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I. Absolute Priority

Deer River Public School District is the eligible entity as a local educational agency (LEA) and public authority legally constituted within the state of Minnesota to administer and direct public education. Deer River Public School District — in collaboration with key partners Itasca County Health and Human Services, North Homes Children and Family Services, NorTran Bus Company, Itasca County Public Health, Ross Resources, Invest Early, and the Boys and Girls Club of the Leech Lake Area — proposes a five-year, full-service community schools (FSCS) program called Embrace Deer River. The program will focus on two schools including King Elementary (grades Pre-K to 5) and Deer River Secondary (grades 6 to 12). The above schools meet Section 1114(b) of the ESSA in that they each have low-income percentages of greater than 40 percent, as determined by free/reduced price meal eligibility. The rate at King Elementary is 70 percent, and the rate at Deer River Secondary is 67 percent.

II. Competitive Preference Priority 1 – Rural Districts

Under the most recent eligibility list (fiscal year 2019), Deer River Public School District is eligible under the Rural Low-Income Schools (RLIS) program.

III. Competitive Preference Priority 2 – Broadly Representative Consortia

Deer River Public School District is part of a broad consortium of stakeholders that exists to serve and support students and families in the Deer River area. Partners that are foundational to the proposed project – Embrace Deer River – include Itasca County Health and Human Services, North Homes Children and Family Services, NorTran Bus Company, Itasca County Public Health, Ross Resources, Invest Early, and the Boys and Girls Club of the Leech Lake Area. In addition, a number of other organizations will deliver services to students and families at Deer River schools. These organizations include Second Harvest North Central Food Bank,

University of Minnesota Extension, Essentia Health, the Deer River Healthcare Foundation, Community Café, Deer River Community Education, Kootasca Community Action, and Get Fit Itasca. The above stakeholders represent local units of government, higher education, early childhood education, private businesses, healthcare, philanthropic organizations, mental health providers, non-profit organizations, and other community partners. The roles and responsibilities of these collaborative stakeholders are outlined in the attached MOU. Letters of support are also attached from Secretary/Treasurer Arthur LaRose (for Chairman Faron Jackson) of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar.

IV. Competitive Preference Priority 3 – History of Effectiveness

The stakeholders that have come together to develop and expand full-service community schools under Embrace Deer River have a long history of working together. These partnerships have been built on needs. In a small community such as Deer River (a community in which many residents face a variety of barriers), such relationships are a matter of survival. If stakeholders don't come together, individual and community issues are exacerbated. If neighbors don't learn to lend a hand, the challenges within the community become even more prominent. For more than 50 years, a variety of community partners have worked to identify needs in the Deer River area, particularly among youth and within the school district, which acts as a central hub in the community. Today, there are a number of strategies and programs in place including early childhood classrooms, mental health programming, afterschool programing, free community meals two times per week, a WIC clinic, and more. None of these programs would exist if it weren't for the stakeholders' history of effectiveness.

In a visible manifestation of the effectiveness of collaboration in Deer River, Deer River Public School District recently passed a building referendum that — in addition to addressing

classroom and building needs – added early childhood classrooms, space for a school pantry, a senior citizen center, space for the boys and girls club, office space, and space for the community meals at King Elementary. This referendum passed by a ratio of 2:1, indicating community recognition of needs at the individual and familial levels, the school’s ability to help address those needs, and the power of collaboration to set a new course. Today, Second Harvest North Central Food Bank, the Boys and Girls Club of the Leech Lake Area, North Homes Children and Family Services, the Community Café, and Invest Early all occupy space in King Elementary in ways that serve students, their families, and the community as a whole.

Also, in 2016, Deer River Public School District began coming together with a number of its partners to plan for and implement a full-service community school (FSCS) model at King Elementary. An FSCS Leadership Team formed, and in 2017, King Elementary was awarded an 18-month planning and implementation grant from the Minnesota Department of Education. The grant helped Deer River Public School District and its partners conduct assessments, hire a part-time full-service community school coordinator, build new partnerships, and provide increased support to students and their families. While it’s still too early to evaluate the impact of the grant on local students and families, the project solidly launched the FSCS model within Deer River Public School District. Many faculty and staff members participated in related trainings, workshops, and meetings. In addition, many students and families were connected to services and programs in ways that hadn’t previously been possible. The anecdotal successes that resulted from the project galvanized a desire among district leadership to more deeply embed the FSCS model within the district. They feel it’s the most powerful strategy available to address complex and interwoven challenges in ways that are impactful, measurable, and lasting.

V. Competitive Preference Priority 4 – Evidence-Based Activities, Strategies, or Interventions

Embrace Deer River will include the use of two evidence-based interventions from the What Works Clearinghouse. These interventions include Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) and Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) interventions. Deer River uses LLI with first and second grade students during small group reading interventions. The groups typically include two to four students who participate every school day for 25 minutes. FBAs are used with all special education students within the district who receive services under the emotional behavioral disorder (EBD) category. Deer River also completes an FBA for students going through the behavior support team process. In this case, a team of teachers, social workers, and other relevant staff complete the FBA together to plan behavior interventions and supports.

Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) is a short-term, supplementary, small-group literacy intervention designed to help struggling readers achieve grade-level competency. The intervention provides explicit instruction in phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension, oral language skills, and writing. LLI helps teachers match students with texts of progressing difficulty and deliver systematic lessons targeted to a student's reading ability. The intervention is used in the Deer River Public School District in grades one and two.

What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) identified two studies of LLI that fall within the scope of the Beginning Reading topic area and meet WWC group design standards. Two studies meet WWC group design standards without reservations, and no studies meet WWC group design standards with reservations. Together, these studies included 747 students in grades K–2 in 22 schools in three school districts across three states.

According to the WWC review, the extent of evidence for LLI on the reading achievement outcomes of beginning readers was medium to large for general reading achievement and small for two other student outcome domains – reading fluency and alphabetics. No studies meet WWC group design standards in one other domain, so the intervention report does not report on the effectiveness of LLI for that domain.

As a whole, WWC states that LLI had positive effects on general reading achievement, potentially positive effects on reading fluency, and no discernible effects on alphabetics for beginning readers.

Functional behavioral assessment (FBA) is an individualized problem-solving process for addressing student problem behavior. An assessment is conducted to identify the purpose or function of a student's problem behavior. This assessment process involves collecting information about the environmental conditions that precede the problem behavior and the subsequent rewards that reinforce the behavior. The information that is gathered is then used to identify and implement individualized interventions aimed at reducing problem behaviors and increasing positive behaviors. FBA is used by special education teachers in Deer River Public School District to develop behavior plans for students.

According to WWC, seven studies have experiments that meet WWC pilot single-case design standards without reservations. These experiments investigated the effects of FBA-based interventions on school engagement, problem behavior, and social-emotional competence outcomes. The experiments included children identified with or at risk for an emotional disturbance, ranging in age from 7 to 14 years old. Different FBA-based interventions were identified for each student and included approaches such as student self-monitoring,

modifications to the proximity of peers and teachers, peer support, teacher attention, and modifications to assignments.

As a whole, FBA-based interventions are described in a WWC intervention report to have potentially positive effects on school engagement and potentially positive effects on problem behavior for children identified with or at risk for an emotional disturbance based on evidence from single-case design studies.

VI. Quality of the Project Design

The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable . . .

The proposed project will enable Deer River Public School District and its partners to increase the impact of the FSCS model within its service area. Specifically, the project will focus on expansion of the existing full-service community school at King Elementary (grades Pre-K to 5). In addition, a new full-service community school will be developed and implemented at Deer River Secondary (grades 6 to 12).

As a whole, Embrace Deer River will improve the coordination, integration, accessibility, and effectiveness of services for children, their families, and community members. These improvements are critical in Deer River because it's a high-poverty rural area. The full-service community schools will provide comprehensive academic, social, and health services for students, students' family members, and community members in ways that will be designed to improve education outcomes for children. These services will incorporate the four pillars including integrated student supports, expanded learning time and opportunities, family and community and engagement, and collaborative leadership and practice. In addition, they will leverage strong partnerships and social capital, stable and progressive leadership within Deer

River Public School District as well as within partner organizations, strong academic programs, and talented and passionate staff and teachers within the school district.

