

**Removing Barriers to Learning through Case Management in Erie’s Community Schools**  
**US Department of Education Full-Service Community Schools 2019**  
**Project Narrative**

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## **Introduction**

Encompassing 13 public school districts, Erie County is located in northwest Pennsylvania along the shores of Lake Erie. It is positioned 100 miles northeast of Cleveland, Ohio; 90 miles southwest of Buffalo, New York; and 130 miles north of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania – far enough from these major cities to have its own unique community identity. Over the last three years, Erie, Pennsylvania has been the subject of both local and national media attention focused on its position at the crossroads of its own past and the representative nature of a struggle to forge its future. This struggle is literally happening every day in Erie’s urban neighborhoods as policy-makers and community leaders work to both address the current effects of widespread poverty and ensure that its insipid growth is somehow stanching and reversed. Erie finds itself at this moment of pregnant potential after three decades of decline in industry, loss of large manufacturing employers and a steady stream of “brain drain.” These factors and others have ultimately contributed to a sharp increase in poverty over the last 20 years, leading to the most recent challenges of inner-city blight, youth violence, unemployment and an unskilled workforce. Unfortunately, public and private leadership in Erie remained stuck in a “silo” mentality, missing opportunities to connect and leverage resources to collectively impact large-scale issues.

Recognizing this community crisis of disorganization and corresponding need for a collective impact model, United Way of Erie County and Erie’s Public Schools (d/b/a Erie City School District) embarked on a fast-tracked pilot project in 2016 to implement the evidence-based community schools model in five district schools during the 2016-17 school year. This pilot project provided the framework to improve coordination, integration, accessibility, and effectiveness of services for children and families in order to improve student access and achieve

long-term goals related to poverty reduction and self-sufficiency in Erie County. Since commencing the initial pilot in 2016, the model has expanded to include three more schools, now reaching three school districts. United Way of Erie County's ultimate goal is to bring the community school model to scale in all 13 public school districts in Erie County.

United Way of Erie County, which serves as the backbone organization for the community schools initiative in Erie County and is at the forefront of the region's collective impact initiatives, now requests **\$2,031,397.72** over the next five years to expand its success as part of the U.S. Department of Education's Full Service Community Schools Program.

### **Competitive Preference Priorities**

Pursuant to Federal Register guidelines, this application is requesting status under the Absolute Priority (serving more than two full-service community schools eligible for a school-wide program) as well as Competitive Preference Priority 2 (Broadly Representative Consortium); Competitive Preference Priority 3 (History of Effectiveness); and Competitive Preference Priority 4 (Evidence-Based Activities). If awarded, United Way of Erie County and the Community School Partnership will expand available pipeline services by incorporating Case Managers into Erie County's five original community schools, with a focus on improving attendance, supporting mental health needs, and increasing access to and use of community resources for parents and students. This strategic project aligns with United Way of Erie County's mission to decrease poverty and increase self-sufficiency among Erie County residents through a collective impact approach.

**Absolute priority.** Each of the five schools involved in this project are part of Erie City School District and are eligible for school-wide services as defined by Section 1114(b) of the ESEA. These schools were the initial pilot community schools in Erie County, first

implementing the model during the 2016-17 school year. They have since provided a framework for other schools in our community to implement the evidence-based community schools model. These five schools represent the foundation of a community-wide strategy to expand the model across all 13 school districts in Erie County.

**Competitive preference priority 2—Broadly representative consortiums.** United Way of Erie County is the backbone organization for the implementation of the community schools model in Erie County. Each community school has a Corporate Partner, Lead Partner, and Community School Director that serve with United Way of Erie County on the Community School Leadership Team. Corporate Partners provide fiscal support and are welcome to volunteer and engage with students and their families. Lead Partners are community-based organizations that employ the Community School Director and help mobilize community assets and coordinate resources. *Table 1: Community School Partners* shows the key partners for each established community school.

In addition to the leadership teams at each Community School, United Way of Erie County and Erie City School District have assembled a District Leadership Team that includes high-level community partners and senior district administration. *Appendix A: Erie County Community Schools Partnership Model* contains handouts that demonstrate the model as it is applied in Erie County. As evidence of the broad base of support from our partners, please find letters of support attached in *Appendix B: Letters of Support*.

**Table 1: Community School Partners**

School	Corporate Partner	Lead Partner	Community School Director
Erie City School District			
Diehl Elementary School	Accudyn Products Inc., American Tinning & Galvanizing, Custom Engineering, Lincoln Recycling, McInnes Rolled Rings, Reddog Industries, Inc., Smith Provision Company Inc., & Team Hardinger	Mercyhurst University	TBD
Edison Elementary School	Wabtec Corporation	Achievement Center	Tami Krzeszewski-Conway, LSW
McKinley Elementary School	LORD Corporation	Edinboro University	Amy Grande
Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary School	Erie Insurance	Family Services of NWPA	Meghan Easter

**Table 1: Community School Partners Cont.**

School	Corporate Partner	Lead Partner	Community School Director
East Middle School	Hamot Health Foundation	Safe Harbor Behavioral Health of UPMC Hamot	Jamilia Gates
Strong Vincent Middle School	Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield	Gannon University	Katrina Byrd
Girard School District			
Elk Valley Elementary School	Reed Manufacturing	Achievement Center	Kim Ozimek
Iroquois School District			
Iroquois Elementary School	Reed Manufacturing & Widget Financial	Penn State Behrend CORE	Kerrie Grande

For the purposes of this grant application, funding will be used to incorporate Case Managers to support attendance, mental health, and access to community resources at Erie County’s five original community schools, including East Middle School, Edison Elementary School, McKinley Elementary School, Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary School, and Strong Vincent Middle School. All of these are schools in Erie City School District. This will provide a model

for other schools to follow as the community school strategy is brought to scale throughout Erie County.

The following organizations are key partners for the five schools targeted by this grant and will be integral in its implementation:

***Achievement Center.*** Achievement Center provides quality therapeutic services to children and families across the Erie region. Programs are designed to meet the unique needs of children and adolescents who are experiencing emotional, physical or behavioral challenges. These programs, available to students throughout the county, as well as the input provided through as a member of Edison Elementary School's Community School Leadership Team as Lead Partner are needed aspects of the consortium.

***Edinboro University.*** Edinboro University is a public, regional, comprehensive university with the mission to develop students personally, intellectually and professionally to become contributing citizens to the Commonwealth and beyond. Edinboro University's influence on McKinley Elementary School's Community School Leadership Team as Lead Partner, as well as the educational expertise available, are important assets to the consortium.

***Erie City School District.*** As the largest public school district in Erie County, Erie City School District's objective is to prepare city students to establish and achieve their higher education and career goals. By actively engaging students in their learning through high quality curriculum and excellent teaching, Erie City School District seeks to create a culture of high expectations, collaboration, respect, and accountability for the students and families of the City of Erie. Erie City School District identified the community school model as a key strategy to leverage and align community resources around student success and has incorporated the model into the district's strategic plan. Each of the five community schools that will be involved in this



project are part of Erie City School District. Members of the district administration sit on each of the Community School Leadership Teams as well as the District Leadership Team.

***Erie Insurance.*** Erie Insurance is a Fortune 500 company, providing auto, home, business and life insurance. Erie Insurance's partnership provides resources and volunteers that support Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary School students and their families as well as input as a member of Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary School's Community School Leadership Team as Corporate Partner.

***Family Services of NWPA.*** Family Services of NWPA is a private, non-sectarian, non-profit family service agency that provides social services throughout Erie County and surrounding counties with 25+ programs within three core service areas of Adoption, Counseling and Education, and Volunteer Services. These programs, available to students throughout the county, as well as the input provided through as a member Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary School's Community School Leadership Team as Lead Partner are important aspects of the consortium.

***Gannon University.*** Located in Erie's urban core, Gannon University is a Catholic, Diocesan university dedicated to excellence in teaching, scholarship and service. Faculty and staff prepare students to be global citizens through programs grounded in the liberal arts and sciences and professional specializations. Inspired by the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, an emphasis is placed on a comprehensive, values-centered learning experience that emphasizes faith, leadership, inclusiveness and social responsibility. Gannon University's influence on Strong Vincent Middle School's Community School Leadership Team as Lead Partner, as well as the evaluative expertise available, are important assets to the consortium.

***Hamot Health Foundation.*** Hamot Health Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides opportunities to advance health care initiatives by aligning the intentions of donors to the critical needs of UPMC Hamot and our community. Serving as the philanthropic arm of UPMC Hamot, Hamot Health Foundation allocates local investments based on careful planning to help provide the highest level of care for as many people as possible. Hamot Health Foundation's partnership provides resources that support East Middle School students and their families as well as input as a member of East Middle School's Community School Leadership Team as Corporate Partner.

***Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield.*** Highmark's mission is to be the leading health and wellness provider in the community through innovative products, programs and services. Highmark's partnership provides resources and volunteers that support Strong Vincent Middle School students and their families as well as input as a member of Strong Vincent Middle School's Community School Leadership Team as Corporate Partner.

***LORD Corporation.*** LORD Corporation is a diversified technology and manufacturing company developing highly reliable adhesives, coatings, motion management devices, and sensing technologies that significantly reduce risk and improve product performance. LORD Corporation's partnership provides resources and volunteers that support McKinley Elementary School students and their families as well as input as a member of McKinley Elementary School's Community School Leadership Team as Corporate Partner.

***Safe Harbor Behavioral Health of UPMC Hamot.*** As an affiliate of UPMC Hamot, Safe Harbor Behavioral Health works to improve access to mental health resources for people in Erie County. Safe Harbor Behavioral Health provides a direct link to research-based care for many behavioral health conditions by offering clinics and therapy services, 24/7/365 crisis intervention

programming, substance use disorder services, and community-based case management, which are all important resources for community schools throughout the county. Safe Harbor Behavioral Health is also a member of East Middle School's Community School Leadership Team as Lead Partner and will act as the hiring and supervising agency for the Project Director and Case Managers in this project.

***United Way of Erie County.*** United Way of Erie County works to reduce the number of children and families living in poverty and increase self-sufficiency. When families are able to meet their basic needs without public or private assistance, they can focus on financial growth and pursue opportunities that previously seemed beyond their reach. United Way of Erie County serves as the backbone organization for the countywide community schools project, providing technical assistance/support, training, data collection, evaluation and community resource development. United Way of Erie County is also a member of all Community School Leadership Teams, the District Leadership Team, and will provide the backbone support for the elements implemented through this grant.

***Wabtec Corporation.*** Wabtec Corporation (formerly GE Transportation) combines decades of industrial leadership with cutting-edge data science and analytics acumen to create an efficient, productive and reliable digital-rail ecosystem. Wabtec's partnership provides resources and volunteers that support Edison Elementary School students and their families as well as input as a member of Edison Elementary School's Community School Leadership Team as Corporate Partner.

**Competitive preference priority 3—History of effectiveness.** Erie County's Community Schools Partnership began in 2016 with a partnership agreement between United Way of Erie County and Erie City School District. Together, United Way of Erie County and the

Erie City School District hosted community information sessions to help potential funders and partners understand the model. United Way of Erie County also contracted with the National Center for Community Schools to provide technical assistance on the developing model.

A Request for Proposals was issued to all schools in Erie City School District to determine interest and need among the 15 schools. Importantly, schools were asked to obtain a majority vote from their building staff in favor of adopting the community school model in order to submit a Request for Proposals. From this process, five schools were selected as pilot locations. Next, a Request for Proposals was issued to potential Lead Partners for each pilot school to match resources with identified need. Corporate Partners were also recruited during this time to provide a commitment that would support the salaries of Community School Directors at each location. Partnership agreements and Memorandums of Understanding between and among United Way of Erie County, Erie City School District, and all partners were carefully negotiated and vetted by legal teams in order to finalize logistics around data sharing, building use and staff commitment. Finally, Erie City School District secured a \$1.5 million grant from the Erie Community Foundation to support planning, training, and start-up costs for the pilot project.

