

**Communities In Schools (CIS) of South  
Eastern PA- Reading School District Full-Service  
Community Schools Project**

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## **Introduction**

Communities In Schools of Eastern PA (CISEPA), in full partnership with the Title I Reading School District (RSD), seeks funding from the Department of Education's Full Service Community Schools Program to plan, develop and fully implement our community school network in three underserved schools identified on the Southwest side of Reading, Pennsylvania. Within the five year period of performance, the project will increase and strengthen the coordination, integration, accessibility and effectiveness of services for 1,940 children, and serve more than 1,000 families in addition to countless community members within the Southwest side of the city.

Applying under Absolute Priority 1: Title IA Schoolwide Program Eligibility and Absolute Priority 3: Capacity Building and Development Grants, CISEPA and the RSD will conduct initial development and coordination activities, including extensive community engagement, that leverages the findings of our needs assessment which will be completed during the first six months of the grant period. We will then fully develop the infrastructure, activities, and partnerships necessary and critical to implement full-service community schools in three eligible and identified RSD schools. After setting benchmarks in Year 1, we will continue to gather data on the 10 identified performance indicators that are fully outlined in the evaluation section of this proposal.

Starting in Year 2, and continuing throughout the remaining years of the project period of performance, our full service community schools will provide services and access to services and supports that will prove advancement toward educational success.

## **1. NEED FOR THE PROJECT**

Limitless factors outside of school affect the in-school success of Reading's

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children and youth. From nutrition to summer opportunities for development to mental and physical health supports, many elements combine to determine the continued level of achievement for our youngest residents. Based on a comprehensive needs assessment, the CISEPA full-service community schools model and effective implementation will address these factors by providing all-encompassing services and supports to address identified needs and gaps both inside and outside of school that currently act as barriers to educational success. Community Schools initiative work in this area of Reading has already begun and our outreach to key stakeholders and community service agencies has established a FSCS consortium, entitled Bridging Opportunity for School Success or “BOSS”, that has participated in the planning and development of this project plan for a year. Our project will also address the following Competitive Preference Priorities: CPP1 – Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs; and CPP2 – Strengthening Cross-Agency Coordination and Community Engagement to Advance Systems Change.

With this initiative, that focuses intimately on the uniqueness of the community, the CIS of Eastern PA-Reading School District Full-Service Community Schools Project will make an enormous impact on the educational quality and overall well-being of the entire community, creating and ensuring equitable opportunity and support for the underserved student and general population that resides in the proposed service area.

**a. Description of Reading**

Founded in 1748, Reading Pennsylvania was popular for the manufacturing of textiles, transport of coal, and other business and industries critical to the growth of not only our region, but our great country. Most well-known for its railway line (made famous by the Monopoly game board), Reading prospered and grew until the early 1900’s. From

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the 1940s to the 1970s, Reading saw a sharp downturn in prosperity, largely owed to the decline of the heavy industry and railroads, on which Reading was built. In 2011, Reading was announced as “the poorest city in the nation” (2010, US Census) competing for this title with other impoverished cities such as Detroit, MI. Poverty, poor English language skills, a straining school district, lack of educational attainment, and other factors have taken their toll on our once great city.

Since the 2011 news story announced to the nation how far Reading had fallen, Reading has changed dramatically. No longer an industrial town with a predominantly white population, it is now home to a diverse Latino community. Neighborhoods are multilingual, the population is more transient, and the city is growing and revitalizing in many ways. New investment is happening in the downtown area, new programs are launching to support youth and families, and new and younger leaders are emerging.

Amid these promising signs of action, local residents, students, teachers, and community leaders are calling for a new education agenda rooted in shared community action. This common agenda is based on the belief that all young people should have equal access to education and to the resources they need to reach their goals in school, after graduation, at work, and as contributors to their community.

From this call to action and whole community movement, especially in response to the needs within education, the Full Service Community Schools Project targeting the Southwest side of Reading was born. The community is poised and ready to seek solutions to the issues that have long plagued our city. With a laser focus on education, CISEPA, RSD and our BOSS Consortium members will coordinate and lead strategies brought forth by the community to ensure success- from cradle to career. This project is a critical step to

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the expressed commitment of CISEPA, the RSD and the community.

Reading is the principal city of the Greater Reading Area and the county seat of Berks County, in Southeastern Pennsylvania. With an estimated population of 95,112 (U.S. census, 2020), it is the fourth most populated city in PA after Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Allentown. The average age in Reading is 30 years old. 29.1% of the population is aged 18 and under and Reading has a large majority of single mother led households.

**Poverty:** Reading was designated as distressed under Act 47 on November 12, 2009. This determination was made after years of recurring deficits, ineffective financial management practices and unfavorable socio-economic and demographic trends. In 2011, U.S. Census data confirmed that Reading had the largest percentage of its population living in poverty of any city in the Nation. Since 2009, Reading has made significant strides to improve its management practices and fiscal situation. Despite some improvement, the percent of Reading residents living in poverty is still deplorable at 30.9% compared to the State poverty level at 12% and the nation at 10.5%. Most shocking is Reading's share of extreme poverty (defined as neighborhoods where at least 40% of residents live below the poverty level). Reading's extreme poverty level is currently the highest in all of the State of Pennsylvania. Extreme poverty affects 9 out of 89 neighborhoods in Reading, and 28.1% of Reading's residents live in neighborhoods where 4 out of 10 residents live in poverty. The percentage of our children and youth living in extreme poverty is deplorable- with 42.4% of children (18 and younger) living in poverty as compared to other age demographics (18-64 yrs =27% and 65 and older=21%).

**Diversity:** Reading has indeed seen a myriad of changes in recent decades. The movement of people in and out of the community has accelerated as Reading has become a more

affordable alternative to nearby urban centers. As shown in **Table 1** below, Reading has a much higher population of residents who identify as Hispanic (67%) as compared to the State (22.5%) and to the nation (18.7%).

**Table 1: Race Comparison**

	<b>United States</b>	<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>City of Reading</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	18.7%	22.5%	67%
<b>Black</b>	12.4%	12.4%	9%
<b>White</b>	61.6%	61.6%	20%
<b>Other</b>	7.3%	3.5%	4%

The total minority population combined is 80% in Reading. Many of Reading’s newer families are immigrants and native Spanish-speakers without easy access to work or educational opportunities. The percentage of persons aged 5 years + who live in a Reading household where a language other than English is spoken at home is extremely high at 55.1% as compared to Pennsylvania State at 11.5% and the nation at 21.5%. Of the 55.1% of residents in Reading (aged 5+) who speak a language other than English at home, the majority (53%) speak Spanish at home (2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates).

**Educational Attainment:** In Reading, only 6.9% of persons aged 25 or older have a bachelor’s degree or higher, as compared to 19.5% in PA and 20.2% in the nation. **Table 2** below presents a comparison of educational attainment between the nation, the State of Pennsylvania, and the City of Reading. Most interesting is the enormous achievement gap in higher education /degree attainment.

**Table 2 Educational Attainment Comparison**

	<b>United States</b>	<b>State of PA</b>	<b>Reading</b>
High School or Equivalent degree	26.7%	34.2%	36.3%
Some college, no degree	20.3%	15.9%	16.9%
Associate’s Degree	8.6%	8.6%	6.8%
Bachelor’s Degree	20.2%	19.5%	6.9%
Graduate or Professional Degree	12.7%	12.8%	3.2%

**Early Childhood Education (ECE):** The City of Reading has an extremely limited supply of quality ECE opportunities available that are accessible and affordable. The PA Department of Human Services (DHS) certifies all early childhood programs. A certified center does mean that Pennsylvania's minimum requirements for safety are met.

However, certification **does not** address Early Education. Keystone STARS (Standards, Training/Professional Development, Assistance, Resources, and Supports) is a quality rating system that promotes quality improvement in early learning and development programs and school-age child care. A Keystone STARS designation informs parents that their children are in a safe, respectful environment in which they are learning new things every day to support their current and future successes in school and life.

Since the inception of the Keystone STARS program in 2002, the Performance Standards have been the bedrock of the program. The standards are guided by the principle

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that quality early learning programs are the foundation for children's success, and investment in the early care and education of Pennsylvania's children is an investment in the future. Therefore, the Keystone STARS Performance Standards reflect research-based practices to improve outcomes for children. The standards are organized into four STAR levels that build upon each other in order to support continuous quality improvement. When a program meets the Performance Standards for a STAR level, they receive the mark of quality, a STAR designation. A Keystone STARS designation informs parents that their children are in a safe, respectful environment. The STARS program supports early learning programs in the commitment to continuous quality improvement.

ECE Programs opt to participate in the Keystone STARS program and are ranked on multiple factors regarding the quality of the ECE program. As ECE programs move up the STARS ladder, the facility is providing even higher quality experiences, therefore, the quality of educational and care components within the ECE Program increase with each STAR level. At each level, programs must meet certain research-based quality standards that measure four areas that make a difference in the quality of care a child receives to include: Staff Education, Learning Environment, Leadership Management, Family and Community Partnerships. As a program moves from STAR 1 to STAR 4, the requirements in these areas increase. Keystone STARS evaluators then confirm the program's STAR level. Programs that are earning a STAR 3 or STAR 4 also receive an independent Environmental Rating Scale.

Child care is available in a variety of settings, including family child care homes, group child care homes, and child care centers. Early childhood programs are perfectly positioned to more effectively link families to the supportive opportunities they need,

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tailored specifically for them and their set of challenges. Recent research highlights the severe negative affect that the pandemic has had on Education throughout the U.S. Early Childhood Education – especially in poverty-stricken areas such as Reading, PA- continue to be devastated by not only the ongoing pandemic and health crisis, but also by the extreme qualified worker shortages and spiraling economic conditions that we are - and will continue to experience. Stable, affordable, high-quality child care is essential to families' economic stability. Consistent, high-quality care allows parents and caregivers to work and provides learning opportunities for children during a critical window for brain development. As daycare and preschool systems continue to fall apart- the crisis in education for our youngest and already at-risk citizens -becomes critical. A recent summary of “Findings from the Act Early Response to COVID-19 Needs Assessment” states that “Early childhood programs and systems report that early identification of developmental delays and disabilities among children from birth to age 5 years have been greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. While some challenges to early identification are not new, the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified the needs and barriers to early identification that existed before the pandemic. (Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Early Identification of Developmental Delays and Disabilities and Opportunities for Improvement, 2021 Report Funded by the CDC).

Often, daycares and early learning centers are the first line of appropriate early screening and identification of potential issues. Early Childhood Screening is an early look at a child's development to help identify specific needs that may interfere with learning, growth, and development. Research from the past 10 years clearly shows that educators and medical professionals can spot the signs of learning difficulties earlier than previously

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thought possible. Professionals can use a variety of easy and quick screeners in math and reading and provide helpful strategies and interventions to support struggling learners. For many years, advocates—particularly parents—have pushed for up-to-date information about children’s progress, feedback about how well they’re performing across subject areas, and insight as to whether they’re mastering skills needed for continued progress. Early screening offers answers to these questions, as well as pointing to characteristics that might identify risk for underlying disorders of learning and attention. With 2 plus years of shutdowns and now even more limited access to appropriate, qualified and safe early childhood education, children in poverty-stricken areas such as the Reading, PA are even more at risk.

**Health:** There are many barriers throughout Reading in regard to access to needed health services for both children and adults that include; a high percentage of the population without health insurance (10.9%), as compared to the State (7.7%) and the nation (10.2%); a large percentage of the population requiring access to translation services (that are limited and/ or unavailable); lack of appropriate or culturally sound health care; and an extremely limited public transportation system.

Below is a summary of findings from the Penn State Health CHNA 2021 (6-county report, to include Berks). The most significant issues that this report recommends the community should focus on in systemwide health improvement efforts over the next 3 years include: Mental Health, Health Equity, Wellness and Disease Prevention.

- One Key Informant Survey respondent stated, “Most people are forced to travel outside of an hour to get to doctors who accept Medicaid or Medicare.” However, many individuals don’t seek care at all due to a lack of transportation.

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- Fifty-four percent of Key Informant Survey respondents indicated that residents may not have transportation to medical appointments. In particular, 1 in 15 community respondents indicated that they or their family needed transportation services but were not able to access them.
- Inability to afford care, challenges of navigating the health care system, lack of transportation, feeling healthy and lack of awareness/emphasis on preventive health were most chosen within respondents' top three selections as why residents who have health insurance do not receive regular care.

**b. Description of Reading School District (RSD)**

The Reading School District is committed to their core purpose of educating ALL students. Located between Harrisburg and Philadelphia in southeastern Pennsylvania, the RSD is the fourth largest school district in Pennsylvania and the sixth largest employer in Berks County. The Reading School District contains 19 schools; 17,659 students are enrolled in 13 preschools, 13 elementary schools, 5 middle schools and 1 large high school. The district also has a virtual academy (online learning) and shares a career and technology center (Berks Career and Technology Institute) with a neighboring school district.

The RSD is a Title 1, urban school district located in a high-poverty community, where 100% of RSD students qualify for, and 93% receive, free or reduced lunch, 18% of RSD students receive special education services, 26.8% of students are English Learners (ELs), and 69.2% of students are economically disadvantaged. The student body at the schools served by Reading School District is 5.1% White, 7.2% Black, 0.3% Asian or Asian/Pacific Islander, 85.7% Hispanic/Latino, 0.1% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 0% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. In addition, 1.6% of students are two or

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more races, and 0% have not specified their race or ethnicity. Minority enrollment in the RSD is over 90% of the student body (majority Hispanic), which is more than the Pennsylvania public school average of 37% (majority Black and Hispanic).

**Preliminary Needs Assessment:** To assess needs throughout the district, and to identify the target schools (most underserved), CISEPA, the RSD and our Community Schools Consortium partners (Bridging Opportunities for School Success or “BOSS”), performed data collection in key areas identified by district administration and other district, city and county wide research and reports. The results were shocking and taken as a whole, a sense of urgency amongst all stakeholders was heightened.

Alvernia University’s O’Pake Institute produced the Berks Vital Signs 2014 report for the Berks Community Foundation. This report, which focussed exclusively on the topic of poverty throughout the County, was one in a series of reports on specific aspects of life in Berks County; “In half of the school districts in the county more than 10 percent of their student population live in poverty. Four districts, (Reading, Antietam, Muhlenberg and Tulpehocken) have poverty levels that exceed both the state and county averages. In Reading, over 40% of the student population is living in poverty.”

The RSD student population represents 28 countries and speaks 27 languages. The high number of English Learners (26.8%) and those who speak a language other than English at home (16%) is substantial. These facts create significant challenges for students and their families to access needed resources and makes family engagement/involvement extremely challenging in all aspects of a child’s life. The RSD does provide one parent outreach assistance (POA) at each school to assist with this challenge.

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**Health:** Below is a summary of findings from the Penn State Health CHNA 2021. These particular results focus on the Health issues surrounding RSD's children and youth:

- 1 in 5 children in grades 7-12 were obese during the 2017-2018 school year (School Health Statistics, 2017-18). Two large contributors to obesity include lack of exercise and poor diet.
- 1 in 14 children reported having skipped a meal due to family finances (PAYS, 2019)

In a 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment (performed by Reading Hospital/Tower Health) respondents were asked to rank the 5 most pressing health-related issues from a list of 13 focus areas identified in the survey. The issues of Substance Abuse/Alcohol Abuse, Overweight/Obesity, Mental Health/Suicide, Diabetes, and Access to Care/Uninsured were ranked as the top 5 health issues. When both the Leadership Focus Group and the Resident/Community Focus Group were asked to list the most pressing issues in relation to health equity and access, the following were captured:

LEADERSHIP FOCUS GROUP: Lack of knowledge of available services, Poverty/low education, Community fear and distrust, Language barriers, Lack of Behavioral Health/Mental Health services, Limited insurance coverage, Racial/ethnic representation of providers/staff.

RESIDENT FOCUS GROUP: Low Income/Unemployment, Convenience of appointments, Unconscious bias and stigmas, Inadequate language services, Inadequate Behavioral Health/Mental Health services, Shortage of diverse/ethnic providers, Insurance coverage.

**Mental Health:** Mental Health issues identified in the Penn State Health CHNA

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performed in 2021 (PAYS, 2019) reveal the following:

- 40% of children in the service area reported feeling sad or depressed most days in the past year, and 1 in 6 reported considering suicide one or more times in the past year.
- One community member commented, “I think that our largest community health issue, which is of epidemic proportions, is childhood trauma/adverse childhood experiences.”
- Approximately two-thirds of respondents (61.8%) saw mental health conditions as a top three health concern in the community; 43.9% of respondents selected substance use disorder as a top three health concern.
- Key informants were asked what resources are missing in the community that would help residents optimize their health. Approximately 60% of informants chose mental health services as a missing resource within the community, and just over half included transportation.

**Homelessness:** Figures released by the PA State Department of Education for the 2017-2018 school year indicate that, in Berks County, 2,279 youth were deemed homeless. Eighty percent of that number were said to be "doubled-up," meaning they were living temporarily in someone else's home, either with or without their family. The RSD's social work team works closely with identified students experiencing homelessness to ensure they are aware of how to access additional outside resources for themselves and for their families.

**Food Insecurity:** The city of Reading meets the definition of a food desert and residents have limited access to affordable and nutritious food. Children who reside in impoverished

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areas do not have the proper nourishment to develop both physically and mentally. Studies show that poor academic achievement is closely linked to food deserts due to the lack of nutritional food needed for a child's development. To address food insecurities, there are nine different food pantries located in close proximity to school buildings within the RSD. These pantries provide shelf stable foods served on different days and times weekly or monthly. One pantry site is managed by Communities In Schools of Eastern PA.

Beyond physical consequences, lack of proper nutrition in children can also lead to psychological and social issues. The biggest health concern linked to food deserts is obesity. Children that are overweight tend to display lower self-esteem, self-worth, and quality of life compared to other children as early as the age of five. These symptoms can lead to anxiety and depression. Research shows that obese adolescents tends to have lower cognitive performance, which indicates that normal cognitive abilities may be affected as well. These circumstances make doing schoolwork difficult and cause health, social and emotional problems for RSD children and youth. In an attempt to address some of the challenges that RSD students and families experience, the RSD established a Knight's Closet/basic needs pantry at each of the district school buildings to help students in need, particularly those who are homeless or at-risk. The goal of the Knight's Closet is to meet students' basic needs so that students are able to focus on their education.

**Educational Attainment:** Reading School District is ranked #660 of all 701 school districts and public educational entities in the entire State of Pennsylvania (based off of combined math and reading proficiency testing data). RSD data for SY 2018-19 show an average math proficiency score of 13% compared to the Pennsylvania public school average of 45%, and a reading proficiency score of 27% as compared to the PA statewide

average at 62% .

**Out of School Time (OST) Programs** : Understanding the important role that high-quality out-of-school time programs play in the success of children from high-poverty communities, the Berks County Community Foundation (BCCF) applied for and was awarded a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Education to conduct a study of the afterschool and summer program landscape in the City of Reading. The goals of the study were twofold. First, to inform state and local policymakers about the availability of out-of-school time (OST) programs and how well they match the needs and preferences of families and students. Second, to enable the Reading community to better coordinate its OST resources so that more children and youth benefit from high-quality programming.

