

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

The Eldon School District/PAVE AmeriCorps will have 25 AmeriCorps members who will provide academic interventions and school readiness support for at-risk students in Pre-Kindergarten, and second grade through High School to increase the chance for success in school and 5 members who will support healthy lifestyle activities designed to improve knowledge of nutrition and physical activity in Kindergarten through 8th grade students in the district's five campuses: Eldon South Elementary (grades Pre-K through 3), Eldon Upper Elementary (grades 4-6), Eldon Middle School (grades 7 and 8), Eldon High School (grades 9-12), and Mustang Academy (alternative high school) . At the end of the 1st program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for improved math and literacy scores for 2nd-12th graders, enhanced school readiness for Pre-Kindergartners, and increased knowledge of nutrition and physical activity for Kindergarten-8th graders. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 150 volunteers, that will be engaged in academic support activities and activities designed to meet student and family needs.

This program will focus on the CNCS focus areas of Education and Healthy Futures. The CNCS investment of \$390,000 will be matched by \$191,499 of community leveraged resources; as a fixed amount grant we are not required to match.

## Rationale and Approach/Program Design

### a. Problem/Need

Eldon School District serves almost 2000 students in a rural area of central Missouri. The District has struggled for years with increasing levels of poverty and with low levels of academic achievement, low graduation and high dropout rates. Families and students in this district suffer from limited access to resources to support their needs and improve their situations. For the past eight years, PAVE AmeriCorps has been a significant part of a focused and research-based plan to address student need.

While gains have been made in key areas, the economic factors affecting our community make it vital that we continue and expand support of at-risk students. This small community has lost over 95 businesses since 2008, according to the Eldon Chamber of Commerce. The 2009 closing of the area's largest employer, FASCO, directly affected over 400 employees and their families. Even though the unemployment rate in Miller County is only 6.3%, the estimated per capita income is \$19,133. This

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indicates that even though most of the population is employed, their wages are not adequate. The number of students eligible for Free/Reduced lunch has increased 23% since our program started in 2006; currently 64% of students are eligible. Research shows that children on the free and reduced lunch program "are more likely to have lower test scores, more learning disabilities, greater special education needs and a higher risk of dropping out than middle- or upper-class children" (2011 KIDS COUNT Data Book). Based on data from the Missouri Department of Economic Development's Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC), 42.2% of Eldon's population age 18 and over did not graduate from high school. KIDS COUNT also shows "youth who leave high school without receiving a diploma are more likely to be unemployed, receive public assistance, and be incarcerated as adults. In addition, high school dropouts are more likely to be single parents and to have children who also do not complete high school." The high poverty and low level of academic achievement are problems which impact generation after generation of students in our schools. By providing support to help students succeed in school, PAVE AmeriCorps strives to address this one underlying cause of generational poverty.

Since the first year of our program in 2006-07, Eldon School District has seen an upward trend in the Missouri Assessment Program scores for our students. We believe this is an indicator that our program has made a significant impact on the students in the district. However, while scores have increased over time, they still fall short of average scores in Missouri and do not meet Proficiency Targets (see data below). Students in our district need the individualized support provided by our program to continue to make targeted academic gains.

### Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) Scores

Communication Arts.....	2007.....	2011
State Proficiency Target....	42.9.....	75.5
State Average.....	44.4.....	54.6
Eldon School District .....	42.4.....	49.8

Mathematics.....	2007.....	2011
State Proficiency Target.....	35.8.....	72.5
State Average.....	44.9.....	54.2

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Eldon School District .....35.4.....52.6

Due to the academic demands on students and schools, Eldon School District has been forced to limit the time available for organized physical activity during the school day increasing the likelihood of childhood obesity. The Missouri Foundation for Health (MFH) has chosen the Eldon School District as a pilot site for its new rural wellness initiative focused on reducing childhood obesity. Combating childhood obesity is an issue faced in our nation and in our community. A recent study released by the Centers of Disease Control (2013) stated that Missouri's low-income preschool obesity level was at 12.9% in 2011; in Miller County it was 13.8%. The study states that "children who are overweight or obese as preschoolers are 5 times as likely as normal-weight children to be overweight or obese as adults." Compounding the higher rate of childhood obesity, Missouri youth consistently fall below the national average for physical activity. Columbia/Boone County Department of Public Health and Human Services reported in 2013 that 51.7% of Missouri youth are physically active at least 60 minutes a day, less than 5 days a week, compared to 63% of youth across the nation. PAVE AmeriCorps will partner with the new Student Wellness Coordinator to add an additional program focus to improve attitudes and knowledge about nutrition and increased physical activity leading to a reduction in overall Body Mass Index (BMI) in the student population. BMI is a measurement of body fat used to determine level of obesity. A comprehensive approach to reduce BMI has been designed which includes providing increased opportunities for physical activity, nutrition education, and family/community engagement.

