

PART I - FACE SHEET

APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE		1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION: Application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Construction															
Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev.02/07 to conform to the Corporation's eGrants System)																	
2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS): 04/21/13		3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE:															
2b. APPLICATION ID: 13ND148687		4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY: 04/21/13															
		STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER: N/A															
		FEDERAL IDENTIFIER: 13WNHLA001															
5. APPLICATION INFORMATION																	
LEGAL NAME: ReNEW-Reinventing Education (ReNEW Schools) DUNS NUMBER: 961563710 - 0000		NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes): NAME: Barbara L. Schuler TELEPHONE NUMBER: (504) 458-9662 FAX NUMBER: INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: barbara@renewschools.org															
ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county): 3128 Constance St New Orleans LA 70115 - 2337 County:																	
6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN): 800416922		7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: 7a. Non-Profit 7b. School (K-12) Local Education Agency															
8. TYPE OF APPLICATION (Check appropriate box). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTEE <input type="checkbox"/> CONTINUATION <input type="checkbox"/> AMENDMENT If Amendment, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es): <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> A. AUGMENTATION B. BUDGET REVISION C. NO COST EXTENSION D. OTHER (specify below):		9. NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY: Corporation for National and Community Service															
10a. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER: 94.006 10b. TITLE: AmeriCorps National		11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT: Achieving College Ready through Turnaround Support 11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):															
12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc): New Orleans, (Orleans Parish/County), LA																	
13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 08/01/13 END DATE: 06/30/16		14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF: a.Applicant <input type="text" value="A 002"/> b.Program <input type="text" value="A 002"/>															
15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #: 1		16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS? <input type="checkbox"/> YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON: DATE: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO. PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372															
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">a. FEDERAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 319,200.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. APPLICANT</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 752,631.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>c. STATE</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>d. LOCAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>e. OTHER</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>f. PROGRAM INCOME</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>g. TOTAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 1,071,831.00</td> </tr> </table>		a. FEDERAL	\$ 319,200.00	b. APPLICANT	\$ 752,631.00	c. STATE	\$ 0.00	d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00	e. OTHER	\$ 0.00	f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00	g. TOTAL	\$ 1,071,831.00	17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES if "Yes," attach an explanation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	
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18. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL DATA IN THIS APPLICATION/PREAPPLICATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT, THE DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DULY AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT WILL COMPLY WITH THE ATTACHED ASSURANCES IF THE ASSISTANCE IS AWARDED.																	
a. TYPED NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: Barbara L. Schuler		b. TITLE:	c. TELEPHONE NUMBER: (504) 458-9662														
d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:			e. DATE SIGNED: 06/18/13														

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Executive Summary

Achieving College Readiness through Turnaround Support will place 24 AmeriCorps members in six low-performing, high-minority, high-poverty Louisiana priority schools in New Orleans. Leveraging 100 additional volunteers, Corps members will help ReNEW's educators provide academic supports to 2048 at-risk PK-12 students and support the development of strong school climate and culture. By the end of each school year, the program will enable increased academic gains (1.3 years of growth) in literacy and math, higher attendance, and improved student behavior. CNCS' investment of \$319,200 will be matched with \$752,631.

Rationale and Approach

1. Program Design

Year after year, New Orleans students trail state and national achievement averages, with African American, special education, and low-income students performing below their peers. According to the August 2011 article by Andrew Vanacore, entitled, "New Orleans Public Schools Achievement Gap is Narrowing," African American students in New Orleans trail their white peers by 42% in proficiency on annual standardized assessments. Low-income students in New Orleans achieved 52% Proficient, while low-income students statewide achieved 58% Proficient. These dynamics contribute to the narrowing but persistent achievement gap.

ReNEW-Reinventing Education Charter Management Organization (ReNEW Schools) is in a position to make a positive impact in closing the achievement gap by serving high-poverty, high-minority New Orleans students. ReNEW acquires schools identified by the Louisiana Department of Education as priority schools and implements the federal Restart Model. After approval from the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, schools are transitioned from state's accountability district to free, open-enrollment ReNEW charter schools serving the same disadvantaged students.

Facilitating educational change at the most underperforming schools significantly improves young people's educational and career opportunities and the disadvantaged communities surrounding each school. When ReNEW restarts a failing school, 99% of its students are African American, 95% receive free or reduced lunch, and 80% of students are academically behind. Due to the unique mission of ReNEW's high schools to serve over-aged, under-credited students, 100% of ReNEW's 9-12 students are at-risk of not graduating. Our high school students are challenged by high frustration, missed years of enrollment, teen pregnancy and parenting, previous drop out status, previous expulsion, and incarceration. With network attendance at 85% (below state goals of 93%) and family participation a

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mere 28%, ReNEW's educators struggle to get students in school and engage families in education.