In the spring of 2017, BCCF hired FourPoint Education Partners (formerly Cross & Joftus) to design and carry out this study. The resulting findings and recommendations offer a view of Reading’s current OST landscape and opportunities to make high-quality afterschool and summer programs available to more children and teens.

**Finding 1:** Compared to state and national estimates, participation in afterschool and summer programs is low in Reading. Just 11 percent of Reading students participate in afterschool programs three or more days a week and 20 percent participate in structured summer programs. Nationally, average participation rates are 18 percent for afterschool and 33 percent for summer programs. Pennsylvania after school participation rates statewide are estimated at 17 percent—very close to the national average.

In its most recent survey of afterschool programming, the Afterschool Alliance—a national advocacy group—took a deeper look at out-of-school time programming in high-poverty communities like Reading. They found that, in general, after school program

participation in communities of concentrated poverty tends to be higher than the national average (24 percent compared to 18 percent nationally). Participation in summer programs was also higher—41 percent in communities of concentrated poverty compared with the national average of 33 percent. Given the high poverty rate in Reading, the low rate of OST participation is even more notable.

**Finding 2:** The supply of OST programming in Reading includes daily, enrolled programming and drop-in activities. Daily, enrolled programs run for at least three days a week and monitor attendance. Drop-in programs and activities operate on a variety of schedules; some operate weekly and others are seasonal. Approximately 1,900 students attend daily, enrolled programs during the school year and 3,600 attend daily, enrolled programs in the summer for at least two weeks. Most of the daily, enrolled programming is provided by the Reading School District (7% of afterschool programs, 41% of summer programs), the Reading Recreation Commission (17%/16%), the Olivet Boys and Girls Club (23%/17%), licensed child care centers (47%/20%) and an array of mostly smaller, independent or faith-based non-profit programs (6%/5%). Elementary students are more likely to participate in daily, enrolled afterschool and summer programs than middle or high school students. Drop-in programs and other activities (referred to as “activities” in this study) are provided by some of the same organizations that provide daily, enrolled opportunities along with many others, including the public libraries, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and local Boy and Girl Scouts councils. There are likely many more activities (e.g., recreational sports leagues, art programs and classes, and other programs offered by smaller nonprofits) than are included in this study. Participation in activities is more common among teens. Stakeholder interviews and survey data indicate that anywhere from

25 to 50 percent of teens participate in some type of afterschool activity. By comparison, many fewer elementary school children, just 12%, participate in afterschool activities.

**Finding 3:** Current programming is not meeting the OST demand. While most children and youth in Reading come home after school, two-thirds of informants indicated that they would like additional OST opportunities for students of all ages. Seventy-seven percent of surveyed parents whose children come home after school would like them to participate in other activities, like sports and music and to receive homework help. Parents and teens reported similar, unmet demand for opportunities for both children and teens in the summer. In addition, maps of OST program locations show that there are areas of the city that are not well served.

**Finding 4:** OST providers report that funding is the largest constraint to serving more children and youth in the RSD. Many programs charge fees that do not cover the full cost of programming and rely on fundraising and philanthropy to make up the difference. Providers indicated a desire to serve more children and youth if additional financial resources were available.

**Finding 5:** Reading families face multiple barriers to accessing afterschool and summer programs, restricting student participation. Many RSD families are not aware of the OST programs available to their children. Other challenges are hours of operation, lack of transportation, cultural barriers and language differences, limited program options, the cost of programs, and concerns about program quality.

**Transiency:** District level data collected for school year 2018-19:

- 42% of 5<sup>th</sup> grade students have been in 3 or more schools since starting their education.

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- 39% of 4th grade students have been in 3 or more schools since starting their education.
- 32% of 3rd grade students have been in 3 or more schools since starting their education.

**Graduation Rate:** A High-School Diploma is an important credential for employment and is a prerequisite for obtaining postsecondary education. This obvious statement allows us to look at the graduation rates of students in the Reading School District, and understand more fully why higher education/degree attainment is lacking. The State of PA's graduation rate is 86.1% (most recent data available for 2015-16 SY). The RSD's graduation rate is much lower than the State at 71% and has decreased from 72% over five school years (2013-2018 SYs).

**District Spending per pupil:** The average spending per student across the nation is \$15,000 and varies greatly State to State. For example, New York State (highest average in the nation) spends \$39,435 per student and Utah State (lowest average in the nation) spends \$8,844 per student. The RSD's spending per student is \$14,905, has stayed relatively flat over four school years (SYs 2014-2018), and is in the lower percentile as compared to the nation. This per pupil expense is also much less than the PA State median of \$17,771 spending per student.

**c. Description of the Southwest Reading Community and Identified Schools**

Although there are signs of progress in Reading, the systems that support Reading communities have not kept pace with the city's evolving challenges. Many Southwest Reading residents point to the performance of the school system as one sign of this gap. Reading schools in general are widely agreed to be under-funded and not adequately

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equipped to meet the needs of a shifting population that includes students from newly arrived families, who don't speak English fluently, or who don't stay in Reading for long periods of time. Even within Reading's single school district, the difference in neighborhood elementary schools is often "like night and day". This is the case with the Southwest Reading community. Extreme poverty, lack of services, blight, crime, drugs, gang presence, etc. plague this portion of the city. Additionally, the realities of racial inequity and bias are present throughout Reading, but are especially prevalent in the Southwest area of the city.

The Southwest Reading neighborhood is considered an "extreme poverty" area. Poverty creates many complicated problems for residents, especially children as children born into poverty face significant challenges. Family difficulties are likely to result in poor educational, social, and health outcomes. Poverty is associated with various factors leading to poor academic achievement, including atypical structural brain development, limited language development, and a greater likelihood of experiencing food insecurity.

Lack of school readiness predicts later cognitive problems and adult psychosocial adjustment. In comparison, higher household family incomes and neighborhood socioeconomic status have been linked with greater school readiness in vocabulary, communication, numeracy knowledge, and attention. Poverty is associated with placement of children into out-of-home care. Poverty may also lead to other issues including externalizing mental conditions, asthma, and injuries resulting in hospitalization. Childhood attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and conduct disorder start early and predict disruptive behavior in later childhood and adolescence. Research reveals children born into poverty are less ready for school and have worse health and

social outcomes.

### **School Level Data**

The target schools identified on the Southwest side of the city of Reading are Tyson-Schoener Elementary School, 10th & Penn Elementary School, and Southwest Middle School. Individual school level data for the three target schools was obtained by CISEPA with cooperation from the RSD and our BOSS consortium members throughout the past year. This data solidifies the critical and urgent need for a more thorough needs assessment, a strategic plan to address the urgent and critical needs in these schools and surrounding community, and a call for coordinated and immediate action.

In April of 2021, CISEPA and our initial BOSS Consortium members solicited and received statements from school Principals. The Principals identified numerous concerns and issues. Grouped by theme, the following issues/concerns were unanimous:

- Poverty affects every aspect of this school community.
- Finding and providing mental health services and supports for students is critical and one of the biggest challenges in each school.
- Many of the students enrolled in the three target schools have parents who are incarcerated which leads to increased trauma and related issues for these children and youth. The incidence of trauma was reported to be more significant in Tyson-Schoener elementary school and the experiences lived by the children enrolled are reported as “more severe”.

**Homelessness:** Per the April 2021 meeting and responses solicited from the individual

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school Principals, “the Berks County Intermediate Unit (BCIU) leads homeless children and youth initiatives” within the three identified schools. Each school Principal additionally expressed a need for qualified social workers in the schools to help combat the incidence of homelessness, attendance, and crisis within their buildings. Only 10<sup>th</sup> & Penn ES provided homeless data from families that disclosed their status:

- SY 2017-2018: 58 students (year of Hurricane Irma and Maria)
- SY 2018-2019: 38 students (6.6%)
- SY 2019-2020: 25 students (6.2%)
- SY 2020-2021: 15 students (4.1%)

**Healthcare:** Individual school level health data in the Southwest area of the city was not available in time for the application. The Berks Community Health Center (BCHC), a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), offers district wide health services to include dental care. Over the summer, the BCHC provides physicals at no cost for the students enrolled in the three target schools.

**Food Insecurity:** Communities In Schools of Eastern PA organized and assists with operation of a basic necessities closet/pantry within one of the schools. CISEPA and the school will need a bigger space to expand this effort to accommodate the great need. This initiative is written into the FSCS grant request budget. There are additional pantries within the service area but access is a challenge due to lack of consistency (time of day/week that the pantry is open), in addition to limited transportation to and from these available services. CISEPA plans to coordinate a pantry schedule that will be distributed to families in English and Spanish to ensure that each of the three target schools has a pantry available (Pantry Day). CISEPA will also initiate a “Backpack buddies” program that will provide

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food for breakfast and lunch over the weekend. 10th & Penn elementary school has also recently started a community garden. Data and stats on pounds of food obtained from the community garden and how the harvest was distributed was not available at the time of this application. Helping Harvest Food Bank and United Way Berks County will assist CISEPA and the BOSS Consortium with data/stats on food access in the Southwest area of the city. This information was also not available at the time of application but will be collected and shared in Year 1 of the grant period of performance.

**Mental Health:** The Southwest area of Reading experiences waiting lists for mental health services due to the extreme and well documented lack of child and adolescent psychiatrists, psychologists and qualified therapists available throughout the city of Reading. There is an increased need for these services and supports and there are extremely limited access points for the services that do exist. Additionally, families are not aware of the services and supports that are available within the city. In the April 2021 meeting with the individual school Principals, it was evident that even the Principals and other school staff were not aware of existing mental health services and supports. Unfortunately, most of the mental health services available throughout the city that do exist are poor quality, disjointed and disconnected and tend to operate in silos. Throughout the Reading School District, Caron Treatment Center (Caron) provides an evidence-based Student Assistance Program (SAP) for all students referred within the RSD. Caron is currently at capacity filling the need for these services within the RSD and other area school districts. CISEPA and RSD will assess the mental health landscape through the utilization of SHAPE assessment tools and other assessment tools during Year One of the grant period of performance. Ongoing, a widespread coordination of services and supports will be necessary. CISEPA will deliver

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evidence-based training that focuses on mental health challenges for teachers and staff, but more must be done.

**Substance Abuse:** Awareness, services and supports are identified as a need throughout the city of Reading to include alcohol, illegal drugs (Cocaine and Marijuana are most prevalent, “K-2”/ other synthetic marijuana products and “huffing” are prevalent with Reading children and youth), and vaping/nicotine dependence. Caron provides programming, services and supports for substance use within the RSD. There is an extreme need for these services and supports in Southwest Middle School and in the Southwest Reading community. Data to inform strategic planning are needed to identify gaps in service, assess the service landscape and capacities of agencies to provide services and supports in this focus area, and coordinate additional services and supports for our three target school immediate areas. Berks Council On Chemical Abuse (COCA) is an option for delivery of these services.

**School Safety:** As part of our planned Year One Needs Assessment, CISEPA will gather additional and current safety concerns from school staff, students, parents and the immediate surrounding community. Results from a Parent Survey conducted in the three target schools to assess school climate and safety was collected in the school year 2021-2022. Tyson-Schoener did not provide the survey results in time for this application. Southwest Middle School and 10th & Penn Elementary were able to perform the survey and provide the following themed responses:

- Students do not feel safe going to and from school
- Students do not feel safe at school (2 survey questions solicited this information)

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- The walking route to school is unsafe and can make it challenging to get students to the school each day.

One comment provided within the survey stated that “some children in the service area do have access to district transportation, but the district does not have enough people to drive the buses. If there were more place-based services and programming, we would not be limited by the lack of transportation”.

**Parent Engagement:** Both Tyson Schoener ES and Southwest MS have a Parent Outreach Assistant in place. 10th and Penn elementary school does not have a Parent Outreach Assistant. This position assists with coordination, planning and outreach for parent and community engagement events. This position is also responsible for tracking the number of events and how many persons attended/participated. Due to COVID and little to no community engagement events happening throughout the district, this data was unavailable at the time of application.

Results from the Parent Survey reported the following: 10th & Penn ES and Southwest Middle School had similar results, with parents reporting that “Parent activities are not scheduled at a time when many parents can attend and family responsibilities can make it challenging to get students to school each day”. Tyson-Schoener ES, referenced from their School Improvement Plan, identified “implementing evidence-based strategies to engage families to support learning” as a challenge.

There is a Parent/Community Engagement Committee already operating within the district that focuses on this. The Berks County Intermediate Unit (BCIU) coordinates and hosts these meetings and forums. The BCIU also runs meetings for Berks Youth Engagement and Homelessness. The focus of both groups is to educate parents and

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schools on the McKinney Vento Act. The BCIU is an excellent resource and BOSS consortium partner that CISEPA will engage more fully in Year 1 of the grant period of performance.

**Academic:** Using the Future Ready PA Index for 2020-2021 School Year, citing PA State Assessment Scores (PSSA’s) the below Table X compares each of the three identified schools performance with the overall State of PA student performance in English Language Arts, Math, Science.

**TABLE 3: PSSA Test Scores (SY 2021) Comparison**

	State of PA	Tyson-Schoener ES	10 <sup>th</sup> & Penn ES	Southwest MS
<b>English Language Arts- Proficient or advanced</b>	55%	24.3%	12.5%	17.6%
<b>Mathematics- Proficient or advanced</b>	37.3%	12.3%	3.2%	1.7%
<b>Science-Proficient or advanced</b>	63.7%	34.6%	34.4%	10%

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<b>Reading at grade level by 3rd Grade</b>	58.3%	26.7%	9.4%	N/A
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It is important to note the following:

- Mathematics for 7th Grade Level was assessed at Southwest MS and was reported at only 4.3% for proficient/advanced.
- An established priority of the Southwest Middle School School Improvement Plan is to add EL structures and supports to general education classrooms. There is a noted “lack of EL support for general education teachers.”
- As per the Tyson-Schoener School Improvement Plan, English Learners (EL) “miss the targets by more than half in science, ELA and math”. Tyson Schoener Elementary School does not currently provide special services in math for EL students.
- Possible reasons for the individual schools’ poor performance in all areas were provided by Principal statements from the Meeting with Principals performed in April of 2021. These statements included “Increased number of ESL students and an increased number of students with an IEP”.

**Attendance:** Using the Future Ready PA Index for 2020-2021 School Year, Attendance data was collected at each of the three target schools:

- **10th & Penn ES:** Regular Attendance is 83.1% compared to 85.8% statewide average.
- **Tyson Schoener ES:** Regular Attendance is 78.7% compared to 85.8% statewide

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average. Per School Tyson Schoener ES Improvement Plan, “Although attendance overall met performance standards, students with disabilities did not meet the statewide goal.”

- **Southwest Middle School:** Regular Attendance is 76.1% compared to 85.8% statewide average.

**Transiency:** Transiency is the condition where a person (transient) or family only lives or works in one place for a short time. Research documents that transient students who change schools frequently often suffer from low academic achievement. Data suggest that the higher the rate of mobility the lower the academic test scores, leading one to believe learning is occurring at a faster rate for those students who have remained in a stable educational environment. The targeted schools located in Reading’s Southwest neighborhood are severely affected by transiency or student mobility. Poor economic conditions and forced transfers for children whose families move during the school year are the main reasons for a high transiency rate in the schools. The challenges for 10th & Penn Elementary School, Tyson-Schoener Elementary School and Southwest Middle School who each have a high rate of transiency and therefore student mobility include:

- Poor Attendance Rates
- Lack of Parent Involvement and School Contribution
- Lack of Community Cohesiveness (making it difficult to influence a culture for education).
- Loss of Consistency in Educational Impact (ex. learning curve from having familiar environment, teachers, methods and tools)

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Most of the above factors affect total school performance on achieving AYP (Annual Yearly Progress) standards. (Studies In Educational Evaluation, 2004)

**Transiency-school level data for school year 2018-19:** For both Tyson-Schoener Elementary School and Southwest Middle School, no data was provided for Transiency except for principal input that Transiency/Student Mobility is a barrier at the school level.

Data was received from 10<sup>th</sup> & Penn Elementary School and is described below:

- In 2018-2019, 10th & Penn enrolled 574 students at the start of the school year. By May 2019, 154 students transferred out of the school and 127 transferred in. The transiency rate was calculated @ 281 students out of the total initial enrollment= 48.9%. Total number of students at the end of the 2018-19 school year = 548.
- In 2019-2020, 10th & Penn enrolled 404 students at the start of the school year. By February 2020, 69 students transferred out of the school and 91 transferred in. The transiency rate was calculated @ 160 students out of the total initial enrollment= 39.6%. The transiency count and associated rate was unable to be captured after February, 2020 due to COVID and associated school shutdown.

CISEPA will ensure that these counts are again in place and plans to utilize current transiency percentages (once assessed) to set a baseline measure and then in subsequent years, establish positive (% increase) outcomes measures in each year (2-5). This data will continue to be collected and assessed throughout the period of performance.

**Reported Incidents, Discipline Referrals and Student Assistance Program (SAP)**

**referrals school level data for school year 2018-19:** For both Tyson-Schoener Elementary School and 10th & Penn Elementary School, no data was provided for

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Reported Incidents, Discipline Referrals and Student Assistance Program (SAP) referrals.

Data was received from Southwest Middle School (SWMS) and is described below:

**School Discipline:** SWMS has a School Improvement Plan that identifies School Discipline as a critical focus. In SWMS, from September to March of the 2019-2020 school year, there were a total of 688 referrals with disciplinary actions. A total of 135 students were given suspensions based on their actions. SWMS averaged 1.5 suspensions per day after 90 days of being in school, with an additional 56 students receiving in school suspension (ISS). The grade level breakdown for ISS at SWMS: Grade 5= 22, Grade 6=23, Grade 7= 55, Grade 8= 38.

### **Reported Incidents**

- In School Year 2018-19, there were 107 incidents
- In School Year 2019-20 incidents increased to 529 ( given the shorter in person school time due to school closures in March of 2020, this is extremely significant.

### **Students referred to and participating in SAP**

- In School Year 2018-19, there were 59 SWMS students referred to SAP supports and 79 SWMS students participated in SAP groups
- In School Year 2019-20 the number of student referred to SAP increased significantly to 94 students, 158 SWMS students participated in SAP groups

**Students with Disabilities:** Data was collected on the percentage of Students with Disabilities in our three target schools:Tyson-Schoener Elementary (24.2%), 10th & Penn Elementary (19.6%) and Southwest Middle School (32.5%). As compared to the nation, in 2017–18, the number of students ages 3–21 who received special education services under

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the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was 7.0 million, or 14 % of all public school students.

**Early Childhood Education (ECE):** Both Tyson-Schoener and 10<sup>th</sup> & Penn elementary schools offer head start and Pre-K Counts programs. But opportunities and access to affordable, safe day care, that employees qualified ECE staff, are limited in this community. There are only three PA STAR rated childcare centers within the Reading School District service area.

The number of day care opportunities that are Keystone STAR rated within 1 mile varies within each school’s service area (Please see **Table 4** below).

