5.1 project abstract or summary

Grace Place Academy of Leaders is a no-cost after school program focusing on academics and enrichment. This 21st CCLC program aims to improve academic achievement in reading/literacy, math, and STEM; improve social and behavioral skills and promote positive youth development; improve English language and literacy; improve parent competencies; and integrate families of participating students into the regular day school environment. We offer Project Based Learning (PBL), homework assistance, engaging enrichment activities, English language and literacy (ELL) classes, and monthly parenting classes. The program will serve 80 students, grades 9-12, from Golden Gate High School (GGHS). We will operate during the school year from 2:05-5:05 Tuesday through Thursday for 109 days after school. During the summer we will operate from 12-4pm from Monday through Thursday from July 3-July 27.

5.2 Needs Assessment

Grace Place is a nonprofit educational touchstone for Golden Gate, a community of high need in Collier County Florida. Problems that contribute to low academic achievement, such as high poverty levels, language barriers, parental illiteracy and/or low education levels, poor living conditions and under-performing schools, beset the community and its children. Grace Place provides programs designed to bridge the academic achievement gap seen between families in middle- and upper-income households, and families with household incomes that fall beneath these economic lines. Grace Place empowers the children and families to change the course of their future through education. The limited after-school services provided to high school youth has been provided by Grace Place and its partners. Teen services have included ACT preparation, college application assistance, scholarship assistance and service learning. We aim to deepen services and include more youth in regular activities.

The residents of Golden Gate face challenges associated with living in a distressed, high-poverty community – reduced likelihood of academic success and reduced access to mainstream social and economic opportunities (Urban 2005). Over 90% of the 465 families Grace Place serves have a household income of less than $24,250, 88% have less than a high school education, and almost 33% are functionally illiterate. Determined to help overcome the barriers, Grace Place led a successful effort to obtain 21st CCLC funds in 2014.

In 2012, the American Community Survey (ACS) estimated the roughly four-square mile community of Golden Gate had a population of 26,327 people with a population density of 6,404 people per square mile and a median age of 30.6. Of the total population, 31 percent are under the age of nineteen, 9.7 percent are under the age of five.

Households suffering from food insecurity are more likely to have children who suffer from anemia; lower nutrient intakes; greater cognitive problems; higher levels of aggression and anxiety; higher probabilities of being hospitalized; poor general health; higher probabilities of dysthymia and other mental health issues; higher probabilities of asthma; higher probabilities of behavioral problems; and more instances of oral health problems.

On February 21, 2012, Grace Place leadership convened a team of committed education leaders from the neighborhood schools, including Principals, Assistant Principals, and Academic Coaches. This was the first of many planning meetings, led by Grace Place, to identify community stakeholders, complete a student and community needs assessment, identify service gaps, and determine the needs for the proposed 21st CCLC program.

Quantitative data was collected from a variety of sources which included CCPS student performance data, graduation rates, adequate yearly progress (AYP) status, School Improvement Plans, School Accountability Reports (SAR), Collier Sheriff’s Department reports (crime, youth indicators), Kids Count Data Center (Florida indicators), and National Census data (poverty, literacy, educational attainment, employment, family demographics). Data was analyzed following CCPS procedures.

Throughout the 2012-6 school years, Grace Place also collected qualitative data through meetings, focus groups, and surveys with community stakeholders. Participants included parents, students, concerned citizens, PTA and School Advisory Committees, Collier County government representatives (e.g. Sheriff’s Department, Parks and Recreation, Golden Gate Civic Association), other nonprofits and agencies (e.g. United Way, Naples Children and Education Foundation, Safe and Healthy Children’s Coalition of Collier, Junior Achievement of SW FL, local arts associations), local private schools nearby (e.g. St. Elizabeth Seton, Naples Christian Academy), churches and faith-based organizations, and business and community leaders. Participants reviewed data and reports, identified needs and gaps, and contributed personal feedback towards the development of the plan. Surveys of a representative group of parents of students were completed and analyzed in 2012, 2014, and 2015.

On April 9, 2013, nineteen representatives of local churches and faith-based organizations (including Haitian and Hispanic church leaders) met for a focus group led by Jeff Dow, Senior Consultant, Lastinger Center UF, Gainesville, FL. In May-July 2013, we met for eight four-hour strategic planning sessions (32 hours), evaluating various county reports, data, needs assessments, evidence-based models, community indicators and resources. This Community Planning task force was convened by the Naples Children and Education Foundation (NCEF) and facilitated by Jeff Dow (above) and Todd Foege, EGF Consulting.

The results of needs assessment drive the short and long-range plans for the proposed 21st CCLC program, and led to the development of three program goals:

1. Improve academic achievement in reading/literacy, math, and STEM.
2. Improve social and behavioral skills and promote positive youth development and personal growth through health, wellness, leadership and enrichment activities, including physical activities, the arts, and character development.
3. Improve adult English language and literacy and parent competencies.

These goals will be supported by proven research-based activities, such as PBL curricula, captivating and engaging enrichment activities, English language and literacy (ELL) classes, and monthly parenting classes. The program will target 80 students, grades 9-12, from GGHS. These students were chosen because they face significant risk factors for academic failure.

