

Collaborative Action for Family Engagement Center (CAFE)

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A. QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN

The Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium, Inc. (MAEC), a 30-year educational non-profit, proposes the Collaborative Action for Family Engagement Center (CAFE), the current regional Statewide Family Engagement Center (SFEC) serving both Maryland and Pennsylvania. In established partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), CAFE will build on the unique opportunity and lessons learned from working collaboratively with two states [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] As the current SFEC, we have made significant progress. Continuing our work will enable us to engage additional partners, champions, and allies to achieve the desired program outcomes.

As a social justice organization, MAEC successfully implements educational excellence, culturally responsive family engagement, and equity. MAEC previously served as the MD Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC) from 2006-2011 and currently operates the federally-funded Region I Equity Assistance Center, the Center for Education Equity (CEE), which has a strong statewide presence in MD and PA. MAEC's response to COVID-19 leveraged the combined expertise of CAFE and CEE, providing weekly webinars addressing family engagement, learning at home, and sharing culturally responsive practices for online learning, reaching over 10,000 viewers. (Appendix A-12, The Family Table Screenshots; A-18, Bridging the Gap Infographic.) In addition to continued support from MSDE and PDE, CAFE partners with five outstanding national and statewide family engagement and parent education organizations: the National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement

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(2) Services reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice

The crisis of the pandemic amplifies inequities and their consequences for families in early care and education settings, with the most vulnerable disproportionately affected. Research shows systemic culturally responsive, high-impact family and community engagement is a critical strategy to advancing educational equity, improving student academic and personal well-being, and increasing success in low-performing schools (Bryk et al., 2010; Chavkin, 2017; Jacques & Villegas, 2018; Mapp & Bergman, 2021). Quality family and community engagement in education are associated with positive outcomes, including better attendance and homework completion, improved student attitudes and behavior, higher graduation rates, increased efficacy and satisfaction among educators, improved school climate, increased family well-being, and improved confidence of educators to work more effectively with diverse families (Epstein, et al., 2011; Mapp & Bergman, 2019; Mapp & Bergman, 2021). The best schools see families as crucial assets, leaders, and experts when it comes to their children’s educational needs (Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017; Ishimaru et al., 2018; Maier et al., 2017).

CAFE seeks to resolve obstacles, such as lack of expertise, capacity, and institutional structures, that prevent LEAs, schools, and communities from engaging and leveraging family resources (Charania, 2021; Ferguson et al., 2010; Leo et al., 2019). Parents of Multilingual Learners (MLs) report difficulty accessing resources necessary for their children’s success because their school does not provide information in other languages (Miller, 2019; Zeh, 2011).

Some families come to school with social capital because of privilege, experience, and opportunity. Families from low-income and low literacy backgrounds frequently lack this social capital, which may hinder their abilities to engage in their children's schooling (Bolívar & Chrispeels, 2011; Gay et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2010; Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2012; Miller et al., 2021).

Centering family and community voices encourages greater collaboration in promoting student success, especially among communities marginalized by race, class, and gender identity (Rodela & Bertrand, 2018; Milligan et al., 2022). Integrating family and community culture into the early learning system and fostering parents' efforts to help their children during the preschool years improves school readiness, reduces behavior problems, enhances social skills, and promotes academic success (Albright et al., 2011; Kaiser & Raminsky, 2020; Yoshikawa et al., 2013). **Home Visits**, one of CAFE's proposed evidence-based programs with partner **PAT**, facilitates trust, relationship-building, and engagement during the early years and are linked to lower school truancy and better reading outcomes (Sheldon & Jung, 2018).

Parents need real-time data on their child's academic performance and learning activities and opportunities to support long-term academic success (Henrich & Gadaire, 2008; Mapp et al., 2017; Safir & Dugan, 2021). CAFE proposes to continue to use **WestEd's Academic Parent-Teacher Teams (APTT)**, an evidence-based program, to build capacity of both educators and parents and transform the way families participate in their children's education. Meaningful, accessible, and consistent communication with families and communities effectively supports student achievement and school improvement (Jung & Sheldon, 2015; Wood & Bauman, 2017). Research finds that Black and Latinx families are twice as likely to face three or more hardships during the COVID-19 pandemic (Padilla & Thomson, 2021). CAFE proposes using **Parent Powered's Ready4K Trauma-Informed** program, a whole child, evidence-based, family engagement curriculum delivered via text messages, to buffer the effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Survey data indicate that the program helps strengthen parent resilience, as more than 90% of parents reported Ready4K trauma-informed messages helped them deal with

stress and increased their confidence as parents (Sussman, 2021). CAFE proposes partnering with **A Parent's Place of MD** (the parent training and information center) to implement their family leadership curricula, including adult and financial literacy, to support underserved families.

Cultural and socioeconomic differences must be integrated into education as learning assets. Academic success requires both opportunity and engagement; positive, inclusive, and welcoming classrooms and school cultures. CAFE will continue to build parent engagement and capacity, leading to higher student well-being and achievement across both states (Baker et al., 2016; Tully & Ujifusa, 2016; Wood & Bauman, 2017).

To align with the overall purpose of the SFEC program, state needs, inclusion of urban, suburban, and rural schools/counties, GPRA measures, and competitive preference priorities, CAFE has identified two priority goals and six objectives:

Goal 1: Improve and sustain regional and statewide efforts which focus on increasing high impact, culturally responsive, family engagement by **addressing inequitable systemic barriers** to enhance communication and collaboration among SEAs, LEAs, schools, community-based organizations, families, and students.

Goal 2: Build equity-centered capacity of educators and families to practice **high impact and culturally responsive family engagement** through increased awareness, knowledge and skills.

Objective 1: Improve capacity of **SEAs** to **implement statewide culturally responsive** family engagement policies, frameworks, and practices aligned to ESSA.

Objective 2: Increase capacity of **LEAs and early childhood education providers to co-construct**, with families, policies and practices which focus on creating partnerships between families, schools, and communities to improve student outcomes and well-being.

Objective 3: Improve SEA, LEA, and early childhood education provider **interstate and cross-agency collaboration** to enhance knowledge, skills, abilities, and best practices to increase academic achievement and support school improvement.

Objective 4: Build capacity for SEAs, LEAs, schools, and early childhood education providers to

conduct effective **outreach and communication**, e.g., using technology with families to engage communities from diverse racial, linguistic, religious, and cultural backgrounds.

Objective 5: Increase families’ ability to promote **school readiness** and support the **academic achievement and well-being** of their children.

Objective 6: Build the capacity of LEAs, schools, and early education providers to support **students’ social-emotional needs** that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and to support their re-engagement in hybrid learning and school reopening efforts.

Figure 1, Three Tier System of Technical Assistance:



Detailed Plan of Work by Objective: CAFE, in collaboration with MD and PA, has developed a comprehensive, multi-tiered system of TA to address the program goals and objectives. CAFE will use MAEC’s Continuous Improvement for Equity Model (See p. 22, Appendix A-19, CI4 Equity Model) to implement proposed services at three levels using an annual roll out plan.

CAFE will continue to rely on and expand its state Advisory Committees comprising diverse families, education professionals, students, and teachers from rural, suburban, and urban schools, business and community members, and SEA and LEA representatives. These state Advisory Committees guide the work of CAFE and address problems of practice such as equitable access to rigorous curriculum, chronic student absenteeism, and lack of assistance to students who are not making academic progress. The Advisory Committees identify strategies to address needs for their states, and thereby improve state-wide knowledge, systems change, communication, and collaboration. Each state Advisory Committee will meet three times per year. The two state

Advisory Committees will also meet together, taking advantage of the opportunity to learn from one another and establish a network of shared leadership and peer support. (Appendix A-11 Advisory Committee Lists for MD and PA.)

CAFE and its partners will implement this multi-tiered system with parents, communities, schools, LEAs, and SEAs to foster authentic stakeholder engagement. Research shows this blended collaboration and co-creation generates buy-in and commitment (Hill & Gayle, 2020; McIsaac et al., 20; Smetzer-Anderson & Roessler, 2016). (Appendix A-2, MAEC Institutional Capability; A-3, Project Partners.)

CAFE's 2-page **Logic Model**, which follows Section E, identifies key project components, including inputs, outputs, and relevant outcomes, and informs project performance measures and evaluation design. Below, we describe our response to the four **Competitive Preference Priorities (CCPs)**. Then we provide a **Targeted and Systemic Project** table (Figure 2) and identify CCPs alignment with the selected projects, among other specifications.

