

Section 1. Project Abstract/ Summary (3 points)

Instructions

Develop a short statement (no more than 500 words) that briefly identifies the number of students served; the names and locations of the schools targeted; the grades of the students to be served; and the components of program service; and an overview of the services to be offered to the adult family members of the students served. Draft the abstract as if the program was in place. Use present-tense verbs such as “provides”, “serves” and “offers.”

Refer to the RFP for more information.

The Grace Place After School Program stands as a beacon of educational support and enrichment for students in grades 6th-8th attending Golden Gate Middle School in Naples, Florida.

At the heart of our mission lie four core objectives that guide our endeavors:

1. Academic Achievement: Our foremost goal is to bolster students' academic performance, ensuring they are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary for success in school and beyond.
2. Positive Youth Development: Beyond academics, we are committed to nurturing the holistic development of our students, fostering qualities such as confidence, resilience, and leadership.
3. Career Exploration: We provide immersive experiences that not only ignite students' passion for learning but also provide valuable insights into potential career paths for future success.
4. Family Empowerment: 5 Family Night Workshops will happen monthly, and they will feature Parent Orientation, Accessing Community Resources, Mental Health, Family Literacy and Building Protective Factors in Children. Additionally, we provide translation services to ensure that all families can participate and benefit from these valuable resources.

During the school year, our program operates from August 13, 2024 to May 22, 2025, Monday through Thursday, from 3:50-6:00 PM. Serving 180 students, our program is staffed by a dedicated team of certified teachers, trained youth development staff, and committed volunteers who provide students with a safe and supportive environment. The school year program is divided into four components:

1. Dinner: The program begins with a nutritious dinner provided through the school's cafeteria. This 15-minute mealtime not only ensures that students have the fuel they need to succeed but also fosters a sense of community among participants and staff.

2. Academic Support: Following dinner, students engage in a 60-minute academic support session led by certified teachers. During this time, students receive personalized tutoring, homework help, and access to the i-Ready program, which provides adaptive, computer-based literacy instruction tailored to each student's individual needs.

3. Project-Based Enrichment: On Mondays and Wednesdays, students participate in Choice Academies, which are project-based enrichment classes designed to expose students to a variety of STEAM-related disciplines. Led by partner agencies and volunteers, these specialized academies allow students to explore their interests, develop new skills, and showcase their learning at public showcases held at the end of each quarter.

4. Wellness Activities: On Tuesdays and Thursdays, students engage in structured wellness activities designed to support their physical and mental well-being. These activities may include sports, group games, fitness challenges, or mindfulness exercises.

At the end of each program day, transportation home is provided.

In addition to our school year program, Grace Place also offers a summer session that operates for seven weeks from June 9 to July 25, 2025. Serving 120 rising 6th-8th grade students, our summer program provides an extended day of academic, enrichment, and recreational activities designed to prevent summer learning loss and keep students engaged and motivated during the break from school. In addition, students also participate in swimming lessons and educational field trips that complement and reinforce in-class learning objectives.

Section 2. Applicant's Experience and Capacity (3 points)

Instructions

Use the dropdown menus in the online application to indicate the number of years of experience, the applicant has providing expanded learning opportunities for students, using federal funding and operating a 21st CCLC program. If the applicant has provided other types of expanded learning opportunities, use the text box to describe the opportunity. If the applicant has held other federal funding, use the text box to indicate the name of the program and the program dates. If the applicant has operated a 21st CCLC program, use the textbox to indicate the dates of operation.

Refer to the RFP for more information.

	Number of Years	Dates of Operation
Expanded Learning Opportunities	10+	8/1/2004-present
21st CCLC	10+	8/1/2014-present
Federal Funding	10+	8/1/2014-present
Other Types	10+	8/1/2004-present

Section 2a. Applicant's Experience and Capacity

Use the textbox to describe your experience in providing expanded learning opportunities, 21st CCLC operation, and in using federal funding. The description should include detailed information about the use of data, community resources, agency capacity and other factors to develop and implement educationally supportive programming to improve performance and life outcomes for students and their families.

Grace Place has provided academic and literacy programs for low-income children and families in Golden Gate for 20 years, pioneering holistic, two-generational family education in Collier County. Grace Place developed a dynamic program model that functions as a conduit for progress and produces long-lasting results. Currently over 1,200 students are enrolled in educational programs that include: (1) School Age (K-12) after school and summer youth development programs, (2) Leaders Empowered to Achieve Dreams (LEAD) (9-12) program of college and career preparation; (3) Nationally recognized Bright Beginnings and Early Childhood Education which earned Grace Place the distinguished honor of becoming a Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy program provider; (4) Adult English Language and Literacy Program, Citizenship, and financial literacy classes.

For the past twenty years, Grace Place has been the only nonprofit with a significant 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 provides reading and math instruction, homework help, and tutoring from qualified teachers to more than 120 middle school students.

Data is still being measured for the 2023-24 school year. Students in the after-school program at Grace Place over the last few years have demonstrated improved knowledge and skills in English, math, and science. The GGMS principal shared preliminary data for SY24 showing that students who participated in Grace Place performed substantially higher in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math than their peers who did not participate. Grace Place outperformed their peers earning more than 14 percentage points in both ELA and Math (see GGMS letter of support attached).

There are four objectives of the program—Academic Achievement, Positive Youth Development, Career Exploration and Family Empowerment. Below is a summary of the progress that Grace Place students made in each category. Although the objectives were very ambitious, Grace Place students showed great progress in the 2022-23 21st CCLC Summative Evaluation Report.

Academic Improvement

The program measures academic improvement in Math and ELA through the review of quarterly grades and performance on the annual standardized tests (now called FAST). The objectives are that students will show growth in ELA and Math performance on the FAST and that students will show improvement in ELA and Math grades (or maintain highest score). Students performed as follows:

65% of Grace Place students showed gains in ELA performance on the FAST from pre-test (Test #1) to post-test (Test #3).

95% of Grace Place students showed gains in Math performance on the FAST from pre-test (Test #1) to post-test (Test #3).

In addition, GGMS recently reported that Grace Place students outperformed their non-participating peers by more than 14% in Math and ELA learning gains from the 2023 school year to the 2024 school year.

Dropout Prevention

The required objective was to improve school attendance. In respect to that objective, 42% of students improved their school attendance from semester 1 to semester 2.

Behavior

The objective was that students will improve their behavior through the year. In respect to that objective, 70% of the Grace Place students improved their behavior from semester 1 to semester 2.

