

Archived Information

SUCCESS EXPRESS

21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS GRANT APPLICATION 1999

NEED FOR PROJECT

Extent to which proposed project will provide services or address needs of students

Only two weeks before the submission of this proposal, the citizens of Memphis were once again tragically reminded of the magnitude of the need for extended day programs at our schools. A thirteen-year-old boy and a friend decided to visit his girlfriend after school. In the house alone and unsupervised, they discovered a gun. The children's curiosity resulted in their playing with the gun. Assuming it was unloaded, the trigger was pulled, killing the boy with a shot to his head. The television news that night featured an interview with the girl's father, expressing disbelief and deep sorrow that this young life was cut short so needlessly.

The risks present in today's urban areas are many and serious. Memphis, in particular, has a crime rate which exceeds that of most major cities. The city ranks 1st in burglary, 2nd in rape, 4th in car theft, 8th in homicide and 9th in robbery (Memphis Shelby Crime Commission Report, 1996). Our children, particularly those in the inner city, are exposed to these risks because of lack of opportunities for structured after-school activities. The crime report found that 40% of juvenile crime occurs between 3:00 - 9:00 p.m., hours when children are frequently unsupervised, as was the case with the teenagers referred to in the opening paragraph. Working parents and parents with limited parenting skills face problems providing adequate supervised settings where they can be assured their children are safe and engaged in appropriate and interesting activities. Seventy percent of Memphis City Schools' 112,000 students have been identified as living at or below the poverty level and receive free or reduced lunch. These children have few, if any, resources to enhance their academic

achievement in the home. Many of the parents are poorly educated themselves and resistant to returning to a school campus where they have memories of feeling unsuccessful.

Memphis City Schools' students score below the national norm in academic achievement. The 1997-1998 standardized achievement tests revealed that only 16% of the district's students (grades 3 - 8) scored at or above the 50th percentile in reading; 19% in math; 26% in language; 14% in science and 14% in social studies. Twenty-eight percent of the students in Memphis City Schools are two or more years overage for their assigned grade. The district's cohort dropout rate is 28%. Our inner-city students desperately need additional time and innovative teaching and learning strategies to succeed academically.

The highly structured after-school activities available to families, who have the financial means, such as gymnastics, organized sports, music lessons, dance, and tutoring are not accessible to Memphis' largely impoverished population. Yet, these students are equally deserving of enriched extended learning opportunities. Memphis proposes to provide these extended learning opportunities through an after-school project, Success Express, that will meet the academic, recreational and safety needs of the children who would otherwise not have these enrichment opportunities. Although the district has after-school programs in place, they are few in number. Of the 162 schools, eight middle schools and seventeen elementary schools have excellent programs funded by grants. A limited number of after-school programs provided by community agencies or the schools themselves are custodial in nature and devoid of academic enrichment and other learning opportunities.

An advisory committee of community leaders, community agencies, school staff, juvenile justice system personnel, students and school administrators participated in the development of project goals, selection of schools, and the focus of project activities. Success Express will target elementary age children in ten of the district's inner-city schools. The schools were selected

for their location in the Enterprise Community, their feeding into middle schools with comprehensive after-school programs, and for their extremely low academic achievement scores.

The decision to target elementary age students was based on current studies. Brain research has revealed that children are most able to learn at early ages, from years three through ten. If their learning experiences are enhanced during this period, the probability for future academic success is increased significantly. Also, research has shown that students who are experiencing significant academic difficulties in grade four will likely continue a pattern of difficulty marked by academic failure, truancy and eventual dropping out. The project's focus will be to intervene in the primary grades to prevent this pattern of school failure and to achieve the national goal for all children to read on grade level by age eight.

The chart below provides a profile of the selected schools, documenting academic achievement, poverty rate, enrollment and potential dropouts. (***ITEMS BELOW INDICATE WHAT CATEGORIES OF DATA WERE PROVIDED BY THE APPLICANT IN THIS CHART - NOT SHOWN IN THIS DOCUMENT***).