To ensure Embrace Deer River is developed and implemented in ways that ensure responsible use of resources, streamline processes for evaluation and continual improvement, and maximize impact for students, their family, and community members, Deer River Public School District and its partners have designed the project around specific goals, objectives, and outcomes.

Project Goals and Objectives
Goal 1: Increase coordination of supportive services for students, their families, and community members.
Obj 1.1: The part-time community school coordinator (CSC) position at King Elementary School will be increased to a full-time FSCS manager position. The new position will be filled by November 1, 2019.
Obj 1.2: A full-time CSC will be hired to implement the FSCS model at Deer River Secondary School. The position will be filled by November 1, 2019.
Obj 1.3: Behavioral Support and Family Support teams will form at King Elementary School and Deer River Secondary. The teams will consist of the school manager/coordinator, a parent resource coordinator, a health services coordinator, social workers, mental health therapists, and other district staff/faculty as appropriate. The teams will begin meeting regularly by November 15, 2019, and will use meeting time as an opportunity to discuss individual student/family needs and coordinate services.

Obj 1.3: The Leadership Team established under Deer River Public School District’s FSCS grant from the state of Minnesota will renew efforts and utilize a collaborative problem-solving process to further refine strategies, leverage assets, and address needs for school and community improvement. The Leadership Team will meet monthly beginning in October 2019 and will continue to meet through the duration of the grant.

Obj 1.4: Deer River Public School District will strengthen relationships with existing and new partners (local businesses, the city of Deer River, community-based organizations, students, and parents) to support a comprehensive and integrated approach to expansion of the FSCS model.

Obj 1.5: Deer River Public School District will begin providing new transportation services including on-call van service in the morning and by-appointment service during week days. On-call service will be available to pick up children who miss the bus or to assist parents with other morning-time transportation barriers. By-appointment service will be available for medical appointments and other important appointments focused on the health or well-being of the child. Service will begin by January 1, 2020.

Goal 2: Decrease achievement gaps and increase the overall number of students achieving academically.

Obj. 2.1: Expand the use of social-emotional learning strategies throughout the district. These new strategies will be finalized during October and November 2019 with implementation anticipated by January 1, 2020.

Obj. 2.2: Expand services and education to help students transition from grade 5 to 6, which is when they make the move from elementary to the high school building. These new services

<p>will be finalized during October and November 2019 with implementation anticipated by January 1, 2020.</p>
<p>Obj. 2.3: Establish a special council with representatives from the full-service community schools, the school district, parents, community partners, and community members. The council will focus on refining strategies to close the achievement gaps between White, Native American, and free- or reduced-price lunch students. Council will begin meeting in November 2019.</p>
<p>Obj. 2.4: Work with Deer River Indian Education (district program) to expand culturally focused strategies and create new pathways that nurture and encourage Native American students to pursue careers in fields such as education. New strategies and pathways will be created and implemented by January 1, 2020.</p>
<p>Goal 3: Increase the number of students who are safe, healthy, and supported by engaged parents.</p>
<p>Obj. 3.1: A full-time parent resource coordinator will be hired to provide onsite and in-home support to parents. The parent resource coordinator will serve the parents/guardians of high-risk/high-needs students attending King Elementary School and Deer River Secondary. The position will be filled by November 1, 2019.</p>
<p>Obj. 3.2: A part-time health services coordinator will be hired to coordinate the delivery of services including immunizations, eye exams, dental check-ups, and doctor visits. The position will be filled by November 1, 2019.</p>

Obj. 3.3: The FSCS staff will begin coordinating and providing transportation to parents to enable them to attend parent nights, conferences, and school events. This service will begin by January 1, 2020.
Obj. 3.4: Create a district-wide parent leadership council and ensure representation from the Native American community. The council will meet every two months and will provide insight/guidance on community needs and the effectiveness of interventions. Council will begin meeting by January 1, 2020.
Obj. 3.5: Collaborate with community-based organizations to help parents address barriers in their lives and engage more fully in the education of their children. These strategies will begin in earnest after the hiring and training of the parent resource coordinator.

By implementing the above FSCS strategies — along with the existing services and capacity described in this proposal — Embrace Deer River will work toward the long-term outcomes as indicated in the below table. Deer River Public School District will track progress toward the project outcomes by establishing, tracking, and reporting performance measurements as described in the evaluation section of this proposal.

Long-Term Project Outcomes
More students achieving academically.
More students who are safe, healthy, and supported by engaged parents.
Increased coordination of services for students, their families, and community members.
All Deer River students are succeeding.
Evaluation leads to long-term sustainability.

The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs . . .

The proposed project will take place in the region served by Deer River Public School District. Deer River Public School District is located in north central Minnesota, in Itasca County. Itasca is approximately 3,000 square miles in size, making it the third-largest county in the state (out of 87). It had an estimated population of approximately 45,127 in 2017 according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The region abuts and includes portions of the Chippewa National Forest, the Mesabi Iron Range, and the Leech Lake Indian Reservation.

Deer River Public School District, at 540 square miles in size, is one of the largest school districts in Itasca County and the state of Minnesota as a whole. The district is highly rural and sparsely populated with a total population of approximately 5,500. The district serves 1,080 Pre-K to 12th-grade students who are bussed from outlying rural areas and more than 20 small communities including Wirt, Spring Lake, Marcell, Ball Club, Inger, Zemple, Bowstring, and Deer River. Students attend King Elementary School or Deer River Secondary. Both schools are located in the town of Deer River, which has a population of nearly 1,000.

Throughout the geographic area of the Deer River Public School District, Native American persons comprise 16 percent of the population. Persons of Native descent are concentrated in the north central portion of the district, in and around the communities of Inger and Ball Club. These communities lie within the Leech Lake Indian Reservation. In the Deer River school system, approximately 32 percent of students are of Native descent, and 12 percent are of two or more races (primarily White and Native American). The high representation of Native American students within Deer River schools is because Native families have the option of sending their children to the Deer River Public School District. In comparison, Itasca

County's Native American population is three percent. The state's is one percent. The remaining student body at Deer River Public School District is White, 53 percent; Hispanic or Latino, 2 percent; Black or African American, .5 percent; and Asian, .5 percent.

The economy of Deer River Public School District is based largely in tourism, gaming, forest-products manufacturing, and healthcare. Many of those fortunate enough to have found work in this rural area have done so because they commute 60 or more miles. Nearly 21 percent of families who live in the district and have children under the age of 18 fall below the poverty level. This compares to 12 percent throughout the state. The median annual household income in the district is half that of the state's. Nearly 70 percent of students qualify for free- or reduced-price school lunch, compared to 36 percent within the state of Minnesota.

Beyond economic factors, Deer River Public School District is located in a region where a culture of alcohol use/abuse has been heavily embedded for many years. This fact is evident in the number of students who state that they live with someone who drinks too much or uses illegal drugs. According to the 2016 Minnesota Student Survey, 18 percent of 9th graders, and 14 percent of 11th graders in Deer River Public School District lived with someone who drank too much. This compared to 10 percent for 9th graders and 11 percent of 11th graders in the state of Minnesota as a whole.

Other statistics that speak to a need for comprehensive FSCS programming in Deer River Public School District come from the Minnesota Report Card, generated annually by the Minnesota Department of Education. During the 2018/2019 school year:

- Twenty-two percent of Deer River students are receiving special education services, compared to 16 percent in the state as a whole.
- Twenty percent are receiving targeted mental health services.

- Four percent are homeless.
- Twenty-seven percent attend school less than 90 percent of the time, compared to 14 percent within the state.

Not surprisingly, the high rate of factors including poverty, truancy, homelessness, special education needs, and mental health diagnoses have a significant impact on academic performance within Deer River Public School District. The following two tables describe how Deer River students do on state standards tests in comparison to their peers across the state.

