and evolving district- and school based partnerships, the magnet program design has consciously integrated opportunities for students to travel beyond school walls and community boundaries to experience first-hand, real-world applications of what they

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are exploring in school (see the Quality of Project Design section.) These enrichment experiences will enhance students' content knowledge, help develop critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity that are essential to a 21st century workforce, and close the opportunity gap that exists between high-poverty, minority-group isolated schools and those schools serving more advantaged peers.

**Project Objective #4: Build the capacity within the magnet schools to provide rigorous, theme-based instructional programs that will help promote choice and diversity in Unit 4 schools.** Objective 4 ties to two purposes of the MSAP statute: *improving the capacity of LEAs, including through PD, to continue operating magnet schools at high performance level after Federal funding for magnet schools is terminated and encouraging the development, design, and expansion of innovative educational methods and practices that promote diversity and increase choices in public elementary and secondary schools.*

Unit 4 is fully cognizant that the MSAP grant is intended to provide the critical seed money necessary to develop magnet programs and the design of mechanisms to sustain the programs must be an inherent component of the program development process. With intention, Unit 4 has incorporated several mechanisms into the design of each magnet program and at the district level to equip schools and the district with the resources and knowledge that will sustain and expand the magnet program after the federal funding period ends. Only by creating truly sustainable programs will Unit 4 continue to increase choice and promote diversity for all students and, as stated in its mission, “in partnership with the community, be[come] an exemplary school district that promotes each student’s opportunity to succeed in a global environment.”

The District Magnet Leadership Team in collaboration with the three school-based Magnet

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Steering Committees and program partners have crafted a strong plan of professional and curriculum development to enhance the knowledge and skills of all instructional staff and school leaders in theme-based topics and evidence-based instructional approaches and to develop rigorous magnet curricula and lessons that will be provided to all students (see Quality of Project Design).

The District will support and enhance school efforts through provision of district-wide PD designed to build leadership capacity at each school and across all schools that will also help sustain the program. Quarterly meetings of the District Leadership Team, which includes District and school leaders; bi-monthly meetings convened by the Project Director with MSAP core staff including the Curriculum Specialist, the Site Coordinators, and Teaching Specialists from the three schools; and the work of each school-based Steering Committee all offer opportunities to develop professional learning communities that will facilitate learning, growth, and sharing of knowledge and dissemination of effective teaching strategies within and across magnet campuses and the district. School-based partnerships with external partners, including institutions of higher education, local businesses and industry, community-based arts and cultural organizations, and individuals who provide training and technical assistance are also a cornerstone of creating strong, sustainable, and long-lived magnet programs. As Unit 4 has experienced before, these relationships are not only valuable in and of themselves but also because of the resources they can leverage over time, either within their own organization and/or through connections with their peers.

#### Feedback and Continuous Improvement Process

Unit 4 is committed to an ongoing improvement of all aspects of the magnet program and

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will employ the four–step quality model—the Plan, Do, Check and Act (PDCA) cycle, also known as Deming or Shewart Cycle, as a tool for carrying out change. Frequently applied in education, PDCA provides a basic structure for overall strategic planning, needs–analysis, curriculum design and delivery, staff goal-setting and evaluation, provision of student services and support services, and classroom instruction. The four components of the cycle are: 1) *Plan*: Identify an opportunity and plan for change, 2) *Do*: Implement the change on a small scale, 3) *Check*: Use data to analyze the results of the change and determine whether it made a difference, and 4) *Act*: If the change was successful, implement it on a wider scale and continuously assess your results. If the change did not work, begin the cycle again.

The District Leadership Team (described above) along with the external evaluation team will serve as the working group that oversees the continuous improvement process, considering data, assessment, needs, and future directions as part of their discussions. The teams will provide high-level direction to ensure the successful implementation of the grant and will serve as a sounding board for ideas and solutions to critical issues that arise throughout implementation. As described in the Quality of Project Evaluation, magnet program participants—including students, families, teachers, school leaders, and program partners—will play an integral and active role in the continuous improvement process to ensure that it provides meaningful and timely information. In addition, the project’s external evaluator will conduct a comprehensive formative and summative evaluation of the initiative to provide external stakeholders with feedback on the implementation and effectiveness of program activities.

A timeline showing the key activity benchmarks by project objective, target date and responsibility is provided on the following page.

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#### Unit 4 MSAP Project Implementation Timeline: Key Activities and Benchmarks for Objective

Key activities	Year 1 Benchmarks 10/17-9/18	Year 2 Benchmarks 10/18-9/19	Year 3 Benchmarks 10/19-9/20	Year 4 Benchmarks 10/20-9/21	Year 5 Benchmarks 10/21-9/22	Responsible Parties
<b>MSAP Objective 1: Reduce minority group isolation of African American Students.</b>						
Create district-wide marketing and outreach campaign that builds on existing U4 communications framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Develop templates for marketing materials (flyers, brochures, posters, presentations) for customization by magnet schools.</li> <li>*Install new school marquees and street banners</li> <li>*Disseminate information on new magnet programs district-wide to build community awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Continue dissemination efforts to build community awareness and interest in the magnet program, engage parents/families as ambassadors for the magnet programs.</li> <li>*Create video vignettes that showcase magnet schools for use on multiple media platforms, school open houses/tours or public presentations.</li> </ul>				PD, U4, SEC
Design and conduct school-level targeted and multifaceted outreach campaign to profile new magnet themes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Develop suite of marketing materials and establish social media presence.</li> <li>*Translate marketing materials into languages spoken by magnet school families.</li> <li>*Outreach to feeder schools and other venues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Disseminate promotional materials, build and expand outreach to community organizations, social media presence, and coverage in local print/web/radio media.</li> </ul>				PD, SC, P
Implement a fair, equitable, and race-neutral student selection and placement process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Receive student applications for new magnets and complete race-neutral selection process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Receive student applications for new magnets, as part of the Choice process and complete race-neutral selection process</li> <li>*Increase number and diversity of applications compared with previous year</li> </ul>				PD, SEC, U4
<b>MSAP Objective 2: Improve Students' College and Career Readiness.</b>						
Design, implement and refine thematic curricula.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Develop 1 thematic curriculum unit focused project-based learning per grade per school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Refine units; Create 2-3 new thematic curriculum units per grade.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Refine units; Implement 4 thematic curriculum units per grade</li> </ul>		CT, CS, TS, PP
Incorporate evidence-based instructional strategies aligned to State and National curriculum standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Begin implementation of evidence-based practices (EM4, arts integration) into thematic curriculum at each school and grade level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Expand implementation of evidence-based practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Schoolwide implementation of evidence-based practices</li> </ul>			PD, CT, CS, TS, PP
<b>MSAP Objective 3: Provide Equal Access to Magnet Program Offerings.</b>						
Provide staff development in cultural competence for magnet teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Begin implementation of professional development on culturally responsive teaching (CRT) for magnet school staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Continue to provide PD and technical assistance in CRT to all magnet school staff.</li> </ul>				PD, PP, P