b. AmeriCorps Members as Highly Effective Means to Solve Community Problems and Measurable Community Impact

Theory of Change and Logic Model

ACMs will be placed throughout the Eldon School District to meet student education and health goals. ACMs who serve as tutors will be tasked with accomplishing one of three education goals: improving school readiness, improving academic performance, or increasing student academic engagement. Tutors will also accomplish a complementary goal of Student Contact Intervention designed to catch students before they fail or fall behind by providing short-term, focused, academic interventions based

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on identified need or teacher referral. ACMs who serve as wellness coaches will be tasked with providing or supporting interventions to improve attitudes and knowledge about nutrition and increased physical activity. All interventions will take place during the regular school day, and/or during the before and after school programs.

Three ACMs will intensively tutor identified at-risk preschool students in literacy, math, and/or social skills up to five times per week during the school year to prepare students for Kindergarten and increase their likelihood of success later in education. ACMs will provide one-on-one or small group tutoring in sessions ranging from fifteen to fifty minutes, depending on scheduling. Students will be considered to have completed the Program if they receive at least a minimum of 3 hours of tutoring a week for at least 4 months of the school year, or a minimum of 48 hours over the course of the year, or until the goal of the program has been achieved and students demonstrate readiness for Kindergarten based on the School Readiness Checklist.

Fourteen ACMs serving with identified at-risk second through eighth grade students will tutor in literacy and/or math up to five times per week during the school year, providing one-on-one or small group tutoring in sessions ranging from fifteen to sixty minutes, depending on scheduling. Students will be referred into the Program based on school-administered, standardized assessments to assure accurate, consistent, and unbiased results. Students will be considered to have completed the Program if they receive at least a minimum of 2 hours of tutoring a week for at least 4 months of the school year, or a minimum of 32 hours over the course of the year, or until the goal of the program has been achieved and students have raised their literacy and/or math score by  $\frac{1}{2}$  grade level.

Eight ACMs will intensively tutor identified at-risk ninth through twelfth grade students up to five times per week during the school year with the goal of improving student engagement and/or attitudes. ACMs will provide one-on-one or small group tutoring in sessions ranging from fifteen to sixty minutes, depending on scheduling. Students will be referred into the Program based on a student engagement survey. Students will be considered to have completed the Program if they receive at least a minimum of 2 hours of tutoring a week for at least 4 months of the school year, or a minimum of 32 hours over the course of the year, or until the goal of the program has been achieved and students demonstrate a substantial improvement in school behaviors and/or attitudes without any other elements worsening.

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In addition to their regular tutoring duties, ACMs serving as tutors will also provide one-on-one or small group student contact interventions based on identified, immediate, and academic need. Intervention will take place during class, as a pull-out activity, or during designated intervention times. Student Contact Intervention will be provided upon referral for struggling students who may or may not meet at-risk criteria as outlined in other performance measures. This intervention is specifically aligned with Eldon R-1 School District procedures to provide academic intervention before failure takes place.

Five ACMs will provide or support organized physical and/or wellness activities for Kindergarten through eighth grade students with a goal of improving attitudes and knowledge about nutrition and increased physical activity, ultimately leading to reduction of overall BMI. Activities will take place during class as "brain breaks," during lunch, recess and physical education classes, and/or during before and after school programming. Specific programming will be developed by the Eldon School District's Student Wellness Coordinator, funded by Missouri Foundation for Health.

The Eldon School District greatly values the PAVE AmeriCorps Program and the service it provides to the students of the district. The Program has been successfully administered for eight years and has become an integral part of the data-focused education models such as Professional Learning Communities, High Schools That Work and Middle Schools That Work, that have been implemented in the district to support effective learning. PAVE AmeriCorps has continuously served far more students than anticipated who make greater gains than expected, consistently exceeding performance measurements. We have also reported upward trends in our district's state test scores which show improvement not only for the students officially enrolled in the Program, but the district as a whole. This why we are confident the above-stated activities will lead to both the early and long-term changes we want to see as a district.

### **Evidence-Based**

Strong research has consistently shown that well-designed tutoring programs that use volunteers and other nonprofessionals as tutors can be effective in improving children's academic skills (U. S. Department of Education). Students with below-average skills who are tutored by volunteers show

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significant educational gains when compared with similar students who do not receive tutoring from a high-quality tutoring program. Methods are tailored to student needs and the pace of learning is easily adjusted based upon student progress. Flexible scheduling and availability of ACMs means tutoring can take place during regular class time, and/or before or after school. Studies documented in America Reads Challenge Resource Kit: Evidence That Tutoring Works show that tutoring ranging from ten to sixty minutes in length is most effective. Session lengths for our program depend upon identified needs, teacher recommendation, and schedule; they will generally range from 20-60 minutes which follow the recommendations from available studies.

