

**Sankofa Chronicles: SEL Curriculum from American Diasporas**

*EIR: Early Phase Grant Proposal*

*Summer 2023*

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## A. Significance

### Overview

The MLK Sr Community Resources Center (MLKSRCRC), in partnership with the Connect with Kids (CWK) Network, Morehouse and Spelman Colleges, New York City (NYC) Public Schools, The Urban Assembly (UA), Atlanta Public Schools (APS), and Empirical Education (EE), is applying for the Early-Phase Education Innovation and Research grant program under **Absolute Priorities 1** (Demonstrates a Rationale), **4** (Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs), and with **Competitive Preference Priority 1** (Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities).

In recent years, educators have argued that to be fully effectual, social and emotional learning (SEL) curricula must include powerful culturally and emotive components so that students are able to connect their own diverse personal histories and the histories of others in ways that build greater self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, social awareness, and relationship skills– the five CASEL core competencies (CASEL, n.d.). Creating and integrating inspiring cultural stories from the local diasporas will enhance not just the SEL impact but also the academic achievement components of the SEL curricula (e.g., critical thinking).

The primary goals are to generate solutions to problems of student underachievement, disengagement, and mental health. To achieve these goals, MLKCRC and CWK will partner with students from two of the nation's most respected HBCU institutions to produce and integrate inspiring video stories, *Sankofa Chronicles*, with the already well-established CWK SEL curriculum to provide the next generation of transformative curricula. The need is particularly great among urban youth where emotional disengagement is a key characteristic of low-achieving adolescents (Mahatmya et al., 2012).

In collaboration, we will develop and implement culturally-responsive, multimedia SEL teaching and learning resources and curricula. The curricula will teach histories that are unknown to many high-needs students - particularly students of color and English learners – while simultaneously giving students the opportunity to connect the histories of others to their own personal and community narratives. In collaboration with public high schools in New York City (NYC) and Atlanta Public Schools (APS), The Urban Assembly (UA), MLKSRCRC, and CWK will lead the development of both training resources for teachers and families through a digital learning platform that can be scaled nationwide at a low cost.

The title of the proposed project is **Sankofa Chronicles: SEL Curriculum from American Diasporas (*Sankofa Chronicles*)**. (In this proposal, “high-needs” refers to students who are living in poverty, students of color, English language learners, students with disabilities, students experiencing home instability, and students exposed to chronic stress or trauma.) At the 60-year anniversary of the march on Washington and Reverend Martin Luther King’s *I Have a Dream* speech, it is particularly fitting that students from Morehouse College (Dr. King’s alma mater) and Spelman College will be trained to be the field co-producers of the new *Sankofa Chronicles* video documentaries and for leaders from these two prestigious colleges to collaborate in the development of a new emotionally and culturally transformative curriculum.

We propose implementing *Sankofa Chronicles* SEL curriculum in at least 60 classrooms during the 2025-26 school year and 120 classrooms in 2026-27 and 2027-28. NYC Public Schools is the largest district in the U.S. serving significant numbers of minority students. The NYC CUNY-Urban Assembly (CUNY) is one of the divisions within the NYC public schools. It includes 41 secondary schools, primarily high schools. In the CUNY high schools, 43% of the students are Black and 50% are Hispanic/Latinx and 90% are eligible for free or reduced price

lunches or Human Resources Administration benefits (see Appendix J). The APS student population is 73% Black and 9% Latinx (Georgia Department of Education, n.d.) and 45% of the students qualify for direct certification under the National School Lunch (NSL) program (see Appendix J). APS serves a city with the largest wealth disparity in the U.S. (cflargeratlanta.org, n.d.).

The CUNY and APS high schools included in the initial phases of this “Innovation and Research” program have been plagued by high suspension rates, low graduation rates, low test scores, and chronic absenteeism (schools.nyc.gov, n.d. & APS Department of Research and Evaluation, n.d.). In addition, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to have an impact on students' achievement and mental health.

### **National Significance of the Proposed Project**

Low student achievement, poor attendance, high suspension rates, and low graduation rates continue to plague our city schools. Further, many high school students feel many of their courses are not relevant to their lives or their futures (Belli, 2020 & Moeller, 2020). More recently, COVID-19 placed a spotlight on issues of students' mental health as well as teacher burnout. Estimates are that as many as 1 in 5 children experience a mental disorder each year and approximately 79% of children aged 6-17 have an unmet need for mental health services (OECD, 2015). Further, recent studies have reported that the percentage of “new” teachers leaving the field has increased to nearly 30%. This has led to teacher shortages, particularly in high needs districts (Shen, 2015), and research has found that the teacher burnout and shortages are having negative consequences for students (Sutcher, 2019).

As one tool to combat these challenges, SEL programs are now being implemented in many urban districts. However, the emotionally and culturally "transformative" potential of SEL

curriculum can be dramatically increased by integrating our nation's diverse historical and cultural "storytruths." Many urban educators have argued that we can even eventually "educate for justice" by implementing inspiring curriculum. In an essay published by the New York State Bar Association, Dr. Betty A. Rosa, Commissioner of Education and President of the University of the State of New York, tells the now-famous story, *Danger of a Single Story*, by Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Dr. Rosa writes about what happens "when complex human beings and situations are reduced to a single narrative" (Rosa, 2020). As Dr. Adelaine Sanford argues, "Culture is a critical component of any learning environment. There can be no excellence without cultural excellence... When we fail to teach about our students' cultural pasts, our children often become whatever someone else tells them they are" (Sanford, 2020). "Sankofa is a word in the Twi language of Ghana that refers to the Bono Adinkra symbol represented by a bird with its head turned backwards while its feet face forward carrying a precious egg in its mouth and is associated with the proverb, "It is not wrong to go back for that which you have forgotten" (Adjaye, 1990; Akoto, 1999).

Change, of course, first requires an awareness that change is needed. As John Kotter has argued, the manner in which you create this awareness can make a profound difference in your chances of success. Often we try to create change by debating the logical reasons changes are required, but Kotter concludes that approach simply doesn't work. He calls it the "*Analyze, Think, Change*" or "*all head, no heart*" approach (Kotter, 1995). Instead, he argues the process must be *See, Feel, Change*. For change to transform, **the problem must be made to feel real**. That is the power of *Sankofa Chronicles*. Through the emotionally and culturally transformative curriculum, challenges, needs, and relationships are made real.

As it relates to both SEL (AP4) and equity (CPP1), the relationship between children’s social and emotional health and academic success is well-documented (Taylor, et al., 2017). A growing research base shows that SEL development helps students enhance their academic tenacity and resilience and develop cognitive skills that allow them to fully engage in the curriculum (Durlak, et al., 2011). SEL development also reduces mental health challenges like depression, promotes prosocial behaviors, and helps students persevere academically and in life (Reeves, et al., 2014 & Stafford-Brizard, 2016). SEL supports are particularly important for children who have experienced trauma or toxic stress such as in low-income communities where poverty is a significant risk factor and linked with other risk factors such as housing instability, food instability, poor nutrition, and lack of adequate health care. These identified risk factors disproportionately affect children of color and low-income households where two-thirds of students reported feeling depressed, stressed, or anxious (Merikangas et al., 2010 & Alegria et al., 2010). This constellation of negative effects from societal inequities and tensions compounded by the COVID crisis creates an alarming predicament for our schools and teachers.