Enterprise Community
Of Students
Title 1
Overall Tcap Percentile (Terminal Grade)
% Performing Below Grade Level In
 Reading
 Math
Poverty Rate
% Overage For Grade

CLC Sites:

Alcy
Caldwell
Charjean
Douglass
Georgian Hills
Lauderdale
Lester
Sheffield
Westwood
Whitney

QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN

A. *Extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes are clear and measurable*

Memphis City Schools' mission is to prepare all children to be successful citizens and workers in the 21st century. The district's strategic plan addresses the need to provide after-school academic, enrichment and recreational safe havens for students, thus increasing opportunities for schools to become the extended learning centers of their communities. In the new century the skill level for all jobs, even the lowest, will be much higher. Today modern technological changes have increased the demand for a more highly skilled workforce. If we do not hold all students to high academic standards, the result will be low achievement, and children will leave school uneducated or undereducated. This grant will expand district efforts to provide quality extended day programs to elementary schools in communities with limited resources and activities for youth. Success Express will address the barriers students experience in achieving, especially in reading and math. Success Express will assist students to achieve at grade level, ensuring timely progression and promotion and eliminating the need for social promotion. These core subjects affect academic success in other content areas. For example, if children cannot read, they experience difficulty in social studies, and science. Students must build upon a strong foundation in mathematics in order to have the requisite skills to succeed in higher-level mathematics courses. Students in middle schools are now required to take pre-algebra which necessitates that elementary students have a strong math background prior to grade seven. The academic component of the after-school program will be integrated with the regular school program and will therefore consist of standards-driven instruction. Integrated units will be taught through non-traditional methods which are engaging and focused on real-world applications. The social,

recreational and cultural needs of the students will also be addressed in other components of the project. A parent component will increase involvement in children's education and parenting skills. Collaboration with local agencies will develop a sense of community ownership of the school and of its activities. All students and their families at the targeted schools will be encouraged to participate in the project.

Goal 1: To implement structured after-school academic activities that will increase the students' ability to achieve state and local standards in reading and math

Objective 1.1: To increase students' academic performance in reading and math as determined by end-of-year subject grades

Outcome 1.1: Students who participate in a least 75% of the literacy and math activities throughout the year will exhibit an increase from baseline (previous year's final grade of C, D, or F) of one letter grade in their reading and mathematics subjects at the end of the project year

Objective 1.2: To increase students' academic performance in reading and math as determined by state and local assessment instruments

Outcome 1.2: Participating students will exhibit an increase of 2 percentage points in the percent scoring at or above the 50th percentile on state standardized tests in reading and math

Goal 2: To establish school-community partnerships that enrich the learning environment and encourage continued collaboration

Objective 2.1: To increase the utilization of community agencies or organizations in the learning process

Outcome 2.1: The active involvement of community agencies or organizations in the learning processes within project school will increase by 10% from baseline levels

Objective 2.2: To develop a system in each school that integrates all the service providers while maximizing the benefits of each

Outcome 2.2: Community service providers that are active in the project schools will participate in a networking partnership to minimize duplication of effort and maximize benefits to students and their families

Goal 3: To involve parents in the educational process

Objective 3.1: To increase the number of opportunities parents have to interact with their children in an educational environment

Outcome 3.1: Parents of children in project schools will be provided access to 6 additional opportunities per year to interact with their children's educational environment

Objective 3.2: To provide six training sessions for parents that demonstrates specific strategies parents can use to increase their children's learning at home

Outcome 3.2: Parents of children in project schools will be able to participate in 6 additional training sessions per year to gain specific home-learning strategies

Goal 4: To provide opportunities for students to participate in recreational, social and cultural activities

Objective 4.1: To encourage the development of new and varied interests by introducing students to variety of cultural and recreational activities each semester

Outcome 4.1: Participating students will be introduced to various cultural and recreational activities that include components to encourage genuine interest compared to baseline levels

Objective 4.2: To provide students increased opportunities to engage in new or different cultural and recreational activities as compared to baseline information

Outcome 4.2: Participating students will report positive growth compared to baseline levels in their experiences with and interests about various cultural and recreational activities.

B. *Extent to which the proposed project will successfully address the needs*

The basic academic components of the after-school program will focus on reading and math, which are critical needs, as evidenced by the school profile chart. These two subjects will be reinforced through standards based, multi disciplinary and integrated curricula units around themes of interest to middle level students. The district's content and performance standards will drive the curriculum, instruction and assessment of the effectiveness of the units. Standards bring focus and direction to student achievement, allowing all school, community and family participants involved with the students to work toward common educational goals. The reading and math components will be identified as the Success Express Book Club and the Success Express Technology Club. These clubs will be offered Monday, Tuesday and Thursday for approximately 60 to 90 minutes, depending on the age and characteristics of the students. Teachers will receive five to six hours of training to implement this design model plus periodic follow-up to ensure quality of design.

