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There are many tough places in this country: the ghost cities of Detroit, Camden and Gary, the sunbaked misery of inland California and the isolated reservations where Native American communities were left to struggle. But in its persistent poverty, Eastern Kentucky—land of storybook hills and drawls—just might be the hardest place to live in the United States. Statistically speaking.¹

Partners for Rural Impact uses a place-based, student-focused approach to improve educational outcomes in the Eastern Kentucky region of Appalachia—a place that “just might be the hardest place to live in the United States. Statistically speaking.” We braid services and align funding to optimize results for the children and youth of Appalachia.

In 1995, Dreama Gentry, JD established Partners for Rural Impact (then called Partners for Education) to increase educational outcomes in rural Appalachia. Through a suite of programs, including two Promise Neighborhood programs, Partners for Rural Impact (PRI) leverages \$50 million annually to serve more than 50,000 children and youth.

The U.S. Department of Education modeled the Promise Neighborhood program after Geoffrey Canada’s Harlem Children’s Zone (HCZ). Canada began the HCZ project as a one-block pilot in the 1990s. With bold ambition, careful planning, and a strong infrastructure, Canada steadily and systematically expanded the depth and breadth of programming in Harlem to encompass 24 blocks, then 60, and ultimately 97 blocks.

Since 2011, Gentry has learned directly from Canada. With his mentorship she has applied a rural lens to the HCZ model, developing a Promise Neighborhood model that works in rural America. Following Canada’s example, Gentry developed PRI’s capacity, partnerships, funding, and infrastructure to scale Promise Neighborhoods in rural Appalachia. **In 2011**, Gentry launched the nation’s first rural Promise Neighborhood serving 6,297 students in three counties. Through that PN, we met all goals and objectives and, most importantly, improved outcomes for young children, students, youth, and families. To illustrate, when our original Promise

Neighborhood began only 16% (80 of 492) of children were ready for kindergarten (2012 data). **Today**, 48.3% (215 of 445) are kindergarten ready—a rate that nearly mirrors the state average (53%) and tops that of many more affluent areas of the state.²

Again, like Canada, to serve more children and youth, we built upon our success. **In 2016**, we launched **Knox Promise Neighborhood** serving 10,347 students in one county and through our strengthened collective impact approach, outcomes for children and youth are improving. **Today** in Knox County, more children (+10.1%) are ready for kindergarten, academic proficiency is increasing in math (+3.9%) and English Language Arts (+3.3%), school attendance is up (+7.4%), and more students are ready for postsecondary (+6%).³ **In 2018**, we launched **Perry Promise Neighborhood** serving 8,495 students in one county. **Today**, five years into the work in Perry County, attendance is improving (+4.9%), more students are graduating high school (+7.9%), and more are ready for postsecondary (+11.1%).⁴

With this Promise Neighborhood proposal, we bring this proven approach, to Letcher County, Kentucky. **Our logic model on page 51 summarizes our approach.** We are applying for funding under Absolute Priority 2 and will exclusively serve a neighborhood that is served by LEAs with a locale code of 32.⁵

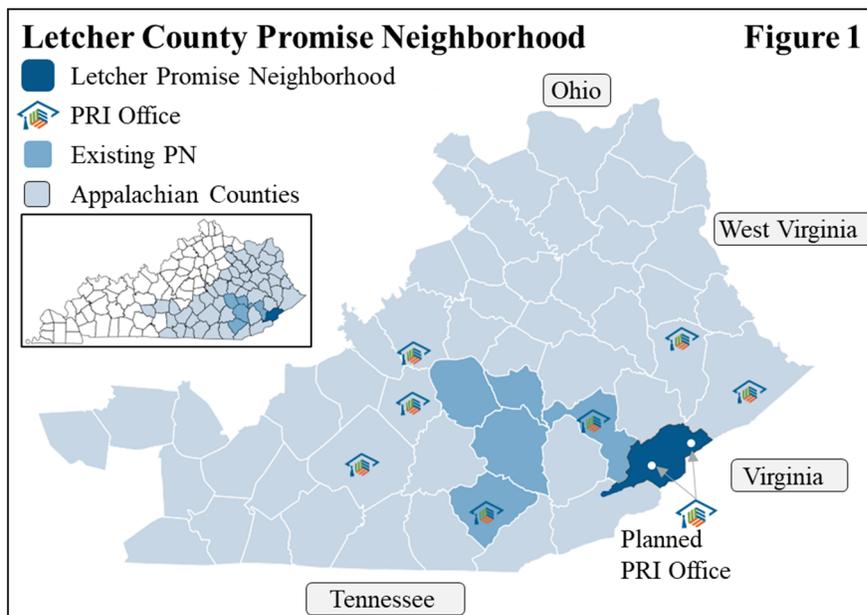
It is important to note that during the development of this proposal, on **July 28, 2022**, **Letcher County was devastated by a historic flood and our neighborhood is currently in a state of emergency.**

Letcher County, where more than 90% of the students receive free or reduced-price lunch, suffered massive devastation from the flooding. More than 1,250 homes were left uninhabitable, and around 1,100 students were displaced. Schools like those in Letcher County are trying not just to figure out where to have students attend class, but also how to get them there. Many of the roads and bridges are so damaged that some believe driving a heavy school bus on them could lead to an accident, which has caused some districts to consider using fleets of vans or large SUVs to pick up students.⁶

The Promise Neighborhood geographically defined

In rural Eastern Kentucky, neighborhood is defined by county lines. When you ask someone here where they are from, they respond by telling you their county. As we have implemented our Promise Neighborhood model we have scaled our work county by county. Letcher County, Kentucky, is the geographic definition of this Promise Neighborhood.

Our Letcher Promise Neighborhood (**hereafter referred to as Letcher PN or PN**), is 339 square miles and is home to 25,881 people.⁷ Some live in the county’s one small town which has a population of 2,251 and some live in one of three incorporated areas, each with a population of less than 1,000.⁸ Most live in the remote parts of the county. Regardless of where they live,



our residents identify as being from one neighborhood – Letcher County. The poverty rate is 24.4% (national rate of 10.5%) and per capita income is \$19,356 (national per capita income of \$62,843.)⁹

Of the 25,881 PN residents, 5,102 are children and youth: 1,244 birth–4; 3,528 ages 5–17; and 1,450 ages 18–24.¹⁰ Children and youth attend one of the **two school districts**— Jenkins Independent and Letcher County.¹¹ Our Promise Neighborhood is designed to serve every student. In our rural context we have learned that for students to improve, schools must improve. PN schools, Figure 2 are a key partner and central to our design.

Promise Neighborhood School Enrollment		Figure 2
District/School	Grade Levels	All Students
Jenkins Independent School District		
Jenkins	Pre-K-12th	464
Letcher County School District		
Arlie Boggs Elementary School	K-8 th	133
Cowan Elementary School	K-8 th	305
Fleming Neon Middle School	6 th -8 th	207
Letcher County Central High School	9 th -12 th	954
Letcher Elementary School	PreK-5 th	303
Letcher Middle School	6 th -8 th	154
Martha Jane Potter Elementary School	PreK-5 th	361
West Whitesburg Elementary School	PreK-5 th	496
Whitesburg Middle School	6 th -8 th	193
Totals for Promise Neighborhood:		3,570

A. NEED FOR PROJECT

1. The magnitude or severity of the problems to be addressed by the indicators of need

A needs assessment and segmentation analysis were conducted to determine the severity of the problems in our Promise Neighborhood. The extensive quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis helped prioritize the needs in our Letcher Promise Neighborhood. Our primary methods of data collection are noted here:

- **Archival data:** We reviewed archival data over a ten-year time period that measures socio-economic status, educational outcomes, post-secondary outcomes, and well-being outcomes.
- **Surveys:** In the Spring of 2022 we conducted neighborhood parent and school climate surveys. We also reviewed reliable surveys administered by our partners.
- **Focus Groups:** In Summer 2022 we conducted virtual focus groups of stakeholders including education leaders and parents from the neighborhood and gained consensus on neighborhood needs.

- **Stakeholder Interviews:** From June 2022 – present, we conducted virtual and in-person interviews with school leaders, community leaders, family members and students from the neighborhood. Post-flooding, we intensified our interviews to ensure the data analysis and program design is focused on the reality of this moment.

Data were analyzed and segmented by gender, race, income, school level (elementary, middle, or high), grade level, and other demographics within the Letcher PN. The available data demonstrates a significant need within the neighborhood even though many data points were limited by the pandemic or suppression within small demographic groups. **Detailed data can be found in the Data Segmentation, Appendix A.**

Our needs assessment and segmentation analysis informed the selection of indicators of need to guide our work, summarized here. It is important to note that **our indicators of need align with the Promise Neighborhood Performance Indicators** established by the Secretary of Education under section 4624(h) of the ESEA and 34 CFR 75.110.

Indicators of Need: Education

Indicator 1: Age-Appropriate Functioning

Number and percentage in kindergarten demonstrating age-appropriate functioning across multiple domains of early learning using developmentally appropriate early learning measures..

Each year Promise Neighborhood kindergarten students are screened with the Brigance Kindergarten Screen III, a developmentally appropriate early learning measure adopted in Kentucky.¹² In the 2021-22 school year, just 16.3% of Letcher students assessed (36 children of 221) exhibited age-appropriate motor, language, and concept development functioning—a rate far below Kentucky’s rate of 53%.¹³

Segmentation of Brigance data shows glaring inequities. To illustrate, 25% of children (6 of 24 young children) entering kindergarten at Cowan Elementary entered kindergarten ready to learn.¹⁴ At Arlie Boggs, however, a more isolated school, only **9.5% of children** (2 of 21 children) entered kindergarten ready to learn.¹⁵ Additional segmentation reflects that fewer boys

are scoring at readiness (19%, 19 out of 100) compared to girls (33%, 98 out of 239).¹⁶

A lack of access to high quality early learning exists within our neighborhood. Our asset mapping of the neighborhood shows there are eight early childhood providers in the Letcher PN. Combined, these eight providers have capacity for approximately 300 students. This capacity can only serve only 25% of the 1,244 children who are under five years old. Six of the eight early childhood providers are either Head Start programs or public pre-schools which are restricted to the highest need families in the neighborhood. The remaining two providers both received poor ratings on Kentucky's standards for high-quality early learning centers.

Indicator 2.1: Math Academic Proficiency

Number and percentage of students at or above grade level according to state mathematics assessments annually in grades 3rd through 8th and once in high school.

The Kentucky state standard for mathematics success is proficiency or higher. Only 18% of our neighborhood students (261 of 1,448) are at or above Proficiency in math, the state standard for success according to Kentucky mathematics state assessment (3rd through 8th and once in high school).¹⁷ Segmentation of data reflects, that only 14.8% of the low-income students are proficient in math (165 of 1,114 low-income students).

As students' progress through school, the risk of academic failure continues. To illustrate, in 2020-21, 18% scored at benchmark on the ACT in math. **Across all grade levels and subject areas, most students in the neighborhood scoring below proficient were low-income.**¹⁸

Indicator 2.2: English Language Arts Academic Proficiency

Number and percentage of students at or above grade level according to English Language Arts assessments annually in grades 3rd through 8th and once in high school.

In 2020-21, 35.7% (517 of 1,343) of PN students were at or above the English Language Arts (ELA) state standard of proficiency, the Kentucky measure for success (3rd through 8th and once in high school).¹⁹ Only 33% (186) of PN Elementary school students are at or above proficiency,

and data segmentation shows that only **23.6% of 3rd grade students meet proficiency** on the ELA assessment in 2020-21. The Casey Foundation reports that children who are not reading proficiently in 3rd grade are at risk of not graduating from high school on time.²⁰

As students' progress through school, the risk of academic failure continues. To illustrate, in 2020-21, 31% of 11th grade students taking the ACT scored at benchmark in reading. **Across all grade levels and subject areas, most students scoring below proficient were low-income.**²¹

Indicator 3.1: Attendance

Attendance rate (as defined by average daily attendance) of students in 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th grade.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, attendance rates for the Letcher PN were 91.5% and 91.7%, respectively, for Jenkins Ind. and Letcher County schools. The Kentucky Department of Education uses daily attendance as a standard for funding and, due to the dynamic nature of the pandemic, froze publicly reported attendance rates at the 2018-19 level. Based on that pre-COVID rate, both Jenkins and Letcher fall far below the 2018-19 state attendance rate of 94.2%.²² Chronic Absenteeism, noted below, continues to be collected and further suggests attendance rates are continuing to be well below state levels in our neighborhood.

Indicator 3.2: Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absentee rate of students in 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th grades.

The Kentucky Department of Education defines a student as being chronically absent if they miss 10% or more of their academic year—typically 17 days. In 2021-22, over half of students (54% or 262 students) in the Jenkins schools were chronically absent. In Letcher County schools, 55% (or 1,579 students) were chronically absent.²³ This accounts for students who continued to attend school remotely; that is, these students were considered “absent” if they failed to meet online benchmarks for time and activity. **The PN chronic absenteeism rate (54%) is far higher than the state rate (28%).**

Data for the 2021-2022 school year reveal alarming rates of chronic absenteeism for males and students experiencing homelessness:

- 66% of students who experienced homelessness were chronically absent.²⁴
- 58.8% of males were chronically absent.²⁵

It is important to note that the current rate is consistent with pre-pandemic rates for the neighborhood. In other words, in our PN chronic absenteeism is not something new.²⁶ Research from Attendance Works indicates that with every year of chronic absenteeism, a student’s likelihood of dropping out of school increases significantly.²⁷ Ongoing research notes that chronic absenteeism **impacts everything**, particularly math as well as graduation rate. Impacts are highest for low-income students who tend to benefit most from being in school. Attendance alone “...will drive up achievement, high school graduation, and college attainment levels” regardless of other educational improvements.²⁸

Indicator 4: Graduation Rate

Four-year adjusted cohort Graduation rate.

Fifteen percent of our PN students who enrolled in 9th grade in 2017 (86 students) failed to graduate four years later.²⁹ This rate is calculated using the Average Freshman Graduation Rate method.³⁰ In the spirit of transparency, our AFGR calculation differs greatly with the official four-year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate reported for 2022 in the Letcher PN: 98.7% (222 of 225 12th-grade students).³¹ We must note, however, that these official rates for Kentucky are **gross underestimates** with roots in changes to Kentucky’s dropout policies and the pandemic.

In 2013, Kentucky implemented a gradual increasing of the state’s dropout age to 18; it went into full force in 2019. Over the past two years—likely as a combination of the pandemic **and** the change in dropout age—we have also seen an increase in the number of 16- and 17-year-olds switching to homeschooling. In Kentucky, this merely requires parents to sign a form each

year. These are students who are deleted from the Adjusted Cohort Graduate Rate calculation, again, **hiding the severity of the actual dropout rate.**

Indicator 5.1: Postsecondary Enrollment

Number and percentage of Promise Neighborhood students who enroll in a two-year or four-year college or university after graduation.

For the 2021 cohort of Letcher graduates, only **50.7% completed the FAFSA** (114 of 225 graduates in 2021).³² Only 46.7% of the 2021 Letcher PN cohort enrolled in postsecondary programs (105 of 225 graduates). Only 41.3% of students eligible for free or reduced-priced lunch enrolled in a college or university (71 of 172).³³ And, only 41.6% of the male students enrolled in postsecondary programs (52 of 125 male graduates) compared to 53% of female students (53 of 100 female graduates).³⁴

Increasing the number and percentage of students who complete the FAFSA is a focus of our PN and, thus, meets the Promise Neighborhood Invitational Priority.

