



MEMORANDUM

To: Finance Committee
From: Zach Pruitt, Community Education & Engagement Director
Date: August 7, 2023

RE: RISE Program Manager

As part of the School Board-approved Graduation Rate goal, we propose an expansion of the RISE/Check & Connect program at Faribault High School. This expansion will allow each Check & Connect mentor to have a caseload of up to 50 students but will require support and supervision from someone who has the time and skills to oversee the program.

The Check & Connect mentors will include two HCI employees, two AmeriCorps Promise Fellows, and the two Academic Specialists who previously worked in other programs at the high school.

Each Check & Connect mentor will lead the following activities:

- Weekly 1:1 check-in meetings with each student in their cohort
- Daily attendance & academic checks
- Support with academic struggles & missing assignments
- Career & technical education assessments and referrals
- Tutoring connections
- Family communication, including home visits
- Teacher connections
- College application & financial aid application support
- Connections with afterschool programs & summer programs



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Alignment with Board-Approved District Goals: One of the board-approved strategies to achieve the goal of a 90% 4-year graduation rate is to expand the RISE/Check & Connect services at the high school to support those students who are already behind in credit progress OR who are at-risk of getting behind (entering 9th graders). This expansion would increase the capacity of the RISE program to serve up to 300 students (compared to our current capacity of 60-100). At the end of first semester, 28% of FHS students (292) were behind in credits and, thus, needed extra support to graduate on time.

The RISE program saw promising results during the second semester with its new model. Twenty-four of 26 RISE seniors (92%) graduated this spring. Moreover, whereas nearly all of the students in the RISE cohort entered the program behind in credits – and, thus, off-track to graduate – as of the end of the spring semester, 69% of the cohort was now on-track. Furthermore, 30 RISE students in the cohort had behavior referrals first semester (totaling 96 incidents), during the second semester, only 20 RISE students had behavior referrals (totaling only 55 incidents).

Budget Request: \$64,908/year for full-time position, plus benefits

- 55% funded by Stronger Connections Grant from the Minnesota Department of Education (*three-year grant through September 2026*)
- 45% funded by Community Education Youth Development funds (*will pursue additional grants, as well*)