



NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY SCHOOL COALITION

Application for the Full-Service Community Schools
Grant Program, August 2023

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Absolute Priorities

AP 2: Title IA Schoolwide Eligibility and Rural LEAs - Rural and Low-Income

In total, the North Carolina Community Schools Coalition (NCCSC) will serve 18 LEAs and 55 schools through the Department of Education's Full-Service Community School grant; of these, 13 LEAs and 44 schools meet the requirements of the Rural and Low-Income Schools (RLIS) program. NCCSC will track and promptly report any changes in school and LEA eligibility, any concerns about meeting requirements under Absolute Priority 2, and resulting effects of such changes to the Department of Education (DOE).

For year one of this proposal, NCCSC includes two RLIS LEAs, Vance County Schools and Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools, and will expand to 11 RLIS LEAs (Table 1) over the course of the grant period. NCCSC also plans to incorporate 11 Title IA schoolwide program-eligible schools from 5 non-rural LEAs (Table 1) with the purpose of: 1) addressing the needs of low-income students and those experiencing racial inequity by closing gaps in educational opportunities and providing basic needs and social connections to ensure youth are ready for college, work, and life; 2) learning from existing FSCS in these LEAs to enhance FSCS implementation in rural LEAs; and 3) expanding and enhancing existing FSCS supports, services, and resources to ensure full implementation of the FSCS four pillars framework.

Schools already implementing the FSCS Model with a full-time Community School Coordinator (CSC) will only receive funds from the NCCSC grant to supplement existing work, not supplant current resources, and NCCSC will ensure no duplication or overlapping activities from prior DOE awards.

AP 5: FSCS State Scaling Grants

NCCSC is composed of six **Year 1** LEAs (including 12 schools), the NC Department of Public Instruction, a State Steering Committee, and various nonprofit, public, and private entities (details provided in the Memorandum of Understanding in Appendix A), thereby meeting the definition of an eligible entity and requirements for Absolute Priority 5. This proposal supports the expansion of FSCSs to a total of 21,351 students, 55 Title IA schoolwide program-eligible schools, and 18 LEAs across North Carolina (NC; Table 1).

All Absolute Priority 2 and Absolute Priority 5 requirements and selection criteria have been addressed, with corresponding page numbers provided in Figures 5, 6, and 7.

Table 1. LEAs, Schools, and Students Included in the NC Statewide Scaling of FSCS

North Carolina State Scaling									
Total									
Total LEAs: 18 (16% of total state LEAs)			Total Schools: 55			Total Est Students: 21,351			
Total RLIS									
Total LEAs: 13			Total schools: 44			Total Est Students: 15,692			
Total Title I Eligible Non-Rural									
Total LEAs: 5			Total schools: 11			Total Est Students: 5,659			
Legend:	LEA/School = Rural Low-Income Schools				LEA/School = Title I Eligible Non-Rural Schools				
Year 1 LEAs & Schools					Year 2 - 5 LEAs & Schools				
LEA	//	School	# (%) Schools	Total Student Enrollment	% Minority	LEA	# (%) Schools	Estimate Student Enrollment	% Minority
West					West				
Asheville City Schools			1 (10%)	4,099	36.7%	Graham County Schools	3 (100%)	1,160	23.7%
		Hall Fletcher Elementary		258	41.9%				
Buncombe County			1 (2.2%)	22,079	33.5%	Swain County Schools	4 (100%)	1,787	34.4%
		Enka Intermediate		594	32.5%				
Central					Central				
Durham Public Schools			3 (5.5%)	31,754	80.8%	Warren County Schools	4 (57.1%)	1,260	86.7%
		*Club Boulevard Elementary		390	60.5%	Northampton County Schools	4 (57.1%)	861	90.4%
		*Fayetteville Street Elementary		223	96.9%	Weldon City Schools	3 (75%)	586	97.4%
		*Lakewood Elementary		373	88.2%	Roanoake Rapid City Schools	3 (60%)	1,978	42.9%
Vance County Schools			2 (12.5%)	5,323	88.0%	Vance County Schools	1 (6.3%)	368	88.0%
		Clarke Elementary		366	92.6%	Durham Public Schools	2 (3.6%)	2,134	80.8%
		Vance County High		921	90.6%	Granville County Schools	2 (11.8%)	853	63.7%
Orange County Schools			2 (14.3%)	7,200	49.8%				
		Central Elementary		318	65.1%				
		New Hope Elementary		516	69.6%				
East					East				
Pasquotank-Elizabeth City County Schools			3 (23.1%)	4,840	65.2%	Bertie County Schools	4 (57.1%)	1,305	90.1%
		*P.W. Moore Elementary		373	79.4%	Hyde County Schools	3 (100%)	489	51.5%
		Pasquotank Elementary		256	74.6%	Washington County Schools	3 (60%)	908	91.7%
		Elizabeth City Middle		555	63.8%	Tyrrell County Schools	3 (100%)	528	63.4%
						Hertford County Schools	4 (57.1%)	1,991	88.4%
Year 1 LEA & School Totals					Year 2 - 5 LEA Totals				
	LEAs: 6	Schools: 12		Est. Students: 5,143		LEAs: 14	CSEs: 43		Est Students: 16,208
* = Existing Community Schools									
% Minority = % of student population that identifies as non-white: American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Asian Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or 2 or more Races.									

Section 1. Need for the Project

1.1 Addressing the Needs of Underserved Populations Most Impacted

NCCSC has identified schools in communities most impacted by systemic racism and generational poverty, with a particular emphasis on Rural Low- Income Schools, for FSCS development and expansion. The communities to be served across NC’s Western, Central, Eastern regions grapple with disparities from food insecurity to chronic disease; among the most sobering are those shouldered by youth. The most vulnerable youth of NC are facing pervasive barriers to accessing adequate and equitable K-12 education and stand to inherit a legacy of poverty, limited job opportunities, and poor health unless action is taken. As NC Governor Roy Cooper confirmed by declaring a “state of emergency” for NC public education in May 2023, the urgency of the need cannot be overstated.¹

To be clear, all NC students are negatively impacted by the state’s history of subpar school funding. Although NC ranks 33rd in the US in overall state public education rankings, it is dead last (50th) in recent rankings for school funding effort and 48th in overall funding level (indicators that capture per-pupil spending relative to taxpayer income).² This results in NC schools continually struggling to obtain the adequate resources and qualified teachers needed for success. Yet, informing the need for this project, some schools that serve significantly higher proportions of students of color are struggling much more than others because they receive less funding despite being taxed at the same or higher rates.³ This disparity in funding dates to the early 1880s, when NC congressional leaders passed a bill segregating K-12 school funding based on race.^{4,5} In the early 1900s, state leadership routinely taught superintendents how to disproportionately allocate funds towards White schools, and by 1920, funding in White schools was nearly seven times that of Black schools. Similar trends have persisted for decades, enabled

by state legislation and enforced by violence against desegregation policies and White Flight to the suburbs or private schools.^{6,7}

In 1994, five school districts in low-wealth Eastern NC counties filed a lawsuit against the state (*Leandro v. State of North Carolina*), arguing that their school districts did not have enough money to provide an equal education for their children, even though residents were taxed at higher-than-average rates.³ This case was heard twice in 1997 and 2004, with the NC Supreme Court ruling that NC has a “constitutional obligation to ensure all children have access to a sound basic education, including well-trained teachers and principals and sufficient resources” and mandating transfer of funds to NC DPI for this purpose.

Today, more than 25 years after sounding the alarm on decades of institutional oppression, the five school districts involved in *Leandro* remain at the bottom of NC’s per pupil spending, demonstrating minimal change in equity. *As of the submission of this application, the mandated transfer of funds has yet to occur, with the NC Court of Appeals affirming that additional funding is necessary but cannot be ordered by the judicial branch.* While the case continues to be litigated in courtrooms⁸, children will begin another school year in under-resourced classrooms, denied their constitutional right to a sound basic education.

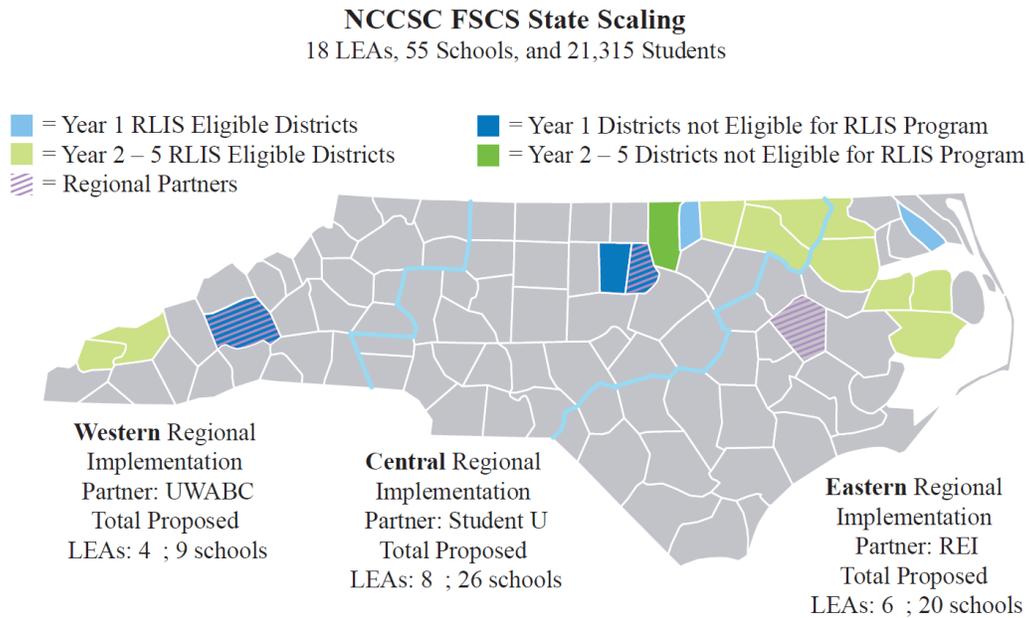
With a deep understanding of the history that brought us to this point, and the legislative and political battles that have kept NC in stasis, NCCSC presents an ambitious and achievable plan to move forward. This proposed project represents the collective vision of NCCSC, a group of parents, students, teachers, administrators, service providers, community partners, government representatives, researchers, and funders, many of whom have lived experience of the barriers faced by priority populations. For 18 months, NCCSC has convened weekly in service of creating the strategy outlined in this proposal. These diverse stakeholders have collectively developed the

proposed process, products, strategies, and practices represented in this project, the NC Full-Service Community School (FSCS) Initiative.

Guided by lead applicant, the Duke Clinical Research Institute (DCRI), and in collaboration with key partners—North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI), LEAs, and many more statewide community partners—NCCSC proposes to meet the needs of some of the most underserved students across each of three regions by implementing a dynamic FSCS four pillars model. A carefully considered governance structure—rooted in School Advisory Boards at the individual school level, aided by Councils at the regional levels, and bolstered by a State Steering Committee at the state level—will prioritize the insight of the communities it serves through every stage of the project and provide the infrastructure for seamless coordination at the local, regional, and state levels. **Over the five-year project period, NCCSC will serve 21,351 students across 18 LEAs and 55 schools.**

Working from the evidence-based regional implementation model developed by the National Implementation Research Network⁹, NCCSC will use Regional Implementation Partners to oversee the project across NC’s three regions: Western, Central, and Eastern. Each Partner has demonstrated experience establishing the FSCS model in their respective region and brings invaluable expertise with community-rooted knowledge about the unique needs and assets of their region’s communities. Each region and its corresponding Regional Implementation Partner are outlined following the map:

Figure 1. NCCSC FSCS State Scaling Map



Western NC: Home to the Blue Ridge and the Great Smoky Mountains, Western NC features majestic natural beauty. However, this region of Southern Appalachia also endures historically- and economically-rooted struggles, including the collapse of natural resource industries and the devastating effects of the opioid crisis. Although most of the region’s 23 counties are rural and largely White (an effect of decades of segregating practices in housing and employment), non-rural counties have significantly higher representations of people of color. All counties in Western NC share a higher burden of poverty than other areas of the state and many also demonstrate dismal educational indicators. Serving as the **Regional Implementation Partner of Western NC is United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County (UWABC)**, an organization that has worked with the Asheville/Buncombe County community for over 100 years. With 13 years of experience in the implementation of 7 FSCSs, UWABC is well-positioned to lead this project’s effort in Western NC. NCCSC plans to serve 4 LEAs and 9 additional schools in the region by the end of the grant period.

Central NC: Also known as the Piedmont, Central NC sits between mountains to the west and the coastal plains to the east. It is the most populous region of the state, containing Charlotte, Greensboro, and the state capital of Raleigh. Although this region is home to some of NC’s most affluent counties, communities disproportionately affected by racial and economic disparities are found throughout and represent those with the most concerning educational outcomes. **Serving as the Regional Implementation Partner for Central NC is Student U**, an organization that has led the implementation of key components of the FSCS model across 54 schools in Durham County and demonstrated measurable success in improving educational outcomes, particularly for first-generation students of color. NCCSC plans to serve 8 LEAs and 26 schools in the Central region by the end of the grant period.

Eastern: Comprised of the 44 easternmost counties, Eastern NC includes the counties along and east of Interstate 95. Vast stretches of farmland, coastal plains, and small towns define the region. Years ago, enslaved Africans and their descendants farmed in the Black Belt, including eastern NC counties such as Bertie, Hertford, Edgecombe, Northampton and Halifax; today, their descendants struggle to make ends meet, living well below the state poverty line. These are the counties that fought for justice in *Leandro vs. State of North Carolina*—and still lack equitable access to education. **Serving as the Regional Implementation Partner for Eastern NC is Rural Education Institute (REI)**, an institute of Eastern Carolina University, which currently leads the implementation of 1 FSCS in Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools. NCCSC will serve 6 LEAs and 20 schools in the region by the end of the grant period.

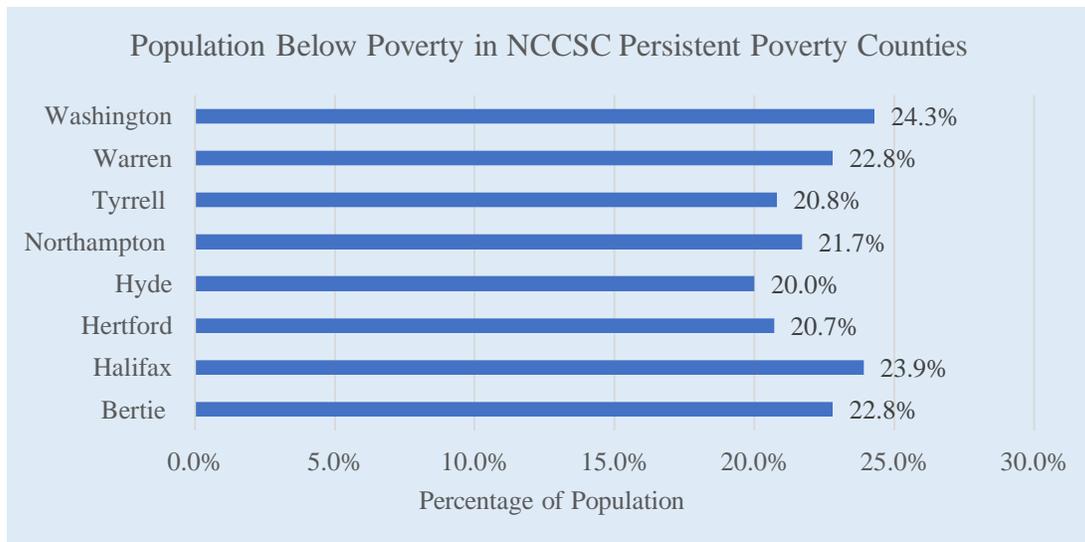
It is important to note that NCCSC’s strategy has been intentionally calibrated with regard to the breadth and depth of our proposed reach. Although each Regional Implementation Partner has the expertise to assist in FSCS expansion in their respective region without engaging in state-scaling efforts, they are committed to this project based on hard-earned knowledge that the

problems in public education left at the feet of NC’s most vulnerable children and families are *systemic, pervasive, and growing*. Despite the unique characteristics, challenges, and strengths of each region, generational poverty and systemic racism are the common roots of these regions’ educational disparities. NCCSC came together because of this shared belief that disparities in education are a statewide problem that requires a statewide solution. By establishing critical FSCS infrastructure in each region, NCCSC will lay the foundation to scale its model across NC—championing not only the idea of educational equity, but the blueprint for it, too.

In the pages that follow, we provide further data expounding upon the extent of poverty and systemic racism and their impacts on educational outcomes within all three Implementation Regions in NC. These data -- derived from publicly available sources as well as focus groups, interviews, and surveys of students, families, teachers, and staff from schools NCCSC will continue to serve-- solidify the need for FSCS implementation and expansion across NC and underpin NCCSC’s commitment to specific Year 1 and Years 2-5 LEAs and schools.

Poverty in NC is concentrated in rural areas. More than 40% of the state’s children are living in poor or low-income homes compared to 37 % of children nationally.¹⁰⁻¹² These disparities are particularly severe in rural NC.^{13, 14} According to the USDA Economic Research Service, based on 2021 American Community Service data, the poverty rate in rural NC is 17.8%, compared with 12.3% in urban areas of the state.^{14, 15} In fact, 47 of NC’s 115 LEAs are RLIS-eligible.^{16, 17} Of these, 13 are in 91% of North Carolina’s persistent poverty counties, where at least 20% of residents have maintained incomes below the national poverty line for 30 or more years (Figure 2).^{17, 18}

Figure 2. Population Below Poverty in NCCSC Persistent Poverty Counties



Across NC, race and ethnicity further compound the effects of rurality. Despite comprising only 41% of NC’s pediatric population, Black and Hispanic children account for nearly 60% of children living in poverty.¹⁹ Disparities in median income can be found across nearly all non-White racial and ethnic groups. For example, African American residents in Vance County, location of a **Year 1** LEA and RLISs, have median incomes roughly 48% less than their White counterparts.²⁰⁻²² In Pasquotank County, another **Year 1** LEA and RLISs, White residents’ median incomes are 54% and 30% higher than those of Hispanic/ Latinx residents and African Americans, respectively.^{17, 21-23} In Tyrrell County, a **Year 2-5** LEA, 79% of African American children live in households under the Federal Poverty Level, compared to only 3.4% of White children.^{24, 25} Further, income inequality in these counties is stark. When comparing the quintile income inequality ratio (top income quintile: bottom income quintile) to that of the nation (5.0) and the state (4.8), many of the ratios in NCCSC’s **Year 2-5** LEAs are greater: Washington (6.3), Northampton (6), Halifax (5.9), and Bertie (5.6).²⁶ Unfortunately, economic inequality is linked to premature mortality and increased morbidity, worsened behavioral, physical, and mental health outcomes²⁷, and more firearm deaths²⁸.

Unemployment contributes to NC's poverty. In rural areas such as Vance County, unemployment is significantly higher (5.7%) than the average (3.7%) across NC.^{29, 30} Moreover, prospects for improvement are bleak; while the state projects overall continued job growth over the next seven years, nearly all of the industries projected to decrease disproportionately impact the rural counties, such as Farming, Fishing, and Forestry occupations (-700 jobs or - 2.1%).^{31, 32}

Inadequate access to food is common among NC's poor. In Pasquotank County, 41.3% of the population is considered "low access," with **Year 2-5** counties Hyde (100%) and Bertie (81.4%) reporting the worst access in the state.³³ Furthermore, nearly all designated RLIS LEAs have a significantly higher percentage of children living in food insecure households compared to the state's overall rate of 15.4 %.^{34, 35} An environmental analysis of Clarke Elementary and New Hope Elementary Schools in Orange County highlighted students with food insecurity as a critical issue. Churches in the schools' community regularly supply schools with food to prevent students from going hungry during weekend and school breaks.

Housing costs are prohibitive. According to the North Carolina Housing Coalition, each of the participating counties and most of their surrounding counties are deeply impacted by housing cost burdens.³⁶ Approximately 30% of households in **Year 1** LEAs, Vance, Pasquotank, Orange, Durham, and Buncombe, spend more than 30% of income on housing, thereby limiting the availability of funds for other needs.³⁶

Mental and physical health care are essential, yet often inaccessible. Mental and physical health are essential to positive educational outcomes, and consistent access to physical and mental health care services are linked to higher test scores and graduation rates, as well as the reduction of absenteeism, suspension, graduation rates, and risky behaviors.³⁷ Therefore, access to high quality care is imperative. Due to pandemic era legislation that required continuous coverage for low-income children and families, the rate of uninsured NC children dropped to 5% as of

2021.^{38, 39} Yet, increasing provider shortages render coverage nearly useless. In fact, as of 2023, all the **Year 2-5** populations reside in designated health professional shortage areas for primary, dental, and mental health care.⁴⁰⁻⁴²

Mental health is of particular concern across NC.⁴³ In 2019, suicide became the leading cause of death for children ages 10-14 in NC.^{44, 45} In 2020, an unprecedented 67 children in the state died by suicide.⁴⁶ In 2021, 20% of NC high school students reported seriously considering attempting suicide, up from 16% in 2017; one in 10 reported an actual attempt.^{44, 45} Although often overlooked, elementary students also show significant mental health needs. In Vance County's Central Elementary, only 50% of referred students received referred for consistent mental health services. New Hope Elementary in Orange County reported that they had to stop mental health referrals in November of the 2022-2023 school year when their partner mental health agencies could no longer accommodate new school referrals.

Poverty leads to unacceptable short- and long-term health, social, and academic outcomes. Inadequate food access has lasting impacts on long term negative health outcomes, including poor growth and development, increased use of emergency department services, worse academic performance, poorer social outcomes, anxiety, and depression.⁴⁷⁻⁴⁹ Poor housing quality is associated with poor psychological health and lower kindergarten readiness scores.⁵⁰ Mental health diagnoses in adolescents are often correlated with increased substance use disorders and higher rates of school delinquency.^{51, 52} The **Year 1** RLIS LEAs demonstrate high rates of school-based delinquency with 275.79 per 1000 students receiving short term suspensions in Pasquotank County, and 414.80 in Vance County, compared to the state average of 146.57.⁵³ This is particularly worrisome as research has demonstrated that for every out-of-school suspension a student faced, they were 7% more likely to have contact with the juvenile justice system.⁵⁴ Once

those students returned to school, they were 20% more likely to receive an out-of-school suspension again.⁵⁴

As detailed below, the well-known effects of poverty on educational outcomes are evident in the LEAs and schools prioritized by NCCSC.

