IPG Application:

2020 NC Innovative Partnership Grant (IPG) Competition
Cohort IB - (July 2020 – September 2023)

ENTITY: Wayne County   **ENTITY Code: 960**

SCHOOL: Dillard Middle   **NCDPI SCHOOL #: 960-326**

IPG Entity Contact Name: Youlonda Wynn

IPG Entity Contact Title: Federal Programs Assistant Director

IPG Entity Contact Phone: 919.705.6171

IPG Entity Contact Email: youlondawynn@wcps.org

Purpose of the Program:
To carry out the State Educational Agency's statewide system of technical assistance and support for Entities,[1] which have schools identified as schools in need of Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) under the State's federally approved plan for The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This competition will provide additional fiscal resources, technical support, and regular school[2] visits to improve student achievement and ultimately to assist these schools with exiting the federal identification and status of CSI.

Eligibility:
To be eligible to receive these funds, an Entity must have one or more schools identified under the federally approved definition for CSI schools. Funding will be made based on a competitive process. If an Entity is applying on behalf of more than one (1) CSI School, a separate application is required for each school and the applications should be unique to the needs of each school.

Special Provisions:
Each grant is awarded for a "period of availability" beginning July 1st and ending September 30th of the following year. The Tydings amendment extends the grant period of availability to 27 months by allowing unexpended funds as of September 30th to carry over an additional 12 months. Funds are potentially available to Entities for 27 months provided there is a continuation of funding available and the school meets annual goals as stated in the initial application.

The State Education Agency (SEA) will determine whether to renew an Entity's grant award if the school served by the applying Entity is not meeting: the goals identified for the interventions an Entity is implementing, student achievement outcomes, leading indicators, and/or other factors determined by the SEA.

March 27, 2020 – Innovative Partnership Grant Applications due date to NCDPI:
Two (2) applications are due to mailto:susan.brigman@dpi.nc.gov (copied to mailto:IPG_application@serve.org) by 5:00 p.m. One (1) final PDF version of the IPG application with all identifiers noted, and one (1) PDF version of the IPG application that removes ALL identifiers of the specific Entity and replaces the LEA name with "Entity", or the Charter Entity name with "Charter", and the School name with "School". Both copies of the application should be sent in the same email. The second version (without identifiers) will be used by the external partner as a blind copy during the actual application review and Level I scoring. To be equitable and transparent – no application received after 5:00 p.m. on March 27, 2020 will be reviewed or considered for this competition. The application should be no longer than 40 pages total*, single-spaced with one-inch (1") margins on all sides, and using a 12pt font in Times New Roman. (*Note: Applicant may use up to five (5) additional pages to respond to Questions in C-III ONLY, if applicable.)

All IPG questions / correspondence should be directed to:

Susan Brigman, Interim Assistant Director, Federal Programs @ NCDPI   Email: mailto:susan.brigman@dpi.nc.gov

---

[1] For purposes of this application, the term "Entity" will be used to refer to a local educational agency (LEA), a public charter school that is a local educational agency under State law, or an Innovative School District.

[2] For purposes of this application, the term "school" will be used to refer to the school served by the Entity (and on whose behalf the Entity is) applying for the Innovative Partnership Grant.

(A) REQUIRED ASSURANCES: An organization must include the following state assurances in its application for an Innovative Partnership Grant:

No point value assigned for this section; however, any application without <u>each</u> Assurance box checked will not be reviewed beyond this point in the application, nor considered for the Innovative Partnership Grant.

By checking <u>each</u> box, the Entity is making the following Assurances if awarded an Innovative Partnership Grant:
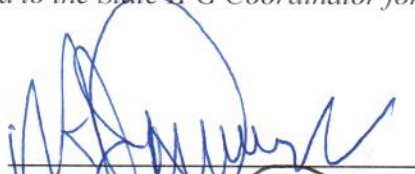
<u>The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) Assurances:</u>
The Entity submitting this application, hereby assures that it will:

✔ Use its Innovative Partnership Grant, <u>in collaboration with a Partner,</u> to implement fully and effectively research-based school improvement strategies in each CSI School that the Entity commits to serve;

✔ Establish annual goals for student achievement on the State's assessments in reading / language arts, mathematics, and science. The Entity will also establish annual goals in other data points required by this grant and track these data points in 20-day increments throughout the period of availability of the grant using a data tracking log provided by the Federal Program Monitoring & Support Division at NCDPI;

✔ Report to NCDPI (by use of the designated data tracking log) the school-level school improvement data requested by the Federal Program Monitoring & Support Division, including baseline data for the year prior to being awarded the grant. The following data points will be collected and reported to NCDPI upon request and these metrics constitute the leading indicators for the IPG Program (in addition to school achievement data):
     1.) Dropout Rate (if applicable);
     2.) In School Suspensions (if applicable);
     3.) Out of School Suspensions;
     4.) Student attendance rate;
     5.) Certified Staff attendance rate;
       (others as determined by NCDPI)

✔ Ensure that the CSI School that it commits to serve receives all of the State and Local funds it would receive in the absence of the IPG school improvement funds and that those resources are aligned with the research-based school improvement strategies in the approved application.

✔ Employ a twelve (12) month IPG School Coach in each of its IPG awarded schools to assist the school leadership with implementation of the research-based school improvement strategies, 100% of the employed School Coach's time and services will be at the IPG awarded school (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2023). *This assurance may be met by contracting with an external provider - 40 hours per week / 12 months.*

✔ Ensure the CSI school is using NCStar for School Improvement planning.

✔ Not reassign the IPG Principal during the first two (2) years of implementation: (2020-2021 and 2021-2022) unless for reasons of demotion, retirement, or resignation.
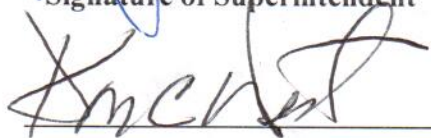
I / We HEREBY CERTIFY that to the best of my / our knowledge, the information contained in this application is correct; and the Entity, if awarded an Innovative Partnership Grant, will abide by all assurances that are checked above and throughout this application, as well as follow this application as submitted. We understand that failure, at any time to fulfill the Assurances, will be cause for the grant award to be rescinded. As authorized individuals with the Entity identified in this application, we submit this application with NCDPI for consideration of an award for the 2020–2023 IPG Cohort IB Competition. Any changes in scope or sequence of this original application must be submitted to the State IPG Coordinator for approval before acting on such changes.

Dr. Michael Dunsmore		**April 24, 2020**
Name of Superintendent	**Signature of Superintendent**	**Date Signed**
Don Christopher West		**April 24, 2020**
Name of Board Chair	**Signature of Board Chair**	**Date Signed**

For State Use Only

Date Received: Click or tap to enter a date.   Received by: Click or tap here to enter text.

Grant Awarded: Click or tap here to enter text.   If Applicable – Awarded Amount: Click or tap here to enter text.

APPLICATION NARRATIVE:

(B) SCHOOL TO BE SERVED: An Entity must include the following information with respect to the school it will serve with an Innovative Partnership Grant.

Required information – no point value assigned for this section.

An Entity must identify
- CSI School (Name) the Entity commits to serve (if awarded);
- county in which the school is located;
- the grade levels served by the school (K-5, 6-8, 9-12, K-12, etc.);
- the type of school (traditional, charter, alternative, ISD, Lab, etc.);
- the NCDPI School ID # (LEA-School, i.e. xxx-xxx), and
- the proposed partner that the Entity will collaborate with in the CSI School. If the applicant Entity proposes to partner with someone NOT on the vetted and approved list – in the "Proposed Partner" column – list "other".

The Partners the Entity may collaborate with (without further justification on the Entity's part) are: (1) Darden UVA; (2) Drive; (3) Ed Direction; (4) Mass Insight; (5) Public Impact; (6) RTI; (7) Success for All; (8) UPD Consulting; and (9) WestEd (listed in alphabetical order, not rank order).

School Name:	County	Grade Level(s):	Type:	NCDPI ID#:	Proposed Partner*:
Dillard Middle	Wayne	6-8	Traditional	960-326	DRIVE Ed Direction

*Entities may propose a partner of their choice (not on the list); however, the applicant Entity must provide justification (Section C-III) for the selection of the proposed partner not on the list, which will then be vetted in a process similar for those already approved. There is not a final guarantee that the (not previously vetted) partner will be considered an acceptable partner for IPG funding.

NOTE: *EACH school for which the Entity is applying, must have a separate application for review as the awards are made individually to schools and not collectively to Entities.*

(C) EXTERNAL PARTNER: The Entity/School must use its Innovative Partnership Grant, in collaboration with a Partner, to implement fully and effectively research-based school improvement strategies. The Partners the Entity may collaborate with (without further justification on the Entity's part) are: (1) Darden UVA; (2) Drive; (3) Ed Direction; (4) Mass Insight; (5) Public Impact; (6) RTI; (7) Success for All; (8) UPD Consulting; and (9) WestEd (listed in alphabetical order, not rank order).

If the applicant Entity proposes to partner with someone NOT on the vetted and approved list – in the "Proposed Partner" column – list "other" and respond to the prompts in C-III to provide justification for selecting the Partner.

No overall application points assigned for this section. See Level I scoring rubric (final page) for explanation of how information will be used in assessing application quality.

C-I. Select the proposed partner from the pre-vetted list of partners below that the Entity/School plans to develop a partnership with:

Response:
- ☐ Darden / UVA - Curry Partnership for Leaders in Education
- ☒ DRIVE Educational Systems
- ☒ Ed Direction
- ☐ MASS Insight
- ☐ Public Impact
- ☐ RTI International
- ☐ Success for All Foundation
- ☐ UPD Consulting
- ☐ WestEd
- ☐ Other (see C-III)

C-II. *Fill in the following organizational information for the external partner selected for the IPG program.*

(Note: If more than one partner was selected, complete for each partner.)

(a) Name of proposed organization (not on the list) that you would like to partner with:
Response: N/A

(b) Name of the proposed organization's contact:
Response: Ed Direction + Drive

(c) Position of contact:
Response: Carrie Miller + Jane Williams

(d) Telephone number of contact:
Response: 720.230.3069 + 336.408.4494

(e) Email address of contact:
Response: cmiller@eddirection.org + jwilliams@thedriverevolution.com

C-III. Provide a detailed rationale for selection of an external partner not on the pre-vetted list, including: a) rationale for not selecting one of the pre-vetted partners; b) type of service provider (i.e., comprehensive or intervention model); c) approach to serving as a CSI Service Partner in supporting LEAs/Schools (i.e., assessing need and developing action plan, working with staff); d) formative evaluative approach to ensure quality of services, and effectiveness of action plan and implementation; and e) evidence of past success reflecting how services led to improved student achievement.

(Note: The "other" partner selected will be vetted based solely on your responses and is not guaranteed to be approved as a qualified IPG partner.)

(Note: Applicant may take up to an additional five (5) pages to respond to this requirement only (if applicable).

(a) Detailed rationale for not selecting one of the nine (9) identified vetted and approved Partners:

   Response: N/A

(b) Type of service provider:

   Response: N/A

(c) Approach to serving as a CSI Service Partner in supporting LEAs/Schools:

   Response: N/A

(d) Formative evaluative approach to ensure quality of services, and effectiveness of action plan and implementation:

   Response: N/A

(e) Evidence of past success reflecting how services led to improved student achievement:

   Response: N/A

(D) NEEDS ASSESSMENT: An Entity must include the following information in its application for an Innovative Partnership Grant. Please provide a detailed response to each required element below (every element must have a detailed response with the exception of those marked "if applicable" – for those elements that are "not applicable" to your Entity's application – indicate "not applicable").

Maximum point value for this section is 32.

D-I. For the CSI School that the Entity commits to serve (if awarded), the Entity must demonstrate that the Entity has analyzed the needs of the school, such as: a) Instructional Programs, b) School Leadership and c) School Infrastructure. This analysis, among other things, examines the needs identified by families and the community, school staff, and selected interventions aligned to the needs the school has identified. (32 pts. maximum)

Please provide the results of the needs analysis below – providing specific needs identified through the analysis in each of the corresponding areas. (Note: For the "School Leadership" section please complete the specific questions with additional detail related to a needs analysis.):

(a) Instructional Programs – the Entity has analyzed the needs of the school and has demonstrated how the selected interventions align to the needs of the school:

Response: *"In all things… excellence."*

These are the words you will find repeated throughout the halls and classrooms of the school. This phrase covers the school's website, illustrates murals throughout the school's hallways, and is repeatedly echoed by teachers and school leaders. It serves as a constant message of high expectations and a vision for what each student can accomplish.