Program design adapts as new studies and information become available. We follow advice and promote techniques from highly-qualified trainers, who are recognized professionals in their field, to provide both our tutors and their tutees with the best tools to advance learning.

Program impact is demonstrated through reported quantitative and qualitative performance data which indicates that students improve academically when they participate in this program. Not only do we as a Program consistently exceed performance measures, but as a district we have reported upward trends in state test scores and graduation rates.

Strong evidence that our Program works can also be seen in a comparison of outcomes between groups receiving interventions and a match comparison group that has not received the intervention. Incoming fourth graders had not received any interventions from our program because no AmeriCorps support was provided in Kindergarten-third grade due to prioritization of member slots elsewhere by the district. At the beginning of the 2013-14 school year, 51.4% of incoming fourth grade students tested as reading below grade level. Current fifth and sixth graders did receive academic interventions provided by PAVE AmeriCorps prior to the 2013-14 school year. At the beginning of the 2013-14 school year, only 35.3% of fifth and 28.2% of sixth grade students tested as reading below grade level. The lower percentage of students in 6th grade also suggests that providing focused interventions over time may improve student achievement from year to year. We believe this data presents strong evidence that the interventions provided through our program help students improve academically.

Our district has a high percentage of students receiving Free/Reduced Lunch. That percentage has

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steadily increased over time. This population represents approximately 75% of the students served by PAVE AmeriCorps. While our overall student population scores below the state average, our Free/Reduced Lunch population has consistently scored above state Free/Reduced averages since the inception of our program in 2006-07. Based on academic achievement data for Free/Reduced Lunch students, we feel our support makes a tremendous impact on students in poverty.

### Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) Scores -- Free/Reduced Lunch

Communication Arts.....	2005.....	2011
State F/R Average.....	18.9.....	40.5
Eldon School District F/R.....	19.1.....	42.7

Mathematics.....	2005.....	2011
State F/R Average.....	15.8.....	40.6
Eldon School District F/R.....	13.4.....	44.8

### c. Member Training

At the beginning of their service, ACMs receive a thorough 2-week orientation to AmeriCorps, the school and community, the specific services they will be providing, and to prohibited service activities. Training topics include but are not limited to:

\*Program Orientation--overview of AmeriCorps, expectations, program, prohibited service activities, record keeping, and confidentiality.

\*Prohibited Service Activities--detailed information is provided and ACMs sign a Member Contract signifying their intent to abide by the prohibitions. Additionally, prohibited activities are discussed during evaluations and at bi-weekly Corps meetings as needed. Site Supervisors receive instruction on prohibited activities. Site Supervisors have daily contact with ACMs and help ensure that Members and volunteers are adhering to the rules regarding prohibited activities. Program staff also perform regular site visits to ensure compliance.

\*Tutoring Strategy Training--instruction on tutoring methodology and strategies to engage at-risk learners is provided by highly qualified trainers.

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\*Curriculum Training--instruction on current reading, communication arts, and math methodology is provided by certificated Eldon School District staff.

\*Community Orientation--community partners and agencies provide an overview of local, county and state government, business and industry infrastructure, health and human resources, civic organizations, and community history.

\*Poverty Simulation--reflects the high percentage of poverty in our community and its impact on student achievement.

\*Team building--designed to establish an esprit de corps among ACMs.

\*Personal Assessment--ACMs gain insight into their personality styles and learn how to work cooperatively with people who are both alike and different from themselves.

Training continues throughout the school year, and focuses on the research-based programs utilized in the Eldon School District which address Common Core Standards.

### d. Member Supervision

The Director directly supervises all ACMs and acts as a liaison between campus staff and Members. Site Supervisors are specifically selected, assigned, and trained to supervise and provide direction to ACMs at their campus in the absence of the Director. All Site Supervisors communicate at least bi-weekly with program office staff and immediately if any issues arise. Supervisors also have daily contact with Members, ensuring opportunities for adequate support and guidance. The Director regularly meets with Site Supervisors and/or Members to address questions or concerns and to give and receive feedback. This creates a support network through the program as well as through the school. This carefully considered Member supervision plan has been very successful for the first eight years of the program and we believe it will continue to be successful as the program moves forward.