Children entering kindergarten are unprepared to learn. Kindergarten readiness is a significant indicator of a child’s ability to be successful, and children who enter kindergarten behind their peers academically are more likely to stay behind for the rest of their education.⁵⁵ Students in NCCSC LEAs are consistently behind as they enter kindergarten. For example, only 20% of students at Pasquotank Elementary entering kindergarten are ready.⁵⁶

Schools are low performing. North Carolina uses a letter grading system to indicate a school’s overall performance rating. Under this system, a “D” or “F” indicates low performance. More than 83% of **Year 1** schools and 80% of schools in **Year 2-5** LEAs scored a “D” or “F” letter grade.⁵³ The remainder do not fare much better with “C” grades.

Students are missing critical academic benchmarks.³⁵ All **Year 1** and **Year 2-5** RLIS LEAs, except Hyde County Schools, are significantly below NC’s average proficiency of 48.1% for elementary school reading, with Vance County Schools at 31.8%, Washington County Schools at 27.8%, and Weldon City Schools at 25.4%, indicating students lack sufficient understanding of grade level content for general education reading.³⁵ Unfortunately, these trends are also reflected across middle school and high school reading.³⁵ Durham and Orange County schools are also markedly lower than the NC average for reading, including two participating schools in Durham at, or barely above, 20% proficiency.^{35, 57, 58} Similarly, proficiency in math among **Year 1** and **Year 2-5** RLIS are abysmal, with a mere 6.7% of high school students in Northampton County Schools, 12.9% in Weldon City Schools, 17.5% in Pasquotank County and

22.5% in Vance County reaching proficiency according to Math 1 scores, compared to the state average of 33.1%.⁵⁹

Racial and economic disparities in reading and math proficiency are also evident, even in LEAs where issues with proficiency may not be immediately evident. The most recently available data from Orange County Schools show that 73% of African American and 72% of Hispanic/Latinx students were not proficient in math in the 2021-2022 school year; 77% of Hispanic/Latinx and 74% of African American students were not proficient in reading; and 72% and 77% of those economically disadvantaged were not proficient in math and reading, respectively.⁵⁸

Students are chronically absent. NC's State Board of Education defines a "student chronic absentee" as a student "whose total number of absences is equal to or greater than 10 percent of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school during such school year".⁶⁰ Students who are chronically absent are more likely to fall behind in school, demonstrate poorer social-emotional outcomes, and increase the risk of not graduating.⁶¹⁻⁶³ On average in 2022, 31.2% of NC students were chronically absent and nearly all participating schools have rates near or above this average.³⁵ All **Year 1** RLIS LEAs have absenteeism rates above NC's average, with Pasquotank County having 39.8% of students chronically absent, and Vance County reporting a concerning rate of 52.3%.^{64, 65} Durham County schools report that 41.2% of students were chronically absent in the 2021-2022 school year.⁵⁷

Disparities in school attendance also exist by race and ethnicity as well as economic status. In Pasquotank County, 50% of Native American students and 48% of those economically disadvantaged have the highest rates of chronic absenteeism.⁶⁴ Economically disadvantaged students in Vance County also have a high rate of chronic absenteeism at 58%; African American students have the next highest rate of 56%.⁶⁵ Non-rural **Year 1** LEAs show similar trends, with 30% of African American students in Orange County, 37% of African American students in

Buncombe County, and 51% of economically disadvantaged students in Durham County reported chronically absent.^{57, 58, 66}

A growing number of students are not in school or working. The number of NC students aged 16-24 who are not in school and not working (“opportunity youth”) has increased from 7.1% to 12% between 2015-2021.⁶⁷ The **Year 1** RLIS LEAs are both above the current state average, with Vance County schools at a staggering 19.8% and Pasquotank County schools at 12.5%.⁶⁸ The percentages of opportunity youth are even more concerning in **Year 2-5** RLIS LEAs, such as Hertford (26.6%), Northampton (26.4%), and Halifax (25.4%).⁶⁸ In Buncombe County schools, 11.5% of youth are not in school or working.⁶⁸ This troubling trend indicates that many youth are disconnected from the people, services, supports, and experiences that help them develop the knowledge and skill essential for adulthood.⁶⁹

Students are not graduating high school or prepared for college: On average, 53.1% of NC’s students are deemed college or career ready.³⁵ However, this average is considerably lower in **Year 1** and **Year 2-5** RLIS LEAs, including Vance, Hertford, Washington, Tyrrell, and Bernie counties, where only 11.6% to 33.3% of students are college or career ready.^{65, 70-73} Similar trends exist for students graduating on time and enrolling in college. In Pasquotank County, only 65.4% of students have a timely graduation compared to an average of 86.4% across NC; and only 52% of students in Durham County and 36% in Vance County enroll in college compared to the average of 62% in NC.^{57, 74}

FSCSs are critical for NC. Despite all that has been stacked against North Carolina’s most underserved students and families, communities across the state have demonstrated unwavering resilience and determination to overcome adversity by cultivating localized supports and weaving together a tapestry of partners committed to providing children and families with the resources needed to live productive and dignified lives. NCCSC has witnessed the impact of

existing FSCS models across the state and believes the FSCS four pillars framework is critical to reversing the pervasive disparities that plague, in particular, students, families, and communities most impacted by systemic racism, and generational poverty. **NCCSC is honored to partner with 18 LEAs and 55 schools across the state to develop and strengthen FSCSs in areas of NC where answers to poverty and educational disparities are needed most.**

1.2 Support, Resources, and Services to Address the Needs of Targeted Population
In collaboration with school leadership, NCCSC will track and address the

challenges experienced by school community members of the target population discussed in Section 1.1. Table 2 briefly outlines the **direct and comprehensive pipeline of supports, resources, and services** from birth to career and how they align with the four pillars to provide access to high-quality early childhood education programs, support during students' transition between pre-K, elementary, middle, and high school, and resources to overcome challenges faced due to systemic racism, poverty, and other barriers.

Table 2. Alignment of the Four Pillars and the FSCS Services Pipeline

Service	Description
Pillar: Integrated Student Supports	
Food Security Services and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Kid Hungry will introduce their Schools as Nutrition Hubs evidence-based strategy to FSCSs to maximize access and participation in school meal programs and increase access to WIC, SNAP, and food skills education • Family Resource Centers (FRCs) will support the development of Nutritional Hubs and provide emergency food resources
Housing Stability Services and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSC and homeless education liaisons will connect families with children insured by Medicaid to Prepaid Health Plan Housing Specialists that will provide resources to address housing instability • The NC Homeless Education Program will train CSCs and homeless education liaisons how to identify barriers to supporting homeless students and ensure that homeless students have access to public education • Legal Aid of NC to provide legal support to families facing eviction or needing to address poor housing conditions • Funding will be available through FRCs to help families prevent eviction and maintain housing
Mental Health Services and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Public School Forum's NC Center for Resilience and Learning will increase trauma-informed practices and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in community schools by training and coaching staff to help them understand trauma and its impacts and helping schools implement strategies for resilience, support, and safety • NC Psychiatric Access Line (NC PAL) to provide mental and behavioral health training and consultation to schools staff on supporting students facing mental and behavioral health concerns
Physical Health Services and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duke Endowment will expand its Oral Health Program that provides access to school-based oral care to community schools • Through the NC State Health Improvement Plan (NC SHIP), partnerships with local health departments will be developed to implement effective programs that will address the physical health and education needs of students • A NCCSC representative will serve on the NC SHIP Community Council that is responsible for identifying priorities and potential policy options to improve population health and move the needle on indicators, including those addressing students' social, economic, educational, environmental, and health needs
Juvenile Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCCSC will collaborate with NC Secure All firearms Effectively to raise awareness of the importance of safe firearm storage by providing resources and best practices through FRCs and gun locks, and additional education will be provided through local health departments partnering with FSCSs • Student U and United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County will provide workshops and training on restorative practices and proactive circles to teachers, staff, and community members to develop community and build a culture of respect, responsibility, and accountability by repairing relationships when harm has occurred

Service	Description
Pillar: Expanded and Enriched Learning Time and Opportunities	
Early Childhood Education and Literacy Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart Start will increase access to early childhood education programs and literacy resources across FSCSs starting at birth to ensure children have the needed skills to succeed in school • Examples of programs: Book Babies focuses on newborns and helps develop early language and literacy skills; Books on Break support kindergarten through fifth-grade students preserve learning through summer reading programs
Out-of-School Time Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Public School Forum's NC Center for Afterschool Programs will work with schools and local providers to identify gaps in servicing out-of-school time needs and build capacity for programs, and provide professional learning and technical assistance to ensure high-quality afterschool and expanded learning programs are available
Support for Transitions to and Through Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCCSC will implement effective strategies from existing local programs to provide targeted student transition support for students entering kindergarten up through planning, financing, and applying to college
Pillar: Active Family and Community Engagement	
Family and Community Engagement Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated physical spaces in school buildings to streamline and consolidate data-driven resources and services for students, families, and community members • Examples of services: Emergency resources (food, diapers, hygiene products, etc.); education on eligibility for economic benefits and support for application processes; early childhood education and literacy programs, tutoring, and parenting courses; legal support for appealing housing evictions; funds to support school needs and meet acute needs of families
Pillar: Collaborative Leadership and Practices	
Collaborative Leadership and Practices Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student U will offer professional development to school staff to implement proven, data-driven collaborative practices • The STAR program will provide targeted teachers with opportunities to gain valuable experience in science, team building, collaborative leadership, equity, public speaking, and ethics that can be later translated into their classrooms • The Institute for Education Leadership will offer principals and staff statewide the opportunity to participate in the Community School Leadership Academy, where teachings on the FSCS model will be shared by principals and CSCs of existing FSCSs • Through the Educator Pipeline Collaborative, the Public School Forum of NC will develop a framework for effective teacher preparation partnerships across K-12, higher education, and workforce development designed to recruit, prepare, support, and retain a diverse, high-quality educator pipeline

NCCSC has identified LEAs and schools that represent some of the most significant needs across the three regions of NC. All students enrolled in **Year 1** schools will be served by the FCSC four pillars framework. Targeted interventions are designed to reach priority students, who are children and youth that fall into at least one of the categories outlined in Table 3 and make up the majority of students to be served by this grant.

Table 3. NCCSC Priority Students

PRIORITY STUDENTS Students Impacted by Intergenerational Poverty and Structural Racism	
Students Struggling in Schools as Determined by: Chronic Absenteeism Failing at Least One Course Inadequate Incoming Student Readiness Scores Inadequate Academic Proficiency	Students Who Identify as: Racial and Ethnic Minorities or LGBTQ+ Impacted by the Justice System Military- or Veteran-Connected Facing English Language Barriers

Table 4 outlines the projected number and percentage of rural and non-rural low-income students and families that will be served during the five-year grant period.

Table 4. Estimated Number of Students Served by FSCSs Across NC

Total Students and Families Supported by FSCS Services per Year						
	Total Population	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
		#/%	#/%	#/%	#/%	#/%
Students	21,351	3,065 (14%)	9,095 (43%)	1,4725 (69%)	18,148 (85%)	21,351(100%)
Families	21,351	2,135 (10%)	4,697 (22%)	6,832 (32%)	8,967 (42%)	10,676 (50%)

1.3 Closing Gaps in Educational Opportunity to Address Needs of the Targeted Population

NCCSC will use evidence-based strategies focused on fighting poverty and racial inequity to close gaps; address weaknesses in services, supports, and resources; and provide basic needs and social connections vital to students' and their families' academic success, well-being, and economic advancement. The comprehensive pipeline of services and the intended results are illustrated in Table 5. The needs outlined in this figure demonstrate how economic deprivation and racial inequity uniquely impact NCCSC students, schools, districts, and counties.

Table 5. NCCSC Services, Targeted Needs, and Intended Results*

NEED FOR SERVICES
EARLY GRADE SERVICES
High-quality education and transition support services for targeted students to promote academic recovery from preschool and other early childhood settings through 3rd grade
Need
<p>Year 1 RLIS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergarten Ready: 20% Pasquotank Elementary and 27.8% P.W. Moore Elementary • Did Not Meet Grade 3 Benchmark (NC 25.1%): 88.8% of economically disadvantaged and 84.8% of AA/B students at Clarke Elementary (VCS) <p>Year 1 Non-Rural:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergarten Ready: 28.9% Lakewood Elementary and 32.4% Club Boulevard Elementary (DPS) • Did Not Meet Grade 3 Benchmark (NC 25.1%): 75.8% Fayetteville St. Elementary (DPS), 59% Efland Cheeks Elementary (OCS), and 33.3% Hall Fletcher Elementary (ACS) • Pre-K Enrollment (NC 51%): 32% and 41% of children in Durham and Buncombe County <p>Year 2 - 5 LEAs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not Meet Grade 3 Benchmark (NC 25.1%): Highest in Weldon City Schools (53.7%), Washington (48%), Northampton (46.9%), and Graham (36.5%) County Schools
Intended Results
<p>Increase in the number of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority students and families participating in early childhood educational opportunities coordinated by the school FRC • Students signed up for pre-K and ready for kindergarten and subsequent early grades
TRANSITION SUPPORT SERVICES
Integrated services supporting transitions of targeted students between elementary school, middle school, high school, and post-secondary education or workforce
Need
<p>Year 1 RLIS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic Absenteeism (NC 31.2%): 41.8 - 61.4% of students • College/Career Ready (NC 53.1%): 21.6% of students at Vance County High • Opportunity Youth (NC 11.8%): 19.8% of Vance County 16-24-year-olds are not working/in school • Enrolled in College (NC 62%) : 30% Vance County High students <p>Year 1 Non-Rural:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic Absenteeism (NC 31.2%): 70.4% and 45% at Fayetteville St. and Lakewood Elementary (DPS) • Homelessness Graduation On-Time (NC 69.2%): 67.6% of Durham Public School students • Foster Care Graduation On-Time (NC 57.1%): 68.8% of Durham Public School students <p>Year 2 - 5 LEAs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity Youth (NC 11.8%): Highest in Hertford 26.6%, Northampton 26.4%, and Halifax 25.4% • Chronically absent (NC 31.2 %): 39.2-58.6% • College/Career Ready (NC 53.1%): Lowest in Washington 11.6%, Northampton 15.8%, Tyrrell 20.8%, and Warren 27.1% County Schools • School Dropouts (NC 66%): Highest minority dropouts in Weldon City Schools 100%, Hertford 84.3%, and Warren 82.1%
Intended Results
<p>Increase in the number of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority students and families participating in transition support services provided by the school FRC • Priority students with the necessary skills to enter the labor market and receiving guidance and tutoring support services

NEED FOR SERVICES

EXPANDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

High-quality educational opportunities and expanded learning times to promote powerful learning and academic achievement, and college and career readiness in targeted students

Need

Year 1 RLIS:

- **Poor Performing:** 100% of schools are assigned a letter score of "D" or "F"
- **Proficient in Reading (NC 48.4%):** Clarke (VCS) 19.3%, P.W. Moore 26.5 %, and Pasquotank elementary schools (ECPPS) 31.9%
- **Proficient in Math (NC 49.8%):** Clarke (VCS) 15.5%, P.W. Moore 18.5%, and Pasquotank Elementary Schools (ECPPS) 30.1%
- **Met Benchmark in the ACT (NC 41.7%):** Vance County High School 12.6% and ECPPS 24.2 %

Year 1 Non-Rural:

- **Proficient in Reading (NC 48.4%):** 27.7-37.5% students at partner OCS schools
- **Proficient in Math (NC 49.8%):** Fayetteville St. 29.8%, Lakewood 33.3% (DPS), and 35.4% Hall Fletcher Elementary Schools (ACS)
- **Met Benchmark in the ACT (NC 41.7%):** 37.9% of students at Durham Public Schools

Year 2 - 5 LEAs:

- **Poor Performing:** 80% of schools in RLIS LEAs are assigned a letter score of "D" or "F" and will be targeted
- **RLIS Met Benchmark in the ACT (NC 41.7%):** 10-33.3% with the exception of Swain County Schools (41.9%)
- **RLIS Graduate on Time (NC 86.9%):** 40 - 84.6% Students with disabilities, 55.6 - 82.1% H/LA, 57.1 - >95% Who, 62.5% English Learners, 65.4 - 92.9% AI, 71.6 - 86.7% AA/B; 76.5 - 91.7% Homeless

Intended Results

Increase in the number of:

- Priority students receiving in- and out-of school academic support services and experiencing improved academic performance
- Priority students that participate in expanded learning programs (e.g., languages, music, arts) and graduate and are college and career ready

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Authentic community and family engagement through the FRC, (e.g., classes on literacy, parenting, trade skills, and diploma programs, and job fairs)

Need

Year 1 RLIS:

- **Families Below 100% FPL:** 26.9 - 88.1% of ethnic minority compared to 1.7 - 3.2% of Wh families
- **Residents 18+ with Higher Education Degree (NC 30.4%):** 16 - 23%
- **Children Evaluated for Abuse/Neglect by Race per 1000 (NC 43.80):** 66.53 in Vance County, with higher rates for AA/B (79/1000) and AI (133/1000) than Wh (52/1000)

Year 1 Non-Rural:

- **Liquid Asset Poor (NC 30%):** 62% of H/LA and 46% of AA/B compared to 17% of Wh Durham residents
- **Income Inequality Ratio (NC 4.8, US 5.0):** Orange County is 5.5, which can lead to increased rates of crime, violence, and mortality
- **Children Evaluated for Abuse/Neglect by Race per 1000 (NC 43.80):** 146 of "other race" and 125 AA/B in Buncombe County (Wh children 42)

Year 2-5 LEAs:

- **Persistent poverty RLIS include:** Warren, Halifax, Northampton, Hertford, Bertie, Washington, Tyrrell, and Hyde
- **Families with Income Below FPL:** 21.25 - 36.98 % of children in all RLIS schools
- **Residents 18+ with Higher Education Degree (NC 30.4%):** 10.8-21.5% of residents
- **Children Evaluated for Abuse/Neglect by Race per 1000 (NC 43.80):** High in Graham (85.86), Tyrrell (65.41), Hyde (62.34), and Halifax (54.89)
- **Income Inequality Ratio (NC 4.8, US 5.0):** Highest in Washington (6.3), Northampton (6), Halifax (5.9), and Bertie (5.6)

Intended Results

Increase in the number of:

- Students and families participating in engagement/learning activities through the FRC and experiencing economic advancement and self-sufficiency
- Students whose guardians or family members provide support during college and career planning

NEED FOR SERVICES

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SUPPORTS

Integrated supports for targeted students that address behavioral, mental, and physical health, food insecurity, housing instability, and utility support provided with the assistance of the FRC

Need

Year 1 RLIS:

- **Persistent Poverty:** Met threshold for either 1 or 3 decades
- **Infant Mortality as Leading Cause of Death for 00-19 years:** 27.8%, count 5
- **Drug Overdose Death Rate per 100,000 (NC 38.5):** 50.2 in Pasquotank County
- **Children Living in Food Insecure Household Incomes (NC 15.4%):** 26.6% of children in Vance

Year 1 Non-Rural:

- **Infant Mortality as Leading Cause of Death for 00-19 years:** 28.7%, count 29
- **Buncombe Drug Overdose Death Rate per 100,000 (NC 38.5):** 46.7 (High)
- **Homeless (NC 1.7%) and Foster Youth:** 3.2% (1056) homeless (Durham Public Schools), and 74.8% (288) foster care AA/B (Durham County)

Year 2 - 5 LEAs:

- **Infant Mortality as Leading Cause of Death for 00-19 years:** 37.8%, count 14
- **Infant Mortality (US 5.4, NC 6.9):** RLIS counties make up 80% of rates between 15 - 22.5 deaths per 1000 live birth across NC
- **Drug Overdose Rates per 1000 (NC 38.5):** High rates in Bertie 52.8, Washington 51.8, Tyrrell 49.8, and Swain 49.1
- **Children in Foster Care per 1000 (NC 6.10):** Highest in Graham 28.6, Swain 20.3, Tyrrell 18.9, Hyde 16.2, and Washington 14.6

Intended Results

Increase in the number of:

- Students referred for medical, mental, behavioral, dental, and vision care
- Students attending school

COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND REHABILITATION

Violence prevention and rehabilitation programs, gun safety education, and mental and behavioral health consultations

Need

Year 1 RLIS:

- **Homicide Third Leading Cause of Death for 00-19 years:** 11.1%, count 2
- **Bullying and Harassment Acts per 1000 (NC 12.06):** 151.90 in Elizabeth City Middle School, Pasquotank County
- **Violent Crime per 100,000 (NC 430.2):** 872 cases in Vance County
- **Short-Term Suspension per 1000 (NC 146.57):** 660.82 in Vance County High School

Year 1 Non-Rural:

- **Suicide as Third Leading Cause of Death for 00-19 years:** 7.9%, count 8
- **Students Referred to Law Enforcement per 1000 (NC 4.58):** 13.21 in Durham Public schools
- **% Violent Crime:** 21.6% increase in Orange County compared to a 3.6% decrease in NC

Year 2 - 5 LEAs:

- **Bullying and Harassment per 1000 (NC 12.06):** High in Granville 40.04 and Graham County Schools 22.58, and Weldon City School 23.92
- **Short-term Suspension per 1000 (NC 146.57):** High in Washington 427.32 and Herford County Schools 426.58 and Weldon City Schools 366.22
- **Criminal Acts per 1000 (NC 7.51):** Highest rates in Hyde 19.61, Granville 16.68, Hertford 12.27, and Warren 10.73
- **% Violent Crime:** 344.61% and 361.17% increase in Warren and Bertie compared to a 3.6% decrease in NC

Intended Results

Increase in the number of:

- Students, and school community members, that receive training in restorative practices and proactive circles model and education on gun safety
- Students that receive assistance for mental and behavioral health needs and are provided trauma-informed learning environments

** References by Table Section: Early Grade Services⁷⁵⁻⁸¹; Transition Support Services^{59, 64, 65, 68, 71, 73, 74, 77, 82-88}; Expanded Learning Opportunities^{35, 89}; Health and Social Supports^{34, 90-97}; Community Violence Prevention and Rehabilitation^{35, 91, 98}*

Section 2. Quality of Project Design

2.1 Project Design Reflects Relevant and Evidence-Based Findings from Existing Literature

The NCCSC FSCS Initiative has been designed to meet the specific needs of priority students while integrating school-wide reforms aimed at improving outcomes for all students, guardians, teachers and staff within a school community. In addition, NCCSC creates opportunities for district-wide adoption of best practices and ultimately the further scaling of these best practices across the state. Each component of the project design incorporates evidenced-based frameworks and models, reflecting relevant literature on effective interventions. The design has been developed in consultation with three successful community school models in other states: United Community Schools in New York City, the Community Learning Center Institute in Cincinnati, and the UCLA Center for Community Schools in California, as well as NC FSCS models - Durham's Bull City Community School Partnership, and United Way of Asheville City and Buncombe Counties Community Schools. Over the past 18 months, NCCSC representatives have met frequently with leaders from these proven programs to design the NCCSC model.