This message of high expectations is challenged by high needs from the student population. Over 95% of the students at the school come from economically disadvantaged homes. The school serves all students living in housing projects within the county. The students, their families, and the faculty that support them, face many challenges as they strive to achieve excellence in outcomes and practice. There is ample evidence, described in detail below, that there are gaps between the school's vision of excellence and its current state. The Innovative Partnership Grant (IPG) will provide the school with the needed resources and support to help bridge this gap through comprehensive support from external partners who will provide much-needed professional learning and job-embedded training for school staff focused on the following:

Improving School Culture and Climate   **Retaining Collaborative Teachers**   **Increasing Student Growth and Achievement**

Through systemic transformation and implementation of evidence-based practices in each area, these drivers will help transform the school from an institution that has chronically underperformed to a place where students will be exposed to new ideas, believe that they can achieve great things, and will be excited about learning. The following section will provide an overview of several "Excellence Gaps," or areas of challenge that are impeding the school's ability to reach the goal of excellence, and will address how the IPG partnership will help bridge this gap to improve student learning.

Excellence Gap: Opportunity to Improve School Climate and Culture

Defining the Gap

There are many opportunities to improve the school climate and culture to address the challenge faced by many of the students. Staff report high incidences of student misbehavior, which severely impacts the learning environment. In the 2018/2019 Teacher Working Conditions Survey, 42% of participating staff

reported that they "strongly disagree that students follow the rules." Suspension rates align with this finding. The in-school suspension rate is 10 times higher than that of the district, while the out of school suspension rate is 7 times higher. A comparison graph of the suspension rates for the school, district, and state can be found to the right. High suspension rates and frequent misbehavior contribute to less instructional time for all students, but especially those who have been pulled out of class because of misbehaviors.

Suspension Rates
2018/2019 (per 1,000 students)

In-school: 1622, 151, 157
Out-of-school: 1477, 204, 134
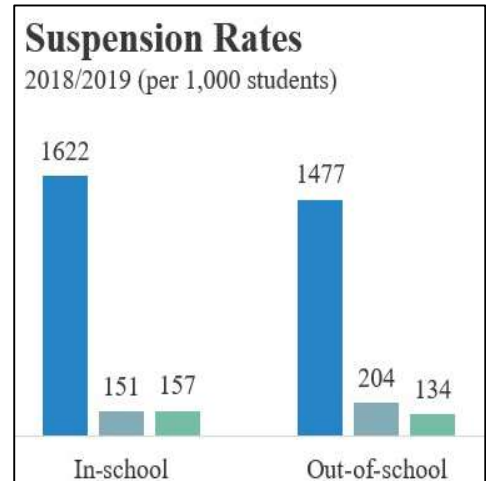
Within the realm of climate and culture, there are opportunities to empower staff to address the more consistent and severe behaviors among the student body. Though 34% of the faculty indicate they see one another like family, only 54% of teachers stated that they believed that "the majority of students with behavioral problems can achieve grade-level benchmarks in reading and math." Further, only 38% believed that "instruction on social skills and behavioral expectations is the responsibility of the schools." These belief statements indicate opportunities to rewrite the narrative about student misbehavior at the school. Such data indicate faculty have a low sense of self efficacy (Reaves & Cozzens, 2018), a factor that has been show to impact student performance (Zullig, Koopman, Patton, & Ubbes, 2009). Given the high percentage of students at the school with significant behavioral needs, there is a dire need to change mindsets and beliefs among staff.

Bridging the Gap Through the Innovative Partnership Grant
Over the past three years, the school has taken measures to change the mindsets and beliefs of staff, students, and stakeholders. The school allocated resources to rebrand, creating the motto "In all things… excellence," and establish a clear vision for the school. Efforts have been made to make the school a more welcoming place to be with new signs about academic excellence throughout the school building and a Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) system. However, shifting beliefs take time and strategic efforts. School leaders report, and the data validate, that many teachers still do not yet believe that all students can achieve at high levels. Teachers also report that they lack adequate training and tools to support the social and emotional needs of the students.

Three things that the school has not yet been able to do, given current resources, are provide in-depth training and coaching to develop the climate and culture of the school, refine the school's Response to Intervention framework, and brighten the physical school space so it feels more welcoming.

This solution begins with an IPG coach—a full time employee on the school staff who supports all improvement efforts through the IPG. This grant will also provide the school access to comprehensive professional learning and coaching to transform their culture. One of our selected partners, DRIVE, can provide the necessary professional development and coaching to transform the climate and culture of the school, empower staff with the tools and resources they need to address the social and emotional needs of the students in the general classroom, and ensure that discipline challenges are appropriately addressed when they arise. DRIVE's Power of Our program includes training for the School Improvement Team as well as all school staff on evidence-based practices to create a culture of intrinsic motivation and empowerment. The program builds upon work previously done at the school, such as the school's PBIS system, to ensure more durable implementation of effective discipline strategies. DRIVE's team has extensive experience working in schools that face similar challenges to our school, and they have had demonstrated success in transforming the culture of schools, shifting the mindsets of staff, and empowering staff and students to develop a culture of learning and growth. DRIVE's work creates a positive learning environment that supports healthy mental wellbeing and helps support behavioral stability among students.

Further, the school can utilize some IPG funding to brighten the school building with new paint and decorations to make the school feel warmer and more welcoming.

Excellence Gap: Opportunity to Retain Collaborative Educators

Defining the Gap

Another area of opportunity is the need to develop, empower, and retain teachers at the school. Forty percent of teachers at the school are new to the profession or within their first three years of teaching, and the school experiences a high teacher turnover rate (23%)—nearly 10% higher than the state average of 14%. The graphics to the right depict the percentage of teachers with varying years of experience and the teacher turnover rate compared to the district since 2014.
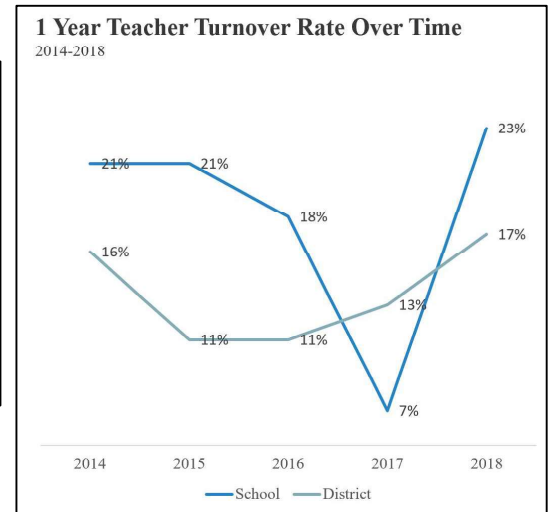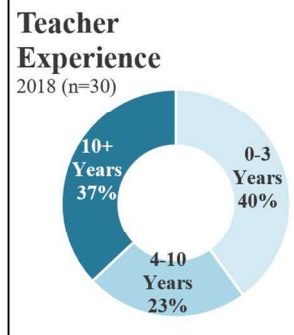
Students' economic disadvantages can bring challenges that extend well beyond the classroom including increased incidents of trauma and identified disabilities (Fuller, Hollingsworth, & Pendola, 2017). Each presents a barrier to learning that makes the already complex work of teaching more difficult to sustain at this school, especially for teachers who are new to the profession (Blitz, Anderson, & Saastamoinen, 2016). School personnel in such circumstances have reported, as Blitz et al. (2016) described, "feeling ill-equipped to respond to the enormity of problems in students' lives" (p.538). Data suggest that staff have not yet developed a sense of collective efficacy, or the common belief that they can influence student learning despite the challenges the student body bring to school (Donahoo, 2016). Staff meet regularly in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to analyze data and use that to improve instruction. Since the school leader's appointment, she has also provided training and support on effective PLCs and data use but notes that the majority of the staff are just beginning this learning process; additional training and development in this area is essential.

When considering the data about the retention of collaborative educator, it is important to note the need to retain leaders as well as teachers. We know from research that leadership retention also has an impact on student performance (Pendola & Fuller, 2018). Sebastian and Allensworth (2012) found that "principal leadership has significant, positive relationships with both academic demand and classroom order via school safety, parent ties, high college expectations, and program quality" (p. 643). The actions of leaders also promote the percieved self-efficacy and motivation of teachers (Shoulders & Krei, 2015). Leadership engagement and effort is therefore an integral feature of this finding.

Bridging the Gap Through the Innovative Partnership Grant

The school can utilize professional learning and training to increase collaborative practices schoolwide. Collaboration not only supports student success (Hattie, 2012) but also increases teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy (Donahoo, 2016). When teachers feel capable and collegial, they outperform isolated peers with lower perceptions of self-efficacy (Blitz et al., 2016). The school's IPG coach, together with selected learning partner Ed Direction, can foster evidence-based and effective collaborative practices. These include collaborative practices that enable staff to collaborate meaningfully with one another, which in turn equips teachers to more successfully engage with their students and students' families. Ed Direction is right for this school because their practices not only ensure all team meetings are efficient, data driven, action oriented, and reflective, but their services can also help teachers use collaboration to improve how they teach and relate to their students. Both strategies are indispensable to increasing self-efficacy (Bandura, 1987). Ed

Direction can also facilitate leadership coaching, which will reinforce staff development through this partnership (Shoulders & Krei, 2015).
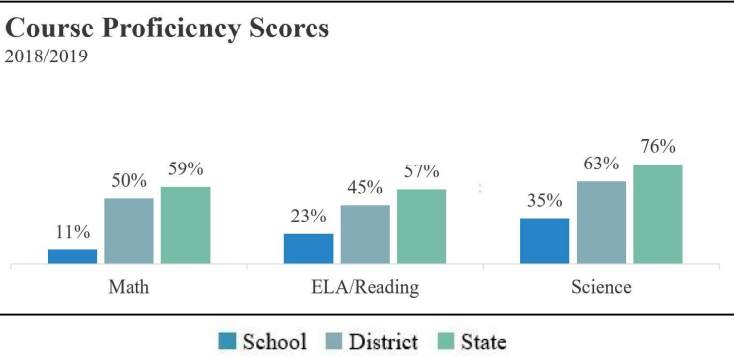
In addition to providing the added resources of an embedded IPG coach and a learning partner with collaborative expertise, the IPG can also provide the school stipends to ensure the staff receive deserved compensation for their time to go above and beyond in this learning process. Ultimately, additional resources, training, and wrap-around supports afforded through the IPG partnership will increase the capacity of staff, which will result in greater successes leading to an increase in collective efficacy. Such capacity-building efforts will have sustained impact on this school beyond the years of IPG partnership work.

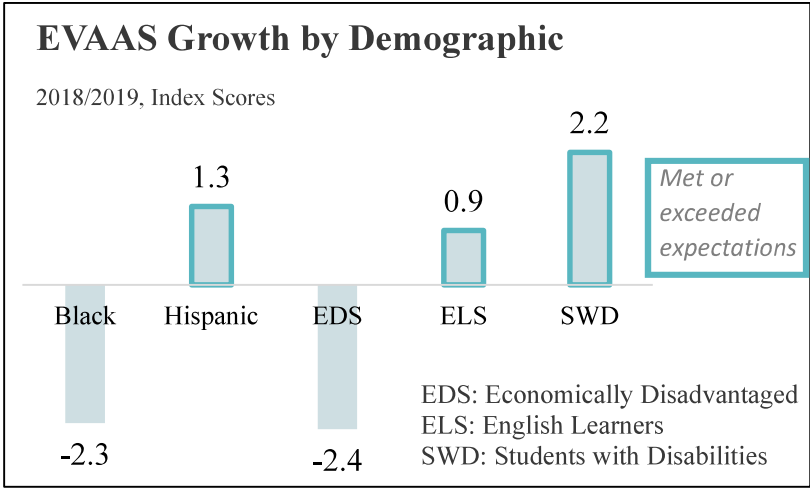**Excellence Gap: Opportunity to Increase Student Growth and Achievement**
Defining the Gap
One of the primary gaps in achieving excellence for students at the school is improving student achievement schoolwide. Ultimately, this is the primary metric to demonstrate whether a school is meeting students' academic needs or not. In a recent stakeholder survey, administered in winter of 2020, one hundred percent of participating families reported that they do not feel that the school currently meets the academic needs of the students (N=12). In addition, nearly half of all stakeholder groups, including community members and district and school staff, reported that the school is not meeting students' academic needs.

Stakeholder beliefs are reinforced by the results of state assessment data. According to the most recent course proficiency scores from the North Carolina State Assessment, students at the school scored at least 50% lower in all subject areas when compared to peers from their district, and even lower than students across the state. The graph to the right depicts the average score for grades 6-8 in each subject area for the school, district, and state.