We expect to face challenges with enrollment and attendance. We will structure the program with time allowed for extra homework time and tutoring according to student needs. We will provide a wide variety of wellness activities that allow students to increase their heart rates and learn about maintaining healthy lifestyles. Additionally, we will provide elective alternatives to match student interest. We will recruit early including mailings to teen students of families currently involved in other Grace Place programming. There will be additional recruiting opportunities at the school and at community events during August. We are confident that we will meet these challenges and know that many youth and families want to continue Grace Place activities after completing middle school.

5.3 Program evaluation

5.3.a evaluation plan

An effective evaluation is essential to the success of any afterschool program. The Academy of Leaders evaluation utilizes **established performance measures** to determine changes resulting from 21st CCLC activities and guide program staff to make data-driven decisions for program improvement. These **outcome measures** will be used to assess **impact on student achievement**, relative to baseline data and **benchmarks** chosen with SMART objective procedures. The measurement results help answer evaluation questions related to program outcomes. The evaluation will also measure program outputs, including site operations, students served, partners, and staff training. The results of these measurements will help answer evaluation questions related to program implementation.

The evaluation **data collection plan** will provide the evaluator, program staff, and site staff with a big picture framework for data collection. The collection details help ensure that all required data is collected and that appropriate resources have been allocated to collect data for both the after school and summer programs. **Data instruments** used to measure performance will include surveys and interviews, administrative records (attendance forms, sign-in sheets, meeting minutes), site-visit observations, pre -and post- tests, and student performance database (e.g. academic performance, demographics, attendance). STOPWatch (Student Tracking of Outcomes and Progress), a CCPS district system for direct access regular day student data, will be the primary **data source** for academic enrichment assessment. Data sources to assess personal enrichment objectives will include teacher reports and staff-created, content-based pre- and post-tests. Surveys will be administered to students, parents/guardians, and teachers to collect qualitative data for student wellness and enrichment, and parent involvement.

The **data collection responsibilities and timeline** will include 1) Site-level staff: Start of the program (registration forms, objectives baselines) and throughout the program (daily student attendance and activity participation, pre- and post-test administered at the start and end of activity modules), and 2) Program-level staff: Quarterly (STOPWatch student data), monthly (average attendance data and student lists submitted to the online reporting system), mid-year (Site coordinator interviews, Quality Self-Assessment Tool), and end-of-year (student and parent satisfaction surveys; teacher behavior improvement surveys). The external evaluator will be responsible for the **analysis** of all afterschool and summer **data**. Quantitative data will be analyzed with descriptive statistics using means, standard deviations, and frequencies. Qualitative data (open-ended survey responses) will be analyzed by type and the degree of consensus between respondents will be determined. Common statistical procedures such as t-test and chi-square test will be used, as needed.

Program evaluation will be ongoing through the program year, including two annual formal **evaluation reports**: (1) Formative evaluation summary (January) will provide ongoing insight on the quality and the extent of program implementation, allowing for mid-course corrections as necessary; and (2) Summative evaluation (August) will provide regular, annual analysis and reporting of progress toward student outcomes as defined by the grant objectives. Focus will be placed on: (1) evidence of program quality (using the Florida Afterschool Network Standards); (2) student attendance trends; and (3) progress towards the performance (impact) measures included in the Measurable Objectives Table. Recommendations for program refinement will be provided and based on both quantitative and qualitative data collected to assess progress on objectives. All evaluation reporting will be presented in a format that is understandable and useable for program staff and stakeholders. Reports will be made **available to stakeholders**, including project directors, site coordinators and staff, partners, and district staff. All reports will be posted to the program’s 21st CCLC webpage and **available to the public** via this site, or other formats upon request.

Grace Place will use the Center for Assessment, Strategic Planning, Evaluation and Research (CASPER) as the external evaluator. CASPER will help the program staff to continuously **refine, improve, and strengthen the program**. The assigned evaluator, Dr. Charles Byrd, was the past Executive Director of the FDOE 21st CCLC Administrative Team, which included oversight of all evaluation, monitoring, and technical assistance activities for all Florida 21st CCLC programs. Dr. Byrd has personally evaluated hundreds of 21st CCLC programs throughout Florida. As an active member of the American Evaluation Association and American Psychological Association, evaluations will be conducted under the ethical codes and procedures of these professional organizations. CASPER utilizes a **collaborative program evaluation model** for 21st CCLC evaluations, an effective method for **ongoing program improvement**. The collaborative model assimilates the evaluator into the development of an improvement plan based upon the evaluation results. Dr. Byrd will work with the program staff to use the evaluation findings to develop and implement program changes. When evaluators and program staff work together throughout the entire program, all participants gain a deeper understanding of how the program operates and what impact is anticipated. There are many benefits that this knowledge brings, but two significant benefits are: 1) The evaluator will be better able to provide recommendations that are realistic and that do not have unintentional impacts in other parts of the program; and 2) The program staff will be more receptive and better positioned to make mid-program adjustment to established procedures, such changes to performance measures. The evaluator will complete **federal and state annual reporting requirements**, as detailed in the grant application, including 1) 21st CCLC APR report (federal); 2) Baseline, mid-year and end-of-year database and data reporting submissions (state); 3) annual formative evaluation summaries; 4) End-of-year Summative Evaluation Brief Report (Years 1, 3, and 4); and 5) Summative Evaluation Report (Years 2, 5).