The project design begins at the school level. Each of the 55 schools that will be part of NCCSC over the grant period will be equipped with the structure, staff, and services required to effectively implement the FSCS four pillars framework.⁹⁹ When intentionally executed, this framework will lead to improved outcomes, meeting the acute needs described in Section 1.

Each NC FSCS is designed to understand the strengths and challenges of its school community; create opportunities for students, guardians, and staff to develop a plan that leverages community assets to meet identified needs; and provide resources necessary to implement the

strategy through collaborate leadership. The following are the critical research-based components of this design.

Table 6. Critical Research-Based Components of NC FSCS Initiative Design

Strategy	Description	Research	Research in Action
School Advisory Board	A school-based governing body comprised of students, guardians and staff that will oversee the FSCS implementation strategy, including conducting the assets and needs assessment (ANA), managing the Family Resource Center, and overseeing integrated services. Stipends are available for guardian and staff participation.	Shared governance in schools helps develop agency for marginalized populations and amplifies their voices to ensure that the appropriate services are provided. Effective school-based reform efforts require the collective decision making of students, families, and staff. ¹⁰⁰	School Advisory Board structure and function is modeled off United Community Schools in NYC, which have improved academic and behavioral health outcomes for 20,000 students. ¹⁰¹
Community School Coordinator (CSC)	An embedded full-time staff member who will work with the School Advisory Board to oversee the ANA and integration of cross-sector school-based supports to improve outcomes through community-supported policies and practices.	A resource coordinator who is based in a school and integrated into its functioning improves a school's ability to respond to a range of student, guardian and staff needs. ¹⁰²	Job responsibilities and qualifications are based on the Community Learning Center Institutes' embedded research coordinator concept which has led to measurable changes for Cincinnati's public schools, including an increase in graduation rate by almost 7%. ¹⁰³
Assets and Needs Assessment (ANA)	Through surveys, interviews and focus groups with participation from at least 70% of the full school community (students, guardians, teachers and staff), the ANA will identify the challenges that negatively impact students and school communities, and the strengths of those within and around the school to solve for these challenges.	Use of comprehensive ANA improves impact of interventions and increases alignment and buy-in across a school community. When families are honored as partners in the education of their children, they become active participants in school-based reform efforts. ^{104, 105}	ANA process is modeled on Bull City Community School Partnership's ANA implementation at Lakewood Elementary. The identification of strategic priorities, including guardian engagement, has led to tangible results: each month, more than 33% of families attend PTA meetings.
Family Resource Center (FRC)	Dedicated physical spaces in school buildings where resources are consolidated and streamlined for maximum accessibility. FRCs, overseen by CSCs and School Advisory Boards, provide support through connections with community-based organizations and initiatives and provision of emergency funds aimed at meeting acute needs of families.	Integration of support services within a school can directly impact metrics that improve academic achievement, such as decreases in grade retention and dropout rates, and increases in attendance, math scores, and overall GPA. Emergency funds lead to decreases in poverty hardships and increases across health and well-being measures. ¹⁰⁶	FRC strategy is based on Buncombe County's FRC, where families can receive products (e.g., diapers, cleaning supplies) and connection to benefits (e.g., SNAP and WIC) which provides support to more than 1,000 families each year. ¹⁰⁷
Services	Local, regional and statewide interventions integrated into each	The traditional school model is often insufficient, lacking	Comprehensive services based on United Community

Strategy	Description	Research	Research in Action
	school based on specific needs of each school community, including literacy, housing, food, mental and physical health, juvenile crime prevention and rehabilitation, expanded learning time and transition support.	cohesion at the expense of marginalized students and families. To achieve post-secondary success, a range of partners is required that connect youth and families to resources through programs, partnerships and direct services. ¹⁰⁸	School's integration of cross-section partnerships to meet acute student needs leading to more students receiving health care, accessing healthy foods, and behaving better in school. ¹⁰¹
Collaborative Leadership and Practices	Students, guardians, teachers and staff learn from one another and external partners to collectively determine strategic direction of schools. NCCSC schools have been identified after discussions with administrators regarding their commitment to horizontal leadership through which all staff have a voice. This commitment will be supported through the Community School Leadership Academy (described in Section 4) and ongoing coaching for CSCs and administration.	Principals are in unique positions to extend leadership, which becomes an important lever for building effective professional learning communities in schools. A collective approach to shared leadership and professional agency further broadens the schools' reach to additional stakeholders by drawing on the different knowledge, skills, and lived experiences of stakeholders. ¹⁰⁹	Collaborative Leadership Practices are developed based on United Way of Asheville City and Buncombe County's integration of restorative coaching for key FSCS staff, which has increased CSC and school-leadership staff retention and improved student experience in schools. ¹¹⁰

These school-based supports make up a total of [REDACTED] of the overall NCCSC budget, a clear demonstration of the priority NCCSC places on the effective integration of the FSCS four pillars framework into each of the 55 FSCSs.

2.2 A High-Quality Plan for Project Implementation Integrating the Four Pillars of Full-Service Community Schools

Pillars of Full-Service Community Schools In Place or How Pillars Will be Established

Implementation of the FSCS four pillars framework across NC will be supported by three Regional Implementation Partners. Each understands the history and context of its region and has a track record of collaborating with diverse stakeholders to improve outcomes for children and families through integration of the FSCS four pillars. Regional Implementation Partners will support school districts and individual schools in implementing the FSCS model while expanding the impact and reach of FSCS within the region.

The regional implementation model has been field-tested by the UCLA Center for Community Schools, the California Community School Transformation Assistance Center. The model follows the evidenced-based concept developed by the National Implementation Research

Network which defines a Transformation Zone as a vertical slice of the education or service system that is small enough to be manageable, large enough to represent substantial and diverse aspects of a system, and inclusive of the systems and infrastructure that will be needed for successful implementation, sustainability, and scale-up.¹¹¹

As outlined in the MOU, NCCSC Regional Implementation Partners will manage the implementation of FSCSs, including the School Advisory Board, CSCs, FRCs, and services; create opportunities for shared learning among staff within FSCSs and across three NC regions; and create Regional Councils to include representatives from School Advisory Boards to guide district-wide and regional implementation of the FSCS model

Regional Implementation Partners will work with the following entities—each key to the governance structure of this project—to establish the FSCS four pillars framework (see Table 7).

Table 7. NC FSCS Initiative Governance Structure

NCCSC Entity	Function
School Advisory Boards	A school-based organization comprised of students, guardians and staff that will oversee the school-based implementation strategy
District Community School (CS) Liaisons	Appointed by Superintendents from LEAs to support the development and enhancement of two or more community schools, determining what school-based initiatives can expand throughout the district, and advocating for district-level policies and school board resolutions to promote the academic, mental, and physical health of students, staff and guardians
Regional Councils	Comprised of representatives from School Advisory Boards, LEAs, and community partners; guide policy recommendations for district, regional and state leaders
State Steering Committee	Supports the development, implementation, scaling, and sustaining of the FSCS model; comprised of youth and family advocates, educators, district administrators, representatives from NC DPI, state education partners, philanthropic entities, and eventually, community school alumni
State Implementation Partners	Increase capacity of each Regional Implementation Partner, facilitate cross-region learning, and support statewide educational equity efforts

The NC FSCS Initiative leverages the strengths of the following entities to guide each region’s work. The Regional Implementation Partners represent the diversity of organizations and perspectives needed to effectively implement the FSCS four pillars framework across NC.

Western NC: United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County (UWABC), a backbone organization for youth empowerment movements, brings decades of experience co-creating and

implementing 7 FSCSs in partnership with Asheville City Schools (ACS) and Buncombe County Schools (BCS). In collaboration with LEAs, students, families, and representatives of health, social services, higher education, business, and youth services community partners, UWABC has reached 3,326 students, with improvements demonstrated in attendance, behavior, and core course grades when compared to non-Community School students. This accomplishment is especially impressive when considering the comparison group includes schools with significantly lower rates of poverty and socioeconomic hardship, as well as lower representation of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students, English as a Second Language (ESL) students, students with disabilities, and students from other historically marginalized populations. Through the NC FSCS Initiative, UWABC will develop 9 FSCSs, including 2 additional FSCSs in Asheville City and Buncombe County and 7 new FSCSs in 2 other Western NC counties. NCCSC will ensure there is no duplication or overlapping of activities in existing FSCSs already receiving funding from a prior DOE award.

Central NC: For 16 years, **Student U** has been a key service partner for Durham Public Schools, providing culturally appropriate support to 550 low-income, potential first-generation college students and their families. This community organization leads with its proven model, an 11-year educational pipeline aligned with the four pillars of FSCS, leading to a high school graduation rate of 100%, postsecondary enrollment of 90%, 79 college graduates to date, and higher attendance rates, and lower incidents of suspension compared to their peers.¹¹² Student U will enhance services in 3 current Durham FSCSs while working across 8 LEAs to expand to a total of 26 FSCSs.

Eastern NC: Rural Education Institute of East Carolina University (REI), an institute of the East Carolina University School of Education, initiates and facilitates partnerships and research-driven innovations that enhance holistic development and opportunities for students and

their families in rural communities. Through REI programming, educational stakeholders across Eastern NC access resources and support to address the unique issues that impact educational outcomes in rural NC. As a result of its demonstrated impact in rural education, REI was selected by NC DPI in 2022 to begin the development of one FSCS in Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools. With established relationships with LEAs around Eastern NC, REI will expand to 20 FSCSs across 6 LEAs through the NC FSCS Initiative.

Integrated Student Supports

CSCs and School Advisory Boards will identify integrated student support initiatives needed and lead their implementation through FRCs. Research shows inequities are exacerbated when consideration is not given to resource allocation based on the needs of underserved populations.¹¹³ Therefore, funds available for FRCs will be based on a formula that considers total school population and available community resources, with RLISs receiving an additional financial supplement. Relevant interventions provided by community-based organizations through a combination of in-kind support (see LOS) and FRC funding, will be integrated with school services through partnerships with school leaders and staff. Regional Implementation Partners will provide resources and training to schools for integrated student supports initiatives, such as working with students with learning differences, restorative justice practices, and service-learning.

Western NC: UWABC has a record of effective integration of services across FSCSs. UWABC has established three school-based health clinics, partnered with local mental health-providers, developed new mentorship programs, and provided access to transitional supports. For example, UWABC implements Student Success Planning across FSCSs, an asset-based and student-centered practice that proactively refers students to in-school support and community

partner enrichment opportunities. Similar service integration will be incorporated in newly developed FSCSs in Western NC.

Central NC: Student U supports its students' academic and holistic needs, both during and after school. Through its Advocate Model, part-time Advocates work with a caseload of students on academic growth, postsecondary plans, goal setting, and wrap-around support. Student U's Student and Family Support Services Department addresses students' out-of-school barriers to learning (e.g., mental health concerns and financial strain) through universal programming and individual case management. By leveraging community partnerships, Student U also offers medical, dental, and vision screenings along with behavioral health services including trauma-informed therapy. These services will be available in FSCSs in Central NC.

Eastern NC: REI utilizes research practice partnerships across the broader institution of East Carolina University (ECU) to meet identified needs of Eastern NC schools. REI and ECU's medical family therapy program provides mental health support to students and their families. ECU's Brody School of Medicine and Dental Medicine embed health services into schools while creating opportunities for job shadowing and internships for high school students to prepare them to pursue healthcare careers. REI will collaborate with community stakeholders to coordinate and implement research-based practices in FSCSs in Eastern NC.

Active Family and Community Engagement

Insights into student learning and educational experiences are made stronger by gathering perspectives from a diverse stakeholder group, especially in an environment that fosters collaboration, empowerment, and decision-making.¹¹⁴ School Advisory Boards, composed of students and families and convened by their CSC, will direct FSCS programming. Regional Implementation Partners will support School Advisory Boards and CSCs with training in best practices for authentic family engagement and community resource mapping.

Western NC: UWABC will collaborate with students, families, and community members to build and strengthen family-school partnerships. Using focus groups, surveys, and interviews, UWABC will incorporate recommendations from guardians and community members into the project plans. UWABC has demonstrated effectiveness in family and community engagement through parent-developed “Community Nights,” a dynamic, comprehensive strategy that invites students and families into the school building after hours to offer a continuum of coordinated support including tutoring, parent-teacher relationships, a free and nutritious meal, and community resources. In 2022, 103 Community Nights reached over 1,100 participants from at least 45 neighborhoods. Of these participants, 718 attended four or more times. “Community Nights” will be implemented in newly developed FSCSs in Western NC.

Central NC: Student U makes family and community engagement a hallmark of its programs. Dedicated staff create deep engagement with families and will support the NC FSCS Initiative. In 2023, Student U has implemented family events on financial literacy and mental health; provided health programming at no cost to students and their families, including 269 vision screenings and 53 physicals; and hosted a “Family Day” for hundreds of families with 23 community partners focused on early childhood, literacy, and health. Dedicated Family Support Funds are distributed to families in crisis to keep students engaged in the classroom and holistically well. These offerings will be incorporated into FSCSs in Central NC.

Eastern NC: REI has a history of engaging its surrounding community in research and program development. In preparation to launch FSCSs in **Year 1** LEA Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Schools, REI and district leadership have engaged in community listening sessions during which they gained insight on the FSCS model’s alignment with community goals. The culmination of these listening sessions—conversations with teachers, guardians, community organizations, and community leaders—was a 4,000-person gathering during which the Elizabeth City-Pasquotank

Superintendent and REI leadership shared what they heard and what has now become the collective vision for FSCS in the district and across Eastern NC. In August, the mayor of Pasquotank County, district Superintendent, and REI will visit four housing developments (in an ice-cream truck) to further engage the community in FSCS education reform efforts. This active community and family engagement will serve as the model for each Eastern NC LEA.

Expanded and Enriched Learning Time and Opportunities

School Advisory Boards and CSCs will establish expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities needed for their schools identified through the ANA. Partnerships will be created with community-based organizations to meet these needs through after-school and summer programs. Partnerships will be informed by the work of school staff, aligning with academic content areas and supporting existing in-school support for students.

Western NC: UWABC works with community partners to support children's transition to kindergarten through parent education groups, pre-K play and learn groups, and “Transition to Kindergarten” sessions for families. UWABC also offers after-school tutoring and summer programs at current FSCS sites, providing a safe place where students can complete homework and engage in enrichment activities, such as healthy living, cooking, art, music, and sports. These services will be available at all FSCSs developed by this project.

Central NC: Student U designed a comprehensive pipeline to address persistent achievement gaps between NCCSC priority populations and their peers from higher-income families, which widen during the summer months.¹¹⁵ From September to May, middle and high school students engage in afterschool programming, including tutoring, enrichment, clubs, and advising. Access to grades and end-of-course exam scores through an established MOU with DPS allow Student U to offer targeted support to students so they stay on or ahead of grade level and graduate on time. Student U’s 5-week, full-time Summer Academy, held in June and July,

implements a culturally relevant, anti-racist, academically rigorous Summer Academy curriculum; post-test scores among participating students in 2022 increased by a mean of 19%.¹¹⁶ Student U will work with LEAs to incorporate components of its comprehensive pipeline into Central NC FSCSs.

Eastern NC: REI and ECU's Community Learning Exchanges (CLE) create spaces for real-world learning and problem-solving in the community, allowing students to identify interests and skills during expanded and enriched learning time. The CLE will connect students to local history through field trips to sites such as the Township of Bath in Beaufort County or the Lost Colony in Manteo, North Carolina. Partnerships with organizations such as The Museum of the Albemarle or the North Carolina Estuarian provide students with hands-on learning. Monthly Family Dinners will extend learning time while creating an opportunity for guardians and community partners to learn together. During Family Dinners, REI will engage FSCS students in youth participatory action research, oral history projects, and other socio-historical documentation, which will be collaboratively presented to families and regional officials.

Collaborative Leadership Practices

Collaboration among school leaders is foundational to the successful implementation of FSCSs. Extension of leadership opportunities for school staff members, such as teachers and CSCs, builds effective professional learning communities.¹⁰⁹ When teachers and staff feel like they are part of a collaborative team that is working towards school improvement, are empowered by school leadership, and believe they have influence over their work environments, they are more likely to remain at school.¹¹⁷ To promote collaborative leadership, Regional Implementation Partners will offer customized professional development training to schools and convene school-based stakeholders across the region to share best practices, discuss key challenges, and brainstorm solutions. In addition, the NC Community School Leadership Academy will provide

coaching for CSCs and school leaders, following an effective coaching model proven to shape culture and improve student experience and outcomes.¹¹⁸

Western NC: UWABC's network consists of more than 150 youth, school and active community partners, who will play a key role in the success of FSCS. From students to teachers, grassroots organizations to anchor institutions, UWABC brings a broad base of experiences and capacity in health, social services, family and community engagement, higher education, and youth services. Recently, this network crafted and adopted a new Bold Community Goal: *By 2035, ALL Asheville City and Buncombe County students graduate from high school ready and fully prepared to pursue their goals and dreams.* Participation in NCCSC will bolster UWABC's capacity to achieve this goal by linking it to the vast resources and knowledge base of its fellow Regional Implementation Partners and NCCSC's statewide partners. UWABC will institute collaborative leadership by connecting its network to CSCs, School Advisory Boards, District CS Liaisons and Regional Councils as part of an inclusive leadership strategy aimed at enhancing interventions taking place within each school and then utilizing impact data to advocate for expansion of programming and spending priorities across Western NC.

Central NC: Student U creates an opportunity for prospective and current teachers and FSCS educators to learn how to be collaborative leaders through its effective educator training. This model, which includes an intensive two-week orientation and five-week teacher training residency within the Student U Summer Academy, emphasizes cultivating partnership with school leaders, guardians, and students; creating a trauma-responsive environment; empowering students with learning differences; and integrating student and teacher-developed anti-racist curriculum into academic spaces. FSCS staff will participate in this teacher training, which has a proven impact on both student and teacher. Sixty-eight percent of Student U teachers have

continued their careers in education; of these, 67% teach in NC. Five former Student U teachers now teaching in Durham have been named Teacher of the Year.

Eastern NC: REI prepares 6,000 individuals annually to serve as educators at 43 LEAs across the state with a curriculum that includes social and emotional learning and mental health support training, equipping educators to meet the needs of the whole child. FSCS staff will have access to this curriculum as well as connections with local stakeholders, including municipal government workers and leaders, businesses, and non-profits critical to the communities in which they will work. To further development of trusting relationships, educators will receive in-depth training in collaborative leadership practices, learning how to elevate the voices of students, guardians, and community members when developing curriculum and making classroom decisions.

State Implementation Partners: Key to ensuring the progress of the state-scaling plan, NCCSC's State Implementation Partners will collaborate with Regional Implementation Partners to develop strategy in alignment with state priorities for improving quality of the FSCS model, measuring its impact and expanding its reach. State Implementation Partners will respond to the needs of Regional Implementation Partners and their districts, providing funding and technical assistance to meet requests of regional and district leaders while developing and promoting statewide policy and practices that promote positive, equitable outcomes in schools. Specific responsibilities of State Implementation Partners can be found in Section 5 and the **MOUs**.

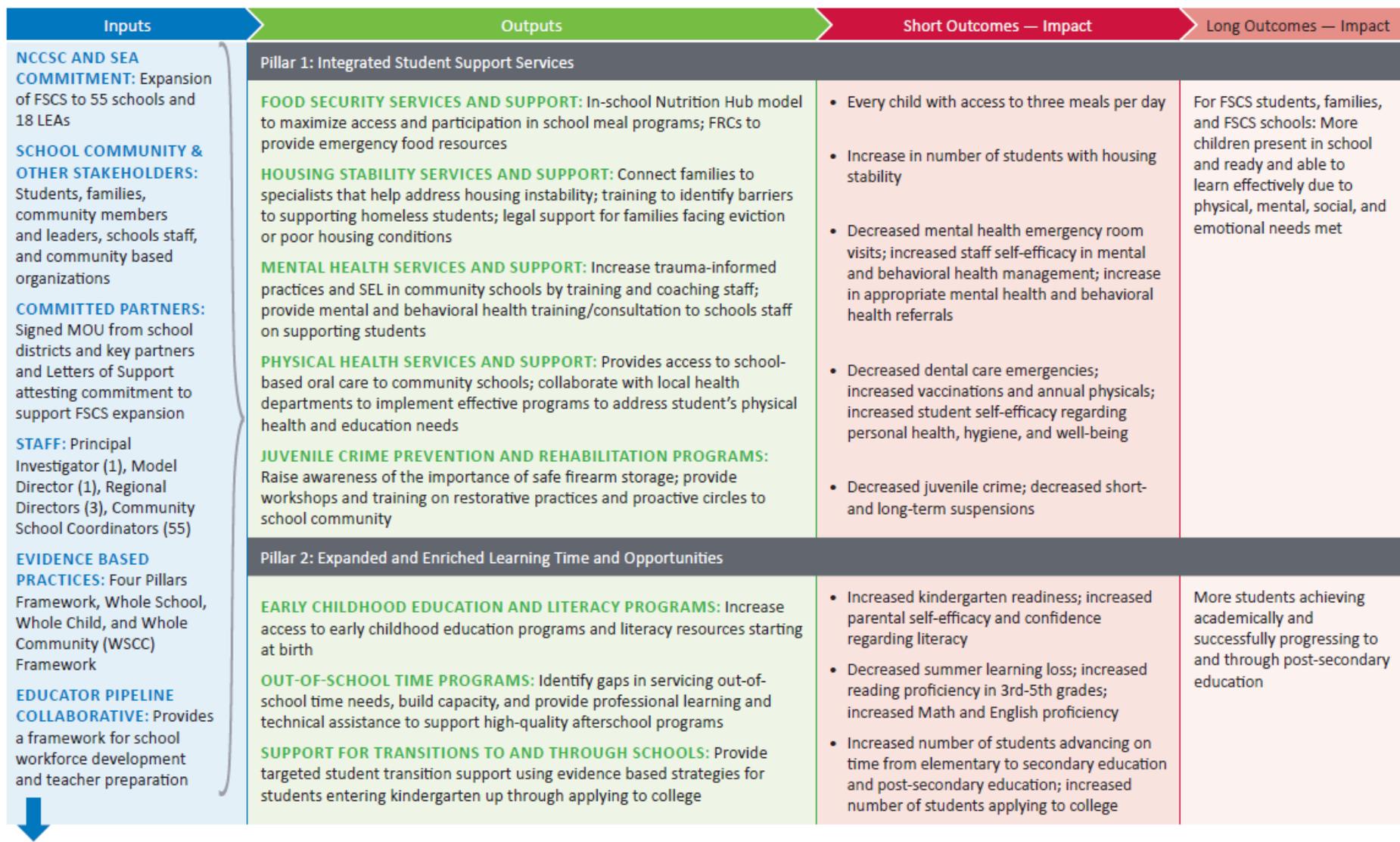
Shared Learning and Leadership: Underlying the NCCSC initiative is a commitment to shared learning and leadership that centers the values, vision and voice of students, staff, and families in determining priorities. This centering begins at each school, with the creation of School Advisory Boards. Representatives of School Advisory Boards will form Regional Councils which will guide policy recommendations for LEA, regional and state leaders. At all

levels of NCCSC, decisions will be made by those most impacted. Across this carefully developed governance structure, opportunities will exist for individuals and institutions to learn from and support each other in the effective implementation of the model.