### **Program Innovation and Demonstration of New Strategies**

Kotter tells us that emotional connections are critical to learning (Kotter, 2012). Yet, research tells us that many high school students are bored and disengaged (Belli, 2020; Moeller, 2020). In addition, teacher recruitment, burnout, and turnover are increasingly daunting challenges (Shen, 2015; Sutchter, 2019). That is why the innovative *Sankofa Chronicles* SEL curriculum holds such great promise. Using a unique, evidence-based, storytelling strategy, producers will create short films (nine films) that address key themes (see Appendix J) and corresponding text resources to develop deeper understanding for high school youth: these themes provide opportunities to engage students in critical thinking, foster empathy, promote social awareness,

and empower them to contribute to positive societal change. Professional development can focus on equipping educators with the knowledge, resources, and teaching strategies to address these themes effectively in the classroom. It will involve exploring diverse historical perspectives, developing culturally responsive teaching practices, incorporating social-emotional learning strategies, and facilitating meaningful discussions on social justice and equity.

The *Sankofa Chronicles* will develop scalable strategies that address three of the most urgent educational problems: 1) inequities in access to engaging and powerful curricula that increase social competence; 2) the lack of SEL supports that amplify authentic learning; and 3) teacher burnout and inequities in the recruitment and retention of certified teachers, particularly in specific secondary content areas (Gallup, 2023).

## **B. Quality of the Project Design**

### **Quality of conceptual framework underlying the proposed activities**

CWK has been designated an “Effective Producer of Programs” by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and appears on ED’s What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) List (Page and D’Agostino, 2005). CWK’s Drug and Alcohol Prevention Program is on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Agency’s SAMHSA National Registry of Effective Programs and Practices (NREPP) as well as the New York Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) list of Effective programs (CWK, 2012).

The framework relies on the power of storytelling, emotion, and peer-to-peer interactions and uses the Mutual Aid methodology (Gitterman, 2004) and See-Feel-Change (Kotter, 2012) strategies to inspire positive behavior and motivate social action. The “see-feel-change” approach fuels action by sparking emotion and using the power of storytelling and peer-to-peer connections to create powerful associations (Kotter, 2012). John Kotter, author of *The Heart of*



*Change*, developed some of the strategies CWK incorporates in story-telling and video production techniques. CWK research further validates Kotter’s findings that behavior changes are more likely to occur through an emotional rather than “data-driven” process. When students or adults watch a compelling story through video, the experience creates an emotional impact that is far more likely to instigate behavior change than more traditional approaches. According to Kotter, he “discovered eons ago the power and the magic of using video to create the kind of emotional connection that enables behavior change” (Kotter, 2008).

The Mutual Aid method utilizes the power of one’s peer group as a vehicle for solving common problems (Shulman, 2011). The peer group provides a forum for trying out new behaviors; giving and receiving feedback; providing positive support; and learning to help and support others through the aid of a trusted adult. Through Mutual Aid, students discover that they are not alone in their thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Steinberg (2014) refers to these mutual supports as the “strength in numbers” phenomenon.

The *Sankofa Chronicles* documentary series will explore diverse diasporas to provide a culturally and emotionally responsive educational experience. This groundbreaking series will feature collaboration between CWK and Morehouse and Spelman Colleges. Their students will serve as field producers with the CWK production team in nine (9) different diaspora, connecting the diaspora stories with local HBCU students’ experiences and perceptions and university experts will collaborate in the development of an accompanying culturally responsive SEL curriculum.

The *Sankofa Chronicles* video series will serve as the foundation of rich SEL learning experiences for high school students. Visual stories create compelling and emotionally engaging experiences for viewers, evoking empathy, understanding, cultural appreciation, and social

awareness and fostering critical thinking. At the heart of *Sankofa Chronicles* curriculum lies the Sankofa philosophy, deeply rooted in African traditions. This guiding philosophy emphasizes the importance of retrieving wisdom from the past and using it to shape a better future.

CWK Network has developed a unique production strategy that infuses SEL strategies into the filmmaking process to unlock deeper meaning within the stories which offer profound insights into social issues, personal struggles, triumphs, and the complexities of life. The *Sankofa Chronicles* multimedia curriculum will extend beyond the high school curriculum to include professional development digital video series for educators and programs for parents (e.g., online digital educational resources). These additional resources will empower educators with the knowledge and tools to effectively implement the curricula in their classrooms. The programs for parents will create opportunities for family engagement, fostering a sense of connection, and encouraging dialogue. The curricula, training resources, and parent programs collectively shape a comprehensive approach to education that celebrates diversity and promotes personal and social change.

The power of video and technology provides greater opportunities for positive behavior change. Research shows that children and adults who emotionally connect with an experience are more likely to make a life-long behavioral change than those who simply received information about that experience (Davis, 2020). Video is an emotional medium and an excellent vehicle for allowing students to connect to the experiences of other people and their own cultural narratives.

### **Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes**

Sankofa Chronicles will accomplish five goals as detailed in Table 1.

<b>TABLE 1. PROJECT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND OUTCOME MEASURES</b>
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<b>Goal 1: Development: Transformative SEL curricula enhanced by integrating cultural and emotive “storytruths” in the form of video content produced by CWK, students from Morehouse and Spelman Colleges, and MLK Sr. Community Resources Collaborative (MLKCRC).</b>
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Objective	Activities	Dates	People Responsible	Measures
1.1 In collaboration with CWK and MLKSRCRC, Morehouse and Spelman College students produce transformative Sankofa Chronicles videos relevant to students living in diverse urban communities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CWK will train Morehouse and Spelman College students to become field video producers.</li> <li>CWK will meet bi-weekly with Morehouse and Spelman students to provide support and advice on field production.</li> <li>Morehouse and Spelman students, in collaboration with CWK, will conduct video productions in nine selected diaspora.</li> <li>Morehouse and Spelman professors/scholars will meet monthly with CWK and MLKSRCRC to plan, write curriculum, and integrate the Sankofa videos with the CWK platform and curriculum.</li> </ol>	January 2024 - June 2025	CWK, MLKSRCRC, leaders from Morehouse and Spelman Colleges.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalized Sankofa Chronicles videos</li> <li>Operational Draft of Sankofa Chronicles SEL platform and curriculum.</li> </ol>

**Goal 2: Increase student’s and teachers’ social and emotional competencies by implementing the Sankofa Chronicles (SC) SEL curriculum with fidelity in high-needs high school classes.**

**Goal 3: Increase student’s academic achievement and improve prosocial behavior by implementing the Sankofa Chronicles (SC) SEL curriculum with fidelity.**