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Key activities	Year 1 Benchmarks 10/17-9/18	Year 2 Benchmarks 10/18-9/19	Year 3 Benchmarks 10/19-9/20	Year 4 Benchmarks 10/20-9/21	Year 5 Benchmarks 10/21-9/22	Responsible Parties
Adapt thematic curricula and instructional strategies to meet the needs of ELLs and students with disabilities.	*Work with District ESOL and Special Education staff to ensure that all thematic curriculum units meet the needs of ELLs and students with disabilities			*Monitor implementation of thematic units to ensure that all students have equitable access to magnet instruction and activities		CIS, TS, CT, U4
Provide enrichment opportunities within and beyond the school day.	*Develop plans for in and after-school and summer enrichment programs and activities and begin implementation for all grade levels.		*Review and expand partnerships to provide enrichment activities for all grade levels (including in-school clubs and activities, field trips, after-school programs, and summer math camp).			PD, SC, CT, PP
<b>MSAP Objective 4: Build capacity to Sustain Magnet Programs.</b>						
Develop and implement a rigorous PD plan for magnet program teachers.	*Draft and initiate implementation of a magnet PD plan for each school. *Provide at least 50 hours of PD for all instructional staff and leaders in each magnet school.		*Revise PD plan based on feedback and evaluation findings. *Provide at least 50 hours of PD all instructional staff and leaders in each magnet school.			PD, CS,TS, P, PP, CT
Conduct school-level processes to share best practices & assess program implementation	*Establish MST to inform program design and implementation. *Establish MAC to bring diverse perspectives to discussions of program status, challenges, and lessons learned. *Include magnet agenda item on all staff and building council (BC) mtgs.		*Convene monthly meetings of the MST for afore-state purposes. *Convene 3-4 meetings of the MAC for afore-stated purposes. *Include magnet agenda item on all staff and BC mtgs.			SC, P, TS, MAC
Conduct district-level processes to share best practices	*Conduct bi-monthly MSAP meetings to discuss magnet theme and implementation of innovative instructional strategies. *Disseminate best practices from magnet programs district-wide.					PD, CS, SC, SEC
Design and conduct a rigorous continuous improvement process to assess program implementation and inform sustainability.	*Establish DLT, that will also serve as the CIWG, convene 2-3 mtgs.		*Convene 4-5 meetings of the DLT/CWIG.			PD, PE, U4, P

\*RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: **CS:** Curriculum Specialist; **CT:** Magnet Classroom Teachers; **DLT:** District Leadership Team; **MAC:** Magnet Advisory Council; **MST:** Magnet Steering Committee; **P:** Magnet School Principal; **PD:** Project Director; **PE:** Project Evaluator; **PP:** Project Partners; **SC:** Magnet Site Coordinators; **SEC:** Magnet Secretary; **TS:** Magnet Teaching Specialists; **U4:** Other District Staff

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*(2) The Secretary considers how the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate.*

Should Unit 4 be awarded an MSAP grant, a solid foundation of collaboration, excitement, and momentum that was fostered during the proposal development phase will be leveraged to support the high-quality implementation of the project (highlighted in the Quality of Project Design section). Several mechanisms are built into the project design and management structure that will ensure that a diversity of perspectives is encouraged and incorporated into the ongoing operation and refinement of the magnet project. These mechanisms echo formal contractual language that states that the Board of Education and Champaign Federation of Teachers “agree that shared-decision making at the building level is a goal to be achieved and is in the best interest of the educational welfare of students.”

#### **School-Based Mechanisms**

As stated previously, each magnet school will establish a **Magnet Steering Committee** comprising the Principal, Magnet Curriculum Specialist, Magnet Site Coordinator, and teacher representatives, including a representative from each grade level, ELL and SPED, that will meet on a monthly basis. During each year, one meeting each quarter will be designed as an evening public meeting to which program partners, parents, and community members will be invited. The purposes of the public meeting will be to provide an update on magnet programming, showcase accomplishments to date, gather input and feedback from attendees, and encourage expanded

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engagement in program activities. A representative(s) of each Steering Committee will also present annually to the school's Parent Teacher Organization for the same purposes stated above. In addition, the Steering Committee in general and the Site Coordinator in particular will ensure that for all public magnet events at the school, there will be a manned "Magnet Information Table," designed to engage parents in conversation about their child and the magnet programs.

Translators will be secured through the services of the district's Parent Liaisons and/or ELL/Bilingual Director. The committee will also work with the project evaluator to review and analyze data from an annual parent survey (as described in the Quality of Project Evaluation) to gather feedback about parent engagement, satisfaction with the magnet program, and ideas for program improvement.

In addition, the already-established School Building Councils, which serve as a vehicle for developing school-based educational policies and procedures ensuring that resources are aligned to implement policies, will establish a **Magnet Advisory Council (MAC)** as a subcommittee that specifically focuses on magnet programming and implementation. The council will be the primary mechanism to ensure to ensure multiple perspectives and diverse voices inform program planning and implementation. The council will be composed of representatives from the school's Administration, Champaign Educational Support Professionals, parents, and teachers. To ensure clear two-way communication, the Magnet Site Coordinator serve as the liaison between the Magnet Steering Committee and the MAC, which will convene quarterly throughout the duration of the grant. The role of the MAC will be as follows:

- Review project updates from the school magnet staff, including challenges, accomplishments, and proposed refinements;

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- Review formative and summative evaluation data provided by the external evaluator to identify potential issues with meeting performance measures; and
- Identify policies and practices that can be leveraged in support of magnet goals and those that have the potential to impede program progress.

Within three months of award notification, each school in collaboration with the Building Council will be asked to provide the names and affiliations of MAC team members with the Project Director.

While literature clearly shows the benefits that accrue to students when their parents and others are engaged in school activities, schools serving large numbers of low-income students in challenged communities are often hard-pressed to garner substantial parent involvement, particularly among parents that are “hard to reach” due to a variety of factors, including those who speak a language other than English, who work long or non-traditional hours.) In addition to the parent involvement activities that schools typically conducts, each of the magnet schools as crafted a parent engagement component specific to the thematic focus of the magnet grant (see school descriptions in the Quality of Project Design section.) To ensure that parents’ perspectives and diverse community voices are represented both on the MAC and in other parent engagement initiatives Unit 4’s magnet initiative will utilize the following practices, which have been found in literature to be particularly effective in encourage parents and other stakeholders to serve as decision makers in their children’s future:

- use personalized approaches and phrases to build trust and interest;
- communicate with parents often and with a variety of communication mediums;
- organize smaller events, such as grade-level nights, rather than whole-school events;

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- create venues for families to provide input and receive feedback online and in person
- conduct outreach in community spaces, such as libraries, park facilities, and community events; and
- communicate with parents in native languages and ensure that all school events incorporate bilingual staff members or translators.

#### d. Quality of Personnel

*(1) The Secretary reviews each application to determine the qualifications of the personnel the applicant plans to use on the project.*

Unit 4 has assembled an exceptionally well-qualified and visionary leadership team to spearhead the implementation of the Unit 4 magnet program. The team includes veteran staff with deep knowledge of and direct experience in curriculum development and instructional strategies, desegregation strategies, and magnet school program design, delivery, and assessment. They will work collaboratively to ensure the Unit 4 magnet program benefits from both their expertise and that of other talented professionals district-wide to support achievement of MSAP objectives.

*a) The Secretary determines the extent to which the Project Director (if one is used) is qualified to manage the project.*

The MSAP Project Director will have programmatic and administrative responsibility for the magnet initiative and will commit 100% of his/her time to ensuring the efficient operation and impactful implementation of the Unit 4 magnet program. The key qualifications for the position have been established to ensure that the successful applicant possesses the commitment, knowledge, experiences and interpersonal skills needed to provide strong and effective

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leadership for the project. These include 1) advanced degree in education; 2) state certification as a School Administrator; 3) at least three years as a school or district-level administrator responsible for equity or desegregation programs; 4) at least five years of experience in curriculum development; 5) at least five years of experience as a staff developer/teacher trainer; 6) experience and knowledge related to systemic reform models and innovative programs; 7) experience and knowledge related to parents of different races, ethnic, social, and economic backgrounds; 8) knowledge of the Common Core and Fine Arts State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, and C3 Framework; 9) demonstrated leadership in the development of programs and courses of instruction that substantially strengthen students' knowledge of academic subjects and 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills; 10) demonstrated abilities in effective leadership; 11) experience managing federal grants; and 12) excellent interpersonal skills. (Detail on job responsibilities is included in the Quality of Management Plan.) The PD will report to Dr. Susan Zola, Assistant Superintendent for Student Achievement and Curriculum and Instruction (see below).