School charters, improvement plans, and SIG plans are aligned, to prioritize improvement in student proficiency in literacy and math, as measured by state assessments. Our AmeriCorps plan will support schools in their continued progress toward improvement goals.

a. AmeriCorps Member as Highly Effective Means to Support and Sustain School Turnaround Efforts

ReNEW is requesting 24 full-time AmeriCorps members to provide greatly-needed academic supports at each priority school campus: ReNEW Cultural Arts Academy, SciTech Academy, Reed Elementary, Schaumburg Elementary, ReNEW Accelerated High School #1, and ReNEW Accelerated High School #2. None of these campuses currently hosts AmeriCorps members. We have included all priority schools because each has over 50% of students achieving below grade level in one or more subjects, and each campus has a robust need for extra adults to supplement core staff in providing academic interventions customized to each child's needs. Serving all schools will increase the cost-effectiveness of the program by sharing professional learning, supervision, and program supplies. Serving Monday through Friday from 7:45 am to 4:30 pm, from August 1, 2013 through June 30, 2016, all 24 member slots will be focused on providing educational supports to students under the supervision of a full-time, lead classroom teacher with proven effectiveness based on state evaluations. At each elementary, three Corps members will be assigned to PK-4 and two Members will be assigned to support grades 5-8, totaling five Members per elementary school. Two Corps members will be assigned to each high school to support English and math credit recovery. At all campuses, Members will support expanded learning time. Small school principals will use the most recently available student achievement data to determine which math and literacy classes and students have the greatest need for Corps members. ReNEW will strive to recruit university students in an education career track; therefore Corps members will be well-suited to support our at-risk students and accelerate their learning to 1.3 to 1.5 years of academic growth annually.

Personalized, Accelerated Learning Supports

With classrooms of learners of diverse academic levels and knowledge gaps, Corps members will be invaluable in facilitating small group remediation, helping students work in customized online learning programs, and providing extra practice for struggling students. Corps members will help students pinpoint misconceptions and weak skills, make corrections, and remediate basic skills. This will increase students' success in learning coursework appropriate for their grade level, and help high school students make up Carnegie Units they should have earned before enrolling with ReNEW.

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Corps member-assigned laptops will be loaded with blended learning programs to facilitate student-centered intervention activities.

AmeriCorps individuals will not only add value to the program; they will enable it. As ReNEW's educators already work a longer school day and year-round school, teachers are not able to provide significant amounts of uninterrupted tutoring time. Members will fill a personnel need that is more skilled than a paraprofessional or community volunteer, more consistent and available than individual or groups of volunteers, and tied directly to student support (unlike an administrator). Corps members will learn valuable professional skills, gain insight into the challenges of serving high-poverty urban students, and learn about the charter school movement while providing much needed services to ReNEW's students.

Reinforcing Climate and Behavior

The roles of an educator are endless. During any day a teacher working with at-risk kids can be a mother or father figure, a social worker, a nurse, a mentor, a coach, an academic teacher, and a disciplinarian. Behavioral distractions take precious time and focus away from learning. Corps members will add value by helping to shape and reinforce the school and classroom environment. Members will monitor classroom activities, proactively redirect student behaviors, and provide reinforcement in line with ReNEW's positive behavior program. During transitions and multi-class events, Corps members will assist in keeping shared spaces safe and orderly by reiterating and reinforcing expectations (i.e., shirts tucked in, respectful language, and orderly transitions).

b. Evidence-Based/Evidence-Informed and Measureable Community Impact

The Center on Instruction (COI), funded by the U.S. Department of Education, develops and identifies free resources that state, district, and local educators can use to deliver high quality instruction. COI recognizes that today's students are extraordinarily diverse, representing a wide range of experiences, cultures, strengths, weaknesses, abilities, disabilities, and perspectives. These students differ in their instructional and support needs, but all are expected to be successful. COI purports that schools must organize themselves to ensure that every student has a pathway to success and is supported through a wide variety of programs and instructional approaches, including one-on-one or small-group tutoring, and targeted interventions. The 2011 Handbook on Effective Implementation of School Improvement Grants (the Handbook), edited by Carole L. Perlman and Sam Redding for the Center on Innovation & Improvement, details research-proven strategies and action steps for state, district, and school leaders.

The Handbook and the COI describe differentiated instruction as a successful educational strategy

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that allows educators to provide effective instruction to all students. Differentiating instruction utilizes research-based instructional and organizational practices to accommodate student differences in the classroom. Examples include grouping practices such as small groups, pairs, and one-on-one instruction; modifying assignments so all students can participate; providing opportunities for students to respond in multiple ways; and using effective instructional strategies such as reteaching, using multiple examples, and teaching strategies for how to read, complete math problems, or remember content. AmeriCorps members will engage small groups and individual students to work through modified assignments and support students' work in blended learning, an evidenced-based instructional strategy that blends traditional learning with interactive, online educational software.

ReNEW's blended learning programs were teacher-tested and piloted before wide-scale implementation. Blended learning programs--Fast ForWord, Earobics, Accelerated Reader, and others--have been reviewed by the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse and were rated "positive or potentially positive" on impacting achievement. Each is transitioning to Common Core State Standards and allows major differentiation of each student's learning content and pace. Corps members will support students in working through customized learning paths. They will run individual and group reports and analyze data to track ongoing student progress.

Accelerated instruction is a strategy especially useful in reading and mathematics. Rather than the slow-paced and reduced curriculum of many remediation models, teachers accelerate instruction to help students overcome educational deficits and catch-up to their peers. Successful use of acceleration increases the likelihood that struggling students will be prepared to take challenging, on-level courses. Corps members are essential to effective acceleration, as more adults are needed to meet the needs of diverse learners and carry out multiple learning activities concurrently. While the Handbook recommends use of tutoring within classroom instruction in reading and math a minimum of two or three times weekly, ReNEW's Corps members will provide daily support in literacy and math.

Tutoring is an instructional strategy promoted by the Handbook that supports both differentiation of instruction and accelerated instruction. In remediating missing skills, tutoring fills in skills needed to perform at or above grade-level. For younger students, tutoring may prevent later skill gaps when at-risk students are identified early and provided with effective intervention. Tutoring represents a means of increasing intensity through smaller groups, homogenous grouping, and direct instruction of skills. The Handbook advises schools should support the recruiting, screening, and monitoring of tutors. Use of well-trained Corps members represents a high-potential, cost-efficient model for increasing academic intensity.

