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Executive Summary

The Waynesville R-VI School District will have 66 (36.69 MSY) AmeriCorps Members who will provide academic support, mentoring, service learning, enrichment and fitness and wellness support to students, of whom over 73% are military affiliated, in the Waynesville, St. Robert and Ft. Leonard Wood communities of Missouri. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps Members will be responsible for increasing student achievement of Pre-K-12, at-risk and military affiliated students through Member and volunteer supported tutoring and mentoring programs during the regular school day and in the afterschool setting. In addition, the AmeriCorps Members will leverage an additional 1,000 volunteers that will be engaged in providing educational enrichment and support to students in the Waynesville R-VI School District. The program will focus on the CNCS focus areas of Veterans and Military Families and Education. The CNCS investment of \$480,569 will be matched with \$479,263 in public funding and \$0 in private funding.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

A. Problem/Need

The Waynesville R-VI School District is home to Fort Leonard Wood Army Installation, where 73% of students in the district are military affiliated. Over 43% of students in the Waynesville School District are considered economically disadvantaged youth and receive free or reduced lunch. Recent economic challenges have resulted in community wide increases in unemployment and financial burdens as many jobs have been reduced or eliminated due to federal budget cuts. The Waynesville School District serves a rural population where job opportunities are scarce. Pulaski County has experienced a 3.1% increase in unemployment over the last five years due in part to decreased funding of Fort Leonard Wood (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007-2012).

Many military affiliated students experience frequent moves resulting from parental deployments, temporary duty relocations, and reassignments. Student mobility rates exceed 60% across the district, with some schools exceeding 80% mobility rates. The highly mobile student population is frequently trying to catch up academically after making a move, while also being impacted emotionally due to leaving behind friends, family, and community. It is not atypical for a military child to attend 6-9 schools during their K-12 education (Military Child Education Coalition, 2012). As a result of high mobility rates, many students struggle with academics due to gaps in learning that result from the curriculum being varied in schools across the country and overseas.

Students also struggle with making friends and forming attachments to their school and

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community. Waynesville AmeriCorps Members (ACM) serve to close achievement gaps and help students make connections during mentoring/tutoring sessions throughout the school day and during the Club TIGER Afterschool Program. Club TIGER is a comprehensive afterschool program designed to keep students actively involved in their school and community. The Club TIGER program is available to all K-12 students and is focused on academic assistance, physical activity, health and wellness, and enrichment clubs and activities.

Through the Club TIGER Afterschool Program, ACM provide academic support and mentoring while helping students develop positive relationships with peers and caring adults through involvement in service learning, enrichment, and health and wellness clubs and activities.

While individual students continue to make progress and experience success, 42.7% of district students are performing below grade level in English Language Arts and 42.3% of district students are performing below grade level in Mathematics, demonstrated by yearly MAP (Missouri Assessment Program) scores. The district has responded by conducting in-depth studies of areas of weakness, adopting new materials to provide support, and implementing building level Response to Intervention (RtI) systems to better meet student needs. However, there is simply not enough manpower to provide students with the individualized direct instruction and support that is needed to close achievement gaps. AmeriCorps provides a solution to the academic concerns faced by the district, providing mentoring and tutoring in skill-deficient areas to at-risk students identified as most in need of support. ACM, working directly with classroom teachers, provide much needed additional time and support to Pre-K-12 students who are not reaching proficiency levels.

B. AmeriCorps Members as Highly Effective Means to Solve Community Problems - Evidence Base and Measurable Community Impact

The goal of the Waynesville AmeriCorps program is to provide all students with an equal opportunity to succeed in school and as adults. The challenges faced by military connected and at-risk youth contribute to an unequal playing field both academically and post-graduation. The logic model and theory of change detail how the inputs and activities of the AmeriCorps program will directly produce evidence of the outcomes of increased academic achievement, increased volunteer support, smoother transitions for military affiliated students, and increased support for at-risk youth. The proposed AmeriCorps activities will support achievement of the program goal of providing all students with an equal opportunity for school and life success.

The use of research-based instructional strategies paired with district teacher, administrator, and

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volunteer support creates a safety net for at-risk youth. AmeriCorps Members provide a connection between the learning that takes place during the school day and in the after school setting, bridging the gap for at-risk youth. For six years, ACM have worked to close the achievement gap for the youth of the district, providing service to over 7,900 students. Working in partnership with teachers, ACM efforts have resulted in increases in student achievement. However, the district continues to be in need of ACM support due to the fluid nature of the military student population. ACM play a vital role in individual students' success, serving an essential role in the Response to Intervention (RtI) process. Students who are below proficiency levels in mathematics and/or English Language Arts, or have recently transitioned into the district, require individualized instruction in order to reach and maintain grade level expectations and support positive social and emotional transitions. Building-level RtI methods have been developed by the district, however staffing levels are not such that Tier II and Tier III intervention methods (the most intensive levels) can be successfully implemented. Over the last six years the number of ACM has increased from 15 to 33. By further increasing to 66 ACM, the number of at-risk students paired with trained mentors and tutors will expand, significantly increasing the positive academic impact of the AmeriCorps program. Increasing the number of ACM will also increase the capacity of the district to effectively recruit and support volunteers serving as mentors and tutors.