CPP #1: Evidence-Based Activities: CAFE's program design implements activities that reflect a combination of ESSA-supported family engagement interventions and recent family engagement scholarship. CAFE's two-pronged approach to family engagement draws upon the work of Karen Mapp and Eyal Bergman. (2019) whose dual capacity-building framework sets the standard for effective family, school, and community engagement. CAFE's project, *Working Together: School and Family Leadership Academy* (see Objective 2, pg. 6), illustrates how CAFE's work is guided by the dual capacity-building model. In four PA school districts, CAFE plans to assemble school-based equity teams of families and LEA staff to examine how current policies and practices foster constructive family engagement. Participants will seek opportunities to expand upon existing family engagement efforts. Teams will consider how equity and culturally responsive practices can enhance the capacity of practitioners and families with respect to the Dual Capacity-Building Framework's "4 C" areas.

CAFE's rural family engagement project adopts the Ready4K Birth-5 family engagement curriculum designed to increase families' capacity to support their children's success. To

promote accessibility, curricula are distributed through a text-message delivery service on a weekly basis in multiple languages. A series of randomized controlled trials demonstrated that over the course of a single school year, Ready4K's approach increased child learning by an estimated 2-3 months (York & Loeb, 2014; Doss et al., 2018; Cortes, Fricke, Loeb & Song, 2018; Cortes, Fricke, Loeb, Song & York, 2019).

CAFE's early childhood parent education program uses the Parents as Teachers (PAT) model to increase school readiness and success through relational home visits. Children participating in PAT demonstrate increased social-emotional learning and language acquisition, such as improved language skills and self-control (Schaub et al., 2019). Mothers who participate in PAT show increased sensitivity to their children, and their children show increased language development. (Neuhauser et al., 2018.)

CAFE will continue using Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT), a national family engagement framework that aligns grade-level learning concepts, student performance data, and family-teacher communication and collaboration to foster meaningful connections between families and schools. Case studies show that involvement with APTT forged deeper connections between families and schools, and students whose parents attended APTT meetings had a statistically significant rate of growth in word fluency skills than their peers whose parents did not participate (Paredes, 2015).

CPP #2: Addressing Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, & Faculty:

The COVID-19 crisis continues to disrupt student learning, exacerbate opportunity and achievement gaps, and negatively affect student and educator social and emotional wellness (Dorn et. al, 2020). In MD and PA, academic engagement and student attendance has decreased since the start of the pandemic, especially for underserved students (Maryland State Department of Education, 2022; Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2021a). One in four MD households and nearly half of rural PA students can't connect to Wi-Fi at home (Garrett et al., 2020; Horrigan, 2021). CAFE adapted to meet the needs of rural families in Queen Anne's County Public Schools, MD by providing hot spots to ensure computer and internet access so parents and

students could continue participating in virtual programming and remain engaged with school. MAEC will continue to conduct needs assessments to assess and address the needs of underserved students and educators. While students are out of school, concerns around their wellness rise. PA reports an increase in suicidal ideation tips and one in three students in MD reports anxiety or depression symptoms (Safe2Say, 2020; Wenger, 2020). CAFE has produced a 40-page toolkit, *Managing Mental Wellness: Tools for Yourself, Your Students, and Your Classroom* (See Appendix A-14), to support teacher and student wellness during COVID-19. CAFE will also partner with Ready4K to provide parents with the Trauma-Informed family engagement curriculum based on the strengthening protective factors framework. This program includes a community asset mapping process to support LEAs, schools, and community-based organizations in connecting families to needed community resources.

Long after the pandemic is over, students, teachers, and communities across the U.S. will navigate the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on their mental, social, and academic well-being. Advancing racial, gender, linguistic, and disability justice outcomes in pre-K-12 education will require holistic approaches that protect students from discriminatory practices and policies, as well as proactive supports, including mental health services. CAFE will continue to provide webinars, workshops, and CoPs that account for the long-term effects of COVID-19. CAFE will publish, in collaboration with both SEAs, and members of the advisory committees, a guide for keeping schools open safely. CAFE will expand its interactive state resource map with up-to-date information to connect families to resources to alleviate the challenges exacerbated by the pandemic.

CPP #3: Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: MAEC has always prioritized culturally responsive and equitable family, school and community engagement. CAFE's equity approach promotes the following: (1) strategies to increase outreach to diverse communities to establish common ground; (2) voices from within each community as sources of expertise; (3) identification and removal of cultural

biases that hinder academic achievement; and (4) a new definition of family engagement that reflects and includes communities of color.

Equitable, culturally responsive family engagement ensures that all families, especially families from underserved communities, have the tools necessary to engage in their children's schooling and learning (Clark-Louque et al., 2020; Ishimaru, 2020). Through innovative programs and equitable collaborations, and the fostering of culturally responsive family engagement, CAFE staff and partners work with stakeholders to identify and dismantle inequitable practices and policies that harm underserved families. We will work with MD and PA to finalize and implement their statewide family engagement frameworks with an emphasis on identifying strategies that will improve the engagement of underserved community members. We respond to the needs of various communities and use our understanding of those needs to develop content. CAFE's recent toolkit, *21st-Century Learning at Home: A Guide for Families and Caregivers of English Learners to Support Project-Based, Deeper Learning at Home* (English/Spanish) (See Appendix A-13) provides EL families with resources to support children's learning at home.

CAFE works across all education settings with a focus on underserved youth and families and on transitions to elementary school, middle school, high school, college, and career. Our work will continue to focus on shifting mindsets and interrogating systems and institutions that negatively influence student success. CAFE staff will continue working with PAT sites in PA to offer a training series focused on increasing the knowledge and skills of practitioners who work with diverse families in their homes. Past participants reported developing an awareness of race, bias, culture, class, gender, language, disability, sexual orientation, and other lines of difference. They also were better able to explore how systems might be structured in ways that build equity and justice (Posey-Maddox, 2017). According to Simmons (2020, para. 8), "...we have to know how our power, privilege, and positionality influence our lives, how they give us access to resources or not, how they show up in the world, and how they can be abusive, and even toxic, to others if we are not mindful."

CAFE will host Communities of Practice (CoPs) to implement strategic equity plans and evidence-based family engagement practices that center the voice of families and create equitable partnerships (Ishimaru, 2020). These CoPs will focus on integrating partnership development strategies with the goal of increasing collaboration among families, schools, and communities to achieve learning outcomes for children (Ma et al., 2015). CoPs will build on CAFE's Community of Practice on Parent Leadership, a collaboration between members from the MD and PA CAFE Advisory Committees. The CoP on Parent Leadership will build on an *Educator's Guide to Family Leadership* to explore how best to build family leaders in diverse school communities. In PA, we plan to work across agencies and community-based organizations to pilot parent liaisons across 29 Intermediate Units (regional districts). To build their knowledge and skills, we will start where people are ready to work, just like we do with students. We turn equity from a value to an integrated and sustainable practice.

CPP #4: Strengthening Cross-Agency Coordination and Community

Engagement To Advance Systemic Change: CAFE seeks to improve positive outcomes of all underserved student populations in MD and PA by strengthening cross-agency collaboration with key stakeholders to support their efforts to meet family needs and student success. CAFE will create organizational and systemic coherence necessary to increase collective and equitable impact and improve student outcomes. From an equity perspective, collective impact refers to a network of community members, organizations, and institutions that collaborate to advance equity and achieve systems-level change (Kania et al., 2021, p. 38). Rather than facilitating siloed events, CAFE will promote sustainability through systemic partnerships, targeted interventions, strategies, and analysis. For example, in 2021, CAFE partnered with the PA Family Involvement Conference team, PDE, MSDE, and parent representatives from the CAFE Advisory Committees to host a virtual workshop series *Reunited: Families, Schools, and Communities Making it Work Together*. The series focused on highlighting equitable family engagement practices, family leadership initiatives, and socio-emotional learning strategies.

Home-school-community partnerships are essential in improving outcomes for children's academic success and well-being (Epstein et al., 2019), and success requires building capacity for all key stakeholders working together (Bolívar & Chrispeels, 2011; Mapp & Kuttner, 2013). CAFE will continue to support families with school readiness and parenting classes at Parents as Teachers sites in PA. Additional cross-agency collaboration is representative of partnerships with early childhood centers, neighboring Community Action Partnerships, and county Departments of Health and Human Services.

An overwhelming number of students who are experiencing homelessness live in both states (National Center for Homeless Education, 2021). CAFE plans to work with family involvement coordinators in each state as well as McKinney-Vento Specialists in each state and school district to provide training and supports to families and educators. We will also work with the Maryland Community Action Partnership and the Community Action Partnership of Pennsylvania to identify supports and resources, such as community asset mapping, for underserved families.