Objective	Activities	Dates	People Responsible	Measures
2.1 Increase teachers’ teachers’ SEL competencies.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MLKSRCRC, UA, and CWK leaders will meet bi-weekly to develop, plan, and refine the implementation with local adaptation.</li> </ol>	Jan. 2024 - June 2028	MLKSRCRC, UA, and CWK leads	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting agendas/ notes</li> <li>Signed MOUs and consent forms</li> <li>Training attendance records</li> </ol>
2.2 Prior to implementation (summer), teachers who lead advisory classes will receive at least 14 hours of training to implement SC.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruit schools and teachers for the impact study.</li> <li>Experienced SEL trainers and coaches conduct training and coaching.</li> <li>Training is provided for all teachers and administrators in the selected schools and classrooms.</li> </ol>	Jan. - May 2025 June - July 2025	UA (NYC) and MLKSRCRC (APS)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher surveys, meeting agendas</li> <li>SEL competencies surveys for teachers and students</li> </ol>
2.3 Participating teachers will integrate the nine SC units into their advisory	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MLKSRCRC, UA, and CWK teams will meet with school-based teams bi-weekly to refine the model to meet local needs.</li> <li>MLKSRCRC and EE will conduct quarterly reviews</li> </ol>	June 2025 - June 2028	MLKSRCRC and UA  MLKSRCRC and EE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily attendance improves by 3% each year for student groups with lower attendance).</li> </ol>

period (expected 4 days per week, 20 minutes per day).	<p>which will include assessments of teachers completing lessons, the number of lessons completed, and the number of teachers participating in training and quarterly coaching.</p> <p>7. Students will participate in a range of activities to ensure depth of understanding (e.g., debates, role-playing, discussions, field trips, peer teaching, guest speakers, multimedia presentations, research projects, and reflective writing).</p>	Sept.2025 - June 2026	MLKSRCRC and CWK	<p>7. Referrals and Suspension rates decrease by 3% each year for student groups with historically disproportionate rates.</p> <p>8. Increase graduation rates by 3% per year.</p> <p>9. Increase student achievement as measured by state tests by 3% each year.</p>
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**Goal 4: Year 4-5 scale-up of Sankofa Chronicles (SC) SEL curriculum within selected schools and plan for new schools and districts.**

Objective	Activities	Dates	People Responsible	Measures
<p>4.1 Scale-up SC within the initial CUNY and APS schools.</p> <p>4.2 Finalize guides, manuals, video platform, and training materials.</p> <p>4.3 Utilize local and national distribution networks to recruit new teachers, schools, and districts</p>	<p>1. Support for trainer of trainer activities within schools - SC teams will meet with school-based teams monthly to refine the model to meet local needs.</p> <p>2. Codify the Sankofa Chronicles components – including manuals, videos, policy briefs, and hands-on guidance regarding leadership strategies, training, curriculum implementation so they can be replicated with fidelity.</p> <p>3. An implementation guidebook will be developed in accordance with the Sankofa Chronicles model and the validated program parameters .</p> <p>4. We will share these resources as well as insights gleaned during the implementation process through an online resource center that includes how-to guides, articles, and other resources.</p> <p>5. Online family and community resources will also be developed.</p> <p>6. Apply lessons learned during implementation by directly communicating with principals</p>	<p>Sept. - Dec.2026</p> <p>September 2026 - December 2028</p>	<p>MLKSRCRC, UA, CWK</p> <p>MLKSRCRC and CWK</p>	<p>1. Identify additional schools, grades, and districts ready to implement the refined Sankofa Chronicles SEL curriculum</p>

	and teachers in participating schools.			
<b>Goal 5: By implementing the Sankofa Chronicles (SC) SEL curriculum with fidelity, the school climate and culture will improve as perceived by both teachers and students.</b>				
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>People Responsible</b>	<b>Measures</b>
5.1 SC will improve the communication, SEL skills, empathy, attitudes, and behaviors of students and teachers within the schools as a whole.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. MLKSRCRC, UA, and CWK leaders will meet bi-weekly to develop, plan, and refine the implementation with local adaptation.</li> <li>2. MLKSRCRC, UA, and CWK teams will meet with school-based teams at least bi-weekly to develop and refine the model to meet local needs.</li> <li>3. Students and teachers will participate in a range of activities to ensure depth of understanding (e.g., debates, group discussions, field trips, peer teaching, role-playing, guest speakers, Socratic seminars, multimedia presentations, research projects, and reflective writing).</li> </ol>	<p>January 2024 - June 2028</p> <p>January 2025 - January 2028</p> <p>September 2025 - June 2028</p>	<p>MLKSRCRC, UA, and CWK leaders</p> <p>UA (NYC), MLKSRCRC (APS)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Climate Surveys</li> <li>2. Teacher turnover</li> <li>3. Teacher interviews</li> </ol>

**Appropriately address needs of the target population or other identified needs**

On the one hand, our cities are the greatest cultural melting pots in the world. On the other, low achievement, low graduation rates, poor attendance, and high suspension rates have a long intergenerational history in our urban schools. In addition, teacher recruitment, burnout, and turnover is an increasingly daunting challenge. Many city schools have turned to SEL as a strategy to address these issues. Yet, many experts argue that for these programs to change lives, they must tap emotional and cultural roots that are not currently present in most high school curriculum. That is why the innovative *Sankofa Chronicles* SEL curriculum holds such great promise and why the collaboration of the video production experts of CWK, MLKSRCRC, Morehouse and Spelman Colleges, and NYC CUNY and APS high schools are such ideal partnerships.

*Sankofa Chronicles* recognizes social emotional skills as a conduit to promote a positive school climate (Wang et al., 2020). When school staff are well-versed in social emotional skills, students and teachers have the potential to prevent misunderstandings and de-escalate conflicts before they reach a level warranting disciplinary action.

Today's urban public school students come from all over the world. Still, they have more in common than most are aware. The *Sankofa Chronicles* SEL curriculum will highlight those commonalities. In addition, most urban high school students have little awareness of the cultural histories of their communities. By building a program around stories from diverse diaspora, the *Sankofa Chronicles* curriculum will engage students intellectually and emotionally in strategies promoting mutual respect and understanding, justice, personal growth, and CASEL's five core competencies – self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, social awareness, and relationship skills (CASEL, n.d.).

A critical component of the *Sankofa Chronicles* is the emotive impact the curriculum holds. As John Kotter argues, the change approach must be "*See, Feel, Change.*" For change to transform, the problem must be made to feel real. Through the *Sankofa Chronicles* culturally responsive curriculum, student, family, and teacher challenges, needs, and relationships are made real. At the same time, a focus on SEL development also reduces mental health challenges like depression, promotes prosocial behaviors, and helps students persevere both in academics and in life (Reeves, et al., 2014 & Stafford-Brizard, 2016).