Engagement

According to the stakeholder survey that was completed by the school day teachers, Grace Place students performed as follows:

56% of students increased their safe and supportive relationships with peers and adults.

54% of students increased their engagement in school.

Youth programming has expanded and improved each year for 20 years. Grace Place expanded its physical facilities five years ago. Additional evidence of Grace Place's experience includes: 1) Growth from an initial 40

students in 2004 to over 1,100 students in 2023-24, including 200 children under age 5, over 600 children ages 5-18, and almost 300 adults; 2) Successful operation of extensive educational programs with measurable outcomes, managing private and grant funding, an annual budget of over \$6 million, a successful single audit and operating a busy and safe neighborhood educational center; 3) Partnership with Collier County Public Schools and Collier County Sheriff's Department since 2004; 4) United Way of Collier County approved partner agency since 2008; 5) Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy program provider; 6) Recipient of 21st CCLC Grant for Elementary and Middle School Programs in 2014 and 2019 and High School programming in 2016 and 2022 and 8) Achieved Charity Navigator Platinum status.

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 Memorandum of Agreement with CCPS enables Grace Place to access individual student data (testing, grades, assessments) through a robust district system called STOPwatch.

Grace Place's leadership possesses the necessary capacity and expertise to successfully execute the proposed 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) program. This includes firsthand experience in facilitating academic and personal enrichment activities for students in the Golden Gate area, providing adult language and family literacy programs, and evaluating the effectiveness of the 21st CCLC program.

The team includes: (1) Lara Fisher, Chief Executive Officer at Grace Place for 4 years, during which time she has overseen 21st Century programming and has maximized programming after the extensive capital expansion that happened 5 years ago. (2) Marcie Curry, Ed.D. has been the Chief Program Officer for two years and has extensive experience as an administrator in educational non-profits, including other 21st Century programs. (3) Sheila Oxx, Director of School Age Programs, has more than 10 years of experience in youth organizations serving diverse populations, including 3 years overseeing 21st CCLC program at Grace Place. (4) Diane Ponton, M.Ed. (TESOL), Chief Learning Officer, has been at Grace Place for nearly 20 years, where she developed the successful Grace Place Family Literacy Model® and built the Adult Education program. (5) Jerri Kautsky, Chief Financial Officer, is a CPA and has nearly 20 years of experience in accounting, financial and operational management. (6) Tom Powers has been the primary contact for 21st CCLC reporting and implementation over the past two 4-year cycles of 21st CCLC funding for the middle school as well as concurrent funding for 2 other 21st CCLC grants with Elementary and High School. (7) Josh Edel, Site Coordinator, Middle School Program, will be in his third year of leading 21st CCLC staff and activities.

The executive leadership team is experienced in planning, overseeing and managing over \$6 million in yearly expenditures/budgets. Significant funds are held in reserves to handle cash flow and contingencies and a

professional audit has been conducted yearly for the past thirteen 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.

Grace Place 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 for more than 15 years. In addition to the experienced Finance team, Grace Place has an external Finance Committee that includes 2 bankers and 2 accountants, meeting monthly before the Board of Directors meetings.

To further assist with program implementation and oversight, an Advisory Board, comprised of two students, two parents/guardians, a school administrator, teaching staff, community agencies and partners, and private sector members, has been developed. The Advisory Board meets at least twice a year to monitor and provide feedback on the grant's activities, ensuring that the program is implemented as proposed and that the project's goals are carried out. Reports from program representatives will be presented to the Advisory Board for evaluation and analysis. Agenda, minutes, and attendance lists will be maintained, reported back to the CEO and Board of Directors, and made available to the general public on the Grace Place website.

Section 3. Evaluation of the Community Needs (5 points)

Instructions

Use the Know Your Schools portal to review the school-level data for the target school(s) under the following areas:

- Assessments-Academic Achievement, Growth, and Participation
- Assessments-English Language Learners
- Discipline and Attendance
- Graduation and Postsecondary

Use the text box to summarize the trends found in the school-level data and the results of the surveys of the teachers, parents and communities. Identify the issues and trends that need to be addressed. Describe the activities that the survey respondents would like to see in the community learning center. Identify any assets that already exist in the community to focus on those needs identified above and assets that do not yet exist which are needed to meet the needs.

Refer to the RFP for more information.

Grace Place assembled a team of committed education experts and community stakeholders to assess student and community needs. This involved identifying service gaps and evaluating the conditions and criteria for the proposed 21st CCLC program.

Quantitative data was collected from various sources including FLDOE's Know Your School portal, which includes student performance data and gaps amongst student subgroups. Leadership also reviewed the School Improvement Plan, School Accountability Reports (SAR), the Collier Community Foundation's Community Assessment, and National Census data (poverty, literacy, educational attainment, employment, family demographics).

Grace Place also collected qualitative data through meetings, focus groups, and surveys with community stakeholders. Invited participants included parents, students, concerned citizens, teachers, a nearby private school St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic School, and business and community leaders. Participants reviewed data and reports, identified assets, needs, and gaps, and contributed feedback toward the development of the proposed plan.

The results of the needs assessment drive the short and long-range plans and led to the development of four program goals:

Improve academic achievement in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

Improve social and behavioral skills, promote positive youth development and personal growth through health, wellness, and character enrichment activities.

Fill gaps in the workforce through career exploration activities and classes.

Empower families through workshops focusing on topics of mental health, family literacy, and youth protective factors.

These goals will be supported by research-based methods such as tutoring in core subjects, supplemental English language and literacy instruction, project-based enrichment, and wellness activities. The program will target 180 students in grades 6-8 at Golden Gate Middle School (GGMS).

The population of students the program currently serves faces several barriers to future success. 89% of students at Golden Gate Middle School are classified as low-income, with 100% of students benefiting from the Community Eligibility Provision for free lunches. Language barriers also pose a significant threat to academic achievement with 20% of GGMS students being classified as English Language Learners. The proposed 21st CCLC program works alongside GGMS staff and leadership to identify and recruit at-risk and academically low performing students who need additional support.

To best address the needs of Golden Gate, Grace Place conducted surveys and focus groups, and reviewed data from the Collier Community Foundation's 2023 Community Assessment to gather the opinions of concerned citizens, parents, students, and teachers.