In January 2017, Community School Directors were hired for each pilot school, utilizing a model in which the Community School Directors are employed by each school's Lead Partner but are paid through a grant from United Way of Erie County with funds from a Corporate Partner. Lead Partners provide benefits packages to each Community School Director as their in-kind commitment to the project. In their first six months of employment, which coincided with the second semester of the 2016-17 school year, the Community School Directors completed a comprehensive needs assessment to identify the scope and nature of student, family, and staff

needs in their school. These needs assessments were then used in 2017-18 to inform the development of school action plans that outlined a strategy to address needs. Community School Directors are now using their school action plans and working with their Community School Leadership Teams to connect and leverage community partners with needs in their buildings.

Now in its third year, the Community Schools Partnership has expanded to include eight schools over three school districts. More than 265 student engagement events and more than 190 parent engagement events have occurred with the help of nearly 6,000 volunteers and more than \$214,000 in in-kind donations. United Way of Erie County has also become part of the Pennsylvania Community Schools Coalition to advocate for community schools. By engaging a variety of stakeholders, the Community Schools Partnership has been successful in encouraging this collective impact approach by promoting collaboration across public, private, philanthropic, and non-profit sectors. Because of the time taken to thoughtfully and strategically plan the structure of this model's local implementation, we are confident that the project will continue to grow and expand over the next five years and beyond.

**Competitive preference priority 4—Evidence-based activities, strategies, or interventions.** The expansion of services outlined in this proposal include components guided by recommendation 2 in the *Dropout Prevention Guide* developed for the What Works Clearinghouse.<sup>1</sup> Recommendation 2 shows moderate evidence supporting the targeted intervention of assigning adult advocates to students at risk of dropping out. Using this recommendation as a foundation, a component of the work of case workers who are involved in this project will be to develop meaningful relationships with at-risk students and act as adult advocates to support their needs.

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<sup>1</sup> Dynarski et al., 2008

The *Dropout Prevention Guide* was unable to assess the discrete effect of the adult advocates on dropout prevention but showed moderate evidence that this strategy in combination with other strategies could have positive effects on staying in school (one study showed a positive effect and one a potentially positive effect) and progressing in school (two studies showed a potentially positive effect). In line with this evaluation, this component of the project will be combined with other pipeline services and strategies that are currently in place to improve outcomes at the schools. The Case Managers and the pipeline services they will provide will be incorporated into a network of services available to improve student success and family stability.

#### **(a) Quality of the Project Design**

Faced with district-wide challenges that include distressing levels of poverty (73% of students are economically disadvantaged), chronic poor attendance (23% of students were chronically absent in the first three quarters of 2018-19), substandard graduation rates (2017-18 graduation rate was 74%), and dismal standardized test performance (35% of students scoring proficient or higher in ELA and 21% proficient or higher in Math), Erie City School District has adopted a district-wide strategic plan that seeks to improve attendance, mastery of core subjects, student engagement, and graduation rates by 2024. To do this, the district recognized it required a collective impact model to make any progress toward significant gains in these areas. Erie City School District identified the community school model as a key strategy to leverage and align community resources around student success in order to ensure that the district is not alone in this critical work and to address non-academic barriers to student achievement by integrating high-quality, evidence-based, and culturally informed pipeline services within these schools<sup>2</sup>. This proposal seeks to enhance pipeline services at five existing community schools in Erie

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<sup>2</sup> Maier, Daniel, Oakes, & Lam, 2017

County. A signed Memorandum of Understanding outlining the activities described in this proposal is attached in *Appendix C: Memorandum of Understanding*.

The project expansion outlined in this proposal has been informed by school action plan and needs assessment data collected at each of the community schools involved. The action plan template used by these schools has been established by the Community Schools Partnership to increase academic achievement and pro-social behavior for students adversely affected by poverty and related challenges. Priorities for each school, developed as part of these action plans, are attached as *Appendix D: Action Plan Priorities*.

**(1) The Extent to Which the Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes to be Achieved by the Proposed Project are Clearly Specified and Measurable**

United Way of Erie County’s mission is to mobilize community resources to break the cycle of poverty and improve our community. The goals of the project align with this mission and objectives of the project are designed to lead to outcomes that work toward these goals, as outlined in *Table 2: Project Goal, Objectives, and Outcomes*.

**Table 2: Project Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes**

<b>Goal 1:</b> Increase social, health, and mental health services and supports for community school students and families
<b>Objective 1.1:</b> Within 60 days of project funding, hire a Project Director with education and experience in case management.

**Table 2: Project Goals, Objectives and Outcomes cont.**

<p><b>Objective 1.2:</b> Within six months of project funding, work with project partners to finalize eligibility criteria that will guide the referral process through the Student Assistance Program, protocol for Case Manager activities, and standards for documentation.</p>
<p><b>Objective 1.3:</b> Within six months of project funding, hire a Case Manager with education and experience in case management to serve students and families at each school.</p>
<p><b>Objective 1.4:</b> Within seven months of project funding, provide Case Managers with necessary training and ensure they start receiving a caseload of students to work with through the Student Assistance Program referral process, as measured by referrals received.</p>
<p><b>Objective 1.5:</b> Throughout the duration of the project, work with specialists in physical health, mental health, behavioral health, special education, and children’s services to provide case management services for students and families that need additional supports and integrate services seamlessly into the school culture to support academic achievement, as measured by records of services provided.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 1.1:</b> By June 2024, provide case management services to 375 unduplicated individuals annually, as measured by documentation records.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 1.2:</b> By June 2024, increase accessibility to services in physical health, mental health, behavioral health, special education, and children’s services to an additional 125 unduplicated individuals annually, as measured by the number of referrals made to these services through the Student Assistance Program.</p>



**Table 2: Project Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes cont.**

<b>Goal 2:</b> Increase overall school attendance and decrease truancy and chronic absence
<b>Objective 2.1:</b> Within eight months of project funding, begin utilizing Case Managers to support truancy caseloads by making phone calls and conducting home visits to work with families of students identified as truant or chronically absent on overcoming barriers to school attendance, as measured by phone calls and home visit logs.
<b>Objective 2.2:</b> Throughout the project, follow recommendation 2 from the <i>Dropout Prevention Guide</i> and utilize caseworkers to build meaningful relationships with at-risk students and act as adult advocates to support their needs, as measured by the number and type of touchpoints with students and families.
<b>Outcome 2.1:</b> By June 2024, decrease the percent of chronically absent students to a 10% combined rate across the schools involved in this project (currently 23.4%), as measured by the number and percent of students who have missed 10% of school days or more in a school year.
<b>Outcome 2.2:</b> By June 2024, decrease the percent of truant students to a 25% combined rate across the schools involved in this project (currently 38.4%) as measured by the number and percent students who have three or more unexcused absences in a school year.
<b>Goal 3:</b> Increase family and community engagement and supports
<b>Objective 3.1:</b> Within seven months of project funding, provide cultural competency training to Case Managers and the Project Director.

**Table 2: Project Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes cont.**

<p><b>Objective 3.2:</b> Within seven months of project funding, ensure Case Managers receive referrals to support students and families with challenges due to basic needs, parent needs, or a one-time-event based need, as measured by referrals received.</p>
<p><b>Objective 3.3:</b> Throughout the project, work with community referral services to ensure accurate accountings of available community resources and use assertive follow-up to support students and families in accessing needed resources, as measured by the number and type of connections made to available resources.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 3.1:</b> By June 2024, collaborate with the project partners to increase access to community resources for 1,000 individuals, including at-risk students and families, as measured by the number of individuals who have had at least one successful referral to community resources.</p>
<p><b>Goal 4:</b> Implement evaluation strategies that encompass the Rapid Cycle Quality Improvement approach to monitor the project’s impact and create a predictive model that can support the development of an early warning system for students</p>
<p><b>Objective 4.1:</b> Within 60 days of project funding, finalize the Data Sharing Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding with Gannon University to conduct formative and summative evaluation.</p>
<p><b>Objective 4.2:</b> Within six months of project funding, implement a system to monitor project impact and train partners on goals, outcomes, and methods of data collection.</p>

**Table 2: Project Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes cont.**

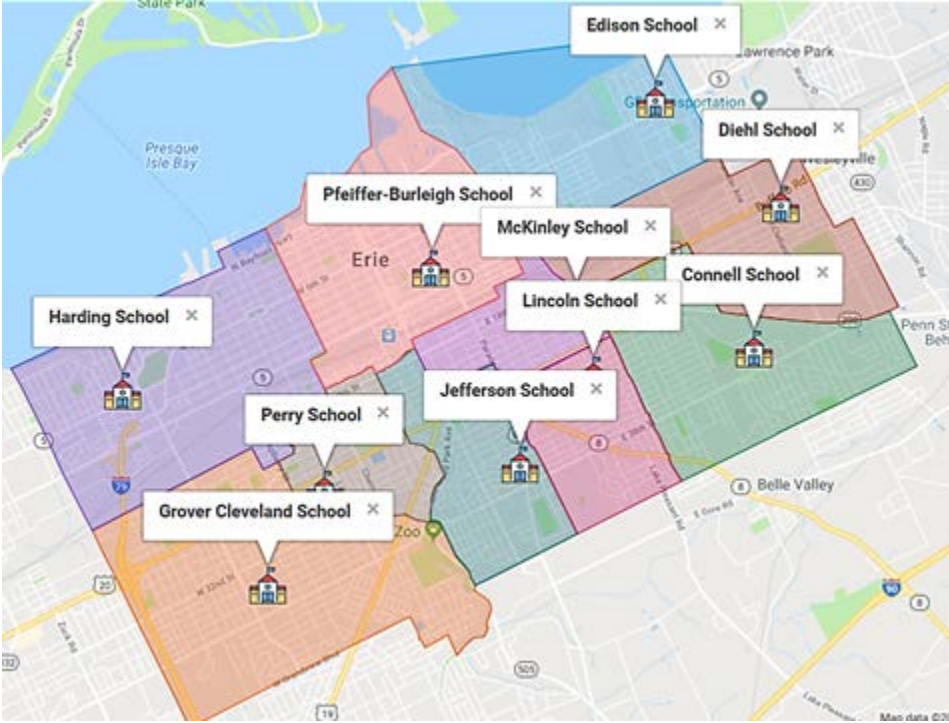
<p><b>Outcome 4.1:</b> Annually conduct formative and summative evaluations that show progress toward project outcomes.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 4.2:</b> By June 2024, use collected data to create a predictive model that can identify indicators that lead to negative outcomes (e.g., a student who is bullied is less likely to attend school) and apply knowledge gained to develop an early warning system and inform strategies and pipeline services provided by the community schools.</p>

Achieving these outcomes and objectives will also progress the work toward long-term goals that apply to the entire Community Schools Partnership, including: 1) improved academic performance, 2) increased social/emotional learning and life skills, 3) improved physical and mental health, 4) increased graduation rates, 5) improved partnerships between schools and families, 6) increased family involvement in education, and 7) increased family connections to community resources.

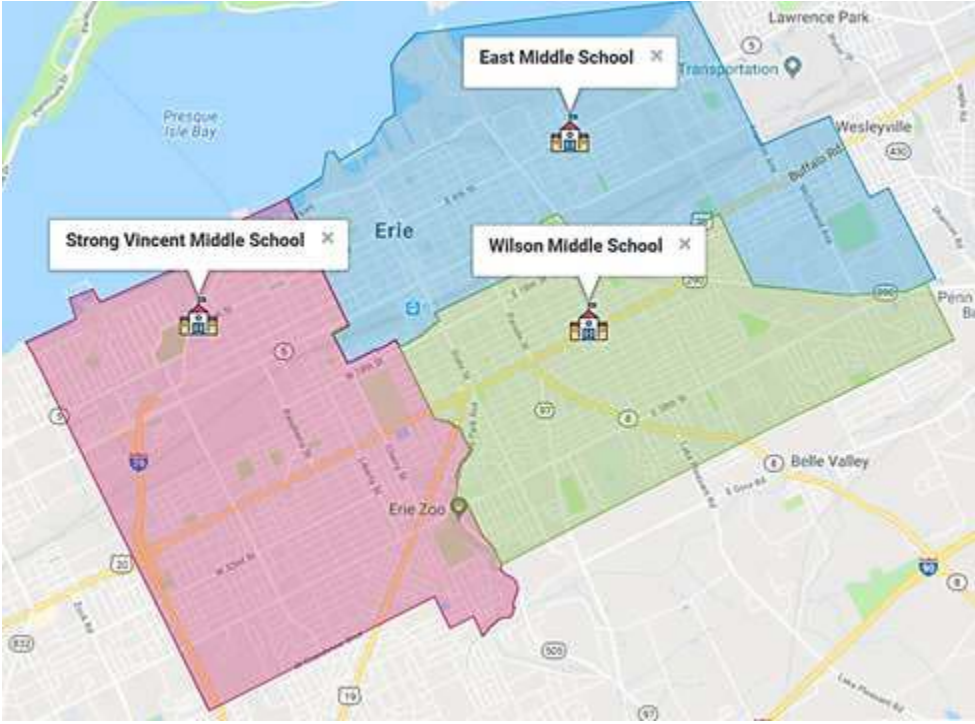
**(2) The Extent to Which the Design of the Proposed Project is Appropriate to, and Will Successfully Address, the Needs of the Target Population or Other Identified Needs**

The target population of this project is the 3,138 high-risk, low-income students attending Edison Elementary School, McKinley Elementary School, Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary School, East Middle School and Strong Vincent Middle School (see *Figure 1: Elementary School Boundary Lines & Figure 2: Middle School Boundary Lines*).