**Table 4: Available Childcare Options Within Targeted Service Area**

	<b># of Childcare programs</b>	<b># of Early Intervention programs</b>	<b># of Home Visiting programs</b>	<b># of Early Head Start programs</b>
<b>Tyson Schoener ES</b>	12	0	2	0
<b>10<sup>th</sup> &amp; Penn ES</b>	20	0	2	0
<b>Southwest MS</b>	14	0	2	0

In addition to the limited options available in the targeted service area, many childcare programs in the Reading community have either closed and not reopened due to COVID or have opened with a limited capacity due to the extreme qualified ECE shortage that Reading is experiencing. Additionally, most childcare options that are available in

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Reading do not participate in a subsidized child care program which excludes our underserved target population and community from utilizing these services.

**Health:** The prevalence of and lack of services and supports to address Mental Health is a huge concern in Reading, PA and in every community across the nation. This is evident in the underserved area of Southwest Reading where qualified adolescent and child psychologists, counselors and therapists are in short supply and in high demand.

Reading Behavioral Health, Pennsylvania Counseling Services, and Commonwealth Clinical Group are all located within the Southwest Reading area and each of these require Medicare or private health insurance. Caron Treatment Center provides a student assistance program (SAP) and services and Safe Berks (focus on Domestic Violence) also offers small group activities at all three schools.

To combat the gap in educational attainment across the RSD, Alvernia University's Holleran Center provides tutoring and homework help to targeted, low achieving schools. This program coordinates college students who are engaged in service learning and community service to serve as mentors and tutors for children attending the neediest schools in the district. This program is active at Tyson-Schoener Elementary School and at Southwest Middle School. 10th & Penn Elementary School has not yet received these tutoring services and educational supports.

Further assessment of students, families, and community residents will be performed in Year 1 of the FSCS grant period of performance. In sum of our preliminary needs assessment produced in preparation for this project, poor academic performance, physical health, mental/behavioral health, community engagement and other data provided as described demonstrate the need in our three target school's student, family and

community. In addition to the high poverty and extreme poverty rates, our target schools' high mobility and chronic absence rates are noteworthy.

## **2. QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN**

In Year 1 of the grant period of performance, we will complete our Needs Assessment, invite community service providers across the city to join the BOSS Consortium, and finalize implementation plans. We will additionally utilize the most current data on individual school performance to set benchmarks to measure against. We will also prepare space for, hire, train and place FSCS school staff to be in place at the start of school year 2023-2024. We will fully understand the measurement that will be accomplished in the subsequent years of the grant as we work toward successful outcomes, accomplish objectives and further the goals of the FSCS grant program. The project goals and objectives are set but the anticipated measurable outcomes will be determined in full after the Needs Assessment and full planning is accomplished in Year 1 of the CISEPA-RSD FSCS Project. Goals, Objectives and Outcomes that are able to be planned at the time of application include the following:

### **Goal 1: Students start school ready to learn**

#### **Objectives and Outcomes:**

- # of students prepared for kindergarten will increase as measured by RSD K Readiness Assessments
- Increase the # of children meeting early childhood benchmarks
- Increase the # of children attending early childhood programs

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- Increase the # of students who are identified with physical and behavioral health needs
- Increase the # of students who are connected to physical and behavioral health services

**Goal 2: Students are positively and meaningfully engaged in school**

**Objectives and Outcomes**

- # of students identified as chronically absent will decrease by 25%
- # of students engaged in high quality out of school time programs.
- Increase % of students reporting positive experiences with school as measured by CISEPA's Engagement Survey

**Goal 3: Students are succeeding academically**

**Objectives and Outcomes**

- Increase # of students reading at grade level
- Increase # of students attending school regularly
- Increase # of student' reading at grade level
- Increase # of students performing math at grade level

**Goal 4: Students are healthy physically, socially and emotionally**

**Objectives and Outcomes**

- Decrease # of students with behavioral incidences or OSS
- Increase # of students connected to and accessing health services

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- Increase # of students demonstrating a strong social emotional skills
- Increase # of students who report feeling safe at school

**Goal 5: Families are positively engaged with their children’s education**

**Objectives and Outcomes**

- Increase # of family engagement events offered at each school
- Increase # parents attend family engagement events

**Goal 6: Schools are positively engaged with families in the surrounding community**

**Objectives and Outcomes**

- Increase # of parents per year that report that the school staff and teachers regularly communicate about their child’s progress and concerns
- Increase # of parents reporting their school is a community resource
- Increase the # of parents who report they can identify who to contact at school for various needs.

The Four Pillars of Community Schools (Integrated Student Supports, Expanded and Enriched Learning Time and Opportunities, Active Family and Community Engagement, and Collaborative Leadership and Practices) are present in this project. They include parents, students, teachers, principals, and community partners working together to build a culture of professional learning, collective trust, and shared responsibility using strategies such as site-based leadership teams and teacher learning communities. To enable Reading to build flourishing education opportunities for all its young people based on the four pillars concept, the

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community must respond to an array of connected challenges: graduation rates that are below the state average; rates of teacher and student turnover that are higher than average; a significant percentage of immigrant students and families still lacking English literacy; rising poverty and diminished trust in many school and community leaders; and an entire population reeling from the compounded impacts of Covid.

In addition to Reading School District schools, local groups throughout the Reading community are taking action in a variety of ways to address these challenges: new family engagement and pre-K programs, non-profit initiatives focused on reading and online learning, and internships and scholarships. But the reality is many of these efforts still do not reach enough young people and families. New actions must be taken to meet the community's shared aspirations for education.

As Reading's fragmented communities attempt to bridge their divides and name education as a shared purpose, the Full-Service Community Schools initiative and associated momentum will accelerate action and include everyone in the community. The Full Service Community Schools Project partners, key stakeholders, and community members share the vision that ALL young people and families will have equal access to the education and resources that equip them to reach their goals in school, after graduation, at work, and as contributors to their community.

CISEPA and RSD, along with our established consortium of community service providers, and with the voice of the community, will utilize Year 1 of the grant to further plan and more extensively develop an intentional, robust and sustainable Community Schools (CS) network in Reading that is explicitly tailored to the needs of the underserved students and community to benefit from this project. The CS model that will be implemented will leverage

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the evidence-based and proven success of our current national Communities In Schools model.

Throughout the five-year period of performance CISEPA will lead the coordination and full implementation of project activities with three identified RSD schools located on the Southwest side of the City of Reading; 10<sup>th</sup> and Penn Elementary, Tyson Schoener Elementary, and Southwest Middle School. We will also leverage our existing Communities In Schools evidence-based Integrated Student Supports initiatives already located in the Reading School District to glean positive results and solve issues that arise. We will continuously evaluate and reinform the project and activities using evaluation techniques described in the Evaluation section.

With the public school as the epicenter, our community schools will bring together multiple partners to offer a range of support and opportunities to children and youth, their families, and the broader community. As momentum builds, and the community is not only informed but actually sees the CS initiative in action, we will continue to utilize the Needs Assessment and identify goals to increase services and supports within the Southwest side of Reading. In addition to engaging instruction and preparing students for college and/or career, the CISEPA full-service community schools will also provide health and social support, early childhood development, and family and community engagement services based on the identified needs of the population served. **Table 5** below shows our proposed service pipeline.

<b>Table 5: CISEPA Full-Service Community Schools Project</b>				
<b>Educational Pipeline</b>				
Early Childhood Birth – Age 4	Elementary School Grades K	Middle School Grades 6-8	High School	Post-Secondary College and

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	- 5			Career
YMCA of Reading Opportunity House: Second Street Learning Center Berks County Intermediate Unit (BCIU)	10 <sup>th</sup> & Penn Elementary School  Tyson-Schoener Elementary	Southwest Middle School	Reading High School	Reading Area Community College (RACC)  Alvernia University (AU)  Berks Career and Technical Center

CISEPA, in joint collaboration with the RSD, and in tandem with community organizations and service providers, has embarked on a strategic plan to support the development of a robust CS system for Reading children and youth. Based on research and best practice, work being done across the country to expand opportunities, and findings from local and regional studies, CISPEA’s own extensive network of CSs across the Lehigh Valley, CISEPA has identified the following activities that will lead to positive outcomes for students and community in southwest Reading:

**Project Activities:**

**1. Continue to expand a network/coalition of providers and community leaders**

**to support the CS system and evidence based programming.** A systems approach will help to expand and strengthen in school, afterschool and summer programming, improve educational program quality, enable leaders to jointly advocate for needed resources, encourage cross-program collaboration and better inform and engage local and state policymakers.

**2. Inform and empower families and youth to select and participate in programs that meet their interests and needs.** It is not enough for programs to exist. Families and youth also must be able to access them and be able to make good decisions about which programs are a good fit. This starts with providing a comprehensive catalog of program options, in both English and Spanish, so families and teens have one place to learn about the many options available to them. It also requires identifying opportunities to promote programming and share the new catalog. This effort involves working with the individual schools and city agencies to promote the value of these programs to families, sharing information about existing programs with families, surveying families and teens to better understand their interests and needs, and developing additional programs to meet them. It will also include providing educational opportunities for parents to build their leadership capacity and ability to demand high-quality options.

**3. Further plan, build and implement a comprehensive CS model at the 2 elementary schools and 1 middle school identified given the unique needs of this community.** These schools will become “proof points” to build upon. Seeing a high-quality, comprehensive program in action will build the public support and experience needed to grow a larger and a sustainable CS system. We will first start our system building work by implementing CS in three schools. As results take root we will then

expand to serve more schools and more students and families. The identified schools already have several programs that, with collaborative synergies, will support the development of a robust, proof-point program.

**4. We will work with state and local officials to secure additional and ongoing support and resources for more and better educational opportunities and options for children and youth in the RSD.** Given the RSD's high rates of poverty, number of English learners, number of students receiving special education services, and low percentage of student achievement, the RSD is a good candidate for special consideration with state policy makers. By engaging and educating state legislators and other state policy makers we will intensely advocate for additional funding. We will also utilize the established United Way of Berks funding streams and leverage our partnership with United Way Berks, Berks County Community Foundation, Wyomissing Foundation, County and City officials, and other funding and support avenues. Additionally, we will strengthen and leverage our PA Statewide Afterschool Network in developing a state advocacy strategy.

#### **Overview of Implementation Timeline**

Upon award, CISEPA and RSD will finalize our MOU (see preliminary MOU attached). We will also plan and promote a minimum of five focus groups to solicit thoughts, opinions and feedback of parents, students, community members, school staff/faculty, and school and district leadership in order to inform our updated and thorough Community Needs Assessment. At least two of the focus group sessions will occur in this timeframe. Our internal evaluator will design and deliver the focus groups, surveys, and will also perform research to collect data from public websites/reports and from each school (specific/shared data outlined in the MOU). This will not only inform our Needs

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Assessment but will also set baselines from which to measure impact.

In Year One, the Needs Assessment will be completed and shared with the Department of Education. Using the Needs Assessment, we will continue to plan the details of the roles each partner will assume and how each consortium member will assist in coordinating and providing the pipeline services. We will also advertise all positions to be filled, hire, onboard and orient the new Community School staff identified in this proposal. Every effort will be made to hire from the same community served.

With the Start of SY 2023-24, all personnel will be in place and all community partners will start activities as described both within the identified schools and within the surrounding community. CISEPA and RSD will continue to build strong and trusting relationships with students, school faculty and staff, parents, community residents, community leaders, and community agencies. We anticipate that at least 10 more service agencies will be added to the consortium during the first year (planning year) of the grant period of performance, with additional service providers and community stakeholders joining throughout years two-five that will be invited based on the Needs Assessment where gaps are determined and solutions are planned.

Over the remaining period of performance (Years 2-5), CIS of Eastern PA-Reading School District Full-Service Community Schools Project will target three high need public schools located in Reading's Southwest neighborhood. Our project will bring on Tyson Schoener and 10th & Penn Elementary schools as well as Southwest Middle school as new CSs in our network. We will plan and implement both new and expanded services and supports based on community need and community voice. We will ensure effective coordination through an increase in capacity in both staffing and infrastructure at all three

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schools to support service delivery. In addition, we will integrate critical services such as evidence-based trauma informed behavioral health services, evidence-based Integrated Student supports, student case management to reduce chronic absenteeism, Positive Youth Development programming to improve student engagement, reduce chronic absenteeism and disciplinary referrals, and initiatives to build parent leadership and voice.

**Training/Professional Development:** As evidenced by existing community schools within our network, dedicated community school staffing is vital to creating effective processes for identifying students in need of interventions, connecting at-risk students with the right interventions and right dosage of interventions, and monitoring student outcomes to assess the effectiveness of these interventions. Within our network of schools, out of school time opportunities are used to both provide critical skill building opportunities and act as motivation to improve school attendance and behavior, including pro-social behavior and interpersonal dynamics. A mixture of at-risk students and students with positive attendance and behavior is combined in after school programs to provide opportunities for positive peer modeling.

Health services, family engagement, positive youth development (through before/after school programs), summer learning and kindergarten readiness are critical strategies to school success. As noted in the 2017 Children's Health Fund literature review, Health Barriers to Learning: The Prevalence and Educational Consequences in Disadvantaged Children, if a child cannot see the writing on the board or the page, or struggles to control his asthma or is in chronic pain due to tooth decay, his focus on learning and school attendance will suffer. Similarly, research shows us that students who do not feel positively engaged in school suffer from lower academic achievement, school

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attendance and higher behavior incidents. Conversely, students who participate in high quality afterschool programs demonstrate higher school attendance, fewer behavioral incidents and improved academic performance. In our CS model, we connect students with attendance concerns to fun, engaging before or after school programs to increase their sense of school attachment, self-worth and exposure to a kind, caring adult mentor.

An effective transition process and high-quality support services within that process are essential for a child to successfully transition. Transition from daycare and home to preschool to kindergarten, transition from elementary to middle school, high school and beyond- are stressors and are often traumatic for children and youth. An effective transition plan is built on effective strategies, existing evidence based practices, and teacher training to create needed resources and transition plans at each level. These methods and processes enable administrators, teachers and service providers to provide high-quality transition services for children and youth moving into, through, and out of education levels.

Our CSCs are equipped to turn ideas into action for the benefit of their students and families. One example of this is the transition process between a CISEPA elementary school in the Allentown School District that feeds into a CISEPA Allentown middle school. Within these two schools, CSCs have helped to develop a coordinated, seamless transition process with supports that continues to make a greater impact each year. Currently, sixth grade guidance counselors, the CSC and former elementary school students return to their former elementary school in the spring of each school year. Fifth graders get a chance to ask questions and get answers from older students they relate to, and trust. Some 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms have set up Pen Pals with middle school students so that incoming sixth graders already feel like they are part of the school community. Rising

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sixth graders are also recruited from elementary school to participate in summer programs to enable them to be more familiar with their new school. These efforts have been promising and the middle school has a welcoming environment and better outcomes than any other middle school in the Allentown School District. These examples of success that were initiated by a CSC and proved to successfully support our students in pilot and in implementation will be utilized and promoted in the RSD Community Schools.

**Additional services** selected for inclusion in this application were chosen based on their evidence of promising practice or after our own work and experience in both the Allentown Community School network and the Reading School District Community School network. This section presents support for School-Based Behavioral Health Services, Positive Youth Development programs, Integrated Student Supports, and strategies to increase Parent Leadership and Voice that have been found to improve the following areas: school attendance, academic achievement, behavior, social-emotional learning, and family engagement. Our plan adds services to build a comprehensive full-service community school model that ensures that students enter kindergarten ready to learn; are achieving academically; and are safe, healthy and supported by engaged families.

**Mobility/Transiency:** A growing body of research suggests student mobility may be a key indicator to identify vulnerable students and keep them on a path to academic achievement. Even one move increases a student's risk of not graduating or getting delayed in graduating. Several studies have found that student mobility, especially multiple moves, are associated with engaging less in class, having poorer grades in reading and math, and are at higher risk of dropping out in high school. Research has determined that transferring students are nearly three months behind in reading and math learning. Mobility can be

especially hard on children in early grades when they learn “foundational skills.”

(Friedman-Krauss, 2015).

**Absenteeism:** A report by the Department of Education identifies chronic absenteeism as a hidden educational crisis. Students who are chronically absent are at serious risk of falling behind in school. RSD principals, teachers and administrators report that they feel unequipped to address the reasons why children are missing school. Attendance Works’ definition of students at-risk of chronic absence is students missing 5-9% of the school year, or 9-17 days. When added to chronic absence, this number is significant.

**Health:** The target community/population also has significant health disparities and conditions to include obesity, diabetes, and poor oral health: “The high diabetic population of Berks County makes them predisposed to gum disease...limited knowledge, access to care and preventive services, creates a public health crisis” (Chief Dental Officer, BCHC).

Multiple Berks Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) reports confirm a dental health crisis and state that in the City of Reading 43% of adults did not receive dental care in 2012. The 2019 CHNA reports that the dental crisis remains: over 70% of those living in Berks County do not have dental insurance. Lack of insurance, lack of education and information on signs and symptoms, poor nutrition (due to food desert and food access), awareness and education on the the importance of health (specifically for the high number of residents afflicted with with diabetes), lack of transportation, lack of desperately needed translation services, and the cost of copays and services are identified as the primary barriers to accessing care.

**Early Childhood Education (ECE):** To ensure quality, accessible and appropriate ECE, and to contribute to the service pipeline, the Reading YMCA and Opportunity

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House/Second Street Learning Center will play an integral role in the FSCS project. Both of these non-profit agencies are BOSS Consortium partners and offer quality, culturally appropriate programs in Early Education. The Reading YMCA Offers: Pre K Counts, Reading School Age-Before and After School Care, Reading Early Learning Center (Infant through Pre-k Childcare), and Reading School's Out Program- Half and Full Day Care.

Opportunity House initiated and physically built the Second Street Learning Center which opened in 1996 to give homeless mothers an opportunity to participate in life skill classes offered at their shelter. It quickly became the answer to working parents in the Reading area. A combination of an increased need for these services and support from the community allowed the Learning Center to thrive. In 2011 seven more classrooms and the Technology Center (an environmentally friendly building with LEED Gold Certification from the U.S. Green Building Council) were added. The Second Street Learning Center offers subsidized childcare for over 150 families in Reading. Programs serve more than 350 children annually, aged 6 weeks to 13 years. 98% of the children Opportunity House serves come from families at or below the poverty level. The Second Street Learning Center's commitment to providing high quality childcare and education to every child is apparent with its Level 4 STAR rating from the Keystone Stars program, the highest rated accreditation possible. The Center provides quality educational programs, daycare, meals, snacks, transportation to and from all local school districts, before and after school services to include tutoring, referral services for children with challenges (trauma, social-emotional, learning delays, etc.), early intervention supports, and additional programming through community partnerships. In Spring of 2022, the Second Street Learning Center was selected as a SILVER champion winner for the Pennsylvania Equity in Early Childhood

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Education Awards by The Pennsylvania Key, an organization that supports Pennsylvania's Office of Child Development & Early Learning. This award is given to organizations whose work around equity is a reflection on the impact on the families and children served in our community.

Our **Evidence-Based School Based Behavioral Health** services are grounded in elements of trauma informed systems supported by research and organizations such as the National Center for Safe and Supportive Learning Environments (NCCSLE), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Massachusetts Advocates for Children, Harvard Law School, and the National Traumatic Stress Network.