CAFE will strengthen cross-agency coordination and community engagement by implementing the following select evidence-based initiatives to improve outcomes for underserved students: Communities of Practice (CoP) (Tomkin et al., 2019; Pyrko et al., 2017); and pre-service educator preparation for family and community engagement (Collier et al., 2015; Ferrara, 2017).

CoP members learn from each other's experiences and expertise through regular, ongoing interactions and work towards a common goal (Wenger, 2009). CAFE will create CoPs in MD and PA composed of culturally and linguistically diverse families, educators from varied areas of expertise, representatives from various local and state agencies, and community/nonprofit organizations to determine goals and develop a plan to improve outcomes for underserved students and families. The CoPs will create resources specific to family needs, design webinar series for families, educators, and communities, and create an inter-agency resource hub. Resources will be translated into the most widely spoken languages by MD and PA families and made available in other modalities, including recordings and podcasts for low literacy families.

Over the past two years, MAEC, NAFSCE, SEAs, institutes of higher education, and other SFECs, have developed a framework to support the redesign of educator preparation programs, coursework, policies, and partnerships. CAFE will build on its work with Bowie State University in MD to build the capacity of preservice educators to engage families *before* they enter the classroom. This pilot program will collaborate with school districts and other community partners. Cross-agency and intra-agency collaboration with the explicit intent to engage in collective and equitable impact will strengthen communities and increase the well-being and capacity of educators, families, and students (Kania & Kramer, 2015).

Chart 1, Targeted and Systemic Projects, describes selected projects by objective, title, target audience, educational level, background, anticipated outcomes, and alignment with the above Competitive Preference Priorities (CPPs).

<p>Objective 1 Project – Implementation of Family Engagement Framework for Birth-21 As lead partners in the Council for Chief State School Officers’ (CCSSO) Consortium on State Family Engagement, CAFE with partner NAFSCE, will work with MD & PA SEAs to support the implementation of the Frameworks.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Project Attributes</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tier: Systemic ~ Target: MD/PA SEAs ~ Ed. Level: Birth – 21 Location: Statewide CPPs # 2, 3, 4 ~ Expected number of stakeholders served: 10 SEA staff per state and all stakeholders, indirectly, in MD and PA</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Sample Project Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide TA to MD and PA SEA to implement a seamless birth-21 framework • Establish advisory committees in MD and PA to guide the work of CAFE and to provide input to the SEA on the development of policies, frameworks and practices aligned to ESSA; • Develop DEI resources and materials based on needs established within advisory committees, SEAs, LEAs, and community groups
<p style="text-align: center;">Selected Project Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased SEA staff knowledge and implementation of family engagement framework Increased collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including families in the development of SEA policies, frameworks and practices aligned to ESSA • Increased knowledge of DEI best practices tailored and relevant to the needs of families and community members MD and PA
<p>Objective 2 Project – Building Stronger Schools: Improve Student Outcomes CAFE will work with MD Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools (CSI) and PA School Improvement Pilot (SIP) Schools, in collaboration with the Parents Place of Maryland (MD) and Parents as Teachers (PA) to provide a deep dive into family engagement practice to foster</p>

systemic outcomes.
Project Attributes Tier: Targeted ~ Target: LEAs, Schools ~ Ed. Level: K-12 Location: Indiana Area School District, School District of Lancaster, School District of Philadelphia, School District of Pittsburgh (PA); Community Schools (MD); Prince George’s County - Buck Lodge Middle School (MD) CPPs # 2, 4 ~ Expected number of stakeholders served: 200
Sample Project Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with Parent’s Place MD & PAT to implement parent leadership curricula in PA and MD to build adult literacy including financial literacy • Expand parent academies in PA and MD focused on improving parent readiness to co-construct policies and practices with LEAs and ECE Providers • Establish COPs focused on family leadership
Selected Project Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness among educators on how to partner with families to support learning. • Increased capacity of parents to work with schools to meet the academic and well-being needs of their children.
<p>Objective 3 Project – Fostering Interstate and Cross-Agency Collaboration CAFE will facilitate states to meet regularly to grow, problem solve, and advance opportunities for family engagement in policy, practice, and procedures. Project activities will be staged over the five-year grant period.</p>
Project Attributes Tier: Targeted ~ Target: SEAs/LEAs ~ Ed. Level: Birth-21 Location: Four MD Regions, Six PA Regions CPPs # 3, 4 ~ Expected number of stakeholders served: 200
Sample Project Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage partnerships with existing organizations in MD and PA to improve interagency and cross-agency dialogue • Partner with NAFSCE to advance educator preparation by piloting elements of the Family Engagement Pre-service Framework for Educator Preparation
Selected Project Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased knowledge of high-impact, culturally responsive family engagement and systemic barriers in SEAs, LEAs, and ECE providers • Improved and sustained interstate collaboration between MD and PA. • Increased capacity of educators to work with families to effectively meet the academic and developmental needs of their children
<p>Objective 4 Project – Conducting Outreach to Engage All Families Many schools and LEAs are not successful in reaching low-income, racially, and linguistically diverse families. Recognizing the importance of collectively supporting the success of every child, CAFE will engage with local communities to ensure effective outreach and collaborative action.</p>
Project Attributes Tier: Targeted & Universal ~ Target: LEAs, Schools, and community-based organizations ~

<p>Ed. Level: PreK-12</p> <p>Location: Statewide (Universal) in PA and MD, Allegheny Intermediate Unit (PA) targeted, Queen Anne’s County (MD) targeted</p> <p>CPPs # 2, 3, 4 ~ Expected number of stakeholders served: 300 through the Reframing Academy and all stakeholders indirectly</p>
<p>Sample Project Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement NAFSCE’s Virtual Reframing Academy • Partner with NAFSCE to pilot and develop statewide family math programs, establish an innovation hub for emerging practices, and create a messaging toolkit • Develop communities of practice of SEAs, LEAs, schools, and ECE providers • Expand bilingual Spanish website and increasing the number of multilingual documents and publications
<p>Selected Project Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased capacity of LEAs, schools, and educators to effectively reach and collaborate with families of diverse backgrounds. • Increased understanding about and use of the common vision and language around family engagement • Increased use of the bilingual Spanish website, multilingual documents, and publications for families from diverse communities
<p>Objective 5 Project 1 – Promoting Early Childhood School Readiness and Nurturing Child Development The evidence-based program, Parents as Teachers, provide parents with knowledge and resources to prepare their children for a stronger start in life and greater success in school using the strengthening protective factors framework.</p>
<p>Project Attributes</p> <p>Tier: Systemic ~ Target: Parents, Young-children ~ Ed. Level: Ages 2-4</p> <p>Location: PAT Affiliate sites in PA and MD</p> <p>CPPs # 1, 2, 4 ~ Expected number of stakeholders served: 300 (30 families across 10 sites)</p>
<p>Sample Project Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct home visits, with more time offered to higher need families • Provide families with child development knowledge and early detection of developmental delays • Facilitate community asset mapping, professional development, and family leadership activities
<p>Selected Project Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased knowledge and understanding of child rearing practice and child development in families • Increased readiness of racially, linguistically, socioeconomically and culturally diverse children upon entering the school system • Improved scores for students on kindergarten readiness measures
<p>Objective 5 Project 2 – Families and Teachers Partnering to Promote Academic Success MAEC will partner with the <i>Academic Parent-Teacher Teams (APTT)</i>, an evidence-based program successfully working with parents and teachers to promote student success.</p>