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The Handbook recommends building student and community supports as an excellent resource to school improvement. According to Redding, 2006 (as cited in the Handbook), "A safe, orderly school climate is one of several characteristics of schools that consistently show good achievement gains." Positive relationships and effective classroom management not only support positive student behavior, but they can also support teacher retention. ReNEW's model is based on annual climate and culture-building with students and staff, and implementing Positive Behavior and Intervention Support (PBIS) to provide a consistent climate and reinforcement through student celebrations. Working in the same classrooms daily, Corps members will provide "another set of eyes" to monitor student actions and provide consistent corrections. Members will support students by developing positive relationships that make students feel welcome, cared for, and encouraged to achieve at high levels.

Community involvement helps to sustain programs, make connections between school work and life, and bridge gaps between school and families. Family engagement also facilitates increased expectations about learning at home. Our monthly stakeholder meetings will provide a new opportunity to engage students, families, and community members in the project and its improvement.

By the end of the 3-year grant cycle, we expect the program to have made a significant impact upon students, the ReNEW network and its campuses, and each Corps member. Demonstrable impact will include an increase in the number of students performing on grade level or above, and thereby prepared for high school and college. With Corps members assisting full-time on a daily basis, it is anticipated that program participants will gain 1.3-1.5 years of growth in reading, ELA, and math annually. Improved climate and culture will be demonstrated by an annual 3% decrease in the number of behavioral referrals. Student attendance will improve by 1% annually as a result of the Corps member incentive activities and rapport building.

Performance measure targets were formulated by tracking historical data on the schools prior to becoming charters, as well as their time managed by ReNEW, and making trend predictions that are above average year-to-year gains without AmeriCorps program interventions. For example, in ELA and math prior to management by ReNEW, annual student achievement averaged .8 years of growth with periods of backsliding or no growth. Many students were gaining less than a full year's worth of skills and content knowledge. Under management by ReNEW, the average rate of learning increased to 1.2 years in core subjects. It is anticipated that program interventions will support math and literacy achievement at a rate of 1.3 years of growth annually (i.e. accelerated learning). See the performance measures section for specific targets and number of students impacted.

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ReNEW will track outcomes through regularly-collected school data: fall, winter and spring MAP and STAR assessments for literacy and math, behavioral data (positive behavior rewards, referrals, in-school and out-of-school suspensions and expulsions), and student attendance. Through daily Member logs of participants, time in tutoring, and intervention activities, Members will be able to measure the number of students directly served, including entrance into and completion of the program as defined by the performance measures. Long term, Members will observe increased student enrollment in the city's competitive high schools and colleges and decreased dropout rates. With time and sustained intervention, the community will be positively impacted by improved school-community partnerships, increased earning power of young residents, and greater civic participation that comes with higher educational attainment.

ReNEW will report program progress and seek stakeholder collaboration through monthly CMO staff meetings, Board of Directors Academic Committee meetings, the bi-monthly stakeholder newsletter, PTA meetings, and monthly program stakeholder meetings. The academic dashboard is provided in an easy-to-understand format to engage stakeholders in open dialogue about program successes, areas for improvement, and brainstorming for ongoing program improvement. Progress will be reported quarterly to CNCS through programmatic reports.

c. Member Recruitment

ReNEW's Member recruiting will mirror current organizational practices for identifying talented individuals attending local universities. ReNEW desires to recruit the majority of the 24 spots from local universities, and will target 20 slots (85%) for local individuals. Remaining slots will be filled with folks attending Louisiana universities outside of New Orleans or those attending out-of-state universities. Recruiting will occur on campus, at local ReNEW informational sessions held at ReNEW campuses, or through teleconferencing for interested candidates located outside of the greater New Orleans area. Recruiting will start with candid discussions of the types of students ReNEW serves, the challenges of educating disadvantaged youth, and the AmeriCorps intervention program. Corps members will be selected for their ability to work with young people and serve as role models, willingness to serve youth in need likely with backgrounds and life stories different than their own, and capacity to develop leadership and professional skills. After learning about ReNEW's mission, values, and opportunities to serve, Member recruits will submit an application, resume, cover letter, and essay through ReNEW's online staffing portal. The essay asks candidates to describe a situation in which they experienced success. The Human Capital team uses a set of screening rubrics that are based on successful hiring strategies found in Geoff Smart and Randy Street's book "Who." The first

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rubric identifies desired qualifications and competencies found in the cover letter, resume, essay, or application. Candidates scoring a total of 9-10 on the first screening rubric are prioritized, and those scoring 7-8 are guaranteed to continue through the process as strong candidates. Candidates scoring 5-6 are considered for placement in critical shortage areas when higher-scoring candidates are not available. The Interview Score Card rubric rates candidates' general patterns of evidence in efficiency, organization and planning, attention to detail, strategic thinking and visioning, calm under pressure, persuasion, intelligence, and ability to analyze. Using questions designed to focus on outcomes, the Interview Score Card asks candidates about career goals, professional strengths and aspirations, and previous work experience and relationships. Candidates scoring 7 or above during the in-person or phone interview meet with small school principals for possible placement. Principals then utilize their own rigorous process to determine values alignment, previous successful experiences, and fit for the team.

While all volunteer slots will be the same, activities will be differentiated by the grade level served. ReNEW will carefully match Member's interests and capabilities to an appropriate grade cluster. A Member who connects with young children will be matched with a PK-2 team, while a Member with demonstrated potential with young adults will be placed at a high school. Small school principals and lead teachers will make final Corps member placement from the pool of qualified applicants. The Human Capital Department will finalize placements by collecting standard hiring forms, conducting background checks and finger printing, setting up email and benefits, and assisting Members with reporting and initial training. The Human Capital Director is prepared to advertise, recruit, and screen Members should ReNEW be awarded.