Unit 4 is already building a pool of potential candidates through informal outreach and networking and upon award notification, is poised to immediately post the position on its own website and others, including but not limited to the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA) Job Bank, SchoolSpring, K-12 JobSpot, Indeed, and Monster. With the goal to identify 6-8 exceptionally qualified candidates, the initial screening process of résumés/applications will be completed jointly by the Executive Director of Human Resources and Dr. Zola. Top candidates will each be afforded a phone interview after which a pool of 3-4 candidates will be identified and invited to participate in an in-person interview. Members of the

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interview/selection committee will include the members of the District Magnet Leadership Team and Principals listed below. The District will work aggressively to ensure that the Project Director, as well as other positions, are filled within six weeks of award notification.

*b) The Secretary determines the extent to which other key personnel are qualified to manage the project.*

#### **District Leadership**

The 2017–2022 magnet initiative will benefit from the commitment and expertise of a dedicated group of district leaders, who along with the MSAP Project Director and Curriculum Integration Specialist will form the District Magnet Leadership Team.

Superintendent **Dr. Judy Wiegand** has more than 32 years of experience as a special education teacher, dean of students, assistant principal, principal, and director of secondary education, assessment, and professional development. Prior to her January 2012 appointment as Superintendent, she served as Assistant Superintendent for Achievement and Pupil Services, a position which included oversight and management of the K-12 Assessment Department and AVID Programs; supervision of curriculum and instruction for English Language Arts, grades K-12; and development, implementation, and evaluation of district staff development programs. In that position, she personally developed the district-wide professional development program for Unit 4's 2011 magnet grant program.

Having served in leadership positions throughout the seven years of the Consent Decree and settlement process that culminated in the fall of 2009, Dr. Wiegand is keenly focused on the issues of access and equity. Her work includes adoption of a K-12 Achievement Framework as outlined in *District Leadership That Works* (Marzano and Waters, 2009), integration of

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Computational Thinking/Computer Science Education into the elementary math curriculum, creation of two dual language schools, establishment of an Alternatives to Suspension program, and the fall 2016 launch of the Community Schools initiative. In October 2016, the Champaign County NAACP honored Dr. Wiegand for her commitment to equity and excellence in education with a special recognition award. Dr. Wiegand completed a Doctor of Education degree in Education and Organizational Leadership from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her dissertation topic was the “Sustainability of High School Reforms.”

The MSAP Project Director will report directly to and receive support and guidance from **Dr. Susan Zola**, Unit 4’s Assistant Superintendent for Student Achievement and Curriculum and Instruction. Dr. Zola currently provides oversight for all K-12 Curriculum and Instruction work, including the monitoring/evaluation of the curriculum adoption process, and supervises the district’s 12 elementary principals, Director of Elementary Teaching and Learning, and the Schools of Choice process. She has been instrumental in the establishment of an Elementary Achievement Framework and the New Teacher Evaluation Process and Student Growth parameters for Teacher Evaluation. Her innovative work includes the creation of a Kindergarten Transition Plan to welcome new families and provide universal screenings and resources prior to the first day of school; development of all-district, multi-year, job-embedded professional learning plan for elementary administrators and staff; and implementation of the norm-based MAP assessment that provides Fall/Winter/Spring benchmarking system. When she assumed her current position in 2012, she worked closely with the three elementary schools as they developed their magnet theme and later took the lead on grant oversight after the Project Director took a leadership position as a Principal.

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Prior to her current position, Dr. Zola served as the Principal of Dr. Howard ES and Jefferson MS in Unit 4, the Director of the District's Title I/Literacy, and Director of Choice, where she worked with a community task force and consultants to develop policies, procedures, and practices for the K-5 Schools of Choice model at the critical time following the Consent Decree. As Choice Director, she also established the Family Information Center, which is the assignment site for the elementary choice process. Dr. Zola completed a Doctor of Education degree in Education and Organizational Leadership from the UIUC with a dissertation focused on the evaluation of a year-long student teaching model.

**Angela Smith**, Assistant Superintendent for Achievement and Equity, provides leadership and oversight for the District's three middle school campuses. In that role, she has transformed an outdated Science Technology course to a STEM Lab curriculum, implemented an Achievement Framework for Middle School staff and students, and overseen implementation of Standards-Based Grading. From 2012-2104, she provided oversight for the 2011 magnet grant, attending meetings at each campus to help ensure high quality programs; meeting with project staff, the evaluator, and other stakeholders to ensure fidelity of implementation; and supervising the Magnet Project Director on public relations and outreach efforts. Since 2004, she has been instrumental in building the District's AVID program in which more than 550 middle and high school students now participate.

Ms. Smith serves as co-facilitator of the District's Staff Retreat for Minority Recruitment & Retention and oversees the district-wide EEE Committee created to review, discuss, and report on issues related to equity across the district. Under Ms. Smith's leadership the Committee has taken an action-centered approach resulting in key initiatives such as the African American 3<sup>rd</sup>

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grade Portfolio Project, and Operation Hope, Jr. which provides middle schools students with academic/behavior issues with wrap-around supports to help them rewrite their own stories. Ms. Smith, the proud graduate of Whitney M. Young Magnet High School in Chicago, holds a Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction from UIUC and is currently enrolled in the UIUC Educational Doctoral program

**Michael Lehr**, Director of Secondary Teaching and Learning, and **Jamie Roundtree**, Director of Elementary Teaching and Learning, will serve as critical resources to the Magnet schools. Mr. Lehr has more than 22 years of teaching and administrative experience. He currently supports the development, implementation, coordination, and evaluation of the District achievement and instructional frameworks, including the vertical and horizontal alignment of the grade 6-12 curriculum; coordination of District benchmark assessments; and design of professional development to support teacher implementation of Illinois Learning Standards and the use of assessment data to support instructional and programmatic decision making. As Administrator of the District's Advanced Placement (AP) grant, he has led the effort to attract and support a larger and more diverse group of students to the AP program. Mr. Lehr completed a Master of Education in Educational Policy Studies and a Master of Educational Organization and Leadership from the UIUC.

**Mr. Roundtree** currently oversees Unit 4's K-5 Curriculum and Instructional work, Gifted/Enrichment program, and Title I summer school. He was a founding member of the district's Social Justice Committee and currently serves as co-chair of the district Racial Identity Student Experience (RISE) group, which provides a learning and leadership opportunity for high school youth focused around racial identity development and racial/social justice and advocacy.

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As Principal of Unit 4's Barkstall ES, he facilitated the implementation of Culturally Responsive Education and Adaptive School strategies, helped restructure and develop the PBIS framework, and served as a member of the District's Elementary Assessment Committee. He also serves on the board of the Don Moyers Boys & Girls Club. Mr. Roundtree completed both a Master of Elementary Education and Master of Educational and Organizational Leadership from UIUC.

**Kristin Morris**, who served in the same position for Unit 4's previous MSAP grant, is the proposed candidate for the MSAP Curriculum Specialist position. Ms. Morris currently serves as one of three Unit 4 Elementary Teaching & Learning Coordinators. In this role she works with administrations to develop and carry out a plan to provide professional development that supports teachers' implementation of the Common Core Standards, NGSS, and C3 Framework; builds staff capacity in effective implementation of research-based/evidence-based instructional practices; and assists with the development of written curriculum, instructional timelines, and related common assessments. Prior to joining Unit 4, Ms. Morris served as an 8<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics teacher, department chair, and a member of the District Mathematics Assessment Committee at Urbana MS. She also has previously served as a school improvement consultant with the Regional Office of Education working with schools and districts that did not make Adequate Yearly Progress under No Child Left Behind and assisting them in writing school improvement plans. She has received training in Understanding by Design, Cognitive Coaching, Adaptive Schools, Essential Facilitation, and Culturally Responsive Education, and has contributed greatly to the development of this MSAP proposal. Ms. Morris completed a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education with a Mathematics and Science Concentration from UICU and a Master of Science in Educational Administration from Illinois State University.

