

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

Denver Public Schools' Urban Education Service Corps (DPS/UESC) proposes to have 345 full-time AmeriCorps members provide daily tutoring to students below proficiency in mathematics and provide evidence-based and targeted interventions to students who exhibit attendance problems at 47 of the district's lowest performing (K-12) schools. In addition, 4 full-time Strategic Engagement Slots will be requested representing 1% of the overall AmeriCorps MSY. At the end of the first program year, AmeriCorps members will be responsible for assisting targeted schools attain improvements in academic achievement, student attendance and increased family engagement. 3,000 4th, 6th and 8th grade students will receive math-tutoring support and 3,000 4th, 6th, 8th and 9th grade students will receive intensive attendance support. A targeted number of 9th grade students will receive attendance support only. This AmeriCorps program will focus on CNCS Education priorities. CNCS investment of \$279,200 will be matched with \$11,248,595 in general fund dollars from DPS: \$11,148,595 in public funding and \$100,000 in private funding.

## Rationale and Approach/Program Design

PROBLEM/NEED: The 4-year graduation rate in Denver Public Schools is 61.3%. This must be improved. Research by Maclver, Balfanz & Byrnes (2009) suggests that early warning signals of a potential dropout outcome include: poor attendance; behavior; eighth-grade achievement; and semester math course failures. Too many students in DPS are exhibiting early warning signals for dropout by not regularly attending school, not being proficient in math and general disengagement with their school. Therefore, DPS/UESC seeks funding to enhance and expand its AmeriCorps program and work collaboratively in teams to increase student attendance, mathematics proficiency and family engagement at 47 of the lowest performing schools in the district. Currently the DPS/UESC AmeriCorps attendance program serves 25 schools. This grant seeks to expand to 47 schools offering attendance support to 4th, 6th, 8th and 9th grade students and math tutoring to 4th, 6th and 8th graders, targeting students exhibiting dropout risk factors, focusing on non-English speakers, immigrants, low-income and refugees, as these families often face barriers to prioritizing their child's attendance and school performance. In the 2013-2014 school year, in the attendance intervention targeted schools, the overall attendance rate for students fell below 89%. In comparison, the overall district attendance rate is 93%. On any given school day, there are between 35 and 60 students absent from each of the targeted schools--far too many for school counselors to contact daily. Maclver, et.al. (2009) found that "significantly more dropouts (60%) than nondropouts (44%) missed

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20 or more days of school in 9th grade." By missing 20 days of school, students miss the equivalent of 140 hours of classroom instruction a year, with clear impact on a student's ability to be successful in school. The importance of attendance, specifically 9th graders, will be the focus of 25 full-time Student Engagement Specialists (SES) serving along side 170 part-time parents who will provide evidence-based, one-on-one targeted daily interventions to students who exhibit attendance problems. These 25 SES with support from half-time members will be responsible for supporting 4,000 students identified by schools due to escalating absences as being in need of attendance support. The 4th, 6th and 8th grade students served by the attendance intervention will also participate in the math tutoring intervention in order to increase the impact of both interventions. School counselors will continue to focus on working with students with the highest needs, but the SES AmeriCorps' members will serve as a team alongside Denver Math Fellows and parents to support students who are showing signs of escalating risk. By increasing attendance, the SES' will help to increase the number of hours of classroom instruction these students will receive, which will result in an increase in student academic achievement. SES will spend 85% of their time monitoring student attendance, conducting door knocks and making positive attendance calls to parents; 10% will be spent collaborating with part time AmeriCorps members performing service projects in their school community and 10% participating in member training and entering/managing program data. Members will work to positively impact student attendance to further support academic achievement and engagement with the school. In addition to the attendance warning signals, many students in the targeted schools are below proficient in math, another important warning signal for dropout risk. In the 2013-2014 school year, in the 47 schools DPS/UESC is proposing to serve with the math intervention, 51% of 4th graders, 55% of 6th graders and 62% of 8th graders were below proficient in math. Every year, the percentage of students who are below proficient in math grows. By providing targeted support for students in 4th, 6th, and 8th grade, this intervention is a proactive approach to addressing math proficiency, which, in turn, addresses dropout risk. Therefore, 320 of the 565 AmeriCorps members will be full-time Denver Math Fellows (DMF) providing 1:4 daily small-group tutoring to students below proficiency in mathematics in elementary and middle schools daily. These DMF will serve 3,000 students (based on enrollment projections) in the targeted schools that have been identified as below proficient in math, which will ensure that all students below proficient in math will receive intensive small group tutoring. This focus on high-dosage tutoring is informed by research by Dobbie and Fryer (2012) which found that high-dosage tutoring (6 or fewer students, four or more times a week) is one of five policies that can account for almost half of a school's effectiveness. DMF will spend 75% of their time tutoring students,

