



DULUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*Preparing all students for successful lives in the twenty-first century . . .
success in the workplace, success in the home, and success in the community*

October 23, 2012

Carole Saylor and Board of Trustees
Northland Foundation
202 West Superior Street, Suite 610
Duluth, MN 55802

RE: *Youth Success Teams* in the Schools
Application for funding of \$30,000: August 2012 – August 2013

Dear Ms. Saylor and Board of Trustees,

Please find enclosed, a grant application for the amount of \$30,000. We are requesting funding to cover a portion of the cash match costs of infusing AmeriCorps Members and Promise Fellows into the schools as part of *Youth Success Teams* for the period of August 2012 through August 2013. Strategies shown to reduce poverty's impact on children include effectively addressing children's mental and physical health issues, providing focused 1:1 interventions with trained tutors, and providing access to educational, social, and cultural enrichment opportunities that keep youth intellectually and creatively engaged. To this end, Duluth Public Schools, in partnership with True North AmeriCorps and Minnesota Alliance With Youth has established *Youth Success Teams* in every school.

We ask that the Northland Foundation support this invitation to partner with the Duluth Public Schools in providing these services. We believe *School Success Teams* increase the overall capacity of our schools and community to ensure our children have the strongest possible foundation for success in school and life. The *Youth Success Teams* ensure that identified students are connected to interventions that help them improve in areas of attendance, behavior, and academic growth. During the school year, AmeriCorps Members and Promise Fellows work as part of *Youth Success Teams* to provide academic support and facilitate linkages between in-school and out-of-school time learning. During the summer, interaction with students will continue through efforts at local youth agencies and other community-based programs. The relationships formed between students and members of *Youth Success Teams* will facilitate opportunities for learning throughout the entire year.

Please direct questions concerning this grant application to me at William.Gronseth@duluth.k12.mn.us or 218-336-8752. Thank you in advance for your support and consideration of this application.

Most sincerely,

William L. Gronseth
Superintendent of Schools

WLG/skt
Attachment

PROPOSAL OUTLINE AND BUDGET

I. APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

Description of your organization, including a summary of its background, mission, and experience in the area where funds are sought.

Duluth Public Schools, Independent School District No. 709, was *first organized on* April 2, 1870 and is the largest District in northeastern Minnesota. ISD 709 maintains a market share of about 70% of available students.

The Purpose of Independent School District 709 is to provide a quality education that prepares all students for successful lives in the home, community and workplace. The districts three aims are: Achievement for All, A Safe and Welcoming Environment, and Efficient and Effective Systems.

Several underlying beliefs provide the foundation for our decisions and actions. We believe:

- It is our responsibility to educate all children
- It is our responsibility to operate the District with fiscal stability
- We need to act as partners with teachers, parents, community members and students
- We must continue to explore and expand our partnerships to identify ways in which we can hold each other accountable and responsible for student success
- We need to review change in an ongoing way. This includes both external (technology, legislative action) and internal (student results and research) changes.

Teachers average 18+ years' experience and most hold a Master's Degree or higher. They are caring, enthusiastic, highly trained and qualified. Students at all levels receive individualized attention. Advanced academic opportunities and comprehensive interventions to boost reading and math skills are available at all levels. All schools have strong parent and community partnerships to support education. All provide guidance and support to help students learn responsibility, citizenship and respect.

As of September 2011, nine Duluth school buildings are new or newly renovated to provide modern teaching tools and labs, healthier and greener facilities, and improved safety systems. All schools take part in efforts to create a positive school climate and reduce incidents of bullying. Students, teachers and staff are regularly recognized for achievements at the state, local and national level. Overall graduation rates for the three regular high schools remain above state standards. Students from the district regularly outperform national averages on ACT college entrance exams.

ISD 709 Elementary schools offer:

- All Day, Every Day Kindergarten for All Students
 - 90 minutes reading plus 30 minutes writing each day
 - 70 minutes math plus 10 additional minutes facts/computation fluency in grades 2-5
 - State of the art facilities, modern classrooms, bright and engaging spaces, new playgrounds
- Art, Music, Physical Education and Media
- Kid Connection fee-based after school child care program

ISD 709 Middle schools offer:

- Teacher teams and a Homebase Teacher to review individual student needs and provide social, emotional and academic support.
- Transitional support to build student skills and confidence
- A wide range of courses including, but not limited to World Languages, Art, Music, Pre-Engineering/Industrial Tech, Computer Applications, Local and State Science Fair
- A wealth of unique after school clubs and athletics including, but not limited to: Music, drumming, vocal ensemble, Book Club, LEGO/Robotics Club, Intramurals, Inventor's Fair, Yearbook Club, Middle School Athletics (Swimming, Basketball, Volleyball, Track)