Caron Treatment Center (Caron), an international leader in drug and alcohol and mental health education and treatment, is locally based in Berks County and provides evidence-based supports, services and programs within the Reading School District. Caron was founded in Berks County in 1947. Caron partners with schools, families, communities and other organizations to provide customizable prevention programs for drugs, alcohol and nicotine. Caron has expanded its programs, services and supports to help Reading students reach their potential and equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to overcome life's obstacles in a healthy, substance-free way. Programs and services are offered in person or through virtual platforms.

Caron provides /administers behavioral health assessments through the Student Assistance Program (SAP) for students in grades five through twelve. During one-on-one meetings, Caron SAP Specialists interview students to identify substance use related problems, mental health issues, and other factors that could negatively affect a young person's life. Upon completing the comprehensive assessment, specialists make

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recommendations and help students implement them. Recommendations are confidential and are only shared with the guardian of the student and the school's SAP Core Team.

Participation is voluntary and parents choose whether their children will participate.

Often, more intervention is recommended as a result of an SAP assessment. Caron provides Teen Intervene which involves two to three individual sessions designed to educate teens on their current behaviors and motivate them to pursue positive change. Teen Intervene is a time-efficient, evidence-based program for youth that are suspected of having mild to moderate problems with alcohol or substance abuse. The Teen Intervene Program integrates stages of change theory, motivational interviewing, and cognitive behavioral therapy to help teens reduce, and ultimately eliminate substance abuse.

CISEPA plans to add additional behavioral health services at all three Southwest Reading schools after a thorough needs and gaps assessment is performed. We will utilize The School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation (SHAPE) system and the School Mental Health Quality Assessment (SMH-QA). SHAPE is a public-access, web-based platform that offers schools, districts, and states a workspace and targeted resources to support school mental health quality improvement. SHAPE houses the National School Mental Health Profile and the SMH-QA. These measures are designed for team completion at the school or district level to document the school mental health system components, assess the comprehensiveness of a SMH system, prioritize quality improvement efforts and track improvement over time.

CISEPA and the Reading School District will use SHAPE to:

- Evaluate strengths and identify areas of growth in each school using the School Mental Health Quality Assessment

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- Document mental health services across tiers of support
- Engage each school's mental health team in meaningful, data-driven, strategic quality improvement
- Guide school mental health quality improvement efforts by using SHAPE's robust resource center and quality guides.

We will also use the State School Mental Health Profile to assess several school mental health indicators within our schools and within the district. Through this process-RSD, individual schools, the community, CISEPA and the BOSS consortium will learn more about the quality of each school's mental health services and supports. **Evidence-Based Integrated Student Supports (ISS)** is a school-based approach to promoting students' academic success by developing or securing and coordinating supports that target academic and non-academic barriers to achievement. As noted in the ChildTrends 2014 summary of the research and evidence base behind ISS, this intervention has the potential to help a range of disadvantaged, marginalized and/or struggling students. These resources range from traditional tutoring and mentoring to provision of a broader set of supports, such as linking students to physical and mental health care and connecting their families to parent education, family counseling, food banks, or employment assistance. While individual programs vary somewhat in the ways they provide integrated student supports, all ISS providers employ common components (needs assessment, integration within schools, community partnerships, coordinated supports, and data tracking); all provide wrap-around supports to improve students' academic achievement and educational attainment; and all embrace the premise that academic outcomes are a result of both academic and non-academic factors.

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While ISS programs take many forms, integration is key to the model—both integration of supports to meet individual students’ needs and integration of the ISS program into the life of a school. CISEPA has been collaborating with Allentown CS network consortium members to provide ISS throughout Lehigh Valley schools for over a decade. In the CISEPA ISS model to be implemented within the Reading School District, the Community School Coordinator, CISEPA Case Manager, and partners will deliver interventions and supports to school, students, and families through the evidence-based and well documented Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) model. MTSS is an educational framework designed to ensure successful educational outcomes for ALL students. When districts and schools are effectively utilizing MTSS, multiple tiers of standards-aligned instruction and intervention can increase the academic, behavioral, emotional, and life skills of students. Research and literature indicate that a number of critical elements are associated with an MTSS that yields positive outcomes for students. These elements can be grouped or categorized into six domains: Multiple Tiers of Support, the Problem-Solving Process, Data/Evaluation, Leadership, Capacity Building/Infrastructure and Communication and Collaboration. Providing evidence-based instruction, intervention, and support matched to the diverse needs of all students is paramount to a system of supports.

While the critical elements of an MTSS should be present in every school, the organization and nature of the elements will be different for each of our CSs, as they will be based on the unique resources, barriers, and student population. Just as different students require various levels of tiered instruction and intervention to reach grade level expectations, different students and families require supplemental and/or intensive district supports. The inter-relationship among the six critical domains is optimized when school

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and district leaders share responsibility for MTSS implementation to improve student outcomes and reach school and district improvement goals. The goal of MTSS is to intervene as early as possible so students can catch up with their peers. It screens all students and aims to address academic and behavior challenges. Within the RSD CSs-this framework will be used to give targeted support to students on three different tiers.

Tier I supports induce school-wide culture change and achieve school-wide goals. These opportunities are available to the entire student population and sometimes families. (Tier I example: Clothing drive, family engagement night, every day attendance campaign). In the CISEPA Full-Service Community Schools project, the RSD and the community provides or initiates most Tier I supports, while CISEPA focuses on Tiers II and III. Tier II supports empower small groups of at-risk students who share a common need (Tier II example: tutoring, grief counseling group). Tier III supports are individualized, case-managed supports directed to a small population of referred students within the school. Working with individual students' parents and teachers, the Case Manager completes a comprehensive student support plan for each student receiving Tier III supports. CISEPA will continuously monitor student and school progress and adjust supports to optimize results.

Through ISS, CISEPA Case Managers will provide support for students' transition from elementary school to middle school. At 10th & Penn and at Tyson-Schoener, CIS will conduct small group meetings with students receiving case managed services to provide an opportunity for a face to face meeting as well as an attempt to answer any questions or concerns they or their parents may have about transitioning to middle school. In Southwest Middle School, CIS will assist with the planning, coordination and

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transportation arrangements for students to participate in large group field trips to the high school. CIS will host meet the teacher nights, “locker nights,” special tours and other opportunities to bring students and their families to the middle school and to the High School during off hours to help reduce anxiety about the next grade level. Additional outreach efforts will be made to 5<sup>th</sup> graders to encourage participation in summer programming to assist in the ease of transitioning from elementary to middle school.

**Positive Youth Development Programs** Effective Positive Youth Development (PYD) programs considerably improve multiple youth outcomes (Catalano, R. F., Berglund, L. M., Ryan, J. A. M., Lonczak, H. S., & Hawkins, J. D. (2002) such as attendance and participation, increased willingness to attend and participate at school, positive social behaviors, grades, test scores and reductions in problem behaviors. In addition, 3-6 pm is the peak time for juvenile crime and victimization. After-school PYD programs provide students from high crime neighborhoods with a safe haven and positively affect prevention outcomes. An exploration by the Tufts University Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development showed that PYD was connected to the following outcomes: increased levels of school engagement; competence; confidence; connection; character; and caring/compassion.

CISEPA has already identified the following community agencies/service providers who are part of our BOSS Consortium at the time of this application. Roles and responsibilities are detailed within the preliminary partner MOU and are evidenced by our attached Letters of Support and/or Participation. The partner list includes the Reading School District as the LEA in addition to the following community service providers: Reading Science Center, Reading Public Museum, Reading YMCA, Reading Boys & Girls

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Club, Centro Hispano, Easterseals (Berks County Chapter), Berks Counseling, Community Services for Children Early Learning Resource Center 13 (CSC ELRC-13, United Way Berks, Caron Treatment Center, Berks Initiative For School Attendance, and Opportunity House/Second Street Learning Center.

All BOSS Consortium members will:

- Provide representation on the BOSS Consortium Community Leadership team
- Participate in forums or meetings in support of program quality, information exchange and continuous process improvement
- Provide office space for meetings when needed
- Employ and supervise their staff providing programming and support to our identified schools
- Support all federal FSCS Program grant requirements with respect to the selection of services to meet student, family, and community needs
- Promote the Community School model
- Assess needs and progress of school and community and participate in resource development efforts
- Assist in implementing programs that address the following priority areas:  
Kindergarten Readiness, Summer Learning, every day attendance, grade level reading proficiency, improved behavioral health, increased connection to health services, and family engagement.

BOSS Consortium members will also ensure accurate and timely completion of all reporting for the purposes of the Full-Service Community School grant funds, support the implementation of the school support plan complete with best practice strategies aligned

with the five-year goals of: decreasing the number of students with chronic absenteeism, decreasing the number of students with behavioral incidences, and increasing parent and family engagement in a way that increases their ability to support their child's learning.

### **Detailed Description of BOSS Consortium Members/Partners**

**Reading Science Center (RSC):** RSC exists to foster a love of Science through exciting and experiential STEM education for the Greater Reading community, especially our youth. RSC offers both formal and informal science education to provide exposure to students of all ages to the sciences. RSC promotes careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) through its programs and exhibit experiences. RSC compliments and augments efforts by school districts, government agencies, and other non-profit organizations by promoting STEM careers to youth, especially to those youth whose exposure to science is very limited in the Greater Reading community.

**Reading Olivet Boys & Girls Club:** Since 1898, Olivet Boys & Girls Club has been touching the lives of thousands of youth each year. Their programs reach to the area's young people most in need of help and provide them with a safe, fun and positive environment to thrive in. The Reading Club serves 3,000 youth annually. For most of the club's history, two club units operated in two neighborhoods within the city of Reading and expanded in the 1990s into several new areas of the city. The Club currently operates five clubhouses in the City of Reading. Their three core areas of programming promote Academic Success, Healthy Lifestyles, and Good Character and Citizenship. To reach and serve as many children and youth as possible, their programs and services are available during non-school hours and during the summer at free or greatly reduced costs.

- **Character and Leadership:** Members are expected to be an engaged citizen

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involved in the community, register to vote and model strong character.

- **For Children Ages 6-18:** Our programs address the region's most pressing and immediate youth issues of education support, afterschool programming and mentoring – all of which is provided by caring and knowledgeable staff.

**United Way Berks (UWBC)** helps people in need, addressing critical issues to make our community a better place for everyone. Their work is centered on raising and distributing funds to support a vital network of health and human services, with 4 focus areas:

- **Education:** early care and school readiness, school success and positive youth development
- **Financial stability:** stable housing, job skills and financial literacy
- **Health:** Optimal mental and physical health and intervention needs
- **Safety Net services:** supporting people in crisis

These focus areas are supported by many agency partnerships, many of which receive funding from the United Way to implement the five focus areas within the community.

**Salvation Army of Reading, PA:** The Salvation Army's goal is to serve the most people, meet the most needs, and do the most good. Programs include: Basic Needs assistance, including utilities assistance, emergency solutions grants, homelessness prevention, rapid rehousing (non-CoC), permanent supportive housing program, SHARE emergency assistance, and food distribution / collection. In addition, the Salvation Army of Reading has a 'Play and Learn' Center whose goal is to assure that all children are developmentally on track to be ready for Kindergarten; offered for parenting/caretaker education with children ages birth through 5 years old. Classes/groups are also offered on basic adult

computer literacy, prayer meetings, life skills and Christian workshops.

**Community Services for Children Early Learning Resource Center 13 (CSC ELRC-**

**13):**The Mission of CSC is to prepare young children and their families to succeed in learning and in life through innovative, comprehensive, leading-edge services. With programs in Head Start, pre-k counts, early learning resource centers and community initiatives, CSC is both an Early Childcare provider as well as a programmatic and resource hub for the communities it serves. As a recognized ELRC, CSC is a one-stop hub for ECE and childcare needs: a place where families can find high-quality ECE opportunities, apply for assistance to help with child care costs or access other resources that will set them on a path to success. Childcare providers can also receive information on improving program quality. Based on the values of excellence, inclusion, equity, integrity, and connection, CSC has the following programs and services: Head Start and Pre-K Counts, Early Head Start, Early Learning Resource Centers, Head Start Alumni Scholarship, STEM Resources, and Kindergarten Jumpstart Center.

**Opportunity House/Second Street Learning Center:** The Second Street Learning Center offers subsidized childcare for over 150 families in Reading. These programs serve more than 350 children annually, aged 6 weeks to 13 years. 98% of the children served come from families at or below the poverty level. The Center will provide transportation to and from each of the target schools for, before and after school services to include tutoring, referral services for children with challenges, early intervention supports, and additional programming through community partnerships.

**Berks Initiative for School Attendance (BISA)** In 2011, the Berks County

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Commissioners and judges convened a series of stakeholder meetings to gather input on the problem of truancy in Berks County schools. A Truancy Intervention Program was then formed which enabled schools, Magisterial District Judges (MDJs), parents, and community partners to refer a student to a more intensive intervention with the goal of improving attendance, decreasing truancy, and increasing graduation rates. In 2016, the initiative changed its name to the Berks Initiative for School Attendance (BISA) to reflect the goal of improving student attendance in all grades and decreasing absences for any reason. In partnership with Service Access and Management, Inc. (SAM), the Truancy Remediation Program was renamed the Advancing School Attendance Program (ASAP). BISA/ASAP is funded through a combination of state and local monies; the program has been a continued success and continues to receive special grant assistance.

**Easterseals of Eastern PA:** Easterseals has had a presence in the community since 1928. Easterseals Eastern PA annually provides services to over 3,600 children and adults in a seven-county region that encompasses Berks, Carbon, Lehigh, Monroe, Northampton, Pike and Schuylkill Counties. They serve children and adults with a wide-range of physical and cognitive disabilities, autism and other social, sensory and developmental delays, and their families. Easterseals provides many programs and services in the community including: Autism Diagnostic Clinic, Early intervention, outpatient therapy, specialty clinics, therapeutic groups, and community supports / habilitation which include resources on financial planning.

- **Autism Diagnostic Clinic:** using a telehealth model to serve residents of Berks, Carbon, Lehigh, Monroe, Northampton and Pike counties, Easterseals partners with children's hospitals and specialists for psychological and developmental diagnostics

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for children age 18 months to three years.

- **Early intervention:** early intervention services and screenings designed to promote child development while coaching parents. These EI services are offered for children from birth to age three, offering physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech and vision therapy and special instruction.
- **Outpatient Therapy Services:** At Easterseals' Center in Reading, PA they offer outpatient therapy for children and teens with a variety of illnesses, disabilities or other special needs. Onsite occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech language pathologists assist with a wide range of issues, disorders, and rehabilitation.

**Berks Counseling Center (BCC):** Berks Counseling Center has been providing services to the Berks County Community since 1977. Originally founded as Berks Youth Counseling Center, the organization has grown tremendously over time and dramatically expanded its target population and scope of services. BCC maintains its foundation as a licensed substance abuse treatment provider but over time has expanded its services to include mental health and co-occurring disorders treatment, housing, case management, community based programming , peer support, and , most recently, physical health and wellness services. With the addition of our DCO partners, SAM, Inc. and Threshold Rehabilitation Services this led to BCC becoming established as a Certified Community Behavioral Health Center and Integrated Community Wellness Center.

**Reading Public Museum:** Provides quality Out of School Time (OST) Programming in the areas of STEAM and field trip opportunities for 1st through 6th grade students enrolled in the three target schools and their families when applicable.

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**Reading YMCA:** The Reading YMCA offers the following programs in Early education:

- Reading YMCA Pre K Counts
- Reading School Age-Before and After School Care
- Reading Early Learning Center (Infant through Pre-k Childcare)
- Reading School's Out Program- Half Day and Full Day Care

The Reading YMCA will provide Positive Youth Development (PYD) enrichment opportunities particularly “Y on the FLY” programming at all three target schools weekly for pre-K through 6th grade students enrolled and additionally within the Southwest Reading neighborhood when applicable. Reading YMCA will also contribute to the advancement of Early Childhood Education efforts and planning and contribute to the FSCS pipeline (birth- age 4 and preK-8th grade).

**Centro Hispano:** Centro Hispano will provide “Opening Doors/Abriendo Puertas: Parental Engagement Program” at all three schools, each year of the grant. Centro Hispano is also uniquely qualified to address the needs of our traditionally underrepresented, Spanish speaking community members. Centro Hispano is a grassroots community organizing entity. Because of Centro Hispano’s authentic ability to engage with residents in the highest need communities through an asset-based approach that values residents as experts in their own lived experience and because of the years of missed communication efforts between white leaders and the minority, a prioritized effort is needed to support organizations who can effectively build several layers of bridges while also promoting cooperative progress. Based on previously noted research linking parent engagement to improved academic outcomes, we expect Centro Hispano to contribute toward improved

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academic achievement and educational gains.

**Caron Treatment Centers (Caron):** Caron is an international leader in drug and alcohol and mental health education and treatment and is locally based in Berks County. Caron provides evidence-based supports, services and programs within the Reading School District and partners with schools, families, communities and other organizations to provide customizable prevention programs for drugs, alcohol and nicotine. Caron provides /administers behavioral health assessments through the Student Assistance Program (SAP) for students in grades five through twelve. During one-on-one meetings, Caron SAP Specialists interview students to identify substance use related problems, mental health issues, and other factors that could negatively affect a young person's life. Upon completing the comprehensive assessment, specialists make recommendations and help students implement them. Often, more intervention is recommended as a result of an SAP assessment. Caron provides Teen Intervene which involves two to three individual sessions designed to educate teens on their current behaviors and motivate them to pursue positive change. Teen Intervene is a time-efficient, evidence-based program for youth aged 12-19 years that are suspected of having mild to moderate problems with alcohol or substance abuse. The Teen Intervene Program integrates stages of change theory, motivational interviewing, and cognitive behavioral therapy to help teens reduce, and ultimately eliminate substance abuse.

**Other Coalitions/Agencies will be consulted with and requested to join BOSS include:**

**Berks Council On Chemical Abuse (COCA):** provides a number of programs on substance abuse prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery in Berks County. COCA

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also provides a Strengthening Families Program for parents and youth ages 10-14 which helps families build stronger bonds through fun activities over seven weeks.

**Reading Cares** is a consortium of community organizations that came together to support families affected by Hurricane Maria. It continues to come together when disasters occur within our community and their families.

**South of Penn Task Force** is a community outreach project focused on the South of Penn (SOP), from Franklin St. to Canal St. and RACC to 7th St. Focused on trying to increase home ownership, improve livability and foster interpersonal relationships with the neighbors of this area.

**Berks County Suicide Prevention Task Force** saves lives by eliminating suicide as well as actively working to reduce the stigma of mental illness in Berks County. The vision is that Berks County will become a community that is compassionate and willing to embrace and support individuals who are affected by mental health concerns. The task force will accomplish these goals through education and advocacy within the community.

**Unity Within Our Community/Berks Intercultural Alliance:** is a non-profit organization that has been established in order to promote unification within Berks County through committing resources and time to our residents, but also focusing on our youth in order to encourage future community leaders who understand the importance of a unified community.

**Reading Education Foundation** is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to expanding the educational experience of all Reading School District students.