<p>Project Attributes</p> <p>Tier: Systemic ~ Target: Parents, Teachers ~ Ed. Level: K-12 Location: Baltimore County (MD), Reading School District (PA) CPPs # 1, 2, 4 ~ Expected number of stakeholders served: 15 teachers per district and 45 families per district</p>
<p>Sample Project Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help interested schools and districts develop APTT awareness and readiness for adoption to start implementation in Year 2 • Implement the APTT model by Year 2 • Train teachers in designated schools to conduct the program
<p>Selected Project Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased capacity of teachers to train parents to support learning at home • Increased capacity of parents to work with their children to meet target academic goals • Increased academic achievement of participating students
<p>Objective 6 Project 1 – Supporting Students’ Social-emotional Needs and School Engagement CAFE will prepare providers and educators to build effective partnerships with parents and families and meet children’s ongoing academic and social and emotional needs to ensure a welcoming and nurturing learning environment.</p>
<p>Project Attributes</p> <p>Tier: Universal ~ Target: Parents, Teachers ~ Ed. Level: K-12 CPPs # 2, 3 ~ Expected number of stakeholders served: All stakeholders across both states</p>
<p>Sample Project Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide workshops related to the CAFE SEL toolkit • Create an interactive tool with up-to-date information and resources • Develop a guide for reopening and reimagining schools • Monthly family newsletter focused on SEL and school re-entry • Create resources and tools to help families and school professionals with school transition milestones from Birth through 21
<p>Selected Project Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased capacity of LEAs, schools, and ECE providers to support student’s social-emotional needs • Increased engagement of racially, linguistically, and culturally diverse children upon returning to school • Increased knowledge among parents and educators on school transition milestones
<p>Objective 6 Project 2 – Supporting Families to Buffer the Effects of Trauma The evidence-based program, Ready4K which is delivered via text, provides parents with a family engagement curriculum based on the strengthening protective factors framework.</p>
<p>Project Attributes</p> <p>Tier: Targeted ~ Target: Parents, LEAs ~ Ed. Level: birth – 8th grade Location: Somerset County and Garret County (MD), School District of Lancaster (PA) CPPs # 1, 2, 3 ~ Expected number of stakeholders served: 2,000 families</p>
<p>Sample Project Activities</p>

- Implementing Ready 4K programming
- Develop a Community Support Stream to provide families with links to local resources

Selected Project Outcomes

- Increasing parents’ ability to promote their children’s development and well-being

(3) Proposed project yields results beyond period of Federal financial assistance

MAEC’s proposed CAFE will continue to build client capacity and yield results that extend beyond the period of Federal assistance. Rather than facilitating siloed events, CAFE will promote sustainability through systemic targeted interventions, strategies, and analysis.

(Appendix A-1, MOUs and Letters of Support; A-2, MAEC Institutional Capability; A-3, Project Partners.) CAFE initiatives will institutionalize long-term capacity and results by using the combined skills of CAFE, the Advisory Committees, its partners, and key consultants to promote evidence-based strategies in policy, practice, and messaging. This synergy will engage and empower all stakeholders, including SEAs, LEAs, schools, teachers, students, families, and community members. MAEC’s experience demonstrates that participants at all levels are more likely to commit and build shared responsibility if they believe they have a voice in the process.

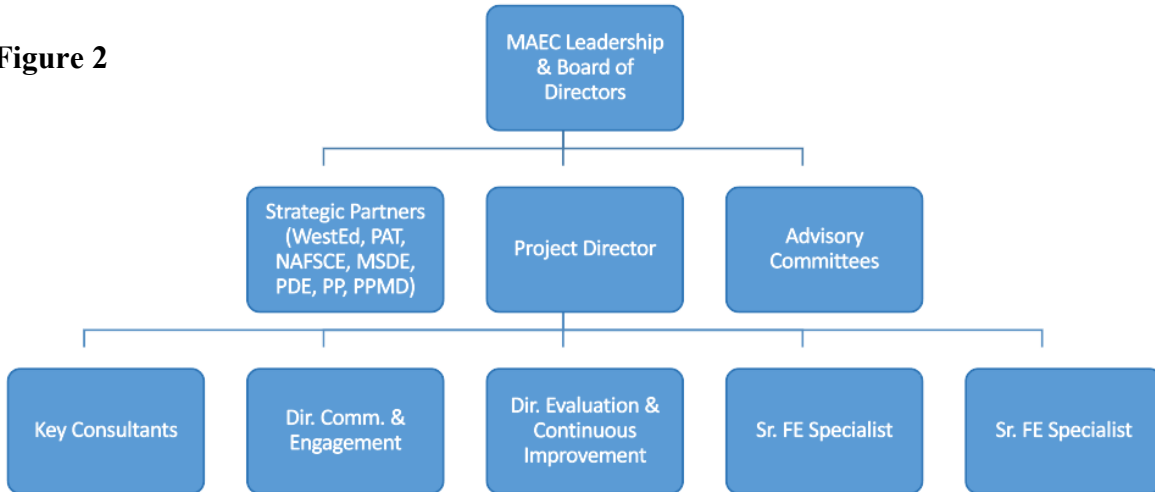
Each CAFE initiative works to strengthen knowledge and skills and create systems change to ensure sustainability. Both PDE and MSDE have committed staff to create SEA policies and structures that support sustained impact. The advancement of both state family engagement birth-21 frameworks will result in a comprehensive strategic document that can be used and revised by the SEA beyond the five-year grant period. CAFE will continue to build coalitions within and between the states to create an ongoing and sustained support network. NAFSCE’s pre-service family engagement pilot initiative, bringing together the SEAs and post-secondary institutions, including HBCUs, will advance future teachers who have the knowledge and skills to lead culturally responsive family engagement strategies in the classroom (The Aspen Education & Society Program & The Council of Chief State School Officers, 2017). These initiatives extend CAFE’s benefits beyond the period of the grant and enable a more equitable,

sustainable recovery from this pandemic—for students, educators, families, and entire school communities.

B. QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT PLAN

(1) Management plan achieves objectives on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones

Figure 2



CAFE’s services have been carefully designed to ensure that budget, timeline, personnel, and resources address the purpose, goals, and objectives of the project. The collaborative management plan assures the adequacy of structure and procedures by promoting clear leadership and communication, maximizing efficiency, minimizing duplication, and mobilizing its broad and deep resources to deliver excellent services on time and within budget to stakeholders in MD and PA. CAFE will ensure high-quality technical assistance by regularly monitoring during monthly meetings the anticipated milestones and focusing on systemic, strategic alliances that leverage flexible staffing, responsiveness, and scalability to provide a unified system of client/beneficiary support. **Chart 2, Responsibilities, Timelines, and Milestones**, below shows clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

CAFE Main Tasks/ Project Leads	Milestones	Project Goals & Objectives	Person Responsible	Yr (s)
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<p>CAFE will act as a coordinating hub for regional and statewide family engagement efforts by SEAs by creating and sustaining partnerships and leveraging network expertise.</p> <p>Lead: Project Mgr., SEAs, CAFE Staff, Partners</p>	Review and revise a vision statement for the network	G1; Obj1; Obj2	Project Manager, CAFE staff, SEAs	1
	Assess and identify the needs of the network as well as the needs of individual organizations	G1; Obj1; Obj2	Project Manager; CAFE Staff	1
	Establish cross-organizational committees to promote sharing of information	G1; Obj1; Obj2	Project Manager; Partners; SEAs	1
	Assist SEAs in ensuring a diversity of perspectives are included when recruiting new members for Advisory Committees within their state	G1; Obj1; Obj3	Project Manager; CAFE Staff; Partners	1
	Continue utilizing online systems to exchange information and promote collaboration	G1; Obj3; Obj4	CAFE Staff; SEAs; Partners	1
	Develop and co-construct strategies for each SEA to implement their respective Comprehensive Framework for Birth-College and Career Family Engagement	G1; Obj1	Project Manager; CAFE Staff; NAFSCE	1
<p>CAFE in collaboration with partners will provide technical assistance and training to educators regarding culturally responsive practices as well as family, school, and community engagement.</p> <p>Leads: Project Manager, MAEC staff, Partners (NAFSCE,</p>	Develop a common language and framework for family, school, and community engagement	G1; G2; Obj1; Obj2; Obj3; Obj4;	Project Manager, CAFE staff, Partners (NAFSCE, WestEd, Ready4K, and PAT), LEAs	1
	Establish and strengthen partnerships with universities in order to provide training on FSCE to preservice teachers	G2; Obj2; Obj3; Obj4	Project Manager, SEAs	1
	Design a resource or tool to assess the readiness of districts or schools to engage in programs	G2; Obj2	CAFE staff; Partners	1
	Develop tools and resources in collaboration with partners regarding messaging to community, recruitment of stakeholders, and conducting outreach	G2; Obj2; Obj4	CAFE staff; Partners	1