ISD 709 High schools offer:

- Advanced Placement, Honors Courses
- College In the Schools - Earn college credit in high school
- Career/Tech Ed Training - medical, business, culinary arts, more
- Art and Music, including Band, Orchestra, Chorus – small and large groups
- More academic choice
- Languages, including Mandarin Chinese
- Comprehensive interventions to boost reading and math skills
- Guidance and support to teach responsibility and citizenship
- Dozens of extra- and co-curricular opportunities
- Dozens of unique Scholarship Opportunities
- Alternative programs through Unity and ALC

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Need

Local, statewide and national data continues to show that many young people are being "left behind" when it comes to school success; particularly children of color and those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged.

Center for Educational Policy data indicates the gaps in Minnesota are some of the widest in the nation. In Duluth, this gap is also reflected in academic achievement and on-time graduation rate gaps between white students and students of color. Locally, in the Duluth Schools (2009):

- An average of 80.52% of White students graduated on time* - 19.48% did not
- An average of 50.42% of students receiving free or reduced lunch graduated on time – 49.58% did not
- An average of 49.15% of Black students graduated on-time – 50.85% did not
- An average of 34.33% of American Indian students graduated on-time – 65.67% did not.

Low on-time graduation rates indicate we are failing a large percentage of our youth. The infusion of AmeriCorps members and Promise Fellows into the schools as part of Youth Success Teams has increased the overall capacity of our schools and community to ensure our children have the strongest possible foundation for success in school and life. (*on-time = in four years)

Implementation of Goals and Objectives

List the specific goals and objectives the project is designed to meet.

Strategies shown to reduce poverty's impact on children include effectively addressing children's mental and physical health issues, providing focused 1:1 interventions with trained tutors, and providing access to educational, social, and cultural enrichment opportunities that keep youth intellectually and creatively engaged.

To this end, Duluth Public Schools, in partnership with True North AmeriCorps and Minnesota Alliance with Youth has established Youth Success Teams in every school.

The Youth Success Teams will ensure identified students are connected to interventions that help them improve in areas of attendance, behavior, and academic growth. The Youth Success Teams will also address the socio-emotional, cultural and life-skills needs of students – key factors to improving their academic skills and positive association to school. These teams will help bring community resources, such as volunteer tutor/mentors and Youth Development staff, into the schools to support student learning and well-being – with the ultimate goal of helping children succeed in school, specifically by meeting annual yearly progress and graduating on time.

Short term - Children will have increased support through interactions with staff, volunteers, and other students leading to improved attendance and behavior

Mid-term - Improved academic achievement; positive connections with schools; discovery of talents and strengths; feeling of success in school and in life

Long term - Becoming a successful adult; choosing healthy relationships; developing a sense of responsibility for self and others; possessing problem solving and "team player" skills; practicing good communication skills; and knowing resources and how to access them.

Describe the specific activities identified to reach the goals.

As part of the Youth Success Teams, functions of the responsibilities associated with these positions include but are not limited to:

Academic Mentoring

- Providing direct one-to-one academic mentoring to individual students
- Matching volunteer mentors with identified students
- Maintaining regular contact with schools, volunteers, teachers, students, and parents regarding match
- Utilizing school-supported academic enrichment tools for each match
- Attending and participating in all 'school/community' team meetings

Homework Help

- Providing "homework help" at school sites (i.e. afterschool homework clubs, study hours, etc.)
- Assisting in recruitment of volunteers to provide group tutoring/mentoring in specific subjects to serve student needs.
- Tracking volunteer service hours and the students who attend homework help sessions.

Classroom Support

- Assisting with identification of teacher/staff needs for classroom support
- Serving in classrooms to provide support and promote academic success.

Outline and explain the timeline from project start to completion.

The timeline for this project runs from August 2012-August 2013. The majority of time focuses on the academic school year, with a portion of AmeriCorps hours carried-over into the summer to help address what is commonly referred to as the "summer slump". During the school year, AmeriCorps members will work as part of Youth Success Teams to provide academic support and facilitate linkages between in-school and out-of-school (OST) time learning. During the summer, interaction with students will continue through efforts at local youth agencies and other community-based programs. The relationships formed between students and members of the Youth Success Teams will facilitate opportunities for learning throughout the entire year.