### e. Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification

Participants in the PAVE AmeriCorps Program will know they are AmeriCorps Members because of the intensive training and information that is provided to them from the moment they enter service. During orientation, Members prepare and present their own individual 'elevator speech' which they can use when discussing their service. Members effectively engage in the community, interface with VISTAs within our own program as well as Members from other national service programs, and

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participate in numerous opportunities, both in and out of the school district, to demonstrate the impact of service. AmeriCorps gear is provided for ACMs to wear at all times when they are serving, whether in school or in the community. Daily supervision at their sites and by program staff assures that they are identified as AmeriCorps Members at all times during their service. Bi-weekly Corps meetings and monthly Success Stories help our Members reflect on and share specific events or situations that demonstrate the impact of their service. These reflections ensure that when Members are invited to make community presentations about their service, the PAVE AmeriCorps Program, national service, volunteer recruitment, or to showcase successful programming, that they are able to do so with confidence, intelligence, and insight.

### **Organizational Capability**

#### **a. Organizational Background and Staffing**

The Eldon School District has the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan and successfully implement PAVE AmeriCorps. The Program Director has been with the district since before the program began and was responsible for initial program design, planning, and implementation. She continues to lead the program and has eight years experience managing AmeriCorps grants and five years experience managing VISTA grants. The Program Director is responsible for overall program management: grant administration and oversight; Member recruitment, training and oversight; partner and site management; volunteer programming, and community relations. The program is staffed by two additional full-time positions. The Administrative Assistant, with the program for over three years, is tasked with all financial functions and works closely with the School District Business Services office. The Program Supervisor is in her fourth year with the program, having served two years as an AmeriCorps Member and one year as a VISTA prior to becoming Supervisor this year. The Supervisor provides Member and partner support, backs up financial functions, and coordinates all grant reporting. The program receives fiscal and human resources support from the Eldon School District Business Services Office which has three dedicated full-time employees. Additionally, the school district provides oversight at each campus through full-time administrators who communicate monthly with the Program Director and dedicated Site Supervisors who are trained, interact with Members daily, and communicate at least bi-weekly with the program.

To ensure the success and sustainability of this vital program, the Eldon School District provides

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financial and personnel support. The program has been managed successfully as evidenced by meeting or exceeding all performance measures for all program years; high levels of enrollment and retention of Members; and positive evaluations, compliance monitoring/audits, and site visits. The Eldon School District has experience successfully administering the following federal funding programs: Medicaid, Perkins, Perkins Post-Secondary, Individuals w/ Disabilities Act (IDEA), Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), School Lunch and Breakfast Program, After-School Snack Program, Title I, 21st Century Learning Grant, Title IIA, DHSS Dinner Program, DHSS Summer Food Program, Pell Grants, and Title VI B.

Program staff takes advantage of every training opportunity presented by Missouri Community Service Commission (MCSC) and CNCS made available to us. The Program Director attends annual Director Training and all program staff attends Financial Management training each year. The Director has attended 5 of 8 National Conventions to stay abreast of changes and updates to grants and programs. Technical assistance or other support has been accessed as needed through Project Star, MCSC and CNCS personnel.

### b. Compliance and Accountability

Eldon School District and PAVE AmeriCorps set high expectations for compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations, especially prohibited activities. We understand that to maintain strong, sustainable programming, we must first focus on gaining a complete understanding of grant requirements, rules and regulations and then establish policies and procedures to ensure that we meet the requirements. Program staff participate in state-wide Program Director training and regularly attend National conferences to update our knowledge of regulations and prohibited activities. Members are trained on prohibited activities and regulations during the first two weeks of their service. Specific information is provided in the Member Contract, which is reviewed and signed before service begins, and in the PAVE AmeriCorps Member Handbook. AmeriCorps Regulations and prohibited activities are reviewed frequently throughout the year at bi-weekly Corps meetings. School administrators and Site Supervisors receive training when they are initially hired or assigned; updates are provided again at the beginning of each school year. Daily oversight ensures that regulations and prohibited service activities are in compliance at the grantee and service site locations.

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To prevent and detect compliance issues, both scheduled and unscheduled site visits are made by Program Staff. Members, site supervisors and the site are observed and interviews are conducted. If any instances of risk or noncompliance are identified, the situation is addressed immediately with the involved party and communication is shared with site and program staff. A plan of action is drawn up with specific followup dates. If necessary, the disciplinary procedure identified in the Member Contract is followed. To prevent and detect compliance issues in the program, our statewide agency - the Missouri Community Service Commission-performs annual site visits and audits. Additionally, they review documentation monthly and survey Members annually to determine if the program is in compliance with established AmeriCorps regulations. Any identified issues are submitted to the program in writing, with a deadline for compliance. We have a strong record of success with clean audit reports and have promptly addressed any issues that have been brought to our attention.