**Figure 1: Elementary School Boundary Lines**



**Figure 2: Middle School Boundary Lines**



Pursuant to IDEA, Erie City School District is required to ensure that all students with special needs have equitable access to school-related programs and services. All elements of the community school project follow these same guidelines and provide accommodations for students and their families who require them. Important school notifications are provided in multiple languages and the district websites, where information is regularly posted, are ADA compliant. Further, all schools either employ or contract (through the local Intermediate Unit) an array of specialists to meet student and family needs. Many of these employees, particularly those involved in the Student Assistance Program, participate in the Community School Leadership Teams to ensure equitable access for all students and families.

As noted previously, comprehensive school needs assessments have been completed for each of the schools through a process that included focus groups, surveys, asset inventories, reviews of school improvement plans, and student data assessments. In addition to this school-level assessment, Erie City School District also completed a comprehensive stakeholder-driven strategic planning process in 2018. Through this process, the district publicly addressed critical challenges facing its approximately 11,000 students including:

- 35% of third grade students were proficient or advanced on the PSSA in English Language Arts
- 20% of students were proficient or advanced in Math
- 45% of students reached an attendance rate of at least 95%
- 73% of students graduated

**Risk factors that affect the target population.** As recognized by the Every Student Succeeds Act, additional supports are needed for America’s disadvantaged and high-need students, such as those attending Erie City School District. Ensuring their success requires

addressing risk factors they face every day. Among the 3,138 students enrolled in the schools targeted by this proposal, there is a significantly increased risk for dropping out of school due a combination of the following risk factors outlined by the National Dropout Prevention Center and Communities in Schools.<sup>3</sup>

***Individual domain: Factors related to individual students.***

*Individual background characteristics.* Unalterable demographic characteristics can place students at higher risk for struggling in school, including race, gender, and having limited cognitive abilities or some other type of disability. *Table 3: 2018-19 Student Demographic Characteristics* shows the prevalence of these characteristics among students at each of the targeted community schools. Research suggests that of all of these characteristics, the students receiving special education services are most likely to drop out of school and have need of greater supports.

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<sup>3</sup> Hammond, Linton, Smink, & Drew, 2007

**Table 3: 2018-19 Student Demographic Characteristics**

<b>Demographic</b>	<b>Edison Elementary</b>	<b>McKinley Elementary</b>	<b>Pfeiffer- Burleigh Elementary</b>	<b>East Middle</b>	<b>Strong Vincent Middle</b>
<b>Enrollment</b>	495	557	610	686	790
<b>Race</b>					
White	19.2%	21.5%	19.8%	22.4%	49.4%
Black/African American	33.7%	42.9%	39.5%	41%	20.6%
Hispanic/Latino	27.7%	19.7%	21.3%	21%	16.1%
Asian	7.1%	6.8%	6.4%	7.9%	2.2%
American Indian/Alaska Native	.2%	.2%	.2%	0%	.3%
Two or more races	11.7%	8.8%	12.8%	7.7%	11.1%
<b>Gender</b>					
Male	51.3%	51.5%	50.2%	53.1%	52.9%
Female	48.7%	48.5%	46.2%	49.8%	47.1%

**Table 3: 2018-19 Student Demographic Characteristics cont.**

<b>Demographic</b>	<b>Edison Elementary</b>	<b>McKinley Elementary</b>	<b>Pfeiffer- Burleigh Elementary</b>	<b>East Middle</b>	<b>Strong Vincent Middle</b>
<b>Students Receiving Special Education Services</b>	21%	25.3%	21.97%	19.8%	24.1%

In addition to traditional special education services, the Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program is in place to help identify issues which pose a barrier to a student’s success, including alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, and mental health issues. The Student Assistance Program is designed to help students overcome these barriers so that they may achieve, advance, and remain in school. *Table 4: 2018-19 Q1-Q2 Student Assistance Program (SAP) Referrals* shows the need for these services at each of the schools. The weight of these caseloads do not provide the capacity for school mental health, Student Assistance Program staff, or Community School Directors to conduct individualized follow-up or give time-intensive cases the attention they need, so information regarding how many referrals for community services outside of the school were actually accessed is incomplete.



**Table 4: 2018-19 Q1-Q2 Student Assistance Program (SAP) Referrals**

	<b>Total Referrals to SAP</b>	<b># SAP Referrals for School Mental Health Specialist Caseload</b>	<b># SAP Referrals to Community Services</b>
<b>Edison Elementary</b>	77	73	56
<b>McKinley Elementary</b>	29	37	0
<b>Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary</b>	121	99	56
<b>East Middle</b>	207	84	50
<b>Strong Vincent Middle</b>	95	43	24

A subset of the student population that needs additional services is students for whom English is a second language. In the 12 months between October 1, 2016 to September 30, 2017, 455 refugees from 17 countries settled in Erie County. From January 1, 2003 to September 2018, more than 7,100 refugees resettled in Erie County.<sup>4</sup> For students from these families, learning a new culture as well as a new language has a significant impact on their educational success.

*Table 5: 2018-19 English Language Learners* shows the percent of students for whom English is a second language in each school. With the current limited capacity, it is often difficult to give these students the extra support needed to ensure they successfully connect with mental health supports outside of the school as well as other community resources.

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<sup>4</sup> Bukowski & Quirk, 2018

**Table 5: 2018-19 English Language Learners (percent)**

<b>Edison Elementary</b>	<b>McKinley Elementary</b>	<b>Pfeiffer- Burleigh Elementary</b>	<b>East Middle</b>	<b>Strong Vincent Middle</b>
10.91	12.93	15.25	20.85	5.19

*Social attitudes, values, & behavior.*

High-risk social behavior. One of the most prevalent high-risk social behaviors is substance use, which is one of the primary focus areas of the Student Assistance Program. Erie City School District 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students participate in a biennial survey to gather information about knowledge of, and attitudes and behaviors toward alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use.<sup>5</sup> Among our middle schoolers, students' self-reported lifetime and 30-day use of alcohol, marijuana, inhalants, and cigarettes in 2017 was often higher than throughout the rest of the state and nation as shown in *Table 6: 2017 Student Self-Reported Drug Use*. Use continued to increase among 10th and 12th graders in all areas except inhalants.

The Erie County Policy and Planning Council found 40% of youth had family history of antisocial behavior, including alcohol and drug use, and 50% of youth had a low perceived risk of drug use<sup>6</sup>. Alcohol is the most common substance used among adults and results from the 2016-17 Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance Survey indicate that 6% of adults in Erie City are at risk for problem drinking, with 23.2% binge drinking at least once in the past 30 days, and 1.6% drinking at least two drinks every day.<sup>7</sup> Family history of antisocial behavior and low perceived risk of drug use are two of the three priority risk factors in the 2017 Community Action Plan.

<sup>5</sup> Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, & Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2017

<sup>6</sup> Erie County Policy and Planning Council for Children and Families, 2017

<sup>7</sup> Bear, Mrvka, Foulds, & Bukowski, 2018

**Table 6: 2017 Student Self-Reported Drug Use (percent)**

Substance	Erie City School District				Pennsylvania				Nationwide			
	Lifetime		30 Day		Lifetime		30 Day		Lifetime		30 Day	
	6th	8th	6th	8th	6th	8th	6th	8th	6th	8th	6th	8th
<b>Alcohol</b>	16.9	34.9	4.3	7.6	16.8	33.0	3.3	9.3	n/a	23.1	n/a	8.0
<b>Marijuana</b>	2.1	12.9	1.2	8.8	0.9	8.4	.5	4.6	n/a	13.5	n/a	5.5
<b>Inhalants</b>	2.5	6.4	1.2	1.4	3.6	5.2	1.6	1.6	n/a	8.9	n/a	2.1
<b>Cigarettes</b>	5.1	16.5	1.0	3.2	2.7	9.4	.6	2.5	n/a	9.4	n/a	1.9

High-risk peer group. Across the board for alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and prescription drugs, students reported that their friends were less likely to disapprove of their use of these drugs as compared with students throughout the rest of the state. They were also less likely to disapprove of their friends using these drugs as compared with students throughout the rest of the state. Effectively addressing risk factors and underlying causes of high-risk behaviors, including substance abuse, requires greater capacity in our schools.

*School performance.* One of the most consistent risk factors for dropping out of school is low achievement in school. *Table 7: 2017-18 Percent of Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced - Pennsylvania System of School Assessment* shows the most recent available results for each school on state testing that indicates attainment of proficiency of academic standards. The majority of students scored below proficient in core subjects of Math, English Language

Arts, and Science. Increasing the ability to connect students and families to school and community resources that can address issues with reading and learning is vital to improving school performance.

**Table 7: 2017-18 Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced – Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (percent)**

School	Math*	ELA*	Science**
Edison Elementary	15.4	24.6	29.7
McKinley Elementary	14.0	20.3	26.6
Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary	21.0	24.8	40.0
East Middle	6.5	19.2	15.6
Strong Vincent Middle	22.0	44.4	43.4

\*Math and English Language Arts include grades 3-8 \*\*Science includes grades 4 & 8

*School engagement.* Students who are disengaged are at greater risk of dropping out.

Poor attendance. A primary indicator of academic disengagement is absenteeism. Too many students in Erie City School District miss too many days of school. Across the five schools impacted by this project, 750 students, more than 23% of the student population, have missed more than 10% of school days (13.1 days or more). Of those, 189 students, about 6% of the student population, have missed more than 20% of school days (26.2 days or more) in just the first three quarters of the 2018-19 school year. Additionally, 1,206 students, approximately 38% of the student population are truant, having three or more unexcused absences. *Table 8: 2018-19 Q1-Q3 Absenteeism* shows attendance information for students at each school for the first three

quarters of the school year. Absenteeism affects reading proficiency; reading proficiency affects high school graduation; and high school graduation affects economic status. Greater capacity is needed to better understand and address the underlying needs of chronically absent students and their families.

Low commitment to school. Negative attitudes toward school increase risk for dropping out. In 2017, 81.1% of 6th graders and 65.0% of 8th graders in Erie City School District felt school was going to be important for later life compared with 80.3% of 6th graders and 59.3% of 8th graders in Pennsylvania. However, only 49.6% of 6th graders and 36.7% of 8th graders reported that they enjoyed being in school often or always during the past year as compared with 55.9% of 6th graders and 42.5% of 8th graders in Pennsylvania.<sup>8</sup>

No extracurricular participation. The lack of involvement in extracurricular activities is the strongest social risk factor for dropping out. In response to school-wide surveys at the beginning of the 2018-19 school year, 47% of Strong Vincent Middle School students and 55% of East Middle School students reported they are not involved in any before or after school activities. At the elementary school level, parent surveys indicate children would be interested in extracurricular activities, but asset inventories showed limited programs for students outside of school hours, especially for those in younger grades. Opportunities for students to become engaged have been increasing since implementing the community school model, and participation has been growing. Increasing the ability to connect students at greater risk to these opportunities has the potential to increase commitment to school and support their success.