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#### **School Leadership**

The principals of each of the three propose magnet schools are visionary leaders eminently capable oversee the implementation of the magnet school initiative. They all have led the intensive magnet planning process at their schools and if funded, will supervise all staff working on magnet-related programs and activities during and beyond the regular school day/year and work with the Magnet Project Director to ensure regular communication with and coordination between the magnet school planning teams. Although each brings a unique set of skills, all are deeply committed to the magnet program. An overview of each staff follows and as with district leadership listed above, their résumés are included in the attachments to this proposal.

**Stephanie Eckels** became the principal of Stratton ES in 2010, just prior to the District's notice of award of the 2011 magnet grant. Although not involved in the planning for the proposed magnet, her commitment to the magnet program led to Stratton's 2012 Rookie MicroSociety® of the Year and 2015 MicroSociety® Innovator Awards. Her vision and leadership have been instrumental to Stratton's substantial revision of the magnet theme to a fine arts focus. Since 2014 she has participated in the National SAM Innovative Project, a professional development process using a unique set of tools to change a principal's focus from school management tasks to instructional leadership. Ms. Eckels completed a C.A.S. in Educational Leadership and a M.S. in Curriculum and Instruction from UIUC.

**Elizabeth Ladd**, who was hired to become the new school leader for the Garden Hills Mathematics and Engineering Leadership Academy in spring 2017, has more than 20 years of professional experience as a teacher and administrator. Before joining Garden Hills ES, Ms. Ladd served as the Assistant Director of Student Services for Urbana School District where she

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oversaw and coordinated special education services, fostered collaboration with schools on issues related to special education services and compliance; and led district and school-based professional development on racial equity and effective learning strategies. Over her 20 years in education, she has conducted multiple presentations and facilitated professional development on a range of topics including co-teaching, leading for racial equity, using data and collaborative problem solving in education. She has a strong understanding of pedagogy and curriculum development to help ensure that all students at Garden Hills ES are challenged academically and receiving the supports they need. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Special Education from Indiana University, and a Master of Science in Educational Administration from Eastern Illinois University, and earned a Director of Special Education endorsement.

**Sara Sanders**, principal of Franklin MS, has more than eight years of administrative experience at Franklin, including serving as a reading intervention and AVID teacher prior to becoming principal. Among other current duties, Ms. Sanders assists with curriculum development, provides staff PD for instructional best practices and coordinates district and state assessments to promote data-driven decision making to improve student achievement. Ms. Sanders helped Franklin MS earn its distinction as an AVID National Demonstration School as well as a National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) Breakthrough School. She completed a Bachelor of Arts in Middle Level Teacher Education at Illinois State University and a Master of Science in Educational Administration from Eastern Illinois University, where she was named the “Distinguished Graduate for Educational Administration.”

**Magnet Site Facilitators** (1.0 FTE) will work closely with the school principal and Magnet Teaching Specialists to spearhead the implementation of the magnet program in their buildings.

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The Site Facilitators are responsible for all administrative aspects of the program, including fiscal management; data collection activities; outreach and recruitment activities; and serving as the primary liaison to the external partners supporting the implementation of the magnet programs. The Magnet Site Facilitators will be required to have a bachelor's degree and at least five years of teaching or other experience in the educational field; extensive familiarity with the school and parent community; strong organizational skills; knowledge and experience in data collection and grant management; excellent communication skills with experience in community outreach and partner building; and demonstrated ability to work well with the diverse constituents of the school and wider community, including administrators, students, teachers, parents, and partnering agencies. The principal at each school will be responsible for hiring both the MSAP Site Facilitator and Teaching Specialist. Parallel to the District's process of hiring the Project Director, each principal is already creating a pool of potential candidates, is poised to post the position upon award notification, and will work aggressively to ensure that positions are filled within six weeks of award notification.

*c) The Secretary determines the extent to which teachers who will provide instruction in participating magnet schools are qualified to implement the special curriculum of the magnet schools.*

The primary instructional personnel at each magnet school will consist of a **Magnet Teaching Specialist** who will be responsible for developing and strengthening the magnet themes at their schools. Specialists will have demonstrated competence in the following: instruction of heterogeneously grouped classes consisting of children from diverse ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds; use of various innovative teaching methods and materials to

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address the learning styles of different students; development of theme-related curriculum materials that have been effectively used with elementary and middle school students; evaluation of student academic performance, including the use of alternative assessment methods within their subject area or specialty; and the ability to work effectively with students, parents, teachers, and administrators. Experience teaching in a magnet school and an advanced degree in curriculum and instruction or educational leadership are highly desired.

Unit 4 is fortunate to have an extraordinary pool of talent to draw from and has already identified the following staff as key members of the school magnet teams. The résumés of the two identified Magnet Teaching Specialists are included in the attachments,

**Emily Young**, the proposed Magnet Teaching Specialist at Stratton ES, currently serves as an Instructional Specialist. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art Education, Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting, and Master of Arts in Art Education. She, along with the Stratton fine arts team, have been instrumental in fostering a school culture infused with the arts, developing arts-integrated curriculum, and forging community and university arts partnerships. Additional members of the fine arts team whose expertise will support the grant objectives include **Priscilla Putnam**, Arts Enrichment Specialist (BFA in Art Education); **Rachel Bradley**, Drama Teacher (BFA in Acting and Master of Arts in Teaching); and **Rhonda Tyler** (BFA in K-12 Music Education and Master of Education, Organization and Leadership), who collectively have more than 35 years of teaching experience.

**Chris Brunson**, the proposed Magnet Teaching Specialist at Franklin MS, currently serves as a 7<sup>th</sup>-grade science and reading teacher and as Franklin's science content area chair (CAC). He also serves in a leadership role at the district level as a member of the Curriculum,

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Instruction, and Assessment Middle Level Team and Science Curriculum Adoption Team. Mr. Brunson graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science in Education and is now enrolled in a Master of Education program. Other highly qualified staff at Franklin whose expertise will be tapped for the grant include **Heather Cameron**, STEM Lab Teacher (Master of Education, Instructional Leadership); **Torrance Douse**, Music Teacher (Master of Music Education); **Kate Higgs**, Science Teacher (Master of Education in Elementary Education); **Tracey Jones**, Mathematics and AVID Teacher, Mathematics CAC (Master of Elementary Education), who collectively have more than 42 years of teaching experience.

Although the Magnet Teaching Specialist at Garden Hills is to be determined, additional members of the Math and Engineering Leadership team whose expertise will support the grant objectives include **Chris Davis**, 5<sup>th</sup>-grade gifted teacher (Bachelors in Elementary Education) , **Melissa Kearns**, instructional coach (Masters in Curriculum and Instruction), and **Sarah Williams**, 2<sup>nd</sup>-grade teacher (Masters in Reading Instruction). All three of these staff received Level I, II, and III training in the PYP magnet program through the IB Schools of America Program on a plethora of topics related to writing curriculum through a lens of inquiry, assessment, IB content and philosophy, and administrative infrastructure. They will be joined by **Michele Trueblood**, special education teacher (Masters in Special Education).

*(2) To determine personnel qualifications, the Secretary considers experience and training in fields related to the objectives of the project, including the key personnel's knowledge of and experience in curriculum development and desegregation strategies*

The combined expertise of district-level and school-based staff in fields related to the objectives of the magnet program will ensure the District's and schools' effectiveness in making

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progress in the broad areas of systemic reform embodied in the MSAP statute. Since the settlement of the Consent Decree, their commitment to equity and excellence has been reflected in the continuation and strengthening of programs such as AVID; ensuring that teaching professionals are provided training in innovative instructional strategies of particular relevance to supporting schools with diverse populations (Adaptive Schools, Culturally Responsive Education, Cognitive Coaching, Positive Behavior Facilitation); restructuring enrichment programs with emphasis on a push-in versus pull-out model; implementing universal first grade screening for Gifted initial placement, and launching new initiatives such as the Community Schools program.