Results from the Community Assessment indicated that after-school program participation is prohibited by long wait lists seen at other after-school programs in the district. By specifically targeting the Golden Gate community, Grace Place ensures that at-risk students have access to high quality OST activities. Focus group participants also mentioned the need for increased vocational training to fill employment gaps. This need is addressed in the proposed 21st CCLC program through project-based enrichment activities that introduce middle schoolers to various high-demand career paths. Participants also discussed the need for additional ELL support for students-- a primary goal of Grace Place.

The proposed 21st CCLC program was intentionally designed in response to GGMS' School Improvement Plan (SIP). This plan outlines GGMS' goal of increasing academic proficiency by 3% in all four core subjects: ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies. To help achieve this goal, Grace Place's certified teachers provide 60 minutes of daily after-school academic support to lower-performing students at GGMS.

Academic Achievement, Growth, and Participation

Student performance on Florida's statewide assessments is reported on the Know Your Schools Portal. Performance is labeled with 5 achievement levels: Well Below Grade Level (Achievement Level 1), Below Grade Level (Achievement Level 2), On Grade Level (Achievement Level 3), Proficient (Achievement Level 4), and Exemplary (Achievement Level 5).

The 2022-2023 English Language Arts Assessment reports that 57% of GGMS students are well below or below grade level, indicating the need for substantial support for the next grade. Collier County students performed significantly better with only 43.5% of students well below or below grade level. The state of Florida also outperformed GGMS with 48.6% of students below or well below grade level.

The results of the 2022-2023 Mathematics Assessment indicate that 32.5% of GGMS students are below grade level, mirroring the district's performance. Notably, GGMS has observed a decline in math proficiency since 2019. While Collier County and GGMS marginally outperform Florida in the Mathematics Assessment, it is crucial to provide supplemental support for students struggling in this subject to halt the ongoing decline.

The Science Assessment results report that 59% of GGMS students are underperforming and are below or well below grade level. The school district significantly outperformed GGMS with only 37% of students falling below grade level.

Finally, the Social Studies assessment results reveal that GGMS lags behind the district and the state in achievement levels. 39% of GGMS students are below or well below grade level; compared to only 30.5% of students in the district, and 33% of the state.

GGMS refers students for specialized services when needed to bolster academic performance. Other existing assets include school sponsored sports and arts activities. These are great motivators and, in most cases, students must maintain minimum grades to participate. There are also after-school activities in the county that charge a fee. These activities are often out of reach for our students due to a lack of transportation and income barriers. Filling this need, 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.

Gaps between Subgroups

When segmented by subgroup, only 43% of ELL students are proficient across the four core subjects. Despite only

representing 19% of the GGMS' total population, ELL students make up 55% of all non-proficient students in ELA. Nearly 75% of ELL students at GGMS are below or well below grade level in ELA and only 3.4% of GGMS' ELL students achieved English Language proficiency in the 22-23 school year (FDOE Know Your Schools Portal). Additional support for ELL students at GGMS is vital to their future success in high school and beyond. At Golden Gate High School last year, 70.5% of ELL students graduated on time, compared to the high school's overall rate of 88.5%. By equipping middle school students with English language and literacy skills, they are more likely to graduate high school and pursue a fulfilling post-secondary plan.

The district provides English Language Learners equal access to the curriculum. ELL teachers work to boost students' English proficiency through small group and individual instruction. GGMS is committed to maintaining an environment where students can learn the American culture and English language through their experiences with classmates and teachers. Although these existing assets are in place, students' proficiency in English is still lagging, indicating the need for more support beyond what the school has the capacity to provide. 71% of households in Golden Gate do not speak English in the home (US Census), creating a great need for English language and literacy support. Grace Place emphasizes this importance by employing a staff of qualified individuals capable of providing ELA instruction to students learning English as a second language. Additionally, many Grace Place employees are from the Golden Gate community and help bridge the cultural barrier for students.

In 2022-2023, Collier County Public Schools reported an average achievement gap of 18 percentage points between Economically Disadvantaged students and Non-Economically Disadvantaged students across the four core subjects. GGMS has one of the highest rates of poverty in the district, putting its students at a higher risk of academic underperformance. Parents in low-income families often do not have the luxury of flexible work hours, resulting in children being unsupervised after school. A study by the Naples Children and Education Foundation (NCEF) indicated that over 60% of school-aged students living in Golden Gate do not have adult supervision at home when they return from school each day. This lack of supervision increases the probability of students engaging in risky or aggressive behaviors, being injured or victimized, and losing interest in education.

Existing assets for low-income students include free and reduced lunch to combat food insecurity. There are also several after-school opportunities in Collier County for students of working parents, but the vast majority require a fee and transportation. To eliminate these barriers, the proposed 21st CCLC program will provide completely free programs on the campus of GGMS and provide transportation home for each student.

Students with disabilities at GGMS also have a greater need for additional support. For the past two consecutive years, students with disabilities have performed beneath the federal index (37% and 38%, respectively). This highlights the importance of tailored interventions and resources to address the unique learning challenges they

face. Inclusive practices that accommodate diverse learning needs are essential for ensuring academic success and creating a supportive educational environment.

CCPS employs a dedicated team of educators and leaders specializing in Exceptional Student Education (ESE), aimed at enriching the academic journey for students with disabilities. Additionally, an ESE Advisory Board, comprising parents, teachers, administrators, and community stakeholders, contributes valuable insights. However, despite these existing assets, students with disabilities at GGMS continue to underperform. Recognizing this challenge, Grace Place places a strong emphasis on prioritizing students with disabilities, ensuring they receive tailored accommodations to actively participate in the after-school program.

OST programs are incredibly crucial in meeting the diverse needs of students, promoting their academic achievement, and nurturing their growth and development.

Discipline and Attendance

The rate of chronic absenteeism at GGMS is 19%. Studies show that low-income students who are disconnected from social services are more likely to miss school (American Federation of Teachers, 2012). Grace Place, in collaboration with GGMS, creates a network of support between teachers, families, and after school staff to combat the risk of chronic absenteeism.

In the 2022-2023 school year, 22% of students at GGMS had one or more In-School Suspensions at some point during the year. This rate is much higher than the 9.8% seen district wide. Additionally, 9.6% of GGMS students have received at least one out-of-school suspension, compared to only 5% of students in Collier County. School suspensions lead to loss of instructional and learning time, leading to a drop in grades. It is important to address early indicators of behavioral concerns to avoid suspensions and ensure students receive maximum academic instruction. Research indicates that after-school program participants are less likely to engage in at-risk behaviors that lead to disciplinary actions (Afterschool Alliance, 2014).