In addition, we are compelled to note the lack of preparedness of many of our high school graduates as they transition to postsecondary. In 2020, **70% of students were not academically ready for college when they graduated from high school.**³⁵ And, 72% of the low-income students were not academically ready for college upon high school graduation.³⁶

Indicator 5.2: Postsecondary Completion

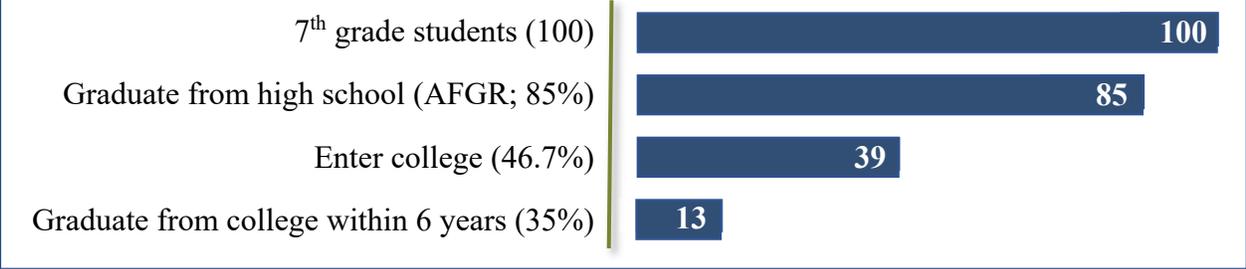
Number and percent who graduate from two or four-year university or certification completion.

Two-thirds of Letcher students who enroll in postsecondary programs fail to complete.³⁷

Our neighborhood's postsecondary graduation rate (6-year rate for 4-year institutions and a 3-year rate for 2-year institutions) is 35%.³⁸

The status quo predicts a dire future for our youth. Statistically speaking, the future is bleak for Letcher children and youth, as seen in Figure 3.³⁹ Without comprehensive supports and targeted interventions, **only 13 of 100 7th-graders today will receive a 2- or 4-year degree.**

Figure 3: Postsecondary Pipeline of the Letcher Promise Neighborhood



Indicators of Need: Family and Neighborhood

Fifty-seven years ago, President Lyndon B. Johnson declared his “war on poverty” from Tom Fletcher’s porch in neighboring Martin County, Kentucky. While much attention has been paid to the economic and educational problems of Appalachian Kentucky, the problems persist in Letcher County. If President Johnson were alive today, and if he were to declare once again a “war on poverty,” he could still do so—some 57 years later—from a front porch here in our neighborhood. *Ranked the 28th worst place to live in 2021,⁴⁰ Letcher County puts a face on rural poverty and emphasizes the dire need for increased services to students in rural America.* Poverty levels are high, educational attainment and income are low, and all are exacerbated by the rural nature of the area. Economic and educational problems are deeply embedded.

Over the last 10 years, our Eastern Kentucky region has lost more than 90 percent of the coal and coal related jobs that had sustained its economy.⁴¹ The unemployment rate is 7% for the neighborhood (3.7% in the nation; Aug. 2022).⁴² Our residents find building up even a small amount of savings a challenge. According to the 2019 Prosperity Now Scorecard data, 50% of households in our neighborhood, as compared to 36.9% in Kentucky, are “liquid asset poor,” meaning they have less than three months of savings to live at the poverty level if they suffer an income loss.⁴³ With liquid-asset poverty comes a lack of capacity on the part of families to financially plan for emergencies, let alone plan for their children’s higher education. Figure 4 contains socio-economic information for our neighborhood.⁴⁴

Socio-Economic Information for the Neighborhood			Figure 4
Population	% of Below Poverty	Per Capita Income	% US Poverty Rate
Letcher	37% children, 24% families	\$22,103	215%
State	22% children, 12% families	\$29,123	131%
Nation	19% children, 9 % families	\$35,384	100%

Students living in poverty, on average, start their educational experience significantly behind their peers. They lack precursory reading and mathematics skills—including early vocabulary and gross/fine motor skills—as they enter school. Differential experiences, including the lack of after school and summer programs—widen these gaps.⁴⁵ As they grow older, students in poverty tend to have less academic background knowledge and more limited vocabularies, which further challenge the pace with which they read and absorb academic material.⁴⁶

Our families are living in poverty, navigating the collapse of the coal industry, and facing the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. **And then came the flood.** On July 28, 2022, ten to twelve inches of rain fell overnight on very steep terrain in eastern Kentucky in nine hours’ time, resulting in record-breaking flooding that devastated and/or destroyed small communities and resulting in the deaths of 39 individuals. Letcher County School District’s Superintendent reported two school district staff died in the flash floods that swept through the region. More than 40 school staff members experienced significant damage to their homes.

Six school district buildings were inundated with three schools holding eight feet of water in them. One elementary school is so severely damaged it may not be salvageable. School leaders—recognizing the needs for young people to begin healing from the trauma in in safe spaces where they are warm, fed, and cared for—prioritized re-opening. School is now in session in both districts. Leaders reconfigured schools by grades and levels. Students are divided

between other school buildings and some attend classes in a nearby church and community center that have donated spaces for classrooms.

School is the refuge for too many of our students. As Amanda Anderson, principal of Jenkins Elementary, shared

I cannot wait to see my students again ... I want to make sure they are okay. In a community that has faced so many challenges lately, school can be one thing that doesn't change in these kids' lives. They need the consistency that school provides, and we are excited to welcome them back to provide it.⁴⁷

School is too often the only place where our neighborhood children can truly be children and our educators are determined to provide students that security once again. "The playground is a big concern of mine. We had an area for our preschoolers, as well as one for the older kids," Jenkins Superintendent Damian Johnson said. "Most of the playground equipment and the fencing around it is gone. We have no idea where it went."⁴⁸

In addition, the raging flood waters ravaged roadways, destroying more than 50 bridges. Businesses and homes—including homes of our students—were lost as well, many covered in mud and uninhabitable. Recovery crews are not able to easily reach many areas. **Our entire neighborhood remains under a state of emergency** due to damaged homes and property; washed out culverts and roadways make all roads impassable. Many businesses were also severely damaged including the Isom IGA, a locally owned grocery store that had been serving Isom, a remote area of the neighborhood for over 50 years. The grocery store, in addition to being an access point for food, was the largest employer in that area of the county and one of the only employers of teenagers. Multiple educators shared that at the slightest rain students' anxiety increases and several shared that they too feel anxious each time it rains. Our residents are resilient, and they are also very tired.

Indicator 6: Healthy Eating

Number and percentage who consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily.

According to the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, poverty is associated with lower fruit and vegetable consumption and lower-quality diets.⁴⁹ Our PN students are not getting the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables. In Spring 2022, we surveyed PN students and found that **only 7.75% (10 of 129 respondents) eat the daily recommendation of five servings of fruits and vegetables.**⁵⁰ According to the Foundation for Healthy Kentucky only 5% of PN adults consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily⁵¹

Access to healthy food options is a pressing issue.

There are only four grocery stores in the neighborhood, and that was BEFORE the flood. Hunger was already a concern in our neighborhood and school and community leaders share that food insecurity has drastically increased since the flooding. Displaced families are living in tents, campers and sheds with no electricity, no running water and no ability to prepare meals.

Indicator 7: Safety

Number and percentage who feel safe at school.

In Fall 2021, the Kentucky Incentives for Prevention (KIP) survey found that 12% of Letcher PN students (73 of 596

EASTERN KENTUCKY FLOODS SWALLOW ISOM IGA

That morning we turned off Route 15, and I said, ‘We’re in trouble. We’re in bad trouble,’” Gwen Christon, Letcher County resident and the owner of the Isom IGA shared.

Isom IGA is a pillar of the neighborhood and the only full service grocery store for miles.

"The health department has been here and condemned the whole store." Gwen shared.

Independent Grocers’ Association President John Ross summarized the community impact as follows, “When rural stores like Isom IGA close, communities suffer. It creates a food desert where people are forced to shop from convenience stores. They lack access to fresh meat and produce.”

IGA News
August 2, 2022

respondents) felt unsafe or very unsafe in their schools.⁵² There is a concerning increase in the rate of students experiencing psychological distress, and alarmingly, the rate increases as students get older. In 2021, **33.6% of 12th grade students report experiencing psychological distress in the past 30 days.**

Generational cycle of substance abuse: Appalachian Kentucky is known for artistry, unique culture, and rolling landscapes, but it is also known as the nation’s **painkiller belt**. Our war on prescription opioids has been reported nationally. Adults from all walks of life—and this is primarily a story of adult addiction—are abusing pills that are legal and distributed by medical professionals. The opioid crisis has ravaged Appalachia impacting those most vulnerable, our children and youth. The experience of this youth from a neighboring county resonates with too many of our students:

Drugs are just a part of the eastern Kentucky town I grew up in, passed down like the poverty that ran through its veins. As each year of high school went by, I watched more and more of my classmates give up the fight for an education and drop out, my class size diminishing by two hundred students.⁵³

School officials report that it has become common for students to lose a parent due to substance use and addiction. Across Kentucky, 12.4% of all **children are not living in parental care** (e.g., foster, kinship care); within Letcher County, **the rate is double, at 24%.**⁵⁴ According to Child Trends, 67% of Kentucky’s youth formerly in foster care are unemployed by the age of 21 and almost double the national average for youth on public assistance.⁵⁵

Fourteen percent of Letcher County students (492) experienced homelessness over the course of the school year.⁵⁶ And leaders in our neighborhood believe the actual number is much higher. In rural areas like ours, these children are hidden from our view. David Millanti, an administrator at the Kentucky Department of Education, said the dramatic increase in the number of kids who are considered homeless has been driven by a multitude of factors including a

depressed economy and Kentucky's high rate of addiction, which has devastated traditional family units. In Appalachian Kentucky, neighborhood leaders say these two key factors—the rapidly declining coal industry and drug addiction—have combined to exacerbate the problem.⁵⁷

And to be perfectly clear, these data do not include the impacts of the July flood which resulted in more than 1,250 homes being left uninhabitable, and around 1,100 students being displaced.⁵⁸ We anticipate the rate of children and youth experiencing homelessness will skyrocket given **vast number of homes destroyed** in the flooding.

Indicator 8: Mobility

Student mobility rate.

At the end of the 2021-2022 school year, we found that **10.4% of students had moved to a different school, transferred to home school, or were retained.** This compares to a national rate of 14%.⁵⁹ However, mobility rates for students experiencing foster care are substantially higher; 34% of the 23 students in foster care moved or transferred.⁶⁰ Research shows that even one school move both reduced elementary school achievement in reading and math and increased high school dropout rates.⁶¹

KENTUCKY FLOODS DESTROYED HOMES THAT HAD BEEN SAFE FOR GENERATIONS. NOBODY'S SURE WHAT TO DO NEXT

“This is my lifelong home where all my family is. People have passed down their homes, passed their land to their children and their grandchildren. That’s what makes it home,” Danielle Eckles, a Letcher County resident, tells TIME. “It’s not a house, it’s the people around you that you know love you.”

Eckles fled her single-wide trailer with her husband and three children. All they had time to grab was baby formula and diapers. Eckles says the water was up to her calves by the time they got outside. The trailer was swept away by the flood shortly after. Eckles and her family are currently staying with loved ones, but plan to resettle somewhere in the area eventually.

Anisha Kohli, Time.com
August 13, 2022

Our residents are deeply tied to place and, those that are displaced by the flooding, hope to rebuild. In a September 13, 2022 report for NPR, author Katie Myers notes:

Still, everyone interviewed for this story says they don't plan to move away. For (Letcher County resident) Derenia Dunbar, and so many more in eastern Kentucky, connection to land and home goes back generations. "We're family here," Dunbar said. Dunbar's under no illusions that it will be easy. "It's kind of like the road's real crooked instead of straight for everybody," she said. "It's just real crooked. You have to stop at a couple of places, you know?"⁶²

Reality is that the road to rebuilding in place will be, as Derenia so eloquently puts it ‘real crooked instead of straight.’ The destruction of homes from the flooding has reduced the stock of available housing to rent and purchase, and the increased risks revealed by the floods restrict the locations where safe housing can be placed. It is important to note that the supply of safe housing is already constrained by low incomes in the communities, steep and damaged topography, and corporate ownership of much of the land in these counties at higher elevations. We anticipate mobility rates for our neighborhood will drastically increase during this time of rebuilding.⁶³

Indicator 9.1: Family Encourages Literacy

For children from birth to eighth grade, the number and percentage of parents or family members that read to or encourage their children to read to themselves three or more times a week.

Persistent cycle of under-education: In Letcher County, only 11% of residents over the age of 25 have a bachelor’s degree or higher, as compared to 33% of the nation. **Twenty-two percent of Letcher residents have less than a high school diploma** as compared to 8.9% of residents nationally.⁶⁴ These adults are the parents and family members of our students.

In the Spring of 2022, our neighborhood partners administered a survey to PN parents and caregivers. Among the 155 respondents with children aged birth to 8th grade, **70.97% (45 of 155) do not read to or encourage their children to read in a typical week.**⁶⁵

Indicator 9.2: Family Encourages College and Career

For children in the 9th–12th grades, the number and percentage of parents/family members who report talking with their child about the importance of college and career.

As our students reach high school and begin the process of preparing for college or the workforce, their families do not have the information necessary to assist their students with making these choices. Stereotypes depict Eastern Kentucky parents as not wanting their children to attend college for fear of losing the children or that the children “will get above their raising.” We find this is not true. Data tells us that most parents ***do*** want their children to succeed at school and attend college.

In our recent survey of 379 parents of youth in our neighborhood, 96% had spoken to their children about attending college. However, the survey revealed that **most parents do not have information to assist their children with college planning**—57% reported that no one had ever spoken with them about college entrance requirements, and 54% reported having no information about financial aid for college. This is particularly distressing given the undereducation of our parents and caregivers. According to our surveys, schools have limited resources to provide students, or their parents, with the information needed to plan for higher education, including financial planning. Few programs provide low-income parents the skills necessary for supporting their child in identifying and financing higher education pathways.

College planning support at school is lacking. The student-to-school counselor ratio in our schools is extremely high at **464:1**, which greatly exceeds the American School Counselors Association recommendation of 250:1.⁶⁶

Indicator 10: Access to Broadband

Number and percentage of students who have home access to broadband.

Our neighborhood partners analyzed internet access in the neighborhood and found that **76.5% of respondents did not have access to internet service because it was simply not available for their household**.⁶⁷ Of the households who did have internet access, 42% experienced download speeds of less than 10 Mbps and 45% had upload speeds that were less than 3 Mbps.

Generally, a speed of 25 Mbps is recommended to be able to work remotely or attend virtual school.⁶⁸ According to the FCC, in 2018 22.3% of Americans in rural areas lack coverage from 25 Mbps broadband, as compared to only 1.5% of Americans in urban areas.⁶⁹

2i. The nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses

Analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, including our segmentation analysis, has led us to identify specific gaps and weaknesses in services, infrastructure or opportunities that will be addressed by our pipeline of solutions. **These are summarized in Figure 6, column 2i.**

What is not readily apparent in our summary of gaps and weaknesses is the profound impact of living in **a place of persistent poverty**. Federal legislation in 2009 defined a **persistent poverty county** as one in which 20 percent or more of its population has lived in poverty over the past 30 years.⁷⁰ An April 2022 report confirmed that **Letcher County is a persistent poverty county**.⁷¹ Researchers note that in persistent poverty places, like Letcher County, all residents are impacted.

The higher the poverty rate and the longer it endures, the greater the likelihood that associated problems become systemic, affecting both the resident poor and non-poor. For instance, **areas of persistent poverty more often lack availability of healthcare, healthy and affordable food, safe and affordable housing, quality education, and adequate protective service and transportation systems**.⁷²

Persistent poverty has been linked to academic failure, school dropout, and reduced rates of college attendance and graduation.⁷³ Persistent poverty is the ecosystem in which we live.

