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## A. Need for Project

(1) *The magnitude of the need for services to be provided or the activities to be carried out by the proposed project. ‘Aha Lamakū ‘Oia‘i‘o (ALO): A culturally-responsive leadership development, mentoring, and transition support system for at-risk Native Hawaiian youth* is a large-scale comprehensive effort led by a longstanding partnership between the (1) University of Hawai‘i’s Curriculum Research & Development Group, Pacific Literacy Consortium (CRDG PLC) in the College of Education and the (2) Hawai‘i Department of Education (HIDOE). This cross-agency partnership continues to demonstrate an exemplary collaboration between an institute of higher education and state department of education, collectively addressing educational concerns.

The ALO project is an innovative educational approach that meets critical needs in four schools serving secondary-level students residing in Hawai‘i Island’s Ka‘ū-Kea‘au-Pāhoa Complex Area (KKP). Project sites include all three of KKP’s three receiver high schools (Ka‘ū High [multi-level], Kea‘au High, Pāhoa High [multi-level]) and one of the feeder middle schools (Kea‘au Middle) in the catchment area. The project has the strong support of HIDOE Superintendent [REDACTED] including confirmed commitment of the KKP Complex [REDACTED] and the four principals of the proposed model demonstration schools (see Attachment 6, Letters of Support). ALO addresses Absolute Priority 1 (needs of at-risk youth; needs in fields or disciplines in which Native Hawaiians are underemployed) and Competitive Preference Priorities (1) Promoting Science, Technology, Engineering, or Math and (2) Fostering Flexible and Affordable Paths to Obtaining Knowledge and Skills. ALO seeks to support at-risk Native Hawaiian secondary students by providing them with services aligned with a comprehensive mentoring- and academic-support model. ALOs activities are organized under

five actionable goals and corresponding objectives (see Table 2) designed to ensure timely completion of courses, promotion to next grade levels, graduation from high school, and successful transition into post-high school college or employment training. ALO targets a population that is notably more disadvantaged than the state on average and within the nation.

Across three years, this project will serve KKP on the Island of Hawai‘i, the largest of the eight main Hawaiian Islands. Hawai‘i Island comprises three complex-areas of which KKP covers the widest geographic region (65 miles) and consists of some of the most remote rural areas of any of the 15 complex areas across the state (Hawai‘i Department of Education, 2013). KKP comprises 5,542 students (pre-K to Grade 12) served across nine schools (i.e., the schools listed in the Table 1 plus five elementary schools). The target area to be served by the project has a population that has experienced low academic achievement, higher unemployment rates compared to the state average, linguistic and cultural differences, and geographic isolation. Compared to the state average, KKP ranks higher in the percentage of students who are Native Hawaiian (43% [state 24%]), economically disadvantaged (68% [state 46%]), and special education eligible (14% [state 11%]) (Hawai‘i Department of Education, 2020). Across the same enrollment variables (i.e., Native Hawaiian, economically disadvantaged, special education), KKP student averages also ranked above those of the other two Hawai‘i Island complex areas. On average, the three KKP high schools ranked lower than the state on Grade 9 promotion and daily attendance (Hawai‘i Department of Education, 2019). Research shows that Grade 9 retention and absenteeism are among student-level predictors that have the strongest links to diminished academic outcomes and high school dropout (Birioukov, 2016; Renda & Villares, 2015).

Based on Hawai'i's 2019 Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBA), the high-stakes test administered statewide to students in Grades 3–8 and 11, large percentages of KKP secondary students are not on-track for readiness in college and career. The percentage of KKP students who met the English language arts (ELA) proficiency standard was lower than the state average in both Grade 8 (32% [state 51%]) and Grade 11 (42% [state 59%]). Likewise, the percentage of KKP students who met the SBA mathematics proficiency standard was lower than the state average in both Grade 8 (18% [state 38%]) and Grade 11 (25% [state 30%]). (Hawai'i Department of Education, 2020). KKP student achievement data also indicate a significant achievement gap between Native Hawaiian (NH) students and their more advantaged peers. For example, compared to their white peers, there were significantly lower percentages of KKP Native Hawaiian students who met the SBA ELA proficiency standard (26% NH; 49% White). The SBA mathematics results displayed a similar disparity between the percentage of NH and White students meeting proficiency (17% NH; 37% White) (Hawai'i Department of Education, 2020). Table 1 summarizes key data comparisons between the state and KKP secondary schools in terms of percentages of students on the following measures: Native Hawaiian (NH); economically disadvantaged (ED); met 2019 SBA English language arts proficiency standard; met 2019 SBA math proficiency standard.

Table 1. 'Aha Lamakū 'Oia 'i'o (ALO) Project Site Demographic and Key Data Comparisons

State and ALO Sites	NH (%)	ED (%)	ELA Proficient (%)		Math Proficient (%)	
			Gr. 8	Gr. 11	Gr. 8	Gr. 11
State	24	46	51	59	38	30
Ka'ū High & Pahala Elem.	43	68	16	38	4	6
Kea'au High	45	57	NA	39	NA	26
Pāhoa High & Inter.	51	69	31	54	26	30
Kea'au Middle	39	62	38	NA	18	NA

Source: (Hawai'i Department of Education, 2020)

In response to the magnitude of KKP's needs, the ALO project will serve 1,160 students and 800 teachers across three years. In collaboration with the four project sites, ALO personnel will select and serve 360 at-risk Native Hawaiian Grade 8–12 students enrolled in Ka'ū-Kea'au-Pāhoa Complex Area's only three high schools (Ka'ū High, Kea'au High, Pāhoa High) and one of its feeder middle schools (Kea'au Middle). The project will also target an additional 800 students through outreach and dissemination activities focused on work-based learning experiences and in-demand industry sectors. ALO will provide all four project sites with intensive transition services designed to enhance students' academic and social-emotional skills as well as counteract the debilitating effects of poverty, low academic achievement, absence of adult role models, and inaccessibility to an integrated, culture-based, mentoring- and academic-support model. Attachment 2 (logic model) details ALO services strategically aligned with five project goals and corresponding objectives.