Program leadership (including appropriate site-level staff) will meet at least quarterly with the evaluator: 1) August, preceding the after school program start and following the submission of the summative report from the previous program year; 2) November, following the release of first grading period results; 3) February, following the submission of the formative report; and 4) May, preceding both the after school program end and summer program start. The exact focus of each meeting will be determined based on evolving program performance and staff/student needs. The general focus will be 1) August: Program implementation/start-up and adjustments based on summative findings from previous program year; 2) November: Baseline data collection and observations of programming; 3) January - Adjustments based on formative findings; and 4) May: End-of-year data collection and summer program implementation.

The development committee has carefully identified and selected specific strategies and activities for each component of the 21st CCLC program. The rationale/criteria for selecting each of the proposed strategies and activities included, (1) evidence-based and effective in improving student academic achievement, (2) closely aligned to FL Standards, (3) contributes to the achievement of specific, identified objectives, and (4) employs performance measures that are quantitative and challenging, yet achievable. Each of the proposed strategies and activities, and how each strategy meets these criteria, is detailed in other sections of this narrative.

**5.3.B MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES AND ASSESSMENTS**

Measureable objectives and assessments were created using the web-based system required by FLDOE. Letter from the school district is submitted showing support that the program will have full access to all data necessary to evaluate progress towards objectives. All objectives were designed to align with the needs and gaps identified in the needs assessment.

5.4 Applicant’s experience and capacity

Grace Place has provided academic and literacy programs for low-income children and families in Golden Gate for 12 years, pioneering holistic family education in Collier County. Grace Place has been the only nonprofit with a foothold in the community and there is a meaningful trust between Grace Place and those served. Grace Place has become more than an educational resource, it is “the heart of the neighborhood,” and for many, a beacon of hope and a lifeline to a more prosperous future.

Grace Place developed a dynamic program model that functions as a conduit for progress and produces long-lasting results. Currently over 800 students are enrolled in Grace Place educational programs. 21st CCLC Elementary (K-5) serves 144 and 21st CCLC Middle School (grades 6-8) serves 120. 21st CCLC programming includes hands-on STEM projects, gardening, and science; mentoring programs with high school and college students, business professionals, and senior citizens; music/performing arts; health/wellness activities; leadership/ character development; and career exploration activities. Current teen programming (9-12) provides college and career prep along with work skills development through service for nearly 100 students through the year. The program at GGHS will enable Grace Place to continue 21st CCLC services to 80 high school students and build on the success of current programming.

Additional evidence of Grace Place’s experience includes: 1) Growth from an initial 40 students in 2004 to almost 900 students weekly in 2015-6, including 220 children under age 5, 360 children ages 5-18, and almost 300 adults; 2) Successful operation of extensive educational programs with measurable outcomes, managing private and grant funding, and operating a busy and safe neighborhood educational center; 3) In July 2014, Grace Place was recognized by Eileen Connolly-Keesler, Executive Director of the Community Foundation of Collier County, as one of the most effective and efficient nonprofit agencies in Collier County; 4) Partner with CCPS and Collier County Sheriff’s Department since 2004; 5) United Way of Collier County approved partner agency since 2008.

Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) performance management software is utilized to track data on individual students and the whole family, translate data into knowledge about program performance, actively monitor progress toward outcomes, and continuously improve service delivery. A MOA with CCPS enables Grace Place to access individual student data (testing, grades, assessments) through a robust district system called STOPwatch.

While the focus of Grace Place programming is clearly on educational outcomes, we recognize that a myriad of social problems contribute to poor outcomes for students. Strong partnerships have been built with community agencies and organizations capable of addressing these additional needs. In response to the high levels of food insecurity and the nutritional needs of children in the community, Grace Place also operates the largest food pantry in Collier County, providing more than 350,000 pounds of food including dairy, meat, and fresh produce to 1530 households in 2015.

Grace Place leadership has the capacity and experience to effectively implement the proposed 21st CCLC program, including proven experience for the past two years in 1) development and implementation of 21st CCLC curriculum and instruction, 2) delivery of enrichment activities for students in Golden Gate, 3) language and family literacy programming, 4) professional development of CCPS teachers, administrators, and principals, and 5) assessment of program success. The team includes: (1) Tom Powers, Project Director, has 18 years of experience in youth organizations serving diverse populations, including 4 years overseeing 21st CCLC in Boston and 2 years overseeing 21st CCLC programs at Grace Place; (2) Diane Ponton, M.Ed. (TESOL), Director of Family Literacy, has been at Grace Place for eleven years and developed the successful Bright Beginnings, adult ELL, and family literacy programming; (3) Beth Thompson, former Chief Instructional Officer of CCPS (retired March 2013), has served on the Grace Place Board of Directors for 5 years and is has led the curriculum development of the 21st CCLC program; (4) Tim Ferguson, CEO, will provide the educational support and inspiration that has led to the success of Grace Place; (6) Karina Sierra, College Access Counselor, is bilingual and attended GGHS, graduated from Florida Gulf Coast University, and coordinated 21st CCLC after school and summer programs for one year; (7) Chief Financial and Operations Officer, Dave Tobiasz has thirty-nine years of experience in accounting, financial and operational management.

