

Milwaukee Public Schools Head Start 05CH010537

Quality Improvement

Application and Budget Justification

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1. Summary of Current Head Start Program

Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) is home to Milwaukee's most experienced Head Start program. The program provides high-quality, full-day, center-based programming five days per week for four-year-olds as well as full-day and half-day programming for three-year-olds; it serves 1,506 children and their families from low-income households at 33 sites throughout the city of Milwaukee. The MPS Head Start program strives to be a model collaborative educational agency promoting individual growth and personal achievement for children and their families.

2. Needs

To support social-emotional needs, the MPS Head Start program uses the Frog Street curriculum, which includes Conscious Discipline[®] strategies, and trauma-informed practices to teach staff and children behavior management and self-regulation. The MPS district provides trauma-sensitive training to all MPS staff, and the MPS Head Start program offers trauma training specific to pre-K students and staff. The MPS Head Start mental health and disabilities staff trains and gives direct support to teachers and paraprofessionals in responding to challenging behaviors in the classroom setting.

Although the MPS Head Start program provides high-quality services to students and families, additional needs are apparent. The current Head Start grant supports eighteen family partnership associates (FPAs); however, there are six vacancies, resulting in an average caseload of approximately 132 families per FPA. In addition, the FPA positions are only 75% FTE positions or thirty hours per week. This is extremely challenging and does not allow the program to sufficiently serve the families and their increasing needs. By working quickly to fill the vacancies and provide additional compensation to the current FPAs, caseloads will be more manageable, which will enable the program to strengthen family services for our

participants. The FPAs will be able to build relationships using relationship-based competencies as well as provide more individualized family support. Moreover, additional FPAs will help to decrease the amount of wait time during the enrollment process.

Additional staffing hours are necessary to strengthen families, enhance relationships, expedite registration, recruit additional families, and provide professional development and training focused on trauma-informed care for Head Start staff and families. These additional hours will assist the Head Start program during peak registration times and MPS district-wide recruitment and enrollment events. Due to the varying needs of the schools, additional hours are allotted to support the school-based paraprofessionals beyond the six-hour work day for arrival and dismissal based on school need.

As stated by Dr. Becky Bailey, stress and trauma cross all ethnic and economic lines with grave effects on health, learning, social-emotional development, and brain development (Bailey, 2014).¹ Teachers are facing the demands of becoming aware of and understanding how to deal with students of stress and trauma. Students are coming into the program each year with more exposure to stress and trauma, and teachers are reporting an increased need for behavioral supports. Based on parental reporting utilizing the Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional (ASQ:SE), 27.98% of children who entered the Head Start program received a higher-than-average score, which may indicate a possible delay in social-emotional development and a need for additional supports or interventions and possible further assessment. Also, the program's school-readiness data have indicated an increased need for social-emotional support. The MPS Head Start school-readiness goal in the domain of social-emotional learning indicated that *children will demonstrate self-regulation and personal sense of well-being and maintain secure relationships*. The progress made for four-year-old students in the 2020–21 school year was

¹ Bailey, B. A. (2014). *Conscious discipline: Building resilient classrooms*. Loving Guidance, Inc.

62.73 percentage points and is indicative of the known developmental needs of children. As there are three education coordinators, one mental health and disabilities coordinator, and two mental health staff members attempting to meet the growing needs of 164 teachers and paraprofessionals, the Head Start program is recognizing that an opportunity exists to further strengthen services. In order to address the growing needs of the Milwaukee community, the Head Start instructional staff needs to understand trauma and the possible corresponding triggers, how to respond, and how to implement strategies in the classroom to support students and families in a trauma-sensitive manner. With improved understanding of trauma-informed teaching strategies, instructional staff will be able to more effectively address the academic needs of the students and prepare them, both academically and socially-emotionally, with school readiness. Through the use of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), teacher and student interactions are observed in the areas of emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support. The use of consultants to assist and guide teachers with school readiness, social-emotional learning, behavioral interventions, and self-care will help to create consistent, predictable, nurturing environments and address the multiple domains of development and learning that are impacted by trauma.

3. Quality Improvement Implementation

In an effort to alleviate the higher family caseloads, the Head Start program will work efficiently to fill the six FPA positions, which will reduce caseloads as well as work-related stress. This will allow the program to retain qualified FPAs and give individualized attention while effectively engaging families, resulting in stronger relationships. Consequently, families will feel an increased level of support and engagement to the Head Start program and will be more likely to participate in district, programmatic, and school events, programs, parent committees, and policy council meetings. Upon receiving funds, the Head Start program will offer additional hours and continue to aggressively work with the Office of Human Resources to hire six highly qualified

FPA's, thus decreasing caseloads from an average of 132 families to an average of 88 families per FPA.