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<sup>8</sup> Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, & Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2017

**Table 8: 2018-19 Q1-Q3 Absenteeism**

<b>School</b>	<b>Total Days Missed</b>	<b>Total Sick or Excused</b>	<b>Total Illegal Absence</b>	<b>Total Unexcused Tardy - # of Class Periods</b>	<b>Chronic Absent (10%) - # of Students</b>	<b>Chronic Absent (20%) - # of Students</b>	<b>Truant - # of Students</b>
<b>Edison Elementary</b>	4,755	2,524	2,231	4,100	100 (20%)	18 (4%)	213 (43.2%)
<b>McKinley Elementary</b>	5,782	2,194	3,588	5,952	133 (24%)	30 (5%)	202 (36.07%)
<b>Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary</b>	5,292	2,094	3,198	5,905	103 (17%)	20 (3%)	289 (46.92)
<b>East Middle</b>	10,096	4,716	5,380	11,083	271 (40%)	93 (14%)	231 (33.58%)
<b>Strong Vincent Middle</b>	6,699	4,053	2,647	4,435	143 (18%)	28 (4%)	271 (34.26%)

*School behavior.*

Misbehavior. Student misbehavior, especially if it results in suspension or expulsion, can

result in alienation from school. In response to surveys at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year, teachers indicated that coping skills and behavior support were the top two mental health supports needed. *Table 9: 2018-19 Q1-Q3 Behavior Resolutions* shows the outcomes of behavior incidents at each of the schools for the first three quarters of the school year, including the number of resolutions and the number of students who received each resolution. Often the same students are referred repeatedly for behavior incidents. Without resources to address underlying needs, this pattern will continue.

**Table 9: 2018-19 Q1-Q3 Behavior Resolutions (# resolutions/# students)**

<b>School</b>	<b># of Detentions</b>	<b># of Suspensions</b>	<b># of Expulsions</b>	<b># of Office Discipline Referrals</b>
<b>Edison Elementary</b>	<b>181/85</b>	<b>94/52</b>	<b>5/5</b>	<b>162/73</b>
<b>McKinley Elementary</b>	<b>39/30</b>	<b>88/53</b>	<b>2/2</b>	<b>152/77</b>
<b>Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary</b>	<b>390/143</b>	<b>84/52</b>	<b>4/4</b>	<b>317/106</b>
<b>East Middle</b>	<b>1,019/270</b>	<b>663/229</b>	<b>12/12</b>	<b>328/154</b>
<b>Strong Vincent Middle</b>	<b>524/204</b>	<b>284/137</b>	<b>2/2</b>	<b>581/179</b>

Early aggression. Aggression is one of the most prevalent causes for the indicators of misbehavior. In 2017, 7.5% of 6th graders and 13.9% of 8th graders in Erie City School District reported attacking someone with the idea of seriously hurting them within the last 12 months. Comparatively, 5.4% of 6th graders and 5.9% of 8th graders throughout Pennsylvania reported the same. Further, 1.9% of 6th graders and 6.5% of 8th graders reported having been arrested in

the last 12 months compared to 1.0% of 6th graders and 1.8% of 8th graders in Pennsylvania.<sup>9</sup> In response to a school-wide survey at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year, 34% of students at East Middle School and 38% of students at Strong Vincent Middle School reported having experienced bullying. Bullying was also a concern for parents who responded to surveys and focus groups at each of the elementary schools. Children who bully others are often the same ones experiencing the consequences of behavior listed in *Table 9*.

***Family domain: Factors related to family background and home experiences.***

*Family background characteristics.*

Low socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status is one of the most consistent risk factors. Erie County has experienced a persistent high rate of poverty for many years. In Erie City, 26.8% of residents and 39.1% of children lived below the poverty level in 2017, with the lowest income neighborhoods in the boundaries of the schools involved in this project. Compared with the national poverty rate of 14.6% overall and 20.3% of children, more families are struggling day to day. Nearly 80% of students in Erie City School District are classified as low-income. *Table 10: 2017-18 Economically Disadvantaged Students* shows the extent of the struggle in each of the schools. As a “provision 1” school district, 100% of students in Erie City receive federal free lunch.

**Table 10: 2017-18 Economically Disadvantaged Students (percent)**

<b>Edison Elementary</b>	<b>McKinley Elementary</b>	<b>Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary</b>	<b>East Middle</b>	<b>Strong Vincent Middle</b>
89.9	82.7	91.0	87.8	68.7

<sup>9</sup> Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, & Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2017



Although the median income for families with children in Erie City was \$35,625 in 2017 - higher than the federal poverty level of \$25,465 for a family of four - research suggests that one in five working-age households in Erie City have inadequate income to meet their basic needs, such as food.<sup>10</sup> In 2016, 14.5% of Erie County residents experienced food insecurity. Among children, 20.1% experienced food insecurity and 36.8% were living in households receiving Supplemental Security Income, cash public assistance income, or Food Stamp/SNAP benefits. In Pennsylvania, 26.9% of children live in households that receive such assistance and 27.2% in the United States. It is estimated, however, that 25% of food insecure children in Erie County are not eligible for federal nutrition assistance.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, ten of Erie County's twelve food deserts are found in Erie City. Surveys and focus groups at each of the schools show parents, teachers, and students all identify better access to community resources for basic needs as a top priority.

Many low-income families also have limited access to transportation. In 2017, it was estimated that 19.8% of households in Erie City did not have a vehicle available. Public transportation is available, but focus groups shared that bus routes, schedules, and cost are barriers to getting needed support for their families. Despite this lack of transportation, walkability audits showed many concerns with the walking environment, making it difficult for children and families to walk safely as a means of transportation.<sup>12</sup> This impacts families in their ability to meet their needs, including attending appointments, receiving follow-up services, and obtaining needed supports for mental and behavioral health.

Low education level of parents. Although parental education is related to socioeconomic status, it has been found to have an independent effect on risk of dropping out of school. In 2017

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<sup>10</sup> Pearce & Pathways PA, 2012

<sup>11</sup> Feeding America, 2018

<sup>12</sup> Bukowski & Quirk, 2018

in Erie City, 86.4% of adult residents had a high school diploma or equivalent as compared with 89.9% in Pennsylvania and 87.3% in the United States. The areas served by the schools targeted through this project have the lowest educational attainment in Erie County; in one zip code, only 69.7% of adult residents have a high school diploma or equivalent. Significantly, this impacts literacy within the home, which makes tasks such as filling out paperwork to receive assistance from community and government resources more difficult.

High family mobility. Mobility increases risk of dropping out, especially when moving means attending multiple schools. *Table 11: 2018-19 Q1-Q3 Incoming & Outgoing Students* shows the number of students who are impacted by changing schools.

**Table 11: 2018-19 Q1-Q3 Incoming & Outgoing Students (# of students)**

<b>Edison Elementary</b>	<b>McKinley Elementary</b>	<b>Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary</b>	<b>East Middle</b>	<b>Strong Vincent Middle</b>
130	100	181	151	105

Not living with both natural parents. More than half of children (56%) in Erie City lived in a single parent household in 2017. Comparatively, 34% of children lived in single parent households in both Pennsylvania and the United States. Additionally, 8.2% of children lived with a grandparent (7.3% in Pennsylvania and 7.9% in the United States), 2.3% lived with other relatives (1.7% in Pennsylvania and 2.4% in the United States), and 1.7% were living in a foster home or with other adults to whom they were not related (1.8% in Pennsylvania and 1.7% in the United States). Families without both natural parents have greater need of support to ensure they obtain access to available resources.

Greater capacity is needed to improve access to community resources for students that face these barriers.

*Family engagement/commitment to education.* Lack of parental involvement with school can increase risk of dropping out. Focus groups and surveys with teachers at each of the schools show increasing communication and involvement with parents is a significant need and should be a high priority. In response to parent surveys, parents indicate they want to be involved, but response to school outreach and attendance at events for parents has been low. Those working with the most at-risk students often have difficulty reaching parents and need greater capacity to make follow-up calls and home visits, when necessary.

**Need for case management services.** At-risk students need more assistance than our schools currently have the capacity to give. Due to the weight of their caseload, our mental health specialists, truancy officers, and liaisons from the Student Assistance Program do not have the ability to consistently work with students and their families on time-intensive tasks. Without consistent individualized follow-up, too many of our students miss needed mental and behavioral supports and are not connected to resources that could ensure their family's needs are met. This is especially problematic when working with historically disengaged families and during the summer months when at-risk students cannot be monitored through opportunities provided by daily attendance during the school year. The need for follow-up often falls on the shoulders of Community School Directors whose time needs to be spent on the creation of systems and coordination of supports for all students, families, and community members.

Although some students can receive blended case management services through community providers, regulations limit the number of clients these community providers can serve. Additionally, there is a significant gap for those who cannot obtain community services as

they do not meet medical necessity criteria. Rather, these students face challenges due to basic needs, parent needs, or a one-time-event based need.

To attain true success in supporting our students requires the ability to work with students and families out in the community, not solely in the school. Home visits to check on truant and chronically absent children, assertive follow-up to ensure students make it to appointments for health services (including mental and behavioral health), help for parents with low literacy to fill out legal paperwork, and support finding and showing qualification for basic needs assistance are all examples of activities that stretch the capacity of our current limited resources. Incorporating case management services into the schools can provide flexibility to accommodate a broader spectrum of student and family needs.

### **(b) Quality of the Project Services**

#### **(1) The Likely Impact of the Services to be Provided by the Proposed Project on the Intended Recipients of Those Services**

The evidence-based community schools strategy was implemented in Erie County with the support of the National Center for Community Schools. Pipeline services at each of the schools are coordinated by dedicated full-time staff at each community school location. With funds provided by their respective corporate partners described previously, each school has a full-time Community School Director in place. Community School Directors assist in the development and implementation of comprehensive community school needs assessments that include administrators, principals, teachers, students, parents and community members.

Community School Directors then develop action plans based on school-specific needs and implement strategies to address them. *Appendix D: Action Plan Priorities* shows identified priorities for each school. Ultimately, Community School Directors lead site collaboration at

each community school by sharing a collective vision, engaging and exciting others, ensuring that programming supports the vision, and outlining the general direction of the partnership. Community School Directors also impact program evaluation and continuous improvement by monitoring program quality, solving logistical issues, working with school staff to develop policies and procedures, managing parent and community volunteers, and ensuring overall accountability of programming to all partners.

Despite the gains that have been made since implementing the community school model at these schools in 2016, needs assessments completed by the Community School Directors show the most at-risk students need more assistance than our schools currently have the capacity to give, as outlined in the *Need for Case Management Services*. This project will strengthen capacity to better utilize current pipeline services at each of the five target community schools through incorporating Case Managers at each school. Utilizing the Case Managers, two new pipeline services will also be introduced, including home visitations and resource coordination. Additionally, data collected through this project will provide an opportunity to develop an early warning system that will improve efforts to support students in years to come. These services will improve coordination, integration, accessibility, and effectiveness of services for all students as the strain on current services is reduced, additional services are provided for students and families in greatest need, and Community School Directors are able to refocus their time on the creation of systems and coordination of supports for the whole school.

Services will be available to all 3,138 students and families at the five schools involved in this project, without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age or other status protected under applicable law. These services will be accessed through the Student Assistance Program referral process.

Students are referred to the Student Assistance Program by other students, school staff, parents, or via self-referral. A core team reviews the referral and gathers information to determine the nature and magnitude of the concern. Based on the outcome of the review, students are provided informal supports or are referred for school-based and/or community services, including mental health services, special education services, behavioral health rehabilitation services, foster placement and shelter services.

With the addition of Case Managers to each of the schools through this project, the Student Assistance Program will work with school-based services to determine when home visitations and/or resource coordination are needed to ensure student success and family stability. The Student Assistance Program will evaluate eligibility for receiving services from community providers and students who fall in the gaps due to eligibility or regulation restrictions will receive a supplemental referral to the Case Manager. The Case Manager will then work with the cross-departmental team providing services to the student to develop and carry out a plan to help the student and family obtain needed supports.

Based on estimates developed through reviewing past and current caseloads, we anticipate that this project will specifically provide new pipeline services to 375 unduplicated individuals annually, an average of 75 students and family members per school. Some students and families will stay on the caseload of the Case Manager long-term while others will only need supports for shorter periods of time or for one-time needs.