2.3 High-Quality Plan for the Use of Appropriate Evaluation Methods to Ensure Successful Achievement of Project Objectives

Research can provide an understanding of historical context, current trends, and strategies one can employ to serve every student. Collecting, analyzing and intentionally communicating results is important to reaching equitable outcomes and determining opportunity and access for every student.¹¹⁹ As described in detail in the plan for evaluation (see **Section 6**), a central part of NCCSC’s evaluation strategy is the identification of measurable, relevant, and realistic endpoints for each school community and based on the 13 annual evaluation indicators outlined in Table 14. Based on NCCSC’s commitment to data-driven process improvement, we will work with school communities to collect, analyze, and report data on students, staff, families, and the community at large using evidence-based qualitative and quantitative methods and collection tools. These data will be used to 1) evaluate progress towards the measurable endpoints and identify opportunities for process improvement with students, families, and staff central to these conversations; 2) develop a holistic understanding of NCCSC’s effectiveness in meeting the individual needs of students, families, and staff; and 3) provide the information needed to build the collective movement necessary to improve and ultimately sustain the NCCSC initiative statewide. Both internal and independent external evaluation will ensure comprehensive assessment of project impact, including the effectiveness of inputs and outputs in service of achieving the short-term and long-term outcomes as described in the logic model (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Logic Model



Inputs	Outputs	Short Outcomes — Impact	Long Outcomes — Impact
<p>Continued...</p> <p>HORIZONTAL LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES: A structure that places families, students, educators, and community members at the center of the decision-making process and shared governance in schools to develop agency for marginalized populations and amplify their voices</p> <p>NC CHILD AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOL FORUM OF NC: Leaders with more than 60 years of combined experience in ensuring children’s voices are heard and used to guide policy</p> <p>DCRI - ABC SCIENCE COLLABORATIVE: Experts in evaluation science who have a robust infrastructure to maintain partnerships with schools and districts across N.C. and use data to answer questions most critical to school communities’ health and well-being</p>	<p>Pillar 3: Active Family and Community Engagement</p>		
	<p>FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT: Dedicated physical spaces in school buildings to support and connect families with resources, economic benefits, early childhood education and programs, tutoring, and parenting courses, legal support</p> <p>YOUTH AND FAMILY COUNCIL: Youth and families will serve on school-based Advisory Boards, Regional Councils, and the State Steering Committee to inform the statewide FSCS strategy and advance policy</p> <p>COMMUNITY SCHOOL COORDINATOR (CSC): CSC will create and maintain an advisory board comprised of students, guardians and staff that will oversee the school-based implementation strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • >75% of families participate in family resource center services/educational sessions • >50% of families participate on youth or family councils • Implementation strategy that meets the needs of the community as defined by the ANA 	<p>Schools are viewed as the "hubs" of the community with caregivers, students, and schools staff all invested in the success of every student and the school</p>
	<p>Pillar 4: Collaborative Leadership Practices</p>		
	<p>LEADERSHIP TEACHINGS: Training and professional development to school staff for implementing proven, data-driven collaborative practices</p> <p>ENHANCING CLASSROOMS: Provide targeted teachers with opportunities to gain valuable experience in science, team building, collaborative leadership, equity, public speaking, and ethics</p> <p>DISSEMINATING COMMUNITY SCHOOL MODEL: Offer principals and staff statewide the opportunity to receive teachings on the community schools model</p> <p>STRENGTHEN EDUCATOR PIPELINE: Develop a framework for teacher preparation partnerships in K-12, higher education, and workforce development designed to recruit, prepare, support, and retain a diverse, high-quality educator pipeline</p> <p>EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY: Opportunities for students, and schools community members to advocate for policy reform and spending priorities to improve outcomes for students, guardians, and staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased teacher and staff self-efficacy; Improved sense of belonging and togetherness; Improved school climate • Increased teacher self-efficacy • Increased number of principals and staff with Interest in community school pillars and model • Increased teacher retention and job satisfaction • Increased self-efficacy 	<p>School staff feel empowered, energized, and valued, enhancing their teaching abilities and the general classroom environment</p> <p>More schools across North Carolina pursue the Community Schools model</p> <p>Students and families advocate for equitable access to schools and improved child and family well-being across NC.</p>

Section 3. Quality of Project Services

NCCSC services are designed to address the needs of NCCSC's priority populations through the FSCS four pillars framework. Services are designed to improve outcomes indicated in Figure 3 (Logic Model) for students impacted by intergenerational poverty and structural racism.

The equitable design and operation of pipeline services will be guided by diverse perspectives, including those of students, parents, families, educators, school staff, and school and community leadership. Each Regional Implementation Partner brings historical knowledge and context, experience building and implementing programs to support the priority population, and a commitment to supporting the equitable design and operation of NCCSC. Regional Implementation Partners will work collaboratively with each school's CSC and Advisory Board to conduct an ANA, which will follow a standardized process that ensures a range of perspectives and input from marginalized communities are included. Results from the ANA will inform each CSC and School Advisory Board on the specific needs of children, youth, and families within a school to identify the pipeline services needed to address those needs.

The CSC and School Advisory Board will develop a plan to implement identified services and target outreach to students from NCCSC priority populations to ensure equitable access and participation rates. When barriers to student or family participation are identified, CSCs and School Advisory Boards will collaborate with Regional Implementation Partners to address barriers and ensure needed accommodations are made, such as translators, transportation, or home-based services. Ongoing assessment of pipeline services by CSCs and School Advisory Boards will be conducted and will include feedback from all impacted stakeholders. In the following pages, pipeline services are described, including:

1. A brief description of **evidence supporting the need for each service** and how its incorporation into selected schools across NCCSC regions improves child and family well-being, including student academic achievement;
2. A description of the programs and partnerships that will **provide pipeline services to be implemented at two or more FSCSs**;
3. A spotlight on **existing pipeline services currently in place to be implemented as of the date of the grant award**. These programs will continue to operate within the designated community and are committed to leveraging efficacy and experience to expand services across NCCSC FSCSs by supporting other LEAs and schools in developing similar programs. Letters of Support expressing commitment to this work from each program are included in this submission.

3.1 Family Resource Centers (FRCs)

Need	In North Carolina, 20% of children live below the federal poverty line and children of color are three times more likely than White children to be poor. ¹²⁰ Greater than 50% of children in 33 out of 42 rural low-income school counties live in poor or low-income households. ¹²¹
Evidence	The presence of FRCs has been associated with a reduction in rates of child abuse and neglect and gains in family self-sufficiency, as well as documented financial returns on investment in multiple states. ¹²²⁻¹²⁶
Service	FRCs will be created in every community school to support specific needs of children and families, including poverty and economic hardship.

Programs and Partnerships: *Family Resource Centers (FRCs)* will be dedicated physical spaces in school buildings where resources are consolidated and streamlined for maximum accessibility. FRCs will be launched by October of the first FSCS school year and provide support through connections with community-based organizations determined by data gathered through the preliminary ANA. CSCs will serve as coordinators of FRCs with CSCs and School Advisory Boards managing allocated funds. Examples of resources and programs that may be part of FRCs include:

- Emergency resources and funds to support families (food, diapers, hygiene supplies, etc.)

- Enrollment and legal support for receiving benefits available in multiple languages to ensure accessibility (SNAP, WIC, internet subsidy, etc.)
- Early childhood education, literacy, and parenting programs

Program Spotlight: *Buncombe County Schools (BCS) FRC* is stocked with food, diapers, cleaning supplies, clothing, and toiletries. The BCS FRC also supports families in applying for food benefits and housing assistance. The BCS FRC’s established relationships with the local housing authority and social services agency improves its ability to connect families to services.

3.2 High-quality Early Childhood Education and Literacy Programs

Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2018, only 49.9% of kindergarteners in North Carolina were at a proficient level according to the Kindergarten Entry Assessment.^{127, 128} As of 2021, some rural low-income school LEAs had kindergarten readiness scores as low as 20%. • In 2021, North Carolina was tied for the highest rate of job disruptions due to families not having adequate childcare.¹²⁸
Evidence	Early childhood education programs increase kindergarten readiness skills and can lead to long-term improvements in academic performance. ^{129, 130} They also provide childcare so caregivers can work to meet the needs of their families.
Service	NCCSC will partner with Smart Start to increase access to early childhood education programs and literacy resources.

Programs and Partnerships: *NC Partnership for Children/Smart Start* is a network of nonprofit local partnerships led by the NC Partnership for Children, Inc. (NCPC). Smart Start provides childcare, health, and family support services for young children starting at birth that ensure children have the skills they need to succeed in school. These include subsidies for high-quality childcare, Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, and home visiting & parenting education. Smart Start agencies will work with NCCSC and collaborating partners in their LEAs to learn the needs of each school and community and prepare children to enter kindergarten ready to learn.

Program Spotlight: *Book Harvest*, supported in part by Smart Start, has provided more than two million books and countless literacy supports to NC babies, children, and families.^{131, 132} Two complementary programs will be available at NC FSCSs and surrounding communities: Book Babies partners with families of Medicaid-eligible newborns to develop their child’s early language and literacy skills from birth until kindergarten through a literacy model proven to

impact children in the NCCSC priority populations; Books on Break, an evidence-informed program, helps kindergarten through fifth grade students preserve their learning gains by inviting them to fill a new string backpack with up to 10 books before summer break.^{133, 134}

3.3 Housing Stability Services and Support

Need	22,644 NC students were considered homeless during the 2020 school year. ⁹⁴
Evidence	Children facing housing instability and homelessness often experience school changes, lower test scores, slower grade progression, chronic absenteeism and higher rates of dropping out of school. ^{135, 136} Housing navigation support and direct funds for housing expenses are effective strategies to combat housing instability and prevent homelessness. ¹³⁷⁻¹³⁹
Service	NCCSC will increase housing stability for children attending FSCSs by providing funding to families to prevent eviction, connecting families to housing navigation support, and connecting homeless education liaisons across NCCSC LEAs for training and support.

Programs and Partnerships: Funds to Prevent Eviction and Homelessness: FRC funding can be used to help families maintain housing by, for example, paying overdue rent or utilities or support for a deposit on an apartment. ***Housing Specialists at Prepaid Health Plans (PHPs):*** Each of the Managed Care Organizations administering Medicaid in NC employ Housing Specialists who have knowledge about local and statewide resources and connect families to resources that meet their needs. NCCSC will help CSCs and homeless education liaisons serving FSCSs to connect students insured by Medicaid and facing housing instability to Housing Specialists. ***North Carolina Homeless Education Program (NCHEP)*** provides technical assistance to NC’s homeless education liaisons to ensure children and youth experiencing homelessness have access to public education to which they are entitled under the McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth Assistance Act. NCHEP will partner with NCCSC to support homeless education liaisons in NCCSC LEAs by bringing them together to provide training, share helpful resources and innovative ideas, and identify barriers to supporting students experiencing homelessness. ***Connection to Legal Aid of NC (LANC):*** NCCSC will work with LANC to develop education-legal partnerships, based on the Medical Legal Partnership model, so families facing eviction or poor housing conditions are supported by legal representation.

Program Spotlight: *Buncombe County Schools (BCS) and City of Asheville Housing*

Authority MOU: The BCS Homeless Education Liaison helps families who are homeless or facing housing instability to complete the application process for a Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) and provides case management. Families working with the Liaison are moved up on the Asheville Housing Authority’s waiting list to receive an HCV.

3.4 Food Security Services and Support

Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Carolina has the 10th highest rate of food insecurity in the nation. At least one in five children is food insecure, and children of color are more likely than White children to face food insecurity.¹²⁰ In NC in 2022, only 69% of eligible individuals participated in SNAP and in 2020, only 56% of eligible mothers and children participated in Supplemental Program for women, Infants, and Children (WIC).¹⁴⁰
Evidence	Enrollment in federal benefits, including SNAP and WIC, are effective at reducing child hunger and poverty and improving academic achievement. ¹⁴¹⁻¹⁴³
Service	NCCSC will increase food security by ensuring eligible students in FSCSs and their families are enrolled in and receive nutrition benefits including SNAP, WIC, school meals, and summer meals. Emergency food resources will also be available through FRCs at FSCSs.

Programs and Partnerships: *No Kid Hungry*, a nonprofit working to solve problems of hunger and poverty in the US, implements a strategy in New York FSCSs called “Schools as Nutrition Hubs”, and are eager to expand the strategy to work with FSCSs in NC. “Schools in Nutrition Hubs” works to maximize access and participation in school meal programs, WIC and SNAP, while completing steps to receive free meals for all students.¹⁴⁴

Program Spotlight: *No Kid Hungry* is collaborating with *Meals4Families (M4F)*, an organization that works to end child hunger in America. Like the development of “Schools as Nutrition Hubs”, the project seeks to increase student enrollment in SNAP benefits by partnering with community-based organizations integrated into Buncombe County and Orange County Schools to support the benefit enrollment process and with local government social services agencies who process benefit applications.

3.5 Physical Health Services and Support

Need	Tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease and is the cause of children collectively missing 51 million hours of school each year. ¹⁴⁵ An estimated 15.3% of NC kindergarteners have untreated dental decay. ¹⁴⁶ Low-income, minority, and rural children are more likely to experience oral health issues.
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Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School-based oral health prevention programs reduce dental disease by up to 50%.¹⁴⁵ Strong partnerships between Local Health Departments (LHDs) and LEAs can support the implementation of the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child framework and help students thrive.^{147, 148}
Service	NCCSC will provide dental services to children and youth attending FSCSs and bring more health services and health education to students by building and strengthening connections between school LHDs to achieve outcomes of the NC State Health Improvement Plan (NC SHIP). ¹⁴⁸

Programs and Partnerships: *The Duke Endowment Oral Health Program* funds school-based oral health programs that provide dental care to 343 schools throughout North and South Carolina. The Duke Endowment will partner with NCCSC to expand the Oral Health Program to all FSCSs. The *North Carolina State Health Improvement Plan (NC SHIP) and Local Health Departments (LHDs)* create a unified approach across stakeholders toward meeting health outcomes outlined in *Healthy North Carolina 2030: A Path Toward Health (HNC 2030)*. All 86 LHDs in NC will contribute to the NC SHIP by implementing promising new programs and interventions to address the educational, economic, social, environmental, and health needs of local populations.¹⁴⁸ The Director of HNC 2030 will support NCCSC in forming partnerships between LEAs, LHDs, and other entities increasing the capacity of FSCSs to meet students’ identified health needs such as improved asthma control through the school-based Asthma Remediation Program.

Program Spotlight: *Granville Vance Public Health (GVPH) and Vance County Schools* provide health education programs to youth including comprehensive sexual health and tobacco and vaping, and partner with community-based organizations that encourage students to engage in physical activity and healthy eating.

3.6 Mental Health Services and Support

Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NC has had a significant increase in the mental and behavioral health needs of youth since the beginning of the pandemic. In 2021, 1 in 10 adolescents attempted suicide and 1 in 5 seriously considered it.¹⁴⁹ Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events that happen to a child that range from physical or sexual abuse to the sudden loss of a loved one to a caregiver experiencing a
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	mental health crisis. Children experiencing poverty are more likely to experience ACEs. ¹⁵⁰ In NC, children of color are more likely to experience two or more ACEs than their White counterparts. ¹⁵¹
Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher ACE scores among students are associated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower rates of graduation and post-secondary education Higher rates of suspension and unexcused absences¹⁵² Higher rates of mental health concerns, including depression, anxiety, and mood disorders^{153, 154} Trauma-informed school environments prepare school staff to help address and be responsive to students' needs and trauma symptoms and improve student academic outcomes.^{133, 152}
Service	NCCSC will support mental health needs of children and youth by implementing a model promoting trauma-informed practices and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in FSCSs.

Programs and Partnerships: Public School Forum's NC Center for Resilience and

Learning provides school-wide training and coaching to build staff understanding and awareness about trauma and its impacts while helping schools implement strategies for resilience, support, and safety of their students and staff. They have implemented this model in over 60 schools and trained over 4,000 educators. Impacts of the model include a decrease in discipline referrals and suspensions in schools.¹⁵⁵ NC Center for Resilience and Learning will work with NCCSC to implement this model in FSCSs and is already supporting Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools in this work.

Program Spotlight: NC Psychiatric Access Line (NC-PAL) and Vance County Schools

(VCS): VCS school social workers and counselors -- initially from 3 schools and now from 10 -- receive bi-weekly consultation and guidance in supporting students facing behavioral health challenges from NC-PAL child psychiatrists. By leveraging its existing infrastructure and early successes, and in collaboration with NCCSC, NC-PAL is committed to providing mental health specialists to support direct consultation and connection to mental health services in the NC FSCSs.

3.7 Juvenile Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation Programs

Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Firearm deaths among NC children and youth more than doubled from 2019 to 2021. Juvenile arrests for murder have increased from 2020-2021 by 26%.^{98, 156} Harsh discipline practices and school policing contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline in North Carolina. When students are suspended from school, they are more likely to drop out, commit a crime, and be incarcerated as an adult.¹⁵⁶
Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe and secure firearm storage can reduce gun injuries and deaths.¹⁵⁷

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Restorative Practices in schools can reduce suspensions, episodes of misbehavior, and conflict and increase positive relationships between peers and between students and teachers.
Service	NCCSC will support state firearm safety initiatives to reduce gun violence and implement Restorative Practices in FSCSs to address conflicts and reduce verbal and physical altercations in schools. FRCs will provide information on programs aimed at engaging youth to become responsible community members.

Programs and Partnerships: NC Secure All Firearms Effectively (S.A.F.E.), NC’s

statewide initiative designed to raise awareness of the importance of safe firearm storage, provides best practices for firearm storage and safety and has distributed over 25,000 gun locks to cities to distribute across NC.¹⁵⁸ NCCSC will collaborate with NC S.A.F.E. to provide educational materials about firearm safety to FRCs and LHDs partnering with FSCSs. *Student U Restorative Practices framework* is used with students, families, and staff to manage conflict by repairing harm and restoring relationships. Student U hosts restorative practices professional development workshops for educators and community members and provides coaching and consultation to schools. Student U is committed to providing similar training to support other NCCSC FSCSs. *Connections to Community-Based Initiatives:* CSCs will refer youth to existing local programs that support students in choosing a healthy lifestyle free from crime. Examples include the Henderson Vance Teen Council, which teaches youth skills to be leaders among their peers, and Gang Free, Inc, an organization in Vance County serving justice-involved youth with the goal of reducing crime, school dropout rates, and recidivism in the juvenile justice system.

Program Spotlight: United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County (UWABC)

Restorative Practices Training: In partnership with BCS and ACS, UWABC offers free trainings on restorative practices and proactive circles to school faculty and staff, community partners, community members, and parents/guardians.

3.8 Out-of-School Time Programs

Need	North Carolina has an unmet demand for after school programs and more than 666,000 children would be enrolled in a program if one were available to them. ¹⁵⁹
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Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afterschool and out-of-school time programs have helped close achievement gaps for low-income students and consistent participation in these programs leads to lower dropout rates.¹⁵⁹ • High quality after-school and out-of-school time programs improve academic performance, school-day attendance, nurture youth development, decrease juvenile crime, and reduce other high-risk behaviors.¹⁶⁰
Service	NCCSC will increase the capacity of high-quality out-of-time school programs to enable the participation of more children in FSCSs and LEAs.

Programs and Partnerships: Public School Forum’s NC Center for Afterschool Programs

(NCCAP) is a comprehensive statewide afterschool and expanded learning network that seeks to increase access to high quality afterschool out-of-school time programs. NCCAP will work with NCCSC to support the development of opportunities for each FSCS by working with community and LEA out-of-school time providers to identify unmet needs for each student and family, to build the capacity of programs to increase the number of children from FSCSs who can be served, and to provide professional learning and technical assistance to ensure high-quality programming in youth-centered spaces is available.

Program Spotlight: Student U Programs: Students enter Student U as rising sixth graders in Summer Academy. They receive instruction on core academic areas and take electives in subjects ranging from dance to theater to computer programming. Classes are small, providing students with individualized academic support. Student U’s significant academic results are outlined in Section 2. Summer programming continues through high school, combatting summer loss and preparing students for the upcoming school year.¹⁶¹

3.9 Support for Transitions to and Through Schools

Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2018, only 49.9% of kindergarteners in North Carolina were at a proficient level according to the Kindergarten Entry Assessment. In 2021, some rural low-income school LEAs had kindergarten readiness scores as low as 20%.^{35, 162} • In North Carolina, 30% of students who drop out of school do so in 10th grade and 28% do so in 9th grade.¹⁶³
Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School transitions can present changes that create a mismatch between the new school environment and an individual child’s needs. This mismatch can present challenges for children and youth that increase risk for declining academic performance, social isolation, school failure, and dropout.¹⁶⁴ • High school dropout rates are significantly lower in school LEAs that have explicit middle school to high school transition programs.¹⁶⁵ • Kindergarten transition programs increase children’s social emotional readiness for school.¹⁶⁶

Service	NCCSC FSCSs and LEAs will develop targeted support for student transitions to and through schools. LEAs will learn with and from one another, sharing interventions and best practices around transitional programming.
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Programs and Partnerships: *VCS 9th Grade Academy* is for students transitioning to high school. This summer academy provides opportunities for students to go to the school building in which they will enroll in the fall, meet teachers and staff, and get a head start on learning. Although all students are invited to attend, VCS ensures priority populations are engaged by requiring the attendance of students who are at risk of dropping out of high school.

Program Spotlight: *Family Success Alliance (FSA) Ready for K:* This summer camp coordinated by Orange County’s FSA is for children preparing to enter kindergarten in FSA zones, geographical areas where much of the population is low-income. The camp focuses on helping children develop the skills they need to smoothly transition to school. FSA partners with OCS, Orange County Parks and Recreation, a local arts center, and University of North Carolina’s Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute to deliver and evaluate the impact of this program. Formal evaluation of the camp found it had a positive effect on improving math, literacy, and classroom attention.¹⁶⁷

3.10 Supporting Collaborative Leadership and Practice

Need	In August 2022, there were over 3,600 vacant certified teaching positions across the state, and about the same number of teaching positions filled by someone who was not qualified. ¹⁶⁸ Teacher turnover rates and shortages in NC are higher in high-poverty schools. ¹⁵¹
Evidence	When teachers feel like they are part of a larger collaborative team that is working towards school improvement, are empowered by school leadership, and have influence over their work environments, they are more likely to stay at a school. Schools with lower rates of teacher turnover and higher rates of job satisfaction have profound impacts on student performance. ^{117, 169}
Service	NCCSC will support equitable teacher recruitment and retention in community school LEAs and will provide specialized support for CSCs and community school staff to foster collaborative leadership and practices.