2ii. A pipeline of solutions addressing gaps and weaknesses, including solutions targeted to early childhood, K-12, family and community supports, and college and career

In places of persistent poverty, like ours, resources, supports, and services like those to be provided by Promise Neighborhood, are critically important. We have designed a pipeline of solutions to address the identified gaps and weaknesses. Our design is influenced by our experience implementing Promise Neighborhood in areas of persistent poverty like Letcher

County. **Our pipeline of solutions addressing the gaps and weaknesses is detailed in Figure 6, column 2ii.**

Our pipeline of solutions is broken down into four categories with each category including specific solutions that have proven impactful in rural areas of persistent poverty. You will note our approach is framed cradle to career –early learning, Promise schools (from K- 12), and postsecondary access and success (high school to postsecondary to career) with our health and family supports wrapping around this cradle to career continuum. More information on our solutions can be found in Quality of Project Design, page 50 and in our Logic Model, page 51.

Letcher Promise Solutions		Figure 5
Solution Category	Specific Solutions	
#1 Early Learning	1.1 Home Visiting 1.2 Early Learning Professional Dev. & Accreditation 1.3 Evidence-Based Programs (Doors to Discovery, Pre-K Mathematics, Creative Curriculum) and Professional Development	
#2 Promise Schools	2.1 Community School Coordination 2.2 A-B-C One-to-One Case Management 2.3 Check & Connect 2.4 Evidence-Based Programs Math & Reading (Success for All, Fast ForWord, Accelerated Math) & Professional Dev. 2.5 Coaching & Capacity Bld. for School Leadership	
#3 Postsecondary Access and Success	3.1 Bottom Line 3.2 Dual Enrollment 3.3 Financial Aid Awareness & FAFSA Preparation 3.4 Summer Counseling & Transition to Postsecondary	
#4 Health and Family Supports	4.1 Dual Capacity Framework for Families & Schools 4.2 Families & Schools Together 4.3 PowerMyLearning: Family Playlist 4.4 Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child 4.5 Youth Mental Health First Aid 4.6 Teen Outreach Program (TOP) 4.7 Too Good for Drugs and Violence	

Detailed **solution descriptions** are included in Appendix A.

Our pipeline of solutions has been designed to address the identified gaps or weaknesses. Figure 6, below, links the pipeline of solutions to the gaps and weaknesses identified. The numbers given to the solutions below correspond to the individual and comprehensive solutions listed in Figure 5, above. **Solutions are described in detail in Appendix A** and gaps or weaknesses are discussed in detail in the Need section beginning on page 4.

Pipeline of Solutions Linked to Identified Gaps or Weaknesses		Figure 6
2i. Nature and Magnitude of Gaps or Weaknesses	2ii. Solutions	
<p>Indicator #1: Age-Appropriate Functioning 16.3% of children are K-ready as compared to 53%; K-readiness impacted further by location (isolated school only 9.5% ready); 19% of boys enter K-ready vs. 33% girls); lack of access to quality early childhood providers</p>	1.1, 1.2, 1.3	
<p>Indicators #2.1 and #2.2: Math & ELA Proficiency Math: 18% proficient; 14.8% low-income proficient ELA: 35.7% proficient; 23.6% of 3rd grade proficient</p>	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.2	
<p>Indicators #3.1 and #3.2: Attendance & Chronic Absenteeism Attendance at 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th grade 91.5% and 91.7%, respectively, for Jenkins Ind. and Letcher County schools below state rate of 94.2% Chronic Absenteeism rate of 54% compared to state rate 28%; 66% homeless students and 58.8% males chronically absent</p>	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 4.1, 4.6	
<p>Indicator #4: Graduation Rate AFGR rate of 85% meaning 15% of 9th graders failed to graduate in four years. Gross underestimate in official dropout data</p>	2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 3.2, 3.2, 4.1	

Pipeline of Solutions Linked to Identified Gaps or Weaknesses		Figure 6
2i. Nature and Magnitude of Gaps or Weaknesses	2ii. Solutions	
<p>Indicators #5.1 and #5.2: Postsecondary Enrollment & Completion Of 2021 cohort, only 50.7% complete FAFSA; 46.7% enter postsecondary programs; 41.3% of low income and 41.6% males enroll in postsecondary; 70% of those enrolled were not academically ready for postsecondary; 35% of students attained postsecondary degree</p>	2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1	
<p>Indicator #6: Healthy Eating 7.75% students eat 5 or more servings of fruits and veggies daily; 22.4% of families are food insecure before the flood and local leaders anticipate higher rates; Limited access to healthy foods; only 4 grocery stores before the flood</p>	2.1, 4.1, 4.4	
<p>Indicator #7: Safety 12% don't believe school is safe places; 33.6% of 12th-graders reported experiencing psychological distress in the past 30 days; 24% not living in parental care- a rate double the state; 14% experienced homelessness prior to flood and leaders anticipate a much higher rate now given number of homes destroyed; generational cycle of substance abuse</p>	4.1, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7	
<p>Indicator #8: Mobility 10.4% mobility rate; 34% mobility rate among students in foster care; 13.6% students experienced homelessness; leaders anticipate higher mobility post-flood</p>	2.2, 2.3, 4.2, 4.7	
<p>Indicators #9.1 and #9.2: Families encourage literacy, college/career 11% residents have bachelors degree; 22% have less than high school diploma; 70.97% parents of K-8 students report not reading to or encouraging their child to read; while 91.5% of parents spoke with child about college more than 50% had no information on college applications or financial aid; Schools provide limited resources on college planning; counselor to student rate of 464:1</p>	1.1, 1.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3	
<p>Indicator #10: Access to Broadband 76.5% of households did not have internet access because it was not available at their location; Of households with access, 42% experienced download speeds of less than 10 Mbps and 45% had upload speeds that were less than 3 Mbps</p>	1.1, 2.1, 4.3	

Competitive Preference Priorities (CPP)

CPP 1 – Strengthening Cross-Agency Coordination and Community Engagement to Advance Systemic Change

Letcher PN is designed to take a systemic, evidence-based approach to improving outcomes for underserved students through our **coordinated, cross-agency approach** to address healthy development and student success. That includes **providing pro-active responses for community violence prevention and intervention.**

We will build collective capacity through coordinating efforts with Federal, State, and local agencies, including community-based organizations and nonprofits to ensure all students are safe and supported. **We recognize that services alone will not create opportunities for youth and nor will they alone decrease violence.** We, and our partners, understand that no single program, no single voice, nor a single participating entity can accelerate results for all children. Our approach brings together a wide range of groups that are committed to student success and safety—not just families and teachers, but also businesses, civic organizations, nonprofits, and investors. Figure 17, page 80, illustrates the partners that are engaged. These cross-sector partners are committed to adopting common goals and expanding on best practices to ensure student success. They commit to working together to identify resources and operationalize supports to fill identified gaps in services to our children and youth.

We, and our partners, understand that it takes a school, working with the neighborhood, to provide an ecosystem where students are safe and supported. Collective efficacy—the interplay between social cohesion (bonds between community members) and willingness to intervene to solve problems—underpins our approach. Key to our project design is our partnerships with stakeholders from multiple sectors including school, social services, faith-based community and youth and their families.

Within our narrative and in our letters of support, we have noted specific partners including impactful agencies and organizations. To illustrate, the **Kentucky Center for School Safety** is a state agency supporting schools through professional learning, on-site inspections, community plan development, and more. Similarly, **EKCEP**—Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program, which operates 23 Workforce Investment and Opportunity programs in Kentucky—deploys federal dollars throughout eastern Kentucky to support youth, with a focus on justice-involved or substance-involved youth, in career aspiration, motivation, and training. EKCEP coordinates the regions Workforce Investment Board (WIB), a collection of private-sector employers from across Appalachia as well as policy makers from education, economic development, and various public arenas.

Violence prevention and intervention are **typically overlooked** in both the policy arena and in academic scholarship,⁷⁴ particularly in rural places. We center safety in all our work. In 2015, we collaborated with Dr. Charlotte Gill, the Deputy Director for the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy at George Mason University on a Department of Justice funded Community Based Crime Reduction project.⁷⁵ The research team initially worked to identify “hot spots” where crime involving young people was most concentrated. However, **they found no research** on how the concept of hot spots operates **in rural places**, or whether the crime prevention benefits of focusing interventions on these places is as effective as it is in urban areas.

Recognizing this, the team arrived at the concept of “bright spots,” which is derived from “anchor points”—physical spaces that serve as a gathering place for communities where the social bonds that underpin collective efficacy can be built.⁷⁶ As a result, Dr. Gill began translating criminological theory and research for rural communities. She received a Carnegie

Fellowship in 2017 to explore how youth in our rural region experience crime and safety.

As Dr. Gill stresses, the creation of bright spots is crucial in rural areas. Bright spots reduce the attractiveness of the hot spots. Bright spots provide service providers places where they can more effectively provide support, and positive interactions. Bright spots draw young people away from locations where crime is happening.⁷⁷

We recognize that schools are “bright spots.” Our design builds upon Dr. Gill’s research.⁷⁸ We agree that in the rural context, “bright spots” are essential to providing youth support and opportunities.⁷⁹ Rural schools are the heart of community and the most logical place to begin creating the trust and efficacy that is foundational to a safe environment for students. Our design incorporates Promise community schools as a foundational element of our pipeline of solutions. Promise schools transform the school into a “bright spot.” When entire communities are part of the undergirding to build an anti-bullying, supportive environment around youth, outcomes will move in a more positive direction.⁸⁰ Training school personnel, partners, and students and their families in evidence-informed practices is a critical component to schools being the “bright spot” that ensures students are safe and supported.

Evidence-based and evidence-informed practices related to violence prevention wrap around our cradle to career approach. We recognize that it is critical that all children and youth be safe, healthy and supported from cradle to career. Thus, we have incorporated Health & Family as a category of solutions, Figure 5, Category 4. Our initial planning has resulted in the following specific practices to address violence prevention and intervention:

- **Youth Mental Health First Aid (Solution 4.5):** Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) was developed to address gaps in mental health literacy by teaching skills to identify and help individuals experiencing emotional distress.⁸¹ Numerous studies, including those in rural

places, have found YMHFA to be effective.^{82, 83} Rural-specific supplemental materials, and curricula were developed to train instructors on the disparities regarding mental health conditions and treatment in rural areas.⁸⁴ The coordinators and community leaders will be trained as instructors and will provide YMHFA training for families and community partners.

- **Too Good for Violence (Solution 4.7):** Too Good for Violence (TGFV) is a school-based violence prevention and character education program. Crimesolutions.org and What Works Clearinghouse rate the program as a promising evidence-based program. Bacon (2001) found that there was a 45% reduction in intention to engage in aggressive behavior for students that participated in the TGFV program.⁸⁵ Furthermore, Bacon (2003) found that those students that were engaged in TGFV self-reported higher score for emotional competency skills.⁸⁶ Coordinators and educators will be trained in Too Good For Violence, and the age-appropriate programming will be available to each school.

Detailed information on these practices can be found in Appendix A. As part of our cross-agency collaborative approach, the Advisory Board will be on continual lookout for additional programs and practices to support students, schools and the neighborhood.

CPP 2a — Increasing Postsecondary Education Access, Affordability, Completion, and Post-Enrollment Success by (a) Increasing the number and proportion of underserved students who enroll in and complete postsecondary education programs, which may include strategies related to college preparation, awareness, application, selection, advising, counseling, and enrollment.

Letcher Promise Neighborhood is designed to increase the number and proportion of Letcher PN students who enroll in and complete postsecondary education. Our cradle to career continuum of services includes a category of solutions (Category 3) focused specifically on postsecondary access and success, Figure 5, page 19, with more information in Appendix A. Our solutions include strategies related to college awareness, preparation, counseling, application,

selection, enrollment and retention. Our performance measures, Figure 16, include tracking our success in increasing access to postsecondary as well as postsecondary success, page 75. In addition, we will support FAFSA completion and track FAFSA completion rates (Invitational Priority).

While our PN Letcher will serve **all students**, we will target services to those students who are underserved—**priority students**. The vast majority of the young children, students, and youth in our PN fall into at least one priority category. For example, nearly all of our students qualify for free/reduced lunch—an indicator of lower economic status. And each student lives in a neighborhood of generational poverty where few adults have achieved their own academic success (low college graduation rates for adults). With that population—priority students and their families—in mind, we have developed a slate of resources and services found to be effective with this population. Pages 20-21, Figure 6 provides a detailed view of our services **and** the specific gaps/weaknesses that will be addressed via those services.

Our status quo, Figure 3, page 10, whereby only 13 of our 7th graders complete postsecondary education is unacceptable. We have developed a comprehensive plan to increase the number and percentage of young people in our neighborhood that achieve postsecondary success. Category 3 of our solutions – postsecondary access and success - outlines the key



Priority Student Characteristics

- Poverty
- Lack of broadband access
- 1st generation college student
- Chronic absenteeism
- Not Ready for Kindergarten
- Homelessness
- Generational substance abuse
- Foster, kinship care
- Lack of academic proficiency
- Unprepared for college
- Opportunity youth
- Academic failure in a single course

components of our plan, Figure 5. Our plan is a cradle to career approach. In rural places of persistent poverty like our PN, it is imperative that the work of college access and success begin in the cradle. And, this cradle to career work begins with overcoming the challenges of poverty.

Our students, their families, and their teachers face the impact of pervasive poverty each day. In *Overcoming the Poverty Challenge to Enable College and Career Readiness for All: The Crucial Role of Student Supports*, Robert Balfanz points out that the poverty challenge must be addressed differently in schools like ours where the majority of students live in poverty.⁸⁷ With the appropriate program design, the challenges of poverty can be overcome, and students will be ready for postsecondary success. Figure 7 illustrates the evidence base of our framework and the related effective practices that we will replicate to increase the number and proportion of underserved students who enroll in and complete postsecondary education programs.

Evidence Basis and Replication of Effective Practices		Figure 7
Evidence Basis	Replication of Effective Interventions	
Amass the additional people needed to provide coordinated, consistent, evidence-based supports ⁸⁸	We recognize the importance of consistent caring individuals providing evidence-based support . Our PN staff will provide direct services, academic and non-cognitive, during expanded learning time, and will implement evidence-based practices.	
Use data to identify students' needs ⁸⁹	Through our partnership with schools and the Kentucky Department of Education, PN staff will utilize data in real time to evaluate student needs, and to ensure they receive appropriate services during expanded learning times.	
Implement early warning systems ⁹⁰	Our Early Warning System , based on real-time data, signals that a student is falling off track to graduating without the need for remediation in postsecondary. PN staff will regularly monitor the early warning system to ensure students are on track.	
Adopt preventative, real-time intervention and rapid recovery student support strategies ⁹¹	PN staff are key to our tiered intervention system . Their continual review of student progress enables rapid intervention. For example, if an 8 th grader is below benchmark on math, which puts them "off track" for graduating without the need for remediation, the PN staff will ensure the student is provided	

Evidence Basis and Replication of Effective Practices		Figure 7
Evidence Basis	Replication of Effective Interventions	
	extended learning opportunities where math supports will be immediately provided. As importantly, the PN staff will monitor to ensure they move back “on track.”	
Employ a disciplined multi-tiered approach with built-in continuous improvement tools ⁹²	We employ a tiered intervention system : At 1 st level, practices are in place school wide. At 2 nd level, school and program staff use targeted, small group interventions. At 3 rd level, staff and volunteers undertake one-on-one, efforts. PN staff continually review data to determine level of interventions.	
Deploying volunteers to provide coordinated, consistent, student supports ⁹³	Our PN will use trained volunteers and to provide support to our students. One example is our use of the Check and Connect evidence-based intervention to support students in the transition from 8 th to 9 th grade. PRI uses this with great success in nearly all partner schools in our Appalachian region.	