In the Success Express Book Club, teachers will engage students in a variety of research based reading strategies that have proven to be successful, especially with inner city youth. The reading/literacy design will be based on the nationally recognized and extremely successful program, "Success for All," that was developed by Dr. Robert Slavin at John Hopkins University. SFA provides the reading foundation for the New American School design model "Roots and Wings". To encourage independent reading, students will select a topic or theme each six weeks for their Book Club. The stories they read and discuss will relate to the theme. Students will listen to stories and then enter into a lively discussion of the story, relating their thoughts and ideas. Through

discussion students will increase their understanding of the story, build vocabulary and gain knowledge of story structure. Open discussions of this nature develop both listening and speaking skills. Students will be encouraged to dramatize literature selections as well as write stories, poems and critiques of books.

Cooperative learning or teams will increase students' motivation and engage students in cognitive activities known to contribute to reading comprehension, such as elaboration, summarization and rephrasing. Students will keep journals and illustrations of the books they read. A set of trade books as well as children's literature books will be available for student and parent check out. Students will use computers to compose original stories and to keep journals.

Volunteers from the local newspaper will attend selected sessions to help students learn how to storyboard or lay out a story for publishing. The Book Club will also visit the newspaper to see how newspapers and news stories are created. At the end of each six weeks, students will celebrate with a presentation for parents and other students. The celebration may be an oral presentation, a video production, a newspaper, or any product that demonstrates the learning that has taken place and the progress students are making.

An example of an integrated unit built around a book might be the Newbery Award winning novel, *Sarah, Plain and Tall*, by Patricia MacLachlan. This story opens the door to a multitude of subtopics that children could explore, integrating other content areas. Social studies topics would be a comparison of regions, transportation, and farming. Literary skills include composing stories about pioneer days, farm and domestic animals, or mail order brides. Math skills are introduced through designing a barn, fencing, distance traveled, and purchasing of supplies or exchange of goods. For science and health, students will read and research home remedies, preserving food without refrigeration, and cooking in the pioneer days. Square dancing, quilting, barn raising, pioneer songs, and

horseback riding would introduce students to other cultural and recreational activities. Students and parents will be able to visit libraries, museums or historic sites together, comparing life on the plains to life in a mid-south city.

The math component will focus on engaging activities that build not only basic skills, but involve students in problem solving and real life applications. In the Success Express Technology Club students will have the opportunity to strengthen their individual skills by using Accelerated Math, a computer program that evaluates each child's skill level and builds a program especially for that child. In addition, students will use educational playstations to learn and reinforce math and reading skills. Thematic units will be used to promote the understanding of how math relates to real world problems. Cooperative learning teams will compete against one another to solve problems. Students will also be required to design some problems of their own for other teams to solve. Math games and problem solving books will be available for individual self-development. Creative math teachers who enjoy challenging students will be employed. Training will be provided throughout the year to ensure quality instruction.

Other activities that will be provided are a Wednesday Creative Art Club. The Art Club will meet with professional artists to create new and exciting forms of art, including dance, storytelling, drama, and painting. Another club will be Me, Myself and I, which addresses decision-making skills, conflict resolution, teen pregnancy, and substance abuse. The units are age appropriate and address the personal conflicts today's children must face. Parenting sessions will also focus on strategies and methods parents can use to reduce violence and drugs. Recreational activities will be offered every day for at least 30 minutes.

Volunteer tutors will be provided through local agencies. These tutors will be trained in strategies that help students become better readers and

mathematicians. Assignment of tutors will be based on student progress and needs.

A parent support team comprised of the after-school teachers, after-school site coordinator, and school counselor will establish a communications system for all families. They will ensure that the parents feel welcome and that their ideas and thoughts are respected. This team will develop training workshops for parents to learn strategies that can be used at home to assist the children with reading, math or other problems the child may have. Families will be assisted with clothing, health or family problems that may be affecting the child's performance at school through referrals to local agencies. The team will also plan Saturday Excursions for students and parents.

Six Saturday Excursions will be planned per year for the various clubs. These Saturday field trips will correlate with the themes in the Book and Technology Clubs. Students and their parents will visit museums, historic homes, nature centers, exhibits, libraries, businesses, or other places of interest that add enrichment to the current topics. Parents will observe and learn strategies that can be used to make outings of this nature educational.

Providing adult supervision during after-school hours has proven to be extremely effective in reducing crime and substance abuse with youth. Success Express will provide families and students quality after-school licensed extended day programs at their community school that meet both national and local standards for child care from the time school dismisses until 6:00 p.m. To ensure a quality operation, staff will receive training in all areas of child development, safety, child abuse detection, health and management issues.