While ability to work with at-risk students, improve educational outcomes, and espouse ReNEW's values will be the priority in placing applicants, ReNEW fully expects to recruit and place Corps members that represent underrepresented populations, including persons of color and individuals with disabilities. Because ReNEW's mission and organizational culture is so strongly focused on serving underserved, underrepresented populations, schools maintain a highly-inclusive approach with strong diversity and non-discrimination policies. ReNEW is proactive in providing services to meet the needs of staff and students, enabling them to best perform in academics and job activities.

d. AmeriCorps Member Training

Upon grant approval and enrollment in the program, Corps members will participate in 2 days of orientation and program-related training delivered by ReNEW's Curriculum and Instruction team. Onboarding will give Corps members an understanding of the organization, including history,

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mission, values, and the overarching goal to get all students achieving on grade level and college-ready. Onboarding will include orientation to the student and family population, communities surrounding each campus, and New Orleans' diverse neighborhoods, resources, culture, and events.

Following onboarding, Corps members will participate in 3 days of training related to student behavior, academics, operations and logistics. They will complete intensive training on behavioral expectations, classroom management, and school climate and culture. Through conflict resolution training, Corps members will develop skills to assist in proactively monitoring, recognizing, and safely defusing student conflicts. Members will learn: best instructional practices, teaching aligned with Common Core State Standards, effective use of technology in the classroom, using data to drive instruction, serving students with disabilities, diversity awareness, facilities and operations, and first aid. Restricted activities for Corps members and public educators are similar, so ReNEW's training on basic educational law will fulfill required training on restricted Corps member activities and provide common-sense practices for working with minors. Example topics include use of student images, appropriate-touch policy, and situations to avoid such as being alone with a student in a closed space. Corps members will review lobbying and proselytizing activities as prohibited, and examine ReNEW's Educator Handbook which addresses discrimination, appreciation for diversity, and professional expectations.

Corps members will participate in ongoing campus and grade-cluster sessions to learn about their unique assignments, campus themes, student demographics, etc. Lead teachers will guide Members through a typical day and the duties they will perform. Through each campus's school operations managers, Members will learn how to log service hours and gain approval for hours and activities earned beyond the school day. They will participate in teambuilding activities presented by past Corps member(s) that reflect AmeriCorps history and experiences, networking with other local and national service organizations, reflection and growth plans, and initial training on the Life after AmeriCorps Year (LACY) plan. The conclusion of start-of-year training will be an induction celebration, during which each Corps member is recognized and presented with a unique uniform badge that clearly and proudly identifies each as a ReNEW AmeriCorps service member.

Daily, Corps members will participate in 1 hour of small school professional learning to support their service duties. In these sessions, staff and Corps members will study student mastery of standards, share and discuss and best practices and lessons learned, review effective use of second adults in the classroom, collaborate to support achievement for every student, examine effective ways to support small groups and individuals, and discern best uses of online learning programs. Monthly,

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Members will convene as a cohort to share experiences and lessons learned and review acceptable and prohibited volunteer activities. The District Supervisor will lead Members through reflection activities and growth plans. As with ReNEW's professional learning sessions for teachers, Member training sessions will be based on need. This will include data generated by instructional observations and needs expressed by school principals and lead teachers. By the end of each year, Corps members will have developed a solid core of educational strategies effective in increasing learning for at-risk students. They will have increased professional and leadership skills and gained experience facilitating service learning activities aligned with academic standards and community needs.

Tutoring Programs

Corps members will satisfy AmeriCorps program requirements for tutors. All Corps members will have a high school diploma, and meet the NCLB requirements of a highly-qualified para-professional. All Corps members will have completed research-based training on highly effective instructional practices and learning aligned to Louisiana's adoption of the Common Core State Standards. Training will include the ongoing examination of effect size, and putting into practice those educational strategies (such as peer teaching and student goal setting and progress tracking) that John Hattie's research has demonstrated to significantly impact learning (2009). Training of Corps members will be consistent with ReNEW's instructional program and Common Core State Standards because Members will receive the same professional learning as our educators as well as customized Member training. This model will enrich Corps members' experiences as they will be able to collaborate with and learn from educators with proven success in growing student achievement.

e. Member Supervision

Supervision of AmeriCorps members will be done through a collaborative team approach to align specific supports with current staff members' duties and capabilities. Upon grant award, all staff members--lead teachers, principals, support staff, CEO, development staff, Curriculum and Instruction Team, Director of Human Capital, Chief Financial Officer, Grants and Volunteers Coordinator, school operations managers, and parent liaison--will train on the program structure, expectations, and responsibilities. Additionally, ReNEW will modify the existing professional learning calendar to carve out time each month for participating principals and lead teachers to collaborate, receive support, and train on common areas of need.

The newly-hired, full-time District AmeriCorps Supervisor, selected for successful past experience in promoting exemplary student achievement, project management, and supervision of adults, will assume lead on training, support, and supervision of all team members, and will participate in

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technical training from CNCS. The District Supervisor will ensure the program is implemented with fidelity and work with the Finance Office, principals, the Director of Data, and the Grants Coordinator to collect and submit data for monthly review and project reporting. Weekly principal meetings and school operations manager meetings provide existing structures and format in which to discuss site-specific program successes and create action plans to address areas of concern.