GGMS focuses on resiliency, character, and life skills throughout the school year, but with the primary focus being academic achievement, teachers are often unable to directly address these important aspects of positive youth development during the school day.

Based on the results of the needs assessment, Golden Gate families expressed the need for improved social and behavioral skills through high interest activities for students, positive relationships with caring staff, access to behavioral health services, and encouragement during after school programming. These additional supports will reduce the need for in school suspensions and allow students to remain in class during valuable instructional time.

In conclusion, the needs assessment conducted by Grace Place, in collaboration with education experts and community stakeholders, has been instrumental in shaping the proposed 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) program at Golden Gate Middle School. Through analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, including input from various community members, the program goals have been carefully crafted to address the identified needs of the students and families. By focusing on academic achievement, social and behavioral skills, career exploration, and family empowerment, the program aims to bridge existing gaps and provide essential support to a student population facing numerous barriers to success.

Section 4. Community Notice/Dissemination of Information (5 points)

Instructions

In the text box, describe how the applicant informed the school, district and community, including eligible private schools, of their intention to submit a proposal in response to this RFP. Include the locations or sources used to notify the community. Also describe how the proposal will be available to the community following its submittal. Include a detailed description of the platforms used to provide notice and share information and documentation. Describe what information will be available on the web page, what staff will be charged with maintaining the content and the timeline for the launch and maintenance of the web page.

Describe how the 21st CCLC program will disseminate information about the program to the community in an understandable and accessible manner. Describe how the dissemination plan is appropriate for the community being served by the 21st CCLC program. Describe how the program will engage the adult family members of the students attending the program.

Refer to the RFP for more information.

A notice was placed in the Naples Daily News that informed the community of Grace Place's intention to submit a proposal in response to this 21st CCLC RFP at the time of the submission of Grace Place's Letter of Intent to Apply in May 2024. Local public and private schools were consulted and invited to participate in the proposal development. During meetings with the school district this spring, we were encouraged to continue programming as a 21st CCLC. This proposal will be accessible on the Grace Place website following submission, and the programming will be continuously promoted through our website, mailings, social media, community bulletins, and other venues.

An effective combination of traditional and non-traditional communication channels will be used to inform the Golden Gate community, school staff, partners, private school partners, parents and other stakeholders about 21st CCLC programming (e.g. services, activities, goals) and the importance and promise of the 21st CCLC federally funded OST program. We have worked with the Collier County Public Schools to make announcements, send automated Parent-Link calls, and meet with teachers and school leadership.

Grace Place's existing social media sites (Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn) promote current and future program offerings, allowing us to reach more families in the community. The existing Grace Place website currently includes a sub-site for the 21st CCLC program. This site contains pages devoted to sharing program information (including a copy of the approved grant narrative for current funding as well as copies of past years' 21st CCLC Summative Evaluation Reports), progress in meeting the proposed goals and objectives, successes and highlights, all scheduled services, adult family member activities, and links to end-products of project-based learning activities.

The website is updated at least quarterly by the Marketing Manager. The date/time of the latest update will be displayed on the home page. Important parent information will be translated into both Spanish and Haitian Creole, the primary native languages of families in Golden Gate.

Section 5. Partnerships and Collaboration (10 points)

Instructions

In the text box, describe the partnership plan for partners who are making tangible contributions to the program. Discuss how the program is securing the required meals and partnerships necessary to implement the provision of snacks and meals to 21st CCLC students.

Additionally, describe what strategies the applicant has developed to continue meaningful collaboration throughout the school year with the schools attended by the targeted students as well as the private schools in the local area. Identify how the collaborations will work, what information will be requested from the schools, and the frequency of communications and how the applicant will maintain open communication channels.

Finally, describe how federal, state, and local funds will be combined or coordinated for the most effective use of public resources. If other state or federal funding for out of school time activities are known or anticipated in the same school during the grant period, describe how the program will coordinate activities to ensure it can meet participation requirements for funding as well as how funds will be allocated and spending recorded separately for each funding source.

Include each partner in the Partners Table attachment. Identify any partnerships the applicant has secured to support the proposed program. Identify each partner and describe their tangible contribution to the program. Attach documentation such as letters or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from the proposed partners identifying contributions. Letters must clearly identify tangible contributions that will be provided to the program in order to achieve program goals. Letters that indicate just general support for the program will not be considered in the scoring.

Refer to the RFP for more information.

The Grace Place After School Program exists as a resource for Golden Gate Middle School students and families; therefore, coordinated efforts between the school day program and the after-school program is vital. This partnership succeeds due to several important factors—1) a commitment from the school district to value out of school time programming, 2) frequent communication with the school administration, 3) the employment of school-day teachers in the after-school program, and 4) a leveraging of resources between the two entities to do the most good.

At the core of its success lies a seamless partnership between the program and the school district. The data sharing agreement between the school district and Grace Place allows for key program staff to gain access to participating student records. Having access to students' grades, test scores, attendance, and behavior reports allows the Grace Place program to make informed decisions about program interventions. Key staff at the district

work collaboratively with the Grace Place leadership to ensure that program operations are coordinated. This includes data sharing, fingerprinting and badging, transportation, and leasing to name a few. This coordination is not just about paperwork, data, and contracts; it's about working together to drive meaningful change in students' lives.

Communication with the Golden Gate Middle School administration is not just a formality—it is a lifeline. These efforts are led by the Program Director who is responsible for all community relations. Formal meetings occur twice each year through scheduled, face-to-face appointments, but contact is made informally almost weekly. These informal and organic exchanges are the key to our understanding of each other's needs. During these interactions, the Grace Place staff were able to learn of the school's desire to add the i-Ready program as a reading intervention tool, but it was not a budgeted school expense. Grace Place was able to purchase the license and offer the reading intervention during the after-school hours. The school then referred struggling readers to the after-school program to access the resource.

The school invites the Grace Place program staff to make announcements at parent events such as Back to School Night, which allows the program a platform for student recruitment. Also, the school principal often attends special events hosted in the after-school program to demonstrate her support for the students and Grace Place. Frequent informal communication takes place between the after-school site manager and the school administrator to discuss student discipline, the lease agreement, and transportation to name a few. The connection between the Grace Place team and the school administration has allowed needs to be identified, solutions to be crafted, and initiatives to be launched.