(2) *Specific gaps or weaknesses in services identified and will be addressed.*

**Enhance and refine previous model.** The current proposal, ALO, will serve youth who are

predominantly Native Hawaiian and from low-income communities. The selected project sites have sufficiently large numbers of students with characteristics compatible with the purpose of the statute that authorizes this program. ALO meets a critical need for providing at-risk Hawaiian and diverse students with integrated transition supports informed by research and employed through actionable strategies describe in Section C (Quality of Project Services). Targeted communities demonstrate a need for ALO services and are highly desirous to participate in the project as indicated in the letters of support (see Attachment 6). [REDACTED] HIDOE KKP's Evidence Based Practices Educational Specialist, notes that if this proposal is funded, it will be the only initiative to provide the intended transition services essential to the education and future employment of this underserved population. Given the aforementioned demographic and outcome profile data, the target population is experiencing conditions that profoundly deter their educational, economic, and social progress. ALO goals, objectives, and activities will address these critical barriers in order to positively impact the life trajectories of disadvantaged students from the targeted community.

ALO expands on the positive results of previous CRDG PLC secondary student transition projects (*Pihana Nā Mamo*, *Kāko 'o* [2000–2005]; *Kāko 'o Piha* [2005–2008] and *Kāko 'i Ikaika* [2009–2012]) including the continuing emphasis on transition planning to ensure that at-risk Native Hawaiian and diverse students graduate and transition into post-secondary programs. For example, in school years 2002–2007, 93% (382 of 410) of the at-risk Hawaiian students served by CRDG PLC *Kāko 'o* projects graduated, compared to an HIDOE overall graduation rate of 79% and a 69% statewide Native Hawaiian student graduation rate. Eighty-four percent (557 of 661) of the students in Grades 7–11 were promoted to the next grade (*Pihana* database, 2009). Despite the positive results of these previous CRDG PLC *Kāko 'o* projects, they have focused

primarily on developmental domains (e.g., academics and socioemotional well-being) to the exclusion of a model that integrates mentoring support, leadership development, and a culturally-responsive lens. Incorporating these essential components in our work with Native Hawaiian youth and diverse learners will lead to improved and sustainable outcomes.

Given CRDG PLC's infrastructure, experience, and strategic partnerships, we are confident that we will be able to achieve similar or improved outcomes. However, unlike previous CRDG PLC *Kāko 'o* projects that have served multiple communities, the ALO project proposes to target students, teachers, and all the high schools within Hawai' Island's largest school complex area that covers the largest geographic region of any complex area in the state. Across three years, ALO's coordinated services will directly benefit approximately 1,160 at-risk secondary students (see Table 3), 180 of whom we will track longitudinally on program measures across multiple years, and 180 of whom will be a part of an annual cross-section of at-risk Grade 8 students who will participate in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) learning academies convened after school and during intercessions. The project will reach an additional 800 students as a result of its large-scale community forums designed to raise student awareness of available work-based learning experiences that align with in-demand industry career sectors. Although more concentrated in scope than previous CRDG PLC projects, we have purposely redesigned our theory of action based on our successes, lessons learned, research, and evaluation recommendations to employ a multi-pronged strategy intended to yield more sustainable impact informing individual-, school-, state-, and national-level transition efforts.

ALO processes will also ensure that throughout the life of the project, evaluation findings will provide proof of concept for replicating and scaling this model. While the previous CRDG PLC *Kāko 'o* projects enjoyed great success, their potential to be replicated elsewhere had

limitations because those projects were not designed with the intent to generate ongoing state- and national-level efforts within the life-cycle of the grant. In addition to the day-to-day on-the-ground work at the school-, complex-, and overall program-level, ALO will employ tactics and mechanisms designed to stimulate dialogue with local and national networks of learning communities comprising practitioners, researchers, and policymakers. These networks will help to enhance transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to project beneficiaries (students, families, and teachers), thus achieving better and more sustainable development results on the ground (Madon, 2014). Furthermore, the project will not only monitor individual student outcomes as a significant measure of success, it will also systematically monitor and evaluate school variables in order to identify and address needed changes in schools' infrastructures, resource allocations, and instructional practices.

## **B. Quality of Project Design**

(1) *The project is appropriate to meet needs of the target population.* ALO is designed to support at-risk Native Hawaiian secondary students through a comprehensive mentoring- and academic-support model designed to ensure timely completion of courses, promotion to next grade levels, graduation from high school, and successful transition into post-high school college or employment training. Attachment 2 (management plan) delineates a comprehensive list of the project's five strategic goals and their respective objectives and activities across a three-year timeline. The project design incorporates research-based best practices (e.g., provide adult advocates to students at risk, provide academic support and enrichment, provide personalized learning environments), including recommendations offered in a recently published Institute of Education Sciences (IES) practice guide addressing secondary student drop-out prevention (Dynarski et al., 2008; R. Rumberger et al., 2017). ALO project activities (e.g., develop and

maintain student portfolios to monitor career and vocational plans; convene STEM academies during intercessions; engage students in community service projects; provide families with formal and informal learning and network opportunities that address a series of topics relevant to advocating for and supporting their youth; develop and maintain a database system on student progress that will monitor students longitudinally and inform program and sites on needed supports [see Attachment 2 for detailed list of activities]) collectively address individual- and system- level measures. Table 2 summarizes ALO’s goals and objectives, including (1) the alignment between ALO goals and IES recommendations (R. Rumberger et al., 2017) and the (2) specific federal priorities addressed by one or more corresponding project activities.