### c. Past Performance For Current Grantees and Former Grantees Only

All Performance Measure targets have been met during the last three years of program operation. In fact, our program has met or exceeded Performance Measures throughout the history of our program. We have been successful in improving student academic achievement.

#### 2012-2013 Performance Measure Summary:

Tutoring Output: 17 AmeriCorps Members provided academic interventions for 504 students

Intermediate Outcome: 367of students showed an increase in their Student Behavior Assessments.

Target was 180 students. Goal was exceeded by 104%.

End Outcome: 458 positive outcomes were reported based on 620 data points (504 students with 116 students receiving support in two core subject areas). Target was 195; goal exceeded.

#### 2011-2012 Performance Measure Summary

Tutoring Output Target = 200 students tutored - ACTUAL = 436 students tutored Goal exceeded by 218%

Intermediate measure = 60% of students will show gains in improved attitudes toward school -

ACTUAL = 65% of students show gains Goal exceeded by 8%

End measure = 65% of students will show measurable gains in communication arts/math based on district benchmarks - ACTUAL = 69% Goal exceeded by 6%

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2010-2011 Performance Measure Summary

NUMBER OF STUDENTS TUTORED

Goal: 200     Actual: 427

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO ACHIEVED MEASURABLE GAINS

Goal: 65%     Actual: 78%

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH IMPROVED ATTITUDES/BEHAVIOR

Goal: 60%     Actual: 70%

During the last full year of program operation, one area of weakness regarding expense reporting was identified and addressed. Due to the timing of reports available from the Eldon School District Business Service Office, we had been late submitting Periodic Expense Reports, (PERs), to the Missouri Community Service Commission for reimbursement and did not submit Aggregate Financial Reports on time. After identifying the problem and working with our state Program Officer and the Business Services Manager, we have had all reports submitted on time.

Enrollment -- 100% of Member slots allocated were enrolled in the last full year of program operation. In fact, PAVE AmeriCorps historically has successfully enrolled 100% of Member slots.

Retention -- 100% retention rate for the last full year of program operation. Our retention rates have continually increased over the years as we have deliberately implemented specific plans to retain Members.

We are proud of our excellent enrollment rates and high retention rates. We believe this shows that our program is strong and we effectively recruit and engage highly qualified applicants and adequately prepare them for national service.

d. Continuous Improvement

As part of the data-driven Professional Learning Community model, Eldon School District and PAVE

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AmeriCorps continually monitor data from both internal and external stakeholders and use it to inform decisions to improve and/or modify programming. Data collected ranges from specific student achievement or student survey results (gathered from school or state assessment reports, student progress reports, or internal reports from ACMs), to informal shared narratives between stakeholders. Data and information are collected from classroom, school, or other external sources. The data is aggregated in both a hard copy and digital copy form. External reports are prepared for grantors and the Board of Education as required or requested. Internal reports are prepared to monitor and assess progress on a Program or individual ACM level at least twice annually.

Open dialogue and planning help create effective program models to meet changing community needs. ACMs serve at-risk student populations every day. In addition to data collection, school staff and administration solicit feedback from ACMs on the progress and effectiveness of new intervention techniques and strategies. To ensure effectiveness, program and school staff regularly discuss changes to better meet the needs of the students they serve.

### **Budget/Cost Effectiveness**

#### a. Cost Effectiveness

The fixed amount grant allows us to operate our program at a lower cost per MSY, making this program very cost effective for CNCS and the District. We also plan to greatly expand our program while maintaining a lower cost per MSY. We show a total program budget of \$581,499 to sustain an AmeriCorps Program with 25 tutors and 5 Wellness Coaches to address the low academic achievement and low nutrition and physical activity knowledge, respectively. Non-CNCS resources totaling \$191,499, cash and in-kind, come from the Eldon School District; the Missouri Foundation for Health Grant will cover the operating costs of the Wellness Program.

The cost to provide alternative programming is extremely prohibitive to the district and to the students we serve. If the district were to attempt to replicate AmeriCorps support provided to at-risk students by hiring qualified personnel, the district outlay would exceed \$1,000,000. Our district cannot afford to replace our Members with staff. Due to the high rate of poverty in our community, there is absolutely no way families in our district could provide professional tutoring support on their own. Tutoring companies charge enrollment fees ranging from \$149-199 and cost per session is around \$50. Additionally, these tutoring programs would not provide the daily support students receive from

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PAVE AmeriCorps.