WestEd, Ready4K, and PAT), LEAs	Assist in identifying LEAs and school staff to provide training on implementing programs	G2; Obj2; Obj3	Project Manager; SEAs	1
	Assist partner organizations in providing training to LEAs and school staff	G2; Obj2; Obj3; Obj5; Obj6	Project Manager; CAFE staff	2
	Assist in selecting families ¹ to participate in the programs	G2; Obj2; Obj5	CAFE staff; LEA partners	2
	Design implementation strategies with partner organizations and SEAs/LEAs	G1; G2; Obj1; Obj2	CAFE staff; Partners	2
	Facilitate the implementation of the programs	G2; Obj3	CAFE staff; Partners	2-5
	Provide coaching for educators in collaboration with partners	G2; Obj2; Obj6	CAFE staff	2-5
	Monitor and assess the progress of the programs	G1; G2; Obj1; Obj2; Obj3; Obj4; Obj5; Obj6	Project Manager; Partners; Evaluation Director	2-5
CAFE in collaboration with partners will provide direct services to support families and build their capacity in areas of early childhood readiness, academic achievement, mental health and well-being, and parent leadership. Leads: Program Associates, MAEC staff,	Develop and disseminate informational materials regarding strategies to extend learning at home, advocacy, mental health and well-being etc.	G2; Obj5; Obj6	CAFE staff; MAEC Communications Team; Partners	2-5
	Assist in selecting parents to participate in the programs	G2; Obj5; Obj6	CAFE staff; Partners	2
	Develop meeting and training materials tailored to the needs of students and families	G2; Obj5; Obj6	CAFE staff; Partners	2
	Assist partner organizations in implementing the Parents as Teachers model (home visits, group connections, screenings/assessments, and resource connections)	G2; Obj5	CAFE staff; LEAs; CBOs	2-5
	Assist partner organizations in advising Academic Parent-Teacher Teams	G2; Obj5	CAFE staff; LEAs; CBOs	2-5
	Assist partner organizations in the implementation of Ready4K (resource connections)	G2; Obj6	CAFE staff; LEAs; CBOs	1-5
	Review policies, practices, and procedures	G1; Obj1; Obj2	CAFE Staff; Partners; SEAs; Advisory Comms.	2-5

Partners (NAFSCE, WestEd/APPT, Ready4K and PAT), LEAs, community-based organizations	Conduct meetings, convenings, and/or trainings on High Impact, Culturally Responsive Family Engagement	G1; G2; Obj1; Obj2; Obj3	CAFE staff; Partners	2-4
	Provide recommendations for improvement and sustainability	G1; G2; Obj1; Obj2; Obj3	CAFE staff; Partners; Advisory Comms.; SEAs	4-5
CAFE in collaboration with partners will assess the progress of programs and identify strategies for scale-up. Leads: Program Manager, MAEC Evaluation Team	Design a formative assessment system to document progress in programs and ensure fidelity of the programs	G1; G2; Obj1; Obj2; Obj3; Obj4; Obj5; Obj6	Program Director; Evaluation Director; Partner Organizations	1
	Collect qualitative and quantitative data to assess the programs	G1; G2; Obj1; Obj2; Obj3; Obj4; Obj5; Obj6	Program Director; Evaluation Director; Partner Organizations	2-4
	Collect qualitative and quantitative data to assess capacity-building activities	G1; G2; Obj1; Obj2; Obj3; Obj4; Obj5; Obj6	Program Director; Evaluation Director; Partner Organizations	2-4
	Identify promising or effective strategies that can be scaled-up to other states or districts	G1; G2; Obj1; Obj2; Obj3; Obj4; Obj5; Obj6	Program Director; CAFE Staff; Partner Organizations	2-4
	Create publications, webinars, websites, and social media content on promising or effective strategies for wide dissemination	G1; G2; Obj1; Obj2; Obj3; Obj4; Obj5; Obj6	Program Director; CAFE Staff	1-5
	Conduct annual program evaluations to determine the effectiveness of the program.	G1; G2; Obj1; Obj2; Obj3; Obj4; Obj5; Obj6	Program Director; Evaluation Director	2-4

(Appendix A-7, Needs Assessment for Maryland and Pennsylvania.)

(2) Adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement

Working in complex environments requires TA providers to support organizational leaders with establishing climates where students, families, and educators

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(3) Adequacy of mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services

Based on MAEC’s CI4E model, all products and services undergo a thorough quality review using the latest available research, standards for accessibility, and instructional design. Prior to release, MAEC’s publications are reviewed by MAEC’s key leadership team, Advisory Committee members, and content experts. We collect data about our services through satisfaction surveys and client interviews. We use Quickbase to examine how stakeholders rate the quality of our services across projects. Of the 1,014 who responded to satisfaction surveys across all CAFE events and trainings during the current administration of CAFE, an average 93% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with items rating the quality of MAEC’s services (above the 80% target benchmark). The Evaluation Team uses this data, along with needs assessment data and other metrics, to produce bi-annual summative reports. These reports are regularly shared with TA providers, CAFE partners, and Advisory Committees to identify trends, highlight successful practices, and support continuous improvement. These findings enable CAFE and our clients to review, refine, and scale up work in the region.

(4) Time commitments of project director and key personnel meet project objectives

Program Director [REDACTED] oversee all responsibilities related to project programming, budgetary functions, and logistical aspects of the program. The Program Director will supervise staff, develop policy, and supervise sub-contractors in project implementation. The **Senior**

Family Engagement Specialists [REDACTED] serve as the liaison to their state (MD or PA), provide TA and training, monitor activities within their state, and work closely with the SEA, LEAs, community-based organizations, families, schools, and program partner staff. They will also work in the other state, as needed. MAEC's **Director of Evaluation and Continuous Improvement** [REDACTED]), supported by MAEC's Evaluation Team, will lead the formative and summative evaluation of the program. The team will administer data collection, analysis, and reporting [REDACTED]

(5) Applicant will ensure project represents a diversity of perspectives

CAFE honors and incorporates diverse perspectives and resources in the operation of the project as sources of expertise to meet the needs of underserved families across Maryland and Pennsylvania. This approach affirms the power, potential, resourcefulness, and resilience of low-income, racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse populations (Huguley et al., 2020). To create stronger solutions that are more responsive to family needs, families are invited to share their priorities, expertise, and feedback on new and ongoing initiatives. CAFE has established relationships with parent groups; teachers; the business community; federally funded research, content, and comprehensive centers; community-based partners; advocacy-based organizations; and culturally diverse educational professionals with expertise in a wide variety of disciplines (Appendix A-6, Collaborating Organizations). CAFE engages families as framers and not simply receivers of existing structures and norms (Mapp & Bergman, 2019). The recruitment process for the Advisory Committee considers role, geographic location, and various social identities and backgrounds. Members will be added as gaps in perspective are identified. Members will be invited to determine their participation, share their expertise, and provide recommendations on policy and programmatic issues. The practice of seeking input from members about how they would like to participate is supported by the research on meaningful stakeholder engagement (Jeffery, 2009). These diverse stakeholders will unite through communities of practice, regional convenings, place-based parent education programs, and interstate networks.

C. QUALITY OF PROJECT PERSONNEL

[Redacted content]

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(3) Qualifications, relevant training, and experience of consultants & subcontractors

Subcontractors and project consultants were specifically selected for their expertise, content and context specific technical assistance and services, statewide, and/or national leadership in family engagement, and their demonstrated commitment to the purpose of the SFECs.

NAFSCE is a 10-year national membership association for family, school, and community engagement. NAFSCE provides outreach to families and communities through its family engagement leadership network, family engagement specialists, national and statewide systemic work, and resource library. NAFSCE addresses systemic challenges and supports effective policies and practices to promote child development and improve student achievement.

WestEd works with education and other communities throughout the U.S. and abroad to promote excellence, achieve equity, and improve learning for children, youth, and adults. It operates multiple National and Regional Comprehensive Centers, Regional Educational Laboratories, and Equity Assistance Centers. CAFE will provide the *APTT* model of family engagement, a research and evidence-based framework that has transformed the way schools engage families in student learning by aligning grade-level learning concepts, student performance data, and family-teacher communication and collaboration. *APTT* provides a systemic approach to building partnerships between families and teachers centered around student learning and achievement. It provides families with tools and strategies to support their children's learning at home and master the academic skills they need to succeed. *APTT* has provided support to more than 600

schools in 22 states, influencing the learning of approximately 600,000 students and over 200,000 families.

PAT is an evidence-based early childhood home visiting model. It provides parents with child development knowledge and parenting support, early detection of developmental delays and health issues, and increases support to children's school readiness and success. The PAT model includes home visits, monthly meetings, developmental screenings, and resources for families. Local sites offer at least 12 hour-long home visits annually with more offered visits to high-need families. PAT serves families for at least two years between pregnancy and kindergarten. In collaboration with CAFE, PAT affiliate programs select the target population they plan to serve and the program duration. Additionally, PAT will implement their parent leadership curricula to build adult literacy including financial literacy.