During the last several years, instructional leaders and other members of the District and school Magnet leadership teams have led the effort to update the curriculum and adoption process to an eight-year cycle that embeds program evaluation into the process. During this same period, the Directors of Elementary and Secondary Teaching and Learning have been deeply involved in curriculum adoption and have worked in concert with administrators and teachers across the district to navigate the new Illinois Common Core and Fine Arts Standards, Next Generation Science, C3 Framework and support the vertical and horizontal and vertical continuity of the instructional program throughout the District so as to support higher achievement for all students. Finally, Unit 4's now Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of Achievement, Curriculum and Instruction, and Assistant Superintendent of Achievement and Equity have been directly involved in policies, practices, training, and programs that were implemented to address educational inequities for minority students during the Consent Decree. In addition, all three had roles in either the development or implementation of the District's 2011

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magnet proposal and have been part of the Leadership Team to develop the 2017 MSAP proposal.

#### e) Quality of Project Evaluation

*The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project.*

The project evaluation of the proposed Unit 4 magnet initiative will include formative and summative components to provide continuous feedback to the district on the effectiveness of program implementation and activities in meeting project objectives and performance measures, and a well-designed impact study that uses a rigorous research design to test for theoretical linkages between implementation of at least one key project component and at least one relevant outcome presented in the logic model.

The evaluation design will guide the collection of data from multiple sources and stakeholder groups to provide feedback and findings to examine several overarching research questions:

1. To what extent are the MSAP-related outreach and student recruitment activities helping the district to meet the MGI targets outlined in the grant? How can outreach and student recruitment activities be improved?
2. To what extent is grant-funded professional development building the capacity of teachers and staff to implement and integrate evidence- and research-based instructional strategies into classroom instruction? How can professional development offerings be improved?
3. How has the grant supported the development of unique thematic curricula and enrichment activities? How can curriculum development efforts and products be improved?

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4. To what extent are academic achievement outcomes of all subgroups of students in the magnet schools improving over the five-year grant period?
5. Are there differences in academic achievement gains among subgroups of students, such as by demographic characteristics, level of teacher participation in MSAP-related professional development, and by home school (within or outside zone); and to what extent do those difference or gaps change over the five-year grant?
6. What impact does implementation of the Habits of Mind school-wide staff development in the two elementary magnet schools have on student academic achievement outcomes in reading and math? How do achievement gains of treatment students compare to those of non-treatment comparison students?

Unit 4 proposes to retain Metis Associates to conduct the impact study (as described in section 1) and the comprehensive project evaluation of the MSAP grant initiative (described in section 2). Metis is an education research and evaluation firm that has provided technical assistance and professional support for a wide range of education and human services initiatives for the past 39 years. Metis has conducted evaluations of MSAP initiatives over the past 10 MSAP funding cycles for 11 community school districts in New York City; Broward County, FL; Baltimore County, MD; Orangeburg County, SC; and Beacon, NY. Metis served as the external evaluator for Unit 4's previous MSAP grant from 2011–2014. Metis has also conducted system-wide evaluations and audits of magnet and choice programs for several large school districts including for Montgomery County (MD) Public Schools in 2015, Broward County (FL) Public Schools in 2014, Baltimore County (MD) Public Schools in 2013; and Pittsburgh Public Schools in 2008. Final reports for these evaluations have been posted on the districts' websites.

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The evaluation of the Unit 4 magnet initiative will be directed by Claire Aulicino, a Senior Associate at Metis (see résumé in Other Attachments). Ms. Aulicino has more than 17 years of experience in designing and conducting program reviews and evaluations in the area of K-12 education. For the past 13 years, the focus of her work has been on school choice and magnet programs. She has directed evaluations of MSAP grants over the past six MSAP funding cycles and she has served as the lead evaluator for 13 MSAP grants, including in Unit 4. She also served as the lead researcher on the district-wide evaluations of magnet and choice programs for Montgomery County Public Schools in 2015, Broward County Public Schools in 2014, and Baltimore County Public Schools in 2013. She also conducts evaluations in the areas of educational technology, STEM education, and out-of-school time programs.

For the impact study, Ms. Aulicino will be supported and advised by Metis’s Senior Associate for Design and Analysis Dr. Zhu (see résumé in Other Attachments). Dr. Zhu is an expert in research design, statistical analysis, survey research, and data management functions. She has played a key role in developing and/or implementing rigorous designs (both experimental and quasi-experimental) and applying advanced statistical techniques to evaluate intervention effectiveness and help programs become evidence-based. Dr. Zhu is in the company of only approximately 300 researchers nationwide who are certified as eligible to review education research studies for inclusion in the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)—an initiative of the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences—and thus is intimately familiar with the level of evidence that is specified in the Notice of Funding Availability and that the evaluation is expected to address. Metis is certified as Dr. Zhu’s organizational affiliation. Dr. Zhu holds a Ph.D. in Quantitative Research, Evaluation, and Measurement, and a M.A.S. in

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Applied Statistics, both from The Ohio State University.

In her role as Evaluation Director, Ms. Aulicino will be supported by highly qualified staff, including Dr. Zhu, and will regularly consult with Metis’s Design Consulting Committee (DCC) on all aspects of the evaluation. The DCC ensures that evaluation designs and analyses that are carried out are sound, of high quality, and appropriately address the key research questions. The DCC is a key component of Metis’s quality management process and provides a systematic review of the data and assurance of high technical standards in line with the accuracy standards of the Joint Committee on Standards (JCS), and with the American Evaluation Association’s (AEA’s) principles for Systematic Inquiry. In addition, Metis has a duly constituted Institutional Review Board (IRB) that is registered with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (IRB #00003465) and assures compliance with Federal-Wide Assurance (FWA) requirements for the Protection of Human Subjects (FWA #00004755). Members of the IRB are specialized in various social sciences and are experienced in all aspects of field-based research and evaluation. Metis’s IRB meets as needed to review evaluation designs and guarantee protection to human subjects for Metis’s research studies. The IRB has submitted and gained approval for study protocols from numerous external IRBs from school districts around the country.

Furthermore, to obtain extant data to support research and evaluations within localities, Metis has successfully negotiated data sharing agreements to gather identifiable (when warranted) and de-identified individual student- and teacher-level data with numerous local education agencies across the United States.

***(1) The Secretary determines the extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well-implemented, provide evidence of promise.***

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Guided by the *What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Procedures and Standards Handbook* (v3.0, 2014), Metis proposes to conduct a rigorous evaluation that is capable of producing evidence of promise if well-implemented. The rigorous evaluation, or impact study, will be conducted to establish empirical evidence to support the theoretical linkage between implementation of the Habits of Mind (HOM) school-wide staff development (key component) and student achievement in reading and math (relevant outcomes) as presented in the logic model in the Quality of Project Design section.

The impact study will build the research base on the effects of the HOM staff development model on student outcomes. As outlined in a synthesis of research compiled by researchers for the Institute of HOM, HOM has demonstrated positive effects on a range of student outcome areas, including critical thinking and creativity, and on fostering students' cognitive capacities to learn. Furthermore, the research has shown positive outcomes of HOM on learning across a range of content areas, including engineering, mathematics, science, and writing (Edward, 2014). The impact study will build on this research and produce evidence of promise on the effects of school-wide staff development in HOM on student achievement outcomes.

The impact study will be informed by qualitative and quantitative data to measure implementation of the HOM school-wide staff development model. These data, as described below in section 2, will be collected from multiple sources and methods to measure fidelity of implementation of the model and will describe any variations in implementation fidelity, such as whether implementation varies across grades, schools, and time. Guided by implementation data, the impact study will use a rigorous design to estimate the impact of the HOM school-wide staff development model on intended student outcomes at different points in time based on treatment-

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comparison contrasts.