Table 2. *‘Aha Lamakū ‘Oia ‘i ‘o (ALO) Goals, Objectives, Targeted Federal Priorities, and IES Recommendation Alignment*

<p><b>ALO Goal 1. Provide systematic transition supports.</b> (Aligns with IES Recommendation 1: Monitor student progress )</p>
<p><i>Objective 1.1.</i> Annually, monitor and support students participating in the project at all project sites. (Activities under this objective address the following federal priorities: AP-B; CPP-1 and 2)</p>
<p><b>ALO Goal 2. Provide academic and social-emotional supports.</b> (Aligns with IES Recommendation 2: Provide intensive, individualize support)</p>
<p><i>Objective 2.1.</i> Collaborate with project sites to develop student support plans that ensure students receive necessary academic and socio-emotional interventions. (Activities under this objective address the following federal priorities: AP-B; CPP-1)</p>

*Objective 2.2.* Provide project staff training and technical assistance to meet students' academic and social-emotional needs effectively. (Activities under this objective address the following federal priorities: AP-B and CPP-1)

**ALO Goal 3. Provide culturally-responsive leadership development and mentorship services informed by evidence-based practices.** (Aligns with IES Recommendation 3: Offer curricula/programs that connect schoolwork with college and career success)

*Objective 3.1.* Conduct leadership development and mentor-mentee learning opportunities for students, including project/school staff and volunteers serving project student beneficiaries. (Activities under this objective address the following federal priorities: AP-B and C; and CPP-2)

*Objective 3.2.* Provide project/school staff and student beneficiaries with cultural training and place-based learning experiences that address Hawaiian history and Hawaiian language and integrates HIDOE's Nā Hopena A'o (HĀ) framework and the HĀ Community Day process. (Activities under this objective address the following federal priorities: AP-B, C and D; CPP-1)

**ALO Goal 4. Develop tools and enabling processes designed to increase family and community engagement toward supporting student transition and promoting successful project elements.** (Aligns with IES Recommendation 4: Create small, personalized communities)

*Objective 4.1.* Adapt and enhance proven transition planning, academic, and social-emotional programs and products to meet the needs of Hawaiian at-risk students and their families. (Activities under this objective address the following federal priorities: AP-B and C; CPP-2)

**ALO Goal 5. Design and conduct a rigorous evaluation to determine the project's efficiency, effectiveness, and impact throughout its life cycle.**

Objective 5.1. Develop and maintain a system of accountability that informs project leads and stakeholders on progress toward project goals and objectives. (Activities under this objective address the following federal priorities: AP-B)

Key: Federal Priorities: AP = Absolute Priority A) beginning reading, B) at-risk youth, C) fields/disciplines in which Native Hawaiians are underemployed, D) use of Hawaiian Language; CPP = Competitive Preference Priority 1) promoting STEM, 2) fostering paths to obtaining knowledge and skills; IES Recommendations: 1 = monitor progress, 2 = individualized supports, 3 = connect schoolwork with college and career, 4 = create small communities

The project will use a longitudinal approach to examine the processes and outcomes of an intensive, comprehensive student-support model directly supporting 360 at-risk secondary Hawaiian students (180 of whom will be part of a longitudinal cohort receiving 1–3 years of project interventions; 180 of whom will be a part of an annual cross-section of at-risk Grade 8 students selected to receive intermittent targeted supports) and an additional 800 of whom will be a cross-section of students reached through project coordinated large-scale forums (e.g., career fairs and enrichment events). Table 3 shows the estimated number of students served annually across the four sites.

Table 3. 'Aha Lamakū 'Oia 'i'o (ALO) Student Service Model

Student Service Model		N Size Across Years	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Longitudinal		Cohort 1 Y1–Y3 (n = 30)	Gr 9	Gr. 10	Gr. 11
		Cohort 2 Y1–Y3 (n = 30)	Gr. 10	Gr. 11	Gr. 12
		Cohort 3 Y–3 (n = 30)	Gr. 11	Gr. 12	First year post high
		Cohort 4 Y1–Y2 (n = 30)	Gr. 12	First year post high	
		Cohort 5 Y2–Y3 (n = 30)		Gr. 9	Gr. 10
		Cohort 6 Y3 (n = 30)			Gr. 9
Cross-sectional	STEM Learning Academies	Y1–Y3 (n = 180 [60/year])	Gr. 8 (60 students/year)		
	Student-Family Community Forums	Y1–Y3 (n = 800 [Y1 = 200; Y2 = 250; Y3 = 350] )	Grades 8–12		

In Project Year-1, project leads will collaborate with appropriate school personnel at the three KKP high schools to identify and select four cohorts, Grades 9–12, comprising a total 120 students (i.e., 30 students/grade level [Grades 9–12]; 10 students/school [Ka‘ū High, Kea‘au High, and Pāhoa High]). The project will identify and select students who demonstrate a high degree of need for project services. The Grades 9–11 cohorts (Cohorts 1–3) selected in Year-1 will receive three consecutive years of project support. Respectively, across three years, the Grade 9 cohort will receive supports until Grade 11; the Grade 10 cohort will receive supports until Grade 12; the Grade 11 and 12 cohort will receive follow up support until their first year in

a post-high school setting. In Year-2, the project will select another Grade 9 cohort of 30 students, who will receive project supports for two years. In Year-3, the project will select a final Grade 9 cohort of 30 students, who will receive one year of supports. The Year-2 and Year-3 Grade 9 cohorts add 60 more students to the original 120 students. Across three years, ALO will provide these six cohorts with student-centered transition services comprising academic, social-emotional, culturally-responsive supports organized under the five project goals. Activities will be delivered through an array of venues, including one-to-one and small group classroom settings, field trips (huaka'i), community service, retreats, college tours, and employment training. In addition to these school-based services, the project will collaborate with public and private partners to host large-scale community forums designed to raise student awareness of available work-based learning experiences that align with in-demand industry career sectors and other post-secondary options. The ALO advisory council will play an active role in these forums. Whereas these community events specifically target project-site students, it extends the invitation to 800 more students who exhibit similar risk characteristics.