Course Proficiency Scores
2018/2019

	Math	ELA/Reading	Science
School	11%	23%	35%
District	50%	45%	63%
State	59%	57%	76%

■ School   ■ District   ■ State

Not only are proficiency levels of students at the school well below their peers, but most students are also not demonstrating adequate growth as measured by state assessments. When comparing student subgroups, black students, which comprise 77% of the student population, demonstrate negative growth as measured by the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS), North Carolina's state assessment metric for growth. Additionally, economically-disadvantaged students, which comprise a majority of the student population, scored negative growth on the 2018/2019 state assessment, while other subgroups including Hispanic students, English Learners (ELS), and Students With Disabilities (SWD) demonstrated positive growth that met or exceeded expectations set by the state. EVAAS growth index scores for various subgroups of students for the 2018/2019 school year can be found in the graph to the left.

EVAAS Growth by Demographic

2018/2019, Index Scores

Demographic	Index Score
Black	-2.3
Hispanic	1.3
EDS	-2.4
ELS	0.9
SWD	2.2

Met or exceeded expectations

EDS: Economically Disadvantaged
ELS: English Learners
SWD: Students with Disabilities

Bridging the Gap Through the Innovative Partnership Grant
Improved instruction will be another critical pillar addressed through the IPG. Improving instruction is essential to this effort but cannot develop without also improving climate and collaborative practices. Over the past three years, the school has taken steps to improve data-use and differentiation within instruction. School leaders and curriculum coaches have supported staff to plan effective lessons that include clear objectives, various levels of depth of knowledge, and differentiation to address varied student needs. This includes setting clear expectations for lesson plans, facilitating necessary training for effective planning, and providing regular feedback on weekly lesson plans.

While these changes in practice have led to increased growth among some subgroups and slow, incremental increased in proficiency for all students (as demonstrated by the graphs above), school leaders report, and the data validates, that many students are still not experiencing adequate academic growth. Teachers need continued support with effectively using data and planning differentiated instruction that meets the needs of their students. Teaches need support learning how to interpret data and turn their insights into instructional action and develop effective instructional strategies to support long-term change. On a stakeholder survey conducted March 2020 (N=21), sixty-three percent of surveyed faculty would like to develop their use of data so that weekly assessments can be collected and analyzed and used to swiftly inform instructional action. An embedded improvement coach, coupled with knowledgeable eternal partners afforded through the IPG will provide resources for professional learning and coaching for teachers, teams, and instructional coaches to build upon these current instructional priorities and ensure that effective instructional strategies are utilized in classrooms schoolwide. Ed Direction has extensive experience supporting schools to implement evidence-based instructional practices and has supported teams across the country to improve their collaborative practices to be more data-driven, resulting in improved student learning.

***(b) School Leadership** – the Entity is responsible for providing strong leadership by: 1) either replacing the Principal if such a change is necessary to ensure strong and effective leadership if awarded the IPG, or demonstrating to the SEA that the current Principal has a track record in improving achievement and has the ability to lead the IPG improvement effort; 2) reviewing the performance of the current Principal; and 3) providing the Principal with operational flexibility in the areas of scheduling, staff, curriculum, and budget.*

- **If the Entity is awarded an Innovative Partnership Grant for Cohort <u>IB,</u> is it the Entity's intention to "replace" or "retain" the current Principal? Response:** ▮▮▮▮▮▮

     If the answer above is "replace", please provide a detailed response to "why" and what the plan will be to hire a replacement Principal: Response: ▮▮▮▮▮

- **If the answer above is to "retain", please provide responses to the following:**

     What school year did the Principal that you plan to retain - begin serving as <u>Principal</u> at the school? (i.e., 2013-14SY): Response: ▮▮▮▮▮▮

     How many total years of experience does the Principal being retained have as a <u>Principal</u> (NOT including experience as an Assistant Principal): Response: ▮▮▮▮▮

     Provide a justification and rationale for retaining the current Principal (using qualitative / quantitative data): Response:

3) **Regardless of whether the current Principal will lead this turnaround effort, or a new Principal is installed July 1, 2020…what additional "operational flexibilities" will be afforded this Principal as compared to those afforded at non-IPG awarded schools":**

Response: The district will provide the school several operational flexibilities tied to scheduling, professional learning, and resource selection. School leadership will have the autonomy to implement a different schedule in order to accept students later in the day. They may also partner with different agencies for Tier II/tutoring/intervention time. This time will enable staff to have more consistent professional learning. Regarding staff development, the option to opt out of county-wide programs and instead select specific programs that align with the school's vision and mission for IPG will be afforded. Flexibility to provide stipends for professional development on the weekends or during vacation time will be extended, as well. In order to further meet the needs of the school, the school will be able to opt out of the county curriculum requirement and instead pursue both a curriculum and an assessment system that aligns with their needs. The district is fully in favor of the school adopting a highly customized approach to curriculum and assessment in order to meet their needs and optimize their IPG partnership experience. We are excited to support the partnership and encourage innovation in the school. The district is eager to extend support to improve schedules, classroom structure, painting the school to improve aesthetics, and reducing classes sizes where appropriate. Intentional and strategic support during IPG partnership will have a notable positive impact on our broader community. The district would like to support increased family and community engagement through social events, such as providing food trucks for parent engagement nights.

(c)School Infrastructure – the entity has analyzed the school infrastructure needs (both facility and human capital) and has demonstrated how the selected interventions align to the needs of the school:

Response:
Human capital is the primary focal point of this IPG application. There is one exception in year one of the partnership. Based on the school's existing building and the relationship between student performance and the quality of a physical space (Granito & Santana, 2016), the school would like to allocate some funding to paint the school and create additional murals and related signage, supporting a positive culture and climate.

These installations in the physical school space support the goal of improving school climate and promote the notion that this is a place where students want to be.

The IPG will provide stipends for all faculty, salary and benefits for an IPG coach, and professional service fees for both DRIVE and Ed Direction to engage the school and support the achievement of each priority: improving school climate, increasing teacher retention, and improving instructional practices. The right people are in place, with the addition of the coach and vendors. The issue is that the work is so challenging at the school, the right people do not stay. This reality warrants the infrastructure to focus on incentives for the faculty's effort, the addition of a coach, and learning partners.

E. PARTNERSHIP SELECTION AND PLANNING: The School/Entity must describe its rationale for selecting the proposed external partner including consideration of varied stakeholder input (e.g., family, community, school staff), as well as processes for ensuring quality of services and accountability for performance and measurable outcomes.

NOTE: The following questions must be answered by all applicants. All questions requesting information about "Partners" must be addressed for all partners selected, whether on the pre-vetted list or those selected outside the pre-vetted list.

Maximum point value for this section is 56.

E-I. For the CSI School, that the Entity commits to serve (if awarded), the Entity/School must demonstrate that it has taken into consideration a) family and b) community input in selecting the proposed partner:

(a) Response:
In the winter of 2020, the school and district solicited input from stakeholders including both families and students in preparation for applying for the IPG. The survey solicited feedback on areas of strength and opportunity for the school, with an emphasis on school needs as they relate to potential school improvement priorities. We used this feedback to select partners that aligned with the needs identified by key stakeholders, including families and students.

Families surveyed explained that the school would benefit primarily from training for school personnel tied to instruction. 100% of parents surveyed reported that the instruction at the school does not meet the academic needs of students. Parents propose using grant funds for additional training for teachers. One parent said, "some of the teachers are nice and good, but need more training… [the school] needs more people resources." The school considered family responses in selecting both Ed Direction and DRIVE because of their focus on providing job-embedded training to school faculty that would develop the capacity within the building.

(b) Response:
Community members were also surveyed to understand their perspective on how school improvement funds provided by the IPG would be best used. Community members expressed concerns about the academic programs at the school, with 100% of community members stating that they feel that the school does not meet the academic needs of students. Additionally, community members suggested that the number one area in need of improvement is culture and climate. Specifically, to empower students to know that individuals throughout the school and community care for them and that teachers understand and believe this concept as well. The professional learning and training from DRIVE would help build upon the steps taken by the school through PBIS to develop a more positive school climate that empowers students and

staff and helps drive more intrinsic motivation for learning. This aligns with the needs identified by the community members.

E-II. For the CSI School that the Entity commits to serve (if awarded), the Entity/School must demonstrate that it has taken into consideration input from school level staff (not solely administration) in selecting the proposed partner:

(a) Response:
In order to understand the needs of the school staff, school and district leaders administered a survey to staff that gathered input on the needs and desires of the staff related to this grant. Overwhelmingly, staff expressed a sincere desire for grant funds to improve their school. Their responses demonstrate that the staff surveyed are committed to improving student outcomes. The staff feel that it is "imperative that the [the school] be highly favored to receive the Innovative Partnership Grant…because every effort must be made to turnaround the trajectory of student's learning outcomes…" (Staff Survey Respondent). The staff survey revealed two primary areas of improvement that the staff would like to see addressed by the grant: 1) improved culture and climate and 2) improved instruction.

Based on these results, school leaders identified potential partners who would best meet the needs of the school, based largely on survey results. Both DRIVE and Ed Direction were a natural fit for the needs of the school, as reflected by the staff responses. DRIVE is an expert in providing professional learning and coaching to transform the climate and culture of schools and has done so with success in schools all across the south. Ed Direction has served as a school transformation expert focused on improving instruction and developing systematic structures for continuous instructional improvement for some of the lowest-performing schools across the nation. Both DRIVE and Ed Direction demonstrate adherence to best-practices and focus on gradual release of teaching and leadership so that change can be sustained by staff and teachers beyond the period of IPG partnership.

The following section provides an overview of the responses of staff members and how they align with the selected providers.
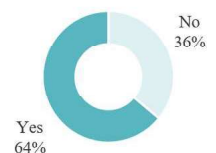
Improved Culture and Climate:
Over 1/3 of school staff surveyed stated that they do not believe that the current culture and climate at the school supports student learning. This is also supported by open-ended survey questions, in which 72% of the responses to

Percentage of Surveyed School & District Staff who Believe the Culture and Climate at the School Supports Student Learning
No 36%
Yes 64%

the question "As the school enters the improvement process, what is the first thing you would like to see change?," reflected a desire to improve school culture and climate. Staff responses noted that they would like to see improvements in discipline practices, staff mindsets and beliefs, improvements in student behavior, and increased ownership and passion for education from the students at the school. DRIVE's expertise in improving culture and climate for all stakeholders including staff, students, and community members aligns with the desires of the staff. DRIVE's Power of Our training incorporates transformational resources and research in the field of educational psychology and organizational culture to build trusting relationships among all stakeholders that results in empowerment of students and teachers and builds a positive culture across the school. The team also has research-validated discipline strategies that will build upon the work staff has done with PBIS. DRIVE's expertise in the area of culture and climate set them apart from other providers and serve as the perfect fit to address the needs of school as reflected by the staff.

Improved Instruction:
Nearly half of the school staff surveyed believe that instruction does not yet meet students' academic needs. Qualitative responses from the survey indicate that the overarching goal of staff is for the IPG to provide additional training for school staff that centers on research-based instructional strategies and that will result in improved student learning for school staff. One staff member's comments reflect their over-arching goals well: "[One of the goals for the grant should be that]…researched-based innovative teaching and learning can take place with [the school to] champion the way to improve students' learning in a way that has not been done before in the state by a public middle school." The staff recommend addressing a variety of instructional areas to accomplish this goal including additional professional learning and training, increased rigor in instruction, strategies to increase student-ownership and buy-in for learning, and methods that will increase student engagement. Ed Direction's services were an ideal match because of the groups' focus on providing job-embedded training on evidence-based instructional practices. The staff were especially impressed by their flexible and adaptable approach to services. Ed Direction does not provide a "one-size fits all model" but instead helps develop and support the instructional systems already in place at the school through a customized approach. Further, the school's administrative leadership has presented a high-level review of IPG priorities and options in the vendor solicitation process. April 22, the team will meet again to review the application a final time before submission.