Percent of Deer River Students, All Ages, Meeting or Exceeding Standards			
	2016	2017	2018
Math	48.1	52.0	50.8
Reading	52.8	59.3	58.3
Science	46.5	47.1	59.6

Percent of Minnesota Students, All Ages, Meeting or Exceeding Standards			
	2016	2017	2018
Math	60.1	59.2	57.7
Reading	60.2	60.6	60.4
Science	55.5	54.7	52.5

Alongside the discrepancy in achievement between Deer River students and their statewide peers are the achievement gaps within Deer River schools themselves. These gaps are pronounced between White students, Native American students, and students qualifying for free- or reduced-price school lunches.

Embrace Deer River
 FY 2019 Full-Service Community Schools Grant Proposal
 Project Narrative

Percent of Deer River Students, All Ages, Meeting or Exceeding Standards in Math			
	White	Native American	FRPL
2014	53.7	38.0	40.1
2015	58.8	33.6	38.4
2016	58.1	33.1	40.8
2017	60.2	40.7	47.3
2018	60.2	34.7	43.0

Percent of Deer River Students, All Ages, Meeting or Exceeding Standards in Reading			
	White	Native American	FRPL
2014	56.8	34.9	37.7
2015	66.5	35.3	44.8
2016	66.5	31.1	45.9
2017	70.3	43.2	52.6
2018	65.2	41.6	52.6

Percent of Deer River Students, All Ages, Meeting or Exceeding Standards in Science			
	White	Native American	FRPL
2014	43.3	24.6	31.8

2015	49.6	29.8	36.6
2016	54.5	25.0	41.2
2017	63.2	27.6	38.3
2018	65.7	46.4	51.8

To better address the complex and interwoven challenges within Deer River Public School District, a number of specific needs rise to the surface. These include an overarching (and all-consuming) need for improved coordination. In addition, they include service-specific needs for transportation, coordination of health services, social-emotional education, increased parent involvement, transition services (particularly between the grades of 5 and 6), and culturally focused strategies that nurture and encourage Native American students.

Need for Coordination

Working in collaboration with its many partners, Deer River Public School District has been successful in developing and delivering many pipeline services for its students. These services are listed within the *Quality of the Project Services* section below.

While the existence of pipeline services is in itself a success, a pronounced lack of cohesion between the services and service providers dilutes the potential for meaningful and lasting impact on the lives of students, families, and community members. Currently, Deer River Public School District employs one part-time community school coordinator. This individual serves King Elementary School only. Given the extent of student-level needs within King Elementary, the coordinator spends more than 100 percent of her allotted .8FTE time meeting the day-to-day needs of students and their guardians or parents. For example, she provides rides to medical appointments, picks up children who miss the bus, brings food to families without transportation, assists with distribution of food through the school pantry, and helps children

meet their needs for clothing, shoes, boots, and winter coats. She also acts as the homelessness liaison within the district. Every school day is filled with the immediate needs of children and families. Any work on big-picture strategies, planning, or partnership building must take place after school hours or during the evenings. The catch-22 of this position is that it takes more coordination to improve efficiencies, but the ongoing demand of day-to-day realities leads to incremental improvement at best. While the coordinator does meet monthly with the FSCS Leadership Team (which formed when the district received an 18-month FSCS grant from the state of Minnesota in 2017), those times are not sufficient to substantially improve overall alignment of services. The result is that the many supports Deer River already has in place end up achieving less impact than they might otherwise. In addition, the many needs of students and families continue to go unmet, which has a spiraling effect in regard to academic performance as well as social-emotional well-being. And finally, there is no designated staff person to begin coordinating services and implementing the full-service community school model within Deer River Secondary.

To fully implement Embrace Deer River, Deer River Public School District needs 1FTE FSCS manager and 1FTE CSC. The FSCS manager will oversee the project, will act as the evaluation point person, and will also provide FSCS coordination services at King Elementary School. The CSC will support the FSCS manager and provide FSCS coordination services at Deer River Secondary. Together, the two positions will ensure the planning, integration of services, development of partnerships, and overall sustainability. They will have capacity to provide this leadership because of additional positions explained below. As a whole, the higher level of coordination capacity will enable Embrace Deer River to improve the integration,

accessibility, and effectiveness of wraparound services for students, their families, and community members.

Need for Transportation

Because Deer River Public School District is geographically large, transportation is a key barrier that decreases academic proficiency for students of all ages. If a family lives 15 or 20 miles from Deer River, and the family car is not working, or the family doesn't have a car, challenges quickly arise. If the student oversleeps and misses the bus, there's suddenly no way for them to get to school. If the car breaks down on the way to a medical appointment, the problems with the car become more urgent than the child's appointment. As a result, his or her illness gets prolonged, leading to more missed days of school.

The problem of transportation is a challenge for people throughout Deer River Public School District as well as Itasca County. Five percent of people in the county have no vehicle, and 25 percent have only one vehicle. While this data doesn't adequately describe the problem, people who work in schools, for non-profit agencies, and local units of government hear over and over that many county residents struggle with transportation. For example, the existing part-time CSC at King Elementary School spends as much as 30 percent of her time each week transporting children. This includes picking them up at home if they miss the bus or helping to get them to a medical appointment. It also occasionally includes picking up a parent so they can attend their child's conference or a school-based event.

Need for Coordination of Health Services

At King Elementary School and Deer River Secondary, health-related problems play a major role in limiting students' ability and motivation to learn. Furthermore, because many local families are low-income and do not have health insurance, the school district's 2.5FTE school

nurses end up becoming the default healthcare providers in a district with more than 1,000 students. Problems they see on a regular basis are related to eyesight, toothaches, general illness, diabetes, hunger, and more. The problems are almost always a direct result of the lack of access to services, and they emphasize the role that educationally relevant health disparities play by hampering academic proficiency and increasing achievement gaps.

Within Deer River Public School District, some of the greatest needs within the area of healthcare coordination include improved health management for students with asthma and diabetes, increased preventive care and immunizations, hunger relief, and increased screening for mental health concerns. In addition, there is a need to ensure students are getting their eyes checked. Two years ago, Deer River Public School District was able to arrange bus service and transported 100 students to a mobile eye clinic. They had their eyes checked, and approximately 50 percent later received glasses that were mailed to the school. In another unrelated instance (after the mobile clinic), a boy lost one lens of his glasses on the school playground and had to go without for two months. His prescription had expired, and his parents were unable to get him in for a check-up. The FSCS coordinator was finally able to help by arranging transportation and making the appointment.

Dental care is also a significant need within Deer River Public School District. Generally, this is due to a lack of transportation or a lack of insurance. However, it also can be related to a lack of capacity within the dental field. Free or low-cost dental services are available through Indian Health with the Leech Lake Tribe, however, the one dentist has a waiting list that is normally a minimum of two months long. The FSCS coordinator is working to build relationships with dentists in nearby Grand Rapids, however, it's a slow process. Deer River Public School District is in need of regular dental services within its schools. These can be

provided through an outside vendor that brings a mobile dental office to Deer River. From there, children can receive check-ups and care on a sliding-fee basis.

Need for Expanded Social-Emotional Education

Because of the wide range of barriers faced by students in Deer River Public School District, many of them arrive at school without basic social-emotional skills that are just as important as academic skills in regard to school success. These are children who haven't learned how to be a part of a group or work as a team member. As a result, they act out in ways that lead to disciplinary action. From there, behaviors begin to affect academics, and a downward spiral begins.

Currently, Deer River Public School District is providing some social-emotional education in collaboration with community partners. However, this education is limited to small age groups or specific programs within the overall district. For example, University of Minnesota Extension teaches social-emotional learning to students enrolled in the Alternative Learning Program at Deer River Secondary. This education has proven effective in helping students increase their feelings of belonging, particularly in building connections with caring adults. What's needed is to expand that learning throughout all grades. How do you walk down the hallway? How do participate in activities during physical education? How do you interact in the classroom? How do you relate to other students and teachers? These are all basic skills that not all students bring to school, but they are skills many students can learn.

Need for Increased Parent Involvement

For many families in Deer River Public School District, the basic realities of day-to-day living make it difficult for parents to engage in significant ways in the education of their child.