Grace Place employs several Golden Gate Middle School teachers during the after-school hours. This decision is not just a staffing choice; it is a strategic move to bridge the gap between the school day and the after-school program. The teachers already know the students, their academic needs, and often their families. This is advantageous in many ways, but mostly allows the after-school program to function as an extension of the school day in both curricular and social ways. The teachers also report that their involvement in the after-school program benefits them during the regular school day because of their improved relationship with students, having invested in them outside of the normal classroom setting.

The strong relationship with the school benefits the after-school program as well. The school provides after-school meals through the federal school lunch food program for no cost. Also, the school supports the safe passage of the students by assisting with transportation efforts. These program additions are an effective use of public funds to make sure that students' basic needs are met even after the school day is over.

In addition to the strong district and school partnerships, Grace Place also benefits from other collaborative,

community relationships. Local partners provide support through staff and curriculum to bring high interest, free programs to the after-school participants. Key partners include Gulfshore Playhouse, David Lawrence Center, Jr. Achievement, Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation, Florida National Guard Counterdrug Program, and the First Tee of Naples/Collier. Together they bring a diverse array of resources and expertise to the table, enriching the after-school experience with art, theater, mental health support, financial literacy, career exploration, and life lessons through sports.

Gulfshore Playhouse is a non-profit theater company who provides theater staff and programming to support students with both literacy skills and self-confidence.

David Lawrence Center provides educators to the program to enhance the mental health of the participants. Workshops and hands on activities related to social and emotional health provide students with an avenue to express their thoughts and feelings on many important topics.

Jr. Achievement provides volunteers and curriculum to strengthen students in financial literacy and other economic-related competencies.

The First Tee of Naples/Collier provides a coach, equipment, and curriculum to teach students many life lessons through the game of golf.

The Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation provides sports programming and life skills workshops for students and invitations to special events and travel experiences.

The Florida National Guard Counterdrug Program informs the students about the dangers of drugs and the importance of healthy choices through the Drug Demand Reeducation Outreach initiative (DDRO).

The collective commitment of Grace Place's partners has made the after-school program appealing to a diverse group of youth.

Section 6: Target Population, Recruitment and Retention (5 points)

Instructions

In the text box describe the targeted students including what schools they attend and their grade levels. If priority will be given during enrollment to any specific students, please fully describe said priority and how it will be applied.

Additionally, describe how eligible students will be identified and what strategies will be used to reach those students and enroll them in the 21st CCLC program. The applicant needs to describe how the program will encourage students to participate regularly and remain in the program from beginning to end of each program day.

Finally, applicants must describe how the program will engage the adult family members of the students attending the program. This description should include what strategies the program will implement to ensure that students and families consistently attend the 21st CCLC activities and participate in the whole array of activities.

Refer to the RFP for more information.

Under this funding proposal, Grace Place's primary focus is to extend its support to Golden Gate Middle School. With a student body of 999 spanning sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, the school's demographics underscore the urgent need for targeted academic interventions as outlined by ESEA Sections 1114 and 1003. A staggering 89% of students at Golden Gate Middle School are classified as low-income, with 100% of students benefiting from the Community Eligibility Provision for free lunches. Despite this, the school's subgroup of Students with Disabilities, representing 20% of the population, warrants special attention due to academic performance concerns. Similarly, while the subgroup of English Language Learners narrowly escaped federal indexing criteria, their proficiency levels, with only 3.5% deemed proficient, underscore the need for targeted support. With ELL students also comprising 20% of the school population, the imperative for Grace Place's after-school programming is crystal clear.

To ensure equitable access, ELL students and those with disabilities receive enrollment preference. Working closely with school personnel, Grace Place actively recruits qualifying students through various channels, including school events like Back to School Night and community fixtures such as the weekly Farmer's Market. Leveraging its existing rapport within the community, bolstered by its Adult Education and Early Childhood programs, Grace Place seamlessly integrates into the fabric of Golden Gate City life. ELL students and students with disabilities benefit from certified teachers, small group sizes, access to adaptive curriculum, and many bi-lingual staff members to ensure that they receive the support that they need.

Grace Place's commitment to student success doesn't end with enrollment. With a dedicated focus on engagement, the program strives to create an environment where students not only feel supported but also genuinely excited to participate. By offering high-interest programming and employing engaging staff members, Grace Place fosters a sense of belonging that keeps students coming back. Moreover, recognizing the pivotal role

of parental involvement, Grace Place ensures that families are not only informed but also actively engaged through comprehensive family and adult member services. Under the guidance of a dedicated Family Engagement Manager, these efforts not only recruit but also retain families, fostering a supportive community where every member feels valued and empowered.

In essence, Grace Place's commitment to Golden Gate Middle School extends far beyond the classroom, embodying a holistic approach to education that addresses not only academic needs but also social and familial dynamics, ensuring that every student can thrive.

Section 7: Times and Frequency of Service Provision for Students and Adult Family Members (10 points)

Instructions

Complete a Site Profile Worksheet for each proposed site, identifying the number of students and families to be served and the programming component to be offered. In calculating the number of students and families to be served, propose a reasonable number of students based on the target population. The amount of time proposed in the site profile worksheet must match the amount of time proposed in the funding request guide. Each application can include up to two (2) sites.

Refer to the RFP for more information.

Click [here](#) to download the Site Profile Worksheet.

Click "Upload a file" to upload Site Profile Worksheet.

[2425RFP_Site-Profile_Middle_School_May_2024_FINAL.docx](#)

Filename: 2425RFP_Site-Profile_Middle_School_May_2024_FINAL.docx **Size:** 173.0 kB

Section 8: Local Level Program Evaluation (10 points)

Instructions

In the narrative box, describe the evaluation plan for the proposed program. Describe the activities to be included in the evaluation of the program. Provide a proposed evaluation timeline for these activities. Explain the process to be put in place to ensure accurate data is collected, maintained, and reported for state and federal reporting.

Describe how the evaluation activities will be coordinated with program staff, students, adult family members and others as applicable. Explain how the evaluation design and data collection plan will examine the intended impact of the program. Explain how the evaluation results will be used for program improvement and shared with the community.

Refer to the RFP for more information.

Grace Place maintains the importance of program evaluation for measurements of effectiveness, program improvements, and informed communication with stakeholders. The evaluation plan includes the following stages: 1) set clear program outcomes, 2) data collection, 3) data analysis, 4) data interpretation, 5) disseminate findings, 6) utilize the findings to make program enhancements or changes, 7) implement changes, 8) repeat the full cycle. The evaluation process is led by the Chief Program Officer with collaboration from the Data Assistant Manager and the Middle Program Manager.