**Study Design:** Given that the HOM staff development will be implemented school-wide and the target schools have attendance zones, it is not feasible to randomly assign students to the treatment. Because a randomized controlled trial (RCT) design would not be viable for this study, in accordance with the WWC guidelines, Metis is proposing a rigorous, quasi-experimental matched comparison group design based on a propensity score matching (PSM) approach. PSM is often considered the best available approach to generating a comparable group of non-participants without random assignment (Guo & Fraser, 2009). Under the PSM framework (Rosenbaum & Rubin, 1983, 1984, 1985; Rosenbaum, 1991, 2002), any initial statistically significant imbalances on observed covariates (e.g., demographic variables and baseline achievement) between treated and comparison groups can be greatly reduced or even removed. PSM techniques first summarize all pertinent characteristics observed prior to treatment (i.e., the matching variables) into a single score (i.e., the propensity) that indicates the predicted conditional probability of an individual participating in a given program. After propensity score estimation, PSM techniques typically match each program participant with one or more comparison students with similar propensity scores.

Using PSM, students who are enrolled in the tested grades in the two elementary magnet schools in fall 2017 will be matched 1:1 with comparable students in similar non-participating schools in the same school district based on important observed baseline characteristics related to

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the outcomes of interest.<sup>1</sup> Depending on data quality and availability, the matching variables may include, but not be limited to: (1) at the student level – baseline achievement (previous ELA and Math scale scores as measured by the PARCC assessments), grade level, age, gender, race/ethnicity, FRL eligibility, ELL and special education status, and previous school year average daily attendance; and (2) at the school level – enrollment size, percent FRL, percent by race/ethnicity, percent male, percent ELL students, percent special education students, and percent previous cohort proficient in PARCC in ELA and Math. After PSM, tests of baseline equivalence of the treatment and comparison groups in each analysis sample will be conducted to ensure that the evaluation eliminates overt selection bias and meets the WWC evidence standards, albeit with reservations owing to the fact that unobserved variables may not be equated between the two groups.

**Analysis Plan:** To provide information for project implementation and improvement as well as to better interpret project impacts, every effort will be made to track data on key project inputs (e.g., number of PD hours attended). To investigate the impact of the HOM whole-school staff development as implemented, Metis will use regression-type analyses for each year's outcome analyses, in addition to providing descriptive and/or correlational analyses of quantitative data. Since the study will involve multiple grades, achievement test scores in each grade (as necessary) will be converted to z-scores or another common metric, when needed, to produce combined impact estimates. The analysis models employed will statistically control for multiple

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<sup>1</sup> Note that student joiners after the project starts will be removed from matching and analysis if determined necessary.

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covariates (e.g., students' pre-test and demographic variables, and school-level characteristics). Statistical significance adjustment procedures (e.g., Benjamini-Hochberg, Bonferroni) will be applied when multiple comparisons are involved for confirmatory contrasts specified in the same outcome domain. In addition, appropriate effect size indices (e.g., Hedges'  $g$ , Cox index) will be calculated to measure the practical importance of the findings. All aspects of the analysis plan will be aligned with the latest WWC requirements.

**Sample Sizes and Minimum Detectable Effect Sizes (MDESs):** Given the parameters of this proposed study, we obtained an estimated MDES of 0.090 standard deviations for key outcomes in overall impact analyses. This calculation was based on a sample of 1,960 subjects (980 treatment/980 matched comparison) and would provide adequate power (.80) to detect the above stated estimated MDES, assuming pertinent covariates explain 50% of variation in a given outcome at a significance level of .05 for a two-tailed test under the regression framework. The proposed study is therefore capable of detecting small project impacts.

**Key Outcomes and Measures:** The project logic model identifies ELA and Math academic performance as key target student outcomes. The PARCC assessments (ELA and Math scores) administered by the district in each year of implementation will be used to measure student achievement. To meet the WWC outcome standards, Metis will ensure that each outcome measure used for the project impact evaluation has face validity, adequate reliability, and consistency in measurement in both treatment and comparison groups, without over-aligning with the intervention.

*(2) The Secretary determines the extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the*

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*project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.*

The impact study will be conducted to produce evidence of promise to support causal relationships of one key component (HOM school-wide PD model) on two relevant outcomes (achievement in ELA and Math). In order to assess implementation and impact of the Unit 4 magnet initiative, Metis will conduct a project evaluation designed to assess the implementation of all project activities and the extent to which the activities support achievement of all of the project outcomes and outputs, as articulated in the Unit 4 MSAP logic model and the project and GPRA-level performance measures. The evaluation design includes formative and summative components and utilizes multiple measures over multiple groups of subjects. Data from all sources will be synthesized and analyzed to maximize precision of outcome information and enrich the capacity of the Project Director and the Unit 4 MSAP stakeholders to make informed and timely decisions about program development and implementation.

The formative evaluation will focus on program implementation and assessment of project activities. Ongoing formative feedback will be provided to the Project Director and the school-based magnet teams about the extent to which project activities are being implemented as planned and in line with the intended outcomes. This feedback and data will be critical for ensuring that the project is well-positioned to meet its objectives and performance measures and to make adjustments as part of a continuous improvement model. As described in the Quality of Project Management section, the continuous improvement process will be instrumental to ensuring the project activities are planned, implemented, assessed, and modified, as needed in order to achieve the grant objectives. The Project Director and key stakeholders will regularly use evaluation data to “check” activities to ensure they yield the desired results.

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Formative evaluation methods, including documentation reviews, written surveys, interviews, and biannual field observations, will be conducted to answer key questions about: the outreach and recruitment strategies being used; how the schools are planning, developing, and implementing the themes and ensuring that all students have access to magnet thematic curricula and activities; the types of staff development being offered and the levels of participation in these; and the collaborations, among instructional staff, within the school community, and with external partners, being fostered to support the program. Quarterly written project status reports, monthly telephone and email communications, and presentations by the evaluator will provide the Project Director, MSAP stakeholders, and the Superintendent with formative feedback on program implementation and best practices.

The Project Director and other MSAP staff will provide opportunities for other stakeholder groups, such as parents, staff, students, and community and business members to review and provide feedback on evaluation findings through a variety of methods. The MSAP staff will conduct presentations of evaluation findings and recommendations to these and other stakeholder groups, including parents and staff at PTA and faculty meetings and during school family events; students at assemblies and through morning announcements; and to community and business members in partner meetings and community meetings such as those of the Chamber of Commerce. The Project Director will also work with the District's Office of Communications and Community Relations to share information through press releases, social media posts, and information on the District's website.

Summative evaluation activities will be conducted to assess the program's attainment of the intended outcomes, as outlined in the logic model and project performance measures. The

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summative evaluation methods will include the analysis of data collected through monthly program implementation logs, stakeholder surveys, student checklists, enrollment and applicant pools, and standardized test achievement scores.

This section presents the project performance measures that will be used to assess the extent to which the four project-level objectives that are described in the Management Plan are being met in each year of the grant and the specific methods that will be used to collect and analyze data to evaluate impact on each performance measure.

**Project Objective 1: Reduce or eliminate minority group isolation among African American students in proposed magnet schools.** The following performance measures will be used to evaluate the extent to which Project Objective 1 is met over the five-year grant period.

**Performance Measure 1.1 (GPRA Measure):** Through implementation of a whole-school magnet programs, each magnet school will achieve reductions in MGI among African American students. The proportions of African American students will be reduced at each school to the following percentages in each year, based on the enrollment projections presented in Table 3 in the Attachments.

<b>School</b>	<b>Baseline (2016-17)</b>	<b>Year 1 (2017-18)</b>	<b>Year 2 (2018-19)</b>	<b>Year 3 (2019-20)</b>	<b>Year 4 (2020-21)</b>	<b>Year 5 (2021-22)</b>
<b>Stratton ES</b>	61.1%	60.8%	58.0%	55.9%	53.3%	51.0%
<b>Garden Hills ES</b>	60.6%	60.3%	58.3%	56.5%	53.1%	50.6%
<b>Franklin MS</b>	46.9%	46.7%	45.0%	44.1%	41.8%	39.2%

**Performance Measure 1.2:** As a result of ongoing outreach and student recruitment efforts and

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the development of innovative educational programming at each elementary magnet school, the number of students who rank each school as their first choice in the kindergarten choice process or who apply to the school for grades (1-5) will increase by 5% in each of Years 2 through 5 of the grant over the prior year, compared with baseline data collected in Year 1.