Parent Powered provides **Ready4K**, a whole-child family engagement curriculum delivered by text messages and available in multiple languages. It supports children from birth through 5th grade. It will expand in Fall 2022 to include middle school grades. It provides families and caregivers with tools and strategies to promote their children's development by building on existing routines. The **Trauma-Informed** curriculum, based on the strengthening protective factors framework, provides families and caregivers with insights to help buffer the effects of adverse childhood experience (ACEs). Research demonstrates that the Ready4K approach leads to increased involvement from families, resulting in two-three months of additional growth over the course of a school year (York & Loeb, 2014). Additionally, Ready4K provides community asset mapping to connect families to community resources.

The Parents' Place of Maryland (PPMD) is MD's Parent Training and Information Center and Family-to-Family Health Information Center. It provides a variety of programs and services to support families of children with disabilities and health care needs, develops the capacity of parents to support other families to advocate for their children's needs, and connects children with disabilities to various community resources. Additionally, it works to train and inform

parents and professionals on topics to improve education and health care for all children. (Appendix A-3, Project Partners.)

In addition to project partners, CAFE engages an unprecedented network of Family Engagement consultants and collaborating organizations for content and context-specific TA across all family engagement areas. The **Center for Schools and Communities (CSC)** serves as the PA State PAT Office and provides local capacity-building TA in family engagement, migrant education, positive school climate, and services to assist vulnerable students including those who are experiencing homelessness, pregnant/parenting, in foster care settings, and identified as disruptive/delinquent. Additional collaborators include other SFECs, parent training and information centers, and community parent resource centers, such as the Parent Education and Advocacy Leadership (PEAL) Center (PA), Judith P. Hoyer Early Child Care and Family Engagement Centers (MD), and Centers on Enhancing Early Learning (CEELO-PA). (Appendix A-1, MOUs and Letters of Support; A-4, MAEC Board of Directors; A-5, Key Consultants; A-6, Collaborating Organizations).

D. ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES

MAEC brings extensive resources to the project. The CAFE partners are committed. The projected costs enable CAFE to reach its goals and objectives and the costs are reasonable when compared to the number of people served in MD and PA. CAFE will use distributed expertise and leadership to maximize efficiency and results, provide high-quality services to improve capacity to increase equity, and to ensure that underserved students have access to the best educational opportunities.

(1) Partner relevance and commitment to project implementation and success

CAFE uses intersectionality and collective impact from an equity perspective as an operating model to maximize the effect of the combined knowledge and expertise of partners and collaborators. CAFE has integrated its partners—MSDE, PDE, NAFSCE, PAT, Ready4K, Parent’s Place of Maryland, and WestEd—into a seamless delivery service for clients. (Section A. Quality of Project Design, p. 1; Figure 2, Organizational Chart, p. 19; Appendix A-3, Project

Partners.) The CAFE partner organizations' resources enable successful, efficient, and cost-effective TA service delivery. MAEC program management uses the five conditions of centering equity for collective impact: (1) ground the work in data and context and target solutions; (2) focus on systems change; (3) shift power within the collaborative; (4) listen to and act with the community; and (5) build equity leadership and accountability (Kania et al., 2021; Lynn et al., 2018; Zuckerman et al., 2020). MAEC's interconnected operational system offers an outstanding approach to service delivery.

Relevance of Each Partner:

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE): CAFE works closely with key partners MSDE and PDE to create systemic change to close achievement and opportunity gaps for all students through collaboration, innovation, and learning networks. The **State Superintendent of Schools for MSDE and the Secretary of Education for PDE** have indicated their department's support of this application and commitment to expanding the infrastructure for family engagement. PDE collaborated with MAEC on the initial implementation phase of the PA Family Engagement Framework, including an introductory webinar, a companion family engagement framework for families, and a course for coaches focused on the implementation of the framework. CAFE is collaborating with PDE to build a K-12 office for family, school, and community engagement.

MSDE has a long history of partnership with MAEC. Most recently, MAEC collaborated with MSDE to facilitate listening sessions to inform the strategic plan for, and the implementation of, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. CAFE co-developed the MD Family Engagement Framework Birth-21 and will provide TA to implement the framework. CAFE provided TA and training to community school coordinators statewide and is partnering with the Director of Community Schools to expand the workshop series into a credit-bearing course for more than 350 schools statewide.

NAFSCE is a national professional membership association representing the broad field of family engagement, including early childhood and K-12 educators, community-based

organizations, parent leaders and advocates, researchers, policy makers, state education agencies, and higher education institutions. It focuses on strategic and systemic initiatives that enable high-impact and equitable family, school, and community engagement. NAFSCE will serve as CAFE's primary partner for advancing educator preparation, piloting programs for family math, building capacity for effective family engagement messaging, as well as national, state, and regional convenings. NAFSCE has committed to providing matching in-kind funds for this project.

PAT provides parents with child development knowledge and parenting support, early detection of developmental delays and health issues, and opportunities to increase child readiness. Parent educators conduct home visits using structured visit plans and guided planning tools. Evaluation studies spanning over 35 years demonstrate that adults and children who participate in PAT experience positive outcomes, including increased confidence and competence as caregivers and a reduction in child maltreatment reports. Children whose parents participated in PAT performed significantly better on school standardized tests for reading, comprehension, phonics, and math; English Learners performed better in reading and writing (Lahti et al., 2019).

WestEd operates multiple National and Regional Comprehensive Centers, Regional Educational Laboratories, and Equity Assistance Centers to promote excellence, achieve equity, and improve learning for children, youth, and adults. WestEd's *APTT*, a research and evidence-based program, equips families with the tools and strategies to help their children master the academic skills needed to succeed. *APTT* has thus far provided support to over 1,800 schools in 26 states — influencing the learning of approximately 600,000 students and over 200,000 families. The *APTT* model of family engagement is a research and evidence-based framework aligning grade level learning concepts, student performance data, and family-teacher communication and collaboration. Evidence collected by WestEd and independent evaluation sources indicate that students whose families participated in *APTT* meetings had statistically significant academic performance growth compared to students whose families did not

participate in APTT meetings (Paredes, 2015). (Appendix A-1, MOUs and Letters of Support; A-3, Project Partners.)

PPMD has administered Maryland’s Parent Training and Information (PTI) Center through six consecutive grants from the USDOE/OSEP since 1991. The organization is staffed predominantly by parents of children with disabilities. PPMD operates an array of programs for families of children with disabilities and special health care needs on education, health, and human services issues affecting their children. PPMD has significant experience developing evidence-based training programs, information, and materials to meet the needs of underserved families, youth, and professionals.

Parent Powered implements successful, evidence-based early childhood programs and interventions. They have partnered with hundreds of family-serving agencies and organizations, serving the parents and caregivers of over a half million children across a broad range of settings in all 50 states, Mexico, and Singapore to drive significant positive impact. Their program, *The Ready4K Trauma Informed* is designed to provide parents and caregivers with the tools and insights they need to buffer the effects of trauma and navigate challenge and adversity, as a component of a comprehensive trauma-informed strategy. The Trauma Informed curriculum is designed to strengthen protective factors and leverage family strengths. Additionally, the program includes a community asset mapping process to connect families to community resources.

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Significantly, MAEC has 30 years of experience managing grant, contract, and project accounts; audits; benefits management; and general office activities. MAEC has operated the regional equity assistance center for the formerly designated Region III and currently for Region I, for almost 30 years; the MD Parental Information and Resource Center (PIRC) for more than five years; and the current SFEC for three years. In addition, MAEC has managed multiple contracts and foundation funding. MAEC uses Quickbooks Enterprise Solutions for Non-Profit Organizations online accounting to enable external accountant and auditor monitoring and review, and MAEC undergoes an annual Uniform Guidance Single Audit. All expenditures must be approved in a vigorous three-point checking system to ensure transparency, accuracy, budget compliance, and integrity of fund allocations. All vendor bills, invoices, and payroll are processed for payment semi-monthly. MAEC's three-person accountant management team reviews all transactions and expenditures prior to the final signature and approval by Susan Shaffer, MAEC's President and/or Karmen Rouland, MAEC's Vice President. All financial data are stored both on-site and in the cloud to ensure continuity and accessibility. (Appendix A-2, MAEC Institutional Capability; C-1, MAEC Selected List of Grants and Contracts.)

(2) Extent costs are reasonable in relation to objectives, design, and significance

Although CAFE's objectives are ambitious compared with the proposed budget size, MAEC has experience in delivering services at the lowest possible cost. Service delivery will be facilitated by CAFE staff who will leverage long-standing relationships, resulting in greater levels of engagement and improved quality and quantity of services. Our proposed programs vary in scope, intensity, and duration.