ACM will utilize the research-based intervention methods Check & Connect, RtI, and the Direct Instruction model implemented through SRA (Science Research Associates) Reading and Math, all of which are supported by strong evidence of effectiveness through well-designed and well-implemented experimental studies with positive findings of outcomes. ACM will also utilize teacher directed interventions to provide small group and individual remediation to at-risk youth. The Check & Connect program incorporates both mentoring and tutoring support focusing on academics, attendance and behavior monitoring. Through Check & Connect, ACM will empower students to solve their own problems and take responsibility for their actions. When placing students into intervention groups, an emphasis will be placed on ensuring that students new to the district (typically military-affiliated) receive extra support during the initial transition phase of relocation. The Direct Instruction model used in SRA Reading and Math and teacher directed instruction will provide students with scaffolded learning opportunities in areas of skill deficits, with frequent monitoring and curriculum adjustment. ACM tutoring and mentoring will provide academic support to 2,000 students in the areas of literacy and/or math; progress will be measured by performance on nationally normed, standardized assessment instruments including: Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI),

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Scholastic Math Inventory (SMI), STAR Reading and STAR Math assessments.

AmeriCorps support will increase access to quality afterschool programming for K-12 students. Participation in afterschool programs has strong evidence supporting it as a highly effective means of increasing student engagement. ACM will extend the classroom learning into the afterschool program through academic assistance, service learning, interest-based clubs, enrichment, and health and wellness activities. Afterschool programs are crucial to students new to the district, providing a safe, nurturing environment to meet fellow students, develop new skills, and build relationships. In addition, many military families rely heavily on afterschool programs to provide care for their children while they are working non-traditional hours or have a spouse deployed.

The volunteer tutoring and mentoring program in partnership with Check & Connect mentors, will increase student access to individual support from caring adults. ACM will play a crucial role in creating this program by recruiting, training, and matching volunteers with disadvantaged youth. ACM will serve alongside the school district's Volunteer Coordinator to reach out to the military and civilian communities to engage new volunteers, and guide them through the process of becoming a tutor or mentor. In partnership with Check & Connect mentors, it is anticipated that 200 disadvantaged youth will be matched with mentors.

C. Evidence Base

The research-based interventions of RtI, Check & Connect, SRA, and high-quality afterschool program activities will be combined to provide students with an evidence based, systematic approach to meeting student needs. The four components detailed below, demonstrate strong evidence that support positive impacts on student learning. This supports the goal of the Waynesville AmeriCorps program to provide all students with an equal opportunity to succeed in school and as adults.

RtI: Response to Intervention (RtI) is an accepted method of bridging academic proficiency gaps and providing early detection of learning disabilities through tiered, research based learning interventions supported by strong evidence. The concept of RtI is explicitly included in the No Child Left Behind act of 2001 and the re-authorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 (Klotz & Canter, 2006), lending inherent credibility to the method. In the article "Field Studies of RtI Programs, Revised" (Hughes & Dexter), Penn State researchers Hughes and Dexter examine the field studies of sixteen RtI programs that measure a variety of outcomes including (but not limited to): reading outcomes, mathematics outcomes, literacy outcomes and retention. Waynesville R-VI School District utilizes a tiered early intervention, blended model of RtI (Standard Protocol/Problem Solving) (VanDerHeyden) that utilizes SRA, Check & Connect and Teacher Directed Interventions.

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One high level finding identified by Hughes and Dexter in their evaluation confirms the effectiveness of this model through well-designed and well-implemented experimental studies: "All of the studies examining the impact of an RtI program on academic achievement or performance resulted in some level of improvement, and the authors attributed the changes to the RtI approach they used. Thus, there is emerging evidence that a tiered early intervention approach can improve the academic performance of at-risk students."