The evaluation plan is cyclical in nature. Once a cycle has completed, it starts over again almost immediately. The timeline for the Grace Place middle school program evaluation is as follows:

July-August: set clear program outcomes/implement changes

August-May- data collection

May-June- data analysis, data interpretation, and disseminate findings

June-July- utilize findings to make changes

Grace Place sets clear program outcomes through the creation of a program logic model. Here the program inputs, outputs, and outcomes are determined. For each outcome, indicators are created to ensure that the outcomes are being measured for effectiveness. The program manager reports on the pre-determined indicators monthly through a scorecard, which is an ascending report reviewed by the Chief Program Officer, the CEO, and eventually the board of directors. This monthly review process ensures that the program is operating with fidelity and provides an

opportunity to catch problems or inconsistencies before they become too entrenched.

The data collection stage is ongoing throughout the program. Student performance data is received through a data sharing agreement with the Collier County School District through a secure online database called Stopwatch. This resource provides the program team with student identification numbers, grades, test scores, school attendance, and school behavioral data. This is an invaluable tool to ensure that program staff have the right information to provide targeted interventions, monitor student progress, and complete any progress reports or deliverables required by funders. The MOU with the district is reviewed, updated, and signed each August.

Other data collected are student surveys, parent surveys, teacher surveys and transcripts from program advisory meetings. These qualitative data sources provide additional insights into the program experience.

The data analysis phase is where the data is reviewed for any errors or gaps and where qualitative descriptive statistical methods are reviewed to find patterns and trends.

Next, the data findings are interpreted based on the predetermined program outcomes. Here is where the program team discovers if their interventions had the expected impact or if groups of students did not benefit from the program as intended.

After the data is interpreted, the program team creates recommendations for program changes expected to enhance student outcomes. These recommendations are evaluated for practicality and feasibility before being proposed for future programs.

The last step in the evaluation process is to disseminate the findings to stakeholders. This includes writing a comprehensive evaluation report which is then distributed to a variety of stakeholders such as funders, partners, parents, and the local community. This report will be housed on the Grace Place website for full transparency.

Grace Place has extensive experience collecting, maintaining, analyzing, and reporting accurate program data. Grace Place has been a 21st Century Community Learning Center grantee since 2014. During this time, Grace Place has successfully met all data deliverables in a timely and accurate manner. Grace Place employs a Compliance Director, a Data Analyst, and a Data Entry Coordinator to oversee the data cycle. This team expertly uses technology tools such as EZ Reports, Efforts to Outcomes (ETO), Kid Kare, Stopwatch, and other resources to ensure program outcomes are measured with fidelity.

The Chief Program Officer at Grace Place brings a wealth of experience to the table in using data to enhance program quality. With over 20 years of dedicated involvement in youth program development, her expertise is

grounded in a deep understanding of the nuances of program dynamics and the intricacies of fostering positive outcomes. Moreover, her earned doctorate degree in Educational Leadership not only underscores their commitment to advancing educational initiatives but also signifies extensive training in research methodologies and program evaluation techniques.

Grace Place has consistently demonstrated a proactive approach to leveraging data for program improvement. Leadership involvement in program evaluation at Grace Place has been instrumental in driving evidence-based decision-making processes. By systematically analyzing data generated from tools such as EZ Reports and Efforts to Outcomes (ETO), they have facilitated a comprehensive understanding of program effectiveness and identified areas ripe for enhancement. Furthermore, their expertise extends beyond mere data interpretation; they possess the acumen to translate insights gleaned from evaluations into actionable strategies for program refinement. Their blend of practical experience and academic rigor equips them with the skills to not only navigate the complexities of program evaluation but also spearhead initiatives aimed at continuous improvement.

Section 9: Authorized Program Activities (15 points)

Instructions

Each program must create and upload a schedule for each program component that includes the start and end time for each activity and which activity will be offered in each time block. In the text box provided, submit a narrative that outlines a plan for how the activities in the proposed schedule address the needs identified in the program needs assessment, indicates the frequency and duration of each program activity and will meet the measures of effectiveness described in ESEA Section 4205(b). Additionally, the plan should include a description of research or evidence-based practices that are used to select educational and related activities which will complement and enhance academic performance, achievement, postsecondary and workforce preparation for the students served by the program. The plan should describe how the community learning center will implement each activity on the schedule. Identify the interventions the program staff will use for each activity and their levels of evidence.

Refer to the RFP for more information.

The after-school program's structure is designed to correspond with the authorized activities outlined in ESEA Section 4205(a) and fulfill the measures of effectiveness outlined in ESEA Section 4205(b). Furthermore, all activities aim to enhance student academic achievement and overall success as specified in ESEA Section 4205(b)(2)(B). Finally, each activity is founded on research to ensure its efficacy.

The program design will provide a balance of academic and personal enrichment activities for student participants. Each program day, students will have three activity blocks. For the first 15 minutes of each day, students will receive a hot, nutritious meal provided by the school. During this time, staff will be intentional about building relationships with youth. This more informal time allows for trust to be built, and staff can gain crucial information to help meet the needs of each student. Next, students will go into a one-hour academic enrichment session followed by a 55-minute personal enrichment session. The details on these will be expanded below.

The academic enrichment session meets three areas of the ESSA measures of effectiveness—student academic achievement, reduction in achievement gaps, and providing after-school activities for English Language Learners that emphasize language skills and academic achievement. The academic enrichment session is managed by certified teachers and supported by youth development workers and volunteers. The goal of these sessions is for students to make academic gains.

The program model follows a similar approach to Response to Intervention (RTI), a tier 2 intervention in ESSA. In essence, the Response to Intervention (RTI) method tailors interventions to students according to predefined benchmarks. Those with more significant needs are offered more rigorous support measures. This is the approach that Grace Place takes in the academic enrichment component. Since Golden Gate Middle School has low

achievement in reading, each student begins the academic session by completing 15-minutes on the i-Ready reading software with their school issued laptops. The National Reading Panel research found that regular reading, even for short durations like 15 minutes, can significantly improve vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and overall reading proficiency. Additionally, sustained reading practice fosters a love for reading, which is linked to higher academic achievement and lifelong learning. Each student has an individualized learning path to follow according to their most recent i-Ready diagnostic. Teachers review student progress on the software and meet with students to set goals. i-Ready meets the effectiveness requirements outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) by providing comprehensive assessments and personalized learning experiences that align with academic standards, support student growth, and facilitate data-driven instruction to improve educational outcomes.