**Performance Measure 1.3:** As a result of ongoing outreach and student recruitment efforts and the development of innovative educational programming at Franklin Middle School, the number of students who apply to the school will increase by 5% in each of Years 2 through 5 of the grant over the prior year, compared with baseline data collected in Year 1.

**Evaluation Methods for Project Objective 1:** Data to assess Performance Measure 1.1 will be obtained from an annual analysis of student enrollment data from the District’s registers for all active students as of October 1 of each project year. Frequency calculations will be conducted by school and grade to determine the number and proportion of students by racial/ethnic group. Data to assess Performance Measures 1.2 and 1.3 will be collected from choice process and magnet application data to determine the number of first choice ranks or applications by school in each year of the grant. Results from the enrollment, choice process data, and application data will be synthesized with data on outreach and recruitment logs and marketing materials for each school and the district to assess the effectiveness of the outreach and student recruitment plans.

**Project Objective 2: Ensure that all students attending the magnet schools meet challenging academic standards and are on track to be college- and career-ready.**

The following performance measures will be used to evaluate the extent to which Project Objective 2 is met over the five-year grant period.

**Performance Measure 2.1 (GPRA Measure):** At each magnet school, students in each

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racial/ethnic group, students with disabilities, low-income students, and ELLs will demonstrate measurable improvements in academic achievement in ELA as measured by an increase of four or more percentage points in the proportion of students in each tested grade who meet the grade-level standards on PARCC assessments in ELA (Grades 3-8) *in each project year* and, by Year 5, the overall increase will be statistically significant.

**Performance Measure 2.2 (GPRA Measure):** At each magnet school, students in each racial/ethnic group, students with disabilities, low-income students, and ELLs will demonstrate measurable improvements in academic achievement in Math as measured by an increase of four or more percentage points in the proportion of students in each tested grade who meet the grade-level standards on PARCC assessments in Math (Grades 3-8) *in each project year* and, by Year 5, the overall increase will be statistically significant.

**Evaluation Methods for Project Objective 2:** The standardized instruments for student assessments include the PARCC assessments which are administered annually to students in ELA and Math in grades 3-8. Results for these tests are expressed both in scale scores and performance level equivalents. Scale scores are equal-interval, criterion-referenced scores that create a continuous scale that extends across grade levels. For each grade, scores are categorized into one of five performance levels: Level 1 (did not yet meet expectations), Level 2 (partially met expectations), Level 3 (approached expectations), Level 4 (met expectations), and Level 5 (exceeded expectations).

Student achievement results for ELA and Math will be derived from performance level analyses using matched data to calculate the proportions of students in each year who meet or exceed the learning standards (Performance Levels 4 and 5). Chi Square Tests of Independence

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or other appropriate statistical measures, such as McNemar tests, will be conducted to determine if changes in student achievement occur from one year to the next and if differences in achievement by student subgroup are statistically significant and educationally meaningful. All analyses will be conducted by school, by grade level, and by student subgroup, including each major racial and ethnic group, students with disabilities, low-income students, and ELLs, except in cases where the number of students in a category is less than 10 and therefore insufficient to yield statistically reliable information, and/or where the results yield personally identifiable information.

**Project Objective 3: Ensure that *all* students attending the magnet schools benefit from the magnet’s educational offerings and have equal opportunities to gain magnet theme-specific value-added skills and knowledge.** The following performance measures will be used to evaluate the extent to which Project Objective 3 is met over the five-year grant period.

***Performance Measure 3.1:*** As part of the magnet program at each school, all (100%) of students will be exposed to at least one new thematic curriculum unit in Year 1; at least two new thematic curriculum units in each of Years 2 and Year 3; and at least four new thematic curriculum units in each of Years 4 and 5.

***Performance Measure 3.2:*** Through their participation in the magnet program, the proportion of students in each school who demonstrate mastery of a set of unique magnet value-added standards and skills will increase by at least 5 percentage points in each year of the grant, compared with baseline data collected in Year 1.

**Evaluation Methods for Project Objective 3:** Data to assess Performance Measures 3.1 will be derived from a systematic review of curriculum development and implementation logs and

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copies of thematic curriculum units and magnet elective course registration and enrollment data. Data to assess Performance Measure 3.2 will be obtained from the annual administration of authentic student performance assessments that will be developed by the magnet staff at each school in collaboration with district MSAP staff, the external evaluator, and program partners and based on published literature and research. The assessments, which will be completed by teachers for each student, will measure student attainment and mastery of unique magnet value-added skills. The skills will include theme-related content skills and the habits of mind domains that will be the focus on the school-wide HOM staff development, such as motivation, persistence, and communication, and will be specific to each school's magnet theme and curriculum. The assessments will be administered in the spring of each project year and analyzed by school, by grade, and student subgroup using frequencies and cross-tabulations to determine the proportion of students who master the skills in each year. The assessments will be pilot-tested in Year 1 with item analyses and reduction conducted to ensure validity and reliability of the items in measuring the intended outcomes.

Qualitative data to provide contextual information about the implementation of thematic curriculum units and elective courses at each school and student attainment of magnet value-added skills will be obtained from biannual site visits by the evaluator to each magnet school in each project year that will include class observations and interviews and focus groups with planning team members, teachers, parents, and students.

**Project Objective 4: Build the capacity within the magnet schools to provide rigorous, theme-based instructional programs that will help promote choice and diversity in Unit 4.**

To build staff capacity, each magnet school will develop a comprehensive five-year professional

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development plan that describes implementation of staff development directly related to the magnet theme and evidence- and research-based instructional practices that are outlined in the MSAP grant application. The following performance measures will be used to evaluate the extent to which Project Objective 4 is met over the five-year grant period.

***Performance Measure 4.1:*** Based on the PD plans, the following proportions of staff in each school will participate in 50 or more hours of magnet-related professional development in each year of the grant: 25% or more of instructional staff and school leaders in Year 1, 50% of instructional staff and school leaders in Year 2, and 100% of instructional staff and school leaders in each of Years 3-5.

***Performance Measure 4.2:*** Through their participation in magnet-related professional development, the proportion of teachers in each school who report using strategies and concepts related to the magnet theme, HOM school-wide staff development, and innovative instructional strategies will be at least 25% in Year 1, 50% in Year 3, and 100% in each of Years 3-5 of the grant.

***Performance Measure 4.3:*** In each year of the project, the percentage of parents/guardians at each of the three magnet schools who express a high level of satisfaction with the rigorous, theme-based instructional program at each school will increase by at least 10 percentage points in each of Years 2 and 3, compared with baseline data from Year 1, and by an additional five percentage points in each of Years 4 and 5.

**Evaluation Methods for Project Objective 4:** Data to assess Performance Measure 4.1 will be derived from a review of each magnet school's annual professional development plan, school and district professional development activity logs, and professional development agendas and

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sign-in sheets. Data to assess Performance Measure 4.2 will be derived from an analysis of checklists completed by instructional staff that will be developed by the external evaluator in consultation with the school and district MSAP staff to collect data on classroom practices and use of instructional strategies presented in grant-funded PD and job-embedded coaching. Data will be collected annually and analyzed by school and for the project using frequency and cross-tabulation calculations. Performance Measure 4.3 will be assessed with data collected on annual parent/guardian surveys that will be administered to all families in each year of the grant.

In addition, in each year of the grant, surveys will be administered to instructional staff, parents/guardians, and students (in Grades 3-8) in each magnet school. All surveys will be administered online and in paper version in the spring of each project year. The parent survey will be available in English, Spanish, and French. The staff survey will be administered to collect data from staff about their satisfaction with grant-funded PD, perceptions about impact of the PD on staff's knowledge, skills, and confidence in key concepts addressed in the magnet PD, and areas in which they need or would like additional PD. The survey will also measure staff's awareness and support for the magnet program and their participation in and satisfaction with program planning.