Programs and Partnerships: *Specialized Leadership Support for CSCs and Community School Staff:* The Community School Leadership Academy (CSLA) will support FSCSs by providing professional development training to schools and supporting the onboarding and

coaching of CSCs in partnership with LEAs and school leadership. More information on the CSLA can be found in Section 4. *REI's Education Pipeline in Rural Action for Teaching Equity (edPIRATE)* has been developed by REI in partnership with four LEAs and 28 high-need elementary and middle schools to develop effective K-8 teachers and school leaders, improve student achievement, and increase recruitment and retention of diverse educators in high need rural communities. edPIRATE includes a one-year teacher residency with stipends, graduate classes, and extended support for teachers in the classroom. *Public School Forum's Dudley Flood Center for Educational Equity and Opportunity* connects leaders, educators and community stakeholders to address systemic issues related to equity, access, and opportunity across NC. This Center provides tools and resources to raise awareness on establishing equity by applying dignity, respect, and well-being to each and every individual and situation. The Forum will deliver professional development to public school units, boards of education, education leaders, teachers, businesses, and other community stakeholders throughout NCCSC.

Program Spotlight: *Duke Summer Training in Academic Research (STAR) program*, funded by the NIH for the last 10 years, is a summer program at DCRI that provides participants a hands-on clinical research experience and a stipend. In addition to high school and college students, recruitment targets teachers who, as a result of their gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age may not have had such opportunities. Participating teachers gain unique and valuable experiences in science, team building, collaborative leadership, equity, public speaking, and ethics that they subsequently translate to their classrooms.

3.11 How Services Will Address the Annual Measurable Performance

Objectives and Outcomes

Table 8, below, details how each service described above is designed to address the annual measurable performance objectives and outcomes.

Table 8. Goals and Outcomes

Goals	Objectives	Planned Intervention	Measurable Outcomes
GOAL 1: Promote powerful learning and academic achievement	Promote teacher wellness and resiliency	The Forum’s Educator Pipeline Collaborative	% increase in retention of school staff
	Increase/expand teacher resources	Family Resource Center	% of teachers attend “free store”
	Improve teacher self-efficacy	The Forum’s Educator Pipeline Collaborative	% of teachers increase self-efficacy scale score on administered survey
	Provide teacher professional development	Duke Summer Training in Academic Research (STAR) Program	% of teachers attend training/mentorship sessions
		REI, Student U, The Forum professional development	
		Professional Development funds available for school-based staff	
	Proficiency on standardized tests	Student U Individualized students needs assessment and targeted intervention	% increase math and english proficiency
		UWABC high quality tutoring	
		The Forum’s Educator Pipeline Collaborative training for teachers	
	Reduce learning loss	Student U Summer Academy	% increase in reading proficiency in 3-5th grades
		NC Center for Afterschool Programs increase access to high quality afterschool and expanded out-of-school time opportunities	
		Book Harvest’s Books on Break	
	Promote literacy	Book Harvest Program Pipeline	% increase in reading proficiency in 3-5th grades
		Student U Read Fearlessly Program	
Smart Start Early Literacy Programs			
UWABC in-school literacy focused tutoring programs			
Improve self-efficacy and confidence in learning	Various interventions mentioned above	% of students increase self-efficacy scale score on self efficacy survey	
Increase high school graduation rates	Academic tutoring, workshops, mentorship, and services via Family Resource Centers, Student U, UWABC and integrated services, family engagement	% increase in graduation rates	
Increase kindergarten readiness	NC Partnership for Children (Smart Start) to increase access to early childhood education programs and literacy resources	% increase in kindergarten readiness; % increase in KRPB bundle completion for all children	
	Family Success Alliance Ready for K		
	Book Harvest’s Book Babies Program		
Improve literacy for caregivers	Family resource centers (classes on literacy, HS diploma programs for caregivers, skills for trade work, job fairs, etc.)	% of caregivers attend at least one FRC service/session/workshop	
Increase support for social services	Connect to available concrete and economic benefits families (SNAP, WIC, internet subsidy, backpack meal programs, housing support, tax completion assistance, etc.)	% of caregivers attend at least one service/session/workshop	
Create and maintain authentic family engagement	Advisory Board, District and Regional Councils	% attendance at parent-teacher conferences	

Goals	Objectives	Planned Intervention	Measurable Outcomes
GOAL 2: Integrate effective health and social supports	Integrate effective social supports	Family resource centers	% increase in number of youth receiving services
		Emergency resources to support families in meeting their basic needs	% increase in the number of families referred to services
		Connect to available concrete and economic benefits families (SNAP, WIC, internet subsidy, backpack meal programs, housing support, tax completion assistance, etc.)	Comparative effectiveness analysis of social supports
	Integrate effective health services	Dental Services to children and youth through school district and Local Health Department collaboration	% increase in students referred to dental services through school district
		Teen Prevention Education Program sexual health program, Healthy Communities tobacco and vaping education program, and Working on Wellness physical activity program	% increase of students reached through health education and physical activity programs
	Support effective transition practices	NC Center for Afterschool Programs to build capacity for afterschool programs, Vance County Schools 9th Grade Academy, Student U Summer Academy and transition support	# of afterschool programs established
	Decrease food insecurity	Provide emergency food resources through FRC	% increase in student receiving the opportunity for three meals per school day
		Ensure eligible students are enrolled in and receiving nutrition benefits including SNAP, WIC, school meals, and summer meals Meals4Families Schools as Nutrition Hubs project	
	Decrease housing instability	Connection to Legal Aid of North Carolina (LANC) who can support families facing eviction or families who have been denied benefits and want to appeal the decision	% increase in housing stability
		Funds for to families to prevent eviction, connecting families to housing navigation support, and connecting homeless education liaisons across community schools for training and support.	
	Decrease Juvenile Crime	Firearm safety initiatives to reduce gun violence	% reduction in juvenile crime
		Restorative Practices in Community Schools to reduce verbal and physical altercations	
		Henderson Vance Teen Council and Gang Free, Inc., programs aimed at engaging youth to become responsible community members	
Improve mental health	NC-PAL school-based mental health partnership	% increase in mental health service referrals	
	Trauma-informed practices through NC Center for Resilience and Learning	% decrease in emergency department visits	
Decrease chronic absenteeism	Integrated health and social supports, family engagement, promotion of powerful learning and academic achievement	% decrease in chronic absenteeism	
Decrease suspensions	Restorative Practices, Professional Development for teachers through NC Center for Resilience and Learning	% decrease in suspensions	

Goals	Objectives	Planned Intervention	Measurable Outcomes
GOAL 3: Support and promote authentic community and family engagement	Engage students, families and communities in the development, implementation and evaluation of the full-service community school model	Family resource centers	% increase of families served by family resource centers
		Advisory Boards inclusive of guardians	% increase of caregivers attending best practices events
		Involvement of caregivers/community members in the process of synthesizing and interpreting ANA results and creating strategic plan	% increase on school climate (CAYCI-SES) survey scales
		District Liaison facilitates annual presentation from students, guardians, and staff to LEA school boards	# of new board policies and resolutions promoting lon-term growth and sustainability of the FSCS model
		Regional Community School Council	# of Regional Community School Council members
		UWABC Monthly Family Dinners	% of families that attend dinners
		Student U Family Support Service and Family Engagement	# of referrals made to address student well-bing and out-of school barriers
		Promotion of data transparency and reporting via Data Center	% increase of participation in school town hall
	Community School Leadership Academy	% of families participate in Youth and Family Councils	
	Support of community school idea	State Steering Committee	# of Steering Committee participants
Evaluate effectiveness of CSCs	Community School Leadership Academy	% increase in school spending per student	
Improve self-efficacy of teachers/ students/staff	Leadership opportunities on the stakeholder team responsible for ANA synthesis and strategic plan development	% of school community that completed ANA	
GOAL 4: Foster collaborative leadership	Student, Family, Staff and Community participation in community school	School Based Advisory Boards and Regional Councils	# of Advisory Board and Regional Council members that are part of the Steering Committee
	Conduct Assets and Needs Assessment (ANA)	Synthesis and interpretation of results of ANA; Develop strategic plan to address ANA	# of community schools with a strategic plan developed and aligned to ANA findings and guiding frameworks
	Evaluate high impact partnerships or programs that are aligned with school needs	Program development informed by ANA	# of high impact partnership or program established that is aligned with ANA needs identified in each school community
	Family participation in surveys, town halls, parent teacher conferences	Two-way communication between parents and teachers through texting platform	# of families that participate in surveys, town halls, and parent teacher conferences
	Self-efficacy of principals and community school coordinators in collaborative leadership practices	Community School Leadership Academy	% of principals and community school coordinators that attend the academy
		The Forum's Educator Pipeline Collaborative, Equity Core Network, Equity Incubator, and Equity Education	% of students interested in entering the teaching profession; number of individuals assisted through equity focused work
	Duke Summer Training in Academic Research (STAR) Program	# of teachers that participate in STAR program	

Section 4. Adequacy of Resources

4.1 Resources

Plans for a full-time Community Schools Coordinator (CSC) at each school

The full-time CSC will serve a critical role in the successful planning and implementation of each FSCS. As such, NCCSC will ensure each FSCS has a full-time, qualified, well-trained and supported CSC. The following pages outline the roles and responsibilities of the CSC, selection criteria, support for all CSCs across NCCSC, and plan for CSC sustainability.

Roles and Responsibilities of the CSC: The CSC is responsible for the planning and implementation of the FSCS strategy at the school level, including understanding school assets and needs, implementing and evaluating programming, and creating opportunities for shared leadership and family engagement.

Understand Assets and Needs: In collaboration with the School Advisory Board, the CSC will conduct an initial extensive ANA to identify gaps in services for students and families and existing community resources to fill those needs. As part of the overall assessment, the CSC will review and integrate results from the NC SHIP state needs assessment, the Child Health Report Card from NC Child, and The Public School Forum's NC Road Map results.^{155, 170, 171} The CSC will work with the School Advisory Board to synthesize and interpret ANA results.

Implement and Evaluate Programming: Based on ANA, the CSC will work with the School Advisory Board to create a plan to integrate FSCS four pillars framework and the NCCSC project goals for individual schools. The CSC will then implement applicable programs and services through the FRC and community partnerships according to the priorities identified by the school community, with a focus on meeting the needs of the NCCSC priority population. A key resource for implementing services will be the volunteers and interns overseen by CSCs, with priority for these roles given to FSCS alumni and community members. The CSC will work

closely with the NCCSC evaluation team and the school data manager to ensure appropriate tracking of data necessary to measure the effectiveness of interventions and supports.

Create Opportunities for Shared Leadership and Family Engagement: The CSC will serve as a key member of the school leadership team and be an ambassador of FSCSs. The CSC will coordinate parent and community engagement initiatives, with a specific focus on engaging priority populations, as well as collaborate with the school principal to integrate diverse community partners, parents, and other stakeholders into school governance structures (e.g., School Leadership, School Safety). In addition, the CSC will coordinate training and professional development for school staff and facilitate communication and relationship-building with community partners, key stakeholders, and volunteers.

Selection Criteria: Selection criteria identified to ensure the CSC is fully qualified to fulfill the stated roles and responsibilities, along with a complete job description, can be found in Appendix E. Most importantly, CSCs must deeply understand the communities in which they will work, believe in the potential of students and families to serve as leaders inside and outside of the school building, and commit to the integration of the FSCS four pillars framework to achieve desired project outcomes. Selection committees comprised of School Advisory Board members and Regional Implementation Partners will interview and select the applicant best positioned to integrate the four pillars of FSCS into the school community.

Support for CSCs: Consistent with the pillar of collaborative leadership and practice, each CSC will have an extensive circle of support, including the School Advisory Board and the Regional Implementation Partners. NCCSC will also provide professional development opportunities for CSCs, including the Community School Leadership Academy (CSLA) described below and National Education Association (NEA) coaching outlined in the **MOU**.

The CSLA, first developed in 2019 by the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) in partnership with East Carolina University, will provide professional development to CSCs, school principals, and LEA representatives to help them develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to create a culture of collaborative and shared leadership. Qualified IEL coaches will facilitate six cohort meetings throughout the year, and NCCSC will also convene a state-wide, in-person leadership institute and learning exchange designed to support the implementation of collaborative and shared leadership within FSCSs and across LEAs. To date, the CSLA has trained approximately 250 educational leaders, 99% of whom have rated the usefulness as “excellent.”

4.2 Plan for Sustainability

NCCSC has detailed its plan for financial, organizational, and community sustainability below. Additional information can be found in Section 7, Strategy to Scale.

Financial Sustainability

NCCSC's plan for sustaining CSC positions beyond the grant period is anchored by each LEA's formal commitment to financially supporting the CSC position and the District CS Liaison beyond the life of the grant (see **MOU**). In addition, each Regional Implementation Partner and statewide partner has agreed to support the financial sustainability of the NC FSCS Initiative by raising additional funds to expand existing programs and enable long-term program sustainability after the five-year grant (see **MOU**).

As detailed in Section 5 and the **MOU**, NC DPI is committed to serving as an engaged partner of NCCSC beyond the grant period, including developing and implementing a sustainability plan that maintains the FSCS model. In addition, NCCSC's State Implementation Partners, The Forum and NC Child, will leverage their strong relationships with the state legislature to share results of the project with the goal of cultivating legislative champions for the initiative. The Forum and NC Child will also work with fellow advocates to understand the long-

term fiscal needs of this work and collaboratively devise a plan for sustainable funding at the state level.

Finally, a unique feature of NCCSC is the participation of significant philanthropic organizations on the State Steering Committee (see **LOS**). Each foundation has broad expertise in the challenges and opportunities of investing private dollars in NC education reform initiatives (Table 9). As such, they will provide critical input for the development and implementation of a realistic financial sustainability plan. Data derived from program evaluation, including costs (financial, personnel, time, other) and benefits (effectiveness in achieving the project goals) of implemented programs and services will help refine this plan.

Table 9. NC Philanthropic Investments in Education Reform Initiatives

Foundation	Mission
The Duke Endowment	Support grantees as they nurture children, promote health, educate minds and uplift spirits
Leon Levine Foundation	Strengthen partnerships that make the Carolinas thrive
Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust	Improve equitable access to opportunity across NC
Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation	Improving quality of life for all North Carolinians
Whitehurst Family Foundation	Improve education access
Child Trust Foundation	Strive toward equity in early childhood systems

Organizational Sustainability

As Chris Caruso, the founding executive director in New York City’s Office of Community Schools states, “[Community Schools] require an investment in infrastructure. We needed to have people who could guide and teach schools how to do this, be [bridges] between schools and other city agencies, facilitate funding, and hold schools accountable.” NCCSC’s three Regional Implementation Partners bring combined decades of success in sustainable impact and share a core value of keeping the whole child at the center of all initiatives (UWABC: 102 years; Student U: 16 years; REI: 30 years). Moreover, NCCSC’s focus on supporting shared learning, professional development, service coordination, and other functions across the three regions creates a scalable infrastructure that is sustainable beyond the life of the grant.¹⁰³

The project design’s focus on establishing infrastructure is based in NCCSC’s grounding belief that **the most critical factor in organizational sustainability is ensuring the values and visions of those for whom FSCSs are created – students, families, and staff – are central to the development, implementation, and evaluation of the initiative.**¹⁰³ NCCSC is confident in each FSCS’s potential for sustainability based on the fact that each school’s capacity for and commitment to implementing the FSCS vision has been carefully considered and vetted during the project planning process.

Community Sustainability: NCCSC understands the importance of community buy-in for the successful implementation and sustainability of the NC FSCS Initiative. Throughout the life of the grant, NCCSC will engage both school and external communities for each FSCS. Data transparency and sharing results will help contribute to this process. Moreover, indicative of the possibilities for community sustainability, NCCSC has the commitment of many community organizations – from small non-profits to large health systems - who are eager to provide services to students and families (see **LOS**). These organizations recognize collaboration with NCCSC as a pivotal opportunity to further their priorities of meeting the needs of children and families.

Section 5. Quality of Management Plan

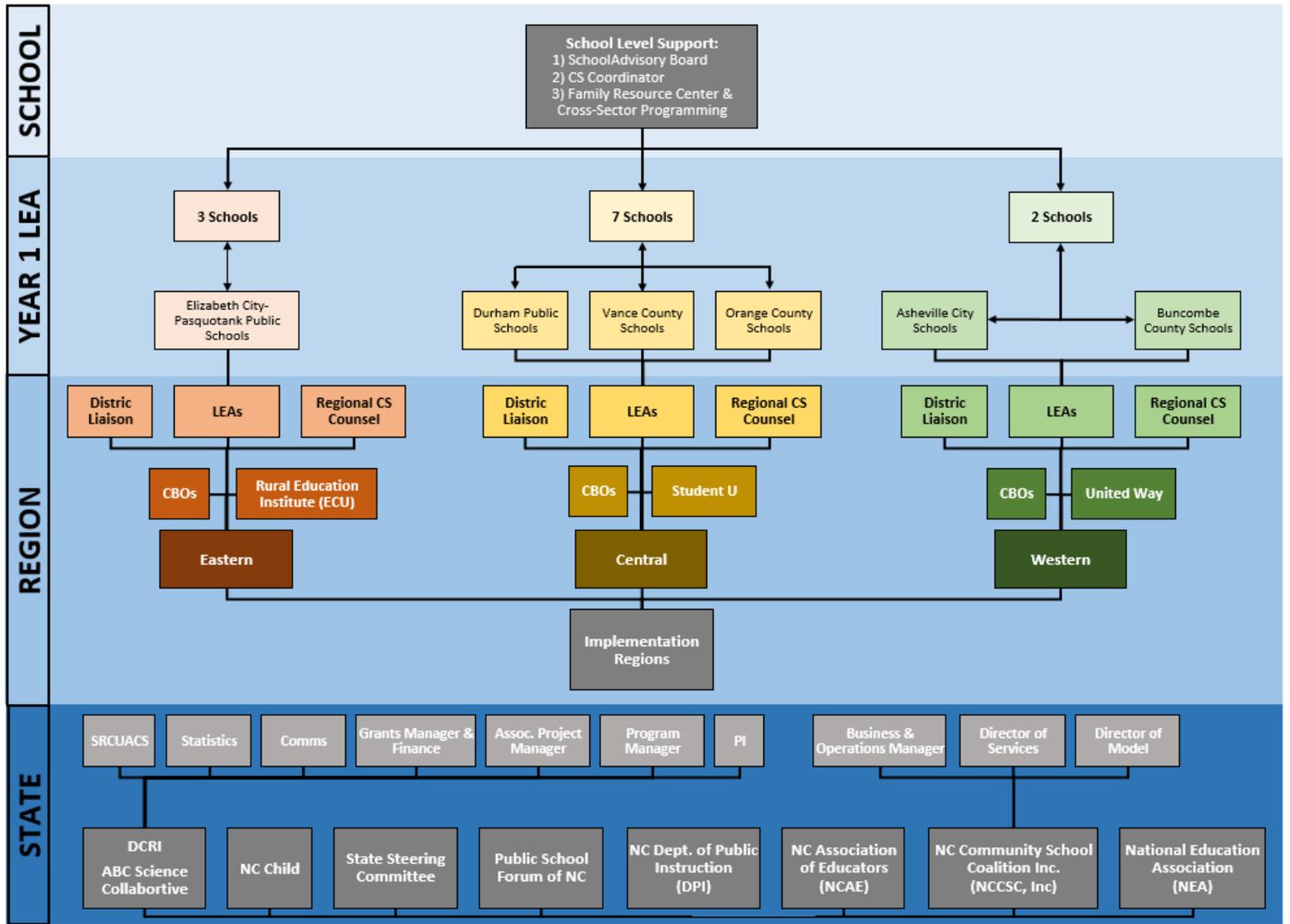
5.1 Overview of the Broadly Representative Consortium

NCCSC consists of a diverse group of collaborators who have the common goal of creating more equitable access to high-quality K-12 education in NC, including: State Steering Committee, DCRI, the Regional Implementation Partners—UWABC, Student U, and REI—NC Child, The Public School Forum of NC, NC DPI, and the NEA, as well as numerous community-based and health service organizations. Each partner brings unique capabilities and a history of successful program implementation that improves outcomes for children. With a collaborative leadership plan and shared management designed across all components of the model, NCCSC

will achieve its goals detailed in Table 8 to integrate the FSCS four pillars framework across three regions in NC, reaching 21,351 students across 55 schools.

NCCSC places the students, guardians, and staff of the school communities of the six **Year 1** LEAs and the 12 additional Year 2-5 LEAs at the center of the Coalition and is committed to honoring and integrating the experiences, ideas, and input from community school families and students. As such, youth and families from FSCSs will be represented on Advisory Boards, Regional Councils and the State Steering Committee (see Figure 4 and Table 10).

Figure 4. NCCSC Team Structure



As with every facet of NCCSC, this team structure will be continuously reviewed and evaluated throughout the project lifecycle, with modifications made as needed to promote excellence, efficiency, knowledge sharing and stakeholder engagement.

Table 10. Integration Plan for Students and Families

Group	Level	Role
School Advisory Board	School	Serve on CSC selection/review committee. Synthesize and interpret results of ANA and develop strategic plan to address ANA. Determine allocation of FRC funds to address school level needs. Will include students and guardians.

Community Evaluation Team	School / Project	Participate in evaluation to determine impact of NCCSC and include participation from the School Advisory Board, Regional Council, and State Steering Committee.
Regional Community School Council	Region	Present annually to LEA leadership. Oversee FSCS implementation in region. Support the dissemination and scaling of best practices across the Region. Will include students and guardians from School Advisory Boards.
State Steering Committee	State	Oversee FSCS implementation in state. Support the dissemination and scaling of best practices across the state. Will include students and families from the Regional Councils.

5.2 Roles and Responsibilities of Coalition Members and their Histories of Effectiveness

NCCSC represents students, guardians, educators, mentors, coaches, physicians, and policy makers who live, work, and play in the communities served by this project. Together, we are committed to achieving the objectives of the proposed project in pursuit of a day when all NC children can thrive. Key NCCSC members, roles, responsibilities, and histories of effective collaboration with diverse stakeholders (including students and families) are outlined below.