Additional staffing hours of the secretaries, social workers, school-based paraprofessionals, and FPA's will benefit the Head Start program by strengthening families, enhancing relationships, expediting registration, recruiting families, and providing professional development and training focused on trauma-informed care for Head Start staff and families. The flexibility of additional hours will allow the secretaries and FPA's to assist the Head Start program during peak registration times and MPS district-wide recruitment and enrollment events. FPA's will be able to work additional hours to support families in crisis, assist with registrations, and participate in recruitment events. Instructional staff will be able to receive additional hours for coaching, classroom support, and professional development in trauma-informed approaches. Health and mental health staff will be able to make use of additional hours to provide professional development and support for staff as well as training and support for families. The additional hours allotted to the school-based paraprofessionals during arrival and dismissal of students will support the identified need of safety.

The MPS Head Start program is facing an increase in families and students experiencing stress and trauma in their lives each year. Consultants who will be trained in trauma-informed care will be beneficial to the Head Start staff. They will be able to provide coaching in the signs and symptoms of trauma and integrate supports to assist in implementing trauma-informed strategies within the classroom. The consultants will be able to focus their support on school readiness, social-emotional learning, behavioral interventions, and self-care for students, families, and staff that will supplement the work that is already occurring within the program. The collaboration between consultants and the MPS Head Start administrative team will assist the program in meeting the needs of the instructional staff and families while allowing the permanent Head Start

staff to complete their other assigned responsibilities. Upon receiving the funds, the Head Start program will contract with consultants for the 2022–23 school year.

While every classroom should serve as a safe space for children in which teachers freely allow children to express themselves, calming areas in every classroom are beneficial for students to have an additional outlet. Calming areas allow students to practice self-regulation skills through personal reflection when they need a break from their peers. Every classroom will have a calming area filled with items such as large cushions, pillows, bean bag chairs, books, puppets, and soft, handheld objects.

4. Objectives, Outcomes, and Evaluation

As the Head Start program hires additional FPAs, the Head Start program expects to see decreased caseloads, increased communication with parents, increased participation in policy council meetings and parent committees, and an increase in the attainment of family goals.

Attendance at policy council and parent meetings will be monitored by program staff through sign-in sheets. Qualitative and quantitative data will be collected through surveys and ChildPlus reporting to determine family goal progress and family satisfaction with focused supports and services to determine program effectiveness.

Additional staffing hours of the secretary, social worker, and the FPA's will allow Head Start staff to participate at higher levels of recruitment and enrollment, resulting in full enrollment of the program as reflected in monthly Head Start Enterprise System reporting. The additional hours for FPAs will also increase parent satisfaction, as measured through surveys, and higher student attendance rates, as measured by monthly attendance reports. Additional hours for instructional staff will result in higher student outcomes as measured by Galileo Pre-K and, specifically, the social-emotional school readiness goal. Supplemental hours for supporting Head Start staff, such as mental health and health staff, will result in the provision of additional support and community

resources to families and fulfilling program requirements such as vision screenings and dental exams in a more efficient manner as measured by ChildPlus reporting. The additional hours allotted to the school-based paraprofessionals during arrival and dismissal of students will support the identified need of safety.

The program will see improved child outcomes, school-readiness goals, and program-wide CLASS data by contracting with consultants to focus on trauma-informed support. The MPS Head Start program expects to receive fewer referrals for mental health support from instructional staff as they receive additional assistance in the classroom from consultants and the administrative team. Teachers will be surveyed to monitor the effectiveness of the consultant, the coaching in trauma-informed practices and social-emotional learning to determine feelings of satisfaction with collaboration, and increased individualized support.

The MPS Head Start program is aware of the importance of trauma-informed practices to meet the needs of students and families experiencing trauma and toxic stress. The addition of FPA staff, the flexibility to work additional staffing hours, and the support of consultants will reinforce the positive work that is already being done. The program will see the effects in the classrooms, within the families, and improved student outcome and program data. MPS Head Start students will exit the program ready for success in school, and families will be prepared to support their children's lifelong learning.

