

DRAFT

Learning Extension Centers

Executive Summary

Like so many districts across the country, Columbus City Schools (CCS) has made the difficult decision to begin the 2020-2021 academic year with a fully remote learning model for grades K-12. The school district's Chief Engagement Officer, Alesia Gillison, has convened over 85 community partners, along with corporate leaders, local government agencies, faith-based leaders, higher education institutions, and others, to strategize ways to keep students supported and engaged in learning despite school building closures. Together, this group has identified learning extension centers (LECs), or locations around the community where students, in grades K-12, can "drop in" to access reliable internet, academic assistance, meals, and wraparound services that would have been available to them in a traditional school setting.

Through a collaboration of faith-based and community partners, students will have safe spaces to cope and navigate, while caring adults cultivate a sense of belonging and community, respond to their unique needs and interests, and help them strengthen their academic, social, and emotional competencies within supportive and equitable environments. These faith-based and community partners have committed to work together and to expand their collective capacity so that students can access the tools and resources they need to succeed personally and academically this year. While many of the community partners will continue to provide virtual support to students, parents, teachers, and schools, access to new funds will allow them to supplement their current plans and serve students virtually and in the LECs. Furthermore, the partners will ensure the effective delivery of programs without duplication by coordinating services with each other, cross-training staff, and meeting bi-monthly.

Current LECs include local churches, recreation centers, homeless shelters, YMCAs, settlement houses, places of worship, and other nonprofits with capacity to host LECs. Centers will vary, operating for a maximum of five days per week, with service hours during the academic day, but many also offering before and after-school hours. In collaboration with Columbus City Schools, the faith-based and community partners listed below have agreed to come together to coordinate and provide additional support for K-12 students at these LECs.

While the list is growing daily, a sample of the faith-based and community partners include: Action for Children; After-School All-Stars; Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio; Boys and Girls Clubs of Columbus; Catalyst for Columbus; City of Columbus Department of Neighborhoods; Children's Hunger Alliance; City Year; Columbus City Schools; Columbus Metropolitan Library; Columbus Dream Center; Columbus Public Health; Columbus Urban

League; Community Development for All People; Communities in Schools; Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services; First Church of God; Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services; I Know I Can; IMPACT Community Action; KIPP; Lead The Way Learning Academy; Nationwide Children's Hospital; Partnership4Success; The Reeb Avenue Center; Rock City Church; Star House; St. Stephens Community House; The Ohio State University; United Way of Central Ohio; and YMCA.

Student System of Supports

Columbus youth-serving organizations recognize that COVID-19 and the resulting remote and/or hybrid learning opportunities present anomalies for students, widen equity gaps, and provide fewer conventional opportunities for students to:

1. Receive the academic support services they need and will be missing in remote or hybrid settings especially considering "COVID Slide" as well as the number of students pre-pandemic, who were performing below grade-level standards;
2. Access college and career readiness services, which is especially important for rising juniors and seniors for whom this year is indispensable;
3. Connect with caring adults and near-peers, through mentoring, to focus on their personal and academic growth, including enhanced self-esteem, confidence and behavior; and,
4. Access services that support their physical and social-emotional health and development, particularly addressing the isolation, confusion, and fear felt during this global pandemic.

The preliminary "COVID Slide" estimates suggest students could begin the 2020-2021 academic year with roughly 70% of the learning gains in reading from the prior year relative to a typical school year. In mathematics, students may show even smaller learning gains from the previous year, returning with less than 50% of the gains, assuming students are in school full-time. While all families and youth are impacted by these learning losses, educational researchers make clear that there are concerns that the gap between high- and low-achieving students will become larger as a result of COVID-19, noting that online schooling is perceived as an inconvenience for middle and upper income students and families, but for low-income students, without access to a designated space to work, access to needed technology, additional responsibilities to care for younger siblings, etc., it can be a significant challenge to succeed at home.