*Sankofa Chronicles*' innovative approach also emphasizes the Mutual Aid method to utilize the power of one's peer group as a vehicle for solving common problems (Shulman, 2011). The peer group provides a forum for trying out new behaviors; giving and receiving feedback; providing positive support; and learning to help and support both students' and teacher's social

emotional competence. Representative activities would include peer teaching, debates, role-playing, group discussions, and group presentations and research. This is an optimal moment for an investment in *Sankofa Chronicles* given the widespread challenges districts are having filling teaching positions, particularly in high needs districts (Shen, 2015). Through weekly SEL activities and professional development, the *Sankofa Chronicles* partners provide the tools for decreasing disciplinary practices and creating a sustainable model for equity within the school community.

That is the power of *Sankofa Chronicles* SEL curriculum. Through the emotionally and culturally transformative curriculum, student, family, and teacher challenges, needs, and relationships are made real.

### **C. Quality of the Project Personnel**

#### **Qualifications of key project personnel**

The project team members' skills complement each other to provide the content knowledge, analytic skills, and expertise in implementation in school settings necessary to deliver the outcomes needed for project success. As lead agency, MLKSRCRC is committed to ensuring equal access to and treatment of individuals that have traditionally been underrepresented. Our hiring processes continue to include active recruitment of a diverse workforce. Currently 100% of MLKSRCRC employees are from traditionally underrepresented groups. Resumes of key personnel from the project team (see Appendix B) provide detailed information about their experience and competence in grant management, SEL curriculum design, documentary production, evaluation, and resource dissemination.

**Table 2** outlines the key personnel and responsibilities throughout the timeline of the Sankofa Chronicles partnership. Supporting staff are listed in the budget justifications.

**TABLE 2. PERSONNEL AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

<b>LEADERSHIP TEAM</b>	
<p>█████ ██████ Executive Director, MLK Sr. Community Resources Collaborative</p>	<p>The MLKSRCRC, in collaboration with the CWK, APS, and CUNY, (see letter of support in Appendix C) will oversee all aspects of the project, including training and coaching school staff; monitoring project fidelity; overseeing the continuous improvement process; and working with the independent evaluation team.</p> <p>█████ ██████ MHA serves as the Executive Director for the Martin Luther King Sr. Community Resources Collaborative (Collaborative), located in the “Historic King District,” Atlanta, Georgia. The Collaborative is an alliance of national and local non-profit organizations focused on eradicating poverty and hopelessness in Atlanta's "Old Fourth Ward" and "Sweet Auburn” community. ██████ is charged with the responsibility of fostering a strong network of free and low-cost wrap-around community services, via local, state, and national partners, to the underserved and disenfranchised residents with a national scaling strategy. She has secured and managed multiple millions of dollars from government contracts, corporate donors, and philanthropic foundations. Prior to leading the Collaborative, she held leadership roles for notable organizations such as the Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America (NACA) where she served as the COO and Governmental Affairs Liaison and at the Medical College of Georgia as Assistant Vice President.</p>
<p>█████ ██████ Chief Executive Officer, The Urban Assembly</p>	<p>Provide <i>Sankofa Chronicles</i> SEL training to all selected NYC teachers and administrators. The UA currently provides professional development and support to 23 NYC public high schools.</p> <p>Created the Resilient Scholars Program (RSP), a unique approach to integrating SEL into curriculum. Led the expansion of UA into a model provider of school support, serving schools in Los Angeles, Houston, and other cities. Sits on the board of CASEL and is an author of <i>The Educator’s Practical Guide to Emotional Intelligence</i>, and a co-author of the <i>Challenges to Integrating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Programs in Organizations</i>.</p>
<p>█████ ██████ CWK Chief Executive Officer and Co-founder</p>	<p>Oversee the program implementation design and coordinate all video production and digital platform content development.</p> <p>For over two decades, she has used the power of storytelling to help improve the social and emotional issues that change the lives of children and families. ██████ produces award-winning documentaries, including <i>Defining Us</i>, that elevate the voices of courageous students, teachers, and families who are creating positive social change particularly in marginalized populations. She also oversees the implementation of digital educational resources to improve SEL and student mental health in schools under a 2022 EIR grant.</p>
<p>█████ ██████ Morehouse College</p>	<p>█████ ██████ will provide relevant content knowledge and historical perspective during curriculum development. He will consult on story lines, resources development, and reviewing materials to ensure cultural responsiveness. He will also curate and advise on appropriate measures to be used during the evaluation activities.</p> <p>█████ ██████ is the Greenhouse, Innovation and Sustainability Director for Morehouse College. He has worked as an educator, public health researcher, analytical chemist, and consultant for nearly two decades. He is also the CEO of a leading</p>



	sustainability and innovation organization, Core2Globe. [REDACTED] attended Morehouse College and Emory’s Rollins School of Public Health. He has gained experience in various environmental and public health research projects at several universities and institutions.
[REDACTED] Spelman College	[REDACTED] will provide relevant content knowledge and historical perspective during curriculum development. She will consult on story lines, resources development, and reviewing materials to ensure cultural responsiveness. She will also curate and advise on appropriate measures to be used during the evaluation activities.  [REDACTED] earned her Ph.D. from Georgia State University where she developed a passion for research and teaching in higher education. Currently, Department Chair and an Associate Professor in the Education Department at Spelman College, she takes great pride in teaching and mentoring students, preparing them for professions in education. With expertise in education and psychology, her research has focused on the social practices and cognitive processes underlying young children's reading development and cultivating literacy partnerships between families and teachers. She has worked with local schools and nonprofits to conduct research and implement family literacy programming and workshops.
[REDACTED] CWK Educator in Chief	Supervise the direction, creation and refinement of the Sankofa Chronicles SEL curriculum, training, and all related educational components to ensure optimal alignment; liaison with all partners to ensure seamless integration of workflow. [REDACTED] has successfully led the implementation of SEL, Mental Health, Equity and Academic initiatives at both the school and district level; currently, she serves as the education lead on a similar EIR 2022 study.
[REDACTED] CWK Project Lead	Manage project implementation; monitor progress toward objectives; update curriculum, training, and coaching materials; direct point of contact with the curriculum writers, serve on the team as a writer and editor of both core and supplementary resources; serve as the CWK point of contact with lead partner.  [REDACTED] has led school-district grant initiatives (see resumes in Appendix B) in the local, state, and federal arena for over 10 years. Each year, he supports approximately \$10-18 million in grant funding. He is currently implementing an EIR 2022 grant initiative.
<b>INDEPENDENT EVALUATION TEAM</b>	
[REDACTED] PI of the independent impact evaluation	Direct the experimental design and analysis. Supervise all reporting and contribute to the writing and dissemination of the report (see resumes in Appendix B and the key personnel section in the budget justification). [REDACTED] has a history of collaborative relationships (including with CWK), and experience working with school districts to address SEL and student achievement (see paragraph 1 in Section E for EE’s experience).
[REDACTED] VP of research operations	Manage and oversee compliance issues, communication with the leadership team and participating schools, data aggregation processes, reporting, and dissemination activities. Her 15 years of experience working in this capacity are in Appendix B.
[REDACTED] Research Manager	Communicate and obtain agreements with the district and school; Submit IRB materials; Manage data collection activities; Conduct descriptive analysis; Draft reports; and disseminate results. [REDACTED] is the researcher on a similar study with CWK, funded by an EIR 2022 grant.

