

## **Community and School Needs for Expanded Learning**

The schools selected for this proposal are located in the highest poverty areas of the school district and in proximity to each other. The School District of Lee County is the ninth largest in the state of Florida with 96,000 students. The district has an overall poverty rate of 70 percent. The strategic plan, Vision 2030, includes Expanded Learning as a goal and initiative to support our students and families in the neediest communities of the school district. The four schools selected for this project are all Title I schools and three are in Targeted Support, as determined by the Florida Department of Education and based on data from the Federal Index related to subgroup achievement. All four schools have a poverty rate of 100 percent based on the Federal Index.

Our data comes directly from 2017 Census information, the American Survey; our school district Evaluation and Assessment Department; and our Student Information Systems (SIS) including FOCUS and CASTLE, each school's School Improvement Plan (SIP) and the Federal Index. We have also prepared a survey for families online on Survey Monkey including questions for parents such as: what are the greatest unmet needs of your students related to: education; health; social – emotional development; after school expanded learning; support services and resources available for families and each question has multiple answer choices. Due to the recent school closings we have not collected all the feedback. We are also currently surveying family needs as they drive up to pick up food for students. We feel strongly that our families in the communities where the schools are located will need even more assistance moving forward due to the effects of the pandemic.

The effect on families living in poverty has been heavily researched. A study by McLeod and Shanahan found sufficient evidence that any period of poverty during children's early developmental years increases their risk of mental health problems, such as depression and acting out behavior. Rates of increase in antisocial behavior were substantially higher for children with histories of persistent poverty during those years than for transiently poor or non-poor children. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center Expanded Learning funding opportunity will allow our schools to support the needs of students and families that experience high poverty and related mental health issues that are risk factors that become barriers to learning.

According to Census data (2017) from zip codes where the schools are located, the median household income is below the state average; the median house value is significantly below state average; the median age is significantly below state average; the renting percentage is above state average so few people own their own homes; and the length of stay since moving in significantly below state average so there is high mobility at the schools. The American Community Survey for 2017 showed that almost 30 percent of residents live below the poverty level with an average household income of \$34,967 and 29 percent have no health insurance coverage. Some families located near Lehigh Elementary are more than 200 percent below the poverty threshold. Additionally, parents of students who attend district schools in these communities are younger and there is significant need for services that include: health and wellness; PreK; afterschool; and social service resources due to high poverty and lack of integration among service agencies. The neighborhoods surrounding the cluster of schools includes nearly 2,000 students in federal housing.

**Franklin Park Elementary\*** Franklin Park Elementary, located in the city of Ft. Myers, Florida, opened its doors in 1958 as an all-black elementary school during the era of school segregation. The school had a large faculty and 960 students at the school's zenith from 1961-1970. The school operated as an all-black elementary school until 1970 when Franklin Park was converted to an integrated middle school as an element of the School District of Lee County's Desegregation Plan. In 1977, Franklin Park was rebranded to serve as a site for migrant education, and eventually an elementary school once again. Today the school serves approximately 500 elementary students, most of whom come from the surrounding neighborhoods. The school is one of the district's highest poverty elementary schools with 100 percent of the students identified as economically disadvantaged on the 2019 Federal Index. The school has 352 Black/African American Students; 50 Hispanic students; 19 White students and 40 Multicultural students. There are 38 English Language Learners (ELL) and 66 Students with Disabilities (SWD) on Individualized Learning Plans (IEP). The neighborhoods surrounding the school have experienced decline and are designated Opportunity Zones defined as economically-distressed communities. Franklin Park is a Title 1 school and has a school grade of B.