Lead teachers in Member-assigned classrooms will provide daily, intensive support and supervision. Lead teachers will purposefully plan lessons and activities to allow Corps members to accelerate learning for at-risk students by providing additional academic supports. Principals will supervise Corps members assigned to their small schools (PK-4, 5-8, and 9-12) just as they monitor and support hired educators. Classroom observations and review of student growth will help principals evaluate Member services. School operations managers will oversee members' logging of service hours and coordinate with the Finance Office to ensure timely and accurate payment of living allowances.

f. Member Experience

Throughout their year of service, Corps members will provide direct service to at-risk students, while supporting families, community, and educators. Daily, they will engage students and develop positive relationships, learn about students and their lives, and share ReNEW's organizational goals to help every child to succeed. Corps members will connect with kids and realize how much work all stakeholders--individuals, families, educators, the larger community, and the students themselves--need to contribute to turn around failing schools, decrease the achievement gap and student inequalities, and aid distressed communities. When students are performing on grade level or above, they are college ready.

Corps members' year of service will also be made meaningful through rich development of skills, personal reflection, growth, and ongoing support. Members will participate in leadership development, teambuilding, shared social activities, and weekly reflections on how service is impacting their school teams, school climate, and personal and professional growth. Reflections will include responses to prompts, discussions, and creation of artworks demonstrating Corps members' experiences. Quarterly reports to the District Supervisor will include Members' perceptions of strengths and weaknesses as individuals and as a team, skill sets acquired, and those still needed to better serve now and in future service assignments. Online Survey Monkey surveys will allow Members to anonymously report program strengths and weaknesses to enable corrections and adjustments as needed. Quarterly development of Life after AmeriCorps Year (LACY) plans will allow Corps members to set goals and action plans for continued service, college, graduate school, or career.

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Participation in national and international service days such as Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Global Youth Service Day, and national CNCS events will allow ReNEW's Corps members to provide service to other partners, meet and work with other local and national service groups, and network with other AmeriCorps members. Because ReNEW actively seeks volunteers and has strong relationships with local universities, neighborhood associations, early education providers, and churches, there are plentiful and ongoing opportunities for Corps members to engage in garden builds, food drives, park clean up events, etc., in a variety of locations. The district keeps a live, open-access database of volunteer groups requesting service with ReNEW, and each school keeps a prioritized list of volunteer-needs. The Director of Operations, the Volunteer Coordinator, and school operations managers, review the database weekly to match volunteer opportunities with school needs.

i. Organizational Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification

ReNEW recognizes that branding is critical to AmeriCorps's organizational identification with diverse stakeholders including policy makers, continued program success and growth, and positive associations between the name and services provided by Corps members. ReNEW is 100% committed to ensuring that all program events, activities, materials, and media will use the AmeriCorps name and logo. These include Corps member uniform badges, classroom signs where Members are assigned, use on ReNEW's website, stakeholder and staff newsletters, and online and print recruiting ads, applications, and service contracts. The AmeriCorps name and logo will be used in onboarding and training materials, and Member-created service materials. Press releases and letters to local legislators will inform a wider audience about the benefits of national service programming and promote AmeriCorps.

Upon award, ReNEW will recruit a local veteran AmeriCorps member to visit newly-recruited Corps members to share AmeriCorps history and experiences, and teach chants and cheers so Members connect with each other and the AmeriCorps organization. Chants will be performed at ceremonies, events, and monthly meetings to build Corps member group cohesion. Every day, ReNEW's AmeriCorps members will connect to the AmeriCorps brand and be easily recognizable through a unique ReNEW AmeriCorps badge. This will consist of the Member name and the AmeriCorps name and logo. Classrooms will have wall name plaques which showcase Corps member's name, college experience, and their status as an AmeriCorps service member.

h. Strategic Consideration

ReNEW's program will provide high levels of organizational capacity and low-risk to CNCS and the AmeriCorps Program, to support six urban Louisiana priority schools. We seek to place 24 Corps

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members, including Members of color, Members with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged youth, to sustain school turnaround efforts and improve educational outcomes for low-income, minority, academically at-risk PK-12 students.

Organizational Capability

a. Organizational Background and Staffing

Following Hurricane Katrina, veteran educators Gary Robichaux and Colleen Mackay started ReNEW-Reinventing Education (ReNEW Schools), a non-profit charter management organization with a mission to provide a rigorous, college preparatory education to historically underserved PK-12 students. ReNEW's founders believe that every child can learn, and every child deserves the opportunity to attend college. ReNEW has grown to four PK-8 campuses and two high schools, serving 2600 at-risk students from across the city. Two recently approved charters will add another PK-8 and high school campus in future years. As ReNEW continues to implement bold school improvement reforms through the Federal Restart Model, feedback from the Louisiana Department of Education, parents, and community members has been positive and academic gains are outpacing years of slow growth from when schools were managed by Orleans Parish. Student achievement has risen by about 15% in each core subject, and each school's School Performance Score (SPS) has risen by over 20 points.

Because each school is supported by the Charter Management Organization (CMO), structures, systems, and staff are already in place to plan, implement, and monitor the program. Each CMO member has educational experience through Teach for America or traditional service in public schools. Michael Galdi is a Teach for America alumnus who worked as teacher and Human Resources professional at the Recovery School District before taking lead in ReNEW's Human Capital Department. He will spearhead Corps member recruiting and placement. Alex Pearlman, Director of Operations, has experience in school finance and operations. He will oversee all school operations managers in Corps Members' daily sign-in, sign-out, reconciliation and certification of time logged, and data entry into each school's online account. Tanya Bryant, Chief Financial Officer and Comptroller, will lead the finance team in braiding funds, documenting matching, coding expenditures in QuickBooks, and ensuring compliance with the approved program budget.