5. Budget Narrative and Justification

| Title | Positions/ Hours | Federal Share | Annual Salary/Hourly | Federal Share |
|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| PERSONNEL | | | | |
| Professional Development – Teachers | 328 | 328 | \$46.45 | \$15,236 |
| Professional Development – Teacher Assistants and FPAs | 400 | 400 | \$18.74 | \$7,496 |
| Professional Development – Social Workers | 8 | 8 | \$56.97 | \$456 |
| Extra Hours (FPA) | 300 | 300 | \$18.74 | \$5,622 |
| Extra Hours (Assistants) | 300 | 300 | \$18.74 | \$5,622 |
| Extra Hours (Secretary) | 150 | 150 | \$18.64 | \$2,796 |
| Extra Hours (Social Workers) | 80 | 80 | \$56.97 | \$4,558 |
| TOTAL SALARIES | | | | \$41,786 |
| FRINGE BENEFITS (52%) | | | | \$21,729 |
| TOTAL | | | | \$63,515 |
| TRAVEL | | | | \$0 |
| EQUIPMENT | | | | \$0 |
| SUPPLIES | | | | \$2,119 |
| CONTRACTUAL | | | | \$10,000 |

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| CONSTRUCTION | \$0 |
| OTHER | \$0 |
| TOTAL DIRECT CHARGES (benefits, extra hours, salary, supplies, contractual) | \$75,633 |
| INDIRECT CHARGES (4.18%) | \$2743 |
| TOTALS | \$78,377 |
| TTA | \$0 |
| TOTAL BUDGET | \$78,377 |

PERSONNEL

Duties of the family partnership associates include completing Head Start enrollments and family partnership agreements, attendance monitoring and follow-up, and providing support for families in their effort to ensure completion of required health services. The FPAs work 30 hours/week.

Extra hours for professional development (\$41,786) will be budgeted to support the cost of training teachers, teacher assistants, and FPAs in trauma-informed services. It is expected that the training will be four hours total. The weekend hourly rate for teachers is \$46.45 ($\$46.45 \times 4 \text{ hours} \times 82 = \$15,236$). The weekend hourly rate for teacher assistants and FPAs is \$18.74 ($\$18.74 \times 4 \text{ hours} \times 100 = \$7,496$). The weekend hourly rate for the social worker is \$56.97 ($\$56.97 \times 4 \text{ hours} \times 2 = \456).

Extra hours for FPAs and the secretaries are needed to cover peak activity months for enrollment as well as family and student conferences to ensure sufficient support for the program on the weekends and during non-school hours. The average hourly rate for FPAs is \$18.74 for 300 extra hours for the 18 projected FPAs (\$5,622). The average hourly rate for the

secretary is \$18.64 for 150 extra hours for the secretaries (\$2,796).

Extra hours for the teacher assistants are for support beyond the six-hour workday. The additional hours allotted to the school-based paraprofessionals during arrival and dismissal of students support the identified need of safety. The average hourly rate for the teacher assistant is \$18.74 for 300 extra hours (\$5,622).

Extra hours for the social worker are needed to assist children and families with additional support and community resources to families and fulfilling program requirements. The average hourly rate for the social worker is \$56.97 for 80 extra hours (\$4,558).

FRINGE BENEFITS

Fringe benefits are budgeted at a district average rate of 52%; this includes Social Security, pension, and insurance for employees. The total budget is \$21,729.

EQUIPMENT – Not applicable.

SUPPLIES

Consumable supplies are budgeted for \$2,119 for training and marketing materials.

CONTRACTUAL

Programming – (\$10,000) Consultants who will be trained in trauma-informed care will provide coaching in the signs and symptoms of trauma and will integrate supports to assist in implementing trauma-informed strategies within the classroom. Upon receiving the funds, the Head Start program will contract with consultants for the 2022–23 school year.

OTHER

CONSTRUCTION – Not applicable.

TOTAL DIRECT CHARGES

The total direct charges equal \$75,633.

TOTAL INDIRECT CHARGES

The MPS-approved indirect cost is 4.18%. This is calculated on all direct costs with the exception of contractual line items. The total amount budgeted is \$2,743. Attached is the document that establishes the indirect rate agreement with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

NON-FEDERAL SHARE

MPS has committed \$19,594 in non-federal resources. MPS will match the federal share of this project through transportation costs. Approximately 70% of three-year-old students in MPS participate in district-provided school bus transportation. The average cost per three-year-old pupil is \$2,517 per the MPS Department of Transportation. This is based on a \$30,208 annual cost per bus route, serving approximately 12 students per route. Therefore, the district commits to the costs associated with transporting 70% of the 981 three-year-old students to be served by this project (687 students) at a cost of \$2,517 per student for a \$1,729,179 total cost. The district has identified \$19,594 as the non-federal share to meet the requirement.