E-III. The Entity/School must describe actions it has taken, or will take to: a) screen and select the external Partner, b) ensure their quality, and c) regularly review and hold accountable said Partner for their performance and measurable outcomes:

(a) Response: Screen and Select the External Partner
In preparation for applying for this grant, we first explored the needs of the school in order to understand how an external partner might support our improvement efforts. First, school and teacher leaders considered various data points including student achievement data, suspension rates, discipline data, and information from previously conducted surveys such as the staff beliefs survey. The team also administered a survey in the winter of 2020 to a sampling of teachers and key stakeholders to understand the viewpoints of these stakeholders as they relate to the IPG. From there the school determined that the largest areas of need are improved culture and climate, improved collaborative practices, and improved instruction. Ideally, this will lead to increased teacher retention and improved student outcomes. Once priorities were identified, school and district leaders reviewed the information available on each of the potential partners. The group then narrowed the list of the most relevant partners based on 1) how the services provided aligned with the school's areas of need, and 2) their experience successfully addressing similar needs. Using these criteria, the school and district selected both DRIVE and Ed Direction as external partners. The rest of this section will describe in more detail how we selected these partners based on the criteria described above.

Alignment of Services to School Needs

Area of Identified Need: Improved Culture and Climate

DRIVE provides professional learning and coaching, using their Power of Our program and process to help schools improve their climate and culture. Rather than focusing primarily on student behavior, the DRIVE team seeks to shift adult mindsets and beliefs through a proactive approach that combines theory and practical classroom applications which result in real changes to the beliefs and practices of all educators. Based on their data review, the school recognized that there is currently a huge need for mindsets to be shifted and educators within the building to feel empowered to improve student outcomes.

DRIVE's approach to improving school climate and culture is evidence-based. Their strategies and methods are based on Perceptual Control Theory which helps describe the fundamentals of human motivation (Powers, 2015). DRIVE's professional learning and coaching empowers educators with the knowledge and understanding of the theory and psychology behind intrinsic motivation. Through professional learning and coaching they help educators understand the components of intrinsic motivation and how to apply these with their students. This includes developing an understanding of the key elements of intrinsic motivation: belonging, safety, power, freedom and choice, and engagement and fun.

We believe that training and professional development with DRIVE will help build and expand upon the school's ongoing work with PBIS. It will increase the tools and methods that teachers have at their disposal and provide structures and strategies for appropriately handling discipline and student misbehavior. This was a need identified by many teachers in staff surveys and is supported by data. The improved culture and climate in the school will help shift educators' mindsets, provide tools and resources for them to adequately handle student discipline challenges, and provide a foundation for effective instruction and increased rigor in the classroom.

Alignment of Identified Need: Retain Collaborative Educators

In reviewing the data on the school's current challenges, it is apparent that a large percentage of the staff is new to the profession and currently teaching in a highly impacted and challenging environment. The majority of the staff are dedicated to improving; however, the school has not had adequate resources to provide highly impactful training and professional learning opportunities to school staff. Ed Direction provides meaningful professional learning to support meaningful collaboration. This collaboration professional learning not only supports the efficiency and evidence-base of educators' practices, but it also equips faculty who may feel isolated or disengaged to connect through a collaborative effort of improving student outcomes. We appreciated Ed Direction's job-embedded approach to professional development that includes interactive trainings with collaborative coaching. We believe this approach will ensure that the staff receives the necessary supports to successfully implement new practices.

Alignment of Identified Need: Instruction

Ed Direction's model for school support and transformation can be summarized by this simple theory of action: if schools select a narrow set of evidence-based practices that address the root cause issues they face, and implement those practices with depth and fidelity, those schools will help students maximize their achievement. Several elements of this model particularly interested the school and district team. First, Ed Direction's emphasis on evidence-based instructional practices felt like a natural fit. In our search for a partner, we wanted to find someone who would be able to help the school achieve substantial growth in academic achievement in a short amount of time. A focus on evidence-based practices helps ensure that the strategies and practices shared with school staff will impact student learning. Ed Direction also has experience and expertise in a variety of instructional areas. This flexibility will allow the Ed Direction team to be responsive to the school's needs and will enable the school to receive customized training on practices that best align with the needs of the students. This is especially important in a middle school setting so that all teachers can apply effective strategies, regardless of their content area. Secondly, Ed Direction's model focuses on implementation. We appreciated their focus on incorporating elements of improvement science research to help the school develop systems and structures that would support effective implementation of new strategies. After all, simply providing training without supporting effective implementation schoolwide will not result in the desired impacts on instructional practice.

Experience Addressing Similar Needs
Another element that was important in selecting an external partner was their experience working with schools that have similar needs and with similar highly impacted student populations. Both DRIVE and Ed Direction have experience supporting schools with similar challenges and demographics to our school.

DRIVE's senior management has decades of experience in North Carolina public schools at every level, from the classroom to district office administration. Ed Direction has a team of former well-seasoned educators, including former teachers, instructional coaches, school psychologists, principals, district administrators, superintendents, university instructors, and state department of education specialists. Collectively, both the DRIVE and the Ed Direction teams have notable experience serving diverse student populations in urban and suburban districts across the country. Most of DRIVE's work has taken place in the southeast United States with a great concentration in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Their team understands the unique needs of schools across the state of North Carolina, particularly schools that have low student achievement and high rates of discipline incidences and suspensions. This experience is compelling because it aligns with the school's needs and we know that the DRIVE team has demonstrated success with other similar schools. Section E-III(b) below includes several case studies that demonstrate their experience addressing similar needs.

Ed Direction has worked with more than 1,000 schools in over 100 districts across the nation and internationally. Much of their work has resulted in successfully improving student outcomes in some of the most highly impacted and lowest performing schools across the nation. We appreciated their team's experience partnering with Turnaround and Comprehensive Support and Improvement schools in Utah, North Dakota, and Illinois with great success. As one of the lowest performing schools in the state, we wanted a partner with a track record of improving student outcomes at schools that were similarly low performing. Case studies for this work will be included in Section E-III(b) below. Additionally, leaders of the Ed Direction team have served as thought partners in the field of education. Particularly relevant to us is their expertise in developing and implementing data-driven instructional systems. Members of the Ed Direction Team have published articles and books on the subject and have extensive experience implementing these practices in schools across the nation. We appreciate this experience because of the school's desire to improve instruction and support implementation of schoolwide priorities through increased data-use in PLCs and as a School Improvement Team. The school leader has prioritized this area as a focus for the past several years, and the school is eager to build on this foundation to further refine their practices.

(b) Response: Ensure Quality of the External Partners
As described in Section E-III (a) above, one of the primary criteria the school and district used in selecting an external partner was the past results and demonstrated experience improving outcomes for students and teachers in other similar settings. We explored case studies provided by our partners, and in some cases contacted references to ensure the quality of our partners. The following section describes several of the case studies we found most relevant to the school's needs.

DRIVE Case Studies
Case Study #1: South Asheboro Middle School
DRIVE supported South Asheboro Middle School (Asheboro, NC) with a focus on shifting their culture away from compliance and control into full engagement and empowerment of students and staff. After building strong collegial relationships in year one, both DRIVE and the school team realized that there were major achievement gaps between white and black subgroups. The DRIVE team supported the school in a thorough analysis of schoolwide data. From this analysis, they found that there were also overwhelmingly

disproportionate discipline rates between white and black subgroups. Black students made up 18% of the overall student population but 60% of the total office referrals. A comprehensive support initiative was designed to transform the discipline framework at the school to attempt to problem solve for this discrepancy and impact the overall achievement of all subgroups. Results of these comprehensive interventions are summarized below.

CATEGORY	2012-2013 SY	2014-2015 SY	CHANGE
Math 1 Percent Proficient	43	88	17.3% increase
Science Percent Proficient	39	70	17.6% increase
Math Composite	23	47	34.9% increase
Reading Composite	37	56	34.7% increase
Reading Growth Index	-1.9 (Not Met)	3.2 (Exceeded)	n/a
Math Growth Index	-5.8 (Not Met)	2.9 (Exceeded)	n/a
Discipline Incidents	762	136	82.8% decrease
Risk Ratio for Black Students	3.2	1.8	43.7% decrease

We found DRIVE's work with South Asheboro Middle School (NC) compelling because of their careful attention to student subgroups. As demonstrated by the data on sub-group growth in section D-I, there are discrepancies that the school has identified between the growth of black and economically disadvantaged student subgroups with these groups achieving much lower growth rates. We hope to engage in a similar analysis with the DRIVE team to identify how to best support various subgroups at the school. Additionally, this case study aligns with our desire to improve school culture and climate and decrease suspensions and discipline referrals. The drastic decrease in discipline referrals along with the improvement in student achievement appealed to us.

Ed Direction Case Studies
Case Study: Utah School Turnaround
Ed Direction's team served as turnaround experts for 15 out of 25 schools in the first cohort of Utah's School Turnaround program. These schools represented the bottom 3% of schools in Utah and ranged from large urban public schools to a small, rural high school serving primarily Native American students. Over the course of the 3-year program, Ed Direction's partners experienced significant increases in proficiency when compared to state averages. The graph below showcases the percent change in proficiency of Ed Direction's Turnaround partners, compared to the average percent change statewide over the same time period. Additionally, out of these 15 schools, nearly 75% grew at least one letter grade and exited Turnaround status, while the majority of the remaining schools qualified for an extension in the Turnaround project due to measurable growth.

Percent Change in Proficiency
2014-15 to 2017-18
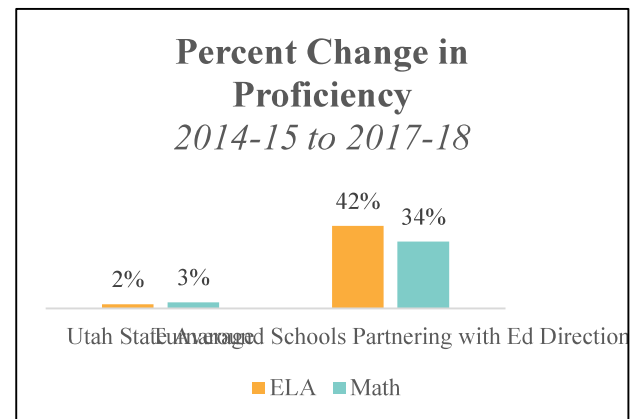
Our team was particularly interested in Ed Direction's work with several middle schools during the Turnaround program. The impact of their work with these middle schools is found below.

School Name &	Unique Characteristics & Demographics	Growth and Progress Made

Dates of Partnership		
Mana Academy 2016-2018	• Urban, Public Charter, K-8 • 82% of students meet federal criteria for economically disadvantaged • 97% identified as ethnic minority (58% Pacific Islander, 34% Latinx) • 15% English Learners status	• Exited Turnaround • School Grade Improvement: F to a C • ELA: 6% to 27% proficiency • Math: 2% to 21% proficiency • Science: 1% to 17% proficiency
Mont Harmon Middle School 2016-2018	• Rural, Public District School • 45% of students meet federal criteria for economically disadvantaged • 17% identified as ethnic monitories • 3% English Learner stats	• Exited Turnaround • School Grade Improvement: D to an A • ELA: 34% to 48% proficiency • Math: 31% to 39% proficiency
Thomas Jefferson Junior High School 2015-2018	• Suburban, Public District School • 60% of students meet federal criteria for economically disadvantaged • 51% identified as ethnic minorities • 13% English Learner status	• Exited Turnaround • School Grade Improvement: D to a C • ELA: 19% to 25% proficiency • Math: 22% to 26% proficiency
West Lake Junior High School 2015-2018	• Suburban, Public District School • 84% of students meet federal criteria for economically disadvantaged • 76% identified as ethnic minorities • 25% English Learner status	• Exited Turnaround • School Grade Improvement: D to a B • ELA: 14% to 26% • Math: 18% to 20%

These results demonstrate that Ed Direction's team is model for support has helped facilitate meaningful improvements in student outcomes among many low-performing schools. We were particularly impressed by the variety of middle schools that the team had worked with and the growth that was demonstrated by each of them.

(c) Response: Regularly Review and Hold Accountable Said Partner for Their Performance and Measurable Outcomes

In order to review the impact and success of both our external partners, we intend to collect a variety of data aligned to the schoolwide priorities over the course of the partnership. We intend to hold our partners accountable to helping the school achieve their goals, using the same measures that we will use to measure growth and progress. We will use interim measures of progress based on student performance and initiatives tied directly to IPG priorities. This data will also inform the school improvement process and will help the School Improvement Team plan, implement, and monitor schoolwide priorities.

The district plans to meet at least quarterly with the School Improvement Team, external partners, and district representatives to review relevant data, discuss the needs of the school, and align efforts on how to best support the school throughout the IPG partnership. Other stakeholders, such as parents and community members will be invited to participate as representatives on the School Improvement Team. During these meetings we will be able to discuss the challenges the school is having with implementation and make plans for how to improve the efficacy of the partnership. At present, staff meet regularly in PLCs to analyze data, discuss solutions, and improve instruction – these meetings will continue to occur. The School Improvement Team will review progress towards 90-day plans on a monthly basis. The IPG coach, partner

coaches, and select school staff will also track progress using the North Carolina Star (NCStar). The district will be included in all progress monitoring. Ultimately, partner performance will be evaluated based on student performance, which will be reviewed annually.