Tammy Robicheaux, Chief of Instructional Strategies, has years of experience in the classroom, at the Picard Center for Early Childhood, and as a Louisiana Distinguished Educator tasked with school improvement. Tammy will oversee onboarding, pre-service, and in-service training that meets the requirements for tutors and well-prepares Corps members to serve at-risk students. Ms. Robicheaux,

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her staff of Directors of Curriculum and Instruction, and the Chief Executive Officer conduct weekly school and classroom observations for support and evaluation.

Barbara Schuler, Grants and Volunteer Coordinator, has experience in classroom teaching, National Board Certification, and implementation of the Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program. She oversees volunteer recruiting and training and implementation of small and large grants (including four active SIG grants and two pending for remaining ReNEW campuses). She will work with all staff and stakeholders to ensure effective communication, training, and program fidelity. Until the full-time District Supervisor is hired, Barbara will serve as the program's lead contact and conduct program orientation and financial and programmatic training for CMO staff, principals, and teachers. She will provide technical support for all stakeholders through email, phone, text, and face-to-face meetings.

Ms. Schuler will establish the District Supervisor as liaison to stakeholders and CNCS, and train him or her to lead program implementation, management, and reporting. The District Supervisor will oversee Member daily activities, promoting the AmeriCorps brand, team building, meaningful reflection, and Life after AmeriCorps Year planning. He or she will monitor daily activities occurring at all schools and provide support to principals and school operations managers. The Supervisor will lead monitoring of ReNEW's AmeriCorps program, providing support in implementation and weekly collection of data for program reporting and evaluation. The District Supervisor will be hired upon grant award, and will have successful experience in facilitating strong student achievement, program management, and supervising adults.

Principals confronting low student achievement within a traditional school structure can be easily overwhelmed with operations, finances, human resources, and state reporting activities. During restart of a failing school, ReNEW creates small school clusters (PK-4, 5-8, and 9-12) with a principal for each cluster to provide greater support to teachers, students, and families, and decrease time managing facilities and operations. Each principal has just over 300 students to support, making it easier to monitor instruction, study student achievement data, align resources to needs, and build relationships with students, families, and educators. Principals are accountable for academic activities and student growth within their assigned grade clusters. Each has a proven record of growing student achievement under his or her leadership. Principals will make final selection of qualified candidates to serve as Corps members and supervise Members assigned to their small school team. They will make daily classroom observations, support lead teachers and Corp members in providing effective instruction, and lead daily professional learning sessions for lead teachers and Corps Members. This

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training, coupled with reflections, Life after AmeriCorps Year planning, and Survey Monkey feedback, will build capacity and skills in Corp members.

All ReNEW employees participate in ongoing professional learning and the structures are in place to add AmeriCorps training and technical support into district-wide trainings and daily small school sessions. ReNEW has been training its new and returning educators for 3 years, with each year increasing in rigor, immediate usefulness in the classroom, and alignment to participants' needs. Through the Curriculum and Instruction team, ReNEW will provide initial onboarding and training, and then fold Corps member training into school-year professional learning. During summer professional learning, all principals and assistant principals attend a week of leadership learning, during which they will receive training on the details of the approved program, including a review of program requirements, roles and responsibilities, desired outcomes, reporting, and next steps. During the school year, principals will receive weekly technical assistance from the District Supervisor, who will work with the Grants Coordinator and the Comptroller to ensure compliance with approved grant activities and budget. Those requiring additional assistance may receive help at any time. Principals will train lead teachers during July professional learning. All lead teachers assigned a Corp member will meet for an overview of the program, review of allowable and unallowable activities, effective use of extra adults in the classroom, and lead teacher expectations in guiding and supporting their Corps member. Each school's operations manager and the district Director of Operations will receive training on Member logging of service hours, reconciliation of hours, and entry into the required online system. Weekly, Mr. Pearlman will meet with each school operations manager individually to review Corps member service hours, campus needs and activities, and programmatic compliance.

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit, ReNEW is managed by a Board of Directors which works directly with the Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent and the charter management staff (CMO). The Board's Academic and Development Committees support the CMO in securing resources to further personalize and accelerate learning to develop students' college readiness. While the Board is the elected governing body, the CMO staff, led by CEO Gary Robichaux, is the central force in day-to-day support and oversight of each campus and all educational programming. There is no stand-alone ReNEW central office; CMO members are embedded within schools to maximize support and availability to principals and teachers and to remain informed on program activities and progress.

ReNEW has not been a recipient of AmeriCorps funds in the past, however we receive and manage just over six million dollars annually in No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Title funds, SIG 1003 funds for the restart of state-identified priority schools, and 8(g) funds. ReNEW also receives and manages

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Minimum Foundation Plan Funds for per-pupil spending. ReNEW's finance department has experience logging and documenting matching sources, managing grant expenditures and reimbursements, successfully braiding fund streams, and prioritizing funds for long-term program sustainability. The finance team of six full time staff and two interns allows one full-time staff member and one assistant to manage all ReNEW grant funds. ReNEW's most recent audit resulted in an unqualified opinion with no significant or material weaknesses in internal control.

b. Sustainability

Each school's principals were integral in preparing and approving the program proposal. They and their teachers will provide time and effort in selecting, training, and utilizing Corps members and their small school funds will support program matching. They realize the potential of the program to positively impact their students, families and teachers. Principals reviewed the allowable and prohibited activities, examined their budgets for anticipated cost sharing, approved the number of MSYs at their campus, and demonstrated support for the primary role of Corps members in supporting literacy and math achievement. Principals realize that Corps members cannot displace ReNEW staff, and agreed that Members will not engage in such activities as excessive duties, clerical work, etc. ReNEW consulted with Volunteer Louisiana (state service commission) and submitted a summary of the program for review.