SRA/Direct Instruction: Numerous studies on the effectiveness of SRA have been conducted, with the most notable study in support of the SRA learning intervention being Project Follow Through (FT), a large and well-constructed experimental study funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The experimental study spanned multiple decades and included over 20,000 student participants at over 180 sites (Grossen, Bonnie; University of Oregon, 1997). Compared to the other models evaluated, Direct Instruction (SRA Reading Mastery was explicitly evaluated) performed consistently higher in all areas and demographics and supported the causal conclusion of increased academic performance as a result of Direct Instruction. The immediately applicable result of this study, emphasized by researcher Bonnie Grossen, PhD. at the University of Oregon is as follows: "... FT Project did successfully identify what does work. The only model that brought children close to the 50th percentile in all subject areas was the Direct Instruction model" (Grossen, Bonnie; University of Oregon, 1997).

A well-constructed quasi-experimental study executed in 2000 by Crawford and Snider and published in the journal, *Education and Treatment of Children*, demonstrates the effectiveness of the SRA model as core curriculum in mathematics. The study explored the difference in efficacy between explicit curriculum (SRA Connecting Math Concepts) and implicit curriculum (Scott Foresman) in a side-by-side comparison at the fourth grade level of mathematics. The study showed that students receiving explicit Direct Instruction curriculum had higher scoring on the National Achievement Test, curriculum-based tests, and a multiplication fact test compared to students receiving the implicit curriculum (Crawford & Snider, 2000).

A quasi-experimental study conducted by Foorman, Francis and Fletcher, published in the *Journal of Educational Psychology* in 1998, confirmed the effectiveness of the SRA Model for English Language Arts. The well-designed and implemented study evaluated three instructional strategies (explicit, embedded, implicit) for early literacy in 285 first and second grade students identified as at-risk for reading failure. The participants were provided literacy instruction with one of the three instructional strategies. The results of this study clearly showed that the students who received the

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Direct Instruction intervention increased their reading skills at an accelerated rate compared to the embedded and explicit learning strategies (Foorman, Francis, & Fletcher, 1998).

In 2002, academics from the Oregon Research Institute published a study titled "Supplemental Instruction in Decoding Skills in Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Students in Early Elementary School: A Follow-up" in *The Journal of Special Education*, evaluating the effects of supplemental reading instruction in students grades K-3. The 256 students who were identified for participation were randomly assigned to either receive the supplemental instruction or not. The reading ability of all participants was evaluated using the DIBELS measurements prior to supplemental instruction, and after the supplemental instruction ended. The researchers conclude that "results support the utility of supplemental reading instruction for children in K and Grades 1, 2, and 3, and provides evidence of the effectiveness of Corrective Reading and Reading Mastery in improving the reading achievement of children at risk for reading difficulty. Hispanic and non-Hispanic children benefitted comparably from instruction, as measured by a significant effect on oral reading fluency, with an effect size of .40 and no interaction" (Gunn, Smolkowski, Biglan, & Black, 2002).

Check & Connect: Check & Connect is a research-based Response to Intervention developed by the University of Minnesota as a means of increasing student engagement, to improve academic performance and promote completion (Institute on Community Integration | University of Minnesota, 2013). Check & Connect is proven to increase the likelihood of academic success for at-risk students through improved engagement, lowering truancy and improving the likelihood of academic completion (Institute on Community Integration | University of Minnesota, 2013). The University of Texas at Austin and St. Louis University conducted a two-year experimental study evaluating the efficacy of an intensive reading intervention and dropout prevention intervention (modified implementation of Check & Connect) in 457 at-risk students in grade 9, from varying demographics. Students participating in the modified Check & Connect treatments (with and without reading intervention) reported higher levels of school engagement over time compared to students in the untreated comparison (Roberts, Vaughn, Fall, & Vaughn, 2013).

Afterschool Programs / 4H Curriculum: In the state of Missouri, studies have shown that 32% of children in grades K-12 are alone and unsupervised after school (AfterSchool Alliance, 2013). The Waynesville area has complex challenges posed by the high density of military affiliated families, reducing the level of family support available to the parents of at-risk students. Compounding this, is the low-income level of the rural community which limits the resources available to parents to enroll their children in activities to promote academic achievement, health and wellness, and other expanded

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learning opportunities that enhance students' school day learning.

4-H curriculum is used as the basis for activities offered to the students participating in the Club TIGER afterschool program. 4-H commissioned a longitudinal experiment, performed by researchers at Tufts University that involved over 7,000 participants from 44 states over seven years. Key findings from this study include:

4-H participants are 2.1 times more likely than non-participants to make contributions to their communities. These same youth are also 1.8 times more likely to have higher scores on measures of active and engaged citizenship.

4-H participants are 1.5 times as likely as youth to report high academic competence and 1.7 times as likely as youth to report high engagement in school. (Lerner, Lerner, & Colleagues, 2011)

There is substantial research to support the efficacy of afterschool programs to enhance the development of many positive outcomes for youth in a variety of areas including: improved school attendance and engagement in learning; improved test scoring and grades; great improvements in performance for students at-risk for failure; decreased instances of crime perpetrated by youth and directed toward youth during After School Program hours; reduced drug and alcohol instances; and increased support for working parents (reducing employee absences and improving working conditions) (National AfterSchool Alliance, 2013).