The reasons for this are many and include substance abuse, job-related conflicts, lack of

transportation, past trauma, and at a times a simple lack of knowledge about how to provide support for their student – or a lack of knowledge that providing such support is a critical element of their child’s success in school.

In a survey conducted of Deer River students in fall 2018 (SPARK Youth Voice Survey), 17 percent of students reported that a parent or parenting adult showed that the student mattered to them only sometimes, rarely, or never. In addition, 28 percent reported that a parent or parenting adult helped them get things done only sometimes, rarely, or never.

Parent involvement affects everything within a student’s academic career. From getting to medical appointments, to getting to school if a bus is missed, to talking about homework, grades, and the social aspects of school, the parent/student relationship is foundational. One way in which the lack of such engagement manifests in Deer River Public School District is within truancy rates. Deer River schools regularly have rates of students who are chronically absent at rates much higher than the state average. The truancy prevention officer in Deer River Secondary recently reported the chronic absenteeism had been as high as 30 percent within the preceding quarter. The services provided by the truancy prevention officer help stem these rates, but they are limited in their role as more of a monitor than a navigator or coach. Deer River Public School District needs new ways to engage with parents in ways that help them address the barriers in their lives so they are more available to engage with their child and in their child’s education.

Need to Improve the 5th to 6th Grade Transition

Over the past five years, Deer River Public School District has seen increasing numbers of 5th graders who move into 6th grade and end up with behavioral problems. Part of the reason for this is because the move between 5th and 6th marks the move between the elementary and high school buildings in Deer River. The transition not only leads to a greater level of

independence and freedom, but it also exposes them to a larger school and older students. The other reason is that Deer River Public School District does not adequately address the transition for students moving from 5th to 6th grade. There is a one-day event for 5th graders in the summer, but it falls short of addressing the needs for new learning and support. Deer River Public School District needs an enhanced 5th-6th grade transition program that provides them with greater education and exposure upfront and also provides them with support during the first quarter of their 6th-grade year.

Need for Culturally Focused Strategies

Within Deer River School District, nearly 16 percent of residents are Native American. Within the schools, 32 percent are Native American, and 12 percent are two or more races (White and Native American). As described in the beginning of this proposal, the reasons for this disproportionate representation in the schools is related to the options Native American families have in regard to where they send their children to school. For many Native families, Deer River is the better choice because of distances in comparison to getting to the school operated by the Leech Lake Tribe. In addition, many Native families choose Deer River because of the extent of support services offered.

Deer River Public School District is intent upon the fact that its schools should be places in the community where diversity is honored, where inclusivity is the foundation of the social fabric, and where all students flourish. However, the reality is that there are longstanding achievement gaps between White and Native American students. The reasons for this are many and complex. Certainly, the negative effects of colonization on Native people are deep and longstanding. As a result, Native American persons have long been forced to fight for their political, educational, spiritual, and social rights. Naming and understanding this historical,

generational trauma is a necessary part of designing culturally focused strategies that stay true to the lived experience of Native American students and their families. It also shows why focusing on helping more Native American youth to not only survive, but thrive, is a priority for Deer River Public School District.

In July 2017, Circles of Healing (a local initiative focused on strengthening relationships between White and Native American communities) and the Itasca Area Schools Collaborative (IASC) hosted a half-day ideation session in Itasca County to envision pathways to better support Native American students. A group of 21 Native American students, educators, and community allies emphasized that communities must be intentional about fostering a sense of place, belonging, and value in Native youth so they are equipped to be future leaders. Furthermore, they identified a number of ways in which the oppression experienced by Native people manifests for youth. These ways included:

- Native Americans experience lower high school graduation rates than their non-Native peers.
- There is a stark near-absence of Native Americans in teaching positions as role models.
- Native people lack of a sense of belonging, having to consistently deal with the myth of White superiority.
- There is an overall societal lack of knowledge about Native American history and tribal traditions.
- Far too many Native people live in poverty and experience racism.

The group also discussed what needs to change in order to alleviate some of the challenges Native American students face. They talked about the need for earlier supportive interventions to increase the students' graduation rates. They stressed the important role played by caring, supportive adults who are committed to understanding the lives of Native American students and keeping them engaged in a way that works for the students. They also discussed the need to encourage and support more Native American youth in choosing careers such as education. This strategy can have a two-way benefit of providing purposeful pathways for youth while also creating a pool of more Native American individuals who want to stay in the area and teach in local schools.

For Deer River Public School District, what this all means is the district must become more intentional about fostering strategies that support Native youth in ways that are right for them. This goes beyond cultural competency and moves into the realm of true understanding and empathy. When we all do better, we all do better. Deer River Public School District needs new ways to ensure its Native American students are getting the support they need and being encouraged and challenged in ways that help them learn, grow, and succeed.

VII. Quality of the Project Services

The likely impact of the services to be provided by the proposed project on the intended recipients of those services . . .

Through ongoing resourcefulness and collaboration, Deer River Public School District has put numerous services in place that are focused on nurturing the whole child as a means to help them better succeed in school. The need for these services has been identified by working one-on-one with students and families and getting to know the challenges they face.

Needs have also been identified over the years through tools such as the Minnesota Student Survey and the SPARK Youth Voice Survey. Based on sources such as these, the district has

worked with its partners to address the many challenges facing its students and their families from all angles possible. This includes providing services through the four pillars of integrated student supports; expanded learning time and opportunities; family and community engagement; and collaborative leadership and practice. The below table details existing services.

Existing Student Supports in Deer River Public School District	
Service	Related Partners
Mental health services for students with diagnoses, on-site, school district provides space, four practitioners at King Elementary School, two at Deer River Secondary	North Homes Children and Family Services
Truancy prevention, 1 FTE in each school, school district provides office space	Ross Resources
Early childhood education, birth to age 5, integrated into King Elementary School, children have access to school gym, playground, slots also made available for staff to help with teacher recruitment/retention	Invest Early, Kootasca Community Action
Math and reading corps, volunteers provide academic interventions at King Elementary School	AmeriCorps

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Alternative Learning Program, provides social-emotional education to high school students with emotional-behavioral disorders	University of Minnesota Extension
Food pantry makes nutritious whole foods available to students and their families, located at King Elementary School	Second Harvest North Central Food Bank
Food packs containing 10-15 nutritious items, made available to children for long weekends and school vacations	Second Harvest North Central Food Bank
Immunizations and WIC clinic at King Elementary School	Itasca County Public Health
Mobile cart with free childcare items located at King Elementary School	Itasca County Public Health
Classroom visits on topics including hygiene, nutrition, and dental health	Itasca County Public Health
Diabetes education in King Elementary School and Deer River Secondary	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
Direct case-by-case assistance providing support and services to students and their families who are members of the Leech Lake Band	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe

Limited transportation assistance for necessary appointments	Essentia Health
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Expanded Learning Time and Opportunities	
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Service	Related Partners
After-school care/education for youth ages 6 to 18, located at King Elementary School, district employs out-of-school time program coordinator and provides space, 3-6 pm, \$5/student per year	Boys and Girls Club of the Leech Lake Area
Summer program for youth ages 6 to 18, located at King Elementary School	Boys and Girls Club of the Leech Lake Area
Ongoing 4H programming	University of Minnesota Extension
Ongoing enrichment classes for youth and adults, scholarships are available	Deer River Community Education
Late route for students who participate in the Boys and Girls Club or other after-school activities	NorTran Bus Company

Family and Community Engagement	
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Service	Related Partners
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SNAP-Ed cooking classes with students and parents, nutrition and exercise education at Parent Nights and other community events	University of Minnesota Extension, Get Fit Itasca
Free meal for community two nights per week, located in King Elementary School, families can eat in or get take-home food	Community Café
Limited funds to assist with health needs of students, working to increase Endowment Fund	Essentia Health, Deer River Healthcare Foundation
Working with various community partners to plan and raise funds for a community wellness center	Essentia Health, Deer River Healthcare Foundation

Collaborative Leadership and Practice	
Service	Related Partners
FSCS Leadership Team, meets monthly, provides oversight on activities including needs assessments, implementation of programming, strengthening of partnerships, and evaluation	All partners

Family Support and Behavior Support teams, meet regularly throughout the school year	Ross Resources, North Homes Children and Family Services
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Deer River Public School District also provides a number of services and programs directly to its students and families without the help of outside partners. These include Leveled Literacy Interventions; Functional Behavioral Assessment-Based Interventions; Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports; Alternative Learning Programs; Special Education; Social Workers (one in each school); Learning Academy (for students in grades 6 to 8); After-School Academics (for students in grades 6 to 12); and Post-Secondary Enrollment Options. Deer River Public School District also operates a comprehensive alcohol and drug prevention initiative called The Movement. This initiative focuses on students in grades 7 to 12 and is being funded by a 5-year Drug-Free Communities grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Finally, Deer River Public School District has an active Indian Education Department. The department’s mission is to complement the service and education objectives of the Deer River Public School District by providing educational support services, care, and nurturing for students utilizing culturally and developmentally appropriate practices.