ReNEW will work to sustain the program by seeking local and national partners and funding sources to continue the extra support our students need. ReNEW partners with local and national organizations and agencies, including New Schools for New Orleans, the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, New Schools Venture Funds, and the Louisiana Department of Education's School Turnaround Office and Office of Educator Quality, among others, to provide data and receive supporting services on ongoing school improvement interventions, Common Core State Standards (CCSS) training and resources, quality educators and instruction, student achievement, and programmatic and fiscal accountability. To continually build support and capacity for the program, we will convene monthly meetings-- including educators, Members, parents, students, program staff, CMO staff, and community partners-- to ensure all stakeholders are on the same page and aware of program goals. Stakeholder meetings will facilitate cross-organizational collaboration, and encourage input and support from diverse partners. Programmatic reports will allow stakeholders to review strengths and challenges, and make ongoing recommendations for improvement. In addition, program staff and Members will share lessons learned to strengthen current and future program implementation. The District Supervisor will collect, archive, and share recommendations and lessons

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learned with all program sites.

Because the project is aligned with each school's charter goals and district and school improvement plans, and because we will still have pockets of students performing below grade level, we will sustain the turnaround efforts beyond the grant period. Three, five, and ten-year charter reviews by the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will ensure the CMO is on track with stated achievement goals in order for each school's charter to be renewed. ReNEW's Board of Directors and Charter Management Organization (CMO) leaders have made extra personnel a priority in literacy and math.

ReNEW will use state Education Excellence and Striving Readers funds to provide extra personnel to facilitate small group learning. Foundations such as the Greater New Orleans Foundation, Pro Bono Publico, Booth-Bricker, and Kinder Morgan are past and current partners that can provide matching funds for personnel salaries and benefits. Ongoing support from the Brown Foundation will continue to fund learning activities and materials. State Minimum Foundation Plan funds and local revenues provide funding based on student enrollment for essential personnel (i.e. school principals and core subject teachers), student curricula and consumables, and facilities and transportation needs.

As part of each school's business plan, small schools will merge as each campus's climate, culture, and academics stabilize (anticipated in the fourth year into turnaround). Collapsing small schools will consolidate principals, freeing funding to continue the program. Just one collapsed principal position at one campus could pay the gap between the program living allowance and the CNCS award per MSY for seven Corps members. Because the number of students will remain the same, no teachers or support staff will be displaced when small schools combine.

The Board of Directors and the CMO Development team have a successful record of fundraising, including efforts to support service. When the CMO was incubating at Tulane University before the first school opened, the founders recognized the value of service and created a Volunteer Coordinator position. The district is in its second year of raising funds to support interns who work with ReNEW's Information Technology team to increase technology accessibility to educators and students and support the network's reliance on blended learning programs. From 2010 to 2012, ReNEW raised funds to support social workers, counselors, and librarians. Unpaid volunteers serve ReNEW monthly, and each school funds volunteer supplies for their campus. ReNEW has successfully completed National Youth Leadership Council, Learn and Serve, Brown Foundation, and State Farm Youth Advisory Grants. Each required service components, and the three largest required matching funds.

ReNEW will leverage the intervention's success to increase community investment in the program,

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both in terms of continued volunteers and financial support after the grant period ends. We will deepen and expand our work with current university and expanded school day partners. Tulane, Loyola, Xavier, and Delgado Universities have established and diverse service requirements for their students, through classes, freshman requirements, and service internships. ReNEW will continue to share academic intervention needs and work with academic departments and service offices to increase availability of young people as trained tutors. Partnership for Youth Development (PYD), The After School Corporation (TASC), and New Orleans Arts in Education Initiative (NOAEI) provide funding and quality oversight of expanded school day for PK-8, which provides a longer school day for students, increased time in learning activities, and additional academic interventions. PYD, TASC, and NOAEI are working on several grants with ReNEW, including PeyBack Foundation and 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants, to secure additional funding to continue to expand the school day at all PK-8 campuses and provide increased tutors and remediation materials for academic interventions. ReNEW is currently working with Loyola's Office of Service Learning on a potential AT&T Aspire grant to train college students as tutors to help at-risk high school students prepare for End of Course assessments and the ACT college readiness exam. The AmeriCorps project represents 4.09% of ReNEW's current organizational budget.

2c. Compliance and Accountability

ReNEW will hire a District AmeriCorps Supervisor to oversee all aspects of the program. The Supervisor will monitor each program site weekly, and each Corps member classroom a minimum of bi-weekly. All principals, lead teachers, and school operations managers will have had training on the program requirements, programmatic goals and outcomes, approved and prohibited activities, roles and responsibilities, timelines, and budget. Principals, supported by school operations managers, will be held accountable for proper and timely implementation and supervision of grant activities. Compliance concerns reported by any stakeholder--student, volunteer, teacher, principal, support staff, or CMO staff--will initiate immediate investigation and retraining. Continued instances of non-compliance or failure to effectively use Corps members in the classroom will result in a required Personal Improvement Plan (PIP) to remedy the problem. More severe non-compliance will result in moving the Corps member to a grade level team which has demonstrated program compliance and has the next highest need for a Member. Extremely severe non-compliance that could potentially endanger students, adults, or the organization will end in termination.