The State Steering Committee supports the development, implementation, scaling, and sustaining of the NC FSCS Initiative and will be comprised of members representing the diverse stakeholders involved in NCCSC. A list of confirmed members can be found in the included MOU. These members will attend bi-annual meetings with NCCSC leadership and commit to: oversee the progress of NCCSC implementation; share the initiative’s progress and accomplishments with relevant entities and determine how findings from NCCSC can influence NC’s long-term strategy for equitable access to high quality education and systems and services that promote health and well-being; determine priorities and strategy for further statewide expansion of the NC FSCS Initiative both during and beyond the FSCS award period; and, in collaboration with NC DPI and coalition partners, develop and implement a sustainability plan to secure funds for at least two years after the term of the grant.

The Duke Clinical Research Institute (DCRI; lead applicant) is a leading academic clinical research organization that generates world-class evidence to improve health and health

equity, creates novel methods that accelerate clinical research, and shares and implements knowledge widely. DCRI has served as a coordinating center for several large-scale community-focused programs including the ABC Science Collaborative, Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics (RADx), Pediatric Trials Network (PTN), Environmental influences on Child Health Outcomes (ECHO), the Trial Innovation Network (TIN), and more. DCRI will work to coordinate local, state, regional, and national FSCS partnerships to develop, implement, scale, and sustain FSCS in NC, while contributing to the national FSCS movement. Dr. Kanecia Zimmerman will lead the DCRI team as the principal investigator.

DCRI has a **long history of effectiveness in working with a diverse range of stakeholders** through past projects and partnerships. For the last 20 years DCRI has worked with federal agencies, local and national legislators, academicians, child advocacy groups, and **children and families** across the country to improve child health. Specifically, DCRI has investigated early environmental exposures on child health and development; influenced federal legislation that now requires drug companies to develop plans for studying drug effects on neonates; conducted studies to update 22 US FDA drug labels with pediatric information; collaborated with US FDA to recognize the importance of conducting drug studies in special pediatric populations; and established the pathway for return of results to pediatric participants in pragmatic clinical trials and their families; among others. In most of these endeavors, DCRI has served as the coordinating center, leading and orchestrating more than 100 clinical research sites, and has been responsible for study design and analysis of results, study implementation, and distribution of funds to facilitate projects.

As a testament to DCRI's effectiveness, in 2020, school board members of local LEAs requested that DCRI leaders create the ABC Science Collaborative (ABCSC) to help schools, LEAs and communities understand the most relevant information about COVID-19. ABCSC

pairs scientists and physicians with K-12 schools, community leaders, and organizations to implement and evaluate initiatives aimed at keeping teachers, students and their communities healthy and well. Each of ABCSC’s founding co-chairs (including Dr. Zimmerman) and faculty members is a practicing pediatrician who has personally cared for tens of thousands of children and their families for preventive care and during times of critical illness. ABCSC scientists and staff, including project leaders, and communications, data management, informatics, and statistical specialists will lead DCRI’s efforts to support the goals and activities outlined herein. Examples of ABCSC’s collaborations across NC’s education ecosystem, as well as evidence of its effectiveness in achieving stated goals and fostering foundational community partnerships are listed in Table 11.

Table 11. History of ABCSC Effectiveness in Working with Diverse Stakeholders

Description of ABCSC’s partnership/partnership goals	Stakeholder type	Evidence of effectiveness/outputs
<u>Influence State Legislation</u> Share state of data from Collaborative and others regarding safe return to K-12 schools	NC State legislators	NC Senate Bill 220 was passed with bipartisan support Reopen Our Schools Act signed into legislation in March 2021 by Governor Roy Cooper, mandating the safe return to K-12 schools in NC
<u>COVID-19 Update 2020 – Present</u> 52 NC LEAs (including LEAs: Orange, Vance, Elizabeth City-Pasquotank, Durham, Asheville)	Superintendents, nurses, and school leaders	Weekly meetings and ad-hoc 1:1 meetings to discuss COVID-19 mitigation strategies and emerging science
<u>School Research Partnership</u> Worked with 13 LEAs to collect school specific data regarding transmission and mitigation strategies	Principals, Teachers, Superintendents, Nurses	Improved confidence in return to school for involved; formed the basis for the first North American description of successful return to K-12 schools in fall 2020 and winter 2021; and contributed to CDC guidance urging the safe return to school
<u>Published Research</u> Guilford County Association of Educators to design and conduct study	Teachers/teachers union	Published manuscript describing findings demonstrating the importance of collaborative leadership practices in keeping schools safe
<u>Evidence to Support NCDHHS</u> LEAs, NC DPI, NCDHHS, governor’s office to implement Plan A (no physical distancing) with close evaluation from ABCSC	State Government Agencies, teachers, principals, superintendents	Inclusion of COVID-19 Plan A in NCDHHS guidance
<u>Develop Masking Guidelines</u> Nearly 100 LEAs across the country	Superintendents, school nurses,	Data comparing partial to complete to no masking establishes universal masking as

	school principals and other leaders	superior to other options for control of transmission of COVID-19
<u>Community Engagement</u> Latin-x community members (LATIN-19);	Community members, including students and families of color	>300 petitions to the Durham Public Schools board to improve outdoor eating consistency; ABCSC listed in the school board's resolution; Educational sessions on COVID-19 in schools
<u>Research to Support Families of Color</u> Teachers, students, and families in Durham Charter Schools and Durham Public Schools to better understand opinions on return to school, barriers, COVID-19 testing	Students and families of color, teachers	Focus groups and interviews revealed that families of color generally felt safer returning to school when mask mandates were in place and identified factors that encouraged them to get COVID-19 testing
<u>Mental Health Consults</u> NCPAL, CDC, NCDHHS to implement and evaluate mental health programming in NC	State and national agencies; staff members at LEAs	130 LEAs (including participating LEAs) participate in mental health consultation/education sessions.
<u>School Assessment to Enhance Achievement</u> School leaders and community members in Orange County and Vance County	Teachers, school leaders, students, and families	Environmental analysis identifying assets, need and vision for the future (e.g., calming room)
<u>Evidence to support World Health Organization</u> to form policy on COVID-19 mitigation for K-12 schools in middle- and low-income countries	International Agency	Helped provide basis for COVID-19 K-12 policy and recommendations on masking for K-12 schools in middle- and low-income countries.

Throughout the award period, DCRI will serve as the fiscal agent for the NC FSCS

Initiative and manage the administrative and evaluation functions of the project. Responsibilities include coordination, collaboration and communication across participating entities, oversight of cross functional regional meetings, grant and financial management, milestone adherence and reporting, and development and implementation of a data collection and evaluation plan to assess effectiveness of NCCSC initiatives.

Regional Implementation Partners

Western NC: United Way of Asheville and Buncombe Counties (UWABC) is a locally governed, autonomous 501(c)3 organization that has been efficiently mobilizing resources to advance the common good in Western NC since 1921. As described in Section 2, UWABC has **effectively worked in partnership with Asheville City Schools, Buncombe County Schools,**

and a powerful network of over 50 community partners to co-create successful FSCSs throughout Asheville and Buncombe County. In February 2021, UWAB initiated its "Bold Community Goal," a plan that was created and adopted by nearly 150 youth, school, and community partners to align and leverage community resources and improve systems for equitable student learning and educational excellence. UWABC will use this expertise to expand the Community School model through the addition of two schools within the Asheville City and Buncombe County LEAs in year 1. **As a Regional Implementation Partner, UWABC will guide the expansion of FSCSs to a total of 9 schools across 4 LEAs in Western NC.**

Central NC: Student U, a community organization in Durham, NC, has a 16-year **history of effectiveness** directly engaging with students and families in support of their educational, social, and emotional success with a proven record of impact. All Student U program growth has developed organically from the requests of Student U families, contributing to a 55% college graduation rate, on par with non-low-income, non-first-generation students. In the U.S., only 11% of first-generation students will graduate from a 4-year institution within 6 years.¹⁷² Student U's success has been made possible by working with diverse stakeholders to support 550 students directly and the other 32,000 Durham Public Schools (DPS) students indirectly through staff training, program piloting, curriculum development, and sharing best practices. As DPS Superintendent Mubenga endorsed, "Student U's immersive program is the perfect example of a transformative partnership that provides first-generation college bound students with leadership skills that ensure success beyond high school. For the diverse array of students who experience it, Student U is a transformative opportunity."

In 2017, Student U purchased a historic former elementary school in Downtown Durham that now serves as a hub for nine organizations working together to combat systemic racism and structural inequalities in service of a Durham where all children can succeed. Student U's depth

serves as the model for the long-term impact of NCCSC, with NCCSC FSCS students becoming the leaders who will enhance and sustain this coalition for decades to come. **As the Regional Implementation Partner, Student U will guide the expansion of FSCSs to a total of 26 schools across 8 LEAs in Central NC.**

Eastern NC: Rural Education Institute (REI) at Eastern Carolina University (ECU) was established over 30 years ago with funding from the NC legislature for the advancement of education in rural, Eastern NC. REI faculty are nationally recognized researchers and educators with strong, multi-generational ties to rural NC, bolstering their ability to develop and research educational programming that addresses the unique needs of children and families in the region.

REI has a demonstrated **history of effectiveness**; over the last five years, it has partnered with 43 NC rural school LEAs, 9 education nonprofit and afterschool consortiums, and 4 mental health groups in 12 externally funded grant projects totaling [REDACTED]. During this time, REI also launched *Theory & Practice in Rural Education*, one of only three national peer-reviewed rural education research journals in the country. Currently, REI is collaborating with NC DPI to explore the effectiveness of extended learning summer programming while amplifying the voices of students, teachers, administrators, and parents of rural schools and communities. REI is the state affiliate for the National Rural Education Association and is working closely with association leadership to further promote rural education initiatives in NC.

Over the past year, REI has closely collaborated with Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public School stakeholders to implement a university-assisted FSCS. Funding provided from the NC Collaboratory of NC DPI has enabled the district to pilot an FSCS and work closely with REI to evaluate and assess COVID-19 mitigation efforts in the district. Note that funds requested in this grant will not supplant current funding available through REI to collaborate with Elizabeth City-

Pasquotank. As the **Regional Implementation Partner, REI will guide the expansion of FSCSs to a total of 20 schools across 6 LEAs in Eastern NC.**

Regional Implementation Partner: Roles and Responsibilities

Each Regional Implementation Partner will leverage its expertise, infrastructure, and knowledge of and relationship to its region to fulfill the responsibilities outlined in Table 12.

Table 12. Responsibilities of Regional Implementation Partners

Partner Roles	Responsibilities
Implementation of FSCS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recruitment, selection, hiring, ongoing training and support of CSCs; ○ Facilitation of partnership between school leaders, School Advisory Boards and CSCs; ○ Creating and maintaining effective partnerships and school-based programs
Connection to District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collaboration with the District CS Liaison and School Advisory Boards to determine opportunities for district adoption of FSCS four pillar initiatives; ○ Creation of opportunities for district staff to learn with and from FSCS leaders; ○ Collaboration with District CS Liaison to identify new FSCSs
Regional Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Leading the Regional Council; ○ Creation of learning opportunities for LEAs within region and across state; ○ Identification of new LEAs to join NCCSC
Statewide Programming and Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In collaboration with Regional and State Implementation Partners, development and implementation of programming to improve effectiveness of FSCSs and determine statewide policy and spending priority recommendations for DPI and the General Assembly
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Each Regional Implementation Partner will hire four full-time staff to support the community school model: Director of CS Model; Director of Family and Community Engagement; Leader of Community School Coordinators; Director of Student Support Services

Year 1 LEAs will identify a district-level leader to serve as the District CS Liaison and will identify an administrator to serve on the State Steering Committee. The District CS Liaison will report on the progress of each FSCS to the school community and School Board annually. District level leadership will actively participate in NCCSC, along with each CSC and School Advisory Board. Each of these entities will collaborate with other school community stakeholders to oversee the school-level ANAs and the development and implementation of the school-level strategic plans according to the FSCS four pillars framework. Each LEA will also share data across NCCSC in support of iterative evaluation and continuous process improvement. After the

grant period ends, each district has committed to continuing financial support for CSCs and district level leadership to ensure program sustainability.

State Implementation Partners support the implementation of FSCSs, and **given their current reach across NC, will propel NCCSC to scale the NC FSCS Initiative throughout the state beyond the grant period.**

NC Child: Founded in 2014, NC Child is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that advances public policies to ensure that every child in NC has the opportunity to thrive, regardless of race, ethnicity, or place of birth. NC Child addresses a wide spectrum of children’s issues including early childhood education, health, foster care, juvenile justice, and family economic security. NC Child is highly respected across the state for its research, policy, communications, and network-building expertise; it has forged strong working relationships with state and local leaders across fields and sectors. NC Child exemplifies a commitment to working with diverse stakeholders through its Parent Advisory Council, Youth Advocacy Council and Child Advocacy Network. In collaboration with communities across the state, NC Child will continue to develop strong policy solutions and elevate them to decision-makers who trust that these solutions serve the best interest of children. NC Child will serve on NCCSC’s evaluation team to create county- and state-level data dashboards that demonstrate the need for and impact of FSCSs. Finally, NC Child will host an electronic data request form that will allow partners to ask for help finding or interpreting publicly available data or locating and submitting special data requests to agencies.

Public School Forum of NC (The Forum): For more than 35 years, The Forum has served as a nonpartisan resource and convener for NC’s public education stakeholders and champions. The Forum brings together individuals and institutions from business, education, and government to study education, develop ideas, seek consensus, and ultimately inform and shape policy. The Forum provides evidence-driven, fact-based education policy analysis and research tools,

advocates to lawmakers across the state, works to engage and inform NC residents, and seeks to bridge elected officials, educators and business leaders committed to school improvement. The Forum has convened 17 Study Groups of experts from across the state—teachers, administrators, elected officials, researchers, students, parents, and more—to develop evidence-based recommendations for policy and practice to improve opportunities and outcomes for NC students. The Forum’s major initiatives already are implemented across much of NC, with expansion proposed through NCCSC. For example, NC Center for Resilience and Learning provides trauma-informed educator training and coaching to 32 LEAs reaching over 26,000 students. The Forum’s NC Superintendent, Principal, Equity Officer Networks and Educator Pipeline Collaborative, Education Policy Fellowship, and Rural Teacher Leader Network provide equity-centered leadership and coaching for school staff in 80 NC LEAs.

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI) is charged with implementing the state’s laws for pre-kindergarten through 12th grade public school at the direction of the State Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The agency provides leadership and service to the 115 public school LEAs and 2,500+ district public schools. In 2016, NC DPI and the NC Board of Education adopted the Whole School, Whole Child, Whole Community (WSCC) Model, which recognizes the urgent need to address the comprehensive impacts of structural racism and intergenerational poverty through aligned and coordinated services between the education and public health sectors. The WSCC Model recognizes the strategic position of the school building and its ability to liaise the day-to-day curriculum with the health needs of students and families. The Model outlines ten integral components through which schools can consolidate their efforts to holistically serve students.¹⁷³

Since adopting the model, NC DPI has created the NC State Board of Education Whole Child NC Committee (which includes members of the FSCS State Steering Committee) and

required each LEA to establish School Health Advisory Councils (SHACS) charged with identifying non-academic social emotional, physical, and mental health needs of students and developing partnerships to meet these needs. The infrastructure created by the WSCC model will be leveraged by NCCSC, with Advisory Boards and SHACs working together to serve NC students. NC DPI will identify how lessons learned through the NC FSCS Initiative and its connection to the WSCC model can be used to scale FSCSs across the state.

[Southeast Regional Coalition for University-Assisted Community Schools \(SRCUACS\)](#) is a three-institution collaboration between East Carolina University (ECU; a rural public university), Duke University (an urban private university), and North Carolina Central University (NCCU; A Historically Black University), focused on convening undergraduate and graduate students from NC and across the Southeast to enhance practice and advance policy change for the expansion and sustainability of FSCSs. SRCUACS was named the Southeast Regional Training Center for University-Assisted Community Schools by the University of Pennsylvania's Netter Center for Community Partnerships. SRCUACS builds on the strengths of participating institutions and will organize college and university students, faculty, and programs across the three NCCSC regions. SRCUACS will connect university resources to FSCSs, contribute to academic scholarship on FSCSs, promote policy strategies to advance FSCSs, support preparation pipelines for FSCS educators and coordinators across the region, and host in-person regional and statewide action-research symposium for university staff, faculty and students.

[The National Education Association \(NEA\)](#), the nation's largest professional education employee organization, is committed to advancing the cause of public education from preschool to university graduate programs. The NEA has spent years studying, compiling, and curating a step-by-step guide for FSCSs that reflects best practices and serves as the foundation for the NEA Implementation Institute for Community Schools. The Implementation Institute is a network of

FSCSs committed to a transformational community-driven process, which will provide unlimited no-cost access to the NEA Community Schools blended learning curriculum and Benchmark Academies to NCCSC CSCs.

The North Carolina Community Schools Coalition, Inc. (NCCSC, Inc.) is a not-for-profit organization created to support the above partners in the statewide implementation of the NC FSCS framework and improve the academic, mental, and physical health of NC students.

NCCSC, Inc. will oversee the following:

- State Steering Committee Management: Manage State Steering Committee; recruit members, including funders, set agendas, and oversee progress towards goals.
- Development and Sustainability Leadership—Lead advancement committee comprised of representatives from Regional and State Partners to raise additional funds for expanded impact and the long-term sustainability of the model after the grant period.
- Statewide Educational Efforts Coordination—Support statewide efforts to improve outcomes for students across the state, both within FSCSs and in schools and LEAs that are not yet participating in the model. See Section 2 for details.

Other Organizations and Supporting Entities: NCCSC relies on the explicit support of community partners that integrate services for NC children and families. Section 3 and each **LOS** detail the services provided by each entity.

5.3 Operational Planning and Management

Sound operational planning and management will ensure that the goals of NCCSC are realized for children and families across NC. All administrative functions of the NCCSC project will be managed by a team experienced in project oversight, ranging from oversight of large NIH-funded clinical and data coordinating centers to community-partnered initiatives, and using standard operating procedures that have resulted in success of the DCRI since 1969.

During the project planning phase of the NC FSCS Initiative, the plans listed below will be developed and refined by NCCSC leaders with collaborators to ensure achievement of project goals on time and within budget.

Project Management Plan (PMP): The PMP will be developed and refined during the planning phase to define the principles that will guide operational execution of the project in compliance with the overall goals. This document provides the overall framework for accomplishing each of the project objectives. The PMP will be version-controlled, reviewed and updated regularly by the DCRI Project Leader in collaboration with Dr. Zimmerman and NCCSC partners. The PMP will be made available for all project team members to access – including the teams, committees and councils listed in Table 10 and will be shared with external stakeholders and collaborators. The PMP will be guided by the roles and responsibilities of the partners and the milestones listed in Table 13.

Table 13. Timeline, Milestones, and Responsible Party

Timeline	Milestones	Responsible Party	
Year 1 2024	January	NCCSC Launch	DCRI, NCCSC, UWABC, REI, Student U
	February	Regional Implementation Staff Hired Kick-Off Meeting with DOE, NCCSC and Participating School Districts	UWABC, REI, Student U, Schools, DCRI, NCCSC
	March	Establish Community School District Liaison Community School Coordinators Hired	UWABC, REI, Student U, School
	May	1 st State Steering Committee Meeting ANA Initiated	-DCRI, NCCSC, Inc. -DCRI, Schools
	June	Community School Leadership Academy Summit	UWABC, REI, Student U and Schools
	July	State Steering Committee Charter Finalized	DCRI, NCCSC
	August	Year 1 Community School Services Begin	UWABC, REI, Student U
	October	Preliminary Analysis of ANA in Year 1 Schools Advisory Board Launched FRC Funding Available for Year 1 Schools	DCRI, NCCSC
	November	2 nd State Steering Committee Meeting Regional Councils Established	-DCRI, NCCSC, Inc. -UWABC, REI, Student U
	December	Year 1 Annual Grant Performance Report to DOE	DCRI
Year 2-5 2025	January	Year 2 – 5 Schools Identified	UWABC, REI, Student U, NCCSC
	March	Establish Community School District Liaisons Community School Coordinators Hired	UWABC, REI, Student U, Schools

Timeline		Milestones	Responsible Party
-2028	May	State Steering Committee Meeting ANA Initiated for New Schools	DCRI, NCCSC
	June	Community School Leadership Academy Summit	UWABC, REI, Student U, Schools
	August	New Community School Services Begin	UWABC, REI, Student U, Schools
	September	Presentation by Regional Council to LEA Leadership	Schools
	October	Preliminary Analysis of ANA in New Schools Advisory Board Launched for New Schools FRC Funding Available for New Schools	DCRI, NCCSC
	November	State Steering Committee meeting Regional Councils Established	DCRI, NCCSC, Inc., UWABC, REI, Student U, Schools
	December	Annual Grant Performance Report to DOE Year 5 Final Grant Performance Report to DOE	DCRI

Communications Plan: A key factor in the success of NCCSC will be timely and accurate communication between all collaborators. The DCRI project team will develop a detailed and unified Communications Plan that will delineate the flow of information, what information will be communicated, and in what format. The DCRI project team has extensive experience using e-mail automation services, Zoom/WebEx conferences, and face-to-face meetings and will leverage this experience to communicate goals, steps, and processes to relevant parties over the life of the NCCSC Initiative. This team will be actively involved in the early establishment of real-time communication and contingency plans.

Risk Assessment: Risk identification and mitigation activities are crucial to ensuring the programmatic, political, and fiscal health of the NCCSC initiative. The DCRI project team will work collaboratively with all NCCSC partners to create a Risk Assessment Plan and will, throughout the life of the initiative, continually review metrics and develop targeted management plans to minimize risk. For example, during the initial stages of the project, the DCRI project team will lead an in-depth cross-functional review of the project plans to develop a detailed list of possible risks using the Individual Risk Assessment Tool DCRI has used for past projects.

Financial Management: The DCRI project team will be responsible for managing the project within the budgetary limits of this award. The program's progress will be monitored on a

regular basis through communication with NCCSC team members, partners and collaborators. This will include monthly review and monitoring of the project scope, budget, timeline, resourcing, and personnel effort expended. Changes in scope will be reviewed and discussed with the DCRI project team, NCCSC Model Director, and State Steering Committee to document the description of the out-of-scope activities or request, estimated cost and impact, and plans for adjusting other activities to operate within the original budgetary limits. To assist in achieving objectives within budgetary limits, **the following administrative teams are supported by the DCRI infrastructure at no additional direct cost to the project.**

- **Sponsored Project Administration (SPA)** is a solution-oriented team whose function is to monitor the financial health of sponsored projects, and foster compliance with applicable laws, regulations and policies through quality direction and guidance in response to project needs and milestones.
- **Grant and Proposal Services (GPS)** orchestrates the development and submission of grant proposals, including budgets for new and ongoing projects.