The following table showcases some of the data points we intend to collect to measure growth and progress.

Area of Focus	Measures Used to Review Progress Toward Goals and Performance of External Partner
Improved Culture and Climate • Decrease in student suspensions • Decrease in disruptive behavior • Increase in positive climate and culture as measured by surveys and external assessment	• Data collected on student suspensions • Student and teacher attendance data • Data on office referrals • Surveys administered to measure stakeholder, including student, input on climate and culture • External climate and culture root cause analysis process administered by DRIVE/Ed Direction annually
Retain Collaborative Educators • Improved collaborative practices • Increased support through professional learning and coaching • Improved retention and effectiveness of school staff	• Observation data collected from School Improvement and PLC meetings related to effective meeting practices • Staff surveys satisfaction surveys and surveys related to professional learning and coaching support • Artifacts to demonstrate effective coaching (i.e. coaching logs, goals set/accomplished, etc.) • Teacher attendance and retention data
Improved Instruction • Implementation of evidence-based instructional practices • Improved use of strategies for differentiated learning • Increased student engagement and instructional rigor	• Student achievement data including but not limited to schoolwide benchmarks and state assessment data • Review of artifacts including but not limited to classroom walkthroughs, lesson plan review, classroom observations • Student engagement data collected by Ed Direction partners using validated student engagement observation tool • Attendance data • External root cause analysis process administered by DRIVE/Ed Direction annually

E-IV. The School must describe actions it has taken, or will take, to design and implement a plan consistent with the research-based school improvement strategies and interventions the proposed Partner offers:

(a) Response:
In preparation for this grant application, the school and district created a preliminary plan for improvement if awarded the IPG. Part of this process included a thorough review of the available data including past needs assessments, data from state assessments, and surveys and information from key stakeholders including school staff, community members, families, and students. From this data, we identified the "excellence gaps" identified in Section D of this application including: 1) improved climate and culture, 2) improved instruction, and 3) support, empower, and retain teachers. We then created a preliminary plan that details proposed goals for each year of the partnership and describes how we hope to address each of the

excellence gaps together with our external partners. Throughout the partnership, data will continue to be leveraged to track process and shape revisions. Sustainability is key, and plans have been designed to involve key actions that demonstrate to the school how to continue to address climate and culture, instruction, and staff development beyond this partnership. You will see that Year 3's plan is particularly focused on sustainability and our partners' purposeful release of leadership and management key actions to school staff and teachers. Each year we have planned a primary area of focus, which will receive the most time and attention during professional learning and coaching, as well as a secondary area of focus that will be addressed but on a less intensive level. Support for teachers is embedded throughout both goals and throughout the school improvement process. The IPG coach will play a lead role throughout this proposal as this individual will maintain focus on these priorities through all coaching and action so faculty can feel successful.

Year 1: Primary Focus – Climate and Culture

Area of Focus	Key Actions
Improved Climate and Culture	*Primary Area of Focus for Year 1* • Update infrastructure with paint and murals and related deliberate design • Professional learning and coaching on DRIVE's Power of Our principles • Revisit the existing PBIS system through a root cause analysis to understand its strengths and opportunities to improve especially with the objectives of refining the school's discipline process, decreasing negative student behaviors, and suspensions. This serves as a foundation to a Response to Intervention model which can begin to be implemented through this process • Develop a more cohesive staff culture through participation in DRIVE professional learning and job-embedded coaching, and support from IPG coach
Retain Collaborative Educators	*Embedded Throughout* • Professional learning and coaching tied to collaborative practices for both the School Improvement Team and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) • Facilitate root cause analysis of current collaborative practices to understand strengths and gaps in structures • Provide professional learning to School Improvement Team members to help them understand their role and purpose in the school improvement process, effective meeting practices, and application of each to refine how exploring schoolwide student performance data informs action • Strategic coaching for the school leader, SIT, PLCs, and IPG coach where appropriate
Improved Instruction	*Secondary Area of Focus for Year 1* • Professional learning and coaching on evidence-based practices to build off of the current lesson planning structure the school has in place; leverage Teacher Clarity as a mechanism to have teachers strengthen data-driven and standards-based instruction • Ensure solid implementation of past schoolwide priorities including weekly lesson plans, differentiated instruction, and utilizing varied levels of Webb's Depth of Knowledge • Facilitated root cause analysis to understand current instructional practices producing both individual and team data that can be utilized in coaching conversations

Year 2: Primary Focus – Instruction

Area of Focus	Key Actions
Improved Climate and Culture	*Secondary Area of Focus for Year 2* • Continue professional learning and coaching on DRIVE's Power of Our principles based on Year 1 implementation • Monitor discipline processes with a goal of continuing to decrease negative student behaviors and suspensions. Implement Response to Intervention comprehensively including PBIS system and begin gradual release from learning partners to school • Identify and implement ways to build positive relationships among families, community members and other stakeholders
Retain Collaborative Educators	*Embedded Throughout* • Continue providing professional learning and coaching to school staff on strategies tied to meaningful collaboration • Use video analysis or equivalent for staff to self-reflect on the effectiveness of their collaborative practices • Provide professional learning to School Improvement Team members to help them begin to lead out in the work of the school improvement process. SIT members collaborate increasingly with learning partners to facilitate professional learning • Strategic coaching for the school leader, SIT, PLCs, and IPG coach where appropriate
Improved Instruction	*Primary Area of Focus for Year 2* • Implement peer-to-peer professional learning structures such as learning walkthroughs so that staff can learn from and with their colleagues • Use data from Year 1 implementation to identify the next steps for evidence-based instructional priorities • Create a plan to implement the evidence-based instructional priorities • Provide professional learning and coaching tied to selected priorities • Continue professional learning and coaching for PLC's including effective data use to drive instruction

Year 3: Primary Focus— Sustainability
*Emphasis will be determined based on implementation progress from Year 2

Area of Focus	Key Actions
Improved Climate and Culture	*Secondary Area of Focus for Year 3* • Ensure full implementation of Power of Our strategies among school staff • Continued coaching and monitoring related to culture and climate • Continue to maintain positive relationships among all stakeholders including staff, students, parents, and community members. • Complete gradual release of Response to Intervention framework and related practices • Continue positive stakeholder relationships among families and community members
Retain Collaborative Educators	*Embedded Throughout* • Continue providing professional learning and coaching to school staff on strategies tied to meaningful collaboration • Finalize and complete video analysis or equivalent system to support peer reflection and sustainable collaboration

Improved Instruction	• Provide professional learning to School Improvement Team members to help them begin to lead out in the work of the school improvement process. SIT members lead out in professional learning for staff • Strategic coaching for the school leader, SIT, PLCs, and IPG coach where appropriate
	Primary Area of Focus for Year 1 • Use data from Year 2 implementation to identify the next steps for evidence-based instructional priorities • Create a plan to implement the evidence-based instructional priorities • Provide professional learning and coaching tied to selected priorities • Continue professional learning and coaching for PLC's including effective data use to drive instruction

As we apply for this grant, we recognize that we have just begun the planning process and have not yet incorporated key stakeholders in this initial plan, including the School Improvement Team, families, and community members. In order to build upon, refine, and bring to life this preliminary plan, the school plans to engage in the following planning process, led by the School Improvement Team each year. We hope to incorporate the following elements of effective school improvement planning, borrowed from our Ed Direction partners: 1) Collect and analyze data through a root cause analysis, 2) Select strategies to address the root cause, and 3) Develop improvement plans.

1. Engage in a Root Cause Analysis: The root cause analysis will help the school understand why areas of underperformance identified in this grant application exist. At the beginning of each year, our learning partners will help facilitate a root cause analysis that will help the school understand why they currently are underperforming in these areas. This process begins with our external partners gathering and presenting a thorough analysis of data including teacher and leader interviews, focus groups with staff, students, parents, and other key stakeholders, as well as surveys. Additionally, their team will conduct classroom observations. This will provide the School Improvement Team will a detailed picture of the school's assets and challenges that fully reflects the beliefs and views of all stakeholders. Following this, the School Improvement Team will engage in a root cause analysis protocol, facilitated by Ed Direction, to analyze the data to identify the key problems of practice within the school and explore the root causes of each of the problems. This will help the team select the right evidence-based strategies to target the root causes and address the problems of practice.

2. Select Strategies to Address the Root Cause: The plan above mainly notes the areas of focus, but it does not yet identify which specific strategies will be implemented to drive improvement in those areas of focus. Once we understand the root causes our identified areas of improvement, the School Improvement Team will work with Ed Direction and DRIVE to identify evidence-based strategies to implement schoolwide that align with our most pressing needs.

3. Develop Improvement Plans: With support from Ed Direction and DRIVE, the School Improvement Team will create improvement plans that bring the selected strategies to life. They will own and author an overall school improvement plan that will outline how they will address priorities over a longer term, such as an entire school year. We intend to use the North Carolina Star (NCStar) system and the processes we have used in the past to create this plan. The team will also create more regular implementation plans, on at least a 90-day timeline. The 90-day plans will help the School Improvement Team break down the school improvement plan into manageable chunks that will define measurable goals, owners, deadlines, measures, and planned supports. Ed Direction coaches will support the School Improvement Team to utilize a continuous improvement process to implement small steps towards our overall goal quickly, reflect regularly on progress and impact, and make adjustments along the way.

F. CAPACITY: The Entity must demonstrate that it has the capacity to implement the research-based improvement strategies identified with the Partner and describe how resources will be leveraged to support full and effective implementation.

Maximum point value for this section is 16.

F-I. The Entity must describe the Entity's capacity to provide adequate resources and related support to the CSI School in order to implement, fully and effectively, the necessary research-based school improvement strategies and interventions of the Partner beginning on the first day of the first school year of implementation (Include examples of resources to be leveraged to support the CSI School.):

(a) Response: The district is fully prepared to support the school in their IPG participation and has adequate resources to ensure the school is set up to be successful in the project. The district wants to play an active role as thought partner throughout school leaders' decision process to ensure the school leaders feel supported in their actions and efforts.

To ensure the school has needed resources, the district will grant the school leadership autonomy with which to determine how to allocate funds from the IPG (based on the parameters this application includes). The school can utilize a combination of CSI and Title I funds, and the district will work with the school to see if Title IV or equivalent funding will provide the school with what they need especially if they determine a new curriculum or related technology is appropriate beyond the scope of this grant. We do not anticipate this will be the case based on anticipated need and opportunity the IPG provides.

To be ready to begin day 1, the district will have already played a role in the school's improvement efforts. District leaders will participate in summer professional learning, attend School Improvement Team meetings, and otherwise have a presence throughout the process. We have already participated in the selection process for the school's vendors and appreciate the evidence-base they will bring to professional learning and coaching services. We will provide the school with the operational flexibility to complete the hiring process in a timely manner that does not interfere with the start of the school year. Should current COVID-19 isolation conditions continue at the start of the school year, we will be responsive and plan proactively with the school and learning partners to ensure this potential scenario does not interfere with a strong start to the project. Part of the appeal of the learning partners we selected is that they have expertise providing remote learning supports.

We will do our best to support faculty retention and approve the stipend structure embedded in this IPG application. To support the onboarding of new team members, we will ensure the highest quality applicants are considered for the IPG coach position. If the school requires additional supports for any new hires during the IPG application process, we are available as needed.

The district has two team members, directors of Title I and Comprehensive Support, who will play active roles supporting the school. Always, one team member will attend key events including School Improvement Team meetings, professional learning sessions, and related activities tied to the IPG. Ideally, both team members will attend, but in a worst-case scenario, there will always be one.

F-II. The Entity/Schools must describe the actions the Entity/School has taken (or will take) to align other resources (for example, Title I or CSI funding, etc.) with the selected intervention:

(a) Response: The entity has reviewed available funding with the school to ensure resources from Title I, Title IV, and CSI are available and provide the appropriate support the school requires to have successful

engagement in this school improvement project. The intervention is funded fully by the IPG application budget and the available funding from CSI.

G: IMPLEMENTATION: The Entity/School must meaningfully engage all stakeholders, including families and communities in the implementation of the reforms, as well as, have a plan in place to ensure effective oversight of, support for, and implementation fidelity of the proposed research-based strategies.

Maximum point value for this section is 48.