In addition to the selected high school cohort groups, ALO will provide project-site Grade-8 students with one-week of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) learning academies during spring and summer intercessions. The project estimates serving 180 eighth-graders across three years. The project has received a tentative commitment from HI FusionED to facilitate the work with Grade 8 project site students. During spring and summer intercessions, HI FusionED will deliver one-week culturally responsive project-based enrichment activities designed to improve their achievement on STEM and motivate them to consider in-demand STEM-related industry sectors.

ALO will deliver job-embedded coaching to the project's school-based transition advisors.

The HDOE ALO project director and resource teacher will convene quarterly technical assistance and professional development meetings with the transition advisors. The topics covered at these meetings will address strategies and approaches (e.g., social-emotional learning, restorative discipline, project-based learning, mentoring, culture-based education, transition planning) specific to working with targeted students. Additionally, ALO will employ a system-level professional development approach by featuring leading local and national level transition experts at the KKP Complex Area Annual Summit. The annual summit hosts 800 KKP Complex Area teachers who attend plenary and small group sessions designed to enhance and transform instructional practices specific to the needs of KKP students. The summit will also serve as a venue for the ALO project team to report lessons learned and guide the conversation around student transition.

(2) *Project rationale and theory of action.* The project's logic model or theory of action (see Attachment 1, logic model) stems from substantial research that informs ALO's five goals and interconnected objectives, outlined in Table 2. These goals align with five primary practice categories predictive of high-school success (Kohler, Gothberg, Fowler, & Coyle, 2016). ALO's conceptual model (see Figure 1) illustrates a student centered-culturally-responsive transition model comprising cognitive and socio-emotional components (academic supports, mentoring supports, leadership development supports) and systemic processes (coaching, professional development, formative assessment, outreach, and evaluation) that ensure an ongoing cycle of improvement and engagement. The model depicts the intended relationships among the interdependent cross-cutting program elements that are theoretically and logically linked in form while functionally flexible for non-linear and recursive actions. Described further in Section C (Quality of Project Services), the ALO project is grounded in research, and complements the

HIDOE’s Strategic Plan goals (student success, staff success, and successful systems of support) and Promise Plan themes (1. Hawai‘i [including Nā Hopena A‘o framework]; 2. Equity; 3. School Design; 4. Empowerment; and 5. Innovation). ALO’s project components combine training, translating research into practice, need-based improvement planning, and continuous support from researchers, cultural practitioners, elders, content experts, and community stakeholders. Achievement of the desired outcomes for the targeted population is influenced by operationalizing all components depicted in Figure 1. ALO’s logic model (see Attachment 1) maps the sequence of the project components to the project’s overall intended impact.

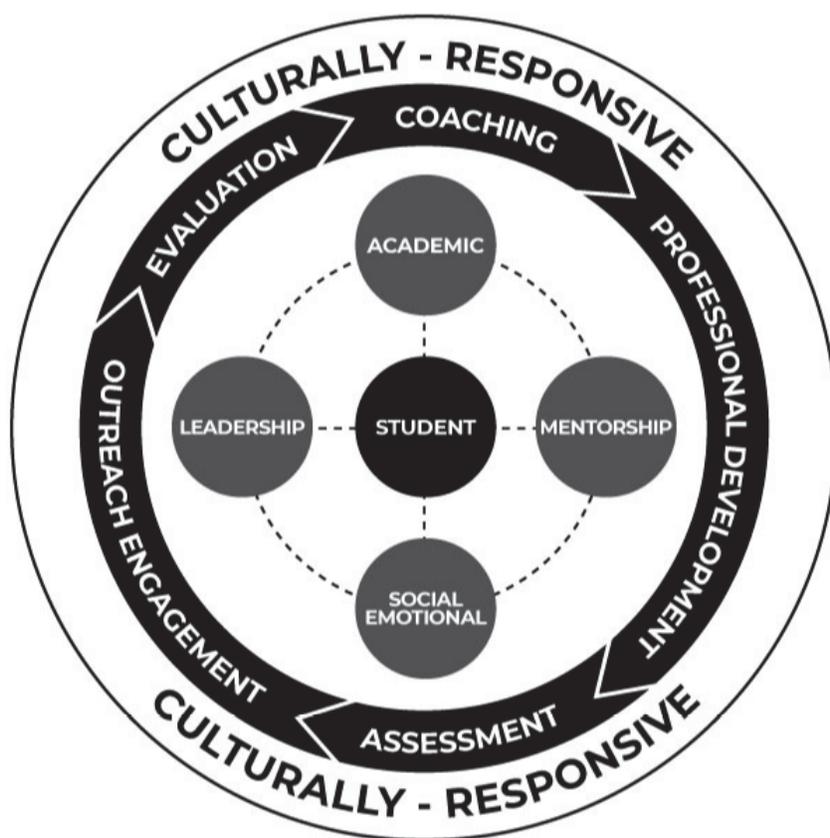


Figure 1, *'Aha Lamakū 'Oia 'i'o (ALO)* conceptual model for building a culturally-responsive, multi-tiered beginning reading support system for schools and communities with diverse learners.