## D. Quality of the Management Plan

### Timeline and Milestones

The expertise and experience of the partners will ensure that the project will be implemented on timeline and within budget limitations. Effective and efficient management of the project is enhanced through several key components: (a) specific, measurable objectives and expected outcomes, (b) specific activities and team responsible, (c) milestones and timelines for beginning and completing of objectives, (d) previously established relationships with the school districts, and (e) utilization of web-based task-tracking software (Asana).

MLKSRCRC will oversee the entire project, develop the work plan, and regularly communicate with the independent evaluator (EE) and the two implementation leads. CWK will manage the integration of the new diaspora stories into the CWK SEL curriculum and digital platform. The project team, using a Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) approach, will meet bi-weekly internally and with school-based stakeholders to develop, implement, and adjust strategies (Bryk et al., 2015).

Quantitative and qualitative data (collected as frequently as quarterly) will provide performance feedback to assess implementation fidelity, determine how to scale up the intervention, and explore how well the *Sankofa Chronicles* program meets programmatic goals.

**Table 3** outlines the *Sankofa Chronicles* SEL management plan, timelines, and milestones.

<b>TABLE 3. MANAGEMENT PLAN, TIMELINE, AND MILESTONES</b>		
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Who</b>
Facilitate bi-weekly meetings with Leadership Team	Jan.2024- Dec.2028	All partner leads
<b>Development (January 2024 - December 2024)</b>		
Recruit eighteen college students (nine pairs) for the field production teams.	March-May 2024	MLKSRCRC, CWK, Morehouse, and Spelman
Establish MOUs and research approvals with CUNY & APS schools	March-May 2024	EE

Filming and field production with the CWK video production team meeting regularly with the partners to set priorities, begin the curriculum mapping process, and ensure the project stays on schedule.	June-August 2024	CWK, Morehouse, and Spelman
Video production will move to post-production and CWK curriculum team begins to create a framework for units and lesson development.	Sept. - Dec. 2024	CWK
MLKRCRC will collaborate with Morehouse and Spelman to develop online digital resources for families.	Sept. - Dec. 2024	MLKSRRCRC
<b>Development &amp; Implementation (January 2024 - December 2025)</b>		
Schools are recruited to join Sankofa Chronicles study (district leads meet with school principals to gauge interest).	Jan. - March 2025	UA, MLKSRRCRC, CUNY, EE
Lesson development is completed in collaboration between CWK, APS, and CUNY and training, communication, and implementation plan is developed.	Jan.-May 2025	CWK and CUNY
Project team will hold webinars for principals and teachers, outlining goals of project and study; EE will collect consent and baseline survey data from teachers	April-June 2025	UA, MLKSRRCRC, CUNY, EE
Collect baseline data from districts including student demographic, academic and behavioral records for participating schools/teachers	May 2025	EE
Randomly assign teachers who lead advisory periods to <i>Sankofa Chronicles</i> or serving as the waitlist control group (once class rosters set)	Summer 2025	EE
UA conducts <i>Sankofa Chronicles</i> SEL curriculum training for initial cohort of teachers in CUNY	Summer 2025	UA
MLKSRRCRC conducts <i>Sankofa Chronicles</i> SEL curriculum training for initial cohort of teachers in APS	Summer 2025	MLKSRRCRC
Develop online digital family resources	Aug. 2024 - Aug. 2025	MLKSRRCRC
Collect data for implementation, process, and cost studies (including quarterly surveys of participating teachers and interviews with key stakeholders)	Aug. - Dec. 2025	EE
<b>Implementation &amp; Randomized Control Trial (Fall 2025 - Spring 2026)</b>		
Implementation of <i>Sankofa Chronicles</i> SEL curriculum during advisory period	Sept. 2025 - June 2026	APS and CUNY schools
Complete student baseline measures of SEL competencies	Sept. - Oct. 2025	APS and CUNY schools
Conduct PDSA cycles internally and with school staff on a regular basis.	Sept. 2025 - June 2026	EE, UA, MLKSRRCRC, APS, CUNY
Facilitate quarterly coaching and support to teachers for <i>Sankofa Chronicles</i> SEL curriculum (once per quarter)	Sept. 2025 - June 2026	MLKSRRCRC, UA, and CWK
Collect data for implementation, process, and cost studies (including quarterly surveys of participating teachers and interviews with key stakeholders)	Sept. 2025 - May 2026	EE
Complete student and teacher measures of SEL competencies (outcomes)	March - May 2026	APS and CUNY schools

Collect outcomes data from districts (student academic and behavioral outcomes)	May - July 2026	EE
Analyze outcomes from implementation and impact studies and begin dissemination	July - Aug. 2026	EE
Expand and train new CUNY and/or APS teachers (for year 4) including teachers that were waitlisted during RCT.	June-July 2026	CWK
Finalize digital family resources online	Aug. 2026 - June 2027	MLKSRRCRC
Begin work to create implementation guides with staff and plan for scalability	Jan. - July 2026	MLKSRRCRC, CWK
<b>Implementation (Fall 2026 - Spring 2027)</b>		
Continue to refine Sankofa Chronicles curriculum based on RCT results	Sept. - Dec. 2026	MLKSRRCRC, CWK
Implement Sankofa Chronicles curriculum at year 4 cohort schools	Sept. 2026 - June 2027	CUNY and APS
Revise implementation guides with staff and plan for scalability	Sept. 2026 - June 2027	MLKSRRCRC, CWK
Communicate impact and implementation results to community and school stakeholders	Sept. - Dec. 2026	EE and MLKSRRCRC
Conduct PDSA cycles internally and with school staff on a regular basis.	Sept. 2026 - June 2027	EE, UA, MLKSRRCRC, APS, CUNY
Work with schools to determine train the trainer model and how to sustain implementation and scale-up to other schools and districts	June-July 2027	CWK and CUNY
<b>Implementation &amp; Scaling (Fall 2027 - Spring 2028)</b>		
Implement Sankofa Chronicles curriculum in year 5 cohort schools and classrooms	Sept. 2027 - June 2028	CUNY and APS
Finalize guidebooks and implementation support for individual schools	Sept. 2027 - June 2028	MLKSRRCRC, CWK
Schools train new teachers themselves - trainer of trainers	June-July 2028	CUNY and APS
Disseminate year 4 results to stakeholders.	Sept. - Dec. 2027	EE and MLKSRRCRC
Conduct PDSA cycles internally and with school staff on a regular basis.	Sept. 2027 - June 2028	EE, UA, MLKSRRCRC, APS, CUNY
Assess strategies and options for scaling up the Sankofa Chronicles, cost analysis, and further program refinement	Jan. - July 2028	MLKSRRCRC, CWK, EE
Deliver final report to the Department of Education	Summer 2028	MLKSRRCRC, EE, CWK
<b>Scaling (Fall 2028 - December 2028)</b>		
Finalize report and disseminate to stakeholders	Aug. - Dec. 2028	MLKSRRCRC, EE, CWK
The Sankofa Chronicles will be an open-source platform. Implementation guidebooks will be shared with interested stakeholders (schools, districts, etc.)	Aug. - Dec. 2028	CWK
Funding ends for grant and schools implement on their own autonomy	Aug. - Dec. 2028	All partner leads