Monitoring procedures will include on site observations, check of all records, facilities maintenance, and parent and student comments. Transportation will be provided based on needs. School administrators, parents and agency partners will be provided an evaluation report on the operation of the extended day program every six weeks.

Tuition will be assessed per government regulations. Working parents with sufficient income will pay the standard rate. Non-working families, who are provided child care funds from the state, will receive grants from state service agencies. Working families without sufficient income to pay for quality child care, but receive no state assistance, will be offered student scholarships. These student scholarships are a part of the grant funds to help families who would otherwise have no access to child care for their children.

When visiting an after-school program visitors will see happy, friendly, and optimistic children, eager to participate in the activities around them and proud of what they have accomplished. They will be actively involved, curious to learn more and constantly seeking more knowledge. Higher standards will be achieved and students will have more quality time for reading, writing and math.

YEAR TWO

In year two, the Success Express project will increase the number of students served, provide additional parent training sessions, and sponsor a summer camp. Funding for the additional programs will come from two sources: (1) an analysis of individual school budgets to redistribute funds (i.e. Title I, Title II, Title VI, Extended Contract funds, and school grants); and (2) one-time grant funds (computer, non-consumable materials). The summer camp will utilize integrated units where students explore, question, investigate, and work in cooperative groups to solve problems and use technology to access and retrieve information. Students will be involved in a variety of cultural and recreational activities based on their age and interest level. The city's recreational department and volunteers from the community will assist in providing fun and enriching activities for the students.

In year two, Success Express will expand to five new schools utilizing the same program design with the improvements identified during the first year. The new sites will be selected based on the same criteria as the first ten, which includes location within or close to the enterprise zone, feeder schools, and

academic achievement as determined by standardized testing. The funding for these schools will utilize the one-time funds that were expended on the first ten schools, plus funding from the state for child care programs and transportation.

YEAR THREE

In year three, the five schools added in the second year will expand to include a summer camp based on the program design and using the same funding sources as the first ten schools. New partners and additional sponsors will be identified as the community becomes aware of the quality service provided by Success Express.

Five new schools will be added in year three to total twenty elementary schools implementing Success Express by the year 2001. Funding for these schools will come from the one-time expenditures used by the first schools plus funding from the state. By year three the original ten schools will have assumed greater responsibility for their after-school programs.

C. *Extent to which the proposed project will establish linkages*

The Volunteer Center of Memphis will recruit and train volunteers to be tutors and mentors for students at risk of failing reading and math. The tutoring sessions are pre-planned and correlate with the child's daily reading program. The tutors will work closely with the child's teacher to provide the best quality service.

The Commercial Appeal will provide personnel to visit the Success Express Book Club and demonstrate techniques used in the production of a real newspaper. They will also host field trips from the schools to allow students to observe how the newspaper operates and the various functions related with creating a newspaper each day. Personnel from the newspaper will help the centers in promoting and advertising the centers to the community.

The Memphis - Shelby County Public Library system will provide personnel from the neighborhood libraries to visit the Success Express school in respective communities. The staff will explain how the library works, help students and families to fill our application cards and identify the multitude of services the library can provide. Personnel will also read stories of interest to students during the read aloud time while encouraging students to read as much and as often as possible. The libraries will host parent and student field trips to the library and special night -time sessions for families.

Wonders for Children will provide free tickets, transportation and guides for Success Express schools to attend exhibits presented by Wonders. The "Queens of Africa" will be the exhibit for 2000-2001. Wonders will also bring artifacts from past exhibits to the after-school centers that directly relate to the current theme or unit of study.

University of Tennessee Agricultural Center will help establish 4-H clubs at the schools where children will learn about nutrition through innovative games and research. U.T. will also sponsor special field trips for students to visit the agricultural center and observe how food is grown to produce quality products.

LeBonheur Children's Hospital will provide Health Fairs for the communities involved in the 21st Century Community Learning Centers. From these fairs parents will gain information on health-related issues, how to access available resources, when and where to get health care for their children and requirements for entry into school.

The Memphis Arts Council will provide the artists for the Creative Art Club. The various artists will introduce children to new forms of art as well as those with which they are already familiar. Students will learn dances from many countries, hear music from ancient times, and become more culturally aware of the many ways people can express their feelings and emotions.