Key to our approach is incorporating practices that strengthen our schools. We understand that the status quo will only change when we change our systems. The following illustrate our plan to work with our schools to change how they approach college access and success:

CCR Targets and Early Warning System: PN staff will build the capacity of the school to use college- and career-readiness (CCR targets) performance targets and an early warning system to counsel and advise students. CCR targets indicate a student is on track to be academically prepared for college by the time he or she finishes high school. Once CCR performance targets have been set, students can be assigned into groups, and services can be targeted based on CCR performance targets and the size of students’ academic preparation gaps. Our neighborhood schools will incorporate the ACT College-Equipped Readiness Tool, a standards-based system of assessments, into their performance monitoring plan. This tool will be used to monitor a student’s progress toward college and career readiness. Beginning in 5th

grade, schools will use the tool to assess students three times per year, then assess each 11th-grader using the ACT. Individual student data from these assessments will be downloaded into an early warning system. This data will provide school staff and partners information needed to define a path to academic proficiency and college and career readiness for each student that moves with them from elementary to high school.

College-Ready Curriculum: *Helping Students Navigate the Path to College: What High Schools Can Do*, an IES Practice Guide, recommends schools offer courses and curricula that prepare students for college-level work and ensure students understand what constitutes a college-ready curriculum by 9th grade.⁹⁴ Our PN is focused on ensuring students are prepared for a college-ready curriculum by 9th grade **and** that students take a college-ready curriculum. PN staff will assist the schools in course review, refinement and development to ensure a rigorous curriculum is offered to all students. And, PN staff will work with families and students to ensure both understand what constitutes a college-ready curriculum and that they understand the importance of students taking and succeeding in this more rigorous curriculum.

These effective practices will be strengthened by the use of evidence-based programs that have proven effective in increasing the number and proportion of underserved students who enroll in, and complete postsecondary education programs. More information on these programs can be found in Appendix A.

Check and Connect (Solution 2.3): Check and Connect will focus on PN students at that critical time of transition between 8th grade and 9th grade. Check and Connect has two main components: “Check” and “Connect.” The “Check” component is designed to continually monitor student performance and progress (including the student’s

Check and Connect, a key project component in our logic model, meets the What Work Clearinghouse standard required for strong evidence.

attendance, incidence of suspensions, course grades, and credits). The “Connect” component involves mentors giving individualized attention to students. Staff and community volunteers will serve as our mentors and be trained in Check and Connect.

Check and Connect mentors will begin mentoring students at the end of their 8th grade year and continue mentoring them through the summer following their 9th grade year. Recognizing the importance of this intervention, **all** PN students will receive a Check and Connect mentor. We have the staffing, community support and resources allocated to deploy a mentoring program of this size and scope. And, we have effectively deployed Check and Connect of similar scale within rural areas. By providing PN students with a mentor as they transition into, thru, and out of 9th grade, we are increasing the likelihood that these students will graduate high school and transition to postsecondary education without the need for remediation.

Dual enrollment (Solution 3.2) allows high school students to take rigorous college courses and earn college credits while still attending high school. These programs help boost college access and degree attainment, especially for students typically underrepresented in higher education. We have seen the success of Dual Enrollment programs in rural Appalachia with populations similar to our PN population. Dual enrollment programs allow high school students to experience college-level courses which helps them prepare for the social and academic requirements of college while having the additional supports available to high school students. Researcher Brian P. An found dual enrollment has “significant benefits in boosting rates of college degree attainment for low-income students.”⁹⁵ Particularly relevant in the context of our persistent poverty region is that dual enrollment

Dual Enrollment, a key project component within our logic model, meets the What Works Clearinghouse standard required for strong evidence.

programs offer discounted or free tuition, which reduces the overall cost of college and may increase the number of low socioeconomic status students who can attend and complete college.⁹⁶

We will support higher education institutions including Southeast Community College and Pikeville University, our partners in this PN, in deploying dual enrollment courses— both virtual and in-person—to increase the number of dual enrollment opportunities for our high-school students, with a specific focus on increasing access for priority students (e.g., low income, first generation college students, students experiencing homelessness). We will support PN schools with logistics—virtual access as well as transportation—to ensure these are not barriers to dual enrollment. PN staff will meet individually and in small groups to design and provide tailored interventions and appropriate study supports.

Bottom Line College Advising and Support (Solution 3.1): Bottom Line advising begins when students are in the 11th grade and continues through postsecondary success. We will use the research based Bottom Line approach to provide intensive advising for PN high school students who are identified as priority students needing intensive support (i.e., students experiencing homelessness, students from persistent poverty, etc.).

Bottom Line, a key project component within our logic model, meets the What Works Clearinghouse standard required for strong evidence.

Bottom Line advising is designed to help students apply for college and financial aid and select a high-quality affordable institution. We will start implementation of Bottom Line at 11th grade and continue the support through college success. PN staff will work with 11th and 12th grade students to provide personalized one-on-one guidance and mentoring throughout the college application and decision process. Our PN postsecondary navigators will provide students

with continued guidance based on Bottom Line’s DEAL rubric (Degree, Employability, Aid and Life) throughout college helping students overcome obstacles and graduate with a career plan in place.

CPP 3—Evidence-Based Activities to Support Academic Achievement

We will carry out evidence-based activities, strategies, and interventions—each greatly informed by research and evidence—leading to increased student achievement, graduation rates, and career readiness. See evidence form for more information on our evidence base.

Working with the school leadership and partners, we have developed a **pipeline of solutions** that incorporates evidence based activities that support academic achievement and student success as illustrated below:

- Evidence Based Early Learning Programs - Doors to Discovery, Pre-K Mathematics, Creative Curriculum - (Solution 1.3)
- Check and Connect (Solution 2.3)
- Evidence Based Math and Reading Instruction - Success for All, Fast ForWord, Accelerated Math - (Solution 2.4)
- Dual Enrollment (Solution 3.2)
- Families and Schools Together (Solution 4.2)
- Too Good for Drugs and Violence (Solution 4.7)

Each of these interventions meet, at a minimum, the promising level of evidence. A listing of all evidence-based interventions with citations for each, relevant What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) designations, a description of the intervention and the relevance of the intervention are included in Appendix A.

To further illustrate, Check and Connect, a component included in our logic model and

described here, meets the WWC standard for **strong evidence** and demonstrates our integration of evidence-based programs into our pipeline of services.

Check and Connect Satisfaction of Criteria for Meeting Evidence Level		Figure 8
Criteria	WWC Review of Check & Connect Studies	
<i>Strong Evidence</i>		
Two studies meet the WWC Evidence Standards without reservations	Two studies meet WWC group design standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sinclair, Christenson & Hurley, 1998 ● Sinclair, Christenson, & Thurlow, 2005 	
A statistically significant favorable impact on a relevant outcome (with no statistically significant unfavorable impacts on that outcome)	The WWC review for the Dropout Prevention area includes student outcomes in the domain of staying in school as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sinclair (1998) study: 9th grade students in Check & Connect were statistically significantly less likely than similar comparison group students to drop out of school by the end of 9th grade ● Sinclair (2005) study: Check & Connect students were statistically significantly less likely to have dropped out at end of 4th follow-up year Result: WWC rating of positive effects, with small extent of evidence	
Includes a matched sample that overlaps with the populations proposed to receive the practice.	Check and Connect Study Populations: Included 238 students who attended Minneapolis high schools and entered program in the beginning of 9 th grade.	

B. QUALITY OF PROJECT SERVICES

1. Quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability

We have a well-developed plan to ensure equal access and treatment for all participants including those that are members of groups that have been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, or disability. Upon notification of funding, the Principal Investigator (PI) will work with schools and partners, including newspapers, social media sites, and radio stations, to announce Letcher PN and its services. Every school or early childcare facility located within Letcher County will be served by Promise Neighborhood. Nearly all services will be offered in collaboration with schools and early childcare providers. To ensure equal access, **all young people enrolled in a neighborhood school or in a neighborhood early childcare facility will be presumptively eligible for services** with an avenue for opting-out available to families or youth who do not want to participate.

Promise Neighborhood staff will work with our partners and service providers to reach children and youth, birth to age 24, who are in the neighborhood and not enrolled in an early learning center or a school. We have partnerships with in-home childcare providers, homeschool associations, vocational rehabilitation services, social services, public libraries and the faith based community that will facilitate the identification of these children and young people.

Particular attention will be placed on informing special populations of their eligibility for services. For example, we will work with the McKinney-Vento representatives to notify children and youth experiencing homelessness and their families of their eligibility for services. Once identified, these participants will be eligible for services.

To ensure we are continuing to reach participants, PN staff and partners will annually

mail a letter to each family within the geographic area to inform them of the services. A translated version of this letter will be sent to all students identified as Limited English Proficient. The annual letters will be shared via social media, provided to our partners, and posted in popular neighborhood locations (e.g., churches, stores, gas stations, health department).

It is not enough to let families and young people know they are eligible for services. We will identify and address barriers to their participation. We recognize that personalized recruitment is necessary to engage children, youth and their families, particularly when participants are from traditionally underrepresented groups. Recruitment strategies will include direct outreach and home visits by PN staff and partners who have trusted relationships with underrepresented populations.

Accommodations will be made to ensure all students have equitable access to all services. During our prior Promise Neighborhood programs, we developed the capacity to understand and to meet student accommodation needs. Examples of accommodations provided in our prior work include tailored materials to meet the needs of vision impaired participants, translators to meet the needs of hearing-impaired participants, and special transportation to events to accommodate wheelchair-bound participants. Our PN staff, as another example, have assisted families in accessing appropriate diagnostic assessments and referrals for children with disabilities and children experiencing developmental delays. Data will be monitored to gauge the program's effectiveness in reaching underrepresented groups and corrective steps will be taken, if necessary, to maximize their participation.

Within the first quarter of program implementation, PRI and our partners will meet and adopt shared strategies for ensuring equal access to and participation in the PN program for children and youth and their families, community members, staff of partnering agencies, and

employees. During our planning, we began this work and the following list emerged:

- Develop and administer a pre-participation survey with event activity registration materials to identify special access requirements – such as wheelchair access, signers, and interpreters.
- All program-related sessions must be held in ADA accessible facilities.
- Coordinate and offer cultural sensitivity and ADA training for program staff and partners.
- Hire, recruit, and involve individuals from diverse groups to plan, implement, and evaluate program services.
- Develop or acquire and disseminate culturally relevant curriculum and materials that can be understood and accessible to all potential participants, regardless of their challenges.
- Offer transportation vouchers for families who must use personal transportation to attend meetings, activities, and workshops, as needed.
- Offer interpretation services for consumers and others as needed and appropriate.
- Offer onsite childcare for individuals who must bring their children to program activities.
- Arrange for assistive technology devices to translate materials for participants.
- Post information materials, schedules of events, and program assessments on the internet – which will enable assistive computer devices to interpret the materials for users.

Once adopted, the strategies will be implemented by PN partners and monitored with the intent to reduce access barriers based on gender, race, national origin, color, disability, and age.

2. The likelihood that the services to be provided will lead to improvement in the achievement of students as measured against rigorous academic standards

For a decade, we have implemented evidence-based strategies that have led to actual academic improvements in Appalachian Kentucky. Letcher Promise Neighborhood replicates that work, providing a pipeline of solutions built on our proven interventions and measured against rigorous academic standards. To be clear, we have implemented these services with

positive impact in similar neighborhoods since 2011, improving the lives of more than 50,000 children and youth.

- **Student Achievement and Growth:** From 2012 to 2016, our 1st Promise Neighborhood exceeded state average growth on student achievement and growth. Over four years, the percent of students at or above grade level, as measured by the Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress, increased by 48% in math and 42% in reading. Kindergarten readiness, as measured by Brigance, increased by 125% during the same period.
- **Closing Achievement Gaps:** In the Knox Promise Neighborhood, our pipeline of solutions closed achievement gaps for students eligible for free/reduced-priced lunch (FRPL). In 2015, 33.8% of FRPL met the benchmark in math; by 2019, 44.5% of FRPL met the benchmark, an increase of 10.7 percentage points. In 2015, 44.2% met the state benchmark in reading; by 2019, 55.2% of FRPL students were meeting the math benchmark, an increase of 10 percentage points.
- **Transition from Middle to High School:** Between 2017 (baseline) and 2019, our Knox PN realized a 14% decrease in number of 6th through 9th graders identified as chronically absent.
- **High School Graduation:** Leslie County High School received the continuum of services; their graduation rates increased from 67% in 2012, to 97% in 2019.
- **Postsecondary Success:** In Perry Promise Neighborhood, our pipeline of solutions supporting postsecondary enrollment and attainment success, increased the percentage of students enrolling in a four-year college or university within sixteen months of high school graduation from 22% in 2018 to 28% in 2021.

Our PN design uses rigorous academic standards to measure each student

achievement indicator. To illustrate, incoming kindergarten students will be assessed by the Brigance Early Childhood Screener III, a developmentally appropriate early learning measure adopted by Kentucky. In grades 3–8, and 10, student achievement will be measured by the Kentucky Summative Assessment, Kentucky’s measure of student proficiency and progress on the state content standards. At grades 11, student achievement will be measured by the ACT.

Creating excellent schools is at the heart of our Promise Neighborhood work. To improve the academic outcomes of our youth, we **must** improve our schools. Students in our

Promise Neighborhood attend one of two public school systems, Figure 2. In our rural neighborhood, there are no private schools or charter schools. Both districts are key partners as evidenced by the Memorandums of Understanding (Appendix C).

Our approach to improving our neighborhood schools to ensure improvement in the achievement of students as measured against rigorous academic standards has three components:

1) High quality professional development for educators and school leaders (Solution 2.4

and 2.5): Teacher quality is the strongest school-related factor that can improve student learning and achievement.⁹⁷ Researcher Linda Darling-Hammond has defined teaching quality as “instruction that enables a wide range of students to learn.”⁹⁸ Promise Neighborhood will support teachers by connecting educators to job-embedded professional development. Our PN staff will ensure professional learning will be of the intensity needed to impact teacher quality. When educators receive well-designed professional development for at least an average of 49 hours over 6 to 12 months, they can increase student achievement by as much as 21 percentile points.⁹⁹ Our professional learning activities expand the capacities of instructors to present in-school and extended learning classes with increased rigor and greater efficacy that meet and exceed the 49-hour per year minimum.

PRI will engage neighborhood school leaders, through coaching and communities of practice, to envision their systems with each of these elements thoughtfully designed to fit together and support each other:

- Strong supports for children and their families before students arrive at school.
- More resources for at-risk students than for others.
- World-class, highly coherent instructional systems.

- Clear gateways for students through the system with no dead ends.
- An abundant supply of highly qualified teachers.
- Schools in which teachers are treated as professionals, with support to continuously improve their professional practice and the performance of their students.
- An effective system of career and technical education and training.
- A leadership development system that develops leaders at all levels.
- A governance system that has the authority and legitimacy to develop coherent, powerful policies and is capable of implementing them at scale.¹⁰⁰

Highly qualified PRI faculty will deliver capacity building and the coaching in small groups and one-on-one. Many PRI faculty members have been successful principals, superintendents or state education leaders. All have experience working with rural schools in Kentucky.

Our professional development, capacity building and coaching is designed to increase the number of neighborhood students who have access to effective principals or other school leaders. We recognize that the responsibilities and demands of an effective school leader have expanded far beyond that of “building manager.” This is particularly true in small rural schools like those in our neighborhood. An effective principal and other school leaders fulfill many roles including: strategic thinker, instructional leader, team leader, creator of just, fair and caring culture, visionary, data master, coach and mentor, and driver of change.