**Berks County Intermediate Unit (BCIU)** committees and task forces active in the Reading School district:

- **Right to Education Task Force** was created to provide for a free, appropriate public education for children with disabilities. The Task Force functions as an independent organization of parents and other residents of Berks County who are interested in working with school districts, the IU, and community agencies to further the rights of students with special needs. The primary purpose of the Right to Education Local Task Force is to make recommendations that assist in improving, strengthening, expanding, and monitoring programs and services for school-age children with special needs. It also serves as a vehicle for professional development opportunities according to parent and participant interest.
- **Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness program (ECYEH)** is an initiative of the Pennsylvania Department of Education and is based on the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. This federal legislation ensures that homeless children and youth have access to a free, appropriate, public education. Committed to ensuring that all students experiencing homelessness have the opportunity to succeed in school. We eliminate barriers to education, educate the community about the nature of homelessness, and provide support to schools, families, and communities.

Literacy Council of Reading-Berks serves two audiences, adults and businesses, and offers classes, workshops, one-on-one tutoring, and off-site training. The Literacy Council has helped thousands of adults reach their goals. Their programs are proven effective and focus on four positive outcomes to ensure that students can: Read and Write Proficiently, Become a

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Productive Citizen, Prepare for Work, Achieve Success on the Job. Programs and education offered through the Literacy Council include: ESL, GED, One-to-one tutoring and distance learning, community ESL and High School Equivalency classes, Citizenship Preparation classes, Community Health Worker Program, Corporate Training Program, GED Testing Center, Next Chapter Book Club, Workforce Development Program, Workplace Professionalism, and the Greater Reading Cops N' Kids Program.

To address the issues of Reading at Grade Level and English Literacy and comprehension, CISEPA is partnered with the United Way of Berks County and other key stakeholders involved in the Ready.Set.Read! initiative which seeks to advance grade-level reading across all Berks County schools. The United Way of Berks County has played an integral role in the area of education within the City of Reading and throughout the County of Berks. The United Way shares in the same belief as CIS: that everyone in the community can play a role in ensuring that children grow up to be productive citizens and members of our community. This begins with a good education that is the foundation for a child's success in work and life, along with providing supportive programming that helps youth develop necessary skills for their futures. To meet this goal, key issues addressed by UWBC and its supported programs in this focus area include early care and school readiness, school success and positive youth development. The United Way works toward this goal by funding programs at agency partners, as well as grants and collaborative partnerships. Agency Partners and their supported programs in the area of Education that are available to children and youth throughout the City of Reading are listed below:

- Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Berks County: One-to-one or group mentoring programs for at-risk youth to improve their lives.

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- Centro Hispano: Parental education and support to improve children's school readiness through "Abriendo Puertas".
- Communities In Schools of Eastern PA: Integrated student support and services to improve attendance, behavior and academic performance for students in the Reading School District.
- Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania: Outcomes-based programs for girls 5-17, in the City of Reading, to acquire and develop assets and skills for a positive adolescence and future.
- Hawk Mountain Council: Boy Scouts of America: Character development, citizenship training, and personal fitness for boys 6-18 and young men and women 14-20.
- Olivet Boys & Girls Club of Reading and Berks County: Comprehensive, outcome driven, youth after-school and summer program focusing on education, good character and citizenship and healthy lifestyles.
- Opportunity House: Child care at Second Street Learning Center provides early care and education services for infants, preschoolers and school-age children.
- The Salvation Army: Reading Corps: Educational programming for youth and adults through the Learning Center.
- YMCA of Reading & Berks County: Day and evening child care services. Baby University provides parents, parents-to-be and caregivers knowledge and skills needed to establish strong families and help their children reach their potential.

**UWBC Ready.Set.READ! (RSR) program:** RSR programs focus on improving literacy skills for children from birth through third grade. RSR is a collaboration among United

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Way of Berks County, the education and business communities and community organizations that seek to improve reading proficiency in students by the end of third grade. The collective work focuses on four key strategies: implement school-readiness activities for pre-school children to support language and pre-literacy development in young children, connect tutors with early grade students needing supplemental instruction, engage parents to promote literacy, and mobilize the community around this work. Several programs are available in Reading through the UWBC Ready.Set.READ! initiative to include:

- **The Star Readers tutoring program** is reaching struggling readers in grades 1-3 at elementary schools throughout Berks County. Caring adults are paired one-to-one and meet weekly with students. This program is in all 13 elementary schools in Reading School District, in addition to 11 other districts.
- **Growing Readers** is a collaborative partnership with Latino childcare providers in Reading to lay the foundation for the development of literacy skills to ensure future reading success.
- **Read Alliance** is a dual impact program designed to use the power of teen tutors to build the literacy skills of struggling readers in grades K-2. This program was piloted at 10<sup>th</sup> & Penn Elementary school with positive results. In the 2022-2023 school year, the program is expanding to include 10<sup>th</sup> & Penn and four other Reading School District schools.
- **Read with Me** is an early literacy and family engagement program that helps families develop, practice and sustain good reading habits at home. This program is facilitated in five elementary schools in Reading including Tyson Schoener.

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- **Reach Out and Read** is a national program to make literacy promotion a part of regular pediatric checkups.
- **Neighborhood Bridges** delivered by the Yocum Institute for Arts Education is designed to improve literacy through arts education.

Additionally, UWBC more recently started the Summer Learning Coalition.

Research shows that parents with the financial means invest more time and money than ever before in their children while lower-income families, which are now more likely to be headed by a single parent, are increasingly stretched for time and resources. Summer Learning Programs targeted to low-income students can help close the achievement gap that has been attributed, at least in part, to cumulative learning loss during the summers.

As part of the Ready.Set.READ! initiative, UWBC convened a group of county stakeholders to determine how they might work together to improve reading outcomes for children and youth and address the problem of summer learning loss. With this effort, the Summer Learning Coalition was created. Creative programs that meet eligibility (help kids maintain their reading skills over the summer months) may apply for microgrants from the United Way to consistently increase Summer Learning opportunities throughout the County. One example of a summer learning program that occurs in Reading PA's Oakbrook community is "Books for Bikes". Books for Bikes is an integral part of the Oakbrook Summer Reading Program. A partnership between Ready.Set.READ!, the Berks Community Health Center, Customers Bank, the Reading School District and the Reading Housing Authority (RHA), Books For Bikes is designed to provide literacy activities to children in the Oakbrook Housing neighborhood in an effort to reduce summer learning loss. The program is offered from June through mid-August to children, ages 2 - 12, in this

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area of the city. This program is designed to meet the needs of low-income children by engaging them in literacy related activities on a daily basis around the neighborhood's Summer Food Service Program, which is supported by the RHA and Reading School District. Literacy activities may include reading books, writing stories, vocabulary building, word recognition, and learning games. Varied community organizations also partner with the program to deliver fun and engaging activities. Since 2018, these partners have included The Reading Public Library, which provided their mobile technology van on site weekly; Building 7 Yoga, which incorporated "reading yoga"; and Barrio Alegria, which featured artistic performances during the summer program to complement the literacy activities. Approximately 100 children participated. Children who participated in at least 75% of the program days earned a bike and helmet, courtesy of Customers Bank.

### **Capacity of Lead Entity**

Communities In Schools of Eastern PA has the capacity to coordinate and provide quality services at the three identified full-service community schools. CIS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that has been providing leadership, convening partnerships, mobilizing financial and human resources, and creating effective solutions to improve our community for over 40 years. CIS of Eastern PA was originally named CIS of the Lehigh Valley until our expansion into other service areas. Our Lehigh Valley CS efforts paved the way to our expansion in Berks County and the creation of a countywide CS Coalition.

CISEPA manages a large portfolio of community investments to include grants, contracts, private donations, foundation funding and investments that total \$6.3 million dollars (current fiscal year). CISEPA rigorously measures, evaluates, and reports on impact. We leverage this funding to effectively lead complex, large scale, regional change.

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Furthermore, community partnerships continue to expand and emerge as evidenced by the multiple letters of support written by community organizations and key community stakeholders for this project even though they do not have a direct role, because they have witnessed direct results of the community schools initiatives and its impact on students, families and communities.

CIS has crafted tools that have been sought out by other CS initiatives for use in organizing and prioritizing a school's strategies, programs and services in schools linking the CS supports to the school improvement plans. CISEPA has effectively gained database access for all CSCs across the Lehigh Valley school districts through solid data sharing agreements. CISEPA will ensure that the MOU and joint planning with the RSD include this level of data sharing. In addition, quarterly data dashboards, as well as a formal end of year reports, will be generated for each site. Clear staffing roles and expectations are outlined for each site and are detailed within the proposal.

### **3. QUALITY OF THE PROJECT SERVICES**

The Reading community, specifically the Southwest side of the City, faces a myriad of challenges regarding Reading's future especially in regard to educating our children and youth. The voices of the community—from residents to students and from teachers to civic leaders—consistently reveal concern, even dismay, along with a growing drumbeat of possibility and hope that things can get better if only the community can step forward together, listen deeply, and take common action. Many attempts to solicit and hear the voices of the community historically do not meet families where they are. Parents and families in the community voice that efforts to convene people often use approaches that don't fit with their lives; ie. meeting times and formats don't always

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permit families with shift work or multiple jobs to join. Language and access to interpreters are also significant barriers to hearing and listening to the voice of the community. This was experienced time and time again at online events during COVID, as internet access was a problem for many families. Based on these past experiences, and in not only hearing, but listening to the voice of the community, CISEPA has a vision for a better engagement approach: Community visits along with community events that promote idea sharing in an informal and relaxed atmosphere (i.e. on the corner at the park, at the bodega, a basketball tournament where education is the discussion). Building trusting relationships with and among the community within the community is critical to the success of this project. To that end, CISEPA has formed a solid partnership with Centro Hispano to ensure **Parent Leadership and Voice**. CISEPA will also request Berks Literacy Council to provide English Language courses at no cost to adults in our targeted community.

CISEPA has developed local and regionally based solutions via trusting partnerships and structures to improve lives. One outcome of our work is evident in the formation of our Community Schools Consortium in Reading entitled Bridging Opportunity for School Success or “BOSS” with CISEPA as the lead entity. These cross-sector partnerships grew from the realization that large-scale social change could not be achieved by single organizations. We effectively operate together using the Collective Impact model for addressing problems and advancing population level growth: each consortium member is committed to a common agenda (increasing student academic achievement); we share measurement and track progress; we foster mutually reinforcing activities; there is open and continuous formal and informal communication between

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consortium members; and there is a backbone organization (CISEPA) that coordinates work and partner organizations.

CISEPA, the Reading School District, current and identified RSD school building principals, and community partners that are either already providing services and supports within the identified schools OR through our continued communications have recently been added to the BOSS consortium and will soon provide services and supports within our schools and community. Our history and continued supportive engagement helps build trust between the community and the school district.

As we begin our first year of the FSCS grant, CISEPA will recruit and convened individuals at a minimum of 5 focus group sessions to gain resident feedback into the process of how the CIS and the RSD should move forward with the Community Schools initiative and district transformation. We will additionally create a Parent Network to encourage family voice in the creation of quality educational opportunities.

**Reason for selecting the proposed services** The CISEPA Community Schools Consortium (BOSS) selected services that will help our students, families and community overcome barriers to learning and academic achievement. Services were chosen based on our initial needs assessment and each services' efficacy in addressing those needs within the Community School model. Providers using evidence-based practices, particularly those showing promising evidence in achieving outcomes were given preference. Services that demonstrated effectiveness in advancing outcomes for low-income populations and traditionally underrepresented communities were also of utmost importance. As described below, we anticipate that the selected services will **improve academic achievement** for students in our target schools.

**Reasons for Selecting Behavioral Health Services** Trauma impacts academic performance, behavior and the ability to form relationships. (Helping Traumatized Children Learn, 2005). A Report and Policy Agenda by Massachusetts Advocates for Children). To succeed in school, students need to be attentive; comprehend, process, and remember information; verbally express questions and academic needs; and control emotions and actions in a prosocial manner. Effects of trauma impair these attributes. Our proposed behavioral health services promote behavioral, academic, and mental health outcomes for students (Thapa et al., 2012, Guffey, 2012) by building trust and positive relationships; teaching healthy coping and self-regulation strategies; screening to identify needs; ensuring that students with social-emotional and behavioral health needs receive evidence-based interventions; and tracking intervention impact. Trauma's behavioral expressions such as aggression, defiance, withdrawal, reactivity, and impulsivity often lead to disciplinary infractions. Our project provides practices specifically designed to reduce negative behavioral expressions, thereby mitigating exclusionary discipline and giving students more in-class learning time which will ultimately **improve academic achievement**.

**Reason for selecting ISS:** CISEPA's delivery of a high quality ISS model throughout the region produced the following results (SY 2020-2021), based on 1,106 students receiving case managed services: 56% improved attendance; 86% improved behavior; 77% improved academics. ISS models embrace a "whole child" perspective that recognizes the importance of a child's health and safety, socio-emotional development, behavior, and relationships to his or her educational success. A large body of empirical research, as well as new analyses by Child Trends, indicate that school success (or failure) is the product of multiple and varied factors at the individual, family and school levels. This suggests that providing an

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array of academic and non-academic supports in a coordinated fashion, as ISS does, is a more effective strategy than focusing on one support, or a small set of supports. High quality implementation is crucial to the effectiveness of ISS. Communities In Schools high quality delivery and subsequent effectiveness of ISS in improving educational outcomes has been validated in studies such as Using Integrated Student Supports to Keep Kids in School: A Quasi-Experimental Evaluation of Communities in Schools (Somers, 2017). The CISEPA ISS model will **improve academic achievement** by identifying students “at-risk” and then addressing barriers to learning through the three tiered MTSS approach.

**Reasons for selecting Positive Youth Development** PYD service providers were selected based on criteria outlined by the US Department of Health and Human Services Office of Adolescent Health and alignment with this criteria of successful programs:

- Physical and psychological safety and security
- Clear expectations for behavior, as well as increasing opportunities to make decisions, to participate in governance and rule-making, and to take on leadership roles as one matures and gains more expertise
- Emotional and moral support
- Supportive adult relationships
- Opportunities to form close, durable human relationships with peers that support and reinforce healthy behaviors
- A sense of belonging and personal value
- Opportunities to develop positive social values and norms
- Opportunities for skill building and mastery

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- Opportunities to develop confidence in their abilities to master their environment
- Opportunities to make a contribution to their community and to develop a sense of accomplishment or connectedness
- Strong links between families, schools, and broader community resources

Focusing on the “5 Cs” of Positive Youth Development – competence, caring, confidence, connection, and character - PYD programs engage young people in intentional, productive, and constructive ways while recognizing and enhancing their strengths. There is a growing body of evidence that PYD programs can prevent a variety of risk behaviors among young people and improve social and emotional outcomes. The link between improved social and emotional development and academic achievement has been demonstrated in recent research (Payton, 2008). We anticipate that the high quality PYD programs offered at our schools will improve social and emotional development and lead to **improved academic achievement.**

**Reasons for selecting Centro Hispano:** Centro Hispano is uniquely qualified to address the needs of our traditionally underrepresented, spanish speaking community members. Centro Hispano is a grassroots community organizing entity. Because of Centro Hispano’s authentic ability to engage with residents in the highest need communities through an asset based approach that values residents as experts in their own lived experience and because of the years of missed communication efforts between white leaders and the minority, a prioritized effort is needed to support organizations who can effectively build several layers of bridges while also promoting cooperative progress. Based on previously noted research linking parent engagement to **improved academic achievement**, we expect Centro Hispano to contribute toward improved academic

achievement and educational gains.

### **Evidence Based Activities**

**Integrated Student Supports (ISS):** There is emerging evidence, especially from quasi-experimental studies, that ISS can contribute to student academic progress as measured by decreases in grade retention and dropout, and increases in attendance, math achievement, reading and ELA achievement, and overall GPA. This finding is based on 11 rigorous evaluations completed to date, and published in the ChildTrends “Integrated Student Supports: The Evidence” the first rigorous, independent analysis of all the existing research in the field of integrated student supports (ISS). Researchers found measurable decreases in grade retention, dropout rates, and absenteeism, along with measurable increases in attendance rates and math scores. Taken as a whole, Child Trends concludes that “there is an emerging evidence base to support the effectiveness and cost- effectiveness of integrated student supports in improving educational outcomes.”

Parental engagement continues to be an issue that the Reading School District and the three target schools struggle with. Research shows that parental engagement increases the likelihood of children’s educational success and parents becoming better advocates. As the Latino population continues to grow in and around the city, the need for evidence based culturally inclusive parental engagement programs have never been more important. In partnership with CISEPA and the Reading School District, Centro Hispano will provide “Opening Doors/Abriendo Puertas: Parental Engagement Program” at all three schools, each year of the grant. We anticipate 20 participants in each cohort/program offering for a total of 15 offerings (1 at each of the three schools, in each of the 5 years of the period of performance). When organizations like the Centro Hispano and the RSD engage families

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in ways that support parent involvement, students make greater gains. When we can build partnerships with families that respond to parent concerns, honor their contributions, and share decision-making responsibilities, they are able to sustain connections that are aimed at improving their child's achievement. A side benefit is the continued creation of a stronger community which is also linked to student success.

Centro Hispano's Abriendo Puertas/ Opening Doors program is the first evidence-based, comprehensive training program, developed by and for Latino parents with children ages zero to five. The program aims to improve the outcomes of the nation's Latino children by building the capacity and confidence of parents to be strong and powerful advocates in their children's lives. Additionally, by becoming their children's advocate in the community, parents can make systems and institutions more responsive to the needs of children. The program targets the following areas: (1) Early learning & development; (2) Social-emotional skills; (3) Language & literacy;(4) School readiness skills; (5) Health; (6) Parental Knowledge; (7) Advocacy; (8) Parent confidence.

The ten interactive sessions draw from real-life experiences, incorporate data about local schools/communities, and focus on helping Latino parents understand the important role in the development of the long-term impact on their children's educational outcomes. This program is about transforming families, who, due to a number of socio-economic challenges, have limited access to resources and information. Each two-hour session of Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors incorporates activities and parenting techniques that assist parents in understanding child development, learning, discipline, literacy, nutrition, well-being, and effective communication.

With a strong focus on parent and community voice, an increased focus on

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Kindergarten readiness and grade level reading attainment, and better coordination and communications with Reading's ECE pipeline, we are confident that children will have a strong headstart for success in their elementary education years. We also anticipate that students who receive school based care from mental health professionals will show improved self regulation, behavior, school engagement, and social-emotional well-being which will result in improved attendance and academic outcomes. School-based student case management using the ISS model will support at-risk students with 1:1 and small group therapeutic and skill-building sessions and mentoring which will lead to improved attendance, behavior, academics, and ultimately, a greater likelihood of high school graduation. We expect that students participating in PYD after school and summer programs will show growth in character, confidence, competence, caring, and connection that will lead to improved school attendance and behavior.

In addition to research studies demonstrating the positive impacts of our proposed services, CISEPA and the BOSS consortium's experience supporting a CS network also contributes to anticipated impacts.