The Children's Museum will host parents and children on their Saturday Excursions, providing an additional source for developing parenting skills. Personnel from the children's museum will visit schools with materials or displays that enrich the study units.

Dance Works will host a dance camp at two school sites. Students will learn the art of dance in multiple ways. Students will also have an opportunity to visit classes at other locations to learn more about the world of dance and how it contributes to learning.

Christian Brothers University has offered to provide academic support for the after-school program. By placing university students in the centers to provide tutoring and other instructional support, everyone benefits. The university students receive clinical and field placement, which is a part of their undergraduate studies, and our students receive extra academic or enrichment assistance.

ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES

Support from the applicant

Memphis City Schools has a history of coordinating funds to better serve the needs of children. A close relationship has been established between local service agencies and community leaders to provide quality service to our youth. Schools are site based and govern their own resources, making decisions as close to the point of implementation as possible. The district coordinates multiple federally funded programs, which include Title I, Title II, Title VI, Goals 2000 and Safe and Drug Free Schools. The state of Tennessee also provides funding through Extended Contract to compensate teachers who work with students outside the regular school hours. Extended Contract supports the district's efforts in providing extended learning programs. District initiatives are also supported through the Memphis Urban Systemic Initiative (MUSI), a grant from the National Science Foundation. Technology Literacy Grants offer schools an opportunity to

apply for additional funds for technology equipment and supplies. The state welfare program also provides aid for families with no or low incomes to have assistance for child care programs.

Success Express will be supported by all these initiatives in providing quality programs and services. MUSI will provide training, design units, and provide materials for the after-school program. Extended Contract will supplement teacher salaries. The after-school program will utilize technology equipment purchased through federal or grant funds plus add additional resources to accommodate the large number of students expected in the after-school program. Title I, Title II and Title VI will provide materials, supplies, printing and teacher training. Additional grants have been submitted to local government agencies to support the transportation costs. Two local museums have submitted grants to the state for funding to help support initiatives for Success Express. Memphis is extremely fortunate to have local government, agencies and businesses supporting its mission and goals for student success.

Extent to which costs are reasonable

Memphis City Schools is the 20th largest district in the United States with 112,000 students, of which 70% participate in the free or reduced lunch program. Many of our youth live in substandard housing developments and the food they receive at school may be the only meals some receive. These students need more structured opportunities to learn beyond the six or seven hours in the regular school day. Children from more economically advantaged homes attend quality after-school programs and have private tutors. Furthermore, they live in communities rich with recreational and cultural opportunities. Unless schools partner with communities to provide these additional resources, poor children will not achieve at the level required. To prepare all children for the 21st century requires substantial investments in communities without the

necessary resources. These after-school programs will provide these youth the opportunity to achieve at higher levels.

Each child needs to work on a computer, not once a week, but every day. These children need to experience all the technological advantages of our society today. Most of students have not traveled outside their community, much less outside the city. Books are often non-existent in their homes. The majority of these families do not have personal transportation. Children walk to and from school. Imagine a 6 or 7 year old child walking home at 6:00 p.m. alone, along a street with boarded up houses, with no street light, and dark. Equipment, books, transportation and adult supervision are not luxuries; they are requirements for serving these youth.

This project proposes to serve 100% of the children in the designated schools, a total of 6,871 elementary children. Even if only 50% participate, we would serve 3,435 children. The costs outlined are minimal compared to the number of children and families to be served and needs that these individuals face each day.

QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Adequacy of the plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project

At each school location a team composed of the school principal, program facilitator and site coordinator will coordinate and supervise the after-school program. Working together, the team will ensure the quality of the total program. While the site coordinator runs the day to day operation, the program facilitator will organize and supervise the program components. The school principal, as the school leader, will oversee the overall operation to ensure the program meets the needs of the parents and children. A district Extended Learning Program Coordinator will work with the 10 schools to assist with timely

delivery of resources and agency personnel. The district coordinator will monitor the programs on a regular basis to ensure that all components are in place, gather feedback, and offer recommendations for improvements.

Feedback will be collected from the center staff working, regular classroom teachers, parents, students, community leaders, and community agencies. The Success Express advisory council will meet on a regular basis providing input and addressing concerns. The chart below outlines the staffing structure of the Success Express project.