For the remaining 45 minutes of the session, students complete homework with the support of the staff. Students who are behind in math or reading also receive small group tutoring in specific areas where they need it. Also, during this time, the English Language Learners work with bilingual teachers to work on their language skills. Small group tutoring in core subjects allows teachers to adapt instruction to the individual needs of students. There is strong evidence to support that when individualized and intensive reading supports are provided by trained individuals, students made progress (Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices ([ed.gov](#))). These small group sessions will be supervised by the certified teacher but will also utilize trained community volunteers, many of whom are retired teachers.

Because the staff of the program are also school-day teachers, the curriculum for after-school naturally aligns with the school day. This model is supported by both Tier 3 and Tier 4 interventions as determined by the What Works Clearinghouse standards. Researchers recommend that out of school time tutoring programs align with the school day for maximum effectiveness; therefore, employing staff from Golden Gate Middle School will continue to be a priority (Structuring Out-of-School Time to Improve Academic Achievement ([ed.gov](#))).

The next block during the after-school program is personal enrichment, and it runs for 55 minutes. On Mondays and Wednesdays, students participate in Choice Academies. A Choice Academy is a student-choice, project-based program focusing on career exploration using high interest, STEAM content (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math). Students learn from industry professionals (typically a volunteer or partner organization) and create projects to display every 9-10 weeks in a showcase for the community. Choice Academies include Coding, 3D printing, AI programming, STEM and basketball, STEM and golf, STEM and BMX, photography, fashion design, chess, drumline, dance, culinary arts, theater, and more. Students choose an academy that interests them; they work with classmates to learn new skills, solve problems, and create a final product to represent their learning. This hand-on, choice-based model drastically improves student engagement. The Schlechty Center for Engagement has found that engaged students learn at high levels and have a profound grasp of what they learn, retain what they learn, and can transfer what they learn to new contexts.

In addition to improved student engagement, the Choice Academy's curriculum model offers other benefits for students. Some key advantages include:

Personalized Learning: The Choice Learning Academy curriculum model focuses on personalized learning experiences. It recognizes that every student has unique learning styles, interests, and strengths. By offering a curriculum tailored to individual needs, students can engage in learning activities that resonate with them, fostering deeper understanding and greater motivation.

Flexibility: The model emphasizes flexibility in curriculum design and delivery. It allows students to have more control over their learning journey, enabling them to set goals, choose their subjects, and progress at their own pace. This flexibility promotes a sense of ownership and autonomy, empowering students to take responsibility for their education.

Holistic Development: The curriculum model at Choice Learning Academy promotes holistic development by considering the diverse needs of students. It goes beyond traditional academic subjects and incorporates various aspects of personal growth, such as social-emotional learning, critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and character development. This comprehensive approach nurtures well-rounded individuals ready to face the challenges of the real world.

Real-World Relevance: The curriculum model emphasizes the integration of real-world applications and experiences into the learning process. It strives to connect classroom learning with practical situations, enabling students to understand the relevance of their studies in the context of the world around them. This approach enhances students' ability to apply their knowledge and skills in practical scenarios, preparing them for future careers and life beyond school.

Collaboration and Communication Skills: The Choice Learning Academy curriculum model encourages collaboration and effective communication among students. It incorporates group projects, discussions, and interactive activities that foster teamwork, cooperation, and the development of interpersonal skills. These skills are vital for success in the modern workforce and in building positive relationships.

Lifelong Learning Skills: By promoting self-directed learning, critical thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability, the Choice Learning Academy curriculum model equips students with essential skills for lifelong learning. Students learn how to take initiative, set goals, explore new subjects, and continuously grow their knowledge and abilities. These skills are crucial in an ever-changing world where the ability to learn and adapt is highly valued.

Overall, the Choice Learning Academy curriculum model offers a student-centered, flexible, and holistic approach to education, fostering personalized learning experiences, student engagement, and the development of essential skills and characteristics for success. Wigfield & Cambria's (2010), research highlights the importance of student choice in fostering a sense of ownership and value for learning goals, which positively influences academic achievement. Also, Legault & Inzlicht, (2013) explored the relationship between autonomy and self-regulation, offering insights into how providing choice can support middle school students' academic performance and well-being.

In addition to the Choice Academies being grounded in research, they also meet the ESEA standards for providing well-rounded education activities that build skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics that foster innovation in learning, as well as cultural programs, and programs that build career competencies. They are also aligned with the ESEA effectiveness measures of promoting student academic achievement and career readiness.

The Choice Academies are part of the project-based learning framework, which is an ESSA Tier 1-2 level of evidence. Grace Place models its Choice Academies around the Buck Institute for Education's (BIE) Gold Standard PBL model.

The Gold Standard PBL model outlines a set of essential design elements and criteria for high-quality PBL experiences, including:

Challenging Problem or Question: Projects should present students with authentic, real-world problems or questions that are complex, open-ended, and require critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Sustained Inquiry: Students engage in sustained inquiry and investigation to explore the problem or question, gather relevant information, and develop deeper understanding through research, experimentation, and analysis.

Authenticity: Projects should be authentic and connected to students' interests, experiences, and the world beyond the classroom. They should provide opportunities for students to make meaningful connections to real-world contexts and applications.

Student Voice and Choice: Students have voice and choice in shaping the direction and outcomes of the project, including selecting topics, designing investigations, and making decisions about how to approach the problem or question.

Reflection and Revision: Projects incorporate opportunities for reflection and revision, where students can review their progress, receive feedback, and make improvements to their work based on ongoing evaluation and

assessment.

The after-school program offers a different form of personal enrichment on Tuesdays and Thursdays. For 55 minutes, students will engage in structured, wellness activities. These activities range from fitness, mindfulness, sports, crafting, and other restorative practices. These experiences give youth the opportunity to express their feelings and emotions, learn healthy coping strategies, build relationships, exercise, and play. These personal enrichment sessions are led by volunteers, partner organizations, or staff members. Partners such as the David Lawrence Center play a key role in providing mental health services to the Grace Place participants.

ESSA supports comprehensive school-based wellness programs that promote students' physical and mental health. Research studies evaluating the effectiveness of such programs have found positive outcomes, including improved academic performance, reduced behavioral problems, and increased attendance among middle school students.

In 2017, ESSA included mindfulness-based interventions as one of the evidence-based practices for improving students' social and emotional skills. Research studies cited in the guide demonstrate the positive effects of mindfulness practices on students' attention, self-regulation, and overall well-being.