The executive leadership team is experienced in planning, overseeing and managing over $1.9 million in yearly expenditures/budgets, along with a $10.1 million five-year capital campaign. $285,000 of funds are held in reserves to handle cash flow and contingencies. A professional audit has been conducted yearly for the past ten years. Financial and data support staff are experienced in monitoring data to track progress. Policies and procedures are in place to assure the best possible oversight. The agency has the experience and the financial capacity to manage government grants as evidenced by successful management and reporting of local, national, corporate, and foundation grants.

To further assist with program implementation and oversight, an Advisory Board has supported 21st CCLC programming for 2 years. The Advisory Board meets to monitor and provide feedback on the activities of the grant, ensuring that the program is implemented as proposed and that the goals and objectives of the project are carried out.

5.5 partnership, collaboration & sustainability

5.5.a community notice

We communicated to the community by posting a notice in the Naples Daily News in March 2016. On the Grace Place website, the notice was posted in March and April. We will also have past and future applications posted to the [www.graceplacenaples.org](http://www.graceplacenaples.org) website. The website will be updated monthly and will include program announcements, schedules, activities, and project based learning showcases. Social media will be used to announce the program and to update the community and program stakeholders. Grace Places’ existing social media sites will be utilized: Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Google+, and Blogspot. Program successes will be shared with community stakeholders garnering support for initiatives.

5.5.b partnershipS

Grace Place plans to combine or coordinate other funding with the proposed 21st CCLC program to make the most effective use of public resources and provide for sustainability. These include but are not limited to: private funding of Grace Place facilities and family literacy programs, collaborative community partnerships, and corporate or foundation grants.

Grace Place has established an impressive array of collaborative partners which contribute substantially to the services provided including daily meals and snacks, classes and programs in the arts, nutrition, wellness, behavioral health and prevention service, and career education. Letters of support from community and school leaders included in this application further provide evidence of the caliber of Grace Place services. Nonprofit agencies will provide curriculum and services (e.g. Children’s Network, Naples Art Association). Southwest Florida Workforce Development Board will provide the daily meals and snacks for all students in the program through their Department of Health Food Program grant. The David Lawrence Center (DLC is a leading local provider of behavioral health solutions) provides parent education sessions and the Aggressors, Victims, Bystanders curriculum for 9-12 students, aligned to FL Standards and teaching empathy, emotion-management, problem-solving skills and self-regulation skills.

5.5.c collaboration with regular school day

Grace Place leadership has worked closely with administrators from CCPS to develop the Academy of Leaders. The program aligns with the school curriculum to help students meet state and local academic standards. School administrators and Grace Place staff are committed to building on this foundation and will continue to meet communicate regularly, work together to implement the plan as proposed.

As part of the partnership with CCPS, Grace Place has been provided access to student academic records through STOPwatch, a CCPS web-based system with direct access to the district academic records database. Program staff can export the academic records of program participants, including data to measure and monitor program objectives, to produce annual formative and summative evaluations, to report performance to state (FDOE) and federal (USED) funding authorities. Such data sharing will be consistent with the requirements of Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and related state law.

The site coordinator’s responsibilities include frequent collaboration with regular day school and program staff. Furthermore, staff will meet with the school principal quarterly to discuss student needs and program progress. The site coordinator and after school staff will share progress and student performance with regular-day teachers. Teachers from GGHS will be employed in the after-school program, also contributing to close collaboration and strengthening communication. Communication with parents will be fostered through newsletters, office hours for parents to meet with staff, and teacher-student-parent conferencing.

5.5.d SustainabilitY

Grace Place has a strong history of local private funding, growing the capacity in just twelve years to sustain a $2.2 million operating budget and $10.1 million capital campaign. For the 21st CCLC program, these private funds will provide all costs associated with the use of the Grace Place facilities and campus, as well as additional services including Barbara Bush Family Literacy and Adult ELL classes, food pantry services, and educational leadership and collaboration of auxiliary program staff including the Director of Family Literacy and CEO. Funding from Naples Children and Education Fund will continue to support teen staff who provide college access and work skills development programming.

Project successes will be shared with community stakeholders through the communications staff and channels Grace Place successfully maintains, garnering support for initiatives. The Development department will work with stakeholders, community agencies, local government, local businesses, and private foundations to identify internal and external funds to sustain the program and will develop and deliver funding sustainability efforts (grant proposal development, fundraisers) and disseminate program results to community leaders, stakeholders and potential funders to justify future and expanded support of the program. The Advisory Board, staff, and community partners will work together to build the financial capacity to sustain the program.

5.6 Program Plan

5.6.a Target Students

**Student Needs:**

|  |
| --- |
| Support to improve skills in reading, writing, STEM, and homework completion |
| Support to increase awareness of and interest in STEM |
| Support to improve behavior |
| Support to improve health and wellness |
| Exposure to enrichment activities not generally available in regular-day school |
| Support to increase college and career readiness |
| A safe, structured, and supportive environment during after school/summer hours |

The data evaluated during the needs assessments include CCPS Assessments & Data Management (Strategic Planning and Needs Assessment, student achievement data, school performance and demographic data, School Improvement Plans), FDOE Differentiated Accountability Reports, U.S. Department of Education Reports (after school best practices, youth and poverty), Collier County Sheriff’s Department Reports (crime and youth indicators), Kids Count Data Center (Florida indicators),U.S. Census Data (poverty and employment rates, education levels, family demographics), and Surveys and Focus Groups (student, parent, and community).