D. Member Training

ACM will attend high-quality, pre-service trainings which will provide a two-week introduction to the AmeriCorps program and serving within an educational setting. Experts from outside and within the Waynesville School District will be contracted to provide implementation instruction on research-based interventions including SRA, Check & Connect, RtI, CPI (Crisis Prevention Intervention), and student management strategies to ensure the ACM are prepared to utilize these strategies. Training specific to the AmeriCorps program will also occur intensively during orientation and be re-emphasized during biweekly meetings throughout the service year. AmeriCorps topics will include the history and purpose of AmeriCorps State and National, overview of CNCS, program guidelines, expectations of Members, OnCorps training, prohibited activities, and a detailed review of the Member contract and handbook. ACM will be provided ongoing follow-up training and will be assessed periodically on the adherence to program guidelines and prohibited activities through site observations and informal surveys.

ACM will receive in-service training throughout the service year during bi-weekly meetings and through on site training, focused on improving and enhancing specific strategies to ensure program

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and student success. Training will be provided by teachers, administrators, school staff and community counselors. Additionally, ACM will participate in weekly collaborative Professional Learning Community training sessions with classroom teachers. Training will include specific instruction in the delivery of the research-based instructional models that provide the basis of the Response to Intervention (RtI) system, including SRA Reading and Math, Check & Connect, teacher directed interventions, and afterschool program methodologies. The RtI programs are aligned with local and state academic content standards and serve as a vital component of the remediation program for at-risk youth.

Mentor teachers and administrators will be provided with AmeriCorps handbooks and program staff will review program guidelines, branding, and prohibited activities through annual review training. Mentor teachers and administrators will provide ongoing monitoring of ACM performance and will provide feedback, which will guide training delivery and ensure that instructional strategies are being delivered with fidelity. Mentors and administrators will also continuously monitor for prohibited activities and adherence to program guidelines. Any discrepancies will be immediately brought to the attention of the program director.

Information collected from mentor teachers, administrators, and site observations will be used to determine training needs during bi-monthly training sessions focused on methods for improving student learning and reviewing program guidelines. The district reading specialists, math specialists, counselors, and staff will provide high quality professional development focused on ACM tutoring needs. ACM will share best practices and lessons learned during bi-monthly training sessions, providing opportunities to build on both research-based training protocols and ACM success.

Volunteers serving in partnership with ACM will receive training on district policies, mentoring techniques, and an overview of the AmeriCorps program. ACM will assist in the training, placing, and oversight of recruited volunteers serving as mentors and/or tutors within the district. ACM will receive ongoing guidance on volunteer recruitment and management from district staff.

All professional development opportunities available to district staff members will be open to ACM. Celebrations of success will be a part of each training meeting. Team building and personal assessment exercises will be utilized to establish an esprit de corps among Members. Team-building activities will be included in pre-service training sessions and during bi-weekly meetings to create an environment of trust and open communication among the AmeriCorps team. Opportunities for reflection will be provided throughout training sessions and will be included in team-building activities.

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E. Member Supervision

Supervision and support of ACM will be multidimensional and coordinated with mentor teachers and building principals. The Director and Assistant Director will act as a liaison between administrative staff and ACM to provide support, supervision, and compliance monitoring. The Director and Assistant Director will be responsible for administration related oversight and will provide site supervisors with training regarding program specific procedures and policies. The Director and Assistant Director will maintain regular, open communication with site supervisors and ACM to ensure that ACM have a positive experience tutoring and mentoring students, and that student needs are met.

Building administrators will provide onsite supervision of ACM and will approve all timesheets, review student achievement data with ACM, and provide support in determining student eligibility, schedules, and delivery methods. Mentor teachers, selected by the building principal for their expertise and abilities to support ACM, will provide direction and guidance for ACM in the planning and implementation of instruction on a daily basis. Classroom teachers will also work closely with ACM to provide feedback, resource materials, and guidance in the implementation of effective instructional methods.

Program staff will recruit a diverse population of AmeriCorps Members reflective of the populations they will be serving. A specific focus will be placed on recruiting military veterans and family members, low-income individuals, and individuals residing in a rural area. Military veterans and family members will be recruited through participation in job fairs on the military installation and recruitment from military groups such as FRGs (Family Readiness Group) that serve family members and veterans. Program staff will work with local non-profits serving low-income individuals to advertise and recruit for the AmeriCorps program. Recruitment will also include advertising online and in newspapers throughout the rural communities served to increase awareness of opportunities available through AmeriCorps.

F. Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification

The AmeriCorps brand is well established within the community and AmeriCorps Members' reputation for "getting things done" is consistently communicated utilizing a comprehensive marketing strategy. The following components of the marketing strategy assure that ACM are consistently identified: ACM are required to wear shirts/sweaters, ID badges, and lanyards with the AmeriCorps logo during all service activities; window clings are displayed in building entrances at all service sites; AmeriCorps posters are displayed in all tutoring areas; multiple press releases are

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distributed throughout the community annually sharing ACM success stories; pride in service is promoted through multiple methods during bi-monthly training sessions including development of elevator speeches to share with community members, exploration of service impact, and sharing of success stories.

Organizational Capability

A. Organizational Background and Staffing

The AmeriCorps Program Director, Dr. Kim Hawk, serves as the primary contact for the program and Dr. Brian Henry, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction serves as the secondary contact for the program. The district has extensive experience with managing federal funding and has effectively managed the AmeriCorps program for six years. Additionally, the district manages federal funding for Federal Impact Aid, Title I, IA, ID, IIA, III, Department of Defense Education Activity funds, Army Youth Programs in Your Neighborhood, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, AmeriCorps VISTA and other federal sources. Financial management and oversight is provided by the Assistant Superintendent of Finance, Dr. Chris Berger. Waynesville AmeriCorps is integrated and coordinated by district staff with explicit support from the Superintendent and Board of Education, building principals, classroom teachers, afterschool program directors, and AmeriCorps Assistant Program Director and the AmeriCorps Program Director.

ACM are provided support from the AmeriCorps Program Director and the Assistant Director including: training, supervision, oversight, compliance monitoring, communication, and team building. The building principals provide on site support, training, and monitoring. Mentor teachers are assigned to each Member to provide daily support and direction. The Program Director receives support from the offices of the: Assistant Superintendent of Personnel in the form of recruitment and Member support; Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Service in the areas of program integration, monitoring and compliance; and Assistant Superintendent of Finance in areas related to finance, insurance, and Member benefits.

B. Compliance and Accountability

Compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulation will be closely monitored and supported. All program guidance and rules will be adhered to at the program, site, and member levels. The Missouri Community Service Commission (MCSC) provides extensive guidance, monitoring tools, and support to ensure compliance. This guidance will provide the basis for all internal and external compliance monitoring protocols. Biannual program reviews with building principals regarding AmeriCorps policies and regulations will be conducted, in addition to regular ongoing site visits by the Director and

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Assistant Director to assure site and member compliance. Internal self-evaluation by program leadership and site visits and reviews by both internal and external evaluators will provide additional levels of compliance regulation. Both external and internal evaluators will utilize file and program compliance checklists based on MCSC guidance to enforce consistent delivery of quality programming. Program administrators, site supervisors, and ACM will receive feedback from both internal and external evaluators regarding any instances of risk or noncompliance and immediate corrective actions will be initiated. Program administrators will work with State Program Officers to develop improvement plans if any risks are identified during program operations. Members and site supervisors training in compliance expectations will be intentional and ongoing and will include review of compliance requirements and prohibited activities at the program, site and member level.

C. Past Performance

During the previous three program years, 100% of performance measure targets were met or exceeded - the program has met or exceeded performance targets in all six years since inception. Student achievement, support of military family members, volunteer recruitment, and training requirements were consistently delivered, thus expanding the ability of the Waynesville School District to support student achievement resulting in gains in student academics as noted on state MAP (Missouri Assessment Program) testing in both English Language Arts and Mathematics. The high mobility rate of the district, resulting from the 73% military affiliation, contributes to an ongoing influx of new students who need support in achieving performance expectations.

During the last year of program operation the Missouri Community Service Commission (MCSC) provided a program risk rating of low. Areas of risk and compliance which resulted in corrective actions were as follows: 1. eGrants systems issues: Although ACM enrollment was initiated and documented on the 30th day, due to numerous documented eGrants systems issues, the eGrants system showed the date-stamp as 31 days for two ACM. The corrective action for this system issue was to initiate all enrollments no later than the 27th day in order to provide a buffer for any eGrants related enrollment concerns. 2. Member Retention Levels: Although member enrollment rates have met or exceeded 100% during all program years, an improvement plan was developed to address the concern of member retention levels of 85% for the previous program year. Military dependents and veterans who serve as ACM face unique challenges such as living long distances from extended family, frequent relocations, and unplanned moves due to spousal relocation orders. However, the Waynesville AmeriCorps program remains committed to recruiting and enrolling military dependents and veterans as ACM. This identified weakness is an ongoing challenge, however it is an area that the

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program has demonstrated ongoing improvement: retention levels increased from 78% in the 2011-2012 program year to 85% in the 2012-2013, and 97% (to date) in the 2013-14 program year. This resulted from modifications in the recruitment, in-service training, monitoring and ACM support processes.