Prior to the pandemic, low-income students already experienced inequities in access to college and career planning services, resulting in only 11% of students in the lowest income quartile attaining a bachelor's degree by age 24, compared to 58% of those in the highest income quartile. With known academic, financial, and social capital barriers discouraging students from pursuing their dreams of higher education, now more than ever, it is critical to provide access to one-on-one college and career planning opportunities, support for filling out college applications and complex financial aid forms, and other college and career readiness support services so that

the pandemic does not discourage students from their long-term pathways toward economic stability.

Mentoring, including near-peers, is critically important for students who are dealing with the uncertainties of school, home, and the effects of systemic racism and a global pandemic. Through modeling and coaching, mentors and partners will create positive spaces for students to recognize how they feel and how others are feeling; to master new skills and attitudes; to build self-confidence and a sense of belonging; and, to improve academic performance.

Finally, today, more students and families are experiencing increased levels of stress, anxiety, trauma, and isolation, and will need supports that address their physical health and social-emotional development and growth. Services will be provided to address students' physical health including vaccinations, screenings, and well-checks. Furthermore, partners will cultivate a caring, participatory, and equitable learning environment where students can better understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

Sample LEC Activities

Academic support will be offered at each LEC ranging from navigating the online learning platforms to homework help and communicating with parents on assignment completion. Students will have opportunities for small group enrichment activities and individual tutoring as needed.

College and career readiness programming will include opportunities to explore careers, find the right college fit, understand the importance of high school coursework for college admission, and learn about the available pathways to pursue industry-recognized credentials and degrees for students grades 6-10. For 11th and 12th grade students, services will include small group and one-on-one college and career counseling. IKIC advisors will assist in the completion of critical college planning milestones, including: ACT/SAT, college admission and scholarship applications, and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Mentoring services will be delivered by a number of partners and range from engagement in supportive, healthy relationships to the guidance of activities which strengthen students' social-emotional development and academic skills.

Social-emotional learning will include leading mindfulness and meditation exercises, helping students create mood trackers/feeling charts, facilitating lunch groups, engaging in brain breaks from academic services, practicing goal-setting and growth mindset, as well as activities focused on self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Furthermore, partners will engage students in one-on-one settings to address specific social and emotional competencies.

Project Management Plan

LECs and the programs/services provided to students will be managed and supported by a team consisting of a project manager, regional coordinators, and site coordinators stationed at each center. The project manager will be the liaison to Columbus City Schools leadership, faith-based organizations, and community nonprofits. This role will also work closely with and supervise the regional coordinators who will be assigned to one of six geographic regions across the school district. Regional coordinators will provide support to the LECs in their areas, connecting directly with the site coordinators, and helping to coordinate resources and services, as well as troubleshooting any issues that may arise. Site coordinators at each center will manage day to day operations and ensure smooth delivery of services between and among partners, staff, volunteers, and students.

To further support site coordinators and regional coordinators, our faith-based partners created a LEC Handbook (attached), which includes sample daily schedules, staff roles and responsibilities, as well as policies and procedures for keeping children safe, health and cleaning, technical requirements and support, security and discipline, and legal requirements.

All communications regarding LECs will be coordinated with CCS. Regional coordinators will work with LECs to make sure there is consistent communication to the schools in which their students attend. Furthermore, all communications will be translated into multiple languages and delivered to students and families through the appropriate partners.

Budget and Budget Narrative (attached)

Partners are requesting funds to supplement or expand capacity of current programs and services, open LECs, hire additional staff, and purchase equipment, PPE, and technology. Partners understand that this effort, and associated funding, is meant to increase our collective capacity to provide new or additional support to students and families.

I Know I Can will serve as the fiscal agent. Its budget includes staffing, accounting, grant allocation/project management, printing and postage, program materials, and supplies.

Contractual Services with community partners include staffing, PPE, training, equipment and supplies, background checks, student incentives, program equipment and materials, and transportation.

On-site LEC costs include technology, PPE, cleaning services and supplies, student meals, staffing, liability insurance, COVID/social distancing renovations, and equipment.