The school principal and leadership team have requested to be a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Expanded Learning Center to assist the school in meeting goals in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and to assist families and students who attend the school in obtaining resources and integration of support services, mental health needs and increase academic achievement. **The most pressing need at Franklin Park is to provide support for families in poverty and for students experiencing trauma and crisis situations at home. The most urgent academic need defined by the SIP is science achievement with only 13 percent of students being proficient and showing a decline since the prior year.** The goals for Science; English Language Arts (ELA); Math; and Early Warning Signs (out of school suspensions (OSO) and attendance) are: to increase Science proficiency 7 percent to 20%; increase English Language Arts proficiency 12 percent to 64%; increase Math proficiency 10 percent to 62%; decrease out of school time suspension 1.5 percent to 17%; and increase attendance from 93.02 percent to 93.50% an increase of .48%

The SIP also makes the following suggestions which are the basis of the program and activities for the school: use a developmental team approach; obtain more science resources; increase time allotted to ELA and math; use a check-in-check out process; focus on social skills instruction; use mentors to provide a caring adult; visit families at home; increase family engagement in student's education and school activities. Franklin Park will recruit and focus on the following students based on the SIP: students with below 90 percent attendance 23%; students with one or more suspensions 23%; those who have failed either ELA or Math or both 28%; students who have two or more early warning indicators 37% (such as poor attendance, suspensions, or office referrals) and students that remain at level 1 on the state assessment, the lowest proficiency level, 15%

\*Data shared about Franklin Park Elementary School and all other elementary schools described here can be found in the School Improvement Plans listed on the Florida Department of Education website at <https://www.floridacims.org/districts>

**Tice Elementary School:** Tice Elementary was opened in 1927 and is on the registry of historic sites in Lee County. The school was renovated in 1999 and currently supports over 600 students. Tice is located in close proximity to Franklin Park Elementary, described above, although the demographics at the schools are very different. Tice Elementary is 50 percent Hispanic. Like Franklin Park, however, the surrounding community has experienced decline and the area is part of the designated Opportunity Zones defined as economically-distressed communities. Tice is also one of the district's highest poverty elementary schools with 100 percent of the students identified as economically disadvantaged on the 2019 Federal Index. Tice is the district's only Dual Language school. The dual language program offers a two-way "50-50" curriculum. This program has a balanced enrollment of native English Speakers and bilingual children acquiring Spanish as a second language, and native Spanish Speakers acquiring English as their second language. Students at Tice are not automatically enrolled in the dual language program.

The school principal and leadership team at Tice have requested to be a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center to help the school meet academic goals through additional learning time and reduce the office referrals and behavioral issues that have spiked in the past year. **The most urgent academic need defined by the School Improvement Plan (SIP) is language and science achievement with only 37 percent of students being proficient. In addition, a second urgent need is decreasing office referrals.** The goals for Science; English Language Arts (ELA); and Early Warning Signs (out of school suspensions (OSO) and attendance) are: increase Science proficiency 5 percent to 42% (this is a district added goal); increase ELA proficiency 5 percent to 50%; increase learning time by decreasing chronically absent students through expanded learning 5 percent to 11%; increase learning time by decreasing office referrals 5% to 32%. Tice also has added a math goal to be addressed through STEM activities and tutoring to increase Math proficiency 5 percent to 69%. Tice will also address the Black/African American subgroup performing below the federal index requirement of 41%. Tice is a Title 1 school in Targeted Support (TS& I) based on the Florida Department of Education recommendations and has a school grade of C.

The SIP also makes the following suggestions which will become the basis of the program and activities for the school: use a developmental team approach such as leading and learning teams; obtain more science resources; increase time allotted to ELA and math/science; and like Franklin Park the school leadership will join in using a check-in-check out process; focus on social skills instruction; use mentors to provide a caring adult; visit families at home; increase family engagement in student's education and school activities. Tice will recruit and focus on the following students based on the SIP: students with below 90 percent attendance 17%; students with one or more suspensions 2%; those who have failed either ELA or Math or both 19%; students who have two or more early warning indicators 23% (such as poor attendance, suspensions, or office referrals) and students that remain at level 1 on the state assessment 17%, the lowest proficiency level; and all of the lowest performing students (L25).

**Edgewood Elementary:** Edgewood Elementary was opened in 1992. The school currently supports approximately 550 students. Edgewood is located in close proximity to Franklin Park and Tice Elementary, both described above, although the demographics at Edgewood are similar to Tice. Edgewood Elementary is more than 50 percent Hispanic. Like the other schools mentioned, the surrounding community has experienced decline and the area is part of the designated Opportunity Zones defined as economically-distressed communities. Edgewood is also one of the district's highest poverty elementary schools with 100 percent of the students identified as economically disadvantaged on the 2019 Federal Index. Edgewood is a Title I school in Targeted Support (TS&I) based on the Florida Department of Education Recommendations with a school grade of C.