Our community school implementation model emphasizes culturally appropriate, evidence-based assessments and treatments, many of which have been specifically evaluated for their effectiveness in underrepresented populations. Cultural competency is integrated throughout trainings and professional development opportunities. A vital part of our approach is relationship-building which entails understanding students and the role of culture, including racism and bias, in lived experience and decision making. Since all schools are high-minority, ensuring culturally appropriate assessments and treatments will contribute to successfully achieving outcomes. Given that Reading's schools and

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neighborhoods are predominantly populated by people who have been traditionally underrepresented based on race, color, nationality, gender, age, or disability, it is imperative that our project ensure equal access and treatment for all eligible participants. In recent school years, RSD has moved from planning to action, as set forth in their Welcoming Schools Resolution (2018-19 School Year) and more recently in their Equity Policy (2019-20 School Year). The RSD has now developed a district-wide equity plan to stay dedicated to drawing on the perspective and feedback from the collection of diverse voices received through the District Equity Advisory Committee and School Equity Teams. The RSD has identified concrete actions that must be taken to advance this work and will continue to ensure that these voices are elevated in decision-making processes through their District-wide equity initiatives.

CISEPA will use the School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation (SHAPE) System as an assessment of the mental health climate (needs, resources and gaps) in each of the three schools. SHAPE offers schools and districts a workspace and targeted resources to support school mental health quality improvement. Schools and districts can use SHAPE to evaluate strengths and identify areas of improvement, document mental health resources across multiple tiers of support, and utilize data driven strategies to improve quality. The results of this assessment in each school will guide decision making and strategy to improve the mental health landscape for students.

CIS provides trauma informed care training to all agency professionals. Trauma affects all racial, ethnic, and economic groups, but its burden falls disproportionately on poor and minority children—the very children whose mental health needs are least likely to be met by the health care system. The 2014 ChildTrends study noted that “ISS seems

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appropriate for a variety of “at-risk” students. Because integrated student supports are child-centered rather than school-centered, the specific mix of supports varies depending on a specific child’s needs and circumstances. For example, in the ISS model, children with mental health needs receive a different set of supports than children whose families have become homeless. For children in the child welfare or juvenile justice system, ISS staff can coordinate with agency caseworkers to supplement and align supports. Because ISS programs rely on and coordinate with community-based supports and service providers, they are more likely to deliver a system of supports that are culturally appropriate to minority populations.” The focus of PYD on assets and resiliency means that ethnicity and culture are viewed and emphasized as strengths. Cultural practices can be aligned with core principles of positive youth development. PYD helps students see themselves as “context experts” and lived experience as an asset.

Collaboration of project partners will maximize the effectiveness of project services. The BOSS consortium uses collective impact principles to align cross sector partners and address education initiatives towards outcomes. CISEPA serves as the backbone organization for many of these efforts, with shared leadership structures emerging with other key organizations. As an example of our partnership and relational abilities, Communities in Schools and the United Way of Lehigh Valley have been working together in increasingly greater capacities since 2006. In a similar relationship, our Reading consortium (BOSS) and project partners will maximize the effectiveness of project services through trusting relationships, cross sector partnerships, purposeful engagement, shared accountability and actionable data and clearly articulated outcomes.

Within the preliminary MOU with the RSD (attached) CISEPA has already

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established data sharing agreements with RSD, which allows us to provide community partners that offer school based services impact data on the RSD students they support (changes in attendance, behavior, reading/math assessments)' this in turn supports continuous improvement efforts. Community School Coordinators analyze data to assess effectiveness of programs and the correct dosage of programs to achieve desired student outcome results. This is an added bonus to community partners as well, and is another incentive to deliver their services in our community schools.

Coordination and collaboration is evident throughout our proposed Project Plan. Each partner proposed in this project is relevant and has demonstrated a commitment to implementation and project success. CISEPA is the lead partner for the Full-Service Community School Project and will continue in this role for the proposed project as the applicant organization/fiscal agent. The strong cross-sector partnerships and solid infrastructure that exists in Reading allow us to leverage resources, mobilize residents and organizations, implement, evaluate and share project successes and lessons learned. Berks County is a uniquely collaborative region, having both urban and rural challenges. We have not always had access to significant funding resources. While this has made achievement of education goals at times more challenging, it has also forced us to be creative and collaborative in our efforts to get things done. In order to address community challenges, we have had to develop locally-based solutions to regional needs via trusting partnerships and structures that let us get work done and improve lives for all members of our community – from babies to senior citizens.

Costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and the anticipated results and benefits. For the proposed project, CISEPA will serve 1,940

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students at three high need public schools at a cost of \$500,000 annually for five years. For a cost of just \$257.73 per student per year, the LVCSC will advance our goal of improving academic achievement at Tyson-Schoener, 10th & Penn and Southwest MS by reducing barriers to learning. CISEPA has collaborated closely with partners over the past year to ensure that all costs are reasonable and comparable to other providers working toward similar outcomes.

#### **4. ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES**

Communities in Schools of Eastern Pennsylvania (CISEPA) has been providing leadership, convening partnerships, mobilizing financial and human resources, and creating effective solutions for communities in Eastern Pennsylvania for over 40 years. First in the Lehigh Valley and later in Berks County leading to the creation of BOSS, the CISEPA Community Schools Consortium which will provide oversight and direction for the proposed CISEPA Full Service Community Schools Project. A countywide coalition of collaborating partners and stakeholders, BOSS is dedicated to improving outcomes for students and their families throughout the region. CISEPA currently serves the region's highest need students in rural, suburban and urban communities. As of 2022, CISEPA supports 40 schools across 3 counties (Lehigh County, Northampton County and Berks County) spanning 10 districts with an additional 6 neighboring districts that send students to participate in CIS led activities, services and supports.

The proposed CISEPA Full-Service Community School boasts a comprehensive infrastructure buffeted by BOSS and a long history of collaboration between CISEPA and the Greater Lehigh Valley United Way Community in Schools Network, substantial financial support from the United Way of Berks County, as well as a proven CIS

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Integrated Students Support model which has successfully incorporated the role of a Full-Time Community School Coordinator. The three identified RSD Schools, 10<sup>th</sup> & Penn Elementary, Tyson Schoener Elementary, and Southwest Middle School, will each be assigned a full-time Community School Coordinator working directly with teachers, families, service agencies, local companies and other stakeholders to create a network of support that is easily accessible and addresses the individual needs of each school.

Over four decades, CISEPA has developed a comprehensive strategy to build self-sustaining Communities In Schools programs led by full-time Community School Coordinators. Schools are added to the CISEPA Community School network based on a comprehensive needs assessment as staff members assigned to the school are tasked with building institutional capacity. CISEPA and the BOSS Consortium aggressively build the internal and external infrastructure and financial support needed to transition to a fully operational Integrated Student Support Model with a full-time Community School Coordinator placed within each school.

The strategy includes creating data sharing agreements across all school districts to establish baseline data and demonstrate effectiveness; implementing comprehensive formative and summative evaluation methods including developing and monitoring quarterly data dashboards which inform a formal end of year reports for each site; as well as developing clear staffing roles and expectations for both CISEPA and the host school staff and administrators to ensure alignment with, and support of, each school's student success goals, program services and approved school improvement plans.

CISEPA has successfully implemented this strategy with the support of the United Way of Greater Lehigh Valley and other partners leveraging support from local, state and

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federal sources to expand and transition to a fully operational Integrated Student Support (ISS) model. As previously noted, there are 28 schools in the Lehigh Valley United Way CS Network serving 16,220 students in four Lehigh Valley school districts. Eighteen (18) schools in the Lehigh Valley network serving 8,300 children already have full-service CS partnerships in place with Full-Time Community School Coordinators (CSCs), additional part time CS staff and a host of programs and services. Thirteen (13) of the 18 United Way Community School sites in the Lehigh Valley area have CISEPA as the Lead Partner, two of the eight schools also include CIS' Integrated Student Supports (ISS) services with an additional intensive case manager assigned to those schools. Two (2) of the Lehigh Valley United Way Community School (UWCS) sites that have higher education institutions as the Lead Partners, also have CISEPA's ISS services. The proposed CISEPA Full-Service Community School budget includes a plan to sustain a full-time full-time Community School Coordinator at each school by transitioning the salary of each coordinator from federal funds to matching funds over the five-year grant period. In year one, the salary of the full-time case manager at 10th & Penn is fully funded through matching resources provided by the host school. Recognizing the value of the program, host schools are committed to gradually transitioning institutional funding to support the role as BOSS works in tandem to build the financial infrastructure to support and sustain the FSCS network.

The CSC position will serve to plan, integrate, coordinate, and facilitate programs and services at each school. The CIS Model of Integrated Student Supports (ISS), is an evidence-based approach, adapted to meet each community's unique needs. ISS provides wraparound student support integrating social, emotional and academic development,

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while addressing out-of-school factors that may hinder a student in coming to class prepared to learn.

The full-time Community School Coordinators at 10<sup>th</sup> and Penn Elementary, Tyson Schoener Elementary, and Southwest Middle School will be responsible for implementing ISS in a manner that serves the unique needs of each school community. The CSCs will work one-on-one with students who need help, manage relationships with community partners, and broker new services in school.

After a comprehensive needs assessment and planning, which includes the development of a school-support plan, the CSC begins delivering Integrated Student Support. School-support plans are approved by principals and reflect data and feedback from teachers, parents, guidance counselors and other stakeholders. These plans guide the Community School Coordinator as they develop individualized support, targeted programs and school-wide services addressing the specific needs of students and their families. This includes developing and implementing standardized processes, establishing and implementing processes for identifying at-risk students and matching them with appropriate services and interventions, while monitoring outcomes to assess quality of the intervention and alignment of intervention to student need. CSCs are also responsible for making adjustments deemed appropriate based on a comprehensive analysis of quantitative and qualitative data collected formally through data sharing agreements and informally through surveys, interviews and anecdotal reports.

Additionally, the Community Schools Coordinator is responsible for developing and managing an advisory council that consists of corporate partners, parents/guardians, local government, faith communities, students and teachers. This council brings together

partners to offer a range of support and opportunities for the school. As evidenced by existing community schools within the CIS Coalition network, dedicated full-time CSCs are vital to the long-term sustainability of Community Schools.

## **5. QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

CISEPA has established the BOSS Consortium Community Leadership Team. BOSS is a broad representation of stakeholders who are all committed to the project's success including Reading Science Center, Reading Public Museum, Reading YMCA, Reading Boys & Girls Club, Centro Hispano, Easterseals (Berks County Chapter), Berks Counseling, Community Services for Children Early Learning Resource Center 13 (CSC ELRC-13), United Way Berks, Caron Treatment Centers, Berks Initiative For School Attendance, and Opportunity House/Second Street Learning Center, and our region's largest and highest need school district (RSD). Each consortium member has extensive partnerships across its own network with business, government, faith-based organizations, philanthropy, nonprofit, and citizens. Through these cross-sector partnerships, CISEPA collaboratively addresses barriers to educational achievement, leveraging the experience and expertise of each organization. A description of the roles and responsibilities of the RSD and individual district schools are outlined in the required preliminary MOU.

All BOSS-consortium members are required to assign a representative to the consortium, participate in forums or meetings, as required, in support of program quality, information exchange and continuous process improvement, support all Full-Service Community Schools Program (FSCSP) grant requirements with respect to the selection of

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services to meet student, family, and community needs and promote the Community School (CS) model including: assessing needs and progress of school and community partners; participate in resource development efforts as needed; in addition to providing assistance with implementation of programs that address the following priority areas: K Readiness, Summer learning, every day attendance, grade level reading proficiency, improved behavioral health, increased connection to health services, and family engagement. Additional roles and responsibilities are outlined in **Table 6** below:

<b>Table 6: Consortium Roles and Responsibilities</b>	
<b>Partner</b>	<b>Role and Outlined Responsibilities</b>
Reading School District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Serves as the eligible LEA partner providing leadership and guidance as a lead member of the BOSS-CCLT</li> <li>● Host forums or meetings, as required, in support of program quality, information exchange and continuous process improvement and provide additional office space for meetings as needed</li> <li>● Employ and supervise staff, providing programming and support to identified schools</li> <li>● Participate in the collection of program data ensuring accuracy and timely completion of all reporting</li> <li>● Support implementation of school support plan aligning best practice strategies with the five-year goals to decrease the number of students with chronic absenteeism, decrease the number of students with behavioral incidences, and increase parent and family engagement in</li> </ul>

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	<p>leading toward increased capacity to support their child's learning</p>
<p>Reading Science Center</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide quality Out of School Time (OST) Programming in the areas of STEM sciences and field trip opportunities for 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade students enrolled in the three target schools and their families when applicable.</li> </ul>
<p>Reading Public Museum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide quality Out of School Time (OST) Programming in the areas of STEAM and field trip opportunities for 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade students enrolled in the three target schools and their families when applicable.</li> </ul>
<p>Reading YMCA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide Positive Youth Development (PYD) enrichment opportunities particularly “Y on the FLY” programming at all three target schools weekly for pre-K through 6<sup>th</sup> grade students enrolled and additionally within the Southwest Reading neighborhood when applicable.</li> <li>● Contribute to the advancement of Early Childhood Education efforts and planning and establishing the FSCS pipeline (birth- age 4 and preK-8<sup>th</sup> grade).</li> </ul>
<p>Reading Olivet’s Boys &amp; Girls Club</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide support for programming by offering the club as a meeting location</li> <li>● Attend resource fairs and deliver programming at their site for any student who wishes to attend the club</li> </ul>

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<p>Centro Hispano</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide “Opening Doors/Abriendo Puertas: Parental Engagement Program” at all three schools, each year of the grant initiative as an organization uniquely qualified to address the needs of traditionally underrepresented, Spanish speaking community members</li> </ul>
<p>Easterseals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assist with early learning accessibility and family engagement initiatives including serving as a resource for child development support, parent workshops, and providing information and assistance on navigating the human service system for identified students or families</li> <li>● Provide services to children and adults with a wide-range of physical and cognitive disabilities, autism and other social, sensory and developmental delays, and their families to include: Autism Diagnostic Clinic, Early intervention, outpatient therapy, specialty clinics, therapeutic groups, and community supports/habilitation which include resources on financial planning</li> </ul>
<p>United Way Berks County</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide Positive Youth Development (PYD) enrichment opportunities particularly “Ready.Set.Read!” programming at all three target schools for enrolled pre-K through 3rd grade students and within the Southwest Reading neighborhood when applicable.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Contribute to the advancement of Early Childhood Education efforts and grade level Literacy initiative coordination in support of the FSCS pipeline (preK-8<sup>th</sup> grade).</li> </ul>
<p>The Salvation Army of Reading, PA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide community programs including: Basic Needs assistance, utilities assistance, SHARE emergency assistance, homelessness prevention, rapid rehousing (non-CoC), permanent supportive housing program, and food distribution / collection</li> <li>● Offer classes on basic adult computer literacy and life skills and provide emergency solutions grants to families with acute needs</li> <li>● Contribute to the birth-age 5 pipeline through programs including ‘Play and Learn’ Center whose goal is to assure that all children are developmentally on track to be ready for Kindergarten</li> </ul>
<p>CSC ELRC-13</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Offers programs in Head Start, pre-k counts, early learning resource centers and community initiatives as an Early Childcare provider as well as a programmatic and resource hub</li> <li>● Provide consultation, training and services to assist with ECE initiatives within the Southwest Reading service area</li> </ul>
<p>Opportunity House/Second</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide quality educational programs, daycare, meals, snacks, transportation to and from all local schools within the Reading School District and assist with transportation of students and families to</li> </ul>

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<p>Street Learning Center</p>	<p>ensure access to programming and events throughout the FSCS grant period of performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide before and after school services to include tutoring, referral services for children with challenges (trauma, social-emotional, learning delays, etc.), early intervention supports, and additional programming through community partnerships</li> </ul>
<p>Caron Treatment Centers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide and administer behavioral health assessments at the three identified schools through their Student Assistance Program (SAP) for students in grades five through twelve</li> </ul>
<p>Berks Initiative For School Attendance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide consultation, data and input regarding the RSD’s problem of truancy with the goal of improving student attendance in all grades and decreasing absences for any reason in partnership with Service Access and Management, Inc. (SAM), the Advancing School Attendance Program (ASAP).</li> <li>● Ensure schools, Magisterial District Judges (MDJs), parents, and community partners are able to refer students to an intensive intervention with the goal of improving attendance, decreasing truancy, and increasing graduation rates</li> </ul>
<p>Berks Counseling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide mental health and co-occurring disorders treatment, community-based programming, peer support, and physical health and</li> </ul>

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Center	wellness services as a Certified Community Behavioral Health Center and Integrated Community Wellness Center
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CISEPA has a long history of effectiveness in working with a diverse range of stakeholders, including students and families. As our founder [REDACTED] once said, “Programs don’t change kids, relationships do.” Our organization was built on the premise that developmental relationships are at the core of what we do. The Communities In Schools theory of change links the activities and practices of our organization to the intended future outcomes. In a practical sense, this means that by supporting the development of strong relationships focused on building social, emotional, and academic competencies for young people, we improve attendance, behavior, and course performance for students. These focused and intentional activities and practices guide us to our intended outcomes—to increase the number of students graduating from high school and ensure that students are equipped for college, career, and civic engagement.

This Theory of Change framework will be broadened to encompass the key performance indicators of the FSCS project, driven by the same foundational principle - that by linking our focused and intentional activities and practices to our intended future outcomes we can achieve lasting and substantive change in our pilot schools, our district and ultimately the entire educational system.

Communities In Schools is the nation’s largest and most effective dropout prevention network, serving 1.6 million students in 26 states and the District of Columbia. Our mission is to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and succeed in life. The strength of our services is an evidence-based model of

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Integrated Student Supports with proven results to increase graduation rates and decrease dropout rates.

CIS of Eastern Pennsylvania was originally named CIS of Lehigh Valley. We were founded in 1983 and have been serving the Allentown School District since 1994. Our name has more recently changed to CIS of Eastern Pennsylvania to capture the expansion to the tri-county area that we now serve. CISEPA is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. We are one of four affiliates in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Harrisburg/Capital Region, Pittsburg, Philadelphia, and Lehigh Valley). Typical CIS services include mentoring, tutoring, academic interventions, health care, basic needs assistance, summer and after-school programs, behavior and truancy interventions, parent and family engagement, career services, and service learning.

In February 2019, Communities In Schools, Inc. (National body) recognized Communities In Schools of the Lehigh Valley for achieving all requirements for Total Quality System (TQS) designation. This recognition followed several years of organizational achievement, strong leadership, sound business practices, a commitment to rigorous evaluation, and quality programs. In 2016, CIS National selected CIS of the Lehigh Valley as one of seven finalists (out of 165 nation-wide CIS affiliates) for the designation of Impact Affiliate. These finalists were reviewed and evaluated for highest performance, best business practices, ethics, and innovation. We continue to strive to achieve excellence in all areas of nonprofit management including helping more students and families achieve success while using our resources efficiently and effectively.

CIS is an expanding organization. In the past 6 years, CIS has grown from a \$950,000 budget serving 2,400 students in 11 schools to a \$6.3 million budget serving

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37,000 students in 40 school sites in 2021-22. Our growth is a direct result of strong outcomes and cost effective strategies that work. We have increased the number of students served by CIS six-fold in the past four years.