**Table 1: Golden Gate Community Demographics (US Census, 2014)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Golden Gate Community | Florida | Collier County |
| Poverty Rate (below poverty level) | 29.4% | 16.8% | 13.8% |
| Unemployment Rate | 9.1% | 7.4% | 4.6% |
| Median earnings for workers | 19,261 | 26,878 | 25,266 |
| Median family income | 39,391 | 55,260 | 63,164 |
| Median household income | 37,592 | 45,637 | 54,126 |
| High School Dropout Rate | 12.9% | 8.5% | 6.7% |
| Less than 9th grade education | 21.6% | 5.6% | 7.6% |
| High School graduate | 65.5% | 86% | 85.6% |
| Bachelor's degree or higher | 12.6% | 26.2% | 31.5% |
| Single parent household | 33.9% | 17.8% | 12.6% |
| Foreign born persons | 46.4% | 19.5% | 23.1% |
| Non-English speaking households | 42.8% | 27.6% | 32.1% |

**Table 2: Target School Student Demographics (CCPS, 2016)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| School | Enrolled | White | Black | Hispanic | FRL | LEP | ESE |
| Golden Gate HS | 1596 | 14.4% | 20.8% | 62% | 76% | 11.4% | 11.8 |

Golden Gate is one of the most impoverished communities in Florida and NCEF identified this community as one of the highest pockets of need (NCEF, 2010). Golden Gate city has a higher poverty rate, lower earnings, lower family income and higher rates of unemployment than comparative rates for the state of Florida (Table 1). Golden Gate has a 9.1 percent rate of unemployment, a 29.4 percent poverty rate and a per capita income of $19,261 (US Census, 2012).

Of the student population of GGHS, 76 percent are categorized as Economically Needy and 11.4 percent are categorized as Limited English Proficiency (Table 2). Research connects poverty in childhood and adolescence to higher risk for poor cognitive and academic outcomes, lower school attendance, lower reading and math test scores, increased distractibility, higher rates of grade failure and higher high school dropout rates (CT, 2012).

Table 1 above shows the prominent disparity in socio-economics, education levels and rate of non-English speaking households between Golden Gate and Florida residents. The disparity within the County is greater, as Collier County is comprised of wealthy coastal neighborhoods and pockets of extreme poverty, such as the Golden Gate community (NCEF, 2010).

Educational attainment and poverty are also connected; young adults without a high school diploma are more likely to be living in poverty (USED, 2012). Golden Gate schools are performing below state/local academic standards in core academic subjects. This deficit puts them at high-risk of dropping out of school prior to high school completion (AECF, 2011).

Close to one-third of students in Golden Gate schools are classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP). Annual reporting data from GGES state that LEP students face serious barriers to success including lack of previous education, heritage literacy, heritage academic skills, inconsistent school attendance, and insufficient parental support (CCPS, 2010).

US Census data indicates Golden Gate families are among the least educated at the local and state levels (Table 1). In one out of every five Golden Gate households, parents have attained less than a ninth grade education, compared to about one out of twenty for the state. Similar disparities exist for high school and college graduates. Golden Gate has four times higher rate of residents with less than a 9th grade education, 112 percent fewer residents have a high school diploma, and 43.45 percent fewer residents have a Bachelor’s degree. GGHS’s graduation rate of 73.3 percent is the lowest in all of Collier County (FDOE, 2016).

A 2012 NCEF report on *Child Well Being in Collier County* indicated that over 60 percent of Golden Gate students return home from school to no adult supervision. (NCEF, 2010) The lack of adult supervision increases the probability of engaging in risky and aggressive behaviors, taking part in crimes, being injured or victimized and disinterest in education. Collier County Truancy Court data show that students from Golden Gate schools make up 20.5 percent of all youth entering Truancy Court. Of all of the crimes committed by youth in Collier County, 25 percent is committed by youth residing in the Golden Gate City zip code 34116 (CCTC 2012).

As noted, students attending Golden Gate High School are from the most 'at-risk' population of students in Collier County (if not all of Florida).

Unfortunately, while these students are fully capable of academic success, the combined impact of these risk-factors and negative external influences weigh down their academic performance. In the most recent data available (FLDOE, School Grades 2015-2016 School Grades Report), students at GGHS significantly underperformed the average school in Florida. More specifically, only 39.0% of students were proficient in English Language Arts compared to an average of 53.1% of students in other schools in Florida and 34.0% of GGHS students were proficient in mathematics (55.2% statewide).

This is not true across all academic subjects, with 62.0% of GGHS students proficient in science, compared to only 54.3% of students across Florida - with 70% of GGHS students passing the EOC in Biology (of those taking this course). Unfortunately, most other statistics align with these demonstrated struggles in reading and math - with GGHS students having lower SAT scores across all areas (Reading: 450 vs. 483 (GGHS vs Florida); Math: 439 vs. 473; and writing 438 vs. 461). Moreover, only 104 students at GGHS passed an AP exam last year and the graduation rate is only 73% (compared to 81.5% statewide). Ultimately, the 21st CCLC will be targeting one of the lowest performing schools in Florida, providing much needed services and wraparound educational enhancements to help these students push past their environmental risk factors and become productive and successful members of society.