### C. Quality of Project Services

(1) *Services reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.* ALO promotes Native Hawaiian success by operating within a research-based and theoretical-framework that employs services strategically organized under five goals aligned with five primary practice categories predictive of high-school success: (1. Focused Planning; 2. Student Development; 3. Interagency Collaboration; 4. Family Engagement; and 5. Program Structure), all of which are identified in the research literature as critical components for implementing transition-focused education (Kohler et al., 2016). Project services resonate with the 2017 Institute of Education Sciences (IES) practice guide (R. Rumberger et al., 2017), which provides the following evidence-based recommendations for addressing the challenges of preventing dropout in secondary schools: (1) Monitor the progress of all students; (2) Provide intensive, individualized supports to students who have fallen off track; (3) Engage students by offering curricula and programs that connect schoolwork with college and career success; and (4) Create small, personalized communities to facilitate monitoring and support.

Additionally, ALO integrates transition supports that are culturally-responsive, transition-focused (Kohler et al., 2016), and takes into account micro-level student experiences as well as macro-level educational inequalities (Benner, 2011). Hence, ALO's theoretical framework embodies the concept of *ma ka hana ka 'ike* (knowledge is gained by doing) and integrates proven normative transition strategies (e.g., use data systems to identify students at risk; provide adult advocates, provide academic support and enrichment; improve classroom behavior and social skills; provide personalized learning environments; engage students with rigorous and relevant instruction) (Freeman, 2015) with those that bring greater focus on "social contexts and processes and how individual differences are aggregated into population disparities" (Benner,

2011, p. 301). This is consistent with a growing body of educational research suggesting that problems with achievement among indigenous populations are more complicated than simply knowing or not knowing core disciplinary content. Researchers argue that educators need to understand the complexities that culturally diverse ways of knowing create for teaching and learning environments, especially if we are to improve school achievement for those groups of students who have historically been placed at risk (Bang, Douglas, Washinawatok, & Chapman, 2010). According to Ogata, Sheehey, and Noonan (2006), Native Hawaiians are overrepresented in special education as a result of a mis-alignment between western pedagogy and the cultural methods of Native Hawaiian families and communities .

This proposal is informed by the success of previous CRDG PLC Native Hawaiian Education Program funded projects, one of which is in its third and final year of implementation. It is also guided by research demonstrating the effectiveness of transition-focused education elements (e.g., academic and social-emotional skill development, student-focused planning, interagency collaboration, family engagement). ALO will provide each project student with comprehensive academic and social-emotional services delivered through an array of venues, including one-to-one and small group classroom settings, field trips (*huaka'i*), community service, retreats, college tours, and employment training.

At each site, the ALO HODOE staff will selectively assign a trained transition advisor who will liaise between students, schools, families, community partners, and the project. As the site-based mentor, the transition advisors will coordinate overall student support and advocacy tasks, including completion of career planning, monitoring course registration and grades, and arranging for necessary academic and social-emotional interventions. The project will use a group mentoring structure as its collective orientation has been deemed congruent with and

sensitive to the culture of minority youth (Karcher, Gabriel, Portwood, Sipe, & Taylor, 2006). These groups will serve as a small, personalized community to facilitate monitoring and support. Within and across teams, transition advisors will provide student leadership development experiences through innovative delivery mechanisms and hands-on learning opportunities, including work-based experiences that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations. They will also explore field-based mentoring opportunities for interested students seeking one-to-one guidance and leadership development through internships or apprenticeships. Oparinde, Agbede, and Bariki (2017) argue that student leadership development positively impacts academic and societal measures. Mentoring is a vital part of youth leadership development. Research demonstrates that pairing youth with caring nonparent adults is associated with a range of positive youth outcomes, including fostering persistence and success among underrepresented students (Hagler, 2018).

(2) *Likely impact of the services on intended recipients.* Based on our successes, lessons learned, and evaluation findings related to our previous CRDG PLC projects, this proposed project is designed to utilize and extend upon approaches with strong evidence of effectiveness. ALO's design builds on the previous projects' accomplishments while also including processes that result in more extensive capacity building and sustainability. The activities include effective dropout-prevention strategies such as targeted academic and social-emotional supports and mentoring and cultural activities to increase student motivation and engagement in school.

**Educational benefits to be realized by project recipients,** include but are not limited to the following: improved academic performance; improved attendance; improved attitudes toward school; increase in parent engagement; enhanced social-emotional development; increase in graduation rates; increase in enrollment/participation in postsecondary

education/training/options; increase in employment placement (including in fields or disciplines in which Native Hawaiians are underemployed); increase in the contribution to research and evaluation literature informing the field on integrated culturally-responsive transition support models; and stronger capacity at the school-, district-, and state-level to meet transition needs of secondary Native Hawaiian students. On an individual level, the intended impact is students demonstrating improvement on baseline risk indicators and on a trajectory associated with future academic and post-school success. On the system level, the intended impact is improved enabling processes, practice, and policy ensuring successful transition for at-risk youth.

As specified in previous sections, ALO services will directly benefit approximately 1,160 at-risk students, 180 of whom will be tracked longitudinally, and 180 of whom will be a part of an annual cross-section of at-risk Grade 8 students. In addition to the school-based services, the project will collaborate with public and private partners to host large-scale community forums designed to raise student awareness of available work-based learning experiences that align with in-demand industry career sectors. These community events will target project students, including potentially reaching 800 more students who face similar challenging conditions hindering their educational and career prospects. Through professional development offerings, including KKP's annual education summit, informed by ALO evaluation and stakeholder feedback, the project will annually benefit approximately 800 KKP teachers. ALO professional development offerings will leverage existing scheduled forums as well as coordinate new opportunities for teachers to engage with local and national content experts whose work sheds light on the most recent and best available research and evidence-based practices supporting diverse learners.