Our approach emphasizes these many roles of the principals in creating a place in which all students meet high standards. It ensures that school leaders have the knowledge, skills, and tools to effectively set direction for teachers, support their staff in improving instructional practices, and design a high-performing school that is rooted in professional learning. Our coaching and capacity building empowers school leaders to succeed in these multiple roles.

A focus will be preparing principals to mentor, coach and lead effective teachers. Principals will be provided support and coaching from PRI as they implement professional learning communities (PLCs) within their schools. *“Empowered Educators: How High-Performing systems Shape Teaching Quality Around the World,”* reinforces the concept that teacher professional learning is continual and developmental and that PLCs are an effective mechanism for supporting teachers at all levels.¹⁰¹ Beginning teachers are not expected to be at the same level as veterans, and most veterans are not expected to be at the same level as master teachers. Professional learning is collaborative.

2) Rigorous curriculum with evidence based instructional programs and strategies

(Solutions 1.3 and 2.4): Information on our comprehensive evidence-based practices that support rigorous curriculum can be found in CPP 3, pages 32-33. A detailed listing of all evidence-based interventions, two citations for each, relevant WWC designations, a description of the intervention and the relevance of the intervention are included in Appendix A.

Our careful review and assessment of research and evaluation findings using the National Implementation Research Network’s Hexagon Discussion and Tool¹⁰² to evaluate the fit and feasibility of evidence-based programs and practices in the context of our rural place suggests that the proposed pipeline of cradle to career solutions is **likely to improve relevant outcomes**. Key elements of our strategies to increase academic achievement are further described in the Needs and Solutions Table, located in Appendix A.

3) Transformation of each school into a community school – a Promise School (Solution

2.1): The foundation for our Promise Schools, Solution 2.1, is the four community school pillars. These pillars align closely with evidence-based features of good schools, derived from decades of research identifying school characteristics that foster students’ intellectual, social, emotional,

and physical development.¹⁰³ Figure 9, illustrates the “pillar” to “good schools”¹⁰⁴ connections.

Alignment of Community Schools with Evidence Base of Good Schools		Figure 9
Community School Pillars	Associated “Good School” Characteristics	
<p>Integrated student supports will provide a dedicated professional staff member to coordinate support to address out-of-school barriers to learning via partnerships with social, nutrition, & mental health service agencies and providers. Some employ social emotional learning, conflict resolution training, and restorative justice practices to support mental health and lessen conflict, bullying, and punitive disciplinary actions (e.g., suspensions).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attention to all aspects of child development: academic, social, emotional, physical, psychological, and moral ● Extra academic, social, and health and wellness supports for students, as needed ● Climate of safety and trusting relationships 	
<p>Expanded learning time and opportunities to implement structured and safe learning environments that enhance what students learn during traditional school hours. We will implement afterschool, weekend, and summer programs to provide individualized academic support, enrichment activities, and learning opportunities that emphasize real-world learning with field trips and tutoring programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learning is the top priority ● High expectations and strong instruction for all students ● Sufficient resources and opportunities for meaningful learning 	
<p>Active parent and community engagement bring parents/community into the school as partners in children’s education and make the school a neighborhood hub with family nights and parent/teacher conferences. Also, grant adults with educational opportunities such as English as a Second Language classes, citizenship preparation, computer skills, art, STEM, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strong school, family and community ties, including opportunities for shared leadership Climate of safety and trusting relationships 	
<p>Collaborative leadership and practices build a culture of professional learning, collective trust and shared responsibility using such strategies as site-based leadership/governance teams, teacher learning communities, and a community-school coordinator who manages the multiple, complex joint work of school and community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Culture of teacher collaboration & professional learning ● Assessment as a tool for improvement and shared accountability 	

Alignment of Community Schools with Evidence Base of Good Schools		Figure 9
Community School Pillars	Associated “Good School” Characteristics	
organizations.		

We operationalize our Promise School model by implementing the four pillars as follows:

Integrated Student Supports: Evidence suggests^{105, 106} the implementation of our framework of Integrated Student Supports (ISS) at each school will lead to increased student achievement. Key is the high-quality implementation of the following critical characteristics of the integrated student support model:

- ISS staff conduct needs assessments, develop or locate needed supports in the community, and work with providers to coordinate those supports so that students receive a set of mutually reinforcing supports tailored to their individual needs.
- Supports address both academic and non-academic barriers to student success; these include supports to a student’s family.
- ISS programs seek close partnerships with school leadership and staff to enhance program effectiveness, so ISS staff are based in schools.
- ISS staff are data-driven and track student needs and outcomes over time.

Our design, our evaluation plan, and our model of ensuring continuous feedback and modification, will ensure we implement the Integrated Student Support model with fidelity and quality.

Expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities: Our PN is designed to provide students with expanded and enriched learning time and to ensure they graduate high school prepared to enter higher education **without the need for remediation**. In our rural context, we have learned that the work of Promise Neighborhood must take place during in-school and out-of-school time. Our design expands and enriches out of school learning time while also enriching in-school learning time and is based in our ongoing work to create good school (e.g., curriculum alignment, instructional practices).

Active family and community engagement: While active family and community engagement is an integral part of our Promise School Solution 2.1, we recognize that family engagement must wrap around all PN services – from cradle to career. Thus, we include active family and community engagement within our Health and Family Solution Category 4, too.

Our focus on family and community engagement is informed by research and practice. Research has consistently shown that academic achievement increases if parents are involved and engaged in a child’s learning.¹⁰⁷ Further, our project adheres to the **complementary learning approach** of the Global Family Research Project (formerly the Harvard Family Research Project), based on decades of research exhibiting the effectiveness of integrated supports in promoting children’s learning and contributing to their school success.¹⁰⁸

Learning that occurs at home can complement and extend what children learn in school. When families are involved in children’s learning, no matter their income or background, they have a positive influence on student social and academic outcomes.¹⁰⁹ A literature review by Wood and Bauman confirms positive indicators **and** found parent engagement at home around learning was a statistically significant predictor of both grades and attendance.¹¹⁰ “Students with more engaged parents had higher academic achievement and missed fewer days of school.¹¹¹”

Core to our approach (and Solution 4.1) is Dr. Karen Mapp’s **Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family School Partnerships**¹¹² which provides a picture of what engagement should be. Trust and respectful practices are at its core. School and home partnerships flourish when both families and educators have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to interact in positive, productive, and intentional ways. The Dual Capacity Framework has been adopted by the U.S. Department of Education. Importantly, Partners for Rural Impact was an **early implementer of the Framework**, having been trained by Dr. Mapp in 2014.

Collaborative leadership and practice: The fourth pillar of our Promise Schools is our way of working both at the school level and at the neighborhood level. PRI understands that no single program, no single voice, nor a single participating entity can accelerate results for all children. Our Promise School approach, and our neighborhood approach, brings together a wide range of groups that are committed to student success—not just families and teachers, but also businesses, civic organizations, nonprofits, and investors. These cross-sector partners adopt common goals and expand on best practices for their local community. Cross-sector partners work daily—in our historic work and going forward in this Promise Neighborhood—to find resources and supportive organizations/agencies to fill identified gaps in services. This includes listening to the individual concerns of schools and their grassroots activists (families, teachers, students, leaders) regarding the missing pieces for healthy student development and ongoing learning. As the research notes, **each place is unique** and has its own assets, resources, and strengths that can be built upon. In our work in Appalachia, we have come to deeply understand this fact. Since community needs are locally based, place-based initiatives like Promise Neighborhoods must be locally driven.¹¹³

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

Leadership, vision, and accountability for our Promise Neighborhood initiative rests with a broadly representative consortium (Consortium) that has signed our Memorandum of understanding (Appendix C). **The Consortium shall serve as the Management Board for our PN.** The Consortium has the authority to make decisions about the design, implementation, and evaluation for the grant. Our Consortium has developed an intentional collaborative leadership structure that includes an advisory board, a family council and a student council, to ensure all aspects of Promise Neighborhood are informed and guided by community members. PRI has

used this collaborative leadership structure in our prior Promise Neighborhoods. Our collaborative leadership structure engages a broadly representative group of stakeholders at multiple levels—both the management level and the operational level, both the neighborhood level and the school level—to ensure all perspectives are heard and valued.

Rural places like our neighborhood have few local organizations beyond the schools to support students and their success. There are no YMCAs, no United Ways. What is available are regional, statewide, and national organizations that are committed to Appalachia—organizations that provide services across a broad swath of rural Appalachian communities. These organizations realize that collaboration at the neighborhood and school level are critical practices. Supporting Appalachia is at the heart of their missions.

Our Consortium includes these organizations, all of whom are well-respected for their accountability to their promised services, as well as for their willingness to listen to the local voices and their understanding that local voices are critical to meet local needs. Our inaugural Consortium members share the core belief that **schools must be the center of the neighborhood**. Our Consortium will establish an advisory board, a family council and a student council, page 65.

Consortium members are accountable for the scope of work and for meeting project objectives. The Consortium members will work closely with Dr. Amon Couch, the project's Principal Investigator (see page 61), to launch the project, monitor its effectiveness, and ensure that the project is meeting its goals and objectives throughout the grant cycle.

To formalize their commitment, Consortium members signed an initial, shared Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that clarifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of each member related to PN development and implementation. The MOU, included in

Appendix A, describes each Consortium member's role. A final MOU will be signed within six-month of notification of funding. The size of our Consortium was impacted by the flooding. We anticipate adding additional members to our Consortium as we sign our final MOU.

Our founding Consortium members are as follows:

Partner School Districts: The success of PN depends in great part on the commitments of each partner school district. Each school district within our defined PN footprint is committed to PN. Importantly, the Jenkins and Letcher districts are committed to collaborating on this community wide PN. The districts share a common leadership philosophy, have a history of successful collaboration with PRI and with each other, and are committed to the success of PN.

Partners for Rural Impact: A national organization, PRI supports educational aspirations of rural students by implementing high-quality programs, supports and services, cradle to career. PRI has a deep understanding of the evidence-based practices that work in rural places and has refined **extended school-to-college access and success programs** and practices to fit the rural landscape. Partners for Rural Impact will provide leadership and management of the project to ensure all program goals and objectives are met.

Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (EKCEP): EKCEP's mission is to help workers and businesses in Eastern Kentucky meet the challenges and seize the opportunities of an evolving economy. EKCEP convenes the business community and employers within our neighborhood and will serve as PN's liaison with the business community. EKCEP provides the organizational structure for employers to engage as active and essential partners with our school districts. EKCEP creates opportunities for youth to work and thrive in their communities by providing a "no wrong door approach" for all youth as they explore work-based learning opportunities. EKCEP's foundational program is the Prosper Appalachia Internship Program that

provides youth that are justice-involved or considered at risk with paid internships and case management services. All Prosper Appalachia Internships are aligned with career pathways leading to high quality employment locally.

Save the Children: Save the Children believes every child deserves a future. In the U.S. and around the world, they give children a healthy start in life, the opportunity to learn, and protection from harm. Save the Children works with partners to see that every child receives a quality education and gains the skills and knowledge they need to thrive and develop. They offer activities to support **early childhood programs** and **active family and community engagement** as part of our pipeline of services.

Appalachian Regional Healthcare: Appalachian Regional Healthcare's mission is to improve health and promote well-being of all the people in Central Appalachia in partnership with our communities. Their vision is to earn the confidence and trust of the diverse communities they serve by offering healthcare excellence, delivered in a timely manner with compassion, safety, teamwork, inclusion and professionalism.

Appalshop: The mission of Appalshop is to enlist the power of education, media, theater, music, and other arts to: document, disseminate, and revitalize the lasting traditions and contemporary creativity of Appalachia; challenging stereotypes with Appalachian voices and visions; support communities' efforts to achieve justice and equity and solve their own problems in their own ways; and celebrate cultural diversity as a positive social value. Appalshop will assist the PN in **engaging community**, will provide **arts and cultural programs**, and assist in **documenting** the work of PN.

We understand the importance of partnerships and accountability. Figure 10 illustrates our collective lessons learned and our plans for maintaining and managing

partnerships, both formal and informal, within PN.

Plan to Manage Partnerships within the Promise Neighborhood		Figure 10
Lessons Learned from Previous Partnerships	Steps to Build Strong Partnerships within the Promise Neighborhood	
Successful partnerships come together first and foremost to meet a need in the neighborhood and because they are committed to shared mission and vision.	We have created a shared mission, vision, theory of change and theory of action with our partners who are committed to achieving this vision. The consortium and advisory board will have strong, mutual accountability to our shared goals and will discuss our progress in an open, constructive forum with ample resources for building capacity to reach our shared vision. The advisory board will become the “holder” of the Letcher PN vision and culture for all involved.	
Strong partnerships and accountability are built on consistent, clear communication, trust, follow-up and follow-through and structure.	We will be clear in our agreements (MOUs, work plans and budgets), our mutual commitments and responsibilities. We will monitor results frequently and use data to continuously improve upon results and process. We will allocate resources to partnership development, capacity building, coordination and evaluation to ensure that organizations have the resources to build strong partnerships.	
Effective partnerships use resources to provide equitable engagement in advancing skilled personnel at all levels allowing for contribution toward systematic levels of change.	The strongest advocates for the work of strengthening community experience the day-to-day life of those involved and have a personal investment to the overarching objectives. By developing shared vision in partnership with these individuals and providing learning opportunities to individuals at all levels, we will develop local-led champions holding an image of sustainable change with the passion and skills to make a vision a reality.	

Processes are in place to ensure partner accountability. Our accountability mechanisms for achieving these “effective partnerships” and ensuring strong outcomes are described in Figure 11.

Promise Neighborhood Accountability Systems		Figure 11
Goal	Accountability Process for Partners	Accountability Process for PRI
PN achieves its goals and realizes its outcome targets and deliverables.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The PI and evaluator use information from PN’s Results and Data (RAD) system and evaluation team to monitor progress towards outcome targets and deliverables as articulated in MOUs and contracts. ● In the event a partner agency or contractor consistently fails to meet deliverables, PRI will retain the right to cancel the contract and identify a new contractor to complete the proposed work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The PN Consortium and Advisory Board will monitor PRI’s progress towards goals and deliverables and recommend course corrections. ● The PI will monitor compliance. ● Staff goals and deliverables will be monitored according to individual work plans. ● PRI will refer to data and evaluation information to continuously gauge progress.
Solutions are effective and create change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PI and project director will monitor the effectiveness of PN outcomes in creating change and make modifications as needed. ● The Consortium, advisory board, family council, youth council and partners will assess PN’s success in creating positive change in the neighborhood. 	
PN is transparent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The PI and the project director will ensure that PN’s outcomes and vision are widely accessible to community members through a variety of methods including forums and leadership discussions. PN will maintain a strong online presence and make data available to partners and community. ● The Consortium, advisory board and councils will contribute to the effective distribution of PN program and outcome information to community members. 	

Promise Neighborhood Accountability Systems		Figure 11
Goal	Accountability Process for Partners	Accountability Process for PRI
<p>PN is fiscally responsible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project director and program managers will co-manage partner compliance with MOUs, subcontracts, and purchasing protocols. This will include regular review of contracts and MOUs, partner audits and strong reimbursement policies based on meeting program deliverables. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual OMB single audit. • Advisory board will review fiscal information quarterly. • Undergo programmatic and finance audits that include review of cost per client and per solution and a cost-benefit analysis to determine cost-effective solutions.

C. QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN

We have developed a rationale for our PN pipeline of services that is supported by a strong theory and illustrated by our logic model on the following page. Our data analysis, including analysis of segmented data, our success with programs in rural Appalachia, our literature review, our stakeholder interviews, and our experience implementing Promise Neighborhood programs in rural Appalachia formed the foundation for our strong theory.