The program focus and design of Academy of Leaders is developed to address the specific needs identified in the needs assessments, the actual interests and concerns identified by the stakeholders. The program is designed to help all students and will not exclude participants based on disability, gender, race or ethnicity.

5.6.b Recruitment and Retention

A focused recruitment will target students who have been identified by the schools as high-risk: academically low-performing; demonstrated at-risk behaviors such as truancy, behavior concerns, or documented at-home issues; and/or at risk for grade retention. A teacher/staff/parent recommendation form will be made available at the school and through the Family Involvement Specialist to help with recruitment of high-need students. The partnership with school administration and the Grace Place track record of solid programming and engaging activities will help ensure that families will seek our 21st CCLC program.

Specific techniques and practices will be employed to ensure consistent and long term participation. Prior experience has shown us that if after-school and summer programs provide high-interest, age-appropriate, relevant, student-selected project-based-learning activities, and a strong sense of community and positive adult-student relationships, students will continue to participate. Waiting lists for current programs demonstrate the reputation of Grace Place in the community. Daily attendance logs will be kept, phone calls will be made by staff when absences occur, and staff will personally contact all students who are absent for one week. Additional strategies include: conducting student-interest surveys; engaging in active, frequent outreach to parents including parent/family sessions, adult education, and parent surveys; and referrals to address family needs which are impacting student participation.

5.6.c Student program activities

The program will focus on career preparation through Career Academies based on a model used in CCPS. Academies are small learning communities that broaden students’ exposure to local growth industries by utilizing these industries as the context to deliver academic and technical curricula (CCPS, 2012b). PBLs and personal enrichment programs in Academies will creatively and engagingly reinforce topics taught during the regular school day, emphasize increasing student achievement in core academic subjects, and train students to be college and career ready. Academies each address an identified need.

The Academy of Leaders’ PBL model engages students by starting with the concrete and solving hands-on, real-world problems. The development committee selected high-interest, dynamic, PBL components that combine academic standards, enrichment activities, and 21st Century skills into relevant learning experiences. Reading and writing standards are embedded in all PBL activities and math standards are embedded in PBL activities focused on science and engineering. All program components have common characteristics: (1) delivered to small collaborative groups - student-to-staff ratio will not exceed 1:10 for academic and 1:20 for personal enrichment (lowered considerably when including volunteers); (2) instruction in core academic subjects is supervised by FDOE-certified teachers; (3) supported by evidence-based research; and (4) challenge students of all learning levels and develop cross-curriculum skills.

All projects are designed to answer a driving question, create and present an original final product, and reflect the types of learning and work people do in the everyday world outside the classroom. The driving questions form the backbone of the project and help engage students in the content both emotionally and intellectually. They are mapped to participating schools’ curricula and student academic achievement standards, and cover a significant number of the standards yet remain open-ended enough so that instructors have flexibility in their instruction. Academy of Leaders built the foundation for the high quality project-based learning on identified local needs and interests, and leveraging of community resources.

STEM: STEM curriculum focusing on engineering includes robotics. The curriculum chosen is research-based, aligns with student achievement standards and scaffolds student learning and engagement in engineering, and is proven effective. Students will be introduced to the engineering design process as they ask questions, imagine, plan, create, and improve solutions to real-world problems. STEM PBLs may include industry certifications earned through career and technical education programs and courses at GGHS. Well-prepared students are assessed by an independent, third-party using standards for knowledge, skills, and competencies. Students would be eligible to receive a credential that is nationally recognized for an industry that addresses a critical local need (hospitality) or emerging occupation (environmental protection).

Communications: Literacy has been identified as the primary need for both students and their families. As such, the development team has intentionally incorporated literacy skills in all of the project based learning activities. The Academy of Communications provides opportunities for focused emphasis on Reading and English-Language Arts (ELA). Researchers have found problem-based learning to be more effective than traditional instruction for long term retention, skill development, and satisfaction of both students and teachers (Strobel & van Barneveld, 2009). English language and literacy (ELL) will be offered to qualifying students.

Health and Wellness: Evidence-based nutrition programs will be integrated into fitness activities. The effects of physical exercise also helps students to separate out distracting noises from their environments, helping them to focus on what is important (Castelli, 2013). Students will have at least 30 minutes of fitness daily, soccer, basketball, dance, yoga, Zumba, and other activities identified through student interest surveys. Students would also utilize Choosemyplate.gov’ s SuperTracker Nutrition Lesson Plans, a series designed to help teens learn how to build a healthy diet. Each lesson plan includes learning objectives, detailed instructions, and accompanying resources and handouts.

Arts and Culture: Arts projects are delivered by accredited art instructors and weave academics into artistic sessions. Students receive an educational experience with each class, ranging from math and science to world culture and history.

Community Leadership: FranklinCovey’s 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens is integrated into all aspects of Academy of Leaders. This program is based on Covey’s 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Be Proactive, Begin with the End in Mind, Put First Things First, Think Win/Win, Seek First to Understand Then to be Understood, Synergize, and Sharpen the Saw. Covey’s research shows that the integration of these traits into the lives of students increases their resiliency and self-efficacy (Covey, 2010).