Moving forward, Deer River Public School District is working to identify strategies that can increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the many existing services while also filling identified service gaps. To do this, the district has engaged its partners and developed a comprehensive project that will expand on existing services, add new services, and provide increased levels of coordination and integration. These strategies have been developed within the

context/format of the Leadership Team. In addition, they've been developed based on one-on-one conversations with partner service providers, with school staff and teachers, and with district administration. Plans have also been developed based on the variety of recent local needs assessments including:

- 1) The facilitated conversation hosted by Circles of Healing and the Itasca Area Schools Collaborative (IASC) in July 2017. A group of 21 Native American students, educators, and community members participated in this event.
- 2) In April 2017, approximately 45 educators, administrators, parents, students, and community members gathered at Deer River Secondary to discuss and prioritize student, school, and community needs. The event was open to the community, utilized Intentional Social Interaction to engage attendees, included a feast, and resulted in a report of community discussion and priorities.
- 3) In fall 2018, more than 3,000 6th to 12th graders in Itasca County participated in the SPARK Youth Voice Survey. The survey resulted in a report generated specifically for Deer River schools and examined a wide range of students' experiences and relationships in their families, schools, and communities.

As described on pages 17-25 of this proposal, Deer River Public School District has an overriding need for greater capacity to coordinate support services and programs. In addition, ongoing conversations and assessments have indicated service-specific needs for transportation, coordination of health services, social-emotional education, increased parent involvement, transition services (particularly between the grades of 5 and 6), and culturally focused strategies that nurture and encourage Native American students. The combination of existing proven services and programs along with greater coordination capacity and new services – the need for

which have been identified within the community – can impact students, their families, and community members in more meaningful and lasting ways.

The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services . . .

Deer River Public School District desires to improve the lives of its students, their family members, and community members. As such, it has collaborated with diverse partners to create the proposed five-year project – Embrace Deer River.

Based on input from the Leadership Team, conversations with school staff, and data from Deer River’s community needs assessments, Embrace Deer River is built around the project goal, objectives, and outcomes as outlined on pages 9-12 of this proposal. These project elements have been intentionally designed in ways that respond to identified needs for increased coordination and integration of services as well as the need for specific new services. This is an approach based on the lived experiences of students, families, and community members within the school district. Furthermore, it’s an approach built on existing relationships that have proven effective over time. The concept of Embrace Deer River is to multiply the existing potential for impact by bringing a heightened level of coordination and cohesion to comprehensive support services within the district. At its core, this is a strategy that involves deep and ongoing collaboration with community partners. Such partnerships bring new resources and areas of expertise to the district. They also expand the capacity of the district to improve academic performance by enabling it to holistically address the range of elements that must be in place before such performance can be achieved.

Embrace Deer River will be built on the below partnerships to maximize the impact of project services. Services to be added include a reference to the needs identified earlier in the proposal.

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Partner	Existing Services	Services to be Added
North Homes Children and Family Services	Mental health services for students with diagnoses, on-site, school district provides space, four practitioners at King Elementary School, two at Deer River Secondary	Coordination of health services: Telehealth and medication management
Ross Resources	Truancy prevention, 1 FTE in each school	Increased parent involvement: Building partnerships with parents and juvenile justice system to help students get out of the system
Invest Early	Early childhood education, birth to age 5, integrated into King Elementary School, children have access to school gym, playground, free or sliding fee, slots also made available for staff to help with teacher recruitment/retention	

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NorTran Bus Company	Late route for students who participate in the Boys and Girls Club or other after-school activities	Transportation: A shuttle during the day that parents and students can access to get to school, related events, or appointments
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	Diabetes education in King Elementary School and Deer River Secondary, Direct case-by-case assistance providing support and services to students and their families who are members of the Leech Lake Band	
Boys and Girls Club of the Leech Lake Area	After-school care/education for youth ages 6 to 18, located at King Elementary School, \$5/student per year; Summer program for youth ages 6 to 18, located at King Elementary School	

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Deer River Community Education	Ongoing enrichment classes for youth and adults, scholarships are available	
Second Harvest North Central Food Bank	Food pantry at King Elementary School; Food packs containing 10-15 nutritious items, made available to children for long weekends and school vacations	Coordination of health services: Establish food pantry at Deer River Secondary, delivery to students and families in outlying communities
Kootasca Community Action	Early childhood education, birth to age 5, integrated into King Elementary School	
Itasca County Public Health	Immunization clinics, WIC clinics, education on hygiene, nutrition, and dental health, mobile cart with free childcare items	
University of Minnesota Extension	4H programming, SNAP-Ed cooking classes with students and parents, social-emotional	Social-emotional learning: Expand into all grade levels, possible tools including

	learning in Active Learning Program	Second Step, Peacemaker, or Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
Essentia Health and Deer River Healthcare Foundation	Funds to assist with health needs of students, working to increase Endowment Fund, Working with various community partners to plan and raise funds for a community wellness center	
Community Café	Free meal for community two nights per week, located in King Elementary	

Beyond working with external partners, Deer River Public School District will also engage internally to meet the identified needs. Key internal partners will include Deer River Indian Education, school nurses, school social workers, and teachers. Deer River Indian Education will play a key role in developing culturally focused strategies that nurture and encourage Native American students. School nurses and social workers will assist in the development of strategies related to great coordination of health services. Teachers will help identify and select social-emotional learning tools, will receive training in identified tools, and will integrate them into their classrooms. Fifth- and 6th-grade teachers specifically will help

design and integrate new transition services for students of those ages. And finally, all internal partners will work together to create strategies to increase parent involvement.

VIII. Adequacy of Resources

The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project . . .

As an institution that acts as a hub in Deer River and the surrounding area, Deer River Public School District has deeply embedded its work, strategies, and overall framework within the community. In addition, the district has gone above and beyond to provide support to students and their families.

During the 2018-2019 school year, Deer River Public School District created a strategic plan. The plan includes an overarching statement that: “The students of Deer River Public Schools deserve the opportunity to make their future one of success, hope, and happiness. Through a district, parent, and community partnership, students will improve their skills and achievement, build positive connections to others, and encounter broad educational experiences in an environment that is safe, welcoming, and accessible to all.” The framework also includes a stated mission to: “Develop life-long learners prepared to succeed in an ever-changing world.” High-quality instruction, equipped and supported staff, resilient and supported students, and an engaged community are all identified in the plan as the critical cogs that support the mission and overarching statement. Furthermore, strategic priorities that have been identified for the next five years emphasize the district’s commitment to:

- High-achieving students who are prepared for graduation and have identified their next steps.
- A fiscally sound district that spends taxpayer money wisely.

- Safe and secure school buildings that meet student and teacher needs PK-12.
- Highly trained and effective staff who enjoy and are fulfilled by their work.
- A district that attracts and retains high quality employees.
- Equitable learning environments that meet the needs of all students.