The need in our community is great and we firmly believe that our program is the most cost effective way to reach students on a daily basis and help them succeed. We are dedicated to this mission and plan to do it at a lower cost per MSY than we have done in years past to provide the district, community, and CNCS the most cost-effective option available.

### b. Budget Adequacy

The total amount budgeted to operate the program is \$581,499. This includes the CNCS fixed amount of \$390,000, calculated at fixed amount grant levels of \$13,000 allowed per MSY times 30 full-time Members. Non-CNCS resource commitments total \$191,499 in cash and in-kind funding from the Eldon School District. Few corporate or philanthropic resources are available in this rural community therefore we must rely heavily on these funders to provide necessary programming.

Budget projections are linked to stated performance measure outputs and outcomes, and are based on application guidelines and effective program design. The budget provides for full-time AmeriCorps program costs such as living allowances, health care and criminal history checks. At this time, the cash and in-kind commitment from Eldon School District is the only identified source of funds. The Eldon Board of Education is committed to the continuance of this Program as a result of the positive impact on students demonstrated in the first eight years of the Program.

With the assistance of CNCS funding, we expect to continue to see positive results and improvements in the academic and health outcomes of at-risk students in our school district. The grant from the Missouri Foundation for Health will cover the operating costs of the Wellness Program, with the exception of the AmeriCorps Members, and therefore funding for that program is not reflected in this budget. Without Corporation funding, it would be impossible for the District to fund 30 staff dedicated to intensively tutoring students to recognize measurable academic gains, and supporting student wellness activities resulting in a reduction in overall BMI.

### Evaluation Summary or Plan

PAVE AmeriCorps provides academic interventions designed to increase at-risk student school readiness, improve academic performance of at-risk students, and increase academic engagement of

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at-risk students. Members will also provide or support organized physical and/or wellness activities designed to improve attitudes and knowledge about nutrition and increased physical activity.

Outcomes anticipated:

School Readiness Outcome-- 48 of 60 identified at-risk Preschoolers will be educationally and/or socially ready to enter Kindergarten

Tutoring Outcome (2nd-8th grade)- 182 of 280 identified at-risk 2nd-8th grade students will show a half grade level increase in reading and/or math levels

School Engagement Outcome (High School) -- 104 of 160 identified at-risk 9th-12th grade students will show increased positive engagement and positive attitudes toward school

Wellness Outcome (Kindergarten-8th grade) -- Total student population of 1000 will participate and 500 will show improved attitudes and knowledge about nutrition and increased physical activity

The Program has been successfully administered for eight years and has become an integral part of the data-focused education models such as Professional Learning Communities, High Schools That Work and Middle Schools That Work, that have been implemented in the district to support effective learning. PAVE AmeriCorps has continuously served far more students than anticipated who make greater gains than expected, consistently exceeding performance measurements. We have also reported upward trends in our district's state tests which show improvement not only for the students officially enrolled in the Program, but the district as a whole.

PAVE AmeriCorps is evaluated externally based on its ability to meet goals and objectives approved in grant applications. The evaluation focuses on data comparison analysis of the pre- and post-intervention data. Research questions utilized include but are not limited to:

Did students make prescribed gains/Did academic scores increase by the prescribed amount

Was the planned dosage and duration of interventions provided

Did students successfully complete program based on time and/or achievement standards

Did the program achieve target number of beneficiaries

Quantitative data is collected directly from the sites including student demographics and academic assessment scores for the academic program, and student surveys to determine attitudes and knowledge about nutrition and physical activity for the wellness program. Qualitative data about

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student attitudes and behaviors is collected from the AmeriCorps Members and teachers. The population for the academic program is students who have been identified to have an academic need. The population for the wellness program is all students in Kindergarten through 8th grade. Academic and wellness data is collected before and after interventions and comparative analysis is used to determine if specified gains are achieved. The school district maintains student data on its School Information System; PAVE AmeriCorps maintains a separate system to track data specific to our program.

The Program is evaluated annually by an external evaluator who reviews program performance outcomes, fiscal monitoring, data collection and reporting monitoring, and prohibited service activities. Evaluation results are used to determine how successful the program is at addressing identified needs. Additionally, results are used to help plan for future program years and activities. The Evaluation is shared with partners and sites, and is provided to our grantor as requested. Additionally, the program receives an annual formal site visit by Missouri Community Service Commission.

### Amendment Justification

N/A

### Clarification Summary

i. Your application requests an increased cost per MSY from 2013. In the Clarification Summary field, A) Please provide an explanation and justification for the increased cost. B) Please also explain why these costs must be covered with CNCS funds as opposed to "grantee match".