College Readiness: Students gain knowledge, skills, and academic preparation needed to enroll and succeed in college without the need for remediation. This achievement is also necessary for postsecondary workforce education with the promise of career advancement. Students will take a Postsecondary Education Readiness Test through the program and individualized plans will be made to ensure student success.

Mentoring/Tutoring: Mentoring is a one-to-one caring, supportive relationship between a mentor and a mentee that is based on trust. Tutoring, also a one-to-one activity, focuses on academics and is an effective practice when addressing specific needs such as reading, writing, or math competencies. Student success, accountability and inspiration will prevent drop-outs.

Homework Help: All students will be provided homework assistance and opportunities to complete any assigned homework daily. Trained volunteers, many of whom are retired teachers or business professionals, will provide individualized homework assistance. Volunteers will be trained using Teen Trendsetters Reading Mentors Curriculum (from Just Read! Florida). FDOE-certified teachers guide homework assistance and provide targeted tutoring for students needing remedial assistance. Staff will track efforts and document improvement while showing the correlation between homework completion and improved test scores.

Service-Learning: Service-learning connects meaningful community service experiences with academic learning. This teaching/learning method promotes personal and social growth, career development, and civic responsibility and can be a powerful vehicle for effective school reform at all grade levels.

Dinner and Snacks will be provided for every student through a collaboration with Southwest Florida Workforce Development Board and funded through a Department of Health Food Grant.

A typical day for a tenth grader will start with arriving at the cafeteria immediately after the school day. Upon arrival, s/he will meet his group leader and friends at a receiving table. S/he will then have a nutritious dinner while staff or students make presentations. Homework help and remedial tutoring led by a certified teacher will occur for 30 minutes. S/he will transition to a Project-based learning activity provided by a certified teacher for 60 minutes (for example a robotics/STEM activity). S/he will receive personal enrichment provided by partners, lead program assistants and volunteers through physical activities outside on the field adjacent to the classrooms. Finally, in a special 20 minute session each day, s/he will participate in career and college exploration and support activities. A snack will be given during dismissal daily.

Please see sample schedule and center profile attached.

5.6.d Adult Family Member Program Activities

**Family Needs:**

|  |
| --- |
| Access to local, no-cost out-of-school programs |
| Local community-based English language and parenting services that are language appropriate and relevant to community heritages |
| Access to screenings and referrals to local agencies/organizations family support services |
| Support to become more effectively involved in their children's education |

Research indicates that the more extensive the family involvement, the greater the impact on student achievement. A child’s education is a responsibility shared by the school and family, however, lack of English language and functional literacy has hindered many Golden Gate families from fulfilling their share in the partnership, leaving them uncomfortable in school settings and preventing them from helping with school work. The proposed family services will be implemented to support the research and offer programming for adult family members in the evening. Grace Place has had tremendous success with participation in adult enrollment in ELL classes, with 132 adults enrolled this year, and in family literacy events, with an average of 30 families attending each of six monthly events.

Parents of actively participating 21st CCLC student will be engaged in ongoing services which are language appropriate. Parent materials (e.g., program information, flyers, surveys) will be provided in Spanish, Haitian Creole, and English, and when needed, project staff and community members qualified to translate will be provided. Project staff will recruit families by newsletters, Grace Place website, social media, word of mouth, and school referrals.

The David Lawrence Center will offer a series of parenting classes, called Parent Academy, for the parents of participating students, using *Active Parenting of Teens* curriculum. This curriculum was developed by Michael Popkin, PhD, and is an internationally recognized, group-based approach for working with parents and their children in reducing dysfunction and building healthy, positive interactions. Six, 60-minutes sessions will happen once each month.

The Family Involvement Specialist will work closely with the adult family members and the program’s teachers, staff and school partners to ensure a high level of adult family member participation and integration into the school environment. Support for families will also include activities such as: use of parent resources; creating an environment that welcomes families and hiring bi-lingual family-focused staff who share parents’ experience and background; and helping parents develop skills to navigate the educational system. The ultimate goal is to help parents become more effectively involved in their children’s education in order for all students to achieve at the highest academic level.

5.6.e Staffing Plan and Professional development

All academic instruction will be supervised by FDOE-certified teachers. All staff will be trained by specific subject experts and qualified to provide all PBL and enrichment activities. Student to instructional staff ratios of a maximum of 1:10 will be maintained for academic instruction and 1:20 for enrichment activities.

The Program Director (.05 FTE) will be responsible for managing and implementing the full 21st CCLC program, supervision of annual budget including approvals of payroll and invoices, hiring and supervising project staff, coordinating staff training and professional development, maintaining partner relationships, ensuring timely compliance of grant responsibilities and reporting, meeting regularly with school administrators and Advisory Board, working with external evaluator, and ensuring program success. The current Director, Tom Powers, has 6 years of experience overseeing 21st CCLC programs.

The Site Coordinator (.6 FTE) who will oversee day-to-day program operations and report to the Principal and Program Director. Duties include direct supervision of staff; maintaining school communications, scheduling, program monitoring, policy compliance, record keeping and data analysis; serving as liaison with partner organizations, managing volunteers, student relationships and discipline, and maintaining communications with adult family members and stakeholders. Minimum qualifications for the Site Coordinator include a Bachelor’s Degree, preference bi-lingual, and a minimum of three years’ experience, preferably with at-risk students, in after-school programs in an education environment.