**Needs to Be Addressed
(Identified during planning)**

Early Learning and Development

- Limited home visiting and effective parenting programs
- Limited number of high quality early childhood centers and programs
- Limited PD for early childhood educators

Promise Schools

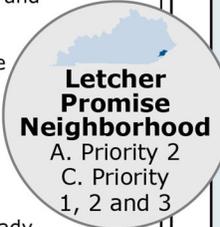
- Lack of vertical and horizontal strategies for STEM and ELA instruction as well as related PD for teachers
- Lack of tiered case management system
- Lack of opportunities for disengaged youth and social-emotional supports
- Low academic achievement and significant disparities in subgroups
- High turnover and shortage of qualified teachers and administrators

Postsecondary Access and Success

- HS graduates not college ready
- Lack of comprehensive postsecondary awareness, preparation, and support system for students
- No comprehensive family-based college/career strategy
- Lack of family support during the transition to college or career

Health and Family Supports

- No case management system that follows students and connects families to resources
- Parents lack knowledge and resources about nutrition and healthy food prep
- Limited access to opportunities for fresh foods and physical activity
- No K-12 drug/violence prevention curricula in place
- Parents lack info on bullying
- Lack of training on developing a safe and secure school/culture
- Declines in student mental health



**Continuum of Solutions
Birth to Career**

1. Early Learning and Development

- 1.1 Home Visiting
- 1.2 Early Learning Professional Development and Accreditation
- 1.3 Evidence-Based Programs and Requisite Professional Development for Early Learning Providers

2. Promise Schools

- 2.1 Community School Coordination
- 2.2 A-B-C One-to-One Academic Case Management in K-8 grades
- 2.3 Check and Connect in 9-12
- 2.4 Evidence-Based Curriculum in Math and Reading and Requite PD
- 2.5 Coaching and Capacity Building for School Leadership

3. Postsecondary Access and Success

- 3.1 Bottom Line College Advising and Support
- 3.2 Dual Enrollment
- 3.3 Free Application for Federal Student Aid Assistance Program
- 3.4 Summer Counseling and Transition to Postsecondary

4. Health & Family Supports

- 4.1 Dual Capacity Framework for Families and Schools
- 4.2 Families and Schools Together
- 4.3 Power My Learning: Family Playlist
- 4.4 Whole School, Whole Community Whole Child
- 4.5 Youth Mental Health First Aid
- 4.6 Wyman's Teen Outreach Program
- 4.7 Too Good for Drugs and Violence

**Short-Term Goals
(Annual)**

Increased age appropriate functioning; building capacity of families; increased use of high quality early learning settings; educators are supported

Increased attendance and graduation rates; improved academic achievement; increase in student voice initiatives; collective impact approach to community partnerships

Increase in under-served students enrolling in college; need for remediation; increased FAFSA completion; increased student ability to utilize 21st century tools and resources

Increases in holistic family engagement; increased student participation in healthy behaviors; increased skills to resist substances and decreased substance abuse; increased student perception of safety at school and community

**Long-Term Goals
(2-5 Years)**

Children will enter kindergarten ready to succeed

Students will be healthy

Students will be proficient in core academic subjects

Students will make successful transitions from MS to HS, and will graduate from HS

Students will obtain post secondary degree, certificate or credential

Students will feel safe at school and live in stable communities

Families and community members will support learning

Students will have access to 21st Century Learning Tools

Data will be used for continuous learning and accountability

Sustainable public and private investments into PN

Ultimate Vision

A complete continuum of cradle to career solutions that include educational programs, family and community supports, with great schools at the center.

Improved systems within the Promise Neighborhood that support positive educational outcomes from cradle to career.

Leveraged resources to support positive educational outcomes for youth from cradle to career.

1. The extent to which there is a plan to create a complete pipeline of services, without time and resource gaps, that is designed to prepare all children in the neighborhood to attain a high-quality education and transition to college and a career.

We base our pipeline of services—which we will bring to scale over time—on a set of assumptions needed to prepare all children for success as follows:

- Strong schools prepare students for eventual college and career and are a central component to increasing community self-efficacy.
- Parents and the community hold assets that, when tapped, can contribute to both the strengthening of local schools and the economic and social development of the neighborhood.
- Creating a culture committed to college-going within the K–12 system and the larger community can contribute to raising student and family aspirations for college and career.
- Strong schools are the heart of a community and instrumental in establishing a community culture that supports all children and youth on their path to college and career.
- Attending to students’ health and wellness needs can ensure that they are ready as they enter kindergarten and that health concerns will not be a barrier to learning as they progress.
- Engaging local businesses and services can result in students and their parents learning together and working to strengthen local schools.

Following a research and literature review and with input of students, parents, educators, and partners, we have developed a **plan to implement a pipeline of services, without time and resources gaps**. We have categorized our services into four solutions as follows:

Category 1. Early Learning and Development:

- Comprehensive interventions and services ensure that children from birth to age 5 receive support, services, and resources necessary to ensure they enter

kindergarten ready to succeed.

- Evidence informed practices and programs within this category are: home visiting (1.1), early learning and professional development and accreditation (1.2), evidence-based programs and professional development (1.3).
- Foundational to this solution: 1) services targeted to the families to ensure they have the resources and support needed to support their child’s learning, and; 2) services targeted to early learning providers within the PN to ensure that early learning environments are using evidence-based curriculum and that early learning professionals have quality training.

Category 2. Promise Schools:

- Because of the rural nature of our PN, many services to our students will be provided within the school.
- Evidence informed practices and programs within this category are: community school coordination (2.1 and see page 41); ABC one-to-one case management (2.2); check and connect (2.3 and see CPP 3); evidence based programs and professional development (2.4); coaching and capacity building for school leadership (2.5 and see page 39)
- Key components are: a) a strong coordination between the school and the neighborhood that connects learning to real-world application; b) the four pillars of a community school – integrated student supports, extended and enriched learning opportunities, active family and community engagement, and collaborative leadership and practice (see page 44), and; c) educational advocates who work with those students to ensure they are engaged and supported.

Category 3. Postsecondary Access and Support:

- We will ensure the integration of evidence-based practices to provide strong supports for students to successfully transition to and through postsecondary education without the need for remediation into a fulfilling career that provides a pathway to economic mobility. See CPP 2, page 25, for more information.
- **Evidence informed practices and programs:** Bottom Line (3.1 and page 31); Dual Enrollment (3.2 and page 30); financial aid awareness and FAFSA preparation (3.3 and CPP 2, page 26); summer counseling and transition to postsecondary (3.4 and CPP 2, page 25).
- **Key components:** 1) intensive advising; 2) intentional engagement with students and families on completion of FAFSA; 3) follow through of counseling and transition support for students in families during summers and transition to college and career; and 4) collaboration with institutions of higher education, workforce development centers, and employers to align PN programming with postsecondary education and workforce readiness.

Category 4. Health and Family Supports:

- We will wrap services around children and families, from cradle to career, to ensure each student is safe healthy and supported.
- **Evidence informed practices and programs:** Dual Capacity Framework (4.1 and page 43), Families and Schools Together (4.2), Power My Learning Family Playlist (4.3), Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (4.4), Youth Mental Health First Aid (4.5 and CPP 3, pages 32-33); Teen Outreach Program (4.6) and Too Good for Drugs and Violence (4.7 and CPP 3, pages 32-33).

- **Key components:** 1) An asset based lens that builds upon the culture of our families and our place; 2) engaging family members as peer leaders; 3) identifying and supporting bright spots within the neighborhood (see CPP 2, page 25), and; 4) leveraging the role of school and community to develop the connections between health and academic achievement using a student-centered approach to support the whole child.

Figure 12 provides more detail on each solution category by providing examples of the specific services that will be provided.

Pipeline of Services		Figure 12
Indicator	Examples of Services	
Category 1: Early Learning and Development (birth to age 5)		
Indicator #1 Age-Appropriate Functioning	Home visiting for pre-birth–age 3 and Raising a Reader Book Bag Exchange for ages 3–5.	
	Train child-care providers on appropriate screening, progress monitoring, curriculum to ensure readiness.	
	Provide coaching for public and private early childcare and all education providers to achieve higher levels of Kentucky’s Early Childhood Professional Development Framework.	
	Professional development for early childhood educators that emphasize engaging boys and girls.	
	Partner with preschools and early learning settings to develop a curriculum plan which will identify and implement evidence-based curriculum such as Pre-K Mathematics, Success for All, etc., along with the corresponding professional development to address programming gaps.	
	Build capacity of the local early learning network to improve communication & leverage resources.	
	Provide technical assistance to child-care providers on the mandated Kentucky All STARS quality rating system to assist centers in meeting state standards for continuous improvement.	
Category 2: Promise Schools (school entry– high school graduation)		
Indicator #2.1 Math Academic Proficiency	With school leadership, integrate evidence-based math and reading programs; develop a three-phase (planning, implementation and evaluation) professional development plan for teachers to ensure effective implementation.	
	Implement early warning system; A–B–C One-to-One Academic Case Management system, tiered interventions, integrated student supports to include embedded tutoring, referrals to tutoring, academic programs, support services and summer reading programs (starting in 3 rd grade).	
Indicator #2.2 Eng. Language Arts Academic Proficiency	Check and Connect monitoring and interventions for high school students including homework assistance, tutoring, mentoring, community service, and social skills development. Family outreach to support students.	
	Individualized coaching for school leadership; data integrated into school improvement plans; assessment solutions; equitable results action plans.	
	Parent leadership training and family networks to engage and empower families in the educational process.	

Pipeline of Services		Figure 12
Indicator	Examples of Services	
	Using a digital literacy platform, lead parent academies to equip parents with the necessary tools, resources and training to support their children’s literacy development.	
Indicator #3.1 Attendance	Implement Check and Connect, refer students and families to support services, provide student outreach and mentoring and engage students in activities of interest.	
	Family programming to improve communication among families and school.	
Indicator #3.2 Chronic Absenteeism	Provide elementary to middle school and middle school to high school transition programs.	
	Attendance Works training; with school leadership, implement attendance campaigns annually.	
	Home visits to review student progress, identify barriers to attendance and provide supports, referrals.	
Indicator #4 Graduation	High-impact practices to engage students; Teen Outreach Program (TOP); work- and project-based learning.	
	Utilizing Check and Connect, refer students and families to support services; provide student outreach and mentoring and engage students in activities of interest.	
	Career- and college-readiness activities; career exploration; test prep study sessions; homework assistance; and educational planning for postsecondary study and workforce entry.	
	Afterschool and out-of-school enrichment opportunities including summer programming.	
Category 3: Postsecondary Access and Success (high school - age 24)		
Indicator #5.1 Postsecondary Enrollment	College and career-readiness programs such as career exploration braided from elementary through high school, as age-appropriate, to build a college-going and career culture within school and community.	
	Intensive Bottom Line college advising and guidance for underserved student sub-groups beginning in high school through postsecondary on academic, financial, application, selection, career, and personal challenges.	
Indicator #5.2 Postsecondary Completion	Summer counseling programs focused on leadership development, life skills, and academic preparation for college and career to decrease the impact of summer melt. Promise Scholars program to connect students from neighboring schools attending the same college in the fall.	
	Through IHE partnerships, support students while in college with focus on first-to-second-year retention.	

Pipeline of Services		Figure 12
Indicator	Examples of Services	
	Through EKCEP partnership, reconnect Opportunity Youth (ages 18 – 24) to training, continuing education, career development tools, and employment services such as on-the-job training and career advising.	
	Each student develops an Individual Learning Plan that outlines goals and steps for successful transition.	
	Financial planning workshops for families to include FAFSA training, budgeting for college.	
	Provide periodic visits to “matched” college campuses, vocational schools and career sites aligned with students’ Individual Learning Plans for students and their family members.	
	Increased dual enrollment opportunities and supports by providing rigorous curriculum and building teacher capacity to support students in attaining academic skills needed to graduate college ready.	
Category 4: Health and Family Supports (birth – age 24)		
Indicator #6 Healthy Eating	Health and wellness coordinators provide opportunities for health and wellness activities during and out-of-school and provide tools to help students make healthier choices.	
	Organize student-centered wellness group to engage school+community to develop school health plan.	
	Integrate evidence-based health curriculum into school programming both in-school and out-of-school.	
	Provide professional development for food service workers and teachers on food preparation, farm-to-school, and integrating food production and preparation into the curriculum.	
	Provide family learning opportunities (food preservation/canning, gardening, cooking, baking, community gardens); establish a community food policy council.	
Indicator #7 Safe School Climate	Coordinate with community groups to engage students and families as champions of change to create safe and supportive learning environments.	
	Partnering with local law enforcement, modify school practices ensuring that best practices are in place for safety issues such as bullying, school violence, substance/opioid use, etc.	
	Facilitate a student-centered student voice team identifying school climate challenges, solution plans.	
	Implement Too Good for Drugs with sixth-grade students to develop self-efficacy and skills for making choices.	

Pipeline of Services		Figure 12
Indicator	Examples of Services	
	Provide mental health and trauma-informed care workshops such as Youth Mental Health First Aid for school and community members.	
Indicator #8 Mobility	Connect family navigators with families that are moving their child from a school to ensure they have information necessary to enroll student. Serve as resource connector to the family during the transition.	
	Increase family relationships, engagement and connectedness through case management and programs such as FAST [®] and Too Good for Drugs.	
	Family navigators engage homeless students, their families providing necessary supports, resources, & referrals.	
Indicator #9.1 Family Encourages Literacy	Provide family academies to train families to utilize a literacy platform to read to their children, utilizing the audio feature if the parent has a low literacy level.	
	Provide home visiting program and family engagement activities to improve school readiness and literacy.	
	Provide training to child-care providers on engaging their students' parents and provide the parents with information and activities to use with their children.	
Indicator #9.2 Family Encourages College and Career	Organize college fairs and career expos for students and families.	
	Deliver FAFSA workshops (parents of 11 th graders); and FAFSA completion sessions (parents of 12 th).	
	Individual financial aid and college match information provided to each student and their family.	
	Provide college and career site visits where parents can attend alongside students.	
Indicator #10 Access to Broadband	Collaborate with the Letcher County Broadband Board to add a student voice member to the board and to increase the take-rate of families of free and reduced-price lunch students taking advantage of the Affordable Connectivity Program. Family navigators connect families to broadband resources.	
	Provide Wi-Fi internet access via the public library bookmobile, buses, etc., allowing download capabilities.	

2. The extent to which the project will significantly increase the proportion of students in the PN that are served by the complete continuum of high-quality services

We have developed a plan to significantly increase the proportion of neighborhood students served over time. Our implementation plan will ensure that as Promise Neighborhood progresses, more and more students will be served by the complete continuum of services. Our experience implementing Promise Neighborhood programs in similar rural areas, our understanding of each solution, and data analysis form the foundation for this implementation plan. Figure 13, below, illustrates our measurable outcomes for the increase in the number and percentage of families and students targeted for direct service each year to ensure that our goals are met. Our baseline was established during planning and based on number of children and youth, birth to age 24, living in the neighborhood. Upon notification of funding, the baseline will be confirmed.

Number and percentage of families and students served each year						Figure 13
# and % of Students and Families to be Served Each Year by Letcher Promise Neighborhood						
	Baseline 2021-22	#/% Year one	#/% Year Two	#/% Year Three	#/% Year Four	#/% Year Five
Students	5,102	2122 (42%)	3318 (65%)	3385 (85%)	4488 (88%)	4812 (94%)
Family Member	5,102	1876 (37%)	2615 (51%)	3086 (60%)	3425 (67%)	3763 (74%)

Importantly, our implementation plan outlines measurable outcomes for the increase in the number and percentage of students and families to be served by **each solution**. See Appendix A Continuum of Solutions for information on the number to be served by each solution each year.

D. QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. The adequacy of the management plan to achieve objectives on time and within budget, including defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for project tasks

PRI's track record for managing large and complicated projects is well-established. For two decades, we have provided a wide array of services to dozens of schools, districts, and counties in the most rural and inaccessible areas in the nation—rural Appalachia. We do this in part through well-trained and highly qualified staff, and, most importantly, a **clear understanding of the population we serve**. We bring that experience to the Promise Neighborhood proposal.

Personnel Plan: High quality key personnel will be in place, and their time commitments will be appropriate to implement the project. Based on a decade of work with the USDOE Promise Neighborhood program, we have established an effective personnel structure that includes adequate staff for implementation. The majority of the staff will be residents of the Promise Neighborhood. We have learned that residents understand the needs of the community and are skilled in engaging fellow residents, including the families of our children and youth, in program implementation. All staff will be hired based on the employment structures of PRI. A personnel plan that connects each position to outcomes is included in Appendix B along with an organizational chart (Figure 14) and position descriptions.

Principal Investigator (15% FTE): Dr. Amon Couch will serve as the project's principal investigator (PI). As PI he will ensure the effective launch of the project, monitor its effectiveness, and ensure that the project is meeting its goals and objectives. Dr. Couch is a fulltime PRI employee and is the principal investigator for PRI's two existing Promise Neighborhood projects where he commits 20% of his time. He will commit 15% of his time and effort to Letcher Promise Neighborhood. Given the role of the PI and Couch's existing

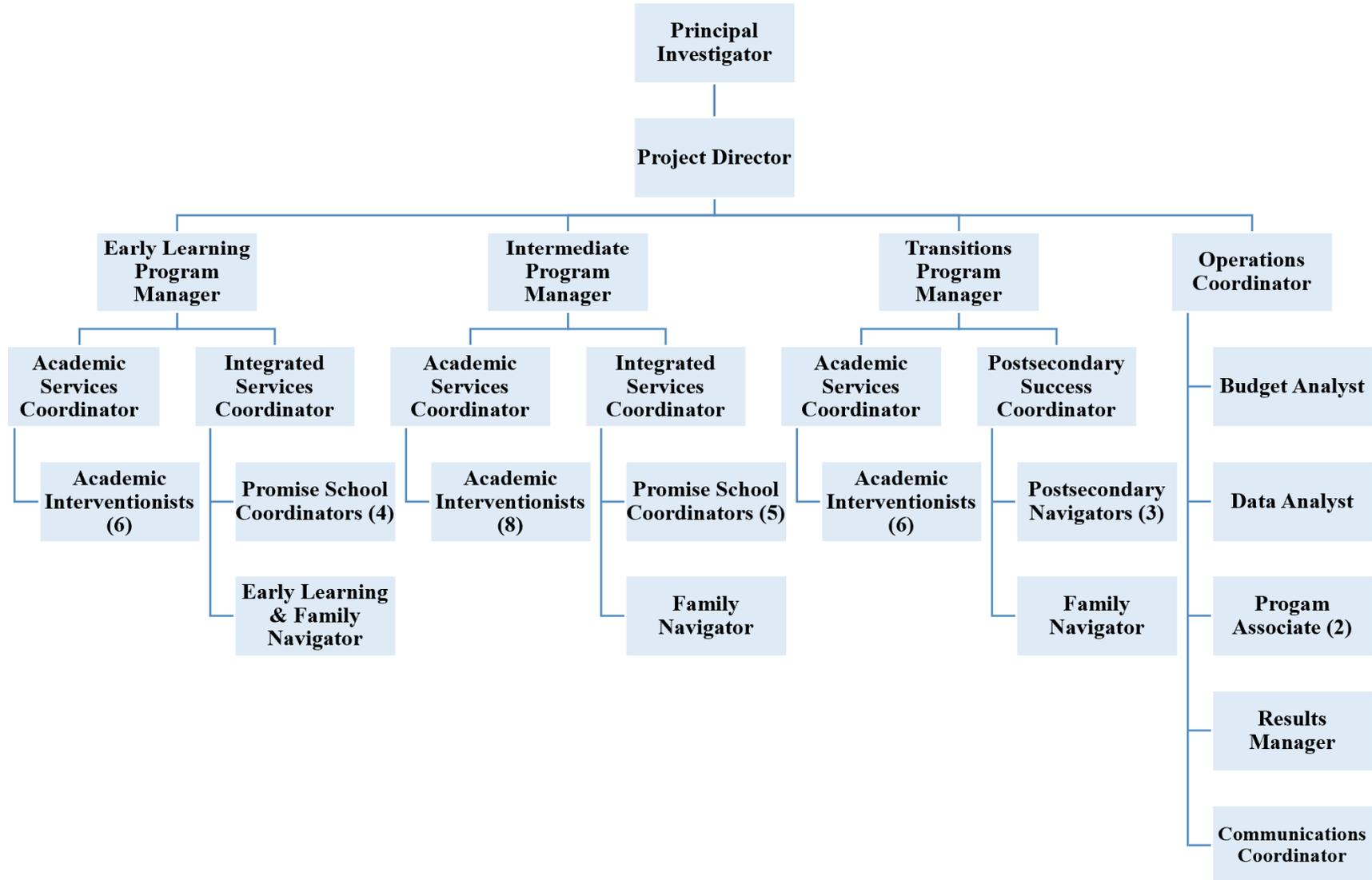
knowledge of PN, the 15% effort is appropriate and adequate.

Principal Investigator qualifications, relevant training, and experience. Dr. Couch serves as Associate Vice President for Appalachia and reports to the PRI Vice President for Place Based Partnerships. As PI, Couch's responsibilities will include articulating PN's strategic direction and theory of change, facilitating the partnership between PRI and school and community-based partners, collaborating with the evaluation team, and aligning the PN program to other Appalachian Kentucky cradle to career initiatives. Dr. Couch has received training in from the U.S. Department of Education's Promise Neighborhood team in grants management and fiscal management. Couch is familiar with the mission and goals of the program. Couch's resume is in Appendix B. Dr. Couch brings over 27 years' experience in school leadership where he served in Appalachian Kentucky in multiple roles including as superintendent; elementary, middle, and high school principal; and teacher. His expertise includes resource and organizational development, human resource management, performance measures, school climate and budget management.

In the event that Dr. Couch is unavailable to serve as PI, Partners for Rural Impact, in collaboration with Consortium members, will conduct a search seeking the following **qualifications, training, and experience:** A terminal degree in education, management or a related field, with a minimum ten years' experience in personnel, program, and fiscal management; demonstrated experience with federal grants management, including budget responsibility; demonstrated knowledge and leadership in developing partnerships among diverse stakeholders; expertise in program evaluation; demonstrated history of achieving performance goals and outcomes for projects; experience in capacity building for partners; belief that all students can succeed; familiarity with Appalachian Kentucky schools and communities.

Project Director (100% FTE): Upon notification of funding, PRI will begin a search for a full-time, 12-month project director (PD). Reporting to the PI, the project director has responsibility for the management of the project. The project director will develop and refine program operations to ensure that objectives are met; ensure the program is in compliance with the U.S. Department of Education guidelines; will manage the daily operation of the program through hiring, supervising, training, and guiding staff in the development, implementation, and evaluation of program activities; will ensure the project is operated in a fiscally prudent manner and will ensure the project is in compliance with all fiscal requirements. Additionally, the project director will work with the Kentucky Department of Education, partner districts, evaluators, and data contractors to implement the PN longitudinal data system; ensure the data drives services; and to ensure continuous improvement of services.

Providing all students in persistent poverty neighborhood like ours a continuum of services requires a team of dedicated staff members. We have developed this Letcher PN team based on our experience implementing PN programs in similar places. It is important to note that the vast majority of the PN staff will be placed in our schools. Those not in schools will be placed in an office within the neighborhood. Full-time personnel for the Letcher PN are illustrated on our organizational chart, Figure 14, next page.



Experience has shown us the importance of having an advisory board, a family council, and a youth council. Upon notification of funding, the Consortium will launch these groups. The advisory board, composed of 25 residents and partners, will analyze programmatic data to inform continuous improvement, provide project implementation guidance, and provide leadership and vision to our PN. The advisory board will meet six times per year using a self-selected decision-making standard. The principal investigator (PI) will call all meetings of the advisory board. Recognizing that the resident’s voice is critical, **a minimum of 60% of the advisory board will be residents.**

The family council will be composed of family members of PN students, and the youth council will be composed of youth ages 16–24. These councils will be formed by the Consortium with the Advisory Board providing guidance and input. The family council will be trained as peer leaders to support and champion families as they help children reach their full potential. The youth council will serve as a community-based student voice team that will operate using a youth participatory action research model. Youth will be trained to identify and analyze problems relevant to their lives and their community, conduct research, and advocate for changes based on evidence. The project director will call the councils to meet four times per year. Both councils will review project data and provide critical feedback informing programmatic progress.

Adequate procedures for program management and reporting: Policies and procedures are in place for data collection, recordkeeping and reporting—financial, student and program services. PRI personnel, financial, and management policies are in place to ensure compliance with all federal and state regulations. In compliance with Department of Education regulations, all personnel will certify effort monthly and records will be maintained in PRI’s grant services and finance offices.

We have developed a comprehensive plan to meet the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities for accomplishing project tasks. Our year one timeline with milestones for accomplishing planning and implementation tasks and the responsible parties follows in Figure 15. Our complete five-year timeline with planning, implementation and continuous improvement tasks for ensuring program results is included in *Appendix J*.

Letcher Promise Neighborhood - Year 1 Timeline Figure 15			Months											
			January - December 2023											
			Year 1 Planning & Implementation											
Tasks	Responsibility	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Planning Activities														
P	Hire and train Project Director	Principal Investigator												
P	Establish memorandums of understanding with partners	Principal Investigator, Project Director												
P	Introduce Promise Neighborhood to neighborhood and establish working space	Project Director, Principal Investigator, VP of Placed Based Partnerships												
P	Hire Program Managers, Coordinators, Navigators, and Operations Staff	Project Director, Principal Investigator, School Partners												
P	District financial visits	Project Director, Program Managers, Budget Analyst												
P	Planning, dissemination, and collection of survey parents/student; enrollment; consent	Principal Investigator, Project Director, Evaluator												
P	Screening, hiring, and training of school-based staff	Project Director, Program Managers, school partners												
P	Establish communication plan for staff	Project Director, Program Managers												

Letcher Promise Neighborhood - Year 1 Timeline Figure 15			Months											
			January - December 2023											
			Year 1 Planning & Implementation											
Tasks	Responsibility	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
P	Convene Letcher PN Advisory Board	Consortium, Principal Investigator												
P	School and community planning and implementation meetings	Project Director, Principal Investigator												
P	Launch data and learning team meetings biweekly to oversee data management plan	Principal Investigator, Project Director, Evaluator, Data Analyst												
P	Planning and launch of longitudinal study	Project Director, Evaluator, Data Analyst												
P	Collect and analyze baseline data	Evaluator, Data Analyst												
P	Launch Family Council and Youth Council	Consortium, Project Director												
P	Conduct a curriculum and PD needs assessment for schools examining capacity, need, fit, resources and readiness	Project Director, Program Managers												
P	Launch school-based monthly meetings to integrate programming and braiding of services	Coordinators, Navigators, Academic Interventionists												
P	Conduct neighborhood and early childhood surveys	Program Managers, Evaluator												
P	Develop and launch data and communication systems	Communications Coordinator, Project												

Letcher Promise Neighborhood - Year 1 Timeline Figure 15			Months											
			January - December 2023											
			Year 1 Planning & Implementation											
Tasks	Responsibility	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	Director, Results Manager, Data Analyst													
P	Plan and train staff/partners to implement of evidence-based curriculum													
P	Establish progress monitoring systems for the evidence-based curriculum and practices													
P	Develop and train partners on project monitoring process including use of scorecard													
P	Conduct neighborhood cultural research such as needs assessment and asset mapping													
Solutions Implementation														
I.1	Planning early childhood programming including Early Steps, Home Visiting and Raising a Reader													
I.2	Planning and launch of Coaching and Capacity Building for School Leadership													
I.2	Launch PN at schools													

Letcher Promise Neighborhood - Year 1 Timeline Figure 15			Months											
			January - December 2023											
			Year 1 Planning & Implementation											
Tasks	Responsibility	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
I.2	Establish caseload and begin Academic Services: Case Management K-8 and Check and Connect 9-12	Program Managers, Coordinators, Academic Interventionists												
I.2	Establish partnerships for summer programming	Program Managers, Coordinators, Navigators, Partners												
I.2	Launch Evidence Based Programs in Math and Reading as decided in curriculum and PD assessment	Program Managers												
I.3	Recruitment for Promise Scholars	Program Manager - Transitions												
I.4	Planning and launch of School-based programming including WSCC, TOP and Too Good for Drugs and Violence	Program Managers, Partners, Coordinators, Academic Interventionists												
I.4	Planning and launch of FAST implementation	Program Manager, Coordinators, Family Navigators												
I.4	Planning and launch Family collaborations and plans for Dual Capacity Building framework	Program Manager, Family Navigators												

Implementation Key: 1. Early Learn. & Dev., 2. Promise Schools, 3. Postsecondary Access & Support, 4. Health & Family Supports

- 2. The experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of the management team and project director in collecting, analyzing, and using data for decision making, learning, continuous improvement, and accountability, including whether the applicant has a plan to build, adapt, or expand a longitudinal data system that integrates student-level data from multiple sources in order to measure progress while abiding by privacy laws and requirements**

We will build capacity of the PRI management team and the project director to make data-informed decisions to support continuous improvement and ensure results for all Letcher PN children. PRI's Continuous Improvement team integrates PRI's data and evaluation strategies. The office is charged with ensuring all PRI program leaders, staff, stakeholders and management team members have capacity to collect, analyze and use data for decision-making, learning, continuous improvement and accountability. The office is led by Sherry Scott Horner, the associate vice president for continuous improvement. Horner is familiar with Promise Neighborhood having served as project director for PRI's first Promise Neighborhood and Principal Investigator for our second Promise Neighborhood (Horner's resume, Appendix B).

From 2012 through 2015, Horner, with extensive technical assistance from Urban Institute, developed an organizational Data Management and Security Plan for PRI. Significant time was spent reviewing, *"Measuring Performance: A Guidance Document for Promise Neighborhoods on Collecting Data and Reporting Results."* The technical assistance and resources, like this publication, were key to the development of our plan which establishes a framework and protocols for managing, analyzing, storing, reporting and utilizing our data. The plan is included in Appendix H.

Under Horner's leadership, PRI's organizational results and data team will build the capacity of the PN project director, management team and staff. Upon notification of funding, a Letcher PN data and learning team will be formed which will include the principal investigator, project director, the external evaluator, the results manager, the associate director for learning

and a data analyst. This data and learning team will meet bi-weekly to continually oversee the implementation of the PN data management plan and to ensure Letcher PN has resources including personnel and/or contractors to manage data collection, the case management system and the longitudinal data system. identifying and supporting opportunities to support capacity building in areas informed by the data collected. The data and learning team will ensure compliance with privacy and security controls and provide support and recommendations for system improvement, holding a learning and continuous improvement approach that invests in neighborhood leaders who are contributing to PN results. The team will guide the continuous refinement of the PN comprehensive plan, ensuring fidelity and compliance with all privacy requirements and security controls, while supporting continuous program improvement and community-centric leadership development.

Letcher PN will use the PRI longitudinal data system that integrates student-level data from multiple sources to measure progress. We will ensure that as we integrate Letcher PN into our existing data system essential security controls are included and that the system continues to comply with all requirements related to informed consent processes and all applicable privacy laws. Any survey data collected will be reviewed by an Internal Review Board and all survey instruments will include active consent notices. All staff will sign a confidentiality statement and receive on-going training on data security procedures that uphold FERPA protections. Security controls are built into all aspects of our Data Management Plan and are summarized in our Data Privacy and Security Statement included in Appendix H.