Retention remains an area of improvement for the program. Serving a military community provides unique challenges for both students and Members. Nearly half of Members are veterans or military dependents who, due to the transient lifestyle, lack the traditional extended family support that in many cases may make the difference of individual Member retention. Member enrollment and retention levels have been positively impacted through the addition of program support staff and improvements in program policies and procedures. Missouri Community Service Commission staff members provided support and direction in achieving improvements in these areas, through the aforementioned modifications in the recruitment, in-service training, monitoring and support processes, resulting in a stronger Corps during the current program year. Providing additional support through the Assistant Director with site visits and strategically placing returning and/or experienced Members with new Members for more dynamic building level teams are additional modifications. A more effective orientation for Members was designed to ensure a quality Member experience that will promote a lifelong ethic of service and civic responsibility.

D. Continuous Improvement

Program advisory boards, made up of both internal and external stakeholders, provide methods for reviewing program progress and coordinating continuous improvement efforts. In addition to advisory board meetings, ACM, teachers, and administrator focus groups are utilized to support ongoing program revisions and improvements. The review of student achievement data is facilitated to support ACM, teacher, and administrator analysis of student progress. Both internal and external progress monitoring data is analyzed to support academic achievement, Member engagement, student support, and professional development needs. Weekly Professional Learning Community meetings focused on student achievement data are used to consistently provide feedback and support in ongoing improvement and implementation processes.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

A. Cost Effectiveness

The Waynesville AmeriCorps program is funded through school district state and local funding venues. Corporation funds in the amount of \$480,569 will support 66 ACM, 36.69 MSY at a cost of \$13,098/MSY, a decrease in cost per MSY from the current AmeriCorps grant. Members will support

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the highly transient, Pre K-12 military-affiliated student population through tutoring, mentoring and volunteer coordination across the district both during the school day and in the afterschool setting. The Waynesville R-VI School District Board of Education has committed \$479,263, 50% of the total project funds through in-kind and cash match to implement a robust and effective AmeriCorps program. The district will support the program by providing a full-time Director, Assistant Director, clerical and financial management support, mentor teachers and site administrators, office space, phone lines, background checks, computers, health insurance, travel costs, supplies and materials for tutoring, member gear, promotions, training, and retention activities.

The Board of Education is committed to establishing a highly effective volunteer service program and recognizes the value and contribution of AmeriCorps Members as an integral component in addressing local concerns and challenges that cannot be met by school staff alone. It is estimated that the district cost for "fully funding" a similar student support program without CNCS support would exceed \$1,100,000. The district values the positive student achievement outcomes of the AmeriCorps program and has demonstrated a commitment to supporting the program by increasing funding at a time when resources are being decreased across the district for other programs. The impact of the AmeriCorps program is evident in the community through the ongoing support provided by community members and agencies for program activities. ACM service and commitment are highly valued within both the school district and impacted communities.

B. Budget Adequacy

Budget projections of program operating costs, Member costs, administrative, and indirect costs are based on application guidelines and project performance in the previous six years. Increases have been made to the district in-kind and matched funds to provide a budget that is sufficient to support the program design and expansion from 33 to 66 Members. District matched funds in the amount of \$131,901 and in-kind support in the amount of \$347,362 will provide 50% of total project costs. The resources for cash and in-kind support will come from local district and state revenues. The budget is directly linked to the stated performance measure outputs and outcomes. Without funding of the program, the recruitment of tutors and mentors to intensely support over 2,000 at-risk students (70% or 1,400 of which are military affiliated) and the production of measurable gains in student performance will not be possible. The number of students served and the level of achievement has been consistently increasing over the past six years.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

A. Program & Theory of Change

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Waynesville AmeriCorps Members (ACM) meet community needs in the focus areas of veterans, military families and education by serving alongside PreK-12 teachers in the Waynesville School District to provide reading and math tutoring and mentoring to at-risk youth. ACM serving in the afterschool program provide academic assistance, health and wellness activities, and club sponsorship to K-12 students.

ACM will enhance the Response to Intervention (RtI) program utilized throughout the district by providing Tier II and Tier III interventions. RtI interventions include SRA reading and math interventions, teacher-directed interventions, and Check & Connect (C&C) mentoring. Intervention methods used are research-based programs with strong evidence supporting their efficacy. Interventions are provided in small group settings or one-on-one. ACM will continue the learning process from the school day by re-emphasizing academic and developmental assets through the delivery of academic assistance and leading health, wellness, and interest-based activities in the afterschool setting.