G-I. The Entity/School must describe how the school will meaningfully engage (a) families and the (b) community in the implementation of the selected research-based school improvement strategies on an ongoing basis:

(a) Response: Families
In order to meaningfully engage families in the implementation of the selected research-based strategies the school will utilize and refine structures already in place and explore new family engagement practices. We are eager to work with our partners to improve engagement with families because there is a positive and convincing relationship between family involvement and student success, regardless of race/ethnicity, class, or parents' level of education (Mapp, 2002).

Utilize and Refine Current Structures: The school has several governing bodies that include parents and can support school improvement efforts. First, the school has a School Improvement Team in place that includes parents, grade level chairs, and other key personnel at the school. This team meets bi-monthly and provides input on school improvement plans and helps monitor improvement efforts. The school also has a Parent Advisory Council in place that meets five times per year. This body provides valuable input on needs currently facing the students and provides advice and input on how to best bring school improvement priorities to life. The school also sends out stakeholder surveys at least annually to solicit parent input from a broader audience who may not be able to engage in these councils. Moving forward, surveys will include additional questions tied to school improvement priorities. The school has found that these structures have been helpful in implementing school improvement initiatives, however, they believe there are always opportunities to refine and grow. School leaders plan to work with external partners to identify ways to better engage families using these current structures. This will likely be a part of the root cause analysis assessment administered by external partners at the beginning of the partnership.

Develop Additional Ways to Engage Families: The school will also explore new ways to engage and partner with families throughout the school improvement process and hopes to leverage the expertise of both external partners in understanding how to engage families in the school improvement process. DRIVE's services include a Family Education Initiative which includes collaboration among faculty and staff to develop and provide structured educational opportunities for families of enrolled students. The training includes opportunities for staff and stakeholders to build trusting relationships, expand communication channels, and understand their joint roles in supporting students. We also plan to streamline and improve communication channels, especially tied to schoolwide goals. This will be done through a variety of methods including newsletters and celebrations shared via text message or email.

(b) Response: Community
While the school has many avenues for engaging parents in the school improvement process, there are opportunities to more fully engage the community in supporting implementation of school improvement initiatives. The school plans to bring community members into the planning process (a representative will be invited to participate in the School Improvement Team) and will identify which governing body would be the best way to facilitate this. The school will reach out to community organizations such as local mental health agencies who frequently provide services to students, community and after school organizations, and other community agencies that provide wraparound services to students and their families within the community. We will invite these groups to participate in a governing council to provide input on and support with implementation of schoolwide priorities, and we will communicate with them regularly about progress made towards schoolwide goals. Additionally, we will invite relevant community organizations to attend schoolwide trainings. For example, mental health workers may appreciate understanding the schoolwide framework/process for discipline and would be invited to those trainings, while after school programs may benefit from understanding the school's current instructional priorities and could receive training on that in order to integrate these strategies into tutoring or after school programs.

G-II. The School must describe how it will implement, in accordance with its selected IPG Partner, one or more research-based school-improvement strategies.

(a) Response:
Doug Reeves (2007) captured the common challenges with implementation: "Every organization—indeed, every person—suffers to some degree from a gap between intention and action." The knowing and doing gap described by this quote unfortunately exists in most school improvement efforts as well. Leaders and teachers usually understand what to do, but we often fail to see best practices implemented schoolwide for a variety of reasons ranging from the beliefs and mindsets of school staff, capabilities and opportunities for training and support, and competing interests for time and resources. We recognize the many challenges of implementing new strategies and systems at scale within a school and understand that implementation of effective strategies will be the primary challenge in helping the school achieve its ambitious goal of excellence in all things. We have selected both Ed Direction and DRIVE as improvement partners because of their demonstrated experience in developing the systems, structures, beliefs, and mindsets necessary to support effective implementation. These partners understand not only *what* practices will make a difference; they also pay careful attention to *how* schools are implementing these practices. The Ed Direction team are experts at applying the principles of improvement science to school systems and they have experience doing this work in some of the nation's most challenging contexts, while DRIVE's team members support staff in developing the mindsets and culture necessary for change.

The school, with support from Ed Direction and DRIVE, will utilize several methods to implement research-based improvement strategies to address the excellence gaps in culture and climate, instruction, and teacher support, empowerment, and retention. These methods include:
- Building the beliefs and mindsets necessary for change
- Engaging in a continuous improvement process to plan, implement, and monitor school improvement priorities
- Establishing and refining collaborative systems
- Facilitating Collaborative Coaching among teachers, school leaders, and coaches

Building the Beliefs and Mindsets Necessary for Change

An important part of the improvement process will be developing the mindsets and beliefs among staff necessary to promote change. The school recognizes that there is still ample work to be done with school staff to address some of the fixed-mindset beliefs some staff hold about students and the improvement process. As explained in Section D, data from the beliefs survey indicate that many staff do not yet believe that certain student groups at the school are capable of learning. With a partnership with DRIVE focused on improving the school culture and climate, the Principal hopes to build upon the work done over the past three years to address these beliefs and shift mindsets. The school recognizes that without a culture shift, these beliefs can serve as a barrier for effective implementation. The school plans to take a proactive approach to building their culture and collective efficacy, which has a strong impact on improved student outcomes (Hattie, 2012). In partnership with DRIVE, the school will develop tangible steps and strategies to improve the school climate and foster the mindsets necessary for successful school improvement, centered around the following:

Building Identify *Individual, Classroom, School*	Institute daily habits, routines, and traditions that affirm the value of the individual, the shared bond within the classroom, and the collective identity of the institution.
Fostering Trust *Teacher to Student, Student to Student, and Teacher to Teacher*	Build and maintain trust through transparent communication, clear expectations, and shared responsibility. Saturate daily rhythms with practices that are proven to help strengthen trust.
Empowering Ability *Academic and Emotional*	Provide tools and mechanisms to practice social and emotional learning. Stoke internal motivation for relational success and academic potential with affirming words, challenging exercises, and exploration of potential.

Engaging in a Continuous Improvement Process to Plan, Implement, and Monitor School Improvement Priorities

A critical part of the IPG partnership is developing the processes, structures, and systems to promote continued growth and improvement that can be sustained long after the partnership ends. In order to support effective implementation and drive continuous improvement, the school will engage in Rapid Improvement Cycles to plan, implement, and monitor goals. Based upon the principles of improvement science, Ed Direction's Rapid Improvement Cycle serves as a framework to understand the process of data-driven improvement. The framework helps teams understand how to use data to drive meaningful change, whether it be for school improvement priorities or for addressing learning gaps for individual students. Ed Direction will coach our leaders and teachers how to use this framework as a guide for effective data-driven implementation and improvement both individually and collectively at every level of the school system, including school improvement planning, using data in collaborative meetings, driving improvement through instructional coaching, and instructional planning for individual teachers.
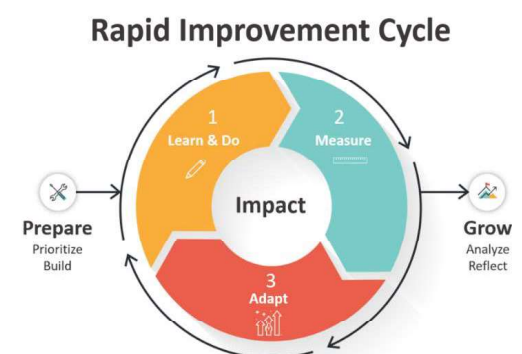
The figure to the above illustrates the Rapid Improvement Cycle process, which is broken into three key phases: Prepare, Impact, and Grow. The table below describes the primary actions taken by educators at each phase of the process.

Prepare	Impact	Grow
Educators prepare for implementation. First, they explore the needs of their school/students and narrow their focus to a few key priorities to address that will lead to improvement. Then, they build a plan for implementation of the identified priorities.	Educators implement their plan by learning about new strategies and practices, trying the new strategies and practices with feedback and support, and then measuring the impact of the new strategies. As they gather and analyze data, they determine how they need to adapt implementation to provide additional supports and more targeted training. Teams repeat the cycle continuously until practices are implemented.	After repeating the impact cycle to achieve the desired level of implementation, teams will meet together to reflect on what they learned throughout the process of implementation. They apply this new learning to the next cycle and for future improvement strategies.

Establishing and Refining Collaborative Systems

We know that effective school turnaround cannot be accomplished by leaders or teachers working in isolation. Implementation of school improvement priorities must leverage and develop all stakeholders in order for system-wide improvement to occur. The school currently has a number of collaborative structures already in place and we hope to use Ed Direction's model for collaborative structures and systems to refine the practices of both school and district leaders to better support effective implementation of school improvement efforts. Ed Direction's model is built upon three sustainable and inclusive levels of support and collaboration:

- **A District Transformation Team** that provides system support beyond the school-based team. This team will be developed upon award of the grant and will be comprised of a few (2-3) key district personnel.
- **A School Improvement Team** of school-based leaders, including the Principal and teacher leaders who represent each of the grade-level or content area teams of the school. This team is already in place and is eager and ready to learn how to become more impactful in leading school improvement efforts.
- **Professional Learning Communities** (PLCs) where every teacher in the building is included in ongoing collaborative inquiry to make important decisions about instruction. These teams are already in place and will receive ongoing support and coaching to refine their collaborative practices.

Facilitating Collaborative Coaching Among Teachers, School Leaders, and Coaches

Providing effective training and support to teachers is a primary goal of the IPG partnership in order to empower and retain teachers and address their varied needs. Operational flexibilities (previously described in Section D) such as weekend and summer trainings, scheduling flexibilities, and curriculum flexibilities will further support Ed Direction's ability to engage school and district leaders and facilitate practicing new concepts. We recognize that simply providing training on new practices will not ensure that they stick. Professional learning efforts that embed ongoing, in-class coaching result in much higher levels of implementation (Joyce & Showers, 2003). The graphic to the right describes the varying levels of implementation after various types of professional learning. Professional learning that only includes theory and discussion results in about 10% implementation, whereas, professional learning that embeds new theory and discussion, demonstration, practice, with ongoing coaching results in 95% implementation.

We have already invested in two site-based curriculum coaches and are eager to utilize the IPG coach, along with support from our external partners, to bolster our coaching efforts. Coaching will play a large role in providing job-embedded learning to staff so that they can effectively implement school improvement priorities. We plan to integrate Ed Direction's Collaborative Coaching Model, which promotes a collaborative partnership-based approach to coaching in which both the coach and educator partner together to explore and implement new practices that will improve student learning. In order to build capacity and support implementation at all levels of the school system, coaching will be provided for principals, teachers, teacher teams, and the IPG coach, as described below:

- *Principals* - The Principal will regularly work the Ed Direction Coach who will serve as a facilitator and support throughout the project. During coaching sessions, the Principal will be supplied with the resources and training on evidence-based leadership principles including: establishing goals and expectations, resourcing strategically, ensuring quality teaching, leading teacher learning and development, and ensuring a safe and orderly environment (Robinson, 2011).
- *Teachers* – Site-based coaches and the school's teachers will consistently work together to analyze and set goals related to classroom student data. Both external partners and site-based coaches, including the IPG coach, will support staff as they build and develop their classroom culture through DRIVE's Power of Our strategies and implement evidence-based instructional strategies to improve instruction.
- *Teaching Teams* - The Collaborative Coaching model will be used to refine the meeting practices of PLCs and the School Improvement Team to maximize their collaborative time and impact. Coaches will support teams to become more data-driven, engaged and efficient, and committed to actions that will impact student learning.
- *IPG Coach and Curriculum Coaches*– The IPG Coach and curriculum coaches will engage in Collaborative Coaching Cycles with Ed Direction coaches related to their coaching practice. Coaching is a skill, and just as any other skill, can be developed through ongoing training, feedback, and practice. Ed Direction will support coaches to understand and apply effective coaching methods, thus building the capacity of a coach who will remain at the school to support with implementation after the project ends.

G-III. The Entity must describe how it will provide a) effective oversight and b) support for implementation of the research-based school improvement strategies if this school is awarded the IPG:

(a) Response: The district is prepared to engage fully in their partnership with the school through this IPG opportunity. Once the IPG is awarded, district representatives will consistently attend relevant activities including professional learning, team meetings, community activities, and related actions tied to achieving each priority through the IPG process. The district will help design and also support the implementation of the schoolwide vision in the partnership. The district partners will keep track of funds, ensure all funds align including funding from Title I and CSI. District partners will attend any meetings relevant to the school's participation in IPG at the state level and serve as steadfast advocates for the school and its improvement efforts. District partners will also be a through line for the Principal in her leadership efforts including that with local decision making, funding, alignment, and coherence. Two district leaders can fulfill this role and will work to ensure there is regular coherence with the school in both of their efforts.