PRI's custom designed longitudinal data system allows us to measure progress across all services. Our PRI longitudinal data system, which we call RAD —results and data system —was created in 2012 and follows students over time tracking individual student

demographic data, types of services received and dosage of the intervention. All services map to a program indicator. The system allows staff and partners to explore the relationship between various variables and educational gain along with other outcomes. RAD gives us not only the ability to collect and monitor the data, but it also provides the necessary elements to analyze the data, allowing for real time program improvements. Producing summary reports, the data system provides the necessary tools to assist staff and partners in monitoring program results. Reports are viewed and analyzed by specific service, school, dosage, time, individual student, service provider, educational pipeline area, solution, result or any other number of variables collected. Supervisors review all service data monthly, meeting with partners and staff to discuss program improvements and expansions. Staff meet monthly to discuss summary data reports and utilizing the principles of Results-Based Accountability™ make program improvements.¹¹⁴

Our data system links data from multiple systems. We have worked with the PN school superintendents and the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) to develop a plan whereby, with requisite permission and data sharing agreements, we will be able to access record-level data on students in our PN. We have a long-standing partnership with KDE to align services and share data. Our data team and KDE meet monthly to develop new data reports and sources and share program level results. RAD, our longitudinal, web-based, data system portal, will incorporate, through data downloads from KDE and the National Student Clearinghouse, record-level data on student demographics, student performance, college and career readiness targets, student attendance, graduation rates, college matriculation and college remediation.

RAD allows for the matching and linking of data from a variety of sources (including data from providers of early childhood services within PN) and the stratification/disaggregation of the data by grade, race, gender, ethnicity and “dosage” of service. For example, we will

execute a data sharing agreement with our partner, Save the Children, wherein we can download student level data from their Early Steps home visiting program.

Our evaluation will be led by the project director and an Independent Evaluator.

Our independent evaluator will be selected from the Partners for Rural Impact pool of evaluators. PRI has established procurement policies which comply with §200.318-.327 of the Uniform Guidance. In keeping specifically with guidance related to open and fair competition, **PRI has established a pool of highly qualified evaluators.** The pool was established using a Call for Qualifications; additional evaluation firms or sole proprietors may submit credentials and costing proposals at any time to be considered as a provider of evaluation services.

Upon notification of award, Couch and Horner will review the experience of each evaluator within the pool and invite evaluators to express interest in Letcher PN and participate in an interview with the Consortium. Couch and Horner will consider the experience of each evaluator and the types of evaluation required in light of the Letcher PN project. We are confident that we have an excellent pool of evaluators for this project. To illustrate, we have evaluators within the pool who have evaluated Promise Neighborhood projects, and who are familiar with the research of Promise Neighborhood. As importantly, our pool is diverse with a significant number of firms that that are minority and women owned and operated as wells a firm with extensive experience working in rural communities. The majority within the pool have significant experience as external program evaluator for the U.S. Department of Education programs.

Once selected, the evaluation firm will track the following performance measures, Figure 16. In addition, the independent evaluation firm will develop a five year research and evaluation

plan. The plan will be reviewed and modified by the PN management team, Consortium and Advisory Board.

Performance Measures for Continuous Improvement	Figure 16
Indicator 1: Age-appropriate functioning	
PM 1.1: # of early childhood home visits focused on transition to preschool or Head Start; % change in enrollment of early learning programs	
PM 1.2: #/% of preschool/Head Start teachers who receive PD related to early childhood instruction (with PD emphasis on techniques targeted at low-performance groups)	
PM 1.3: #/% of children participating in kindergarten transition programs	
PM 1.4 #/% early learning programs using evidence-based curricula supporting math and ELA	
PM 1.5 #/% of kindergarten students who participated in a preschool or Head Start program	
Indicators 2.1 and 2.2: Academic proficiency in math and English language arts	
PM 2.1: #/% of early warning system (EWS) students on caseload	
PM 2.2: #/% of EWS students who receive 5+ math sessions, month	
PM 2.3: #/% of EWS students who receive 5+ ELA tutoring sessions monthly	
PM 2.4: #/% of EWS students that moved to proficiency or improved on KY assessment	
PM 2.5 # school with increased community partnerships/volunteer support	
PM 2.6 #/% Student voice team members who report deeper connection to school	
PM 2.7 # teachers completing PD for an evidence-based curriculum	
Indicators 3.1 and 3.2: Attendance rates and chronic absenteeism rates of 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th	
PM 3.1: #/% of 9th-graders participating in Teen Outreach Program (TOP)	
PM 3.2: #/% of 9th-graders who received Check and Connect (CAC) services	
PM 3.3: #/% of those participating in TOP or CAC with improved attendance	
PM 3.4 #/% 6 th , 7 th , and 8th-grade case management students with improved attendance	
PM 3.5 #/% of students participating in wrap-around care with improved attendance	
Indicator 4: Graduation rates	
PM 4.1: #/% of high school students receiving Check and Connect (CAC)	
PM 4.2: #/% of high school students who received Check and Connect and graduated	
PM 4.3: #/% of high school students who completed TOP and graduated	
PM 4.4 #/% of high school students who received integrated student supports (ISS) services and graduated who were identified through the EWS	
PM 4.5 #/% of high school students who graduate with at least one college credit through dual enrollment courses	
Indicators 5.1 and 5.2: Postsecondary enrollment and Postsecondary Completion	
PM 5.1: #/% of students who receive college- or career-ready (CCR) services	
PM 5.2: #/% of 12 th graders who received CCR services and graduate college or career ready	
PM 5.3: #/% of students receiving CAC supports who graduated College or Career Ready	
PM 5.4 #/% of HS seniors who graduate with at least 1 college credit and enroll in postsecondary education the following semester and complete on time	
PM 5.5 #/% Promise Scholars who enroll in college, fall after HS graduation, and complete on time	
PM 5.6 #/% Students receiving Bottom Line college advising that enroll in postsecondary	
PM 5.7 #/% Opportunity youth who enroll in a postsecondary program and complete on time	

Performance Measures for Continuous Improvement	Figure 16
Indicator 6: Healthy Eating	
PM 6.1: # Promise Neighborhood health, healthy eating and wellness service hours provided	
PM 6.2: #/% of students participating in PN health, healthy eating and wellness activities	
PM 6.3 # students consuming at least 1 serving of fruit or vegetable during wrap-around care.	
Indicator 7: Safety	
PM 7.1: #/% of Neighborhood students who receive Too Good for Drugs or Violence services	
PM 7.2: #/% of PN youth who participate in TOP	
PM 7.3: % of PN youth participating in TOP reporting decreased risky behaviors	
PM 7.4: %/ of PN youth participating in programming report feeling connected to community	
Indicator 8: Mobility	
PM 8.1: #/% of students classified as homeless that are provided support services	
PM 8.2: % of students who moved to the school and are in a case management group demonstrating academic growth in math or ELA	
PM 8.3: % of case management students who move between PN schools and are added to case management at new PN school	
Indicator 9.1: Family encourages literacy (birth-8th grade).	
PM 9.1.1: # of families enrolled in Early Steps to School Success (ESSS) program	
PM 9.1.2: % ESSS children (age 3) with age-appropriate vocabulary (85% or above) on PPVT	
PM 9.1.3: # of family members participating in FAST program	
PM 9.1.4 # of FAST members reporting that they read to their children	
PM 9.1.5 # families participating in Power My Learning: Family Playlist	
Indicator 9.2: Family encourages college and career.	
PM 9.2.1: #/% of parent's receiving information on supporting their student's college and career planning, including financing of college.	
PM 9.2.2: #/% of parents who participate in college and career planning and events	
PM 9.2.3: #/% of 12 th grade students completing FAFSA	
PM 9.2.4 #/% of PowerMyLearning: lessons including college/career information	
Indicator 10: Access to Broadband	
PM 10.1: #/% of children who receive technology to assist learning	
PM 10.2: #/% of children who access digital reading platform at least 3 times during a term	
PM 10.3 # of new community-based hotspots sponsored by community organizations	

E. ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES

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

Letcher Promise Neighborhood will provide services to 5,102 youth and their families with an annual federal investment average of \$1,176 per young person. The per student cost is reasonable given the extreme need and high-quality services to be provided. Our budget is adequate to implement the planned services and activities, and costs are reasonable in relation to

the number served, the high quality of services described, and the results and benefits to be derived from the Promise Neighborhood model. Appendix A and our timeline located on page 67 and in Appendix J illustrates our plan to begin universal implementation of specified services in year one and our plan to bring our services to scale for all students over the course of the project period.

We have included 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 scope for the program, has been calculated using OMB 2 CFR 200, EDGAR and PRI's costing principles, procedures, guidelines, restrictions and limitations and is connected to a specific objective.

Our first Promise Neighborhood in 2011 was effective and had sustained impact. We are on track to meet our Promise Neighborhood goals and objectives for 2016 Knox PN and 2017 Perry PN; which end in December 2021 and December 2022 respectively. We provide a solid return on federal investment. The requested investment is reasonable given our capacity to effectively and efficiently implement the project and the long-lasting, systemic change that will likely result.

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

PRI is a well-established organization with a nearly 30-year history of program implementation and sustainability including a ten year history with PN. We have the resources and partnerships necessary to sustain this program, as evidenced by key elements of our sustainability plan:

- An established PRI leadership and fundraising team committed to garnering resources to support the continuation of PN services after funding ends;
- Partnerships with private philanthropy, like Blue Meridian Partners, who are committed to supporting place-based programs like Promise Neighborhoods;
- Collaborating with LEAs and consortium members to continually review their funding streams to ensure optimization of resources for continued funding of the PN services;
- Utilizing strong evaluations to illustrate the value of the PN, and;
- Partnerships with elected leaders and providing them with the data and information they need to advocate for state and local funding for PN.

Our sustainability plan has a **proven track record of success**, illustrated by our first PN program in 2012. When federal funding ended in 2017, PRI implemented the sustainability steps noted above. We secured funding to maintain a pipeline of services. Importantly, **we continue to see student outcomes increasing in this original promise neighborhood**. To illustrate, when we began our work in 2012 only 16% (80 of 492) of our neighborhood children were ready for kindergarten. In 2021, 49% (214 of 439) were ready for kindergarten—a rate that nearly matches the state average of 53%. Kindergarten readiness and other indicators continue to trend upward due in large part to the sustainability efforts of PRI and our partners.

Our sustainability plan has been successful in **securing state dollars to sustain the efforts of our current Promise Neighborhood efforts**. In early 2022, we received a significant investment of state dollars - \$8 million dollars over three years – to sustain multiple efforts including the work of our Promise Neighborhood that ends in December of 2021.

We have obtained demonstrated commitment of our key partners that evidence broad support and commitment to the long-term success of Promise Neighborhood. A key

partner in our work is our two partner school districts. We have designed PN to ensure we provide schools with the operational flexibility, including autonomy over staff, time, and budget, needed to effectively carry out and sustain the PN services and activities. We have partnerships with multiple community organizations, local and state agencies, higher education, workforce, and businesses. Figure 17 summarizes the partnerships we have formed, the funding streams those partners bring to the work, and their commitments. We continue to connect with partners and will engage partners throughout the five years of funding.

We have successfully operated Promise Neighborhood programs in this part of Kentucky. We are confident that we have the key partners at the table necessary for success. In addition to our partners listed in Figure 17, we have long standing partnerships with the entities in Kentucky that are engaged in policy and investment including the Kentucky Department of Education, the Council on Postsecondary Education, the Kentucky Education Association, and our state and federal legislators.

Collectively our partners have committed non-federal dollars to match the PN federal funds at 50 percent. Documentation of matching contributions are in Appendix D. The match contributions from partners signify long-term commitments to the project. We have secured matching funds from 24 partners equaling \$3,000,000.

PRI will refine our sustainability plan to sustain Letcher PN. We develop a multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan to sustain Letcher PN. The Harlem Children Zone grappled with how to sustain their model when it began its cradle-to-career work. Geoff Canada continues to mentor PRI CEO Dreama Gentry and assist her in scaling and sustaining the cradle-to-career approach in rural Appalachia. As suggested by Canada, PRI has developed a **multi-year financial and operating model** to ensure we have the capacity to

continue cradle-to-career work after the end of federal funding. As we launch new Promise Neighborhood sites, we modify this plan to meet the assets and needs of each specific place.

We have allocated funds for the development of a Letcher PN specific sustainability plan. During the 1st three years of our Letcher Promise Neighborhood, we will engage and work with a consultant to create a sustainability plan. The planning will be based on our experiences and the lessons of HCZ. Gentry and Couch will work with partners, including our philanthropic partners like Blue Meridian Partners, to seek funding pursuant to the sustainability plan.

3. The extent to which the applicant identifies existing neighborhood assets and programs supported by Federal, State, local, and private funds that will be used to implement a continuum of solutions

Letcher Promise Neighborhood will work closely with existing neighborhood assets and programs to maximize resources and avoid duplication of services. During our planning period we identified programs that can be aligned with our pipeline of services as detailed in Figure 17. Support of programs for our PN are on file.

Existing Assets in the Promise Neighborhood and Contribution to Solutions		Figure 17
Existing Resource (source)	Description of Existing Asset	
Solution Category 1: Early Learning and Development		
Letcher County Public Libraries (state)	Reading programs for children age 0–5 and parents, bookmobile that can be fitted with Wi-Fi	
ARH Hospital (private)	Medical services families and their children, birth to age five	
LKLP Head Start (federal)	Educational readiness activities and healthy meals for children, birth to age five	
Rotary Club (private)	Imagination Library for children 0 to 5	
Eastern Streams Community Early Childhood Council (state)	Educational programs to increase community and family awareness of school readiness, professional development for early learning providers.	
Save the Children (private)	Home visiting programs and early literacy programs	
Solution: Promise Schools		
Mayor of Jenkins (local)	Community service opportunities	
Letcher County Judge (local)	Community service opportunities	

Existing Assets in the Promise Neighborhood and Contribution to Solutions Figure 17

Existing Resource (source)	Description of Existing Asset
Appalshop, Inc. (private)	Arts programming; out-of-school programs; camps
Rotary Club (local)	Musical arts programming; reading literacy programs; youth programming
Letcher County Public Libraries (state)	Literacy programs for in-school youth and their parents; internet access; bookmobile that can be fitted with Wi-Fi
Solution: Postsecondary Access and Support	
Southeast Community & Technical College (state)	Dual enrollment opportunities; apprenticeships; Mountain Training Network
University of Pikeville (private)	Dual enrollment opportunities; first-year experience program
Prosper Appalachia (private)	Education and careers services for Opportunity Youth (ages 16 – 24); resource hub; paid internships; apprenticeships
Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (federal)	Entry-level work credentials while in high school; pre-apprentice opportunities; GED assistance
GEAR UP (federal)	Tutoring; service learning; college and career readiness activities; job training; career counseling; STEM camps
Letcher County Adult Education (state)	GED preparation; workforce education; literacy instruction
Solution: Health and Family Supports	
Letcher County Public Libraries (state)	Literacy programs for in-school youth and their parents; internet access bookmobile that can be fitted with Wi-Fi
Cowan Community Center (private)	Student art programs; family events; healthy food programs
Smile Faith Foundation (private)	Need-based dental care; health fairs
Letcher County Farmer’s Market (local)	Healthy meals and events for students and families about locally sourced, healthy foods; summer feeding
Letcher County Health Department (state)	Community health and wellness initiatives for children and families
Letcher County Sherriff’s Office (local)	Professional development; safety presentations
ARH Hospital (private)	Community health and wellness initiatives to all children
Community Agricultural Nutritional Enterprises, Inc (Cane) Kitchen (private)	Health workshops; community commercial kitchen; food preservation programming for families
Kentucky Center for School Safety (state)	Professional development to schools on their safety plans.