Through all of these services, Case Managers will act as adult advocates for students and create meaningful relationships that provide students and families with a source they can trust and rely on in the school. Research shows moderate evidence using adult advocacy in

combination with other strategies could have positive effects on staying in school and progressing in school.

**New pipeline services.** Cornerstones of this project include two new pipeline services that will be provided by the Case Managers: home visitations and resource coordination.

**Home visitations.** Home visits are an option for truancy programs in the schools and have the ability to provide important supports to students with a variety of needs. With the addition of home visitations, mental health, behavioral health, and special education specialists will be able to work with the Case Managers to arrange a plan for home visits that can enhance plans to meet student and family needs. The Case Managers will receive a supplementary referral to work with the student and will work within the context of interdisciplinary teams to help specialists gain a greater understanding of barriers the students face at home, communicate with caregivers in the home setting, and provide support in obtaining other services out of the school setting.

Home visitations will also provide opportunities to better assess needs and support students and families who face challenges due to basic needs, parent needs, or a one-time-event based need. These students and families are often not eligible for other case management supports in the community, allowing the Case Managers for this project to fill the gap.

Home visits will also be an important component to obtaining contact information for historically disengaged parents with whom the school cannot make contact via phone or email. Case Managers will receive referrals from the Student Assistance Program to make contact with the family, discuss the student's needs, and obtain updated contact information. It is anticipated that many of these families have needs themselves, which is part of the reason they are so disengaged and difficult to contact. Home visits in these cases will provide an opportunity to assess the family's situation and provide needed supports.

As a significant percentage of our students are English Language Learners, many families need translation support during these visits. Case Managers will have access to 24/7/365 interpreter availability. Services include those necessary for people who have hearing impairments; private interpreters who sign; and professional interpreters through the Multicultural Community Resource Center, the International Institute of Erie - US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, Multicultural Health Evaluation Delivery Systems, Logistics, and Cyracom (which provides phone and video supports). Through their iPad and data plans, Case Managers will be able to access remote services and communicate with families of all backgrounds in real-time in any location. Access to both in-person and remote services will ensure that there are no barriers to receiving necessary supports.

***Resource coordination.*** Many students need support from community resources outside of the school, but without consistent individualized follow-up, too many of our students miss appointments or fail to submit applications for services. The current infrastructure doesn't provide opportunity for assertive follow-up to overcome barriers to access and ensure successful referral. This is especially problematic when working with historically disengaged families and during the summer months when at-risk students cannot be monitored through opportunities provided by daily attendance during the school year. Case Managers will receive supplementary and direct referrals via the Student Assistance Program to provide this service.

Through supplementary referrals, Case Managers will act as part of an interdisciplinary team to ensure students attend out-of-school appointments and access resources recommended by mental health, behavioral health, and special education specialists who are part of the school network. Case Managers will assertively follow up with students and families, using the home visitation option created by this project when needed.



Through direct referrals, Case Managers will work with students and families who face challenges due to basic needs, parent needs, or a one-time-event based need. Case Managers will comprehensively assess the needs of the student and family and create a plan with the family to facilitate student success and family self-sufficiency. Case Managers will then use referrals to community resources, assertive follow-up, and advocacy to help them access needed supports.

As Case Managers identify barriers students and families face to accessing resources, a variety of opportunities will be available to help overcome them, including:

- Coordination with Student Assistance Program Liaisons - if it is determined that a need can best be filled by a resource connected with the Student Assistance Program, Liaisons can help Case Managers connect with community resource providers and follow-up on appropriate referrals.
- Management of Transportation Supports - as access to a vehicle is a challenge for many of our students' families, Case Managers will have access to bus tokens to help families connect with needed resources.
- Employment of Translation Services - the iPads with translation services discussed in the section on home visitation will also be valuable resources for Case Managers as they help coordinate resources for students and families who are English Language Learners.

Additionally, appointments with in-person translators can be scheduled when that is the preference for the family.

***Early warning system development.*** Although Recommendation 1 from the *Dropout Prevention Guide*<sup>13</sup> does not meet the standards for Competitive Preference Priority 4, the panel believes that utilizing data systems that support a realistic diagnosis of the number of students who drop out and that help identify individual students at high risk of dropping out is a critical

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<sup>13</sup> Dynarski et al., 2008

component in enhancing effectiveness of targeted interventions. Following this recommendation, this project will use collected data to create a predictive model that can identify indicators that lead to negative outcomes (e.g., a student who is bullied is less likely to attend school). The more frequent and comprehensive touchpoints provided by Case Managers will provide vital information regarding the sources of problems as well as the symptoms. This data and predictive model will aid in the development of an early warning system through which we can better identify students at risk of dropping out and provide needed supports to increase the likelihood of staying in school.

**Impact on current pipeline services.** These new pipeline services will also help improve coordination, integration, accessibility, and effectiveness of current pipeline services, including truancy and mental and behavioral health services as well as efforts to provide access to family and community engagement supports.

***Truancy services.***

*School Attendance Improvement Program.* One of the game-changing targets in the 2018 Erie City School District strategic planning is that 90% of students attain an attendance rate of at least 95% by 2024. To achieve this target, Erie City School District has hired two Truancy Officers to decrease cases of truancy and improve attendance across Erie City School District for the 2018-2019 school year. Each Truancy Officer has a caseload of truant (three unexcused absences) or habitually truant (six unexcused absences) students at two schools, where they are in charge of issuing a first notice when a student has reached three unexcused absences, calling parents as a follow-up to determine any excused absences or barriers to attending school regularly, scheduling home visits as necessary to contact families, and issuing second notices and court filings for parents or guardians of students with more than six illegal absences at any point

in the school year. Truancy Officers are only available at three of the schools in this project: Strong Vincent and East Middle Schools, and Edison Elementary Schools.

In addition to each managing a caseload of truant students, the Truancy Officers partner with local Magisterial District Judges to hold parent classes for parents of truant children throughout the district to educate parents about the importance of students attending school every day and on time, review truancy policies, and connect parents to community resources by having representatives or social service organizations attend these programs. These Student Attendance Improvement Programs are often attended in lieu of court fines through referral from a Magisterial District Judge following a truancy hearing.

For the two community schools that do not have an in-school Truancy Officer, McKinley and Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary Schools, United Way of Erie County funds a nearly identical program through Family Services of NWPA, which focuses exclusively on students and parents in those schools. United Way of Erie County meets regularly with Erie City School District, the Office of Children and Youth, and other non-profit agencies to ensure the objectives and evaluation for each of these programs are identical and aligned with Erie City School District strategic plan.

Despite the addition of the Truancy Officers in the 2018-19 school year, and improved follow-up with guardians of truant students, the caseload at each of the community schools currently exceeds the capacity of the Truancy Officers since across the five community schools, 38.31% of students are truant.

A Case Manager at each of the community schools would improve coordination and accessibility of services because they will work full-time at each school, rather than splitting

time between multiple schools, improving immediate follow-up with families. Additionally, the Case Manager will work with the Truancy Officer to conduct home visits.

Integration of services into the school will also be improved because some barriers to attendance can be connected to mental health or lack of access to a resource in the community. Given a broader perspective than a Truancy Officer, the Case Manager would be better-equipped to create linkages for students and families in need of multiple services.

Finally, the effectiveness of improving school attendance will be improved through a broader focus on chronic absence, rather than truancy, as a method of improving school attendance. While the Truancy Officers are focused primarily on students that have three or more unexcused absences, Case Managers will expand the scope to include students who are chronically absent for any reason, which can better contribute to improving the number of students attending school every day.

*Raising Readers in Erie County - Be There Campaign.* At the beginning of the 2019-20 school year, the five community schools in the Erie City School District will kick-off the “Be There” Campaign that aims to change school culture to be more positive about school attendance. In many conversations about attendance or truancy, the discussion is punitive, but the “Be There” effort will focus on rewarding improved attendance, even if it is not perfect, and set goals for chronically absent students and their classmates to get to school every day and on-time.

The “Be There” Campaign is based on an effort with the same name piloted in 2015 by United Way of Southwest Pennsylvania, where over the course of a single school year, schools saw decreases in chronic absenteeism rates anywhere from 4% to 18%. The two key in-school tenets of the “Be There” Campaign are the Buddy Project and Attendance Challenge. The Buddy Project pairs a teachers or other adult in the school with a group of students who are chronically

absent. This “Buddy” checks in with the student a minimum of twice per day to encourage them for attending school and be a mentor. The Attendance Challenge is a school-wide effort that aims to integrate positive reinforcement of regular attendance into the school culture. This includes setting goals both for students who do attend school regularly (and are working to maintain it) and for students who are working to improve their attendance by decreasing tardy minutes or attending full days more regularly, rewarding both groups when they reach their goal.

“Be There” will also include an education and awareness campaign for parents of students in the community schools and the broader community. Utilizing best practices and materials from Attendance Works, Raising Readers in Erie County - the local Campaign for Grade-Level Reading Effort - will leverage its School Attendance Subcommittee to spread the word about the importance of attending school regularly and build networks of supporters to enforce that message.

The Case Managers will support and improve these efforts by coordinating follow-ups and check-ins with “Buddies” and their students, integrating the positive messages around attendance into other supports and systems within which they will work, increasing the accessibility to needed supports that would enable students to attend school more regularly, and collecting information about common reasons for absence or tardiness to make interventions more effective.

***Health services.***

*Student Assistance Program.* The Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program is in place to help identify issues which pose a barrier to a student’s success, including alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, and mental health issues. The Student Assistance Program is designed to help students overcome these barriers so that they may achieve, advance, and remain in school.

Case management is an important element of mental and behavioral health services across providers in the community, with positive impact on risky behavior, child welfare, and family engagement. Incorporating case management services into the schools will make this important aspect of mental and behavioral health available to students who are not medically eligible for blended case management from a community provider.

Increasing connections with students and their families will provide better opportunity for follow-up on referrals to community resources and improve communication with parents to ensure compliance with mental health improvement plans. This will improve the effectiveness of current in-school mental health supports by connecting individuals that would not otherwise be connected to the services that are coordinated by the Community School Director. As mental health, behavioral health, and special education specialists who are part of the school network are able to receive support in meeting student needs through supplementary referrals to the Case Manager, this will also increase capacity for these specialists to serve more students.

Additionally, Case Managers will improve the accuracy of data collected on follow-ups to Student Assistance Program referrals through more frequent touchpoints with the students and families. This will increase the ability of annual action plan updates to more accurately reflect the need for services.

*Other health services.* A mobile dental clinic regularly visits community schools to provide screenings, cleanings, and restorative care. Case Managers will be able to increase access to this important service for the students and families on their caseload through assertive follow-up to encourage use and working with families in need of dental services to understand and overcome barriers to visiting the clinic when it is at the school.

***Access to family and community engagement supports.*** From January-November 2017, Community School Directors completed a comprehensive needs assessment to identify the scope and nature of student, family, and staff needs in their school. These needs assessments are updated annually and are used to inform the development of school action plans that outline strategies to address needs. A key component of these action plans is leveraging community partners to support needs in the schools. Partnership agreements and Memorandums of Understanding are used to provide clarity for logistics around data sharing, building use, and staff commitment.

Using these action plans, Community School Directors and Community School Leadership Teams have been able to incorporate a variety of strategies and supports that are specific to needs at their individual schools. However, getting at-risk students and families connected to these resources continually poses a challenge. Case Managers will improve the effectiveness of these current supports by assertively working with students and families to engage them with resources that can support their specific needs. Regular contact and follow-up provided by Case Managers will enhance the reach of services while also providing opportunity to coordinate plans for students and families that utilize multiple services available.

Additionally, the increased frequency of touchpoints with at-risk students and families will enhance the data available to assess school-wide needs and necessary supports. Annual evaluations of the project will inform the annual action plan updates to more accurately reflect the need for services.

**Anticipated impact.** As outlined in *(a) Quality of the Project Design*, this project will enhance the ability to support our most at-risk students and their families by increasing social, health, and mental health services and supports; increasing overall school attendance and

decreasing truancy and chronic absence; increasing family and community engagement and supports; and implementing evaluation strategies that provide information necessary to develop an early warning system for students.