2d. Continuous Improvement

Prior to each AmeriCorps program stakeholder meeting, the District Supervisor will work with

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CMO Data Directors and the Response to Intervention Coordinator to collect and organize student data in an easy-to-understand format. Monthly meetings of teachers, principals, parents, students, program staff, CMO staff, and community partners will allow stakeholders to review and analyze math and literacy achievement, attendance rates, behavioral data, and logged program participants and hours, to determine progress toward the program's measurable objectives and outcomes. During each meeting, stakeholders will determine program strengths and weakness, and create recommendations and action plans for ongoing program improvement. When possible, monthly stakeholder meetings will be scheduled with high participation events such as report card nights to encourage increased participation. Following each stakeholder meeting, the District Supervisor will post program progress on ReNEW's website.

Independent educational evaluator, Peggy Kirby, will be contracted in years 2 and 3 of the program to support ReNEW in designing and implementing independent program evaluation services.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

3a. Cost Effectiveness

The program is cost effective in braiding funding streams and resources to maximize services to at-risk, high-poverty students across six priority schools. ReNEW acknowledges that Corps members will be compensated at the maximum allowable rate. Living allowances at high rates are essential to recruiting quality candidates with strong potential to make a significant impact on student learning. With 2048 students impacted, the program costs \$523.35 per student per year. The program request, \$319,200, does not exceed the \$13,300 maximum cost per member service year for 24 Corps members. The project represents 4.09% of ReNEW's current organizational budget.

At \$523.35 per student over the course of the year, or \$47.58 per student per month (for 11 months), the program is extremely cost-effective in reducing academic deficiencies and increasing the achievement rate and number of students performing on grade level. Proposed program costs may be in line with tutoring offered by free community services; however free services are rarely able to provide highly-trained tutors, alignment with Common Core State Standards, tracking of growth, and student transportation. Costs at local or national for-profit tutoring centers can cost several hundred dollars for initial assessments, plus monthly fees and transportation costs to and from centers. Private educator tutors charge rates of \$30-\$40 per hour, far exceeding the hourly cost of our program. By integrating Corps members into the school day, we maximize the return on investment by increasing program access and decreasing obstacles for families (such as transportation, scheduling, and fees).

All AmeriCorps grants funds will be layered onto, rather than supplant existing resources. Our first

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two campuses exhausted all SIG funds in 2012. Two others are in their last year, with funds supporting extra principals, behavior interventionists, and curriculum specialists. SIG funds for the two priority schools applying for 2013-2014 will support additional principals, blended learning instructors, curriculum specialists, and technology infrastructure and digital learning content and gaps (matching) within the proposed budget.

3.b. Budget Adequacy

Of the total program cost of \$1,071,831, ReNEW and its schools will support \$752,631 from non-CNCS sources. State Minimum Foundation Plan (MFP) funds will support 69.4% of matching costs and 9.3% will be funded by the Booth-Bricker Foundation for digital intervention programs and computers. The Brown Foundation will fund .8% of matching and Education Excellence will support 3.5% for consumable intervention learning materials. New Schools for New Orleans will fund 4% of matching costs for Common Core professional learning and classroom implementation. School Improvement Grant funds (SIG 1003g) will support 12.9% of matching costs to support gaps in member living allowances member benefits and member laptops.

ReNEW's Development Department and the Board of Directors Development Committee will continue to seek funding from diverse partners. In November 2012, ReNEW held its first annual gala and raised over \$38,000 from supporters and community members for student college-readiness programming. In May, 2013, actress Alfre Woodard is supporting ReNEW in holding a high-level event to gain new supporters and raise additional unrestricted funds. We will continue to strategically seek grants and volunteer resources from local and national partners to support the program. These include the state's Striving Readers Literacy Grant to provide increased support for literacy supports and blended learning hardware and software. Annual Educational Excellence funds will be used to purchase Common Core State Standards-aligned learning materials Corps members will use with students. The 2012-2013 award is \$26,580 and is expected to increase annually (as it has to date). Current Brown Foundation funds of \$6,500 to support teaching and learning activities are non-competitive and renewed annually. ReNEW will continue to involve local universities in Corps member recruiting and in leveraging funding available to the university (such as AT&T's Aspire program) to provide Corps members with additional training, intervention materials and equipment, and assistance in collecting program data to demonstrate effectiveness in improving student achievement. ReNEW is participating in a working group to submit a 3-year proposal.

The program budget includes only necessary items to complete the proposed program as outlined in the narrative or required by CNCS. Staff includes only supervisory personnel who have some part in

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recruiting, training, implementing, monitoring, and reporting of grant activities, and are necessary to support Corps members in carrying out daily activities. Only the percent of time spent and job duties relative to the proposed program were calculated for salaries and benefits. All salaries and benefits were computed based on existing ReNEW salaries and benefits rates. Funding for supplies was kept to a minimum to allow the maximum amount of funding to be used to attain top-notch Corps members. As well, much of the materials and curriculum Corps members will use is already available in the classroom. Training, while extensive, is low in cost because it is cost-efficient to add Corps member training into existing professional learning activities with minimal added costs. Program evaluation was kept to a minimum in year 1, anticipating the line item will increase in years 2 and 3 as the program evaluation is defined and conducted. Three-part background checks and printing costs are based on current provider costs for these items, and travel was based on current rates found online and state allowable costs. Member living allowances were calculated at the allowable maximum cost to enable ReNEW to attract and recruit highly-capable Members. Benefits were calculated at current ReNEW rates. ReNEW will not claim indirect costs for this program. The line items included in the grant, coupled with existing expertise, infrastructure, and curriculum materials at each school site, are sufficient to support the program's desired educational outputs and outcomes.

Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Evaluation

Not Applicable

Federally Approved Indirect Cost Agreement

Not Applicable

Labor Union Concurrence

Sent