## **Cost Rationale**

CWK has a 20+ year history of developing multimedia content to media and education markets. The company is partnering with the districts, Morehouse, and Spelman to build the model, scale the impact, and produce corresponding affordable products and services that can scale nationwide. The national documentary series drives traffic to the Sankofa Chronicles portal where educators, community leaders, parents, teachers, and child advocates can license short-form videos and related educational resources through a national digital platform. Costs to develop that platform are highest in year one due to the need to develop foundational content for the platform. Those costs decrease significantly in outer years. As the film library, corresponding educational resources, and distribution expands, economies of scale improve. This allows students, families, and teachers nationwide to access materials from a central platform. Subscription pricing to access the digital platform ranges from \$12.99 per month for individual membership to \$139.99 for individual annual membership. Group pricing ranges from \$500 to \$2,000 per school/organization based on a pricing grid that provides volume discounts. For a pricing model that assumes 500 students per school, the cost per student is approximately \$1.00 to \$4.00 per student after development and research costs are completed.

Although we focus on costs in relation to immediate impacts on student and teacher outcomes, research suggests that academic and socio-emotional benefits will extend beyond the life of the grant through improved educational and occupational attainment (Durlak et al., 2011), especially considering that strong academic and SEL skills can be a gateway to college or better paying careers (Wang et al., 2020). For example, two years of improved academic achievement and social emotional outcomes can translate into almost \$1 million of additional lifetime earnings for a bachelor's degree and \$400,000 for an associate's degree (Carnevale et al., 2011).

For districts who already have SEL leadership in place to provide support and training to schools, the costs are minimal (e.g., stipends for summer training). Costs are not only minimal but, today, the opportunity costs of not implementing effective SEL programs are unacceptably high as stress and mental health are major concerns for both students and teachers. Although we focus on costs in relation to immediate impacts on student and teacher outcomes, prior research suggests that academic and socio-emotional benefits will extend beyond the life of the grant through improved educational and occupational attainment (Durlak et al., 2011), especially considering that strong academic and SEL skills can be a gateway to college or better paying careers (Wang et al., 2020). The project also provides benefits to future cohorts of students through training teachers to be more effective at managing student behaviors and better at establishing positive teacher-student relationships.

Lastly, the project will improve the *Sankofa Chronicles* SEL model's efficiency and productivity through EE's independent evaluation: impact study, implementation study, cost study, and feedback cycles. EE will use the "ingredients method" (Levin et al., 2017) and CostOut (Hollands et al., 2015) to synthesize costs of various specified program ingredients and calculate total and per-participant costs, as well as the cost effectiveness ratio. This will involve calculating the annual per-student direct cost and the incremental full resource cost, compared to the business-as-usual program. For guidance, we will consult with the assistance offered through the "Cost Effectiveness in Practice" project funded through IES (Teachers College, n.d.).

### **E. Quality of the Project Evaluation**

**Empirical Education Inc. (Empirical)** will lead a 3-part independent evaluation of *Sankofa Chronicles* (SC) adhering to SEER Standards (i.e., SEER1–9) ([IES, 2022](#)). The evaluation includes (1) An Impact Evaluation of SC using a randomized experiment designed to WWC 5.0

Standards without reservations ([WWC, 2022](#)) and ESSA Tier 1 ([IES, n.d.](#)), which will be registered in [REES](#) (SEER1); (2) An Iterative Process Study, with rapid-cycle feedback to support **MLK Sr Community Resources Centers (MLKSRCRC)** in conjunction with **Connect With Kids (CWK) Network's** ongoing program development and eventual scaling and replication (SEER9), and that includes a cost effectiveness study (SEER6) to inform program scalability; (3) A Study of Fidelity of Implementation (FOI) of key components relative to established thresholds (SEER4&5).

Empirical has conducted over 50 rigorous impact, formative, and process evaluations, including IES, SEED, i3/EIR, and NCEE-funded evaluations (e.g., a statewide WWC-standard-aligned RCT with 700 public schools randomized). PI has recent peer-reviewed articles on experimental methods (see CVs for Empirical researchers in Appendix B). Empirical has been an independent evaluator for 10 years in Atlanta-area districts, including **APS**, involved in this study. The evaluation timeline is displayed in Table 4.

<b>TABLE 4. TIMELINE OF KEY EVALUATION ACTIVITIES</b>
<b>Jan-July 2024:</b> Support MLKSRCRC in refining overarching Theory of Change and Logic Model for <b>SC</b> , using Logical Frameworks, articulation of core indicators, change catalysts, critical assumptions, context, causal effects (Lemire et al., 2023). Participate in monthly meetings with EIR TA provider throughout the project.
<b>Aug 2024-July 2025:</b> Provide formative feedback to program developers about the Morehouse and Spelman college students field production experiences to support curriculum/PL development with a view to impact evaluation the following year. Develop impact/implementation study plan and pre-register on REES. Recruit RCT schools and teachers and collect baseline data.
<b>Aug 2025- July 2026:</b> Randomly assign 60 advisory classes from eight schools to <b>SC</b> or waitlist condition. Conduct implementation and impact studies (lasting one school year). Apply two PDSA cycles. Conduct cost study. Deliver annual Interim Report to program developers.
<b>Aug 2026- July 2027:</b> Analyze, report, and disseminate implementation and impact studies. Update REES. Conduct interviews with key stakeholders to continue theory development (Lemire et al., 2023) and identify catalysis of and barriers to implementation. Conduct two PDSA cycles and study potential for program scale-up [Coburn's (2003) dimensions] with view to Mid-Phase EIR grant. Deliver annual Interim Report to MLKSRCRC.

**Aug 2027- July 2028:** Continue evaluation activities with focus on dissemination (webinars, blogs, ed. research conferences, presentations and Q&A’s in participating schools and district, and journal submissions [JREE]); Summarize methods/results to key university and district/school partners.

**July 2028- Dec 2028** Complete evaluation of potential for future direction in program development and implementation (with a view to a Mid-Phase EIR). Deliver final report. Update REES.