The Journal of School Health and the Healthy School Campaigns research agrees that comprehensive school health programs positively impact academic achievement. The research discusses how interventions targeting physical activity, nutrition, mental health, and other wellness components can improve students' academic performance, attendance, and behavior in middle schools.

Partners like the David Lawrence Center and the Florida National Guard Counterdrug Program add a wellness component to the program, included in the Tuesday/Thursday personal enrichment schedule. David Lawrence Educators provide prevention workshops to cover topics such as bullying, peer pressure, dating violence, communication, emotional intelligence, social media dangers, and more. The Florida National Guard Counterdrug Program informs the students about the dangers of drugs and the importance of healthy choices through the Drug Demand Reeducation Outreach initiative (DDRO).

The Grace Place wellness component fits into the list of ESEA approved activities in two ways. The program supports healthy and active lifestyles, including nutritional education and regular structured physical activity programs. Additionally, the program offers drug and violence prevention programming.

In addition to acquiring skills and knowledge through personal enrichment activities, students also contribute to fostering a positive school climate. Those who opt to participate find school enjoyable and develop positive

relationships with after-school program staff, perceiving the activities as more aligned with their interests. Research published in the Journal of School Health indicates that students with a favorable view of school climate tend to perform better academically. While ESSA's Tiers of Evidence do not explicitly address wellness, they do incorporate Social Emotional Learning (SEL). The after-school program serves as an extension of the school, reinforcing its Social Emotional Learning initiatives to cultivate an overall positive school climate. Through collaborative efforts like Leader in Me, Grace Place and Golden Gate Middle School synergize to promote students' social and emotional development, aligning with Tier 1 evidence standards.

Overall, the Grace Place program model uses best practices in academic enrichment, Choice Academies, and wellness to bring about positive academic and personal growth in the student participants.

Section 9a: Authorized Program Activities

Instructions

Upload a schedule for each program component that includes the start and end time for each activity and which activity will be offered in each time block.

Refer to the RFP for more information.

[Grace Place GGMS RFP Program SY and Summer Schedule May 2024.docx](#)

Filename: Grace Place GGMS RFP Program SY and Summer Schedule May 2024.docx **Size:** 39.7 kB

[Grace Place GGMS RFP Full Activity Plan with details May 2024.docx](#)

Filename: Grace Place GGMS RFP Full Activity Plan with details May 2024.docx **Size:** 44.8 kB

Section 10: Staffing, Volunteers, and Professional Learning (10 points)

Instructions

In the text box provided, describe the staffing structure of the community learning center. Outline the positions that will be hired in the community learning center. Discuss how the staffing structure interfaces with the scheduled activities in the previous section. Upload sample job descriptions for each position mentioned above that includes the qualifications and the duties of each position. Provide a schedule of training for the community learning center staff. If the community learning center is utilizing volunteers, please describe how the center will encourage and use appropriately qualified persons to serve as volunteers. Describe the professional learning plan for the 21st CCLC staff including how the training needs will be identified and met through the program years. Identify the types of trainings proposed for the staff, the qualifications of the trainers, and the processes to transfer knowledge into practice during program activities.

Grace Place's after-school programs are led by a team of experienced and highly qualified educators and nonprofit leaders committed to maintaining excellence. The Chief Program Officer, holding a Doctor of Education with over two decades of experience in educational services, oversees program strategy, design, staff training, and evaluation, as well as financial management. The School Age Program Director, with a master's in education and 15 years of classroom and nonprofit leadership, focuses on public relations, partnerships, recruitment, and school district communication. The Director of Grants and Compliance, boasting over 20 years of federal grant and program management expertise, manages interactions with the FDOE, budgeting, grant documentation, compliance, monitoring, and inventory tracking. Together, they provide administrative leadership to the program team.

At the operational level, a full-time site coordinator (referred to as Manager at Grace Place) leads day-to-day activities, supported by a full-time Assistant Manager and a Parent Engagement Manager. The site coordinator handles staff hiring, student enrollment, scheduling, curriculum implementation, parental engagement, partnership management, record-keeping, discipline, and issue resolution. The Assistant Manager and Parent Engagement Manager assist with translation, data collection, parent communication, enrollment, and other administrative tasks. All three of these program leadership positions require a bachelor's degree and continuing education through professional development. Additionally, all three of these leaders are CPR and First Aid certified.

The part-time teaching staff are Florida certified teachers who teach at Golden Gate Middle School. They were carefully selected for their expertise in math, reading, STEM, or ELL, to deliver academic enrichment in the program. Support teachers and aides, functioning as youth development personnel, supporting certified teachers in academic activities. The part-time support teacher positions do not require a college degree, but they do require prior work experience with youth and a commitment to ongoing professional development. The teacher aides are

high performing high school students who are invaluable to the programs since they relate well with the middle school students and serve as role models within the community. Grace Place maintains a staff-to-student ratio of 1:10 during academic sessions and strives for the same ratio during personal enrichment activities, ensuring individualized attention and quality engagement for all participants; however, the minimum ratio for personal enrichment activities is 1:20.

Grace Place also uses volunteers to serve in various roles in the program. All volunteers must first apply to the volunteer program, pass a Level-2 background check, complete youth protection training, and be onboarded by the program manager before being assigned a volunteer role. The volunteer coordinator at Grace Place seeks those with specialized skills to support the program in unique ways, such as tutoring in a specific subject, having bilingual skills, or having career experience in a STEM field.

The Chief Program Officer spearheads the creation of an annual staff development plan for the after-school team, with each training session meticulously tailored to enhance program efficacy and directly benefit the students served. Professional development opportunities are diverse, sourced from various channels.

Twice a year, staff convene for full day training sessions, ensuring comprehensive coverage of program policies and procedures, including the review of the Child Protection policy, safety protocols, bus procedures, and more. These sessions, held in early June and early August, also offer opportunities for CPR and First Aid certification renewal.

Additionally, the Chief Program Officer conducts specialized training sessions focusing on program outcomes, such as i-Ready training, project-based learning, classroom management techniques, instructional best practices, and trauma-informed approaches.

Further professional development is facilitated through the local Out of School Time Initiative, featuring quarterly development sessions that consistently challenge and enrich staff members. Managers also have the chance to attend a summer learning conference through this initiative.

Grace Place collaborates with partner organizations to offer periodic training sessions on pertinent topics like mental health first aid, Leader in Me, and project management. These sessions typically coincide with district closures or professional development days, maximizing staff participation and learning opportunities.