A Family Involvement Specialist (.11 FTE) will report to the Director, resolve attendance problems, build positive relationships with family members, facilitate parent participation in family services, maintain records and generate reports, and recruit parent volunteers.

FDOE-certified Teachers (3 each day) will develop, prepare for and supervise direct instruction of academic PBLs, skill labs, and tutoring, collaborate with regular classroom teachers to determine specific student needs, and monitor academic progress.

Lead Program Assistants (4 each day) will work under direct supervision of teachers to deliver planned and targeted lessons, coordinate homework help, supervise students during dinner and transitions, and lead and/or assist with physical activity and enrichment activities. Lead Program Assistants will be bi-lingual, Spanish or Haitian Creole attending area colleges.

Administrative/data assistant (.25 FTE) will enter attendance data and follow up on absences immediately, handle phone calls, mail, and visitors during after-school hours, maintain additional data on program, staff, family and student outcomes, prepare and maintain schedules, administrative records, Advisory Board minutes and records, and required federal reports and documents, compile periodic reports to be reviewed by staff and the Advisory Board.

Volunteers: Recruited to work at each site, including senior citizens, high school and college students, they will provide homework help, mentoring, and assistance in classes and enrichment activities. Every volunteer will complete an application, participate in orientation and training, pass the Level Two criminal background check.

Our staff is trained in the provision of culturally appropriate services and has a sound understanding of program design and the effective teaching methodology of the 21st CCLC program. Prior to hiring, all staff must pass a Level Two national criminal background check. Staff participate in training including literacy and special needs.

Leadership will form small learning communities to share best practices and visit other 21st CCLC programs. All 21st CCLC FDOE certified teachers, program assistants, and other staff are trained on safety, discipline and program procedures and policies, project goals, measurable objectives and activities, inclusion, and effective student engagement. The Project Director will provide for monthly additional staff professional development which may include high-impact instructional methods and practices, subject-specific training in Reading/ELA, Math, and STEM, PBL and enrichment subjects, training in the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People and program implementation, and surveying program staff to determine professional learning needs. CCPS has offered to include 21st CCLC staff in professional development opportunities as appropriate. Key staff will attend the Florida After School Alliance (FASA) Conference.

5.6.F Program Center

Academy of Leaders will be offered at GGHS campus. The site is centrally located in Golden Gate, easily accessible to students and families, provide safe after school environments, and comply with CCPS safety policies. GGHS campus offers classrooms, computer lab, cafeteria, and outdoor play areas. Grace Place is less than 3 miles away from GGHS and conveniently located in the neighborhood where families live. Most families are a short drive or walking distance away. All space utilized by the 21st CCLC program at GGHS complies with district safety policies (policy 7410A) and will be ADA compliant (policy 2260.03, Equal Access to Educational Opportunities). CCPS will provide the program access to GGHS facilities, including a minimum of 4 classrooms, cafeteria, media center, computer lab, and outdoor fields.

5.6.g Safety and student transportation

Student safety is of paramount importance to Grace Place. All DCF and CCPS statutory background screening standards will be followed (policy 1121.01) for persons present during the 21st CCLC program, including fingerprinting and Level 2 (FBI) background check (as per Jessica Lunsford Act, F.S. 1012.465). Grace Place will coordinate with CCPS regarding background screening.

The staff-to-student ratio will be approximately 1:10 (will not exceed 1:20). Site coordinator present during program hours will maintain safety and security, communicate with parents, and relieve teachers if needed. CCPS procedures for access to the program will be followed. Emergency evacuation drills and inspections will be conducted monthly.

Students attending the program will transition from regular day to after school on school grounds. All students will sign-in to after school and remain under the supervision of program staff for the duration of the day. Students will be transported home by the method chosen by parent/guardian during registration (pickup or bike/walking). Site coordinator and staff will be available to communicate with parents/guardians (including Spanish and Haitian Creole) during dismissal. Prior to leaving Grace Place, students complete the sign-out log.

When taking fields trips or other off-site activities, the procedures include: parent/guardian approval and emergency information; program staff monitor the students for the entire event; no student will be left alone; and all hired bus drivers must meet Florida Administrative Code requirements for a Florida School Bus Operator, possess a valid Class A or B Commercial Driver’s License with a passenger endorsement and a school bus endorsement, complete specialized training, and pass a semi-annual motor vehicle driving record check. Vehicle insurance carried by Grace Place covers liability, property damage and/or bodily injury up to $5,000,000 per accident.

5.6.h Dissemination Plan

An effective combination of traditional and non-traditional communication channels will be used to inform the Golden Gate community, about Academy of Leaders (e.g. services, activities, goals) and the importance and promise of the 21st CCLC federally funded afterschool program. Staff will use school announcements, meetings with teachers and school leadership; local media PSAs, press releases; newsletters/flyers distributed at community churches, local markets, and libraries. Social media will be used to announce the program and update the community. Grace Places’ existing social media sites will be utilized: Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Google+, and Blogspot.

The existing Grace Place website includes a sub-site for the 21st CCLC program. This site will contain pages devoted to sharing program information, progress in meeting the proposed goals and objectives, all scheduled services, adult family member activities, and project-based learning activities. Parent information will be translated into both Spanish and Haitian Creole. The website will be will be updated at least monthly marked with the date/time.