The theory of change for the AmeriCorps Program suggests that when students at risk for academic failure or disengagement are supported through evidence-based tutoring and mentoring models, they will increase mastery in literacy and/or math skills as evidenced by skills tests/summative assessments. These skills will in turn lead to improved academic performance and/or improved academic engagement.

The intensity, frequency and duration of the interventions provided during the school day vary based on student need and intervention delivery models. Tutoring and mentoring sessions range from 20-45 minutes, 1-5 times a week, throughout the entire school year or for a more focused period of time for skill specific deficit remediation. In the afterschool setting, students participate up to 2.5 hours per day 5 days per week for the duration of the school year, depending on family needs and circumstances. Past program performance along with national, well-designed studies validate the expectation that the chosen intervention methods will lead to increased academic success. Nationally-normed assessments combined with student participation data will provide a causal link between intervention methods and increased student achievement. Through the combination of school-day interventions and afterschool programs, 2000 students will receive services through AmeriCorps, at least 1400 of those students being military-affiliated. Students receiving services will demonstrate increased participation during the school day and afterschool program. Increased participation will amplify into improved assessment performance (with 700 military-affiliated students demonstrating improvements in reading and/or math assessments), fewer behavioral problems, improved

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attendance and students will eventually achieve and maintain grade-level performance expectations through graduation.

Further expanding the impact and capacity of the AmeriCorps program, Members will recruit, train and manage community volunteers to serve as tutors and mentors, to allow the program to meet the needs of more students. With the support of ACM, the program anticipates recruiting 1000 community volunteers and pairing 200 disadvantaged youth with mentors, allowing disadvantaged youth to form connections with caring adults, eventually leading to higher school engagement and achievement.

B. Evaluation

In consultation between the external evaluators and the Program Director, the following questions were identified to be addressed through the program evaluation:

Process Evaluation Questions:

- Are both ACM and community volunteers implementing the Program's tutoring and mentoring models with integrity? If not, why?
- Do the sites' institutional infrastructures support the services provided by ACM? If so, how? If not, why?
- What changes to service delivery are recommended?

Outcome Evaluation Questions:

- Have students in the Program improved their reading/math ability as anticipated after participation?
- What level of change was observed? In which subject areas? Which subgroups have demonstrated the most change?
- What ACM tutoring practices contributed to academic improvement in reading/math?
- How do the outcomes of students enrolled in the Program compare with similar non-participating students?
- What changes were seen in students' academics, behavior and attendance performance as a result of participation in mentoring programs?
- What other causal factors have an impact on the desired program outcomes?
- How many volunteers have been recruited to serve in the district and/or paired as a mentor with at-risk youth? How can we improve/enhance their experience?

Student academic, behavior and attendance data will be analyzed to determine which students are making appropriate growth and which are in need of more targeted interventions. In addition to the above data which is housed in Youth Enrollment System (YES), Volunteer2, and PowerSchool, data

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from interviews, surveys and observations will be aggregated and analyzed to provide input in answering research questions.

The following Measurable Program Outcomes will be the targets that determine if appropriate progress is made in answering the identified research questions:

- 1400 military connected students will receive CNCS-supported assistance through mentoring/tutoring services
- 700 military connected students will show gains in academic achievement as demonstrated by STAR Reading/Math or Scholastic Reading Inventory/Scholastic Math Inventory standardized assessments
- 2000 students will participate in school day and afterschool tutoring/mentoring programs
- 200 disadvantaged youth will be matched with mentors
- 1500 students will demonstrate gains in academic achievement as demonstrated by STAR Reading/Math or Scholastic Reading Inventory/Scholastic Math Inventory standardized assessments
- Pre-K students' scores on performance testing will increase on DIAL4 (Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning 4th Edition) and CPAA (Children's Progress Academic Assessment)
- 1000 volunteers will be recruited and managed to support the program activities
- 150 Pre-K students will receive CNCS-supported assistance through mentoring/tutoring services
- 120 Pre-K students will demonstrate gains in academic achievement as demonstrated by DIAL4 and CPAA standardized assessments

C. Data

Qualitative and quantitative data will be collected as part of the evaluation of efficacy of the AmeriCorps Program. Quantitative data will be collected using databases implemented at the district level and supported by district administrators and technology specialists. Databases include:

- Volunteer2 - tracks volunteer recruitment, demographics and service. A minimum of 1000 volunteers will be tracked.
- Youth Enrollment System(YES) - captures students' participation in tutoring and mentoring services provided by ACM and recruited volunteers and participation in afterschool academic assistance, clubs, and activities. A minimum of 2000 students will be tracked, with a minimum of 1400 of those being military-affiliated.
- PowerSchool - includes student demographics including grade level, grades, attendance and military affiliation for all district students.