The school principal and leadership team at Edgewood have also requested to be a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center to help the school meet academic goals through additional learning time and reduce the office referrals and behavioral issues. **The most urgent academic need defined by the School Improvement Plan (SIP) is English Language Arts, Math and especially Science achievement with only 32 percent of students being proficient.** In addition, a second urgent need is decreasing office referrals to increase learning time in the classroom. The goals for Science; English Language Arts (ELA); and Early Warning Signs (out of school suspensions (OSO) and attendance) are: increase Science proficiency 10 percent to 42% (this goal has been added by the district); increase ELA proficiency 10 percent to 48%; increase Math proficiency 10 percent to 49%; increase learning time by decreasing chronically absent students' 5 percent from 20 to 15% through expanded learning. Edgewood will also address the two subgroups performing below 41 percent on the Federal Index: Students with Disabilities (SWD) and Black/African American students.

The SIP also makes the following suggestions which will become the basis of the program and activities for the school: use a developmental team approach such as leading and learning teams; obtain more science resources; increase time allotted to ELA and math/science; and like Franklin Park the school leadership will join in using a check-in-check out process; focus on social skills instruction; use mentors to provide a caring adult; visit families at home; increase family engagement in student's education and school activities. Edgewood will recruit and focus on students with attendance below 90 percent attendance 22%; students with one or more out of school suspensions 2%; course failure in either ELA or Math 22%; students with 2 or more early warning indicators, 34%; and all of the lowest performing students (L25).

**Lehigh Elementary:** The school is the largest of the four schools and currently supports approximately 1,182 students. Lehigh Elementary is about thirty minutes west of the other schools in the district's eastern region. Lehigh Elementary has the largest Hispanic population and is nearly 60 percent Hispanic. Lehigh however, is also one of the district's highest poverty elementary schools with 100 percent of the students identified as economically disadvantaged on the 2019 Federal Index. A higher concentration of persons living below the 200 percent poverty threshold is found in the geographic region of the county including Lehigh Elementary where students live in poverty with minimal access to social services (several documentaries have been made about this impoverished area of Florida). In Lee County, about 13 percent of citizens over age 25 do not have high school diplomas – a fact even more concentrated in the region near the school. Between 1990 and 2014, this region was dramatically changed with substantial population increases and the demographics changed from a majority white population to a Hispanic majority. Although the Lee County School District is 94 percent urban, the area where the school is located is a 96-square-mile, expansive, rural area, with *concentrated poverty*. Lehigh's total area

population is 112,279 and 61 percent (68,490) are from Cuba, Mexico and Haiti (2016 US Census). Transportation and access to services present a real challenge. Lehigh is a Title I school in Targeted Support (TS&I) based on the Florida Department of Education Recommendations with a school grade of C.

The school principal and leadership team at Lehigh Elementary have also requested to be a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center to help the school meet academic goals through additional learning time. **One of the most urgent needs at the school is addressing the Students With Disabilities (SWD) population at the school, who, for the second year are below 32 percent, presenting a subgroup gap. Another urgent academic need defined by the School Improvement Plan (SIP) is Science achievement. Additionally, both Math and English Language Arts need attention for the lowest 25 percent (L25) students.** The goals for Science; English Language Arts (ELA); and Early Warning Signs (attendance) are: increase Science proficiency 6 percent to 52%; increase ELA proficiency 2 percent to 49%; increase Math proficiency 6 percent to 49%; decrease the absence rate 10 percent on the Early Warning list to 12%.

The SIP also makes the following suggestions which will become the basis of the program and activities for the school: use a collaborative team approach; obtain more science resources; increase time allotted to ELA and math/science; and like the other schools, the school leadership will join in using a check-in-check out process; focus on social skills instruction; use mentors to provide a caring adult; visit families at home; increase family engagement in student's education and school activities. The administration would also like to concentrate on leadership skills for students. Lehigh Elementary will recruit and focus on the following students based on the SIP: students with below 90 percent attendance 22%; students with one or more suspensions 4%; those who have failed either ELA or Math or both 24%; students who have two or more early warning indicators 36% (such as poor attendance, suspensions, or office referrals) and students that remain at level 1 on the state assessment, the lowest proficiency level.