***Demonstration sites.*** Project schools will serve as demonstration sites or beacon schools, working toward high-fidelity implementation. As a sub-set of a larger geographical cluster or school complexes, ALO site data will be collected and monitored as a means to distill the factors that have hindered and promoted model implementation. ALO demonstration sites will represent an exemplary and validated approach to increasing at-risk Native Hawaiian students' chances of graduating high school and entering postsecondary education or employment, which directly addresses each of the HODOE's primary goals (i.e., Student Success, Staff Success, and Successful Systems of Support) outlined in the Hawai'i Department of Education & Board of Education Strategic Plan 2017–2020 (2017), including critical HODOE statewide Equity and Excellence indicators 1) chronic absenteeism; 5) ninth-grade on-track; 6) academic achievement; 7) achievement gap; 8) high school graduation; 9) college-going graduates; 10) family engagement.

***Work guided by research and local/national expertise.*** As a means to inform and accelerate its extramurally funded initiatives, CRDG PLC has teamed with national-level researchers and program providers affiliated with notable institutions and organizations (e.g., Massachusetts General Hospital Institute of Health Professions, Acadience Learning, University of Oregon's Center on Teaching & Learning). Their successful efforts locally and abroad have had strong implications on the educational trajectories of culturally and linguistically diverse students, historically underserved and disproportionately overrepresented in special education. These and other local and national level experts, who have been instrumental in developing scalable intervention models in underserved communities in Hawai'i and on the continental U.S., will collaborate with project staff, local consultant-trainers, and content experts to share lessons

learned, build the knowledge base and capacity of project-site teachers, and help guide the project team's strategy to scale the ALO project.

#### **D. Quality of Project Personnel**

The ALO project team is part of a longstanding joint-partnership between the CRDG PLC and HIDOE. Since 2002, this cross-sector collaboration between an institute of higher education and the state department of education has been exemplary in coordinating resources and services to address educational issues. The individual and concerted work of the key project team demonstrates strong leadership in promoting the federal priorities of this grant program as well as the proposed goals of this application. The team members comprise members who are part of an underrepresented minority group or reflect the ethnic and social composition of the target communities. Furthermore, each member is well qualified and sensitive to the needs of educationally disadvantaged students.

**Principal Investigator,** [REDACTED] will directly manage and supervise the grant. [REDACTED] has eighteen years of experience working with HIDOE on grants focused on the education of Hawaiian students. As a PI and Project Director, [REDACTED] has successfully led and managed 12 large-scale multi-year federal- and private-funded projects that have received combined funding of over \$47 million. Throughout his 27 years of experience in the field of education, [REDACTED] has demonstrated exemplary management and leadership skills as a principal investigator (PI) for multiple federal and private grants, principal and vice-principal at local public schools, project director within the UH College of Education, and Director of Early Learning Programs for the UH System Office. His role in mobilizing local and national teams has linked him to an extensive and diverse network of professionals. [REDACTED] received his PhD in Educational Administration, and his research and evaluation work has focused on achievement gaps,

assessment, and literacy. In addition to a state certification in public school administration, [REDACTED] also has numerous certifications in other areas, including Strategic Decision and Risk Management from Stanford University. For his research on achievement gaps specific to Pacific Islanders, [REDACTED] received the Hawai'i Educational Research Association (HERA) Distinguished paper award for both the 2018 and 2019 HERA competitions. [REDACTED] has authored numerous research papers that have been accepted for presentation at American Educational Research Association (AERA) conferences. In 2008 and 2009, [REDACTED] won first place in AERA's Outstanding Publication Award Competition for School Evaluation and Program Development. At the request of the Hawai'i Data eXchange Partnership (DXP), which collectively governs Hawai'i's Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), [REDACTED] is currently conducting a longitudinal study to inform practitioners, policymakers, and program providers on the utility of early-grade interim assessments in predicting high school literacy outcomes. In 2009, [REDACTED] was among 27 honorees selected to participate in the University of Hawai'i System, President's Emerging Leaders Program. [REDACTED] serves as the producer and host of the syndicated podcast show, Pacific Education Pulse (PEP Talk), administered within the College of Education, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. As a means to build partnerships and disseminate project updates and findings to the field, he manages and publishes relevant content to CRDG PLC's websites (Pacific Literacy Consortium [<https://plc.crdg.hawaii.edu/>] and Pacific Education Pulse [<https://pacifieducationpulse.com/>]) and social networking services.

[REDACTED] will work closely with [REDACTED] (**HIDOE, KKP Complex Area Administrator**) who will serve as the HIDOE ALO project director. [REDACTED] has 20 years of experience in the field of education, where she served as an HIDOE vice-principal, complex-level educational specialist, teacher, and curriculum coordinator. Both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are

members of an underrepresented ethnic minority. The CRDG PLC Cross-Agency Coordinator [new hire] will have major responsibility for data management, consultants, and evaluation.

Non-regular project personnel include [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] is a faculty member with [REDACTED]. He will serve on the project as a content knowledge expert who will work directly with students, teachers, and project staff to promote integrating Hawaiian language and culture in project activities. [REDACTED] will serve as the project's cultural specialist with responsibilities for facilitating training and developing culture-based project material and learning experiences. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] are members of an underrepresented ethnic minority.

A major reason project costs are reasonable is the relatively low 11.9% indirect cost rate for the large HIDOE subcontract. CRDG PLC will use the 26% indirect cost rate per UH's approved indirect cost rate agreement. The university only charges indirect costs to \$25,000 of the total HIDOE subcontract. All costs, projected and actual, are monitored and managed in accordance with UH's fiscal and administrative procedures.