A)Cost per MSY increased from 2013 in part due to the expansion of programming. We are growing our program from 17 to 30 Members and will have a twelve month program versus the eleven month program we previously had. We are also planning to add a wellness component to our programming. More Members, new programming and an extended term of service for Members all increase hard costs such as Member living allowance and fringe, as well as support, training and oversight costs. Additionally, the cost per MSY has increased from 2013 due to anticipated higher health care costs associated with providing MEC coverage.

B)The increased cost of supporting additional Members and programming will be shared by both

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CNCS and the grantee, through increased overall match. The School District has also reached out to additional partners, including the Missouri Foundation for Health, which will help support some of the additional costs associated with expanding our programming to add the wellness component.

ii. Based on a review of the cost effectiveness section in your application we feel your program did not make a compelling case for the requested cost per member service year (MSY). C) Please consider decreasing your cost per MSY by revising your CNCS share of the program budget or D) explain why your program is cost effective in terms other than what exists in the application.

D)Our program is cost effective due to the fact that we are the only tutoring program in our area and surrounding communities. Our school district is located in a very rural area, with limited resources and high rates of poverty. The administrative cost to recruit, train, engage, and retain Members is significant given our location and resources available. We also make the most use of our AmeriCorps program, by supporting a high percentage of our student population and by providing tutoring and wellness programming starting before school at 6:45am until 6pm at night. We have previously requested a waiver of match from the Missouri Community Service Commission due to the limited funding available in our community.

iii. Please describe a plan for ensuring that communities are aware that members are serving with AmeriCorps.

All AmeriCorps Members are required to wear AmeriCorps gear, provided by the program, whenever they serve. All sites are clearly signed with 'AmeriCorps Serving Here' logos. All Members are required to make community presentations to increase awareness and recruit volunteers. Our AmeriCorps Members participate in at least one parade each year, where we march behind our AmeriCorps banner, wearing our gear and passing out AmeriCorps literature.

iv. Please describe who the site supervisors are and their experience that makes them qualified to supervise members as tutors.

Our site supervisors are certificated teachers who have the experience and expertise to serve as qualified mentors and supervisors to tutors. The site supervisors are carefully selected by campus

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administration in conjunction with PAVE AmeriCorps staff. The site supervisors are generally seasoned teachers who have worked with AmeriCorps Members in the past and understand the program. All site supervisors receive a personal orientation to the program and formally sign a Site Supervisor/Mentor Teacher Agreement to abide by the program rules and regulations.

v. Grant Start Date and Member Enrollment Period: While we will prioritize early submitted start dates in award processing, the earliest possible start date we can consider is 06/01/2014. It is not permitted for an applicant to re-submit with an earlier start date than previously submitted. Please review your desired grant award start date and member enrollment period start date in the Applicant Info section of your application. Please make any corrections necessary. In the Clarification narrative field, please enter a statement confirming the desired grant award start and member enrollment period start.

The desired grant award start date is August 1, 2014 and the desired Member enrollment period start date is August 4, 2014.

i. Please clarify whether the performance measurement targets are ambitious.

Our performance measurement targets are ambitious given the total school population we support and the ability of AmeriCorps Members to effectively provide meaningful academic and wellness interventions. We have carefully determined how many students can be served based on research based program models for effective tutoring. We anticipate Members providing support to approximately twenty students each, totaling 520 enrolled students in preschool through twelfth grade. This is effectively over one-quarter of the entire anticipated student population in the district for the 2014-15 school year. This is both a higher caseload expectation for prospective Members and a much higher total of district students being reached by the Program than previous years.

ii. ED2: Please explain how completed is defined.

Completion is defined by students enrolled in the Program attaining a pre-determined time standard or by reaching a certain level of academic or engagement gain. The time requirement of 2 hours a week for at least 4 months or the equivalent of 32 hours over the course of the year was set because of

## Narratives

our district's high number of transient students. These students tend to leave and return, causing a break in services. However, those students still benefit greatly from being in the Program. We feel that providing support to a student for two hours a week for 4 months (or about half of the school year) would be a long enough amount of time to see some kind of academic or engagement gain. Based on our long-standing familiarity with the district students, we know that some students flourish with just a little support and may make expected academic or engagement gains before the time standard is met. For this reason, we added the caveat that meeting academic or engagement gain would count as completion without the time standard being met.

iii. ED5: Please confirm that 100% of all students completing the program will have improved academic performance.

After receiving input from the Missouri Community Service Commission, we have determined that some students may reach the time standard for completion but may not make the anticipated academic gain. To adjust for this, we have raised the expected number of students expected to complete the program but left the anticipated level of academic gain the same.

iv. ED27: Please confirm that 100% of all students completing the program will have improved academic performance.