**(2) 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**

To maximize the effectiveness of community schools, a Community School Leadership Team has been established at each school, including the representatives from each of the key partners (United Way of Erie County, the Corporate Partner, Lead Partner, Community School Director, and the principal), school district administrators, teachers, nurses, counselors, and parents. These leadership teams work to improve programs and processes that help students, families, teachers, and community members, meeting bi-weekly to ensure progress toward community school goals. Upon receipt of the grant award, United Way of Erie County will convene partners from each school's leadership team to initiate a planning period and finalize the details of the project's execution, including the position search, eligibility criteria, policies and procedures for Case Managers to follow, and documentation and data collection standards.

Although each of the partners outlined in *Competitive preference priority 2—Broadly representative consortiums* will be involved in the project through their contributions to the community school model and their influence on their respective Community School Leadership Teams, the following partners will be extensively involved to maximize the effectiveness of the pipeline services influenced by the Case Managers proposed in this project. *Appendix C: Memorandum of Understanding* includes United Way of Erie County, Erie City School District, and Safe Harbor Behavioral Health. Gannon University has provided a letter of support in



*Appendix B: Letters of Support*, but will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding when a Data Sharing Agreement is created after the receipt of the grant award within the first 60 days. Immediately upon receipt of the award, these will be developed with Gannon University.

**United Way of Erie County.** United Way of Erie County serves as the backbone organization for the countywide community schools project and will act as the convening agent by providing project-wide oversight and ensuring open lines of communication and clarity on responsibilities and expectations for all partners in the planning period and throughout the project. United Way of Erie County staff will provide technical assistance/support for the project as a whole, training and guidance for partners and Community School Directors to ensure integration of case management services, support for the Project Director and evaluator in ensuring timely and accurate data collection, and community resource development that will support additional pipeline services in the schools.

**Erie City School District.** Each of the five community schools that will be involved in this project are part of Erie City School District. Key individuals in the success of this project, including Community School Directors, Student Assistance Program liaisons, mental health specialists, and special education specialists are all based at the schools. Each school will also provide space for the Case Manager assigned to their school and school district and school officials will be intimately involved in ensuring students in need of services are appropriately identified and Case Managers access needed school resources.

**Safe Harbor Behavioral Health.** Safe Harbor Behavioral Health of UPMC Hamot has expertise in case management, including mental and behavioral health, 24/7/365 crisis intervention programming, substance use disorder services. This expertise and a long-standing relationship with Erie City School District render Safe Harbor Behavioral Health the best

organization to be the hiring agency for the Project Director and Case Managers. Key responsibilities will be the day-to-day supervision and support of the Project Director, who will supervise the Case Managers; providing professional development for the Project Director and Case Managers; providing access to staff to assist the Project Director and Case Manager in situations that require quick decision making and expertise in the realm of case management. Safe Harbor Behavioral Health will also provide office space for the Project Director.

**Gannon University.** Gannon University is located in Erie's urban core and employs faculty and staff with evaluative expertise. This expertise as well as the resources available through Gannon, including software for data collection and statistical analysis, and their commitment to the Community Schools Partnership as a Lead Partner make Gannon University an important partner in evaluating impact and developing a predictive model of negative outcomes that can support the development of an early warning system for our schools.

### **(c) Adequacy of Resources**

United Way of Erie County was first conceptualized in 1911, when the first recorded discussion concerning the need to unite separate agencies for fundraising and mutual cooperation was held. In 1914, it was established under the name of Erie Social Service Federation when 11 of the 22 agencies in Erie County united. The federation of nonprofits was known by a variety of names throughout the following years: Community Chest, United Fund, and United Community Services. In 1974, it was established as United Way of Erie County. United Way of Erie County has witnessed and experienced many changes, but the one thing that remains constant is its mission of improving people's lives.

Throughout the years, United Way of Erie County has been responsible for managing partnerships with multiple service providers in the community, including program evaluation,

fiscal reporting, and management of progress toward promised outcomes. United Way of Erie County recognized our community's need for more purposeful strategies that could only be achieved through collective impact.

To this end, United Way of Erie County partnered with Erie City School District to pilot five community schools in 2016. The initial pilot was made possible through collaborative efforts, including funding commitments, by Corporate Partners and Lead Partners at each school as well as through a \$1.5 million start up grant from the local Erie Community Foundation. United Way has extensive experience managing grants and contracts and is committed to supporting student success.

Since 2016, the community schools strategy has expanded to encompass three additional schools in Erie County, now reaching three districts. The goal is for this model to expand to all 13 school districts throughout Erie County. The community schools initiative in Erie County exemplifies how United Way is better aligning needs in the community with its mission.

Since the Community Schools Partnership began, United Way of Erie County has been the backbone organization responsible for:

- Integration of academic and social solutions in the target schools and in the community
- Implementation of collaborative processes and communication protocols
- Resource development functions for partners and collaborative efforts
- Leadership of data management and evaluation

United Way of Erie County works to reduce the number of children and families living in poverty so more are living self-sufficiently. Community schools fits with our mission because they organize resources around student success, which is a factor in moving children and their families out of poverty and into self-sufficiency. We understand that students cannot be

successful in school when their basic needs are not being met, and we understand that the school districts cannot support basic needs resources on their own. By aligning resources in our community with identified needs, United Way of Erie County is leading the community towards a brighter future for children and their families.

**(1) The Relevance and Demonstrated Commitment of Each Partner in the Proposed Project to the Implementation and Success of the Project**

In 2015, United Way of Erie County approved a strategic plan focused on collective impact and community schools and revamped our community investment process to focus on aligning funding and resources to support community schools in Erie City School District and other Erie County school districts. In addition, because the Community School Directors in Erie are employed by Lead Partners and each school is associated with a Corporate Partner, our community's largest corporations, social service providers, and universities are contributing to the long-term sustainability of the work happening in the community schools.

United Way of Erie County has obtained demonstrated commitment of our key partners, including Erie City School District, governmental agencies, and nonprofits, that evidence their broad support and commitment to the long-term success of community schools. The Memorandum of Understanding attached to this grant submission includes United Way of Erie County, Erie City School District, and Safe Harbor Behavioral Health, (see *Appendix C: Memorandum of Understanding*). Also included are letters of support from the Lead Partners for each school and Erie City School District (see *Appendix B: Letters of Support*).

Each partner has the experience, knowledge, skills, passion, and discipline to produce the results for the planning and implementation experience that will build their capacity. The partners have embraced the pipeline of services model, data-driven approach to achieving

academic and developmental outcomes, and continuous learning opportunity to maintain accountability. This collective impact model also fits within the larger plans of Erie County, including the county’s Emerge 2040 and city’s Erie Refocused strategic plans. This is evidenced by the attached letters of support from elected officials in *Appendix B: Letters of Support*.

In addition, partners have committed matching resources to the community schools model as shown in *Table 12: Partner Commitments*. Partners also create programs specific to needs of students and increase funding for services with the greatest outcomes.

**Table 12: Partner Commitments**

<b>Partner</b>	<b>Total Matching Funds</b>	<b>Description</b>
Achievement Center	\$15,000 per year x 5 years = \$75,000	Benefits for the Edison Elementary School Community School Director
Edinboro University	\$15,000 per year x 5 years = \$75,000	Benefits for the McKinley Elementary School Community School Director
Erie City School District	\$600,000 per year x 5 years = \$3,000,000	Salaries for administrators at each of the five schools as well as the Director of Teaching and Learning to oversee district-wide processes
Erie Insurance	\$60,000 per year x 5 years =\$300,000	Salary for the Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary School Community School Director

**Table 12: Partner Commitments cont.**

Partner	Total Matching Funds	Description
Family Services of NWPA	\$15,000 per year x 5 years = \$75,000	Benefits for the Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary School Community School Director
Gannon University	\$15,000 per year x 5 years = \$75,000	Benefits for the Strong Vincent Middle School Community School Director
Wabtec Corporation	\$60,000 per year x 5 years =\$300,000	Salary for the Edison Elementary School Community School Director
Hamot Health Foundation	\$60,000 per year x 5 years =\$300,000	Salary for the East Middle School Community School Director
Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield	\$60,000 per year x 5 years =\$300,000	Salary for the Strong Vincent Middle School Community School Director
LORD Corporation	\$60,000 per year x 5 years =\$300,000	Salary for the McKinley Elementary School Community School Director

**Table 12: Partner Commitments cont.**

Partner	Total Matching Funds	Description
Safe Harbor  Behavioral Health	$\$15,000 \text{ per year} \times 5 \text{ years}$ $= \$75,000$ AND $\$14,200 \text{ per year} \times 5 \text{ years} =$ $\$71,000$ AND $\$7,850 \text{ per year} \times 5 \text{ years} =$ $\$39,250$	Benefits for the East Middle School  Community School Director  AND  Salary for the Director of Clinical Services for the portion of time spent on this project  AND  Communication and Office-Related Expenses for the Project Director and Case Managers
United Way of  Erie County	$\$72,933 \text{ per year} \times 5 \text{ years}$ $= \$364,665$	Salaries for backbone staff for the portion of time dedicated to the five community schools

Included with this submission is a five-year total project budget that details all project expenses, categorizing expenses as federal or match. Each line item is reasonable in relation to the objectives and scope for the program, has been calculated using costing principles, procedures, guidelines, restrictions and limitations, and is connected to a specific objective. All schools in Erie City School District are eligible for school-wide services as defined by Section 1114(b) of ESEA. Grant funds from this award will only be used to support the schools identified in this proposal, all of which are eligible for school-wide services. Community schools

address long standing gaps related to rigor, high expectations, and opportunities in our schools and broader communities.

**(2) 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**

The proposed project will serve 3,138 students at five community schools in Erie City School District, including direct one-on-one services to 375 students and families annually. The grant request totals \$2,031,397.72 (an average of \$406,279.54 annually for five years) and equates to \$129.47 each year per student in the schools and \$1,083.41 each year per student we anticipate will be served.

This project is designed to better connect students and families to resources that can address needs and risk factors for dropping out of school. As dropouts typically earn less than graduates (approximately \$9,000 annually and \$260,000 over the course of a lifetime), have fewer job prospects, contribute less to taxes while using more government subsidies, have higher chances of serving prison sentences, and have worse health outcomes and life expectancies,<sup>14,15</sup> the investment in this project is small in comparison to the societal costs we currently risk facing. Through this project, we can support student success and family stability among some of the most needed areas in our community.

**Project sustainability.** In 2015, United Way of Erie County's board approved a strategic plan focused on collective impact and community schools, revamping the investment process to align funding and resources to support community schools in Erie City School District and other Erie County school districts. We are committed to utilizing future resources raised from the community to support the Community School Partnership.

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<sup>14</sup> Dynarski et al., 2008

<sup>15</sup> Hammond et al., 2007



Leveraging our broad range of community partners, United Way of Erie County will implement solutions through the community schools model that can drive sustainable change on a large scale. Because the Community School Directors are employed by Lead Partners and each school is associated with a Corporate Partner, our community's largest corporations, social service providers and universities are contributing to the long-term sustainability of the work.

Our key partners have evidenced their broad support and commitment to the long-term success of the Community School Partnership. The partners will work to advance the visions of their organizations that support that of Community School Partnership. In addition to their experience, these partners have the knowledge, skills, passion, and discipline to produce the results for the planning and implementation experience that will build their capacity. They have embraced the pipeline of services model, data-driven approach, and continuous learning opportunity to maintain accountability.

To further ensure continued resources for the specific strategies implemented through this project, the Community School Partnership will work with Erie County Care Management to advocate for billing/reimbursement options. Erie County Care Management was established in 2006 through an ordinance of Erie County Council to promote a conflict-free care management system with a primary focus on integration of community services into a system of care for any child or adult in need of services. The current five-year plan from Erie County Care Management does not provide the opportunity to bill for services provided by community schools Case Managers. Advocating for inclusion of appropriate services provided by the Case Managers through the schools in the next five-year plan will allow billing/reimbursement for applicable portions of the services provided by these Case Managers, providing a source of revenue to assist

in continuing services in the future. This grant will allow us to start providing needed services for our students now while we advocate for that inclusion.