(b) Response: If the school is awarded the IPG, the district will support implementation of each research-based school improvement strategy through the priorities identified in section G-III (a) but also through regular progress monitoring both of the school and of the learning partners.

G-IV. The School must include a timeline delineating the steps it will take to implement the selected research-based strategies identified in the application.

        2020–2021 (Full Implementation Year):
        (a) Response: 2020-2021
The school will follow a clear cadence and process, year after year, for implementing their selected research-based strategies. The timeline and actions taken for implementation will be cyclical in order to ensure that teams are regularly monitoring and adjusting their plans based on what they learn from implementation. We believe that the repetition of key actions will ensure that all stakeholders have plenty of practice, repetition, and feedback to fully understand and develop ownership of the improvement process. Because of the cyclical nature of the improvement process, the steps taken each year to implement selected research-based strategies will follow a similar pattern and will be repeated year after year, with a different emphasis or focus. For simplicity we have created a comprehensive table that outlines the steps the school will take during ALL years of the partnership, which details the proposed work of Ed Direction and DRIVE. The table is found below. In sections G-IV (b) and (c) we will describe how these steps will be adjusted in Years 2 and 3 to sustainably implement the improvement process and ensure that responsibility and oversight of activities are gradually passed to school leadership, so that schools will be set up for success after the partnership ends.

Timeline	Activity
School Improvement Planning and Progress Monitoring	
August-September	**Root Cause Analysis & Progress Monitoring:** The school will undergo a root cause analysis to identify assets and challenges in key areas of school improvement: instruction, collaboration, leadership, climate and culture. Data will be gathered from key stakeholders including leaders, teachers, families, students, and community members. Findings from this collection will be compiled and shared with all relevant stakeholders including staff, family, and community members. Following the data-collection, the School Improvement Team will engage in a Root Cause Analysis Protocol to identify the root causes of underperformance at the school and select strategies that will address these challenges. In Years 2 & 3 a similar process will be conducted to monitor progress, where our Year 1 root cause analysis will serve as the baseline.
September	**Creation of School Improvement Plan and 1st 90-day Plan (September-November):** The School Improvement Team will meet to develop an overall School Improvement Plan that will prioritize goals for the duration of the IPG Partnership. Following this, the team will create a 90-day Implementation Plan that describes how the school will implement and monitor progress towards the overall goals within the first 90-days of the school year.
Ongoing	**Implementation of 90-day Plan:** *Plan and Implement:* Staff will address the first set of priorities and goals outlined in the 90-day plan. Through professional learning and coaching, staff will learn and implement new practices. The School Improvement Team and school administrators will meet regularly to analyze implementation data related to the goals and adjust implementation as needed. DRIVE and Ed Direction will support the leadership in consistently establishing a routine of the bi-weekly check-ins to align the school with district and statewide expectations regarding the utilization of the NCStar tool.

	Reflect on Implementation: At the end of each quarter the School Improvement Team as well as district liaisons will meet to reflect on progress made towards the 90-day plan goals. They will follow a process to identify accomplished tasks and adjustments that need to be made towards the goals based on implementation. *Create a New Plan:* Following the reflection, the School Improvement Team will identify priorities for the next 90-day plan. As they plan, they will consider how to build upon priorities that they are implementing and determine next steps for supports. Plans will articulate clear owners for tasks, deadlines, data to be collected, and necessary supports to achieve goals.
Sep. - Nov.	**Implementation of 1ˢᵗ 90-day Plan** November: reflection and creation of new plan
Dec. – Feb.	**Implementation of 2ⁿᵈ 90-day Plan** February: reflection and creation of new plan
March-May	**Implementation of 3ʳᵈ 90-day Plan** May: reflection and creation of new plan for the fall
Quarterly	**Quarterly Report to State/District Partners:** Ed Direction and DRIVE, in collaboration with school leaders, the IPG coach, and the School Improvement Team, will create a report on progress that will be submitted to relevant stakeholders in the IPG process including district and state leaders.
Twice Monthly	**School Improvement Team Meetings:** The School Improvement Team will meet to analyze implementation data tied to schoolwide priorities and will determine needed actions to support implementation. Ed Direction and/or DRIVE coaches will provide support and coaching to the School Improvement Team at least monthly.
Monthly	**Progress Monitoring Data Collected:** The School Improvement Team or PLCs will collect and analyze formative progress monitoring data related to each schoolwide priority at least monthly to measure the impact and progress towards their improvement goals.

Timeline	Activity
	Professional Learning & Coaching
August	**Professional Learning: Teacher Preparation Days** DRIVE and Ed Direction will provide training at the beginning of the school year on topics that will support the implementation of school improvement priorities. While we will solidify specific priorities after the root cause analysis, we want to capitalize on the time we have to train staff related to some key elements of implementation before the beginning of the year. Initial trainings will likely be focused on culture and climate. In ongoing years, priorities for professional learning will be determined based on relevant data, including data gathered during the root cause analysis, and needs identified throughout planning and implementation.
	Professional Learning: School Improvement Team Training Led by Ed Direction and DRIVE, the School Improvement Team will engage in professional learning tied to effective implementation of school improvement priorities. While more specific details for this session will be determined upon award, we anticipate initial Year 1 trainings will be focused on building capacity around improved climate and culture and refining collaborative practices of the School Improvement Team. Year 2 priorities will likely center on implementing evidence-based instructional strategies, based on implementation in Year 1.

Weekly	**Collaborative Coaching – Teachers and Teams:** Teachers and teams will receive ongoing coaching, weekly, throughout the project. Based on the schoolwide priorities coaching will be provided by DRIVE coaches to support effective climate and culture or Ed Direction coaches to support effective instruction and refined systems and structures. The school will set establish a clear plan for the focus of coaching cycles and the appropriate partner will provide coaching based on the focus. Curriculum coaches and the IPG coach will co-coach with external partners when they are on site and provide coaching to teams to support continued implementation and provide ongoing feedback each week when external partners are not on site.
Twice Monthly	**Collaborative Coaching –School Leaders:** Ed Direction will provide coaching to school leaders to support them as they lead school improvement efforts. Leaders will explore evidence-based leadership practices and troubleshoot challenges to implementation.
Quarterly (plus additional as needed)	**Professional Learning: Ongoing** Staff will receive professional learning tied to school improvement priorities at least quarterly, as determined by the School Improvement Team during the planning process. Professional learning in Year 1 will primarily be provided by Ed Direction and DRIVE, with school and teacher leaders determining the focus. In Years 2 & 3, school staff will begin to take more of an active role in planning and facilitating professional learning as a part of the gradual release process, with support from external partners.

2021–2022 (Full Implementation Year):

(b) Response:

The actions taken to implement the selected priorities will be similar year after year, as described in Section G-IV (a). Please see the tables above to understand the steps that will be taken by the school to implement their selected priorities in the 2021-2022 school year. During Year 2, the school will continue to engage in a regular process for school improvement planning, implementation, and progress monitoring and will also engage in regular professional learning and coaching. The key difference between Year 1 and Year 2 is that the school's external partners will begin to shift more of the responsibility for owning and leading out in the work of school improvement through a gradual release model. In Year 2, additional emphasis will be paid to empowering the School Improvement Team and the IPG coach to begin to plan and facilitate some aspects of professional learning and the school improvement planning process. In Year 2, explicit training for any new school staff will take place. For example, in Year 1, Ed Direction and/or DRIVE coaches may play a larger role in determining the objectives of team meetings and supporting with facilitation. In Year 2, these partners would instead support the team to identify priorities for meetings, create their own agendas, and facilitate meetings with feedback and support.

2022–2023 (Full Implementation Year):

(c) Response:

The steps taken in Year 3 to implement school improvement priorities will follow the same pattern from Year 1 and Year 2, with a continued emphasis on empowering stakeholders to own more and more of the implementation process. Please see the table in Section (a) above to understand the discrete steps that will be taken by the school during Year 3. In Year 3, Ed Direction and DRIVE coaches will work with the school-based coaches (including the IPG coach), school leader, and the School Improvement Team to own the work of implementation. Ed Direction and DRIVE will support in a coaching role, particularly for the IPG Coach and School Improvement Team by providing feedback on their coaching, professional learning,

and meeting practices. In Year 3, explicit training for any new school staff will take place. Year 3 will be included with an end of project report and recommendations for sustained implementation. This will include a final review and assessment of levels of implementation tied to schoolwide priorities by our external partners, along with their recommendations for next steps to sustain implementation.

H. PERFORMANCE MONITORING: The Entity must establish annual performance goals reflecting progress in reading/language arts and mathematics; provide rationale for the goals; and identify progress targets based on leading indicators such as those defined in the Assurances Section at a minimum.

Maximum point value for this section is 16.

H-I. The Entity must describe how it will monitor the CSI School, that receives IPG funds including: a) Establishing annual goals for student achievement on the State's assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics; and, b) Measuring progress on the leading indicators as defined in the Assurances Section (e.g., dropout rate (if applicable), in school suspension (if applicable), out-of-school suspensions, student attendance rate, and certified staff attendance) of this application:

(a) Response:
Establishing Annual Goals
Each year, the district will partner with school leaders and the School Improvement Team to set annual goals for student achievement on the North Carolina state assessment in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science. An important indicator of successful school improvement work is an improvement in student performance. We will collaborate with stakeholders at the school including the School Improvement Team to set these goals at the beginning of the year, or as soon as state assessment data have been released. For the purpose of this application we have set some initial goals found in the table below but will collaborate with stakeholders to review and revise these as needed based on their input.

Subject	Current Proficiency	Year 1 Goals	Year 2 Goals	Year 3 Goals
Reading/LA	23%	25%	29%	37%
Math	11%	16%	26%	41%
Science	35%	40%	50%	65%

Monitoring Annual Goals
As a part of our support with the IPG partnership the district will establish a District Transformation Team who will work with the school throughout the IPG. This team will be responsible for supporting implementation and regularly monitoring progress towards the school's established goals. The team will meet with school leaders, the School Improvement Team, and external partners at least quarterly to monitor progress and identify needed supports. These meetings will be conducted by the School Improvement Team and will include data on academic progress indicators. At the end of each school year, the District Transformation Team will also engage in a review of state assessment data to understand growth made by the school and inform future goals for student achievement.

(b) Response:
Establishing Annual Goals
In addition to setting annual goals for academic achievement the school and district will set goals related to other leading indicators such as student attendance, school suspensions, and certified staff attendance. These goals are essential in measuring progress towards improved school climate and culture, one of the school's

designated areas of improvement. Additionally, regular monitoring of these indicators provides information about factors that relate to the whole student experience. The wellbeing of a student goes beyond their performance results and we want to use the IPG partnership as an opportunity to improve the whole child's educational experience. Each of these ultimately tie to student learning and will help the school understand why achievement is or is not improving. The District Transformation Team will work with the School Improvement Team before each school year to establish annual goals. The graph below provides an estimate for these goals, but we anticipate collaborating with key stakeholders before finalizing them.

	Current State	Year 1 Goals	Year 2 Goals	Year 3 Goals	Relevant Implementation Data Sources
Student Attendance	Avg Daily Attendance 87%	91%	94%	96%	• Attendance data • Ed Direction Student Engagement Data • Classroom walkthrough data
School Suspensions (In School)	635 suspensions	572	515	464	• Discipline incidences and office referrals • Observation data tied to discipline strategies
School Suspensions (Out of School)	611 suspensions	550	495	446	• Discipline incidences and office referrals • Observation data tied to discipline strategies
Certified Staff Attendance	Avg Daily Attendance 91%	93%	95%	97%	• Staff attendance log • Staff satisfaction surveys

Monitoring Annual Goals

Just as with student achievement goals, the District Transformation Team will meet at least quarterly with school leaders, the School Improvement Team, and external partners to review progress toward these leading indicators. In addition to these quarterly meetings, the School Improvement Team will gather and review ongoing implementation data throughout the improvement process related to these indicators. Implementation data is information gathered that relates to the implementation of schoolwide priorities. For example, in order to understand why school suspensions are or are not decreasing the team would gather and analyze data tied to discipline incidences or would review data from classroom observations tied to implementing new discipline processes during general instruction. Ed Direction and DRIVE will assist the school in gathering and analyzing this information to understand the current state of implementation and make meaningful adaptations to implementation to impact these leading indicators. The table above includes a sampling of some of the implementation data sources that the School Improvement Team may use to monitor progress in the "Relevant Implementation Data Sources" column. The data logs included at the end of this application contain more granular data information.

J: SUSTAINABILITY: As part of the planning process the Entity should consider how to sustain reforms put into place at the end of the funding period.