Near-term activities that have been identified to reach the above priorities include:

- Develop innovative, leading-edge classes, curriculum, and programs designed specifically for students.
- Identify and implement a staffing structure that best meets the social/emotional needs of students as well as prepares them for graduation and post-graduation success.
- Engage the community to build positive relationships and generate buy-in.
- Complete and act on a facility study.
- Understand the impact of poverty on families and improve structures to meet their needs.
- Develop job satisfaction metrics and respond to identified needs in school climate surveys.
- And create a coordinated and comprehensive district professional development plan.

Beyond its strategic plan, Deer River Public School District's existing facilities, programs, and staff are of high quality. King Elementary has a robust Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) in place, including a Title I School-Wide Program. The school employs a total of 60 staff including 5FTE Title 1 teachers and 3.2FTE Alternative Delivery of Specialized Instruction Services (ADSIS) interventionists/tutors. Deer River Secondary employs approximately 65 staff members and teachers.

District-wide, Deer River Public School District supports the success of students by

encouraging and supporting the professional development of staff. The district has created a coordinated and comprehensive district professional development plan, which includes ongoing staff development activities that contribute to continuous progress toward the following goals: 1) Improve student achievement of standards using evidence-based instruction, 2) Meet the needs of a diverse student population, 3) Provide an inclusive curriculum, 4) Improve staff collaboration and develop mentoring and peer coaching programs, and 5) Teach and model violence prevention policy and curriculum. Regular training topics include leadership, innovations, mentoring, technology, poverty training, cultural competency, full-service community schools, teaching children with trauma, coaching, special education, and more. The district also hosts a weekly 90-minute professional learning community in which staff and faculty participate to engage around a variety of learning topics. Staff are also participating in a leadership cohort through Learning Services International, which provides training on student-centered approaches to education. Teachers obtain the training and then return to Deer River schools and share the training with others.

Beyond its internal efforts, Deer River Public School District is intentional about engaging with other community stakeholders in ways that support student success. This approach has been engrained within the district for many years, however, collaboration around the full-service community school model began in 2017. It was at this time that Deer River Public School District formed the FSCS Leadership Team and was awarded an 18-month planning and implementation grant from the Minnesota Department of Education. As explained above, the grant helped the district and its partners conduct assessments, hire a part-time full-service community school coordinator, build new partnerships, and provide increased support to students and their families at King Elementary School. However, the grant ended in June 2018. Deer

River Public School District funded the .8FTE CSC at King Elementary for the 2018-2019 school year, however, the position has not been authorized for 2019-2020 and beyond.

Moving forward, Deer River Public School District and its partners have developed the Embrace Deer River project to better meet the needs of students, their families, and community members living in Deer River and the surrounding area. Like the work under the grant from the state of Minnesota, the project being proposed to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, has been heavily influenced by the Leadership Team (which has continued to meet despite the lack of a current FSCS grant). Team members have reviewed information generated by the state grant, have talked with the community school coordinator, and have also met with school administration. The proposed project is influenced by their participation and input. Furthermore, team members are committed to continuing to serve on the Leadership Team and to helping expand the impact of the FSCS model in Deer River.

Individuals currently serving on the Leadership Team include:

Organization	Representative
Deer River Public School District	Deanna Hron (Full-Service Community School Coordinator)
Deer River Community Education	Kayleen Monacelli, Coordinator
Independent School District 318 Grand Rapids	Amber Serfling, Special Education Teacher and Parent
North Homes Children and Family Services	Nick Spolarich, Mental Health Practitioner and Parent
Deer River Public School District	Daisy Mundt, Social Worker and Parent

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Deer River Healthcare Foundation	Leah Oslin, Executive Director
Itasca County Public Health	Kelly Chandler, Division Manager
Itasca County Public Health	Naesa Meyer, Public Health Nurse
Itasca County Health and Human Services	Eric Villeneuve, Director and Parent
Deer River Public School District	Chad Evans, Special Education Teacher and Parent
Deer River Public School District	Sheina Showen, School Nurse and Parent
Essentia Health	Amy Carlstrom, Community Coordinator
Deer River Public School District	Maureen Morrow, Teacher and Parent
Ross Resources	Morgan Hanson, Truancy Prevention Officer
Deer River Public School District	Sherwin Obey, Indian Education Teacher
Deer River Public School District	Jennifer Stefan, Principal of King Elementary
Deer River Public School District	Matt Grose, Superintendent and Parent
Get Fit Itasca	Anna Johnson, Community Coordinator Betsy Johnson, Board Chair
University of Minnesota Extension	Betsy Johnson, Public Health Educator
University of Minnesota Extension	Jodi Nordlund, SNAP Educator
Deer River Public School District	Andy Jackson, Indian Education Teacher and Ojibwe Language Instructor
Kootasca Community Action	Katey Koutsky, Family Support Specialist and Parent

The majority of the above individuals have served on the FSCS Leadership Team since it formed in 2017 and are committed to continuing their service on it. This adds to the depth of experience and background around the FSCS model in Deer River. However, new participants will also be recruited/designated under the Embrace Deer River five-year project. This will ensure new voices are integrated into the process and that partnerships continue to be developed and strengthened.

Part of the reason for the existence of the Leadership Team is to bring community organizations into conversation with each other. This way, there is a centralized way to organize and leverage existing resources, which leads to greater impact for students, their families, and community members. All key partners and many other organizations will identify a person on their staff to serve as the Embrace Deer River liaison. This person will serve on the Leadership Team and be the point of contact for the FSCS staff, creating a streamlined system of communication. The attached MOU includes this commitment from the majority of partner organizations to serve on the Leadership Team and also describes the other ways in which they are committed to contributing. As a whole, each partner is committed to continue and/or expand the services they provide in the targeted schools. They have agreed to attend monthly meetings, leverage their resources to support the program, work to secure additional partners, and cooperate with the evaluation process to provide continuous improvement throughout the project period.

Deer River Public School District is confident in the sustainability of Embrace Deer River because of the level of commitment from the variety of partners supporting the endeavor. Throughout the grant period and after the grant ends, Deer River Public School District will continue to leverage these partnerships and build new ones. The district will also continue to

seek grants from local, state, and national sources. As the project begins to show benefits to the community, increased funding will be requested from the district board. Furthermore, showcasing the success and the impact on the entire community could help garner support and contributions from individuals, businesses, and corporations within the Itasca County area.

The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits . . .

As described, Embrace Deer River will bring together many community resources to provide services for students, their families, and community members from Deer River Public School District's two primary schools. All partners involved in planning and delivery of the proposed project are deeply invested in Deer River and the surrounding area and know that student success is foundational to community health.

As part of the Embrace Deer River project, Deer River Public School District anticipates it will provide direct services to 600 students, 250 families, and 100 community members each year. The attached budget is adequate, and costs are reasonable in relation to the number served, equaling approximately \$1,400 per person per year. The program budget outlines both the expenses that will be supported with federal FSCS funding and the matching contributions from Deer River Public School District for all five years of the grant period.

As included in the budget narrative, the largest percentage (approximately 50 percent) of total grant funds requested will be used to support the project staff that will be employed by Deer River School District. These positions include a 1FTE FSCS manager, a 1 FTE community school coordinator, 1FTE parent resource coordinator, and one .5FTE health services coordinator. These individuals will be central to the work of Embrace Deer River across both schools as well as in the district as a whole. They'll work one-on-one with students, families, and community members to ensure they receive appropriate services and are connected to additional

resources in relation to their needs. In addition, they'll work closely with the Leadership Team, with school staff, with school administration, the contracted evaluator, and others to ensure the overall project is planned, implemented, and evaluated with full intent to do the most good possible with the resources available.

Total program costs, supported with FSCS funding, are estimated at an average of approximately \$1.4 million/year, which is reasonable for a program coordinating multiple in-depth services and programs and serving nearly 1,000 people per year. Deer River Public School District will contribute an average of \$940,000 to the project each year. The school district's match over five years will equal approximately 67 percent of the total projected costs.

IX. Quality of the Management Plan (up to 20 points)

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 . . .

Deer River Public School District will oversee the programmatic, administrative, and fiscal responsibilities for the FSCS grant project and will ensure compliance with the reporting requirements of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. Furthermore, Deer River Public School District will be legally responsible for the use of all grant funds, ensuring that the project is carried out by the group in accordance with federal requirements. Deer River Public School District will also employ the FSCS project staff as described in the project narrative and budget narrative.