#### **E. Quality of Management Plan**

(1) *Adequacy of the management plan.* CRDG PLC has over 18 years of successfully managing and implementing Native Hawaiian Education Program funded projects of similar scale, and it operates within the Curriculum Research & Development Group, an organized research unit in the College of Education at the UH that has over 53 years of experience in developing, implementing, and scaling up professional development programs to improve student academic outcomes. CRDG PLC's success has been a byproduct of its systems, processes, and local and national partnerships. The ALO project will operate within the overarching procedural framework of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and the Hawai'i

Department of Education, both of which have extensive backgrounds in the successful implementation of Native Hawaiian Education funded programs. Attachment 2 delineates all project goals, objectives, timelines, milestones, and persons responsible within each quarter of each project year. The management plan provides a blueprint for achieving goals and objectives in a timely manner. CRDG PLC will have primary responsibility for the overall project management, including data monitoring, technical assistance, contract execution, mobilizing partnerships, and project evaluation. HIDOE will be responsible for the majority of school-based activities, including job-embedded coaching, student monitoring, and facilitating data collection. The cross-agency leads will regularly convene with appropriate staff and stakeholders to identify and mitigate risks.

Project leads have identified and selected schools in need of project services and comprised of principals and staff who understand and value project ALO's theory of action (see Attachment 1). Through our previous work in the KKP complex, staff members are familiar with the elements of the interventions that are necessary for project success. As such, the sites are knowledgeable and supportive of the ALO model and its intent to enhance and scale its interventions. Key outcomes of the project will be regularly tracked, monitored, and disseminated to sustain the momentum generated during project implementation and to provide the necessary evidence and justification for the continued support of the project's goals. In terms of administrative costs each fiscal year, the project will not expend more than five percent of its funds for administrative purposes (see CRDG Budget Narrative [Administrative Cost Table]).

The responsibility for overall project direction, oversight, management, and accountability resides with the principal investigator, [REDACTED] who will assume major responsibilities for the project, including managing staff, facilitating cross-agency meetings, monitoring the

budget, and reporting on project accomplishments. The Cross-Agency Coordinator [new hire], will assume major responsibilities for joint activities, including coordinating meetings, data sharing, and liaising between CRDG PLC and HIDOE.

██████████ (HIDOE, KKP Complex Area Administrator) will serve as the project co-director, providing overall leadership and guidance to the HIDOE implementation of the project. Her responsibilities will include the oversight of the day-to-day operations, maintaining communication with schools, and serving as the HIDOE-CRDG PLC liaison. ██████████ will be a resource to school principals and transition advisors in the execution of school-based services, including assisting with professional development activities and monitoring school-level project outputs and outcomes. She is currently serving in an administrative capacity at the KKP complex level, so she is familiar with the schools and has strong relationships with administrators, teachers, and community members. She received her B.A. from Brigham Young University and has 20 years of experience in the field of education leading programs focused on serving Native Hawaiian students and diverse learners.

(2) *Adequacy of mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services.*

**Feedback loop.** To ensure high-quality products and services, we will use the following feedback and quality assurance mechanisms to mitigate risks and ensure that the project is achieving its objectives on time and within budget: (a) advisory council meetings; (b) monthly staff meetings between key CRDG PLC and HIDOE staff members; (c) quarterly meetings of relevant staff with project consultants; (d) annual meeting of key project staff and site leaders; (e) ongoing school visits and classroom observations; and (f) regularly scheduled budget meetings held between principal investigator, fiscal office staff, and key project staff. These mechanisms are in place to effectively manage multiple sites across the larger system and ensure

constant communication across the various levels so that all team members, including consultants, are working toward the project's shared set of goals as part of a coordinated effort.

Another one of the project's quality assurance mechanisms is its evaluation plan, described further in Section F (Quality of Project Evaluation). Formative evaluation will inform the quality of program implementation in terms of measured outputs and outcomes. The project's evaluation plan includes collecting both quantitative and qualitative data in a mixed methods design, which will include descriptive and inferential statistical analyses, surveys, interviews, and focus groups. These data will be compiled and analyzed to monitor the project's progress, improve its ongoing effectiveness, and assess the project's overall success in achieving its stated goals, objectives, and outcomes. Internal and external evaluation findings will test ALO's theory of action and ensure continuous learning and improvement.

*Advisory council.* The ALO project advisory council will have a cross-agency composition of project leads and members from public, private, and non-profit sectors. The ten-member council will comprise groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. Council members will not only have a stake in the field of education, but they will also contribute to the project as a result of their experience in areas such as business, policy, data governance, information technology, research, and evaluation. During these twice-a-year meetings, council members will review the project's progress and offer their insights. Project staff will also organize formal and informal networking and touch point opportunities to engage project students and teachers with advisory council members and other individuals representing in-demand industry sectors or occupations. As of the writing of this application, the following local leaders have already committed to serving on the [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] ALO staff will seek to fill the remaining council seats with a diverse representation of individuals from various industry sectors.

*Internal support systems.* Internal policies of the Curriculum Research & Development Group (CRDG), an organized research unit in the College of Education at the University of Hawai‘i, will provide additional support to ensure that deliverables generated within each phase of the project plan, including relevant reports, are reviewed for completeness and accuracy. CRDG’s fiscal, IT, and other ancillary personnel will provide the necessary operational services at no cost to the project. The UH College of Education’s Communication Coordinator will assist project leaders in communicating achievements to external audiences through op-ed assistance and digital marketing strategies. The ALO project’s central office will reside in the East–West Center (EWC), or the Center for Cultural and Technical Interchange, which is an education and research organization established by the U.S. Congress to strengthen relations and understanding among the peoples and nations of Asia, the Pacific, and the United States. The project will have access to the EWC’s high-tech meeting venues, conference equipment, resource library, and educational outreach supports.

As an institution classified by the Carnegie Foundation as having “very high research activity,” the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa continues to provide up-to-date infrastructure and systems designed to facilitate the development and stewardship of extramurally funded activities. Furthermore, the University of Hawai‘i, Office of Research Services, and the Research Corporation of the University of Hawai‘i will assist the project with financial and compliance

oversight. All internal policies relating to grant management are guided by the UHM Administrative Procedures, which assure that the project manages activities in strict compliance with the terms and conditions of the grant. Attachment 2 outlines the project's goals and objectives, plots the activities across a three-year quarterly timeline, and identifies the lead individuals or groups responsible for respective task.