List anticipated outcomes (include estimated number of people to be served)

AmeriCorps Members and Promise Fellows will each work with several hundred students over the course of the school year and summer. Levels of interaction will vary depending on the needs of the student, from one-on-one tutoring to facilitation of group activities.

Primary outcomes are focused on the ABC's – Attendance, Behavior and Course Performance – however Youth Success Teams will also address the socio-emotional, cultural and life-skills needs of students -- key factors to improving their academic skills and positive association to school. These teams will bring community resources, such as volunteer tutor/mentors and Youth Development staff, into the schools to support student learning and well-being.

Attendance & Behavior

Disengagement with school by students and parents often results in poor behavior and attendance in at-risk students. Many disadvantaged and minority families experience barriers to involvement—such as economic well-being, logistical constraints and, in many cases, negative histories with and mistrust of schools.

Indicators of success:

- Improved attendance of chronically absent students (absent 10% or more of days of school.)
- Needs of students referred for behavior intervention addressed
- Bridge between school/parent & school/OST program communications around behavior and performance.
- OST programs provide culturally-affirming, fun, and relevant activities that build social/emotional skills.

Course performance

Indicators of success:

- Ongoing assessment and monitoring of student academic performance.
- Personalized academic interventions developed for students not performing at grade level.
- A healthy balance of individualized tutoring, focused interventions, and opportunities for participants to celebrate their culture and expand their base of relationships across age groups, neighborhoods, and family circumstances.
- A tiered intervention school-based model utilized to identify students academically at risk, provide and adjust interventions and monitor progress.

Evaluation Plan

The value and effectiveness of Youth Success Teams and their impact on students within ISD 709 will be evaluated by ISD 709 leadership team members (including teachers, principals and administration) in collaboration with partners including the Minnesota Alliance for Youth, True North AmeriCorps, United Way of Greater Duluth and other key representatives.

Changes will be measured through the analysis of ISD 709 data that includes: a) standardized test scores, b) school grades in core subjects, c) attendance records, and d) behavior or incidence reports, and reports on homework completion, class participation and individual student needs provided by teachers. Primary areas of focus will be on the ABC's – Attendance, Behavior and Course Performance.

Project Continuation

ISD 709 recognizes that the integration of resources provided by True North AmeriCorps, Minnesota Promise Fellows and the Minnesota Education Corps into the school system multiplies the support available for children most at risk of school failure. For this reason, the District is committed to maintaining a level of financial support for this effort going forward.

It is also important to note that investments from the community will continue to be important, and ongoing funding for this project will be needed. Community support of education is critical to changing the course of current student achievement levels. Schools, by themselves, cannot bear sole responsibility for ensuring our children's success – we must involve the entire community and commit to strategic investments that pave the way for our children's futures and community prosperity.

Going forward, we will work to garner additional ongoing support of these efforts from the business community and other entities that recognize the value of making investments in our community's youth and educational success.

Names and Qualifications

Provide the names and qualifications of people involved in project implementation.

- Bill Gronseth, Superintendent of Schools
- Ed Crawford, Assistant Superintendent
- Tawnyea Lake, Director of Assessment, Evaluation, and Performance
- Elementary and Secondary Principals
- Instructional Data Coaches
 - Studies assert that student learning for all should be the only goal of staff development. There is a demonstrated link between staff development, the development of professional learning communities, resulting in changes in curriculum, instruction and climate, and the cumulative effects on student learning. An **Instructional Data Coach** is a school based teacher leader focused on professional development. Their mission is to assist teachers in learning and applying new knowledge and skills necessary to improved the academic performance of our students. They spend a significant portion of their day in direct contact with teachers in their school and their classrooms making learning personal to them and the needs in their classrooms.

III. PROJECT BUDGET

A. INCOME

<u>Source</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Support	
Government grants – City of Duluth	\$ 40,000
Foundations (Northland, Lloyd K Johnson)	\$ 60,000 (\$30,000 each)
Corporations	\$
Other (specify) – ISD 709	\$ 110,200
Total Income	\$ 210,200

B. EXPENSES

<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>%FT/PT</u>
ISD 709 Cash Match AmeriCorps/Promise Fellows	\$ 162,200	
ISD 709 Supervision Costs	\$ 48,000	
Total Expense	\$ 210,200	
Difference (Income less Expense)	\$ 0	

State the grant amount requested from the Northland Foundation.

Investments from the Duluth School District, City of Duluth, AmeriCorps and Minnesota Alliance with Youth have covered most costs associated with this project. However, to fully support this project in all Duluth Schools, we need to fill a gap of \$60,000.

We are requesting **\$30,000** from the Northland Foundation to help fill this gap.