After receiving input from the Missouri Community Service Commission, we have determined that some students may reach the time standard for completion but may not make the anticipated academic gain. To adjust for this, we have raised the expected number of students expected to complete the program but left the anticipated level of academic gain the same.

v. Please remove the applicant determined performance measure.

REMOVED

e. Strategic Engagement Slots Clarification:

i. What percentage of your slots will be targeted to recruiting members with disabilities? What is your program's plan, if any, for outreach and recruitment of members of the disability community?

## Narratives

We do not have specific slot targets for members with disabilities. All of our outreach and recruitment is designed to be inclusive and encourage applicants both with and without disabilities. We have benefitted greatly from a partnership through the Missouri Community Service Commission that provided access to a disability inclusion specialist who reviewed our recruitment procedures and our job descriptions for tutors to ensure that we are an inclusive program.

ii. In order to increase the number of individuals with disabilities serving as AmeriCorps members, CNCS is offering applicants the opportunity to request additional MSYs to be filled by AmeriCorps members with disabilities. The additional MSYs would be funded at the clarification cost per MSY level. Applicants must describe their intent to recruit, engage and retain additional members with disabilities and provide a detailed outreach plan for how these members will be recruited and supported (e.g. established recruitment partners or strategies.) In addition, programs receiving these additional member positions will be required to report specific details on the success of the recruitment, supervision and retention of AmeriCorps members with disabilities in semi-annual progress reports. If you would like to request additional MSYs to be filled by AmeriCorps members with disabilities, please describe your intent as requested above. Also indicate how many MSYs your program would like to request, the number of slots by slot type, and where the additional members will serve. Add these additional MSYs to your budget.

We are not requesting additional MSYs at this time.

f. No-Cost MSY Clarification:

Applicants may request No-Cost MSYs. These additional no-cost MSYs are national service positions in which no grant funds will be awarded. In other words, grantees could receive additional AmeriCorps positions but no additional grant funds. Programs will be responsible for using their own or other resources to pay program costs, member support costs and other operating expenses. Keep in mind that full-time AmeriCorps program costs include expenditures for the AmeriCorps living allowance, health care and criminal history checks. Programs are not required to pay living allowances or cover health care for less-than-full-time members.

We are not requesting No-Cost MSYs at this time.

## Narratives

If you would like to request No-Cost MSYs, please edit your budget as appropriate (for example you may need to revise line items for member gear or criminal history checks). Please ensure your performance measures align with these additional MSYs. Lastly, you must include a response to each item below in the Clarification narrative field:

1. The number and type of slots requested. Please confirm that for the MSYs requested, the additional members will only engage in activities aligned with the proposed member activities outlined in the application narrative.
2. A description of resources that will be provided to adequately support the additional members and how they are sufficient to; support the member support costs, management, oversight, program operations, and the program activities.
3. Source(s) of non-CNCS funds. Provide a brief description of the amount, classification (cash or in-kind), source(s) (State/Local, Federal, Private) for all resources secured to manage, monitor, and support these additional members.
4. The organization's capability and capacity to successfully implement, manage, and monitor the additional members.

N/A - we are not requesting additional MSYs at this time.

### g. Healthcare Clarification:

1. Please provide the name of the health insurance provider you are proposing to use to insure your AmeriCorps members.

The Corps Network

2. How did you select the provider? (for example, direct marketing ,through the Health Insurance Marketplace or other means)

Other programs in our state have utilized The Corps Network and recommended them to us. We called other providers before we chose The Corps Network and felt they provided the best value.

3. Does your proposed budget for member healthcare provide for Minimum Essential Coverage (MEC) coverage, as defined by the Affordable Care Act (ACA), for your full-time members?

## Narratives

The Corps Network policy is not currently a MEC plan, however they expect to provide MEC by August, 2015. Our proposed budget is for a Fixed Award Amount Grant so there is no line item for healthcare. However, we did plan for a slight increase in healthcare costs, approximately 15%, based on information from The Corps Network at that time which accounts partially for the increase in cost per MSY. The most recent information from The Corps Network estimates that the increase may be closer to 30%.

4. If not, what adjustment to your budget is necessary in order for you to provide Minimum Essential Coverage (MEC)?

Since we are applying for a Fixed Amount Award Grant, we do not expect to adjust our budget based on increased healthcare costs. However, if we were asked to or able to adjust the budget to accommodate increased healthcare costs to provide MEC, the adjustment could be approximately \$10,000.

5. If you do not have enough information to answer question (4), please explain why not and/or what prevented you from being able to obtain the necessary information.

N/A

### Continuation Changes

N/A

### Grant Characteristics