\*Data charts for each school from the SIPs are uploaded as part of the Objectives Section

**COMPONENTS:** Available and Accessible components have been selected for the programs that align with the needs of all the schools. Clearly the four schools have commonalities that link them together and to the data presented above that will define the program. All the schools are high poverty and located in regions of the district where communities are impoverished. They are all Title 1 schools. Three of the four schools are in targeted support due to subgroups performing below the federal index threshold. The common subgroups are Black/African American and Students with Disabilities. All the schools need support in the area of mental health due to high poverty and parents need financial support for their students and themselves at home. All the schools need "extra" time for learning in English Language Arts, Math and Science. The high proportion of English Language Learners and their families in three of the schools presents a special challenge for classroom instruction. They all have challenges with attendance and absences from referrals and suspensions. All have special challenges with crisis and trauma due to the nature of the family home environment and effect of poverty on both the family and student. The school district has selected three major areas and will tailor the activities to meet the gap caused by the need as defined by the data presented here. The following are the component areas with resources and supports to meet the needs and close the gap:

#### **CLOSING THE GAP WITH SERVICES:**

1. *Expanded Learning Opportunities:* an area which will include *out of school time programming (afterschool program)* to provide more learning time for students and more time for supporting adults working with students; *engaging instructional enhancements* to allow the most effective teachers to address the gaps in achievement in ELA, Science and Math presented in the data included; and *addressing gaps in subgroups* that will implement specific learning strategies to address the student needs. We intend to focus also on the students that need the most assistance as illustrated by the data including our subgroups and our lowest performing students. We have also forged a partnership with IMAGinarium to work with students to close the science proficiency gap.

2. *Health and Support Services* was selected to address the gaps involving *family support initiatives* for those living in poverty that will include a menu of partners to assist with support services as defined in the partner chart and letters of support. Health and support services will also address *feeding programs* due to the 100 percent poverty level and will include breakfast, lunch, snack and dinner for all the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC EXL students and monthly for families. The teaching team will also implement the research-based SPARK health and wellness program. United Way will also address clothing and household needs of families. This area will also include *crisis intervention and counseling programs* that spotlights a partnership with Lee Health who will provide a Mental Health Navigator that will work directly with families both at school and at home. These services will also include additional school counselors to improve the ratio of student to counselor and conduct group and individual counseling and daily Advisory during the school day for 21 CCLC students. Our partners will also provide mentors and foster grandparents during the school day to provide caring adults for each student in the program. The staff will be trained in Trauma-Informed Instruction done by our own Student Services department to assist them in working more effectively with the students and families in crisis.
3. *Families and Communities as Assets* is an area that will address family engagement including *home visits*; partner support both in the home and at school will be provided; family events and initiatives led by our partners have been selected to close the achievement gap such as Sylvan Learning and Imaginarium who will address academic needs but also engage student's families; and our partner Career Source will be on site to assist with *adult education* through job training and education opportunities tailored to family needs and assistance with obtaining employment if needed.

## CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The preparation of this proposal required the entire community to come together to address the barriers, needs and resources available to make this project a reality. The goal of all the partners, stakeholders and the school district is to develop a consortium of the four schools and partners that will transcend the actual grant and provide a model or framework for future work with students and families. We have partners that have been meeting with the school district over the last several months even during the pandemic as we realize that the students and families in these communities will need even greater assistance moving forward. We have included letters of support to define these relationships and listed our supportive partners on the chart. The work that we have done in planning the project has been in process over several months and illustrative of the concept, "it takes a village". We have emailed and spoken with private elementary schools in close proximity to the selected schools to discuss the project and define interest and possibilities. Importantly, we have spent a considerable amount of time conferring with the principals and leadership teams at these school reviewing the services we can offer and the partners that can provide those services.

We feel that the program and components we have developed as a joint effort with stakeholders will provide the resources to close the gaps for our students and families.