CAFE proposes to meet two goals and six objectives. (Section A, Quality of the Project Design.) Based on past experience, Universal and Targeted TA requests could number in the thousands. Since CAFE launched in 2019, MAEC conducted approximately 512 high-impact

activities, including 296 high-impact activities designed to build statewide infrastructure for systemic family engagement that includes support for SEA- and LEA-level leadership and capacity-building, and 177 high-impact activities designed to ensure that parents are trained and can effectively engage in activities that will improve student academic achievement. (Appendix A-10, Annual Reports for CAFE.) Paired with capacity building, CAFE directly reached 916 parents between January 2019 and August 2021, and reached more than 10,000 viewers during COVID-19 related programming from July 2020 to June 2021. (Appendix A-18, Bridging the Gap.) CAFE will leverage its expertise and existing infrastructure as the current statewide family engagement center. (Appendix B-3, MAEC staff.)

Prior to 2016, MAEC served as the Region III equity assistance center (EAC) for 20+ years. As the current Region I EAC, MAEC provides TA to fifteen states and territories including Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. During the 2020-2021 EAC grant year, MAEC had 52 active projects in its 15 jurisdictions. Some projects were multi-state. MAEC conducted 29 projects in Maryland and 29 in Pennsylvania. MAEC also served as the Maryland State PIRC for five years, during which we provided services directly and indirectly to an average of 100,000 low-income families, 7,765 limited English proficient families, and 56,800 minority families. During this time, we worked with 381 Title I schools (Neuman-Sheldon, 2016; PIRC Final Performance Report, 2011).

Recipients of CAFE trainings, webinars, and other events reported high satisfaction and increased capacity as a result of CAFE's services. To date, 1,014 recipients of CAFE services have completed a post-event satisfaction survey. Of those recipients, 93% on average either agreed or strongly agreed with items rating the quality of MAEC's services, which is above the 80% target benchmark. Additionally, 90.8% of respondents reported that the training they received increased their knowledge about the topic presented; 92.2% plan to use the information from the event they attended in their work; and 91.8% plan to share information from the event they attended with others.

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E. QUALITY OF THE PROJECT EVALUATION

MAEC conducts rigorous evaluations of all its projects to ensure that program goals and objectives are met and desired outcomes are achieved (see, e.g., Appendix A-17, Center for Education Equity (CEE) Case Studies). CAFE evaluation findings will support and improve future program implementation in MD, PA, and across the US. MAEC's Evaluation Team provides leadership in conducting equity-centered evaluation at the federal, states and local levels. Examples of MAEC's previous statewide evaluation work include the 2019 systematic needs assessment of MD's early child care and education system as a part of the Preschool Development Grant, and the 2020 needs assessment of Maryland's Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting, conducted in partnership with the MD Department of Health. (Appendix A-15, MAEC MIECHV Report, A-16, MAEC MSDE PDG B-5 Report.) MAEC's Evaluation Team uses the latest processes and tools, including Qualtrics, Tableau, MAXQDA, R, and SPSS. MAEC ensures data privacy and security by storing all data collected for evaluation purposes on a secure, password-protected MAEC server.

(1) Evaluation methods include use of objective performance measures clearly related to intended outcomes and will produce quantitative and qualitative data

Evaluation of CAFE programs will use a mixed-method design, collecting quantitative and qualitative data from a range of stakeholders, including SEAs, LEAs, partners, Advisory Committee members, and family members participating in CAFE activities. Evaluation will systematically collect and analyze data to determine the extent to which CAFE: (1) meets its objectives, (2) addresses the GPRA performance measures outlined in the call for proposals, and (3) implements activities discussed in the Project Design. The Evaluation Team will collect objective performance measures related to the intended outcomes of the project, provide performance feedback, assess CAFE's progress toward achieving intended outcomes, and produce promising evidence related to the family engagement practices implemented by CAFE. The following questions will guide CAFE's evaluation:

1. To what extent does CAFE successfully implement the planned projects and activities, meeting service quality objectives and GPRA performance measures?

2. To what extent do CAFE services help clients build long-term capacity to support family engagement in culturally responsive ways?
3. To what extent do CAFE services improve SEA, LEA, school and ECE policies and practices as well as family and student outcomes?

For each CAFE objective, we will collect outcome data to assess efficacy to engage families and school staff in children's learning. **Formative evaluation** will support internal continuous improvement of CAFE. Formative evaluation activities will include tracking: (1) completed activities and outputs for each project, (2) event attendance and website traffic analytics, and (3) client satisfaction surveys. Activities will be deemed effective if attendees indicate 80% satisfaction on the constructs measured in the survey (e.g., increased knowledge, increased confidence). **Summative evaluation** will document CAFE's ability to build the capacity of numerous constituencies to enact high-impact, culturally responsive family engagement practices. Summative evaluation activities will include: (1) pre/post surveys examining changes on constructs related to family engagement, (2) six-month follow-up surveys to measure impact of activity, (3) interviews and focus groups, and (4) impact studies using quasi-experimental (QED) design using non-equivalent comparison groups. All surveys will be available in English and Spanish and, when appropriate, in other languages. Evaluation methods and analytic approaches are organized by service tier (Universal, Targeted, and Systemic) and objectives. **Universal Project Evaluation Activities** will align closely with the stated efforts to: (1) identify and create relevant, high-quality evidence-based family engagement products, processes, research publications, and professional learnings (PL); (2) disseminate resources; and (3) communicate information with targeted audiences through trusted sources. MAEC's Evaluation Team will measure outcomes and implementation of activities primarily through client satisfaction surveys of participants in PL, analyses of data generated by online platforms, and administrative data maintained by CAFE staff. Attendees will receive a survey after the event's conclusion asking the extent to which the event resulted in increased knowledge and understanding of family engagement. The Evaluation Team will track website analytics related

to the number of visitors to the website and the number of times resources have been downloaded.

Selected Targeted and Systemic Project Evaluation Activities by Objective

Objective 1 – Systemic Project – Implementation of Family Engagement Framework for

Birth-21: MAEC’s Evaluation Team will administer a semiannual survey to SEA clients and Advisory Committee members asking about their satisfaction working with CAFE, and how working with CAFE has increased their knowledge of, and ability to, integrate culturally responsive family engagement into their statewide frameworks. MAEC’s Evaluation Team will conduct annual interviews with key stakeholders at the SEAs in both states to gather evidence about the degree of collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including families in the development of SEA policies, procedures, and practices aligned to ESSA.

Objective 2 – Targeted Project – Building Stronger Schools: Improve Student Outcomes:

In collaboration with PPMD in MD and the PAT in PA, MAEC’s Evaluation Team will collect data related to the use of Parent Academies, Communities of Practice for Community Schools in MD, and PA School Improvement Pilot Schools. Surveys will be administered at the end of trainings to measure the extent to which district and school staff felt more knowledgeable about strategies to engage families and more confident in their ability to engage with their students’ families consistent with the *Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships*. Attending families will be asked the extent to which they felt more confident in their ability to support and advocate for their child’s learning and well-being. Staff representatives from schools in both states will be interviewed about their satisfaction working with CAFE, and the successes and challenges of their work with families.

Objective 3 –Targeted Project – Fostering Interstate and Cross-Agency Collaboration:

MAEC’s Evaluation Team will gather best practices and lessons learned about running a center that works with two states. As an example of current interstate collaboration, the two states partnered at the PA Family Involvement Conference, with MD staff serving on the planning committee for the event and sending staff to learn from the opportunity. Stakeholders have

reported that CAFE’s interstate collaboration allows stakeholders in both states to share experiences and resources, learn from each other about challenges and strategies, and support families and professionals. Interstate convenings will be evaluated through semiannual interviews with SEA staff and leadership about their satisfaction and ideas for improvement. Following all cross-agency collaboration events, the Evaluation Team will administer a survey to attendees to rate their gained knowledge and confidence to implement asset-based and culturally responsive family engagement practices, and their increased knowledge on how to effectively partner with parents and families to support learning.

Objective 4 – Targeted Project – Conducting Outreach to Engage All Families: To evaluate NAFSCE’s Virtual Reframing Academy and the related CoPs as well as NAFSCE’s TA and CoPs to advance Family Math, MAEC will implement a client satisfaction survey. Following each of the CoP events, attendees will be asked to rate their satisfaction with the event and the extent to which the event improved their knowledge and skills about family engagement, and how to more effectively strengthen school-family relationships. Another follow-up survey will be administered to CoP participants six months after the conclusion of each series to gather impact data on how the CoP increased capacity for families to work with their children at home, in schools, and with service providers and how it affected their views on the importance of math in their children’s learnings.