Section 6. Quality of Project Evaluation

6.1 Overview of Evaluation

NCCSC is rooted in Results-Based Accountability (RBA), which requires that formative and summative evaluation be thorough, feasible, and actionable for each partner and for the Coalition, grounding NCCSC’s work in the collective goal of improving the conditions of well-being for children and families across NC.¹⁷⁴

NCCSC will use a data-driven approach for planning and implementation and has developed a detailed **evaluation plan**. Just as NCCSC is multilevel, consisting of distinct pipeline services, individual FSCSs, LEAs, Implementation Regions, and NC, so too will NCCSC use the RBA-rooted evaluation plan to understand at each level: “How much did we do? How well did we do it? Is anyone better off?” Outcomes will focus on the student and family, teacher and staff,

and school as a whole. Furthermore, NCCSC evaluation aims to accomplish three overarching goals: 1) facilitate continuous process improvement within each level of the Coalition through periodic continuous assessment of progress (every 6 months), 2) establish a common language and facilitate shared accountability, and 3) establish trust and foster community school growth through data transparency.

To accomplish these goals, NCCSC will leverage the collective methodological expertise of DCRI, NC Child, and K-12 schools, with independent evaluation by the Duke Center for Child and Family Policy (led by Dr. Katie Rosanbalm, child clinical and quantitative psychologist focused on educational program implementation and evaluation) to systematically collect, report, and disseminate data. NCCSC will also leverage the robust research infrastructure at DCRI and Duke University, with ready access to data managers, statisticians, informaticists, project leaders, and research coordinators to support organization and ongoing evaluation. In addition, through standardized and evidence-based methods for data collection, these infrastructure resources will ensure that evaluation provides valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes.

Qualitative and quantitative methods will be used throughout the NC FSCS Initiative to evaluate the 13 required indicators. Qualitative data sources will include school staff, children and youth, and families, and will be obtained through focus groups, needs assessments, and evidence-based surveys (see Table 14 and Table 15 for indicators and associated goals and data sources). Qualitative data will be assessed through a six-phase thematic analysis approach as described by Braun and Clark.¹⁷⁵ Analyses will be conducted at group and individual levels with consideration given to each participant's demographic information.

Quantitative data will include sociodemographic characteristics of participants; information on teacher certifications, professional development, and turnover; standardized test scores; disciplinary actions; student attendance; food insecurity and housing instability; teacher

and principal self-efficacy scores; parent/teacher conference attendance; and mental and physical health, including vaccinations; and more. These data will directly address several of the key indicators (See Table 14 and Table 15.)

Prior to data analysis, and as part of the process to ensure valid and reliable data, descriptive analyses will be performed to assess data plausibility and quality, and queries will be issued where there are concerns. Sociodemographic characteristics of participants will be described by school using means (SD) and medians (Q1, Q3) for continuous variables, and frequencies and percentages for categorical variables. Group-level differences will be evaluated as appropriate using student's t-tests, ANOVA, and Kruskal-Wallis testing.

To facilitate these detailed analyses, we will also leverage three unique features of NCCSC's evaluation:

1. A DCRI project leader will work 1:1 with CSCs, School Advisory Boards, and data managers or a school appointed staff liaison at each community school at the beginning of the program and throughout implementation to ensure the relevant variables that are collected as part of regular school processes are appropriately coded into the data capture system and transferred to the secure data system for analysis. Biweekly meetings will occur for the evaluation team to ensure quality data collection, analysis, interpretation and reporting. Demonstrating the significant commitment of each LEA in NCCSC, each has included in the MOU the **sharing of school-level data to support the evaluation** on NCCSC as well as a **commitment to participation in any national evaluation processes**.
2. Evaluation processes will leverage existing experience executing Data Use Agreements between NC Medicaid, NC DPI and NC Department of Public Safety. NCCSC will explore avenues for using linked data to create a powerful method for in-depth

understanding of the cross-sector needs of students and the **influence of NCCSC on the whole child** far beyond typical analyses.

3. NCCSC is not only committed to conducting analyses within each of its levels, but also to evaluate change in quantitative indicators in implementation schools, LEAs, counties, and regions compared to those who are not participating in the NCCSC Initiative, matched according to sociodemographic factors and baseline indicator performance. The NCCSC evaluation team will generate crude and adjusted linear mixed models to assess the association between participation in NCCSC initiative and change in each continuous indicator. NCCSC is hopeful that this commitment will further enhance NC's and DOE's efforts to understand the impact of FSCS within the state as well as across the nation.

6.2 Evaluation to Facilitate Continuous Process Improvement

To facilitate continuous process improvement, we will focus on answering the critical questions of “How much did we do? How well did we do it? Is anyone better off?” at each stage of the design and implementation of NCCSC. Where necessary, we will develop assessment tools, in collaboration with the independent evaluator, to ensure that data tracking aligns with all the required indicators. Reporting of results will occur semi-annually. Early in the project period (and during the process of scaling), evaluation will focus on processes of gaining community buy-in for FCSC implementation, identifying school and LEA staff (e.g., CSC and District CS Liaison), and conducting the ANA. Thereafter, evaluation will focus on program implementation and outcomes. An annual evaluation will also be conducted by our independent evaluator to assess the progress achieved with the grant. The evaluation will be used to refine and improve activities carried out through the grant and provide annual, measurable performance objectives. This evaluation will be publicly available and public notice of its availability will be provided.

How much did we do? While identifying school and LEA staff and conducting the ANA, NCCSC evaluation will seek to quantify effort towards stated goals. Questions might include:

“How many qualified candidates did we receive?”; or “To how many parents, students, and teachers did we speak to inform the ANA”? During the implementation phase, NCCSC might ask: “How many opportunities for professional development were offered?” and “How many students were offered social emotional learning curriculum or direct health care services as organized by the school/NCCSC?” A critical feature is also the costs (financial, personnel, time) that will help shape plans for future financial sustainability of the NCCSC Initiative.

How well did we do it? To answer this question, NCCSC will focus on whether it is on track to meet stated goals by the end of the 5-year period or whether goals have been met, and how well NCCSC is addressing the FSCS four pillars framework. For example, during the planning phase, we will seek to understand the answers to questions such as: “Did we successfully hire our first choice for each of these positions? What qualifications for CSCs were most commonly lacking? What were the barriers to hiring our first choice for each of these positions?” Key questions related to the ANA may be: “Did we obtain input from at least 70% of the school community (external and internal)? Did we develop a strategic plan that was responsive to the needs of the community?” During FSCS implementation, “Did we achieve integrated student supports that are responsive to the needs of the community as defined by the ANA? Did >90% of parents/guardians attend parent/teacher conferences?”

Further details regarding NCCSC goals and outcomes relevant to the key question of “How well did we do it?” are listed in Table 14.

Table 14. Goals and Outcome Measures

Pillar	Goals for Outcome Measures
Pillar 1: Promote Powerful Learning and Academic Achievement	>75% of teachers attend at least one training/mentorship session 25% increase in partnering organizations >50% of caregivers attend one FRC session/service/workshop >90% attendance at parent teacher conferences
Pillar 2: Integrate effective health and social supports	30% increase in youth receiving services 30% increase in number of families referred to services 20% increase in youth who receive physicals 25% increase in youth who receive vaccinations

	25% increase in housing stability 20% decrease in emergency room visits 25% increase in mental health service referrals 50% decrease in short and long-term suspensions 25% decrease in chronic absenteeism
Pillar 3: Support and Promote Authentic Community and Family Engagement	>50% of families served by Family Resource Centers >50% of caregivers attend best practices seminars >70% participation in school town hall >25% of families participate in Advisory Board ANA completed with >70% of involvement of the school community >15% increase in per-pupil spending by school
Pillar 4: Foster Collaborative Leadership	Guardian participation in each School Advisory Board Strategic plan developed for every school, aligned with ANA and guiding frameworks CSCs and principals attend CS Leadership Academy

Is anyone better off? To answer this essential question, NCCSC will focus on the 13 annual evaluation indicators of the FSCS four pillars framework, with data also derived from surveys and qualitative interviews seeking to understand school climate, teacher self-efficacy, confidence, and comfort in the classroom, and caregiver confidence and feelings of inclusiveness in the school environment. Additional details, including the source of data or evidence-based survey instrument for these indicators are listed in Table 14.

Table 15. NCCSC Indicators, Evidence of Impact, and Data Source

Indicator	Evidence of NCCSC intervention Impact*	Data source/evidence-based survey
Expanded and enriched learning times and opportunities	20% increase in Math and English Proficiency	Standardized test scores
Expanded and enriched learning times and opportunities	15% increase in Reading Proficiency in grades 3-5	Standardized test scores
Graduation Rates	25% increase in graduation rates	School graduation data (high schools)
Integrated student supports and stakeholder services	25% increase in kindergarten readiness	School data (elementary schools)
Student Chronic Absenteeism	20% decrease in student chronic absenteeism	School Absenteeism data
Student Discipline	Decrease suspensions and expulsions	School Discipline data
School spending	School spending	School budget data
School climate	50% increase in positive school climate survey scales and school climate walk (independent observer)	Panorama School Climate Survey (staff and grade-specific student versions); School climate walk form; Parent school climate survey
Collaborative leadership and practice strategies	50% increase in self-efficacy scales of teachers and students	Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale
Family and community engagement and impact	50% increase in caregiver feelings of confidence and inclusiveness in the school environment	Parent school climate survey

Family and community engagement and impact	100% increase in attendance at parent/teacher conferences	Parent/teacher conference attendance records
Qualifications and retention of school staff	>20% increase in school staff retention	School staff data
Regular engagement of all initiative-level partners into the working teams focused on issues identified in ANA	Working groups develop plan for addressing at least one major issue identified through the ANA	Qualitative review of ANA; review of strategic plan resulting from ANA
Qualifications and retention of school staff	Increased school staff with additional certifications	Teacher certification information (report to DPI)
*Specific goals for evidence of impact will be refined based on the input of the school community; Each of these goals will assist with evaluation of program quality and progress.		

6.3 Evaluation to facilitate common language and shared accountability

The second major goal for the NCCSC evaluation plan is to facilitate common language and shared accountability. While the framework for evaluation is listed herein and governs regional and statewide NCCSC implementation, details for the evaluation plan especially pertinent to each community school will be co-created with each community school and Regional Implementation Partner in collaboration with the NCCSC evaluation team. Within each FCSC, NCCSC will develop and facilitate a Community Evaluation Team with whom the NCCSC evaluation team and independent evaluator will work to formatively assess the program every 6 months and every year, respectively, to determine if program goals are being achieved based on measurable outcomes outlined. The Community Evaluation Team comprises key stakeholders including youth, family representatives, community members, and community partner organization representatives to support the vision to understand and promote child health and wellness, and equitable access to education. The Community Evaluation Team will inform tailored metrics to ensure that evaluation addresses relevant and meaningful factors for each school community and guide any necessary modifications to services and operations, along with adding and/or refining assessments themselves, to ensure program goals are met. More specifically, the Community Evaluation Team will assist with identifying a “key indicator” for each FCSC and help community members understand shared responsibility in achieving results for that indicator.

6.4 Data Transparency and Dissemination

A key feature of NCCSC’s evaluation process is to ensure transparency and real-time, understandable dissemination of evaluation results. NCCSC will create a data visualization dashboard for each FSCS with both a public facing (de-identified) and internal facet to track progress made towards school goals and quickly make information available for broad dissemination. The dashboard will combine data on health, academic, social determinants of health, and demographic factors, and survey data from surveys to monitor NCCSC impact. The Community Evaluation Team will closely monitor and have input into the NCCSSC data visualization dashboard to ensure that it presents information in clear and informative ways. The Community Evaluation Team will also make ongoing recommendations for improvement so that it can be used to assess progress, provide meaningful comparisons, and answer important questions for LEAs, schools, and families.

The data visualization dashboard will follow the format of previous school-based data visualization dashboards assembled by DCRI. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the dashboards assisted LEAs in evaluating trends in their own real-time data, comparing COVID-19 mitigation strategies, and making informed, real-time policy decisions.

NCCSC will also leverage the expertise and experience of NC Child in disseminating information. NC Child will generate real-time county- and state-level dashboards relevant to NCCSC outcomes for comparative evaluation of NCCSC impacts across NC.

Section 7. Strategy to Scale

7.1 Commitment and Strategy to Scale Full-Service Community Schools Statewide

“The full-service community school will change academic performance. The North Carolina Community School Coalition is a dream come true with the potential to create a model that demonstrates impact not only during the grant period, but for generations to come.”

Ellen Essick, Section Chief for NC Healthy Schools, NC DPI

Each partner comprising NCCSC believes that through effective collaboration centering the vision and voices of students and families, the scaling of FSCS will improve the academic, mental, and physical health of NC children. With this grant, NCCSC will demonstrate the impact of implementing the four pillars of FSCS, creating a sustainable model to advance systemic change. One day, all NC students will attend schools that affirm their assets while connecting families to services from birth to career that directly address children's ability to thrive in school.

This section outlines the strategy to improve the academic, mental and physical health of students across the state, the capacity of NCCSC to effectively implement the strategy, and the plan to sustain the strategy after the grant period.

NCCSC members are deeply rooted in the communities in which they work and intimately understand the communities' needs (Section 1), both through professional experiences combatting structural racism and generational poverty, and because of significant barriers these injustices have caused for members and their neighbors. NCCSC members recognize the power of the FSCS four pillars framework and the potential for the services outlined in Section 3 to change systems that have perpetuated inequity and injustice for too long. Deep relationships, lived experience, and sincere dedication to the welfare of NC children have catalyzed NCCSC's commitment to achieving the ambitious outcomes described in this proposal. This commitment to justice is exemplified by all NCCSC members, particularly the NCCSC State Steering Committee. The State Steering Committee will oversee the development, implementation, scaling, and sustaining of the NC FSCS Initiative. Members of the State Steering Committee represent the three NC regions and reflect the racial and economic diversity within each region and the broad consortium of partners that have coalesced in service of supporting children, families, and communities most impacted by systemic racism and generational poverty, with a focus on rural and low-income schools.

Following the success of national and statewide models that have achieved the intended impact, the State Steering Committee will follow the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) model for continuous improvement to implement, scale, and sustain FSCSs.

- Plan: Based on needs outlined in Section 1, oversee the development of a scalable and sustainable strategy to implement research-based interventions to address needs and determine how progress toward identified outcomes will be tracked over time.
- Do: Oversee implementation of the Project Design, outlined in Section 2, ensuring appropriate research-based services are implemented with fidelity.
- Study: Review ongoing assessments of the project and its independent evaluation, determining areas of progress and opportunities for improvement.
- Act: Guide Regional Implementation Partners, CSCs, and School Advisory Boards, in implementation of necessary changes, with new strategy and program plans launching the next cycle of the PDSA model.

Using PDSA for this project follows the guidance of the National Implementation Research Network, with specific consultation provided by the Lead K-12 Education Project Portfolio Lead Implementation Specialist. NCCSC selected this model based on the Michigan Department of Education’s successful employment of it through the State Implementation and Scaling-Up of Evidence-based Practices (SISEP).

NCCSC has developed priority criteria for initial FSCS implementation and state scaling based on the effective implementation of similar models, including Partners for Rural Impact’s GEAR UP and Kentucky Promise Zone projects and two North Carolina efforts, the NC Department of Health and Human Services’ Healthy Opportunities Pilots, and NC Integrated Care for Kids. These criteria have informed NCCSC’s strategic selection of **Year 1-5** LEAs, where LEAs have met one or more criteria:

1. LEAs that meet Absolute Priority 2. These LEAs satisfy the requirements of the Small Rural School Achievement program or the Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) program;
2. LEAs that face persistent poverty. As a result of decades of disinvestment, an increasing number of children in these communities face significant barriers and are therefore priorities for the NC FSCS Initiative as described in Section 1.
3. LEAs that fit within the capacity, competencies and geography of Regional Implementation Partners. As the entities responsible for the development, implementation and oversight of new FSCSs, Regional Implementation Partners must have the personnel, financial capacity, geographic reach, and relationship to foster a successful model.
4. LEAs that represent contiguous counties. Geographic proximity enables more efficient use of infrastructure, including identification and training of service partners, longitudinal connection to children who might change schools but remain in the region, and increased opportunities for shared learning to create the sustainable model.
5. LEAs that are a part of the NC Black Belt. As described in Section 1, the Black Belt is comprised of 30 former slave counties, where mostly Black/African American people now live well below the state poverty threshold. The NCCSC Initiative represents an opportunity to pivotally impact an area of the state in which the scars of centuries of racism and generational poverty run deepest.

As shown in Table 16, within the five-year grant period, NCCSC will reach 18 LEAs, 55 schools, and 21,351 students through its direct implementation of FSCSs.

Table 16. NCCSC Strategy to Scale

NCCSC Strategy to Scale		
	Total	Percentage
NC LEAs	18	16% of NC LEAs
NC RLIS LEAs	13	28% of NC RILS LEAs
NC Schools	55	*

NC RLIS Schools	44	*
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*See Table 1 for number and % of schools within each LEA

NCCSC will work with partners to ensure that progress, lessons learned, and models are disseminated across NC and beyond. Specifically, NCCSC will work with EducationNC (EdNC) to capture stories and data in digestible articles and videos about schools implementing the FSCS model across the three regions. EdNC is the primary education focused news organization in NC and has covered early childhood, K-12, and community college efforts across every county in the state, with 50,000 impressions on social media a day, 330,000 emails a week, 1,241,530 users and 2,021,811 page views in 2022. EdNC will bring their journalistic expertise to communicate the challenges being addressed, strategies employed, and outcomes of the effort for the schools themselves and their relevance for other schools across NC. EdNC will follow several NCCSC FSCSs across years of implementation.

7.2 Capacity to Coordinate and Provide Pipeline Services

The partners represented by NCCSC have a history of developing, implementing and sustaining complex community-rooted programs, including numerous state- and federally-funded projects. Successfully achieving intended impact through state and federal grant programs requires “fiscal capacity, personnel capacity, and data management capacity,” as described by Partners for Rural Impact and the Kentucky Department of Education in their 2022 FSCS state scaling proposal.

Fiscal Capacity: As the lead applying entity, DCRI’s fiscal experience managing state and federal grants is particularly important to highlight, as discussed in Section 5. Each partner represented by NCCSC employs financial leaders to oversee accounting of funds, including managing the following state and federal grants (Table 17).

Table 17: State and Federal Grants Managed by NCCSC Partners

Partner	
REI	

Student U	
Student U	
The Forum	
The Forum	
The Forum	
UWABC	
UWABC	

Note: There is no duplication or overlapping of activities funded by the grants listed above included in this proposal.

Personnel Capacity: NCCSC employs highly qualified staff with deep passion for this project and a history of effective implementation of similar models.

Principal Investigator: Dr. Kanecia Zimmerman is a pediatrician and epidemiologist, born and raised in NC, who has dedicated her career to improving the health and well-being of children and their families through research, community service, and patient care. She has worked tirelessly to elevate the voices of patients and families through clinical care and as a leader of clinical trials and coordinating centers such as the NIH’s multimillion dollar initiative to address Long COVID, the RECOVER Clinical Trial and Data Coordinating Center. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Zimmerman and colleagues developed the ABC Science Collaborative to ensure school communities had access to accurate scientific information, regardless of where they were located in the US. Over the last several years, she has worked with numerous stakeholders across NC, the country, and the world to advocate for the health and well-being of children (see Resume), and this work has formed the basis for the creation of NCCSC. The DCRI project team will support Dr. Zimmerman as described in Section 7.

Model Director: Dan Kimberg has spent his career co-creating communities in pursuit of justice in NC and throughout the country. Currently, Dan serves as the Director of Strategy and Operations for NC Integrated Care for Kids. In this role, Dan works to forge connections among numerous statewide-systems (behavioral health, juvenile justice, child welfare, food, housing, legal aid, schools and early childhood) to improve health and well-being outcomes for Medicaid-insured children and youth. Prior to joining NC InCK, Dan worked with public schools for over a

decade as Executive Director of Student U, and supported cities around the country in developing strategies to combat housing instability through racial reconciliation and equity-based policy reform. In these roles, Dan has raised [REDACTED] from private philanthropy and public grants, overseen numerous state and federal grants, and managed diverse teams in pursuit of a collective goal (see Resume). Along with Dr. Zimmerman, Dan has helped transform the vision of NCCSC into an ambitious but achievable project design.

Supporting the Model Director will be a **Director of Services** who will identify programmatic and policy solutions to meet the non-academic needs of students attending FSCSs; and a **Business and Operations Manager** to ensure seamless fiscal and operational oversight. In addition, as described in Section 5, NCCSC will include three Regional Implementation Partners, with a Director in each region.

Director of NCCSC Western NC: Laura Elliot serves as the Senior Director of Community Schools and Network Development for the UWABC, where she oversees the implementation of FSCSs in Asheville City and Buncombe County Schools. Laura has 30 years of experience in the fields of education and youth development, including program design and cross-sector partnerships. In 2022, the National Coalition of Community Schools honored Laura with the Community Schools Initiative Leadership Award for her work to significantly advance Community Schools. Laura serves as national co-chair of the Coalition for Community Schools Leadership Network (see Resume).

Director of NCCSC Central NC: Ashley Peters, LCSW, serves as the Director of Student and Family Support Services at Student U. Her primary responsibility is to work with staff, students and families to create and implement a pipeline of intergenerational programming to promote mental health and wellness for Student U and the Durham communities. Ashley has

over 10 years of experience working with youth and families in healthcare, education, community mental health and non-profit settings providing trauma informed care (see Resume).

Director of NCCSC Eastern NC: Dr. Amy Swain grew up in Eastern NC where she now works as a Teaching Assistant Professor within the Special Education, Foundations and Research department of the REI at East Carolina University. Dr. Swain’s research interests include racial equity, rural education, and transformative justice with a focus on enduring legacies of plantations and White supremacy on rural education in the Black Belt of Eastern NC. Over the past year, Dr. Swain has been leading REI’s efforts to develop the FSCS in Elizabeth City – Pasquotank Public Schools (see Resume).

The leaders of the Regional Implementation Partners will recruit qualified staff members to oversee the development and implementation of FSCSs in each region, including:

- Community School Director who will train and oversee CSCs;
- Director of Student Support Services who will implement interventions aimed at meeting needs of the target population;
- Director of Family and Community Engagement who will support the development and operations of Advisory Boards and community partnerships

Immediately upon award, Regional Implementation Partners will leverage their current recruitment channels to advertise opportunities. With competitive salaries and benefit packages, along with the reputation of each Partner within its communities, NCCSC is confident in its ability to recruit, hire, and retain talented staff.

Essential to the success of the model are the school-based personnel. Each of the 55 FSCSs will have a full-time CSC. As described in Section 4, CSCs will be hired in collaboration with school leadership, students, guardians and staff.