#### **F. Quality of Project Evaluation**

The ALO project considers evaluation as an essential tool for tracking the effectiveness of the project and providing informed feedback to improve practice. In Attachment 2, under Goal 5, there is a project evaluation timeline that specifies major formative and summative evaluation activities, including target dates for instrument development, data analysis, and reporting. The activities logically flow from ALO's theory of action, which guides the evaluation plan. The project's evaluation plan will employ a mixed-methods design that integrates mainstream professional evaluation approaches and methods developed by Hawaiian and other indigenous evaluators. Mainstream approaches include following (a) the evaluation field's standards addressing Utility, Feasibility, Propriety, and Accuracy (Yarbrough, Shula, Hopson, & Caruthers, 2010) and (b) *Guiding Principles for Evaluators* (American Evaluation Association, 2018). Evaluation approaches and tools developed by Native Hawaiian and other indigenous evaluators include (a) HĀ Outcomes Framework (Hawai'i Department of Education, 2015), (b) Samuels and Ryan's (2011) work on grounding evaluations in culture, and (c) SenGupta, Hopson, and Thompson-Robinson's (2004) work on cultural competence in evaluation, and (d) the Native Hawaiian Education Council's Common Indicators Matrix (Native Hawaiian Education Council, 2013), which emphasizes the 'ike (knowing/doing) focus of impact and the kanaka (individual) locus of impact.

***Formative Evaluation Design and Methods.*** The emphasis will change from formative (focused on project improvement) in Years 1 and 2 to summative (focused on project outcomes) in Year 3. During Years 1 and 2, we will examine measures of central tendency (means, ranges, and standard deviations) to give statistical descriptions. In the early stages of the formative study, the evaluator will employ exploratory data analysis (EDA) and inferential statistical techniques. These will include correlated *t*-tests for pre-post changes and independent *t*-tests for comparisons such as project students compared with equivalent non-project students and with national norm groups. Effect sizes (e.g., % of variance accounted for or mean differences in standard deviation units) will be reported. Formative evaluation activities will also include refining data collection instruments (e.g., questionnaires, surveys, observations, focus groups, field notes) and selecting appropriate evaluation methodologies. Formative evaluation findings will help project leaders identify and address barriers related to shortfalls in (1) community readiness, (2) communication, (3) continuous improvement, and (4) promulgating successful interventions and outcomes. Hence, during the formative evaluation phase, the project will highlight positive outcomes to promote the intervention to potential new stakeholders and to demonstrate success to existing stakeholders. On an ongoing basis, ALO leaders will seek opportunities to disseminate formative evaluation findings to local and national audiences comprising practitioners, advisory council, researchers, evaluators, policymakers, and parents.

***External Summative Evaluation Design and Methods.*** In the second quarter of Year 1, and across Years 2 and 3, the project will retain the services of [REDACTED] who will guide the formative and summative evaluation process. [REDACTED] a research and evaluation methodological expert whose expertise is in analyzing large-scale longitudinal data sets and achievement gaps relevant to practitioners and policymakers. He has extensive experience in

culturally-responsive evaluation and programs designed to meet the unique educational needs of Native Hawaiians. We will require that the external evaluator select randomly equivalent students for a comparison group. The evaluation study will follow student progress across three years. Employing a repeated measures design within each school year allows for a refined analysis of progress, including how student background, as well as features of their classrooms and schools, may contribute within- and between-student differences on selected measures. The summative evaluation will include exploratory analysis of the several levels of nesting in terms of students within schools. This type of examination is well suited to a multilevel framework for examining student outcomes and school effectiveness research, (R. W. Rumberger & Thomas, 2000; Shavelson, McDonnell, Oakes, & Carrey, 1987; Willms, 1994), which portrays student learning as nested; therefore, activities at one level are influenced by those at another level (Barr & Dreeben, 1983; Willms, 1994). The evaluation will be guided by models consistent with ecological and developmental systems theories that view the lives of children within multiple settings as tethered by multiple relationships (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). In addition to examining the project's output status (see Attachment 1), the summative evaluation will determine the extent to which (1) project outcomes have been met, (2) cohort students improved, in comparison to baseline data (e.g., academic measures, attitude, attendance, grade level promotion), and (2) infrastructure (e.g., processes, policies) has been established to ensure successful transition for at-risk youth. The following summarizes major evaluation activities, which are linked to timelines and task owners in Attachment 2:

5.1.1. Refine formative evaluation design, including data collection protocols and instruments.

- 5.1.2. Develop consensus on project indicators.
- 5.1.3. Obtain HODOE data sharing authorization and requested student-level data.
- 5.1.4. Conduct formative evaluation directed at determining interim impacts and informing project management.
- 5.1.5. Complete formative evaluation report.
- 5.1.6. Interview project stakeholders.
- 5.1.7. Retain external evaluator.
- 5.1.8. Refine summative evaluation design together with external evaluator.
- 5.1.9. Conduct summative evaluation in project Year-3 to determine progress toward desired goals and overall impact of project's efforts.
- 5.1.10. Develop and maintain a database system on student progress.
- 5.1.11. Publish summative evaluation report.

PI, [REDACTED] will closely monitor evaluation activities, most of which recur across all three years. Having done his doctoral work under the tutelage of multilevel and longitudinal modeling expert, [REDACTED] at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Principal Investigator [REDACTED] has the competence and experience to ensure that the data analysis will be of the highest quality.

ALO's evaluation across three years will test the theory of action and provide validated evidence to guide the next steps in terms of whether to expand the model for replication at other schools and communities. Project evaluation findings will inform the field on the extent to which the ALO project has been effective in developing a scalable culturally-responsive transition model designed to improve the delivery of much needed services to Native Hawaiian youth.