Objective 5 - Systemic Project 1- Promoting Early Childhood School Readiness and Nurturing Child Development: The evaluation will use pre-post surveys to assess the extent to which family members’ participation in PAT predicts their confidence in raising their child, and their knowledge of strategies to raise healthy children and interact with their child in engaging ways. Families entering PAT will receive a pre-survey upon entry and a post-survey upon completion of the program (e.g., when their child enters kindergarten). Pre- and post-surveys will be matched using a unique identifier assigned to each family. Analyses will assess the extent to which there is an association between the number of visits a family receives until their child begins kindergarten and parent beliefs and engagement, compared to self-reported beliefs and

engagement at the start of PAT enrollment. The number of visits will be used to predict changes in parents' efficacy and engagement. Analyses will use Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analyses to statistically account for family background factors.

Objective 5 - Systemic Project 2 – Families and Teachers Partnering to Promote Academic

Success: Evaluation of the Academic Parent Teacher Team (APTT) program will use a variety of approaches to identify impact of implementing the workshops on family and student outcomes. These include correlational research, pre-post comparisons, and quasi-experimental design (QED). Correlational analyses will use the number of APTT workshops a family attends to identify an association between (1) family outcomes, such as parents' efficacy to impact their child's learning and (2) the extent to which parents interact with their children's teachers to promote learning and student outcomes, such as school attendance and performance on standardized assessment tests. The number of workshops attended will also be examined in relation to changes in family members' efficacy and reports of family engagement. To estimate the impact of APTT on student outcomes, CAFE will identify a control group through a matched comparison group of students whose families do not attend any APTT workshops. The school outcomes of APTT students will be compared to the control group.

Data will be collected directly from parents and teachers using surveys. Student data will be collected from the district. Families will be asked to complete a pre-survey at the beginning of the first APPT workshop and a post-survey at the end of the year. Family attendance will be observed at each meeting and matched to the families' pre- and post-survey data along with student performance data using the district's student identification number. Data analyses will investigate the extent to which parents' efficacy and their engagement in their children's schooling change over the course of the school year. Parent attendance at workshops will be correlated with a variety of parent and student outcomes, including (1) change in parents' satisfaction with the school, (2) parent efficacy, and (3) frequency of family engagement, student grades, and student attendance. The outcomes of students whose families participated in at least two meetings will be compared to their peers whose families attended zero or one APTT

meetings. T-tests and regression analyses will estimate the extent to which family participation in APTT is associated with changes in parent perceptions, engagement at home, and student outcomes. In addition, students whose families attended at least two APTT meetings will be compared to a matched sample of their peers whose families did not attend meetings, using Propensity Score Matching with student demographic information and student outcomes data collected by the school system. OLS Regression analyses will estimate the differences between a treatment and a control sample of students.

Objective 6 - Project 2- Targeted- Supporting Families to Mitigate the Effects of Trauma:

Ready4K provides parents, via text messages, with an evidence-based family engagement curriculum focusing on the strengthening protective factors framework. Parents will be administered a pre-survey when enrolling in Ready4K and a post-survey at the end of the academic year. Survey data will be matched using a unique identifier assigned to parents to examine satisfaction and self-reported growth in understanding. At the end of each school year, MAEC’s Evaluation Team will host a focus group with parents on how the Ready4K program increased their understanding of their children’s development and promoted their child’s well-being.

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(3) Evaluation methods produce promising evidence about project effectiveness

Evaluation examines the impact of family engagement programs on family and student outcomes, including parental efficacy, parental engagement, student achievement, and student attendance. Where appropriate, MAEC’s evaluation employs pre- and post-surveys and QED comparing students in a program to a similar group that has not received any direct services designed to increase family engagement. To account for any remaining differences in the samples, statistical controls include prior measures of the outcomes. This design allows for the evaluation to capture promising evidence of the programs implemented. CAFE will share lessons learned, including strategies with promising evidence, with other SFECs, to support dissemination of best practices to advance high impact, culturally responsive family engagement nationwide.

Below is Chart 3, CAFE Logic Model.

Chart 3 - CAFE LOGIC MODEL

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-term Outcomes	Mid-term Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes
<p>CAFE’s comprehensive systematic conceptual framework, operational, management and evaluation plan</p> <p>Partnerships with organizations that have extensive experience with evidence-based practices, and a strong record of working on family engagement</p> <p>CAFE staff’s knowledge and expertise regarding family engagement</p> <p>SFEC Dual Capacity</p>	<p>Provide TA on implementing a birth-21 framework with SEAs</p> <p>Establish Advisory Committees</p> <p>Develop resources for stakeholders around DEI, transition milestones from Birth-21 and educator preparation for family engagement</p> <p>Expand parent academies focused on parent readiness</p> <p>Establish CoPs focused on family leadership, innovative practices and Family Math</p> <p>Hold interstate convenings and symposia</p> <p>Expand bilingual Spanish website and increase the number of multilingual documents and publications</p> <p>Conduct home visits through PAT</p> <p>Facilitate community asset mapping, professional development, and family</p>	<p># of Advisory Committee meetings</p> <p># of guidelines on how to develop policies, practices and frameworks around family engagement</p> <p># and types of DEI resources and resources on transition milestones from Birth to 21</p> <p># of parent academies</p> <p># of COP training sessions</p> <p># of interstate convenings</p> <p># of multilingual documents and publications</p> <p># of families served by PAT</p> <p># of resources mapped and # of</p>	<p>Increased knowledge about implementation of Family Engagement Frameworks by SEAs</p> <p>Increased knowledge of tailored DEI best practices by SEAs, LEAs, and school staff</p> <p>Increased knowledge and capacity among educators and parents on how to work together to support student academic and social-emotional well-being</p> <p>Increased knowledge of high-impact, culturally responsive family engagement and ability to identify inequitable systemic barriers for underrepresented groups among ECE providers, LEAs, and SEAs</p> <p>Improved interstate collaboration and sustainability of family engagement leadership</p>	<p>Improved implementation of policies and practices related to Family Engagement Frameworks</p> <p>Increase knowledge and two-way communication between stakeholders that implement DEI best practices</p> <p>Increased partnerships between educators and parents</p> <p>Increased support for at-risk youth and incarcerated families and awareness of violence prevention and reduction</p> <p>Increased family engagement practices that address systemic barriers for underrepresented</p>	<p>SEAs with capacity to fully implement statewide culturally responsive family engagement policies, practices, and frameworks aligned to ESSA</p> <p>LEAs, schools and ECE providers with capacity to improve student outcomes and well-being by co-constructing policies and practices focused on family partnerships</p> <p>Improved interstate and cross-agency collaboration to enhance knowledge, skills, abilities, and best practices that increase academic achievement and support school improvement</p> <p>Communities from diverse racial, linguistic, religious,</p>

Chart 3 - CAFE LOGIC MODEL continued

<p>Building Framework</p> <p>Funding from the US Dept. of Education</p>	<p>leadership activities</p> <p>Implement APTT model</p> <p>Provide workshops related to the CAFE SEL toolkit</p> <p>Create an interactive resource map for students' social-emotional needs</p> <p>Develop a guide for reopening and reimagining schools</p> <p>Create monthly family newsletter featuring events, resources on SEL, financial planning, and school re-entry</p> <p>Implement Ready4K programming</p> <p>Develop a community support stream to provide families with links to local resources</p>	<p>PD sessions and activities attended</p> <p># of families served by APTT model</p> <p># of stakeholders attending workshops</p> <p># of views of the resource map</p> <p># of downloads of guide for reopening and reimagining schools</p> <p># of published newsletters</p> <p># of families served by Ready4K program</p> <p># of families connected to local resources</p>	<p>Increased capacity of LEAs, schools, and community-based organizations to collaborate with parents of diverse backgrounds</p> <p>Increased knowledge and understanding of child-rearing practices, child development, and child well-being by families</p> <p>Increased readiness for kindergarten in racially, linguistically, and culturally diverse children</p> <p>Increased capacity of LEAs, schools, and ECE providers to support students' social-emotional needs</p>	<p>groups and promote sustainable family engagement</p> <p>Improved opportunities for parents of diverse backgrounds to actively participate in supporting collaborative action planning</p> <p>Increased understanding among stakeholders in both states about the common vision and language around family engagement</p> <p>Improved scores on kindergarten readiness measures in school aged children</p>	<p>and cultural backgrounds effectively engaged in schooling of their children</p> <p>Families' increased ability to promote school readiness and support the academic achievement and well-being of their children</p> <p>LEAs, schools, and ECE providers with capacity to support students' social-emotional needs exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic</p>
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