The timeline below shows clearly defined responsibilities, milestones and evidence of completion that will ensure the proposed project is achieved on time and within budget.

Embrace Deer River – Project Timeline – Years 1 to 5			
Activities	Timeline	Responsibility	Milestones
Obtain acceptance of grant award from the Deer River School Board	October 2019	Project Director	Project implementation and hiring approved
Conduct grant orientation with school/district staff	November 2019	Project Director, FSCS Manager	Staff have a clear understanding of grant expectations, implementation, and evaluation
Conduct onboarding with new internal stakeholders including the principal of Deer River Secondary	November 2019	Project Director, FSCS Manager	Key internal stakeholders have a clear understanding of grant expectations, implementation, and evaluation
Post positions and interview candidates for community school coordinator, parent resource coordinator, and health services coordinator	October to December 2019	Project Director, FSCS Manager, HR Business Partner, Principals	FSCS staff hired

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Complete contract for external evaluator	November 2019	Project Director, FSCS Manager, Business Manager	Contract fully executed
Complete evaluation plan and design	December 2019 to April 2020	Project Director, FSCS Manager, Contracted Evaluator	Evaluation plan complete and is implemented
Conduct training and orientation for new FSCS staff	November 2019 to January 2020	FSCS Manager, HR Business Partner, Principals	FSCS trained and ready to begin implementation work
Conduct monthly meetings of the Leadership Team	October 2019 to September 2024	All FSCS staff, all internal and external partners	Regular meetings help guide assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation
Strengthen relationships with existing and new partners through the district and Itasca County	October 2019 to September 2024	All FSCS staff, all internal and external partners	Strong partnerships are serving as the foundation for the FSCS project
Finalize plans to maximize the	November 2019 to January 2020	All FSCS Staff, Leadership Team	Processes are in place to ensure effective and impactful

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effectiveness of overall project coordination			coordination of services
Finalize members of the Behavioral Support and Family Support teams	December 2019 to January 2020	All FSCS Staff, School Staff, Relevant Partners	Teams are meeting regularly to coordinate delivery of direct services
Begin recruiting individuals to serve on a special council dedicated to the reduction of the achievement gaps	October to November 2019	District Staff, All FSCS Staff, School Staff, Parents, Students	Group is meeting regularly and providing input on ways to reduce achievement gaps
Work with transportation partner to design services that will best meet identified needs	November 2019 to January 2020	FSCS Manager, Other FSCS Staff, Leadership Team, Business Manager, NorTran Bus Company	Contract in place and service delivery begins
Design and finalize approaches to more effectively coordinate health services	November 2019 to January 2020	FSCS Manager, Health Services Coordinator, School Nurses, Relevant Partners	New strategies in place to coordinate and centralize eye, dental, and medical needs

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Develop plans to expand social-emotional learning throughout the school district	October 2019 to January 2020	FSCS Manager, Principals, Teachers, U of Minnesota Extension	Contract executed and social-emotional learning is being provided to students throughout Deer River Public School District
Discuss and finalize plans to improve the transition between 5 th and 6 th grades	October 2019 to January 2020	FSCS Manager, Deer River Secondary Community School Coordinator, Principals, Teachers	New strategies are in place and are helping students in their move from the elementary school to high school
Finalize plans to enhance culturally focused strategies including pathways focused on careers in education	December 2019 to June 2020	FSCS Staff, Deer River Indian Education, Teachers, Principals, Students, Special Council	New strategies are in place and are helping Native American students achieve new successes
Recruit members for Parent Leadership Council	December 2019 to March 2020	FSCS Staff, Principals, Parents	Council formed and is providing input on a

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and establish regular meeting schedule			variety of FSCS-related topics
Parent nights, enhanced conference nights, and special events have been developed as ways to increase parent engagement	December 2019 to March 2020	Relevant Partners, Parent Leadership Council	New strategies are in place and are engaging increased numbers of parents
Program implementation begins	January to April 2020	All Staff, All Partners	Final plans and strategies are complete, service delivery begins through new FSCS model
Partners provide services as described in the MOU	January 2020 to September 2024	All Partners	Partners provide services to students and families that align with the four pillars of the Community School Model

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Professional development opportunities provided to FSCS staff and Leadership Team members	January 2020 to September 2024	FSCS Staff, Principals, School Staff, Partners	Staff and partners obtain learning that leads to continual program improvement
Host end-of-year celebrations/recognition events	December of each year beginning in 2020	All Staff, All Partners	Celebration and recognition help create positive and progressive culture around FSCS work
Compile and submit annual performance report	January 2020 to September 2024	Project Director, FSCS Manager	Project expectations met, continued funding of program
Based on performance reports and overall evaluation, make program adjustments/improvements	January 2020 to September 2024	Project Director, FSCS Manager	Evaluation leads to continual program improvement

The time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the project objectives . . .

Matt Grose, the district superintendent, will serve as the project director and will be the person responsible for project administration on behalf of the school district for this grant. Mr. Grose will have the responsibility of helping to create an environment of trust and collaboration and to ensure that the program runs smoothly. Jennifer Drotts, business manager, will assist with financial recordkeeping and compliance. With the time commitment of .05FTE from the project

director and .05FTE from the business manager, Embrace Deer River will be adequately managed with the utmost fidelity to ensure that the proposed grant is responsibly administered.

As stated above, Deer River Public School District will also employ the FSCS project staff. These positions include the 1FTE FSCS manager (who will also conduct site-specific coordination at King Elementary School), a 1FTE FSCS coordinator at Deer River Secondary, 1FTE parent resource coordinator, and a .5FTE health services coordinator. Deanna Hron is the current .8FTE community school coordinator at King Elementary. Ms. Hron has worked as the community school coordinator for 18 months. She facilitates meetings of the Leadership Team, provides quarterly reports to the school board, and is also responsible for providing direct supports to students and families. Under Embrace Deer River, she will play a primary role in ensuring the goals and objectives are achieved on time and within budget. One hundred percent of her time (1FTE) as the FSCS manager will be dedicated to the project, and she will be supported by the 1FTE community school coordinator, the 1FTE parent resource coordinator, and the .5FTE health services coordinator. Further detail regarding staffing for the project follows in the below table.

Staff Member	Qualifications/Experience	Project Responsibilities
Project Director, Superintendent Matt Grose, .05FTE in-kind	Extensive leadership and grant management experience (resume attached)	Oversee project and provide leadership and vision; build culture of trust and accountability
Business Manager Jennifer Drotts, .05FTE in-kind	Long-term experience with district finances and fiscal	Assist with recordkeeping and compliance, keep grant-

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	management of complex grant projects	related financials, and contribute to financial reporting
Full-Service Community School Manager (and coordinator at King Elementary School), Deanna Hron, 1FTE, partial in-kind	More than 20 years of experience as an elementary teacher, FSCS coordinator for past 18 months, has participated on many leadership teams	Provide direction for FSCS project, oversee implementation and act as evaluation point person, provide FSCS service coordination at King Elementary School
Full-Service Community School Coordinator at Deer River Secondary, 1FTE	To be hired	Develop FSCS program at Deer River Secondary, provide service coordination, support FSCS Manager
Parent Resource Coordinator, 1FTE	To be hired, bicultural preferred	Provide in-school and in-home wraparound support for parents to improve outcomes for students
Health Services Coordinator, .5FTE	To be hired	Coordinate delivery and access to health services throughout the district

X. Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

Deer River Public School District will utilize an evaluative methodology consisting of both quantitative and qualitative data. Working in partnership with Wilder Research, a vendor with long-term and documented expertise in project evaluation, Deer River Public School District will develop tools and protocols to document program activities, accomplishment, and performance measurements. These strategies will enable the collection and generation of data for annual performance reports as well as set a course for continuous improvement. Furthermore, Deer River Public School District will prioritize the collection of data to measure impact on students, families, and community members. To further expand the impact of such data, analyses will be desegregated by race, gender, ethnicity, and school.