Nationally-normed reading and/or math assessments will be used in conjunction with YES and Powerschool data to monitor students' progress with respect to participation in mentoring, tutoring

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and afterschool activities. Assessments will be conducted 2-4 times per year, with baselines established prior to services. Program staff will work with district administration to obtain demographics, attendance and performance data for participating students.

External evaluators and Program staff will collect quantitative data on an ongoing basis through observations of tutors/mentors; interviews of ACM and administrators; surveys of ACM, administrators and participating students; monitoring adherence to program guidelines, and mid-term and end of year evaluations of ACM.

D. Results

The interim and final evaluation findings will allow the Waynesville School District and AmeriCorps Waynesville Program to make more informed decisions toward continued improvement of the Program. Interim evaluations will guide the development of trainings held during during bi-weekly AmeriCorps meetings and will help refine the processes for selecting students for participation in the mentoring/tutoring programs. Program staff will work closely with the evaluator to design trainings that will strengthen Members' instructional strategies.

Final evaluation findings will shape future instructional service delivery by providing causal evidence of the most effective instructional strategies at each school site. Stakeholders, including the MCSC, district administrators, school board, and community partners will review results and work closely with program staff to review current practices and make adjustments to member assignments and interventions based on evaluation findings. Outcomes will be reviewed for relevancy and will support revision of goals to ensure continued growth and relevancy of the program. The program evaluation will answer the research questions and serve as a management and decision-making tool for devising appropriate action plans

Qualitative and quantitative evaluation data gathered through performance databases, assessments, interviews, surveys and observations will shape methods for promotion, recruitment, orientation, and trainings, volunteer recruitment, and outreach activities for the following year. Timelines and goals for ACM recruitment, training, and performance will be developed using feedback from Members and administrators.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

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Programmatic Clarification:

Potential Members must demonstrate that they have received a high school diploma or its equivalent by submitting a copy of their diploma or signing a declaration under penalty of law certifying that the Member has obtained a high school diploma or its equivalent as outlined in § 2522.200, paragraph (a). All recruitment materials used outline this requirement.

All Members must successfully complete pre- and in-service specialized training and meet the qualifications outlined in § 2522.940. Members are not required to possess previous experience in the education field; the Program will provide all necessary training needed to implement the research-based tutoring and mentoring intervention tools used by the Program.

Waynesville AmeriCorps Members are not considered employees of the Waynesville R-VI School District and, therefore, are not required to meet the paraprofessional qualifications under the No Child Left Behind Act as required in 34 CRF 200.58.

Start Date Clarification:

Waynesville AmeriCorps confirms the requested start date of 08/01/2014. Member enrollment period start date is 08/01/2014.

Performance Measure Clarification:

The Waynesville AmeriCorps Program has deleted the applicant determined Performance Measures OUTCM6136 and OUTCOM6124. The Program has not added the additional Performance Measure ED4A to track the number of disadvantaged youth/mentor matches. The Program will instead track the number of individuals mentored through quarterly demographic reporting through OnCorps.

Strategic Engagement Slots Clarification:

Approximately 5%-10% of slots will be targeted to recruiting Members with disabilities. Waynesville AmeriCorps will pursue a variety of avenues to recruit Members of the disability community, including advertising positions through organizations that assist disabled citizens with obtaining meaningful employment, such as Vocational Rehabilitative Services, Work Connections, Supporting All Lives Together (SALT), and the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) administered on Fort Leonard Wood Military Installation. Waynesville AmeriCorps will also actively recruit through job fairs on Fort Leonard Military Installation in order to reach the disabled veterans community.

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No-Cost MSY Clarification:

At this time, Waynesville AmeriCorps is not interested in additional no-cost slots.

Healthcare Clarification:

1. Waynesville AmeriCorps is proposing to use the Corps Network, administered through the Willis Group.
2. Waynesville AmeriCorps' healthcare provider for the beginning of the current service year was no longer able to offer coverage beginning 1/1/2014. Through online research and conversations with other AmeriCorps Programs in Missouri, it was determined that the Corps Network was the only provider offering coverage for AmeriCorps Programs in our area.
3. Unfortunately, the Corps Network does not currently offer coverage that meets the requirements for Minimum Essential Coverage. Therefore, the proposed budget is based upon current costs for coverage through the Corps Network.
4. The Corps Network anticipates finalizing a new policy that meets Minimum Essential Coverage by early summer. It is estimated that the new policy will cost between \$215-\$235 per Member, per month. This is an increase of \$44-\$64 per Member, per month. Based on an estimate of 33 Members electing coverage, this would require a budget increase of \$17,424-\$25,344.

Continuation Changes

N/A

Grant Characteristics