**Rigorous Impact Evaluation That Meets WWC 5.0 Standards Without Reservations**

Each teacher in participating high schools (CUNY and APS) has exactly one advisory class. We will randomly assign teachers, with advisory, (described below) to address the following confirmatory and exploratory research questions. They address the intermediate and long-term outcomes from SC’s logic model in Appendix G. Each question follows this format: the outcome domain (*WWC 5.0 Topic Area Protocol*) (*source*) (*outcome measure scale with reliability*) (*Minimum Detectable Impact (MDI)*). MDI is given for confirmatory analyses only, is the minimum magnitude of impact that is detectable with 80% power, assuming Type-1 error rate 5%, a 2-tailed test, the available sample size, and specific settings of other parameters The power analysis is in Appendix J.

TABLE 5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR SANKOFA CHRONICLES
<b>Confirmatory Research Questions for <i>Sankofa Chronicles</i></b>
<p>Is there a positive Intent-To-Treat (ITT) impact of SC (relative to business-as-usual) after one year of implementation on the following <u>student outcomes</u>?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Social-emotional (SE) competence (composite) (teacher-rated) (<i>Mental Health</i>) (<i>Survey Instrument</i>) (<i>DESSA-HSE SEC, <math>\alpha = .98</math></i>) (<i>MDI = .21SD</i>)</li> <li>2. Chronic absenteeism (at school) (<i>Absenteeism</i>) (<i>District administrative records</i>) (<i>MDI=5.0%, from 18.6% to 13.6%</i>)</li> <li>3. Suspension rate (at school) (<i>Student Discipline</i>) (<i>District administrative records: one or more suspensions</i>) (<i>MDI=2.5%, from 5.0% to 2.5%</i>)</li> </ol>
<b>Exploratory Research Questions for <i>Sankofa Chronicles</i></b>
<p><u>Additional impacts</u> (“exploratory”, therefore MDI not reported). Is there a positive impact of SC on the following <u>student outcomes</u>?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Student end of year achievement (<i>Academic Achievement preK-12</i>) (<i>District Assessments</i>) (<i>NWEA MAP in Math and ELA assessment in grades 9-11, <math>\alpha = .80-.92</math></i>)</li> </ol>



5. Individual SE competencies (teacher-rated and student-rated): self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship skills, relationship skills, personal responsibility, decision making, goal-directed behavior, optimistic thinking? (*Mental Health*) (*Survey Instrument*) (*DESSA-HSE subscales,  $\alpha = .85-.92$* )
6. Culturally responsive and relevant experiences in the classroom: Given the focus of *Sankofa Chronicles* and the proposed mechanism of impact on SEL via culturally relevant content for students, researchers will work with experts from Morehouse and Spelman to curate existing/co-develop new instruments to address this construct (no aligned valid/reliable instruments were found in search during proposal writing)
7. Disciplinary office referrals (*Student Discipline*) (*District administrative records*)

Additional impacts (mediators). Is there a positive impact of SC on the following teacher outcomes:

8. Positive relationship with students (*Survey*) (*Teacher-Student Relationship Inventory;  $\alpha = .84 - .91$* ).
9. Teacher burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, increased personal accomplishment) (*Teacher well-being*) (*Survey*) (*Maslach Burnout Inventory for Educators,  $\alpha = .71 - .90$* )
10. SEL competencies (*Teacher well-being*) (*Survey*) (*Social-Emotional Competence Teacher Rating Scale (SECTRS),  $\alpha = .69-.88$* )

Mediation and moderation of impacts:

10. Is impact on achievement mediated by students' (a) increased SEL competence, (b) increased attendance, (c) reduction in suspension rate? It is mediated by teacher-level mediators (7 – 9, above?); Are confirmatory impacts on students (Q's 1-3) mediated through impacts on culturally responsive/relevant experiences (see 6 above).
11. Differential (subgroup) impacts (SEER3): Is there a differential impact of SC on student and teacher outcomes based on baseline characteristics, including gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, LEP status, baseline number of suspensions (students) and years of teacher experience and teacher baseline SE competencies (teachers)? Also by location APS vs CUNY? Is there impact of SC for subgroups implied by moderators (for continuous moderators subgroups will be formed by splitting sample at median)?

## Recruitment, Design and Impact Analysis

**Sample sizes:** We will randomly assign 60 CUNY and APS teachers who lead advisory classes, within eight high schools, to SC or BAU. Each teacher has exactly one advisory class with 20 students on average. Impact analysis will be 54 teachers and 18 students/class post-attrition) [ESSA Tier1 compliant with >2 sites and >350 students]. **Recruitment:** Letters of support are in Appendix C. In spring prior to the RCT, the MLKSRCRC, UA, and CWK leads will meet with superintendents/principals in APS and CUNY to select a purposive sample of schools to share the project overview and address questions. Principals will provide recruitment information to teachers. Then MLKSRCRC, UA, CWK and Empirical will host several in-person/Zoom

meetings to recruit teachers, provide a program overview, and explain compensation for completion of data collection activities. At this “informed consent meeting,” teachers will learn about the waitlist design and compensation, and those interested will sign up for the study and take the baseline survey (QR code offered to those who want to take it later). **Power analysis:** We power the study for confirmatory analysis with available samples of teachers and students and show that the resulting MDES/MDI are within plausible range for impacts. Assuming the sample sizes above, 80% power, Type-1 error rate 5%, specific values of the ICC, R-squared and other parameters (based on empirical research cited in Appendix J), the MDES/MDIs are listed with research questions above. Full details of power analysis are in Appendix J. **Outcomes:** Scale reliabilities are listed with the research questions above. Additional details are provided in Appendix J. **Randomization.** Randomization of teachers (with corresponding advisory class) will be conducted shortly after advisory class rosters are established (in late summer 2025). Randomization will be of teachers within-school, and will be conducted in matched pairs informed by grade level and class averages of student characteristics (e.g., past suspension rates) (using blockTools package in R). **Validity Assurance/Monitoring/Safeguards:** The randomized design is designed to meet WWC 5.0 standards without reservations and ESSA Tier 1 evidence. Safeguards to assure validity of results include: (a) limiting potential for attrition of teachers through appropriate stipends and offering the program to waitlisted participants; (b) establishing advisory rosters before random assignment, or, if not possible, evaluators will cooperate with district admins to establish a firewall process so that assigning students to rosters is blinded to knowledge of teacher assignment status; (c) contamination is limited by virtue of program activities /material / implementation not being easily shared outside treatment classes, and teachers having just one advisory; (d) limiting “compensatory rivalry” or “demoralization”