In May 2012, Communities In Schools released the results of an economic impact study conducted by EMSI, one of the nation’s leading economic modeling firms. The purpose of the study was to quantify the return on investment of CIS’s 113 high school-serving affiliates in its network to taxpayers, businesses, and students. The most significant finding is the benefit/cost ratio of 11.6, which means that every dollar invested in CIS creates \$11.60 of economic benefit for the community.

CISEPA currently leads work across a 28 school Community School network. The infrastructure for the program replicates a highly successful and existing national model used by Communities In Schools. Costs for supervision and staffing have been adequately built into the budget reflecting actual cost to scale the model at new sites. Each school partnership will have a School Board approved MOU (preliminary MOU attached) that stipulates the intention of the school as a Community School. The MOU outlines the expectations of the School, the School District and CIS. **Table 7** below outlines the Project Timeline, Tasks, Milestones and the partner service provider who is responsible for or contributes to the success of the stated Milestone:

<b>Table 7: Project Timeline, Tasks, and Milestones To Be Accomplished</b>			
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Responsible Partner</b>

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<p>Jan 2023- August 2023</p>	<p>Hire and train Community School Staff (2 CSCs, and 2 full time Case Managers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Approve job descriptions for 3 CSCs and 2 full time case managers.</li> <li>● Post job openings</li> <li>● Confirm selection criteria</li> <li>● Screen candidates</li> <li>● Develop interview protocol (1st and 2nd round interviews)</li> <li>● Select the interview committee to include teachers, students and parents.</li> <li>● Generate MOUs for partnerships that provide clarity on role of CSC in each building as well as RSD obligations (office space, computer, database access, etc.)</li> <li>● Generate final MOU for RSD partnership to provide clarity on the role of CSC in each building as well as RSD obligations (office space, computer, database access, etc.)</li> <li>● MOAs approved by RSD BOD</li> <li>● Conduct 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> round interviews to select top candidates</li> </ul>	<p>CISEPA and BOSS Consortium</p> <p>CISEPA, RSD, Principals, BOSS</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm top pick in each position and offer positions</li> <li>• Train new staff (including site visits and on-site training at mature CS sites)</li> <li>• Secure space, computer access, phone line, district data system training for CS personnel</li> </ul>	<p>Interview</p> <p>Committee, CISEPA</p> <p>CISEPA, BOSS, Principal</p> <p>RSD, Principal, New CS staff</p>
<p>August 2023- December 2023</p>	<p>Onboarding New CS Principals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop principal training, orientation materials, expectations and timeline</li> <li>• Train principals in CS model (best practices, data driven, reporting requirements, key philosophies and framework, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p>CISEPA</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct CS readiness scan to identify strengths, areas of improvement in principal leadership, communication, school climate/culture</li> <li>• Monthly core team meetings infused with reinforced learning of CS model</li> </ul>	CISEPA, Principals, CSC
Start September 2023- and ongoing throughout the 5 year period of performance	Onboarding school staff on CS model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training on CS model, and role of CSC in school to all school staff</li> <li>• Plan and execute CS launch to include Blue Ribbon event (fun family event, press event)</li> <li>• Develop and conduct survey of school staff to assess critical needs, existing strengths, top challenges and barriers, goals for CS</li> <li>• Assess current teacher engagement in out of school time, family engagement; identify early teacher champions</li> </ul>	CISEPA, Principals, CSC  CSC will conduct/analyze, CISEPA supports effort
Start	Collecting Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm needs assessment tool</li> </ul>	CSC will

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<p>January 2023 and ongoing throughout the 5 year period of performance</p>	<p>Assessment Data</p>	<p>for students, school staff, families, community partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Disseminating needs assessments to various audiences, analyzing data to identify top needs</li> <li>● Review and analyze existing school data to identify needs, trends – disaggregated by grade, gender, race/ethnicity, special needs</li> <li>● Conduct more informal 1:1 and small group sessions with students and families to gather more qualitative data on needs, school strengths and areas to improve</li> <li>● Ensure cultural inclusivity and language challenges are accommodated for all family gatherings (events, meetings)</li> <li>● Inventory of currently existing services, programs and partners</li> <li>● Review outcome data on existing services and programs; identify high quality services and programs that</li> </ul>	<p>conduct/analyze, CISEPA supports effort</p>
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		<p>need improvement and capacity building</p>	
<p>Start          January          2023-          and          ongoing          througho          ut the 5          year          period of          performa          nce</p>	<p>Meeting          Behavioral          Health Needs of          Students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify area service providers through a community scan.</li> <li>● Contact service providers identified.</li> <li>● Contract with appropriate service providers to provide school based behavioral health.</li> <li>● Develop MOA’s as appropriate with roles, responsibilities, requirements, expectations, measurement expectations accordingly.</li> <li>● Provide trauma sensitive school training to all 3 schools (Trauma 101 plus trauma informed classroom practices)</li> <li>● Connect all three schools with existing trauma sensitive school resources (including the on-line Trauma Sensitive Schools Training</li> </ul>	<p>CISEPA,          RSD, Identified          Service Providers</p> <p>CISEPA,          Principals, CSC,          School Staff,          Parents</p> <p>CISEPA</p>

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		<p>Toolkit developed by American Institute for Research &amp; the National Center for Safe and Supportive Learning Environments)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Train new counselor in CS model, needs of student/family population</li> <li>● Ensure all school based counselors are included in Student Assistance Program (SAP) team processes and communications</li> <li>● Secure confidential space for case managers</li> <li>● Train case managers in SAP and as Mandated Reporters</li> <li>● Review and assess current efforts to support student behavioral health needs (at all 3 target schools)</li> <li>● Each school complete the SHAPE school health assessment and performance evaluation system, (tier 1, 2 and 3) (co-created by SAMHSA and Center for School Mental Health)</li> </ul>	<p>Caron Treatment Centers, CISEPA, Principal</p> <p>CSC, principal, guidance team, identified school staff, school based behavioral health Counselor, SAP Liaison</p> <p>CISEPA, Principals, and District</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop and implement effective referral process and communication processes for at risk students</li> <li>● Confirm schedule of when students can be pulled out by grade for behavioral health interventions (as to not conflict with reading/math instruction)</li> <li>● Receive referrals and provide 1:1 or small group therapeutic supports using evidence-based trauma informed models of care</li> <li>● Provide on-going communication to SAP team on progress, information learned in sessions</li> <li>● Meet with principal, guidance counselors, case managers routinely to discuss what's working well and what areas need to be improved</li> <li>● District level meetings with case managers, school principals and to discuss what's working and what needs to be improved at more of a</li> </ul>	<p>Administration</p> <p>Principal, School staff</p> <p>RSD, CISEPA, Principals, Case Managers</p> <p>RSD, CISEPA</p>
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		<p>available resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review best practices in health access from other CS sites</li> <li>● Identify and execute strategies to improve access to health services, higher connection/completion rates with dental/vision/immunizations (as part of CS Strategic Alignment Plan)</li> <li>● Promote connection to and engagement with area health services and resources (such as A-CHIP in home family case management and health services, Nurse Family Partnerships, etc.)</li> <li>● Track and measure data on connecting students with needed health services; develop improvement plans based upon data review</li> </ul>	<p>RSD, CISEPA, BOSS, Health Centers, Health Bureau</p> <p>CSC, families, area health providers</p> <p>CSC, Principal, School Nurse, RSD, BOSS, CISEPA</p>
<p>Start          Septemb          er 2023-          and</p>	<p>Providing At          Risk Students          with High          Quality Positive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Contract with high quality positive youth development providers to provide after school programming at target schools</li> </ul>	<p>CISEPA</p>

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<p>ongoing through out the 5 year period of performance</p>	<p>Youth Development Opportunities (which includes Tutoring)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review current processes for identifying students in need of positive youth development and connecting with appropriate interventions</li> <li>● Inventory existing positive youth development and tutoring programs delivered at school (including any 21<sup>st</sup> Century programming), assess all available program outcome data to determine efficacy of program ability to improve student attendance, behavior and/or academics</li> <li>● Develop data driven, effective process for identifying and supporting at risk students with after school programs so there is one streamlined, aligned process for connecting at risk students with services and supports</li> <li>● Survey students on types of programs they are interested in and needs they would like schools to address; analyze data to determine</li> </ul>	<p>CSC, Principal, Guidance Team, CISEPA provides support, United Way Berks, Alvernia University</p>
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		<p>most critical programs adopt/purchase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Orient all providers to the Partnership Management Plan expectations and procedures. Ensure awareness with building specific information is clear and comprehensive</li> <li>● Ensure all providers have had a Trauma training (trauma 101, trauma informed practices)</li> <li>● Recruit additional out of school time programs, based on student need and interest, especially higher education and faith-based partners for in-kind tutoring, mentoring and other programs</li> <li>● Schedule positive youth development and tutoring programs (space, schedule, numbers served, etc.) and assign at-risk students to programs</li> <li>● Set up effective data management system to track dosage of positive youth development</li> </ul>	<p>CISEPA</p> <p>External Evaluator,</p>
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		<p>programming for students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track attendance, behavior and academic data on students engaged in positive youth development programs, as well as by dosage of interventions to identify effective programs and integrated services</li> <li>Conduct end of program survey to assess interest, quality of program and impact of program with students; use this data to inform program selection and recruitment for subsequent school years</li> </ul>	<p>Internal Evaluation Team, BOSS, CISEPA</p> <p>CSC, students, out of school time providers, CISEPA</p> <p>External Evaluator, Internal Evaluation Team, BOSS, CISEPA</p>
<p>Start          Septemb          er 2023-          and          ongoing          througho          ut the 5          year</p>	<p>Operating high          fidelity          community          school model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop core leadership team to meet monthly to review, assess data, program needs and develop data driven strategies at target schools</li> <li>Develop and schedule monthly core team meetings at target schools</li> <li>Develop and communicate clear roles, functions and expectations of the</li> </ul>	<p>Principals,          CISEPA, BOSS,          CSCs</p>

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<p>period of          performa          nce</p>		<p>core team at target schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review all data collected from inventories (of services and processes) and needs assessments (student, family, community partners), Title 1 school improvement plan goals, RSD district strategic plan priorities, strategies at target schools</li> <li>● Develop Community School Support Plan for each school</li> <li>● Implement key strategies outlined in CS Support Plan for each school</li> <li>● Identify and invite key community partners to join the school's Support Team ( partners include parents/caregivers, students, health and behavioral health providers, human service providers, local businesses, civic organizations, police departments, higher education institutions, early childhood providers, etc.)</li> </ul>	
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and execute effective Inclusive School Support Team meetings where partners are engaged in creating solutions, discussing challenges, identifying resources</li> <li>• Review end of year data as core team, identify positive trends and effective partners/strategies and negative trends, reasons, create solutions for subsequent school year</li> <li>• Review end of year data with CLT, identify positive trends and effective partners/strategies and negative trends, reasons, create solutions for subsequent school year</li> </ul>	<p>CSCs, Principals, ISST, CISEPA, BOSS</p> <p>External Evaluator, Internal Evaluation Team, CISEPA, BOSS, Principals</p>
<p>Septem ber 2023 and each year of the</p>	<p>Positively and Meaningfully Engage Families in Child’s Educational Success</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and approve MOA with Centro Hispano to operate Parent Leadership Development Trainings with students and parents from target schools</li> <li>• Develop mechanism and processes for referrals and</li> </ul>	<p>CISEPA, Centro Hispano</p>

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<p>project          period          of          perform          ance          (years          1-5)</p>		<p>communication flow, so school staff/CS staff are aware of issues, challenges, strengths, positive solutions/ideas that parents/students are expressing through Parent Leadership Training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify students and parents/caregivers who would be good candidates for leadership program and making referrals to Case Manager</li> <li>● Begin promoting resident leadership development opportunities in the targeted neighborhoods</li> <li>● Assess and analyze current family engagement efforts, attendance, schedules, communication efforts, as well as all feedback data from families and needs assessment data</li> <li>● Review best practices in family engagement from other school sites</li> <li>● Develop plan for meaningful family engagement events and activities (whole school fun family</li> </ul>	<p>CISEPA, RSD,          Principal, CSCs</p>
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		<p>events like literacy night/Book Blast, and more skill-building sessions for parents/caregivers like positive discipline) and host regular family engagement events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop and gather feedback from parents/caregivers on all family engagement events (what was learned, level of interest/enjoyment in event, best time/day for events, supports needed to attend (like transportation/child care)</li> <li>● Use parent feedback data to improve future family engagement events</li> </ul>	
<p>September 2024- and ongoing through out each</p>	<p>Reducing Chronic Absenteeism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide training for principals, guidance teams, CS staff on chronic absenteeism (how to calculate, how to use as a tool to improve school success for at risk youth)</li> <li>● Champion Every Day Attendance Campaign, as part of Attendance</li> </ul>	<p>CISEPA  Principal, School</p>



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		<p>evidence-based trauma focused interventions as needed)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement multi-tiered interventions for attendance, as well as effective referral and communication processes</li> </ul>	
<p>June 2024 and ongoing each summer for the project period of performance Years 2-5</p>	<p>Engage At Risk Youth in Summer Learning and Summer Meals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess current summer learning efforts and resources (reductions in summer slide, percent gained/lost math/reading skills, how many served, outcome data, how were families engaged, retention and average attendance, etc.)</li> <li>• Develop improved plan for summer learning engagement (referral, recruitment, promotion, family engagement, academic growth)</li> <li>• Host fun, family engagement events throughout summer program (based upon parent feedback in surveys)</li> <li>• Host attendance incentive</li> </ul>	<p>Principal, Summer Learning Teachers, Enrichment partners, RSD, CISEPA, CSCs</p> <p>CSCs, families, summer school staff, RSD</p> <p>CSCs, Principal,</p>

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		<p>events for students with outstanding attendance and their families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track data to assess program effectiveness (attendance, retention, academic growth, level of family engagement, program hours provided, etc.)</li> <li>Make recommendations for improvements in summer learning program for subsequent summer programming</li> </ul>	<p>CISEPA, RSD, OST providers, BOSS Consortium</p>
<p>January 2023 and ongoing throughout the project period of performance (Years 1-5)</p>	<p>Meeting Basic Needs of Students and Families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess and inventory current efforts to address student and family basic needs (food, clothing, hygiene products, housing and utility assistance referrals, etc.), # of referrals/requests, # students/families connected with care</li> <li>Align basic need requests and programs with data from family needs assessment conducted and develop plan to improve efforts at addressing student and family basic needs</li> </ul>	<p>CSCs, Principals, Guidance Counselors, CISEPA provides support</p>

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		<p>supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meet with all community partners who provide basic need supports to school families (faith based, corporate, civic, etc.) to assess what’s working, what could be improved, capacity to provide more/different supports for families</li> <li>● Identify new partners in the community for donations, in-kind support, and support to students/families</li> <li>● Recruit and solicit donations, new services to meet basic needs of students and families</li> <li>● Promote summer meals sites throughout RSD to families and students (flyers, yard signs, text messages with meal site locations); promote summer meal sites</li> </ul>	<p>CISEPA, CSCs, BOSS</p> <p>Principals, School Teachers, RSD, CISEPA, BOSS</p>
September 2023	Promote School Readiness &	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Promote United Way’s Ready.Set.Read! campaign and</li> </ul>	<p>CSCs, CISEPA. BOSS, United</p>

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<p>and ongoing throughout the project period of performance (Years 1-5)</p>	<p>Quality Early Childhood Education</p>	<p>initiate other literacy initiatives in identified school to encourage talking, reading, singing to infants, toddlers to promote healthy brain development)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work collaboratively with United Way Berks and Opportunity House second Street Learning Center to inventory existing early childhood partners and activities at the school; invite area child care and early learning providers that serve Reading to the BOSS Consortium. Identify best practices, program capacity, partnership opportunities</li> </ul>	<p>Way Berks, School/Community Leadership Team Members, school staff, health partners</p>
<p>September 2023 and ongoing throughout the project</p>	<p>Building Smooth Transitions for Students along the Pipeline to college/career success</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and analyze current transition efforts (from k-readiness to 5-6<sup>th</sup> grade transitions to 8-9<sup>th</sup> grade transitions, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade + transition to college/career) to identify what works, what needs to be improved, current and potential partners</li> </ul>	<p>CSCs, Principals, Reading High School Principals, guidance teams at each pipeline school, CISEPA provides support,</p>

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<p>period of          performance          (Years 1-5)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strategically recruit out of school time programs that teach, build career skills (such as Salvation Army, YMCA, Boys &amp; Girls Club, Reading Public Museum, Reading Science Center Google Works, etc.) for subsequent school years</li> <li>● Develop plans for summer transition events and activities (ie k-readiness camp, 6<sup>th</sup> grade transition camp, 9<sup>th</sup> grade transition camp), based upon available resources</li> <li>● Implement transition events, opportunities for transitioning students and families (k, 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>)</li> <li>● Develop and disseminate survey tool to gather student and parent/caregiver feedback on transition events in effort of continuous improvement</li> <li>● Partner with area higher</li> </ul>	<p>out of school time partners</p> <p>CISEPA,          Evaluation team,          External Evaluators,          RACC, Alvernia University</p>
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		education institutions (including local community colleges) to connect youth and their parents with programs and skill-building opportunities	
September 2023 and ongoing throughout the project period of performance (Years 1-5)	Evaluation of Grant Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Contract with External Evaluator</li> <li>● Confirm all data sources and indicators; identify data collection methods that may need to be created</li> <li>● Create new data collection methods, processes (if needed)</li> <li>● Host meeting with grant supported schools to review grant evaluation requirements, data sources, timelines, etc.</li> <li>● Develop and execute quarterly outcome data review meetings to identify positive/negative trends and make course corrections with strategies</li> <li>● Collect and analyze data</li> <li>● Host annual meeting to review annual data across 3 target schools</li> </ul>	CISEPA, RSD, Internal Evaluation Team, External Evaluator, Principals

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The chart below visually displays both timeline and milestones for Year Two through Year Five of the grant period of performance (January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2027). Formative evaluation will result in ongoing modifications based upon identified best practices and student/parent voice.