In addition, continuance will be provided for as the structure established and the lessons learned through this grant period will be applied to provide supports to children and families throughout Erie County as the Community School Partnership expands in the coming years to include all of the 13 Erie County school districts.

#### **(d) Quality of the Management Plan**

##### **(1) 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**

Successful management of this project to ensure fidelity to the goals, objectives and budget incorporates individuals across several organizations. In close coordination *Table 13: Project Work Plan* shows the key activities, responsible persons, and the expected timeline.

**Table 13: Project Work Plan**

Key Tasks	Organization or Person Responsible	Start Date	End Date	Data Evaluation/ Measurement
<b>Project Implementation Activities</b>				
Convene project partners to discuss work plan and project activities	United Way of Erie County	July 2019	Ongoing quarterly	Project meetings held
Finalize position descriptions for Project Director and Case Managers	Safe Harbor Behavioral Health leads	July 2019	July 2019	Position Description
Hire and train Project Director	Safe Harbor Behavioral Health, United Way of Erie County, and Erie City School District	July 2019	September 2019	Project Director in place with documentation of any required training

**Table 13: Project Work Plan cont.**

Key Tasks	Organization or Person Responsible	Start Date	End Date	Data Evaluation/ Measurement
Finalize policies and procedures for Case Managers to follow in interactions with students and families	Safe Harbor Behavioral Health and Project Director lead	September 2019	December 2019	Policy and procedure manual
Hire and train five Case Managers	Safe Harbor Behavioral Health, United Way of Erie County, and Erie City School District	November 2019	January 2020	Case Managers in place with documentation of any required training
Procure iPads and equipment for new hires	United Way of Erie County	August 2019	August 2019	Equipment purchased

**Table 13: Project Work Plan cont.**

Key Tasks	Organization or Person Responsible	Start Date	End Date	Data Evaluation/ Measurement
<b>Goal 1: Increase social, health, and mental health services and supports for community school students and families</b>				
Finalize eligibility criteria and referral process for case management services	Erie City School District Student Assistance Program and Safe Harbor Behavioral Health lead	September 2019	December 2019	Document outlining eligibility criteria and referral process
Conduct training meetings with school staff and service providers to make them aware of case management services and the how to use the Student Assistance Program to refer students	Erie City School District Student Assistance Program leads	January 2019	January 2020	Number of trainings held and number of attendees

**Table 13: Project Work Plan cont.**

<b>Key Tasks</b>	<b>Organization or Person Responsible</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Data Evaluation/ Measurement</b>
Provide case management services via supplementary referrals from service providers	Case Managers with supervision of Project Director	February 2020	Ongoing	Number of unduplicated individuals referred and served annually and tracked quarterly
Provide professional development for the Project Director and Case Managers	Safe Harbor Behavioral Health	September 2019	Ongoing	Training logs
<b>Goal 2: Increase overall school attendance and decrease truancy and chronic absence</b>				
Use strategies of adult advocacy to build meaningful relationships with students and families	Case Managers with supervision of Project Director	February 2020	Ongoing	Number and type of touchpoints with students and families

**Table 13: Project Work Plan cont.**

<b>Key Tasks</b>	<b>Organization or Person Responsible</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Data Evaluation/ Measurement</b>
Work with Truancy Officers to make home visits for truant students with whom they cannot make contact	Case Managers with supervision of Project Director	February 2020	Ongoing	Number of home visits made for truant students
Conduct outreach to students who are chronically absent and their families who are not considered truant as absences were excused	Case Managers with supervision of Project Director	February 2020	Ongoing	Number of phone calls, emails, and home visits for chronically absent students

**Table 13: Project Work Plan cont.**

<b>Key Tasks</b>	<b>Organization or Person Responsible</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Data Evaluation/ Measurement</b>
Follow-up with “Be There” Buddies to ensure students on the caseload are receiving positive supports from other adults at school	Case Managers with supervision of Project Director	February 2020	Ongoing	Number of responses from Buddies
<b>Goal 3: Increase family and community engagement and supports</b>				
Provide cultural competency training to Case Managers and the Project Director	Safe Harbor Behavioral Health	January 2020	January 2020	Training logs
Finalize guidelines for appropriate use of transportation and translation services	United Way of Erie County and Safe Harbor Behavioral Health lead	November 2019	January 2020	Document outlining guidelines for transportation and translation services



**Table 13: Project Work Plan cont.**

<b>Key Tasks</b>	<b>Organization or Person Responsible</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Data Evaluation/ Measurement</b>
Provide case management services to students and families referred directly through the Student Assistance program	Case Managers with supervision of Project Director	February 2020	Ongoing	Number of unduplicated individuals referred and served annually and tracked quarterly
Connect students and families with school and community resources that can meet needs	Case Managers with supervision of Project Director	February 2020	Ongoing	Number and type of connections made to available resources

**Table 13: Project Work Plan cont.**

Key Tasks	Organization or Person Responsible	Start Date	End Date	Data Evaluation/ Measurement
Utilize aggressive follow-up, translation, transportation, and referral opportunities to overcome barriers students and families face to accessing resources	Case Managers with supervision of Project Director	February 2020	Ongoing	Number and type of barriers; Number and type of barrier resolutions
<p><b>Goal 4: Implement evaluation strategies that encompass the Rapid Cycle Quality Improvement approach to monitor the project’s impact and create a predictive model that can support the development of an early warning system for students</b></p>				
Finalize Data Sharing Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding with Gannon University	United Way of Erie County	July 2019	September 2019	Data Sharing Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding in Place

**Table 13: Project Work Plan cont.**

<b>Key Tasks</b>	<b>Organization or Person Responsible</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Data Evaluation/ Measurement</b>
Obtain IRB approval or exemption	Gannon University	July 2019	August 2019	IRB approval or exemption received
Finalize documentation and data collection standards	Project Director and Gannon University lead	September 2019	November 2019	Document outlining documentation and data collection standards
Document interactions with students and families	Case Managers with supervision of Project Director	January 2020	Ongoing	Number of documented interactions
Aggregate determined data points and submit them to Gannon University	Case Managers and Project Director lead	April 2020	Ongoing Quarterly	Number of data points received

**Table 13: Project Work Plan cont.**

<b>Key Tasks</b>	<b>Organization or Person Responsible</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Data Evaluation/ Measurement</b>
Train all partners on goals, outcomes, and methods of data collection	United Way of Erie County and Gannon University	December 2019	December 2019	Number of trainings held and number of attendees
Conduct formative and summative evaluation	Gannon University	July 2020	Annually	Annual evaluation reports
Make results of annual evaluations publicly available	United Way of Erie County	August 2020	Annually	Records of public notices
Create a predictive model that can identify indicators that lead to negative outcomes	Gannon University	January 2020	June 2024	Predictive model developed

**Project management coordination schedule.** Effective management of the project requires a variety of regularly scheduled meetings to ensure progress and communication. *Table 14: Project Coordination Schedule* identifies important regular meetings and their frequency.

**Table 14: Project Coordination Schedule**

Meeting Purpose	Attendees	Frequency
Case management supervision, problem solving, and mentoring for Project Director	Project Director and Safe Harbor Behavioral Health Director of Clinical Services (Vicky Merski)	Weekly
Case management supervision, problem solving, and mentoring for Case Managers	Case Manager and Project Director (one meeting for each Case Manager)	Weekly
Case management team meetings for problem solving and training	Case Managers, Project Director, and Safe Harbor Behavioral Health Director of Clinical Services (Vicky Merski)	Weekly during year one, transitioning to bi-weekly
Community School Leadership Team Meetings to improve programs and processes to better support students, families, teachers, and community members	Community School Director, principal, corporate partner, lead partner, school district administrators, representatives from United Way of Erie County, and selected teachers, nurses, counselors, and parents (one meeting for each school)	Bi-weekly

**Table 14: Project Coordination Schedule cont.**

Meeting Purpose	Attendees	Frequency
Project coordination to ensure all aspects of the project are on track	United Way of Erie County staff and Project Director	Weekly during year one, transitioning to bi-weekly
School service coordination meetings to ensure Community School Directors are aware of the needs Case Managers are seeing and to provide support to the Case Manager in accessing resources to address needs	Community School Director and Case Manager (one meeting for each school)	Bi-weekly
Community school implementation meetings to ensure alignment with action plans and communicate overall project status to Community School Directors	United Way of Erie County staff, Community School Directors, and Project Director	Bi-weekly

**Table 14: Project Coordination Schedule cont.**

Meeting Purpose	Attendees	Frequency
Evaluation planning and coordination	United Way of Erie County staff, Project Director, Gannon University evaluation team	Quarterly
Partner update meetings to ensure all partners are apprised of project progress and to problem solve any issues that arise	United Way of Erie County staff, Project Director, lead partners, Erie City School District representatives	Quarterly

**Professional development.** Professional development is key to ensure continued growth in the ability to manage the project and support our students. In both 2016 and 2018, teams from the Erie County Community School project attended the Community Schools National Forum through the Coalition for Community Schools held in Sante Fe and Baltimore. These teams found the seminars invaluable and we plan to send another team of individuals involved in the management of this project (including United Way of Erie County backbone staff and Community School Directors) to the 2020 event for in-depth professional development. Ideas and feedback pertinent to this project learned at the seminars will be shared among all who are involved to continue improving opportunities and outcomes for students.

Regular professional development opportunities for Case Managers and the Project Director will be provided by Safe Harbor Behavioral Health and will include trainings opportunities such as applied suicide intervention skills training, mental health first aid, safe

response in the community, LGBTQ 101, military ethos/core culture, trauma informed care, case management/resource coordination, and comprehensive crisis management.

**(2) The Extent to Which the Time Commitments of the Project Director and Principal Investigator and Other Key Project Personnel are Appropriate and Adequate to Meet the Objectives of the Proposed Project**

Key individuals that will play a role in this project are employed across several organizations in the consortium. Resumes for each key individual listed here are attached in *Appendix E: Resumes for Key Individuals*.

**United Way of Erie County.** As noted previously, United Way of Erie County is the backbone organization for the Community Schools Partnership and will provide necessary coordination and technical assistance/support to ensure the success of this project. Key staff from United Way of Erie County that will be involved in this project include:

***Vice President of Community Impact.*** Mike Jaruszewicz, United Way of Erie County's Vice President of Community Impact, is the principal investigator for this project. He has been directly involved in the implementation of the Erie County community school initiative from its inception, including staffing, management, and allocation/oversight of United Way of Erie County's investments in community schools. He will dedicate five hours per week to this project.

Essential functions in relation to this project include:

- Serves as United Way's primary point of contact with school district partners, given United Way's role as the backbone organization in this collective impact initiative.
- Provides communication and leadership support to all partners involved in the initiative.
- Facilitates community-level meetings on shared challenges and opportunities.



- Is directly involved in the implementation of current and new community school initiatives in Erie and across Erie County.

***Community Impact Manager.*** Emily Francis, United Way of Erie County's Community Impact Manager, is directly involved in the community school initiative and United Way of Erie County's role as the backbone organization. She works with United Way's leadership team and community volunteers to craft the strategic direction for United Way of Erie County. She serves as the key point of contact for all inquiries regarding funding and volunteer opportunities aligned with United Way's community impact strategy. She will dedicate 15 hours per week to this project. Essential functions in relation to this project include:

- Provides research/evaluation and capacity building support to partners.
- Identifies and assesses existing and potential community school partners.
- Manages the collection and analysis of individual and aggregate data from various community school sites.
- Assists and provides support to the Vice President of Community Impact regarding all community school responsibilities.

***Director of Education.*** Stephanie King, United Way of Erie County's Director of Education, is responsible for providing leadership and support for United Way's county-wide community school and Campaign for Grade-Level Reading initiatives. These two initiatives are key components to aligning existing and new resources around student success through a two-generation approach; that is, addressing the needs of the students and their families to achieve improved academic success. She will dedicate ten hours per week to this project. Essential functions in relation to this project include:

- Supports community schools under guidance of Vice President of Community Impact.

- Leads implementation of Erie County’s Community Solution Action Plan, which provides the framework for the Campaign for Grade Level Reading in our community.