(Shadish et al., 2002) through waitlisting; (e) assessing risk of bias by monitoring overall and differential attrition of teachers (for teacher outcomes), as well as for students among non-attriting teachers as per WWC 5.0, ([WWC, 2022](#), Chapter III), (f) evaluating baseline equivalence (for randomized and analytic samples) on pre-intervention measures of the outcome variable, or other outcomes as per WWC 5.0 ([WWC, 2022](#), p. 53-63) –each baseline covariate is regressed against a 0/1 indicator of random assignment status, with random error terms for blocks, teachers, (and students, for student outcomes), with the regression-adjusted difference in average outcomes expressed in the pooled standard deviation of the outcome variable (and with use of LOR Cox, for dichotomous and ordinal outcomes); (g) registering all relevant information (SEER1) to support generalization and scaling (SEER8&9), and replication as per causal replication framework (Steiner et al., 2019), and for transparency of process (SEER2); (h) evaluating via moderator analysis whether impacts are equitably distributed across important subgroups (SEER3); (i) assessing impacts using high-quality measures (SEER7) that meet reliability criteria (per WWC 5.0), (listed under Research Questions above and described fully in Appendix J). **Impact Analysis:** ITT impacts will be estimated using hierarchical linear models (HLM) (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002; Singer, 1998) for cluster randomized trials (Bloom et al., 1999, 2005). (HLMs are specified in Appendix J.) The distribution of each scale (e.g., normal or ordinal) will be determined in order to select the most appropriate model. Impacts will be assessed simultaneously across grade levels, with continuous outcomes z-transformed within grade, where necessary. The benchmark impact model will include random effects at levels of randomized blocks, teachers (and students for student-level outcomes), and a dummy variable for treatment status. Covariates will be included at the teacher level (e.g., baseline survey responses, teacher-level averages of advisory students’ prior achievement, attendances, suspensions), and

for analysis of student outcomes, also at the student level (e.g., demographics, attendance, number of suspensions from the year prior). Whenever possible, pre-intervention measures of the outcome variable will be used. Imputation of missing data will use an option permitted under WWC 5.0, and with reference to sources available through T.A. (e.g., Puma et al., 2009). A matrix of correlations among outcome measures within domains will be provided to support calculation of domain-level average effect size as per WWC 5.0. **Exploration:** Differential impacts will be evaluated by adding the necessary interaction term into the main impact model. Exploration of mediated impact on student outcomes (RQ11) will use a regression framework (e.g., Krull and MacKinnon, 2001, 1999) and principal stratification approaches (Frangakis & Rubin, 2002; Jo et al., 2011; Page, 2012). Researchers will evaluate the robustness of benchmark estimates for primary research questions, using OLS analysis with all outcomes and covariates aggregated to the teacher level, using both Full and Restricted Maximum Likelihood estimation, using alternative software (R, HLM).

### **Evaluation Performance Feedback and Quarterly Assessment of Progress**

A chief goal of the evaluation is to provide *frequent performance feedback and assessment of progress toward intended outcomes* to allow ongoing adaptation and improvement of the **SC** model and local implementation. **Three main approaches** will be used over the period of the project: **1. Theory-Based:** During the pilot year (2024-25), and following the RCT, Empirical will support refinement of the logic model, Theory of Action, Theory of Change utilizing standard methods and tools (Lemire et al., 2023); Surveys, interviews of MLKSRCRC, CWK and purposive samples of principals and teachers will be conducted annually to help titrate program components, and to bridge theory and actual implementation. In the post-RCT phase (2027-28), evaluation will involve working with principal stakeholders to identify process

bottlenecks (Jaciw et al. 2018) and conduct failure analysis of the RCT if called-for (Allen-Platt, 2021). **2. Rapid Cycle Evaluation:** Biannual “Plan-Do-Study-Act” (PDSA) cycles (Bryk et al., 2015; Lemire et al., 2017) will be used throughout the study. Surveys and interviews with primary stakeholders (about issues related to program execution, meeting fidelity threshold, and impacts) will identify elements for improvement (including implementation activities not reaching fidelity thresholds and unintended consequences). Improvements will be integrated and measured using established tools (e.g., analysis of “run charts”) (Bryk et al., 2015). For example, SC stresses the importance of increasing access to culturally responsive and relevant classroom experiences for students to improve engagement and prosocial behaviors. Surveys of teachers will be used to assess enactment/realization of these components and improvement will focus on deficits. Empirical will review levels of success in enacting these components with the program developers, and plan subsequent goals/iterations of implementation. **3. Potential to scale** (SEER9). In the post-RCT phase (2026-28), evaluation will involve working with MLKSRCRC and CWK to assess potential for scaling, as per Coburn’s (2003) dimensions of depth, sustainability, spread, and shift in ownership. For example, both institutions are interested in understanding the roles of principals and teachers in achieving program sustainability with reduced implementation support by program developers. The long-term goal is to iteratively refine the program Theory Of Action to establish a viable, scalable and replicable process (SEER9), and to ready the program for a potential Mid-Phase EIR effort. Although not required for Early Phase EIR, Empirical has experience conducting—and will explore resources/potential for—cost analysis, using the cost effectiveness ingredients method (Levin et al., 2017) as part of establishing potential for scaling.

## **Implementation Evaluation and Fidelity Thresholds**

**FOI.** The implementation study will report on FOI using S(pecific) M(easurable) A(ttainable) R(ealistic) T(imely) goals/thresholds for monitoring **objective performance measures**, and for integrating feedback into **SC**'s implementation. Empirical will support refinement of the program logic model (Appendix G), including key components, outputs, and mediators; and will assess program adherence to program goals, including attainment of fidelity thresholds (SEER4,5). Additionally, during the pilot year Empirical will meet with program developers biweekly and provide feedback on identified goals for consolidation of MLKSRCRC, CWK. Morehouse. and Spelman partnership to support collaboration and program development.

During the period of impact study, Empirical will evaluate implementation of program key components and the extent to which fidelity thresholds are met:

*Implementation of Professional Learning:* (1) UA and MLKSRCRC facilitates 14 hours of summer training for educators; (2) UA and MLKSRCRC staff provides quarterly individual coaching support; (3) 90% of **SC** teachers attend 14 hours of summer training; (4) 80% of **SC** teachers participate in quarterly coaching sessions.

*Implementation of Sankofa Chronicles Curriculum:* 90% of **SC** teachers implement (1) all 9 **SC** units during advisory period; (2) at least 4 days per week FOI results will be shared with MLKSRCRC and CWK biannually, to support decisions about key program components (e.g., should they be modified or discontinued?). **Variation in implementation.** To understand barriers and supports in **SC** implementation (SEER5), including in APS vs CUNY schools, Empirical will: (a) survey implementing teachers four times, using forced choice and open-ended questions, (b) interview a purposively selected cross-grade sample of 10 teacher leaders (to expand on themes in survey responses), and (c) conduct one focus group of teachers during the

2025-26 school year. Results will be discussed with MLKCRC and CWK to support the implementation, scalability, and replication (SEER9) of the program model. A key product will be a refined logic model for the program “as achieved” compared to as initially posited.

Treatment-control contrast: The RCT data collection described above will also assess BAU program components and activities, in order to evaluate the planned and realized treatment–control contrasts (SEER5) (Cordray & Pion, 1993; Weiss et al., 2014) and Achieved Relative Strength of the intervention (Hulleman & Cordray, 2009) to better understand conditions for scaling (SEER9).

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