As a whole, Deer River Public School District has identified five goals for the evaluation of the full-service community schools project.

- To identify and establish relevant baseline data.
- To develop tools and evaluation protocols that are practical and easy to use.
- To develop an evaluation process that produces data that is both robust and useful.
- To develop an evaluative process that illuminates both successes and areas in which improvement is needed in order to increase impact on students, families, and schools.
- To develop an evaluative process that indicates progress toward project goals, objectives, outcomes, and performance measures.

The evaluation design for Embrace Deer River will be led by Wilder Research. Wilder is a non-profit organization with a mission to improve the lives of individuals, families, and

communities through human services research, with a substantial amount of work focused specifically on promoting the well-being of youth across Minnesota. Wilder's work helps organizations improve services, plan for the future, allocate funds, revise policies, and increase public awareness about the issues they care about. Wilder currently conducts research for more than 100 non-profit, academic, and government organizations whose sphere of influence ranges from the neighborhood to the national level. Research clients include schools, school districts, school stakeholders, government agencies, direct service providers, policymaking boards, foundations, and community groups. Primary services include consultation and technical assistance, needs assessments, process and outcome evaluations, community and multi-site studies, social trend and demographic studies, demonstration studies, and dissemination of research findings. Wilder has provided evaluation consultation and services on a number of full-service community school projects including for Minneapolis Public Schools under an FY 2018 Full-Service Community Schools grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

As part of the Embrace Deer River project, Deer River Public School District will work closely with Wilder Research during the first six months of the grant project to establish a contract and design an evaluation process that will closely connect with project implementation. It's anticipated the evaluation design will include three components: 1) Quality of program implementation, 2) Assessment of participant outcomes, and 3) Continual improvement and sustainability. The quality of program implementation will be measured through observations, focus groups, surveys, document analysis, and participation numbers. These will shed light on whether activities are being implemented as planned, whether activities are of high quality, and whether there are any factors preventing successful implementation. The assessment of participant outcomes will center around the project goals, objectives, and outcomes as described

on pages 9 to 12 in this proposal. This element of project evaluation will include the identification and establishment of baseline data that will inform overall project performance. Finally, continual improvement and sustainability will be treated as key components of the evaluation process in order to ensure the project is not only on course, but is building momentum in ways that will help sustain it beyond the grant period.

Based on current numbers of low-income families within Deer River Public School District, it's estimated the project will serve 600 students, 250 families, and 100 community members each year. The logic model on the following page will form the basis of the evaluation process.

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Embrace Deer River – Logic Model			
Goal 1: Increase coordination of supportive services for students, their families, and community members; Goal 2: Decrease achievement gaps and increase the overall number of students achieving academically; and Goal 3: Increase the number of students who are safe, healthy, and supported by engaged parents.			
Inputs	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
Project staff	Health services are integrated and coordinated	Children are healthy and ready to go to school	More students achieving academically
Leadership team	New transportation services created	Students can get to school	More students who are safe, healthy, and supported by engaged parents
Funding and facilities	Transition plans in place for 5 th -6 th graders	and attend regularly	
Committed partners	Strategies to increase parent engagement are developed and implemented	All students are getting the help they need to succeed academically	Increased coordination of services for students and their families
Support from school district and community	Social-emotional learning is used throughout school district	Parents are increasingly involved in their children’s education	
Evaluation	Culturally focused strategies developed and implemented	All services are coordinated and cohesive	All Deer River students succeed at school
	Partners provide existing pipeline services	Staff and Leadership Team members are increasingly knowledgeable and informed	Evaluation leads to long-term sustainability
	Coordination and integration of existing/new services increased		
	Training provided to staff and Leadership Team	Evaluation reports inform continual improvement	
	Evaluation tools, protocols, and data collection in place		

As a whole, evaluation of Embrace Deer River will provide ongoing information to the project director, key FSCS staff, the Leadership Team, and other stakeholders. It will be designed to gauge project progress and identify areas in need of improvement by evaluating both project implementation and outcomes for project participants. The evaluation point of contact for Deer River Public School District will be the FSCS manager. The manager will coordinate evaluation activities within the district, will ensure ongoing and accurate collection of data, and will work closely with Wilder Research throughout the life of the project.

The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible . . .

As described above, the evaluation of Embrace Deer River will be ongoing after a planning process is conducted in the first six months of the grant period. Process evaluation will be conducted to evaluate project activities and implementation. Impact evaluation will be conducted to assess whether the project outcomes have been met. Information obtained from the process evaluation will provide a major source of information for planning and improving project activities. Impact evaluation will be an ongoing learning process that will be used to adjust the project activities in a continuous way and will involve documentation of key aspects of program performance to ensure the program is functioning as intended. Annual performance reports will be generated reflecting the progress in meeting project objectives, and a final report will be submitted at the end of the grant period, detailing all grant activities and outcomes. All annual reports will be posted on the district website and otherwise made publically available. The below table illustrates how performance measures will clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project in ways that will produce both quantitative and qualitative data.

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Outcomes	Performance Measurements that Align with Each Outcome
Short-Term Outcomes	
Children are healthy and ready to go to school	Immunizations, vision and dental status, mental health status, overall health status, food security
Students can get to school and attend regularly	Attendance rates, chronic absenteeism, tardiness
All students are getting the help they need to succeed academically	Grades, academic performance, graduation rates
Parents are increasingly involved in their children’s education	Attendance at conferences, attendance at Parent Nights, engagement through parent resource coordinator, parent participation in Embrace Deer River
All services are coordinated and cohesive	Service utilization rates
Staff and Leadership Team members are increasingly knowledgeable and informed	Number and type of trainings, conferences, meetings
Evaluation reports inform continual improvement	Number and purpose of report completed
Long-Term Outcomes	
More students achieving academically	Standardized test scores, grades, graduation rates
More students who are safe, healthy, and supported by engaged parents	Student surveys, parent surveys, teacher surveys
Increased coordination of services for students and their families	Participation and utilization rates
All Deer River students succeed at school	Overall academic performance, standardized tests, graduation rates
Evaluation leads to long-term sustainability	Partnerships in place, funding secured

Evaluation of Embrace Deer River will involve the analyzing and tracking of project activities as well as the progress of students, families, and community members. Using data obtained from public sources and local documentation, the evaluation will produce valid and reliable performance data. This will be ensured by using existing data sources that are updated regularly including the Minnesota Student Survey, Minnesota Report Card, and SPARK Youth Voice Survey. In addition, fidelity will be integrated by developing local data collection tools at the onset of the project that can be used (with minor modifications as needed) throughout the life of the grant project.

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

As described above, the evaluation will be built around clearly defined project goals, objectives, outcomes, and performance measurements. The project goals are to:

Goal 1: Increase coordination of supportive services for students, their families, and community members.

Goal 2: Decrease achievement gaps and increase the overall number of students achieving academically.

Goal 3: Increase the number of students who are safe, healthy, and supported by engaged parents.

Within each of these goals, a number of objectives (pages 9 to 12) are specifically designed to create progress toward the goals. Short-term outcomes of the implementation of objectives are children are healthy and ready to go to school; students can get to school and attend regularly; all students are getting the help they need to succeed academically; parents are increasingly

involved in their children's education; all services are coordinated and cohesive; staff and Leadership Team members are increasingly knowledgeable and informed; and evaluation reports inform continual improvement. The long-term outcomes of the implementation of objectives are more students achieving academically; more students who are safe, healthy, and supported by engaged parents; increased coordination of services for students and their families; all Deer River students succeed at school; and evaluation leads to long-term sustainability.

The performance measures listed in the table on page 57 will directly tie to the project goals, objectives, and outcomes by:

- 1) Demonstrating an annual increase in the number of students, their families, and community members served by the grant. This will be measured by establishing a baseline at the beginning of the project and tracking it on an annual basis throughout the life of the grant.
- 2) Showing a measurable increase in student academic achievement in the schools served by the grant and demonstrate a decrease in achievement gaps between White, Native American and FRPL students.
- 3) Showing that parents are increasingly involved in the education of their children in ways that lead to them feeling more safe, healthy, and supported.