**Community Impact Coordinator.** Paige Brigham, United Way of Erie County’s Community Impact Coordinator, works with the Vice President of Community Impact, Community Impact Manager, and Director of Education to coordinate and support all aspects of United Way’s community schools work. She will dedicate 15 hours per week to this project.

Essential functions in relation to the project include:

- Provides administrative support to the Community Impact Department regarding all community schools responsibilities.
- Coordinates meeting logistics with community schools personnel and partners and documents meeting minutes.
- Assists in the collection and aggregation of data and updating templates related to community schools.
- Supports the revision and formatting of the community schools needs assessments.

**Erie City School District.** Each of the five community schools that will be involved in this project are part of Erie City School District. Bernadine Habursky (Bea), Assistant Superintendent, is the main point of contact with Erie City School District for community schools and will ensure communication and cooperation with school district entities for this project, including mental health specialists, and Student Assistance Program Liaisons. She will dedicate an average of three hours per week to this project.

**Safe Harbor Behavioral Health.** Due to their expertise in case management, Safe Harbor Behavioral Health will be the hiring agency for the Project Director and Case Managers, providing supervision and resources to effectively follow best practices in case management.

Vicky Merski, Director of Clinical Services, is the main point of contact for this project and will also provide supervision for the Project Director. She will dedicate an average of five hours per week to this project.

**Gannon University.** With expertise in data collection and evaluation, Dr. John D. Ranney, Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology and Counseling will lead the project evaluation and develop a predictive model that can support the creation of an early warning system as well as inform community school strategies and programs. He will dedicate six credits of release time per year to this project.

**Dedicated project staff.**

***Community School Directors.*** Each Community School Director's full-time responsibilities are focused on the Community School Partnership, including coordination of pipeline services. The Community School Director assists in the development and implementation of a comprehensive community school needs assessment that includes administrators, principals, teachers, students, parents and community members. S/he develops an action plan based on the school specific needs assessment and implement strategies to address needs. S/he also leads site collaboration by carrying the collective vision, engaging and exciting others, ensuring that programming supports the vision, and outlining the general direction of the partnership. The Community School Directors will assist in managing this project through monitoring program quality, logistical issues, and timeliness; working with school staff to develop policies and procedures; managing partner staff; and ensuring appropriate fit and accountability of programming. Community School directors include:

- Tami Krzeszewski-Conway at Edison Elementary School
- Amy Grande at McKinley Elementary School

- Meghan Easter at Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary School
- Jamilia Gates at East Middle School
- Katrina Byrd at Strong Vincent Middle School

***Project Director.*** Upon receipt of this grant award, a full-time Project Director will be hired to provide the day-to-day oversight for the project, including coordination between case workers, support for case workers, and communication with partners. As this individual has not yet been hired, a draft position description is attached in *Appendix E: Resumes for Key Individuals* in place of a resume. This position description will be finalized through collaboration with the project's key partners before initiating the hiring process.

***Case workers.*** Upon receipt of this grant award, a full-time case worker will be hired for each school to provide the day-to-day student and family interactions outlined in this proposal as well as complete all necessary documentation about each interaction. As these individuals have not yet been hired, a draft position description is attached in *Appendix E: Resumes for Key Individuals* in place of resumes. This position description will be finalized through collaboration with the project's key partners before initiating the hiring process.

#### **(e) Quality of the Project Evaluation**

##### **(1) The Extent to Which the Methods of Evaluation are Thorough, Feasible, and Appropriate to the Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes of the Proposed Project**

Dr. John Ranney at Gannon University will lead the data evaluation and IRB approval will be obtained from Gannon University's IRB process before beginning data collection and evaluation. Dr. Ranney and the Project Director will collaboratively lead efforts to develop standards for primary data collection that project partners and Case Managers will utilize to ensure quality of data.

Dr. Ranney will analyze collected data using MPLUS version 8.2, JASP, and R to conduct correlations, t-tests, linear regressions, structural equation modeling, multilevel linear modeling, ANOVA, and MANOVA. These analyses will aid in formative and summative evaluation efforts and will be used to support the development of a predictive model that can then be used to create an early warning system.

Using reports from Dr. Ranney, the Project Director will work with United Way of Erie County backbone staff to lead formative evaluation using the Rapid Cycle Quality Improvement approach. Using informal interviews, direct observations, policy and protocol documents, the work plan, and statistical reports as resources, the Project Director and United Way of Erie County will ensure the project is reaching the target population, monitor progress toward outcomes, monitor adherence to project standards, and work with partners to improve quality of services throughout the project.

Summative evaluations will be provided annually by Gannon University to show progress toward project goals. The results of these evaluations will be made publicly available on United Way of Erie County's website and public notice of the availability of the results will be provided.

**(2) 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**

Data will be collected using an electronic tracking system and submitted to Gannon University on a quarterly basis. Data will be reported in group format only, meaning that individual information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. Data sources will include intake forms and surveys, including The Center for

Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale, the Beck Anxiety Inventory, and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale; tracked data from Student Assistance Program Records and Infinite Campus (Erie City School District’s student tracking system); and elements of Case Manager documentation with variables in mental health, attendance, and connection to community resources, as outlined in *Table 15: Variables*. Each variable is connected with project goals, objectives, and outcomes. Additionally, all variables will have influence on Goal 4 and its related objectives and outcomes.

**Table 15: Variables**

Variable	Data Source	Associated Project Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes
Total Number of Student Assistance Program Referrals	Student Assistance Program Records	Goals 1 & 3; Objectives 1.4 & 3.2; Outcomes 1.1 & 1.2
Number and Type of Student Assistance Program Referrals for School Specialist Caseloads	Student Assistance Program Records	Goals 1 & 2; Objective 1.4; Outcome 1.2
Number and Type of Student Assistance Program Referrals to Community Services for Mental and Behavioral Health	Student Assistance Program Records	Goal 1; Objective 1.5; Outcome 1.2
Number of Referred Students who Receive Services	Student Assistance Program Records	Goals 1 & 3; Objectives 1.5 & 3.2; Outcomes 1.1, 1.2, & 3.2

**Table 15: Variables cont.**

Variable	Data Source	Associated Project Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes
Responses to Questionnaires Evaluating Anxiety, Depression, and Self-esteem	Intake Surveys	Goals 1, 2, & 3; Objectives 1.5, 2.2, & 3.3
Total Number of Days Missed	Infinite Campus	Goal 2; Objective 2.1; Outcomes 2.1 & 2.2
Total Sick or Excused Days	Infinite Campus	Goal 2; Objective 2.1; Outcome 2.1
Total Illegal Absences	Infinite Campus	Goal 2; Objective 2.1; Outcomes 2.1 & 2.2
Number of Truant Students	Infinite Campus	Goal 2; Objective 2.1; Outcome 2.1
Number of Students Missing 10% of School Days or More	Infinite Campus	Goal 2; Objective 2.1; Outcome 2.1
Number of Students Missing 20% of School Days or More	Infinite Campus	Goal 2; Objective 2.1; Outcome 2.1
Average Daily Attendance	Infinite Campus	Goal 2

**Table 15: Variables cont.**

Variable	Data Source	Associated Project Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes
Textual Analysis of Reasons Students Commonly Miss School	Intake Forms	Goal 2; Objectives 2.1 & 2.2
Number of Touchpoints with Students who are Absent or at School	Case Manager Documentation	Goal 2; Objective 2.2
Number of Referrals to School and Community Resources	Student Assistance Program Records and Case Manager Documentation	Goals 1 & 3; Objectives 1.5 3.3; Outcome 3.1
Number of Successful Connections Made to School and Community Resources	Case Manager Documentation	Goals 1 & 3; Objectives 1.5 3.3; Outcome 3.1
Number of Parent Contact Information Updates	Case Manager Documentation	Goals 1, 2, & 3; Objectives 1.4, 2.1, & 3.2
Number and Type of Documented Interactions with Students and Families	Case Manager Documentation	Goals 1, 2, & 3; Objectives 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 3.2, & 3.3; Outcome 3.1



**Table 15: Variables cont.**

Variable	Data Source	Associated Project Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes
Textual Analysis of Barriers Students and Families Face to Accessing Needed Resources	Case Manager Documentation	Goals 1 & 3; Objectives 1.5, 3.2, & 3.3
Textual Analysis of Barrier Resolutions	Case Manager Documentation	Goals 1 & 3; Objectives 1.5, 3.2, & 3.3
Number of Students Who Receive Case Management Services	Case Manager Documentation	Goals 1, 2, & 3; Objectives 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, & 3.2; Outcome 1.1
Number of Family Members Who Receive Case Management Services	Case Manager Documentation	Goal 3; Objectives 3.2 & 3.3; Outcome 3.1
Language and Type of Interpretation Services Used	Case Manager Documentation	Goal 3; Objectives 3.1 & 3.3; Outcome 3.1
Demographic Information of the Population Served	Intake Forms	Goals 3 & 4; Objectives 3.1 & 4.2; Outcomes 4.1 & 4.2
Demographic Information of the Student Body	Infinite Campus	Goals 3 & 4; Objectives 3.1 & 4.2; Outcome 4.1

### **(3) The Extent to Which the Methods of Evaluation will Provide Valid and Reliable**

#### **Performance Data on Relevant Outcomes**

The relationship between project outcomes and evaluation variables is shown in *Table 15: Variables*. The outlined evaluation strategies will be used to show project impact on desired outcomes as follows:

**Outcome 1.1.** By June 2024, provide case management services to 375 unduplicated individuals annually, as measured by the count of individuals served according to Case Manager documentation records.

**Outcome 1.2.** By June 2024, increase accessibility to services in physical health, mental health, behavioral health, special education, and children's services to an additional 125 unduplicated individuals annually, as measured by the number of referrals made to these services through the Student Assistance Program.

**Outcome 2.1.** By June 2024, decrease the percent of chronically absent students to a 10% combined rate across the schools involved in this project (currently 23.4%), as measured by the number and percent of students who have missed 10% of school days or more in a school year.

**Outcome 2.2.** By June 2024, decrease the percent of truant students to a 25% combined rate across the schools involved in this project (currently 38.4%), as measured by the number and percent students who have three or more unexcused absences in a school year.

**Outcome 3.1.** By June 2024, collaborate with the project partners to increase access to community resources for 1,000 individuals, including at-risk students and families, as measured by the number of individuals who have had at least one successful referral to community resources.

**Outcome 4.1.** Annually conduct formative and summative evaluations that show progress toward project outcomes.

**Outcome 4.2.** By June 2024, use collected data to create a predictive model that can identify indicators that lead to negative outcomes (e.g., a student who is bullied is less likely to attend school) and apply knowledge gained to develop an early warning system and inform strategies and pipeline services provided by the community schools.

### **Conclusion**

Nelson Mandela said, “Our children are the rock on which our future will be built, our greatest asset as a nation. They will be the leaders of our country, the creators of our national wealth who care for and protect our people.” Giving our children the greatest opportunities success will give us all the greatest opportunity for a bright future.

This reflects United Way of Erie County’s goal for our community. The needs among our students in Erie City School District are large, but the community school model has been making needed changes to better support our children. Building on the strength of the foundation laid through the Community Schools Partnership over the last three years in Erie City School District, United Way of Erie County is eager to address some of the underlying needs in infrastructure and opportunities to serve our students and families, including those at greatest risk of dropping out.

Leveraging the commitment and expertise of partners in the Community School Partnership to introduce Case Managers and the pipeline services they will provide into the schools can increase social, health, and mental health services and supports; increase overall school attendance and decreasing truancy and chronic absence; and increase family and community engagement and supports. The impact in these areas along with the creation of a

predictive model that supports the development of an early warning system will increase opportunities for student success and family stability in our community.

The impact of this project will not stop at the end of the five-year grant period. Through continued partner commitment, the lessons learned through this project will influence children and families throughout Erie County as the Community School Partnership expands in the coming years to include all of the 13 Erie County school districts. As more children in our community have access to resources that support their success, the rock on which our future will be built will be a firm foundation.

### **List of Appendices**

*Appendix A: Erie County Community Schools Partnership Model*

*Appendix B: Letters of Support*

*Appendix C: Memorandum of Understanding*

*Appendix D: Action Plan Priorities*

*Appendix E: Resumes for Key Individuals*

## References

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