**YEAR 2-5: January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2027**

**Timeline and Milestones**

**Formative evaluation will result in ongoing modifications based upon identified best practices and student/parent voice.**

Critical Element	Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
	Jan- Jun	July- Dec	Jan- Jun	July- Dec	Jan- Jun	July- Dec	Jan- Jun	July- Dec
Conduct, Analyze Needs Assessments (students, families, school staff, partners)	X		X		X		X	
Develop annual data driven community school strategic alignment plan	X		X		X		X	

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Continue tracking data on effectiveness of all CS activities, programs and events at each school	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Continually improve process for identifying at risk students and connecting them with appropriate services interventions and supports	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Train all school-based providers to include SAP, Developmental Relationships Framework, Restorative Practices, Using Circles Effectively, Suicide Prevention, Youth	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

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Mental Health First Aide								
Continue building principal leadership in CS model and use as school transformation model	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Continue providing meaningful family engagement and skill building opportunities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Host regular whole school family engagement events (elementary school level)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

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Continue tracking outcome data on students engaged in programming and services to assess program efficacy and appropriate amount of intervention needed for desired outcome	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Continue improving upon access to physical and behavioral health services for students and families	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Continue to grow school staff buy in and engagement in community school model and events	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Continue to grow and improve quality of	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

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early childhood connections								
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Host school readiness events for families and their young children (0-5 years) throughout the school year and summer	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Continue to improve transition along the pipeline to college and career success	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Host Career and College Fairs at all 3 schools; facilitate college/career field trips for all 3 schools;	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

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Develop new partnership opportunities with local community college (RACC) for high school students, possibly middle school students	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Operating an effective and data driven core leadership team at each school	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Operating an effective, data driven and engaging Community Leadership Team at each school	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Continue to improve upon effectiveness of	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

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summer learning programs and supports (recruitment, retention, attendance, academic benefit, promotion)								
Ongoing Continuous improvement process for school team/CS team/ school-based partner communication, referrals, securing family consents, sharing at risk student information, etc.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Continuous improvement in out of school time engagement (meet student voice/interest,	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

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high quality programs, improved student attendance/behavior)								
Continuous improvement in reducing chronic absenteeism (whole school campaigns, incentives, using data as tool, effectiveness of attendance team and attendance support staff, securing of additional resources)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Continuously recruiting new programs and partners to meet student and family needs	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

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Engagement in	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
systems level coalition efforts and public awareness campaigns								
Continuous development of schools into trauma sensitive schools	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Continuous improvement efforts to improve student behavior in school	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ongoing development of data driven multi tiered system of supports for students in each school	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

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Ongoing data collection, evaluation for FSCS grant	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Regular meetings at	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

both school and district level to keep school, district and community partners engaged in continuous improvement and systems level changes to improve student and family outcomes								
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Each full-service community school site will have a full-time coordinator of pipeline services. Applicable funding sources for each coordinator position are described in our Project Budget and Budget Narrative. Communities In Schools of Eastern PA has a robust collaborative hiring process for new Community School Coordinators (CSCs) to ensure the right fit for each school. Prior to the start of the 2023-2024 school year (anticipate 90 days prior), CISEPA will offer positions to new staff. 10<sup>th</sup> & Penn Elementary School already has a full-time coordinator, fully funded by the Reading

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School District, CISEPA, and United Way of Berks County. Coordinators at Tyson Schoener Elementary School and Southwest Middle School will be funded through this grant opportunity as described in the budget and budget narrative.

CISEPA will ensure and deliver professional development for personnel managing, coordinating and delivering pipeline services. CIS has a solidified plan to most effectively support the entire network of Community School Coordinators (CSC) that has been developed, piloted and is currently in action throughout the Lehigh Valley (in partnership with the United Way of Lehigh Valley). All Lead Partners will join these training sessions monthly during the grant period of performance. CISEPA is responsible for onboarding all new CSCs to the CS Network. The BOSS consortium will convene CSCs every other month and peer learning and expert facilitated learning is conducted. Monthly professional development sessions will be organized and be more individualized so that newer and more seasoned CSCs receive training applicable to their level of experience. At the school site level, a core meeting takes place. This meeting consists of Principal, CSC and CISEPA. The meeting is intended to help all partners stay connected, use data to drive success with high quality, coordinated programs and services that meet the explicit needs of students and families in the building. These meetings also serve as a mechanism for continuous improvement. Each CSC also has a direct Supervisor with a minimum of 1 hour a month of formal supervision as a standard expectation. School principals also serve as a daily oversight and partner with the CSC.

The Project Plan includes joint utilization and management of school facilities. Each of the three school partnerships will have a School Board approved MOU that stipulates the intention of the school as a Community School, and outlines the expectations of each

entity in this agreement.

The Management Plan is adequately designed to achieve the objectives on time and within budget. CISEPA is currently leading work across a 40 school Community School network in the Lehigh Valley and will utilize this effective, efficient and well designed Infrastructure model with full consideration of the unique identified needs of the three identified schools. Costs for supervision and staffing have been adequately built into the budget. The budget is based on existing models and true costs.

## **6. QUALITY OF THE PROJECT EVALUATION**

### **Internal Evaluation**

CISEPA will use a participatory mixed-methods outcomes-based approach in the evaluation that includes qualitative and quantitative data gathering and analysis. Best practice in community school evaluation encompasses both the quality of implementation and how specific services and activities produce better results. Such an approach is the most rigorous framework for an evaluation that seeks to show not just what is working (or not), but also to explain why.

Therefore, some evaluation methods to be employed in the evaluation are aimed at understanding implementation and some at collecting data on results, such as academic test scores, attendance, youth behavior, parent and teacher attitudes and behavior and school culture. As a participatory evaluation, there will also be a conscious effort to ensure that key stakeholders are involved in setting goals, helping to identify and collect data, and collaborating with CISEPA in the logistics of site visits.

Moreover, Communities in Schools is committed to a Plan-Do-Study-Act model of effecting change. As a result, project evaluation will be guided by a rapid-cycle continuous

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improvement process model whenever possible. The underlying principle of such an approach is to regularly test a particular performance indicator on a small scale, learn what you can and use those learnings to improve what you are doing. Such ongoing evaluations and course corrections are critical in any undertaking designed to effect substantive and long-term change.

In practice, this means that the CISEPA evaluation team will, whenever possible, compare the baseline data with current information, as well as assess the as-is situation with respect to desired endline results. In turn, this data will be further assessed against the project timetable. This way, the team can measure whether or not what we are doing is actually resulting in an improvement toward the targeted aim. By evaluating program effectiveness this way we will:

- Minimize risks and expenditures of time and money
- Make changes in a way that is less disruptive to key stakeholders
- Reduce resistance to change by starting on a small scale
- Learn from the ideas that work, as well as from those that do not

Thus, by starting with small changes to test ideas quickly and easily, and using simple measurements to monitor the effect of changes over time, rapid-cycle testing can lead to larger improvements through successive quick cycles of change.

**Performance Measures:** Section 4625(a)(4)(C) of the ESEA provides the basis for one performance measure for the FSCS program that CISEPA will measure: the percentage and number of individuals targeted for services and who receive services during each year of the project period. Additionally, the following 10 indicators will be measured by the CISEPA evaluation team:

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- student chronic absenteeism rates;
- student discipline rates, including suspensions and expulsions;
- school climate information, which may come from student, parent, or teacher surveys;
- provision of integrated student supports and stakeholder services;
- expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities;
- family and community engagement efforts and impact;
- collaborative leadership and practice strategies: building the capacity of educators, principals, other school leaders, and other staff to lead collaborative school improvement structures, such as professional learning communities;
- regularly convening or engaging all initiative-level partners, such as LEA representatives, city or county officials, children’s cabinets, nonprofit service providers, public housing agencies, and advocates;
- regularly assessing program quality and progress through individual student data, participant feedback, and aggregate outcomes to develop strategies for improvement; and
- organizing school personnel and community partners into working teams focused on specific issues identified in the needs and assets assessment.

### **Impact of the Evaluation Methods on Performance**

With assessment embedded throughout the project as a continuous process, each strategy will be examined as it is designed, piloted and refined for implementation to increase impact. The development of these assessments is the provenance of CISEPA Data and Evaluation lead (Jon Irons) and the CISEPA evaluation team along with community

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partners and other service providers. The results will be considered among the key internal stakeholders and shared with the External Evaluator through meetings and reports. The CISEPA evaluation team will work with the partners and school district personnel to produce a brief focused report on the results of the formative evaluation as a benchmark to be shared. The summative evaluation conducted annually by the External Evaluator under the aegis of the CISEPA builds on the formative evaluation with due consideration for the findings of the formative assessment and the tactical adjustments made in the implementation protocol as a result. Quantitative and qualitative assessments designed to examine issues under scrutiny will culminate in an impact analysis of all critical features in the final year of the project to assist with sustainability of FSCS impact and continued transformative change.

A cumulative report prepared by the External Evaluator will provide a record of project development, tactical changes and their impact, as well as the overall trajectory for each performance measure for every year. Concluding with recommendations to increase the intended impact, the evaluation report will provide the project management team with the means to make strategic adjustments in the implementation plan for the upcoming year with the ultimate goal of meeting – or exceeding – the performance measures established over the course of the five-year implementation period of the project. The summative evaluation will be shared with school coordinators, building administrators, the CISEPA team, as well as community partners/BOSS Consortium.

**Table 8** below identifies the performance indicators, data elements, data collection and data analysis methods/tools to be used for formative (benchmarks) and summative (outcomes) assessment.

**Table 8: Performance Indicators, Data Elements, Methods and Tools**

Performance Measure	Method/Assessment Tool	Frequency and Data Reporting
the percentage and number of individuals targeted for services and who receive services during each year of the project period.	CIS Data Management (CISDM) Tier I and Student Support Summary reports, compared to school enrollment reported in Needs Assessment	Quarterly via a quarterly progress report to the school, affiliate, and leadership
student chronic absenteeism rates;	LEA student information system (SIS) attendance reports	Quarterly
student discipline rates, including suspensions and expulsions;	LEA student information system (SIS) attendance reports	Quarterly
school climate information, which may come from student, parent, or teacher surveys;	CIS Student Engagement Survey; CISEPA Needs Assessment surveys/focus groups/interviews	Twice each school year, once in the Fall and once in the Spring
provision of integrated student supports and stakeholder services;	CISDM reports for Caseload Detail, Goal Achievement, Student Planned Supports; Student Support Detail	Quarterly (summary of schoolwide and ISS model supports); Monthly (case management requirements)

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<p>expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities;</p>	<p>CISDM Student Support Detail and Tier I reports for in-school and after school activities</p>	<p>Quarterly</p>
<p>family and community engagement efforts and impact;</p>	<p>CIS Student and Family Engagement Survey; CISDM Tier I and Student Support Detail reports</p>	<p>Quarterly (assessment of attendance, participation in engagement efforts), Annually (assessment of impact)</p>
<p>collaborative leadership and practice strategies, which may include building the capacity of educators, principals, other school leaders, and other staff to lead collaborative school improvement structures, such as professional learning communities;</p>	<p>Assessed by using the Community School Standards self-assessment to determine where the school is on the continuum of the standards. Educators, principals, other school leaders, and other CS staff will be assessed for progress</p>	<p>Twice each school year, once in the Fall and once in the Spring</p>
<p>regularly convening or engaging all initiative-level partners, such as LEA representatives, city or county officials, children’s cabinets,</p>	<p>Evidence will include minutes and attendance of the BOSS consortium meeting</p>	<p>Quarterly</p>

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nonprofit service providers, public housing agencies, and advocates;		
regularly assessing program quality and progress through individual student data, participant feedback, and aggregate outcomes to develop strategies for improvement;	Exit survey of participants from programs for feedback from participants, we will look at individual student data for students who participated in programs, to determine impact.	Quarterly

**Independent External Evaluation**

Educational Enterprises, LLC (EE) will be our project evaluator. Educational Enterprises, LLC (EE) is uniquely qualified to conduct the evaluation of the Full Scale Community School Grant for Communities in Schools of Eastern Pennsylvania. EE has an established track record within the region with respect to the conduct of evaluation studies and providing user-friendly reports in a timely manner. EE has also served as the evaluator for the Pennsylvania Department of Education and some of these activities have had a direct bearing on related initiatives such as the Mathematics and Science Partnerships Program. Copies of sample evaluation reports, references, and resumes for EE staff may be found on the EE website: [www.eduenterprises.net](http://www.eduenterprises.net)

EE staff chiefly focus their efforts on federally funded initiatives in support of K-12 education and educational reform initiatives in the mid-Atlantic region. The mission of Educational Enterprises is to provide information from objectively gathered and

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systematically analyzed data which impart guidance and support, program planning, informed decision-making, and evaluation of educational practices that assist educators throughout the mid-Atlantic region to become more data-driven. EE has demonstrated experience collecting, managing, analyzing, and reporting K-12 educational data as independent evaluator for CIS's 21st CCLC Cohort 6A and Cohort 8. EE has an understanding of FERPA and data safeguarding. EE has assisted CIS in setting up the evaluation plan and assisted in fulfilling reporting requirements including the annual evaluation report, receive all collected data and will apply data analysis methods and procedures to precisely measure the designated performance indicators through quantitative and qualitative data

Educational Enterprises staff are fully aware of the fact that evaluations of program efficacy need to be sensitive to the unique features of program operations and the ways in which programs continue to evolve in meeting program goals and objectives as well as the needs of their constituencies.

EE staff are experts in the design of research and the use of evaluation methods, program implementation and compliance, as well as problem solving. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are employed to produce a comprehensive evaluation. Quantitative assessment methods include analysis of standardized test data and the development, administration, coding, and analysis of questionnaires, interviews and observations.

, Managing Partner of EE, will be directly responsible for the conduct of this evaluation. He received his Doctorate in Education from the University of Pennsylvania where his major fields of study were measurement, evaluation and techniques of experimental research. He also holds Master's degrees from the University of

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Pennsylvania and Temple University in educational psychology with majors in educational research and evaluation. Prior to founding Educational Enterprises, LLC, he was the Director of Quality Assurance and Evaluation at Temple University. With over 40 years of experience in the conduct of research and evaluation studies, Bill has worked in academic institutions such as University of Pennsylvania, DePaul University, and Lesley College as well as public school settings such as the Chicago Public Schools. He has provided technical assistance and consulting services to state departments of education (Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania), large school districts (Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia), and the federal government (Department of Education, Department of Transportation, and Bureau of Indian Affairs).

Educational Enterprises will use a participatory mixed-method approach in the evaluation that includes qualitative and quantitative data gathering and analysis. Qualitative assessment methods include: on-site program observation and the use of stakeholder focus groups. Best practice in community school evaluation encompasses both quality of implementation and how specific services and activities produce better results. The evaluation approach will seek to show not just what is working (or not), but also to explain why.

Some evaluation methods to be employed in the evaluation are aimed at understanding implementation and some at collecting data on results, such as academic test scores, attendance, school behavior, parent and teacher attitudes and behavior and school climate and culture. As a participatory evaluation, there will also be a conscious effort to ensure that key stakeholders are involved. Key stakeholders will also help identify and

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collect data, collaborate with Educational Enterprises in the logistics of site visits and collection of materials, and participate in feedback meetings with the evaluators.

The methods described are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project and employ best practices in community school evaluation. As noted, a critical component of the evaluation includes the use of objective performance measures (indicators) that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data that enhances each other and allow for close connections to be made between implementation of specific objectives and achievement of desired targeted outcomes.

EE will conduct an evaluation based on hard data as well as interviews and observations. There will be a formative evaluation, mid-year, to address program implementation that focuses on program operations and processes. A summative evaluation, available at the end of the program year, will reflect the growth and progress of the program in meeting established goals and objectives. EE's recommendations will be shared with key stakeholders to refine, improve, and strengthen the programs and to refine the performance measures. This process of periodic evaluation to assess progress toward achieving our goals will occur in meetings with key stakeholders, and during internal CIS progress monitoring and revisions will be made based on their recommendations.

The objectives and outcomes will be measured in both an implementation evaluation and a results evaluation. Critical aspects of conducting both and implementation and outcome evaluation include

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- Looking for fidelity of implementation. If objectives and their associated activities are conducted as believed to be needed, then the objectives are more likely to be met.
- Connecting activities to objectives to outcomes to goals. We want to be able to make reasonable assumptions that the outcomes occurred if the necessary and sufficient objectives are met. While we cannot prove causality, meeting certain objectives will lead to desired outcomes. If the outcomes are met, the likelihood of the model working as planned is more likely than if we merely seek a set of results.

**Methodology:** Key Performance indicators include but are not limited to academic performance, attendance, chronic absenteeism, behavioral data (Suspensions/ Discipline referrals), student social emotional progress (measured through student surveys), and parent engagement measured through focus groups and surveys. Milestones will be further measured through implementation data including number of students receiving services and by linking implementation outcomes for example, matching outcomes to participation in services. Specifically, each of the performance measures noted in the goals and outcomes section will be collected and tied to the goal they are intended to achieve to test the connection between implementation and achievement of goals.

Educational Enterprises will analyze data relating to academic outcomes, but also data relating to key preconditions to student performance and attainment such as attendance and data on behavior. Education Enterprises will be provided raw data from Reading School District via Communities In Schools for Reading, Math, attendance, suspensions and school readiness measures. Results will be further analyzed by various subgroups including after school students, English Language Learners (ELL) students, Special

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Education (IEP) students and any other cohorts that receive a particular intervention by the community.

An engagement survey for students, teachers, and family members, developed by Communities In Schools National in collaboration with American Institute of Research, will be used to elicit the views and perceptions of how they (or the children) are engaging in school. These items allow schools to monitor the students' global engagement levels and identify areas for additional supports to meet the students where they are at the moment. This survey will be distributed at the beginning of each school year and analyzed to measure changes in engagement levels and attitudinal variables. It is aligned to key FSCS goals in that it captures Emotional engagement ie: students' positive and negative feelings about school and feelings of belonging, Social engagement ie how students are connecting with teachers and other school adults as well as friends, behavioral engagement measures how involved students are in school or how they are participating and Cognitive engagement refers to students' level of interest and how they value school.

This survey developed in collaboration with Communities In Schools, National Office and American Institute of research, is adapted from other well-established and validated school climate surveys including: Alaska School Climate and Connectedness Survey (SCCS), American Institutes for Research Conditions for Learning (CFL) Surveys, Authoritative School Climate Survey (ASCS), Community and Youth Collaborative Institute (CAYCI) School Experience Survey, REACH Survey from the Search Institute, and U.S. Department of Education School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS).

**Self-Assessment:** A self assessment aligned with the Community School indicators will also be used to determine progress towards implementation of best practices as it relates to Community School Standards.

**Participation in Planning Meetings:** Educational Enterprises will attend meetings with the Coordinators at minimum two times per year and virtually if and when possible.

Attending these meetings will keep Educational Enterprises' evaluators up-to-date with school events, issues arising, any intermediate success and possible outcomes to track. The meetings are an opportunity for Educational Enterprises to provide site based professionals with ongoing feedback on the progress of the evaluation and any challenges arising.

Attendance at the meetings will also build a strong relationship between the evaluators and key program staff which facilitates communication on data collection.

**Site Visits:** Two comprehensive site visits per year will be conducted by Educational Enterprises using a set of interview protocols designed to elicit the views of stakeholders on how each community school is developing , including changes, achievements, challenges, and factors facilitating or hindering progress. This will involve: interviewing of all Community School site based professionals, interviewing principals, and or assistant principals; focus group interviews with parents and or parent coordinators, and focus group interviews with students.

**Reporting and Dissemination:** Educational Enterprises will submit a comprehensive annual report that synthesizes all data sources and makes recommendations for moving the program forward and increasing sustainability. The report will be publication quality that will facilitate effective dissemination and communication of results. Educational enterprises will also provide analysis for Federal Grant Reports

## 7. ASSURANCES

1. CISEPA and project partners will focus services on schools eligible for a school wide program under section 1114(b) of the ESEA. We will serve only schools with 40% or more low-income students.
2. Evaluation results will be made publicly available. Our consortium will provide notice that results will be publicly available.
3. CISEPA follows Communities In Schools procurement guidelines for contractors.
4. This project will follow all 2CFR200 Federal Regulations and will not supplant any federal funds.

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