Data Management Capacity: DCRI has 40 years of experience managing large databases, with expertise growing out of the Duke University Medical Center’s renowned Duke Databank. In addition, DCRI is experienced in procuring and integrating data from multiple sources, including data that are publicly available as well as surveys and data entry forms. Data Solutions at DCRI is an integrated group that includes Data Management, Technical Services, and Research Informatics. Through NCCSC, Data Solutions will design and implement the right operational model needed to execute the project.

The data management plan will direct the operation of data collection and preparation of reports and tables to aid reporting and analysis. Leaning on prior experience collecting data from schools, the data management plan and its execution will ensure that all state, local and national requirements for security and privacy are maintained, including FERPA and HIPAA. The data team will include a data solutions specialist, informaticist, project leader and principal investigator. It will meet monthly to review the data management plan and data reports to stay on top of developing trends or anomalies that may affect the NCCSC Initiative. Relevant partners will receive monthly reports and will be included in quarterly reviews. Throughout the Initiative, analytics will support meaningful data visualization (Section 6.4) to inform programmatic and school-level updates.

The database will incorporate data from multiple state and school-based systems, as well as survey data directly from teachers, staff, students and parents. DCRI will receive demographic information, student performance, graduation rates, absence and behavioral data, and longitudinal data to support a thorough analysis of the program. Ensuring continual transparency, the findings will be disseminated to schools and communities.

7.3 Plans for Sustaining the Programs and Services After the Grant Period

NCCSC will be sustained after the grant period through a combination of public and private support. State, regional, and school-based infrastructure, as well as integrated services, expanded learning time opportunities, family and community engagement activities, and collaborative leadership and practices will be sustained through the support of NC DPI, the commitment of LEAs, and private philanthropy. This strategy is bolstered by several esteemed private foundations on the State Steering Committee.

NC DPI: The support of NC DPI is a clear and powerful vote of confidence in NCCSC's ability to successfully achieve this project's state-scaling goals. As Ellen Essick, Section Chief for NC DPI's Healthy Schools program, states in support of our proposal, "I believe this will change overall academic performance over time, so doing it right is so important." NC DPI's confidence in NCCSC's capacity to do it right gives the project statewide credibility that will further coalesce key stakeholders' support of our vision. NC DPI will help determine how NCCSC's work can lead to new resources, opportunities, and supports for schools, particularly those designated low-performing and high-poverty. NC DPI will collaborate as a part of the State Steering Committee to develop and implement a sustainability plan that maintains continuity of the model beyond two years after the term of the grant.

NCCSC, Inc., was created by NCCSC as a not-for-profit to raise philanthropic support for the NC FSCS Initiative. Although the nonprofit itself is new, the staff and partners that established it have a long history of successful fundraising for educational efforts. As described in Section 5, NCCSC, Inc. has created an advancement committee to guide the development of a full fundraising plan to sustain integrated services, expanded learning opportunities, family and community engagement, and collaborative leadership and practices. The advancement committee includes representatives from each regional and state partner which has committed to raise funds to sustain the model (see Table 18 and **MOU**).

NC Child and **The Forum** will partner with local community partners, parents, business leaders, educators, school and district leaders, policymakers, and students to develop a collaborative strategy that will result in state-level support to continue and strengthen NCCSC. NC Child’s Senior Director of Policy and Government Relations and The Forum’s Senior Director of Policy and Research will leverage their existing strong relationships throughout the legislature to cultivate champions for this model. Both organizations will provide in-depth education on the promise FSCSs provide students and families, supported by qualitative and quantitative data and research. They will connect decision makers with the students and families impacted most to create a multi-contextual understanding of the model and its real-world effects. Additionally, both organizations will leverage the extensive connections within state departments to ensure that all efforts to sustain this model are aligned with State priorities.

Local Education Agencies (LEAs): Beyond their commitment to supporting the CSC position for each school beyond the life of the grant (see **MOU**), throughout the five-year grant period, the District CS Liaison will engage regularly with the NCCSC, meeting with FSCS principals and CSCs. District CS Liaisons will facilitate opportunities for an annual presentation from FSCS students, guardians, and staff to LEA school boards, during which time updates and evaluation results will be shared, ideally resulting in new policies and resolutions promoting the long-term growth and sustainability of the FSCS Model within the district.

Table 18. Funds Raised by Each Key Partner in 2022

Entity	
Student U	
Rural Education Institute, College of Education	
United Way of Ashville Buncombe	
NC Child	
Public School Forum of NC	

Sustainability planning will be an agenda item for each State Steering Committee meeting.

The sustainability plan will be possible through timely and transparent data collection. By

achieving the goals described in Section 6, NCCSC will demonstrate the measurable impact this model has on children, families, and schools and provide critical evidence for long term financial support of the NC FSCS Initiative. Moreover, the project’s multilevel formative and summative evaluation will identify what worked best and what difference it made, thereby informing a rubric from which future FSCS scaling efforts can draw.

7.4 Capacity to Work with Others to Ensure Proposed Strategies or Practices can Brought to Scale, Based on Findings and its Independent Evaluation

As the timeline indicates (see Table 13), NCCSC plans to begin implementation of the NCCSC Initiative on January 1, 2024. However, this date does not reflect the beginning of the work. The best way to demonstrate NCCSC’s commitment and capacity to work across a broadly representative consortium is by describing the process that has guided the proposal planning period. In addition to decades of collaborative leadership demonstrated by the key partners of NCCSC as outlined in Section 5, over the past 18 months, diverse stakeholders representing the most critical groups who influence and will be impacted by this work—parents, students, teachers, service providers, community partners, researchers—convened to collectively develop the proposed processes, products, strategies and practices outlined in this proposal.

It is through these meetings that NCCSC was formed. Individual motivation for participation in this project has become a collective vision for NCCSC to harness the powerful work that has already been done in each region of the state and drive this work forward, crafting a dynamic statewide FSCS infrastructure that can impact generations of North Carolinians to come. As a testament to the collective commitment of NCCSC to this project, on August 10th, two days *after* this proposal is submitted, NCCSC will convene again, as we do each week, driving the strategy forward in service of a day in which all children in NC can thrive.

Competitive Preference Priorities

CPP 1: Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs

NCCSC will create education and work-based settings that are supportive, positive, identity-safe, and inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status, through developing trusting relationships between students (including underserved students), educators, families, and community partners. Through the integration of the FSCS four pillars framework, NCCSC is committed to building district-wide and regional strategies in service of statewide implementation of FSCSs and improved student outcomes for these underserved students; the priority is to understand the individual needs of children, youth, and families within the specific FSCSs and respond with multi-tiered support systems to meet those needs. NCCSC will prioritize **a strength-based approach** to relationship building and educational programming to create supportive, positive, identity-safe, and inclusive FSCSs for all students and their families. To accomplish this, Regional Implementation Partners will work with CSCs and School Advisory Boards to oversee an ANA process that explicitly targets input from the NCCSC priority populations. Feedback gathered during the ANA will guide the identification of specific programmatic strategies, with a focus on integration of cross-sector, school-based supports that amplify assets and meet identified needs aimed at improving outcomes through community-supported policies and practice.

Services implemented will have a particular focus on marginalized groups of students and families, including racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ students, and students and families with working parents, transportation issues, and English language barriers. To boost student trust and ensure equal access and language justice for students with English language barriers, all partners will implement translation services. Transportation will be provided whenever possible for community events and home-based services will be available when necessary (e.g., Book Babies, tutoring, and benefit enrollment support). LGBTQ+ students, and other marginalized students, will be connected to advocacy groups, peer support, and counseling support. FRCs, described in

Section 3, will rely on data gathered through the ANA and ongoing process improvement data to direct their suite of services, ensuring that their work remains tailored to changing needs. Finally, to address the comprehensive impacts of structural racism and intergenerational poverty, NCCSC will align and coordinate services between the education and public health sectors. Services include the integration of dental health clinics into FSCSs and peer-led mental health training focused on identifying and coping with toxic stress that results from structural racism and intergenerational poverty.

NCCSC will provide multi-tiered systems of support that address learning barriers for underserved students by offering programs that address students' and schools' unique assets and needs. As described in Section 3, services offered will include FRCs, high quality early childhood education and literacy programs, housing stability services and support, food security services and support, physical health services and support, mental health services and support, high quality school and out-of-school-time programs, juvenile crime prevention and rehabilitation programs, out-of-school time programs, and support for school transitions. NCCSC pursues evidence-based best practices and promising, innovative practices to offer services that **address learning barriers both in and out of the classroom**, such as school-based health education and screenings and trauma-informed therapeutic interventions. These and many other wrap-around services will enhance the effectiveness of the FSCS interventions. Trauma-informed interventions may include coaching staff on co-regulation and resiliency, training and supporting staff to create trauma-informed classroom environments implementing group interventions like SPARCS (Structured Psychotherapy for Adolescents Responding to Chronic Stress), or providing individual trauma therapy.¹⁷⁶⁻¹⁸¹ In addition, Public School Forum's NC Center for Resilience and Learning will work with NCCSC to increase trauma-informed practices and social-emotional learning (SEL) by building on professional learning and capacity building efforts already in place.

Professional development for educators will emphasize the use of positive and proactive strategies rather than deficit-based approaches. Regional Implementation Partners, who have combined decades of experience training and supporting thousands of educators each year, will adapt professional development topics to the unique needs of each school or region and may include Motivational Interviewing; Restorative Justice Practices; Racial Equity Training; The Students' Six: Strategies for Culturally Relevant Teaching; Using a Strengths-Based Approach; and Leadership Development.^{182, 183}

The implementation of comprehensive schoolwide frameworks to support strong and consistent student and educator relationships is central to the project design. To this end, each FSCS will include the following:

- School Advisory Board: A school-based organization comprised of students, guardians and staff that will oversee the school-based implementation strategy.
- Community School Coordinator: An embedded full-time staff member who will oversee the ANA and integration of cross-sector school-based supports to improve outcomes through community supported policies and practices.
- Family Resource Center (FRC): School-based infrastructure (e.g., calming room), school-specific programming (e.g., intensive mental health group therapy), and emergency funds to be managed by School Advisory Board to meet acute needs of families.
- Services: In addition to school-specific infrastructure and services available through a FRC, district, regional, and statewide programs will be offered for schools as desired (e.g., NC Center for Resilience and Learning training and coaching). Underlying and coalescing the NC FSCS initiative is a commitment to shared learning and leadership that centers the values, vision and voice of students, staff, and families in determining priorities.

Representatives of School Advisory Boards will form Regional Councils, which will guide policy recommendations for district, regional and state leaders. At all levels of the initiative, decisions will be influenced by those most impacted - the students, guardians, and staff who make up a school community.

CPP 2: Strengthening Cross-Agency Coordination and Community Engagement to Advance Systemic Change

NCCSC recognizes that the best way to support students and families and address systemic injustices is to create a strong network of support across local and state-wide entities in a coordinated, cross-agency approach. NCCSC will work with LEAs, nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, foundations, consultants, and an active State Steering Committee with student and family representatives. NCCSC will apply this cross-agency coordination to advance systemic change that addresses community violence prevention and intervention by implementing the evidence-based Restorative Practices framework; treating behavioral and mental health; and fortifying and expanding high-quality out-of-school-time programming.

The evidence-based Restorative Practices framework, currently utilized by multiple NCCSC member organizations, will be further disseminated to FSCSs over the course of this project to support students and address community violence prevention and intervention.^{184, 185} Restorative practices underscore the value of respect, compassion, dignity, accountability, and inclusion of all community members. For example, at the innovative Red Hook Community Justice Center, restorative practices are in place to cure the ailments revealed by conflict instead of defaulting to punishment, an approach that has reduced recidivism of juvenile defendants by 20 percent.¹⁸⁶ Students and educators explicitly trained in this framework address conflict in a proactive way, emphasizing the importance of trusting relationships in building community and restoring relationships after harm has occurred.

At Student U and UWABC, the continuum of restorative practices ranges from informal to formal, including affective statements, affective questions, small impromptu conferences, circles, and formal conferences.^{187, 188} Both organizations train their staff and the broader community in these practices and will use their expertise to support the implementation of restorative practices across each region of the NCCSC Initiative. FSCSs will use restorative practices to help students develop social-emotional learning skills in order to proactively reduce conflict and potential violence before it occurs.¹⁸⁹

North Carolina Psychiatric Access Line (NC-PAL) will serve as a key partner in addressing behavioral health in order to proactively prevent violence in school LEAs across NC. School-based mental health consultation services through NC-PAL will provide FSCSs with access to a biweekly consultation with an NC-PAL child psychiatrist and children's primary care provider (PCP) to determine a care plan. Cases of children with behavioral health needs who are identified by a family member or the school will be reviewed at the biweekly meetings by school personnel (principal, counselor, and parent liaison) and NC-PAL to determine necessary resources for each child. NC-PAL will then formulate a care plan with the student's PCP which will be provided by the PCP with parental consent. These interventions can alert parents, school personnel, and medical providers to harmful or violent thoughts or actions before they occur.

Out-of-school-time programming such as that proposed by the NCCSC Initiative can also reduce and prevent community violence. According to a Wallace Foundation report, youth left largely unsupervised after school are at increased risk for drug use, unsafe sexual activity, and becoming victims or perpetrators of violence.¹⁹⁰ NCCSC will seek and expand enriching afterschool and summer programs to eliminate the opportunity for violence and provide additional facetime with students to offer healthy alternatives and prevention programs. Additionally, NCCSC will collaborate with NC S.A.F.E. (Secure All Firearms Effectively) to provide firearm

safety education and training to FRCs, local health departments, and community organizations that provide out-of-school-time programming for FSCSs.¹⁹¹

Appendices

Selected Acronyms

ABCSC	The ABC Science Collaborative
CSC	Community School Coordinator
DCRI	Duke Clinical Research Institute
DOE	Department of Education
FRC	Family Resource Center
FSCS	Full-Service Community School
LEA	Local Education Agency
NCCSC	North Carolina Community School Coalition
NC DPI	North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
REI	Rural Education Institute of East Carolina University
RLIS	Rural and Low-Income Schools
SEL	Social-emotional Learning
UWABC	United Way of Asheville and Buncombe Counties
WSCC	Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model

Figure 5. FSCS Absolute Priority 2 Requirements Checklist

FSCS Absolute Priority 2 Requirements	Page Numbers
A minimum of two or more full-service community schools eligible for a schoolwide program under section 1114(b) of the ESEA, as part of a community- or district-wide strategy;	2
Include an LEA that satisfies the requirements of the Small Rural School Achievement (SRSA) program (ESEA section 5211(b)(1)(A), (B), or (C)) or the Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) program (ESEA section 5221(b)(1)(A), (B), or (C)).	1

Figure 6. FSCS Absolute Priority 5 Requirements Checklist

FSCS Absolute Priority 5 Requirements		Page Numbers
A description of the eligible entity		2-3
Identify or establish a State steering committee (which may be a previously existing body) that represents relevant community schools' stakeholders		26, 59-61, 67, 83
A preliminary MOU among all partner entities of the eligible entity		
Including a description of the State steering committee and the SEA's commitment to and partnership in the consortium, including the roles, responsibilities, and commitment of the SEA to the partnership and the scaling of full-service community schools to a percentage of State LEAs implementing schoolwide Title IA programs		Appendix A
SEA commitment to sustain the program beyond 2 years after the term of the grant.		MOU Appendix A
A description of the capacity of the eligible entity to coordinate and provide pipeline services at two or more full-service community schools in each of the LEAs included in the application.		86-90
A comprehensive plan that includes descriptions of the following:		
The student, family, and school community to be served, including demographic information.		3-22
A needs assessment that identifies the academic, physical, nonacademic, health, mental health, and other needs of students, families, and community residents.		24, 39, 40, 54, 72-73, 78-80, 94-96
Annual measurable performance objectives and outcomes, including an increase in the number and percentage of families and students targeted for services each year of the program, in order to ensure that children are: (i) Prepared for kindergarten; (ii) Achieving academically; (iii) Safe, healthy, and supported by engaged parents.		79-80
Pipeline services, including existing and additional pipeline services to be coordinated and provided by the eligible entity and its partner entities, including an explanation of: (i) Why such services have been selected; (ii) How such services will improve student academic achievement; (iii) How such services will address the annual measurable performance objectives and outcomes established under paragraph (4)(C) of this requirement.		40-48 40-48 50-53
A description of the pillars of full-service community schools that they have in place or how they will establish these pillars, or how they will implement these pillars with partners, including community-based organizations, and collaborating with school leadership and staff.		25-35
Plans to ensure that each FSCS site has a full-time coordinator of pipeline services at such school, including a description of the applicable funding sources, plans for professional development for the personnel managing, coordinating, or delivering pipeline services, and plans for joint utilization and management of facilities.		54-58
Plans for an annual evaluation based upon attainment of the performance objectives and outcomes. An applicant must, in addition to providing the information and assurances required by section 4625(a)(4)(F) of the ESEA, commit to an independent evaluation... (1-4 additional requirements).		78-80
Plans for sustaining the programs and services after the grant period.		90-93
An assurance that the eligible entity and its partner entities will participate in a national evaluation assessing the implementation of the FSCS program, which may include, but is not limited to, the following: (A-E additional requirements)		77 MOU
An assurance that the eligible entity and its partner entities will focus services on schools eligible for a schoolwide program under section 1114(b).		1

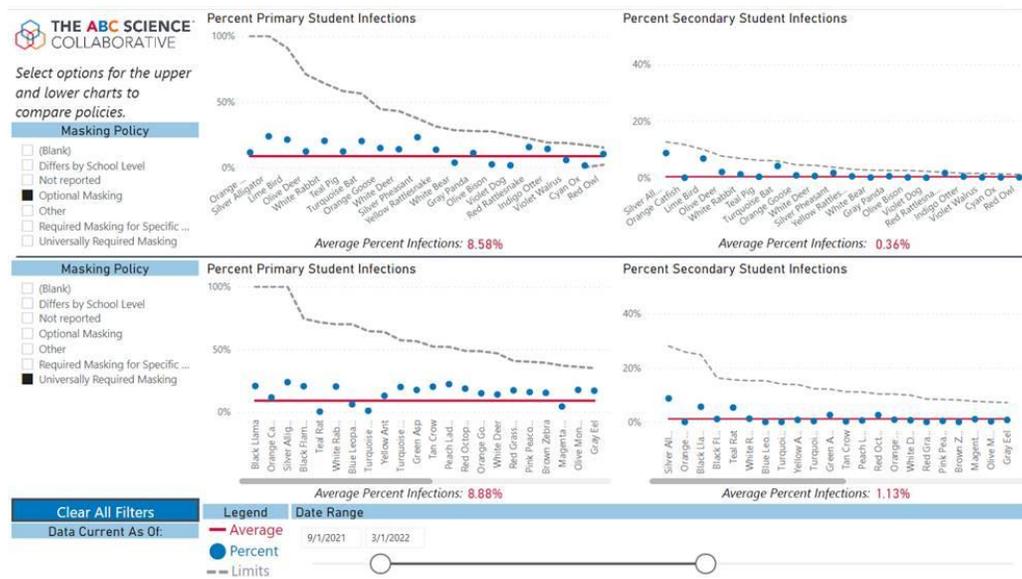
Figure 7. FSCS Absolute Priority 5 Selection Criteria

FSCS Absolute Priority 5 Selection Criteria		Page Numbers
Competitive Preference Priority 1—Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs		
Projects improves students' social emotional, academic, and career development, with a focus on underserved students, through one or more of the following priority areas:		
(1) Creating education or work-based settings that are supportive, positive, identity-safe, and inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status, through developing trusting relationships between students (including underserved students), educators, families, and community partners.		94-95
(2) Providing multi-tiered systems of supports that address learning barriers both in and out of the classroom, that enable healthy development and respond to students' needs and which may include evidence-based trauma-informed practices and professional development for educators on avoiding deficit-based approaches.		95-96
(3) Creating and implementing comprehensive school-wide frameworks (such as small schools or learning communities, advisory systems, or looping educators) that support strong and consistent student and educator relationships.		96-97
Competitive Preference Priority 2—Strengthening Cross-Agency Coordination and Community Engagement to Advance Systemic Change.		
Systemic evidence-based approach to improving outcomes for underserved students in coordinating efforts with Federal, State, or local agencies, or community-based organizations, that support students, to address community violence prevention and intervention.		97-99
Invitational Priority		
Supporting Effective Transition Practices, Continuity of Services and Supports, and Aligned Instruction for Students from Preschool and Other Early Childhood Settings into Kindergarten and from Kindergarten into the Early Grades (K–3).		47-48
Project Need		
Provide support, resources, and services to address the needs of targeted population.		4-16
Close gaps in educational opportunity to address the needs of targeted population.		6-19
Address the needs of underserved populations most impacted by the issue, challenge, or opportunity to be addressed by the proposed project.		19-22
Quality of Project Design		
Reflects relevant and evidence-based findings from existing literature.		23-25
Includes a high-quality plan for project implementation integrating the four pillars of full-service community schools.		25-35
Includes a high-quality plan for the use of appropriate evaluation methods to ensure successful achievement of project objectives.		35-38
The extent to which proposed project demonstrates a rationale (as defined in this notice). (34 CFR 75.210 (https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/section-75.210))		23-25
Quality of Project Services		
Ensures that a diversity of perspectives is brought to bear in the design and operation of the proposed project, including those of students, youth, families, educators and staff, beneficiaries of services, school leadership, and community leadership.		39
The extent to which the services provided reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.		40-48
The extent to which the services to be provided are focused on those with greatest need.		39-48
Adequacy of Resources		
Plans for a full-time coordinator at each school.		54-56
Plan to sustain the full-time coordinator position beyond the grant period.		56-58
Description of how this position will serve to plan, integrate, coordinate, and facilitate programs and services at each school.		54-55

FSCS Absolute Priority 5 Selection Criteria		Page Numbers
Quality of Management Plan		
Has or demonstrates a strong plan to have, a broadly representative consortium that reflects the needs of the community and its stakeholders, and a description of the roles and responsibilities of the broadly representative consortium outlined in the required preliminary MOU.		58-72
History of effectiveness in working with a diverse range of stakeholders, including students and families.		61-72

The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.	72-74
Quality of Project Evaluation	
Methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.	75-82
Methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.	75, 78-80
Methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes.	75-76
Strategy to Scale	
The extent to which the applicant demonstrates its commitment and strategy to scale full-service community schools at the statewide level.	82-86
Number and percentage of LEAs, and the number and percentage of schools within each LEA, the applicant, the SEA, and other partners propose to serve.	3, 85
Applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to further develop, implement, bring to scale, and sustain additional full-service community schools in multiple LEAs.	86-93
Applicant's capacity to work with others, including the broadly representative consortium and the State steering committee, to ensure that the proposed process, products, strategies, or practices can be further developed and brought to scale, based on the regular findings of the proposed project and its independent evaluation.	93-94

Figure 8. Data Visualization Dashboard Example



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