Maximum point value for this section is 8.

J-I. The Entity must describe how it will sustain the reforms after the funding period ends (beginning with the 2023-2024 school year):

(a) Response:

The school and district are committed to sustainable change and reform. We recognize that without deliberate planning and emphasis for sustained improvement, over time improvement results will be diminished and effective practices may not be maintained. One of the reasons we selected our external partners is that they have experience in sustainable school improvement. Even during our initial planning conversations in preparation for this grant, both partners referenced the need for a gradual release model that builds educators' capacity to own the work of school improvement so that the school will be set up for success at the end of the partnership. Our external partners have tools, resources, and strategies built within their support systems that the school can utilize long after the partnership ends. The school and district plan to take the following proactive actions throughout the partnership in order to ensure that the positive growth made during the partnership continues even after the funding ends:

1. Establish structures to support continuous improvement
2. Utilize a gradual release model with external partners
3. Build capacity of district leaders through the District Transformation Team

Establish Structures to Support Continuous Improvement
Throughout our partnership, we will intentionally work with external partners to build systems that foster continuous improvement. As mentioned in Section G-II, the Rapid Improvement Cycle is Ed Direction's framework for continuous improvement. This cycle describes the process that teams take at all levels of the school system to plan, implement, monitor, and adjust implementation of any goal. Ed Direction will provide tools and structures that will help educators understand and use the Rapid Improvement Cycle process to implement meaningful changes in practice. These tools may include discussion or data-analysis protocols, self-monitoring tools, resources to streamline coaching and meeting processes, and more. Examples of how continuous improvement will be practiced at all levels of the school system include:

- *School Level* – The School Improvement Team will practice a cycle every 90-days in which they plan, implement, and monitor schoolwide improvement priorities to ensure that they are being implemented successfully in classrooms.
- *Grade/Content Area Level* – PLCs will engage in cycles regularly to work together to address student learning goals by using data to understand how to better meet student needs, testing instructional strategies to find the most impactful methods, and adapting instruction based on what they learn together.
- *Individual Teacher Level* – Teachers will engage in individual coaching cycles tied to their improvement needs where they will set goals, receive coaching on goals, measure the impact, and make adjustments until their goals are achieved.

With repetition, continued coaching and feedback, and monitoring of growth, the process of continuous improvement will become embedded in every-day practice and will build the capacity of all educators within the school system. This also supports sustained implementation even as staff come and go. Once all staff understand and own the processes and practices for improvement, they are more capable of training and bringing new team members on board.

Utilize a Gradual Release Model with External Partners
Both Ed Direction and DRIVE are committed to empowering and building the capacity of educators at the school. From the beginning, they will use a gradual release model throughout the improvement process. This means that they will deliberately build capacity and transition ownership of the school improvement process from Year 1 to Year 3. Our partners will use a "train-the-trainer" model with district and school leaders, on-site coaches including IPG coach, and teacher leaders within the building. This builds capacity at all levels of the school system. In year one of the partnership Ed Direction and DRIVE will likely lead out in much of professional learning and coaching, whereas in years two and three of the partnership, they will gradually provide support for stakeholders within the school to take the lead with support and feedback.

Build Capacity of District Leaders Through the District Transformation Team

At the beginning of the IPG partnership the district will create a District Transformation Team, comprised of district leaders who will responsible for supporting the school throughout the IPG partnership and monitoring progress. Ed Direction has extensive experience building the capacity of district leaders to support continuous improvement at the schools they serve. Beyond the IPG partnership, additional district support and resources can support continued coaching. In their book, Collaborative School Improvement, Ed Direction details eight practices that effective districts employ to bring instructional improvement to scale within and across schools (Kauffman, Miller, & Grimm, 2012). Throughout the partnership, the District Transformation Team will receive training and coaching from Ed Direction on these practices, which will help them develop the skills and capacity to support the school, and other schools throughout the district, in sustaining improvement.

(K) BUDGET: An Entity must include a budget that indicates the amount of school improvement funds the Entity will require each year if this CSI School is awarded the IPG:

Maximum point value for this section is 8.

Note: An Entity's budget should cover all of the years of implementation (3) and be of sufficient size and scope to implement: the selected Partnership in the CSI School, the salary and benefits of the IPG School Coach, and any additional funding the applicant school will require to carry out the research-based school improvement strategies proposed in this application.

Note: An Entity's budget may not exceed:

2020 – 2021: $500,000
2021 – 2022: $500,000
2022 – 2023: $500,000

Total may not exceed $1,500,000 (as a reminder these funds are in ADDITION to CSI Funds – PRC105)

NOTE: Proposing a budget does not guarantee the exact amount awarded. The amount awarded will be determined by the SEA based on availability of funds.

Example: Entity Response for (3.0) Years

SCHOOL (SAMPLE) BUDGET			
Year 1 2020-2021	Year 2 2021-2022	Year 3 2022-2023	Three - Year Total
$475,000	$480,000	$480,000	**$1,435,000**
SCHOOL (PROPOSED) BUDGET			
Year 1 2020-2021	Year 2 2021-2022	Year 3 2022-2023	Three - Year Total
$498,200	$456,043	$456,043	**$1,410,286**

Please provide a justification for each year of the budget that was entered above. This justification should include estimated costs for each initiative included in the application which should total annual proposed costs (include estimate partnership costs, IPG School Coach salary, supplies, additional contracts, recruitment, and retention pay (if applicable), etc. This is just an ESTIMATE; those that are awarded with the IPG will have the opportunity to revise with "actuals" once awarded:

Justification for 2020-2021 budget:
   (a) **Response:** <u>External Partnership Fees and Justification</u>

		2020-2021	**2021-2022**	**2022-2023**
Personnel				
IPG Coach	Full-time salary and benefits (12 months)	$ 90,000	$90,000	$90,000
Staff Stipend	Stipend based on internal participation in ancillary events including team meetings and professional learning that extend beyond the school day.	$62,000	$62,000	$62,000
Infrastructure / Capital Improvements				
Facilities	• Painting • Purchasing of relevant murals to decorate the school	$18,000	$0	$0
External Partner Services				
DRIVE				
Strategic Planning	• Provides a clear picture of current school climate and practices. Includes a stakeholder appraisal including the SCAI Report; relevant surveys, interviews, and focus groups of stakeholders; and a comprehensive data review. Includes analysis and summary. • Visioning Process – annually. Facilitated to analyze needs assessment findings and related underperformance causes. From this analysis, we facilitate a visioning process to unify stakeholders, allowing them to reimagine the ultimate goals and highest purpose the school can achieve. • Response to Intervention Framework Development	$24,440 (Preliminary)	$18,980 (Progress Monitoring)	$18,980 (Progress Monitoring)
Professional Learning	• Full Staff Professional Learning Sessions – Power of Our (4 days) • Family Education Initiative focused on establishing clear roles in supporting student growth. • Student DRIVER Leadership Development	$84, 162	$53, 081	$53, 081
Coaching	• Leadership Team Coaching focused on strategic implementation of *Power of Our* principles.	$48,700	$48,700	$48,700

	• Coaching IPG coach to support ongoing climate shifts and support of Response to Intervention implementation			
Ed Direction				
Strategic Planning	• Implementation Planning (quarterly) Long-term strategic planning, root cause analysis, and visioning process. Includes interim action planning and reflection. • Progress Monitoring (quarterly) Relevant reporting to state, community, district, school leadership. Includes a presentation of objectives and key results tied to each SMART goal. Summarizes all activities at the school and serves as a measure of progress throughout the partnership.	$19,300	$19,300	$19,300
Technical Assistance	• Tech Resource *EdThrive* subscription • Year 1 - Administrative support for full project launch and implementation	$30,598	$9,200	$9,200
Professional Learning	• Full Staff Professional Learning Sessions • School Improvement Team Professional Learning Sessions • Customized Professional Learning Modules (4)	$43,000 (Full Staff 2 days + SIT 5.5 days)	$76,782 (Full Staff 4 days + SIT 5.5 days)	$76,782 (Full Staff 4 days + SIT 5.5 days)
Coaching	• Principal Coaching Sessions (monthly) • Leadership Team Coaching (Monthly) • District Transformation Team Coaching (Quarterly) • Teacher Collaborative Coaching • Teams Collaborative Coaching • Coach Collaborative Coaching	$78,000	$78,000	$78,000
Year Total		**$498,200**	**$456,043**	**$456,043**

(L) DATA TRACKING LOGS: The following pages include the Data Tracking Logs that need to be completed for the grade span(s) of the school to be served in this application. Complete the areas shaded in yellow for the applicable grade span(s). For schools serving more than one grade span, complete the applicable Tracking Log for each. Delete Tracking Logs not needed for grade span(s) not served.

NOTE: All highlighted fields must be completed for this section for the appropriate grade levels in order for this section to be considered complete. If incomplete, this section will receive a zero (0) score.

Maximum point value for this section is 8.

Public Schools of North Carolina

2020–2023 Entity Application 1003(a)

Data Point	Year	20th Day	40th Day	60th Day	80th Day	100th Day	120th Day	140th Day	160th Day	180th Day	Final
ISS (Incident Count)	2018 – 19	8	(+39) 47	(+73) 120	(+89) 209	(+81) 290	(+121) 411	(+94) 505	(+77) 582	(+53) 635	635
	2019 – 20	21	(+39) 55	(+55) 110	(+55) 165	(+41) 206	(+55) 261	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	Average	14.5	51	115	187	248	336				
	2020 – 21										
	2021 – 22										
	2022 – 23										
OSS (Incident Count)	2018 – 19	10	(+50) 60	(+65) 125	(+81) 206	(+83) 289	(+101) 390	(+96) 486	(+40) 526	(+85) 611	611
	2019 – 20	30	(+66) 96	(+79) 175	(+104) 279	(+90) 369	(+113) 482	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	Average	20	78	150	243	329	436				
	2020 – 21										
	2021 – 22										
	2022 – 23										
Student Attendance %	2018 – 19	96%	91%	89%	80%	86%	89%	85%	86%	81%	87%
	2019 – 20	94%	90%	89%	86%	88%	88%	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	Average	95%	90.5%	89%	88%	87%	88.5%				
	2020 – 21										
	2021 – 22										
	2022 – 23										
Certified Attendance %	2018 – 19	97%	89%	89%	90%	91%	90%	91%	89%	95%	91%
	2019 – 20	98%	89%	87%	88%	90%	94%	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	Average	97.5%	89%	88%	89%	90.5%	92%				
	2020 – 21										
	2021 – 22										
	2022 – 23										

GLP / CCR % tables (baseline 2018 – 19 shown)

Metric	Year	GLP / CCR %
Math 6 (GLP / CCR %)	2018 – 19	18.2% / 8.2%
Math 7 (GLP / CCR %)	2018 – 19	9.2% / <5%
Math 8 (GLP / CCR %)	2018 – 19	6.1% / <5%
Math Composite (GLP / CCR %)	2018 – 19	23.4% / 13.1%
Reading 6 (GLP / CCR %)	2018 – 19	11.3% / <5%
Reading 7 (GLP / CCR %)	2018 – 19	20% / 9.1%
Reading 8 (GLP / CCR %)	2018 – 19	22.4% / 12.2%
Reading Composite (GLP / CCR %)	2018 – 19	19.6% / 10.9%
Science 8 (GLP / CCR %)	2018 – 19	34.7% / 24.5%
Total Composite (GLP / CCR %)	2018 – 19	27.3% / 17.4%
NC Math I (GLP / CCR %)	2018 – 19	0/0 (Final)

Each GLP / CCR table repeats year rows: 2018 – 19, 2019 – 20, Average, 2020 – 21, 2021 – 22, 2022 – 23 (later years blank).

Data Point Goals

Data Point Goals	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
ISS Incident #	572	515	464
OSS Incident #	550	495	446
Student Attendance %	91%	94%	96%
Certified Attendance %	93%	95%	97%
Math GLP / CCR %	12%/10%	22%/15%	37%/25%
NC Math I GLP / CCR %	2%/2%	17%/17%	37%/37%
Reading GLP / CCR %	29%/15%	39%/20%	54%/30%
Science GLP / CCR %	40%/27%	50%/32%	65%/42%
Total Composite GLP / CCR %	24%/12%	34%/17%	59%/27%

+ / -

Legend

2018 – 19 = Pre-Baseline Year
2019 – 20 = Baseline Year / Planning
2020 – 21 = Year 1 - Full Implementation Year
2021 – 22 = Year 2 – Full Implementation Year
2022 – 23 = Year 3 – Sustainability Year