E.L.P. Coordinator	Advisory Council
Success Express School Team	
Parent Support Team	Teachers

Memphis City Schools will utilize instructional and research personnel to continuously monitor and evaluate the extent to which the program is being implemented as designed (process evaluation) and the quality of effectiveness of the program (outcome evaluation). Feedback will be utilized to make modifications in the program for the purpose of improvement. Assessment and planning meetings will be held monthly with learning center staff, the advisory council and community partners. (A timeline is included on the last page of the narrative.)

Diversity of Perspectives

Critical to the success of any community program is the ongoing communication among the stockholders. Recommendations and feedback will be collected on a regular basis from parents, community leaders, students, faculty members, local agencies, and the project partners.

All Memphis City Schools have formed School Leadership Councils consisting of parents, school staff, community members and students. These councils focus on issues such as school improvement plans, extended learning, academic success,

community and parent involvement, and business and corporate involvement within that community. The School Leadership Council will contribute to the planning, implementation and evaluation of the individual school's Success Express program. The council will provide insight into the local communities' perspective about the services provided by the centers. The evaluation of the project will incorporate continuous feedback from the school leadership council. The citywide advisory committee that was formed to identify the goals and objectives of the project will continue to function as a sounding board for the entire community. These community leaders represent the city as a whole and will observe the ten projects as one entity, providing recommendations on how to meet the diverse population within the Memphis area. This committee will also make recommendations on additional agencies and businesses that can assist with the project as it progresses through the three-year phase.

QUALITY OF PROJECT EVALUATION

Methods of Evaluation

The overall purposes of the evaluation plan for Success Express are to: (1) to determine the effectiveness of the project in improving students' academic performance; (2) systematically provide concise answers to a series of questions related to expected outcomes and performance indicators; and, (3) inform project administrators' efforts in improving the project for replication across the district and in other educational settings.

Evaluation Questions. A series of questions which relate closely to expected outcomes and performance indicators will guide evaluation activities:

1. Were the after-school activities successful in increasing the academic performance of participating students in reading and mathematics?
2. For which groups of students were structured after-school academic activities most beneficial?

3. To what extent were community agencies and organizations constructively utilized to improve the learning environment?
4. What were the characteristics of the system that successfully integrated each school's service providers in an effort to maximize benefits?
5. What were the characteristics of the opportunities that facilitated parents' interaction with their children's educational environment?
6. To what extent did parents report positive results in using the in-home learning strategies they gained in project training sessions?
7. Which cultural and recreational activities were positively responded to by students?
8. For which groups of students were adoption of positive cultural and recreational interests expressed?

Data Sources. Several existing and proposed resources of student-related information will be included in the systematic collection of results concerning project outcomes: (1) standardized state and local assessment of achievement in reading and mathematics; (2) school-based records of grades, attendance, and behavioral and disciplinary actions; (3) attendance records of after-school, Saturday, and summer participation by students and their parents; and, (4) perceptions held by participating students and their parents, project staff, and school teachers and administrators.

Data Collection. A variety of methods will be used to gather data: (1) frequent surveys, containing both closed-ended items and open-ended questions, directed at participating students, parents, teachers, and school and project staff; (2) focus groups to achieve consensus regarding issues of concern; (3) documents which request self-reporting by students and adults on a regular basis (e.g., weekly, six-week marking period); (4) activity logs completed by staff and volunteers; (5) comparison of school and project records, between participating students and a control group, regarding attendance patterns, course grades, grade promotion, internal behavioral and disciplinary actions,

Juvenile Court interventions, and dropout or transfer rates; (6) formal and informal observations by district staff, design team, research services, and school administrators; and (6) follow-up on participating students' school experiences in subsequent semesters and years.

Data Analysis. Analysis of data will be performed on a frequent, continuing basis so as to yield timely feedback to project administrators and staff as a resource in decision-making. To the maximum extent possible, data analysis will include disaggregation by recognizable sub-groups to achieve clarity in interpretation of findings. At the close of the project year, a comprehensive review and analysis of all data will be completed, resulting in (a) a fully triangulated interpretation of findings, (b) resulting conclusions, and, (c) pertinent recommendations.

Project Impact. Year-one findings, conclusions, and recommendations will be key resources in the determination of project modifications, and in planning for project replication in new cohorts of schools in years two and three of the grant period. Across the time span of the grant, efforts will be directed toward a synthesis of experiences and findings into a concise description of successful project design which other school professionals may wish to adopt or adapt for use in their districts.

Dissemination: Critical project findings will be (1) posted to a district web-site, (2) included in a comprehensive report to the funder, (3) shared with community partners, and (4) presented at local and regional meetings of relevant practitioner organizations.