The parent/guardian survey will collect data on parent/guardians' awareness of, satisfaction with and participation in magnet program activities including family engagement efforts, as well as perceptions about impact of the program on student outcomes and suggestions for improvement. The student survey will also collect data on participation in and satisfaction with different magnet program activities, perceived impact of the magnet program on student learning and other outcomes, such as interest in theme-related careers, and suggestions for improvement.

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All surveys will be anonymous and will be analyzed by school and for the project using frequency calculations and cross-tabulations. These data will be used for formative evaluation of the PD and will be used by the Project Director and Magnet Site Coordinators for program development. The surveys will be pilot-tested in Year 1 with item analyses and reduction conducted to ensure validity and reliability of the items in measuring the intended outcomes.

All data collected through the project evaluation will be triangulated to incorporate perspectives from the diversity of program stakeholder groups. The findings will be synthesized to objectively *document* the effort expended to implement program activities and determine the *effectiveness* of project activities and *efficacy* of the project in relation to outcomes achieved. Results of the external evaluation will be provided to the Project Director through monthly communications and status updates and biannual summary reports. The evaluator will also provide ongoing informal feedback as data are collected and participate in project management meetings that are conducted by the Project Director. Ongoing feedback will ensure that the evaluation supports continuous improvement of the project.

The results of the quantitative and qualitative data analyses will be synthesized and presented by Unit 4 to the USDOE in the Annual Performance Reports and Ad-Hoc Reports for each project year, including a final report at the end of the grant period. Metis will assist Unit 4 staff in preparing the reports to present succinct findings about the success of the project in meeting the intended outcomes that are outlined in the project objectives and performance measures. The District will also provide data to the USDOE to report on progress on the five program level measures as required by Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA).

The evaluation measurement framework that will be used to guide the program evaluation is

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presented at the end of this section. The framework outlines the indicators; measures of change; and the data collection methods, sources, and timeline of the activities that will be conducted to assess progress toward meeting each of the MSAP objectives to be addressed over the five-year MSAP grant.

*(3) The Secretary determines the extent to which costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.*

The evaluation costs reflect the total amount of resources that is needed to address the research questions and meet the MSAP program evaluation goals, in terms of providing formative and summative data for continuous program improvement of the project and addressing the GPRA and project-level performance measures in each year of the grant period.

At the same time, the evaluation budget provides an adequate level of resources to conduct a well-designed and well-implemented impact study that will build evidence of promise for the impact of the project on the intended outcomes. In order for the study to produce evidence of promise, Metis has proposed a quasi-experimental design using PSM to identify a well-matched comparison group. PSM is an iterative process that requires a one-to-one matching of treatment and comparison students on a comprehensive set of demographic and pre-intervention achievement variables in order to accurately assess the impact of the intervention and associate causal relationships. Building evidence of promise through the impact study will contribute to the growing knowledge base about the type of magnet program interventions that are proven to have positive and educationally meaningful effects of student achievement outcomes. This knowledge base serves as an essential resource for districts across the country for designing instructional programs and interventions to address student learning and achievement needs. The

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inclusion of an impact study components requires the robust level of resources that have been allocated in the budget.

The evaluation design includes resources for a robust set of on-site data collection activities, including biannual visits to each proposed magnet school to collect formative and summative feedback from multiple stakeholder groups through focus groups, interviews, and classroom observations. Additionally, resources are allocated to administer annual surveys of magnet school staff and other key stakeholders to provide opportunities for all stakeholders to provide feedback, in an anonymous and sanction-free environment. Resources are also allocated for the proper processing and analysis of these qualitative data to ensure that all human subjects rights are adhered to and respected.

Finally, included in the evaluation budget are costs associated with implementing a comprehensive set of qualitative and quantitative data analyses and reporting activities. For example, the evaluation requires a detailed analysis plan to assess outcomes of students in each school and by subgroup (racial and ethnic groups, low-income students, ELLs, and students with disabilities) to evaluate progress of the grant in meeting the ambitious goal to improve student achievement. The evaluation budget includes funds for the adequate reporting of data, both formative and summative, to ensure that project staff can effectively integrate findings, in real time, into the continuous improvement process. The reporting structure includes annual summative reports as well as interim reports from the biannual site visits and monthly formative feedback mechanisms, such as teleconferences and email communications.

All possible efforts have been made to minimize evaluation costs and we believe that the costs are reasonable in terms of the benefits and potential significance of the proposed project.

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The evaluation also has been designed with attention to cost efficiencies, e.g., avoiding redundant data collections and relying on administrative data files to the extent possible, using multiple methods of data collection and triangulating findings, implementing minimally intrusive data collections, and using a variety of means of communication (e.g., video-conferencing where appropriate) to minimize costs associated with travel to the district on the part of the Philadelphia-based evaluation team.

Finally, the evaluation budget includes limited funding for Unit 4's Research Department to defray the costs of the incremental work associated with the summative reporting activities of the grant. These activities will leverage the services and institutional knowledge of the internal research staff to support analysis of student-level data to assess progress toward meeting the performance measures outlined in the evaluation plan.

Altogether, the evaluation costs represent approximately 3.5% of the total grant request, a small investment in light of the expected return in knowledge gains regarding effectiveness of the proposed MSAP program model.

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**Unit 4 MSAP Program Evaluation Measurement Framework**

<b>Outputs/Outcomes (as per logic model)</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Measures of Change</b>	<b>Data Collection Methods</b>	<b>Data Sources</b>	<b>Frequency of Data Collection</b>
<b>Program Outputs</b>					
Thematic units of study for all grade levels (Performance Measure 3.1)	Implementation of thematic curriculum units	Proportion of students exposed to thematic curriculum units	Review of program documentation and curriculum, teacher focus group, principal interviews, class observations	Curriculum development and implementation logs and copies of thematic curriculum units, observation and interview protocols	Biannually
Professional development (Performance Measure 4.1)	Staff participation in magnet-related professional development	Proportion of teachers and school leaders enrolled in grant-related training and PD	Review of program documentation and PD participation data	PD plan, PD activity logs, and PD agendas and sign-in sheets	Biannually
<b>MSAP Outcomes (Short-Term)</b>					
Reduced minority group isolation in magnet schools (Performance Measure 1.1)	Proportion of students in each racial/ethnic group within each school population	Reduction in the proportion of African American students in each school population	Analysis of the proportion of students by racial/ethnic group enrolled by school	Unit 4 Official Student rosters as of October 1	Annually
Increased interest and demand for magnet programs (Performance Measures 1.2 and 1.3)	Number of magnet applications submitted for each program	Increase in number of applications submitted for each school	Analysis of number of applications	Unit 4 choice progress and magnet application data files as of October 1	Annually

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<b>Outputs/Outcomes (as per logic model)</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Measures of Change</b>	<b>Data Collection Methods</b>	<b>Data Sources</b>	<b>Frequency of Data Collection</b>
Improved student achievement (Performance Measures 2.1 and 2.2)	Student proficiency on state assessments in ELA and math	Increase in the proportion of students who meet or exceed expectations on state assessments	Analysis of student scores on state assessments	PARCC assessments in ELA and math (grades 3-8)	Annually
Increased student mastery of unique magnet value-added skills (Performance Measure 3.2)	Demonstration of magnet value-added skills	Increase in proportion of students who demonstrate mastery of magnet value added skills	Analysis of data collected on locally-developed student checklists	Teacher-completed student checklists	Annually
Increased staff implementation of innovative teaching strategies (Performance Measure 4.2)	Use of knowledge and skills related to magnet themes and PD	Increase in proportion of staff who report using strategies and concepts related to magnet themes and PD	Analysis of staff checklists and surveys, teacher focus groups, principal interviews, class observations	Staff checklists and surveys, observation and interview protocols	Annual checklist and survey, biannual site visits
Increased parent satisfaction with theme-based instructional programs in magnet schools (Performance Measure 4.3)	High level of parent satisfaction with magnet program instruction	Percentage of parents/guardians who express a high level of satisfaction with theme-based instructional programs	Analysis of parent surveys and parent focus group responses	Parent surveys and focus groups	Annually