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10% working on service projects and 15% training and entering/managing program data. Students will receive approximately 130 dosage hours of DMF tutoring annually, averaging 45 minutes per day. This approach ensures that students get the intensive and tailored math tutoring support that a teacher would be unable to provide in a classroom setting. In addition, as the DMF will work with students throughout the week, they will collaborate with SES and parents to support student attendance. Low attendance and lack of math proficiency are not only warning signals for dropout risk, however, they are also clear indicators of disengagement (Mac Iver, M.A. & Mac Iver, D.J., 2009). Both the SES and DMF will work with parents to create authentic and meaningful relationships with their students, which will address the disengagement in the targeted schools. However, DPS/UESC recognizes the essential role that parents and students play in increasing school-wide engagement. Therefore, 170 parents and 50 students will serve half-time along-side the full-time members to support student attendance, perform service projects in schools and surrounding communities, support and deepen parent engagement in schools and to assist in coordinating summer learning camps. Summer camps will provide a safe and engaging place for students to learn and grow over the summer and an opportunity for the DMF, SES and parent and student members to collaborate to best serve the needs of students and the wider community. These students and parents will spend 85% of their time supporting student attendance; deepening engagement among fellow students and parents; participating in school and community service projects and 15% training. In many cases, parents will also help to break down cultural and communication barriers in schools and assist in translation, as many parents are none English speaking. This approach of engaging parents and students in part-time roles will increase opportunities for students to engage with local examples of citizenship and provide parents and students increased opportunities for community engagement. Also, eligibility for these part-time service opportunities is minimum, making these roles more accessible to many more members in low-income communities. DPS/UESC expects to increase the family engagement in targeted schools, not just engagement by the part-time members, but by leveraging part-time members to engage other families. Each of these interventions are addressing key indicators of dropout risk, but combined, provide an exciting opportunity to truly impact Denver's students. Not only will DMF, SES and parent and student members be working in the same schools, they will work collaboratively and meet daily as a team to track progress, problem-solve and to address the varied needs of the students. Students drop out for a variety of reasons; this combination of interventions, coupled with a team approach, is designed for collective impact -- addressing multiple needs through a united lens of increasing academic achievement.

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THEORY OF CHANGE: The problem to be addressed through the DPS/UESC program is multi-pronged. Students in the 4th, 6th and 8th grades exhibit poor proficiency in math which puts them at risk for ongoing school performance issues and dropping out. Secondly, students in low performing schools present attendance issues which negatively impact school performance and increase the potential for dropping out. Students and families, especially non-English speakers, immigrants, low-income and refugees, often face barriers to school engagement that are illustrated by a student's poor attendance and poor math proficiency. Therefore, success in these areas will be measured by ED5: Number of students with improved academic performance in literacy and/or math and ED27B: Number of students in grades K-12 that participated in the mentoring or tutoring or other education program, including CNCS-supported service learning, who demonstrated improved academic engagement (behaviors). Output measures for outcomes include ED1: Number of economically disadvantaged students...who start in a CNCS-supported education program) and ED2: Number of economically disadvantaged students...who complete participation in CNCS-supported K-12 education programs. Achievement of these outcomes will occur through the implementation of a theory of change based on critical process efforts and the provision of evidence-based services that, together, lead to achievements on these outcomes. Process components that ensure quality service implementation are as follows: 1) Use of the evidence-based Response to Intervention model that guides service delivery through a targeted process and reflection using an Analyze, Plan, Implement, Adjust and Evaluate framework; 2) The provision of training and ongoing support related to the rigorous implementation of evidence-based math and attendance related efforts at the onset of the program and through ongoing observation, school-based meetings, and supervision by coordinators to support member efforts and ensure continuous quality improvements; 3) Implementation of various social media efforts with members to assist in recruitment efforts, ensure engagement in program service efforts and support member retention; and 4) Implementation of school service projects involving DMF, SES, volunteers, school staff, families and students to improve school culture, academic success and student engagement. In the TOC, the above process components support successful delivery of services with rigor and fidelity, to ensure their success. The following evidence-based services will be implemented: The evidence-based Math Fellows program (4th, 6th and 8th grades) - ED5. This program will be provided daily, for between 45 minutes and one hour, with student groups (ratio 1:4) who exhibit poor math proficiency. Students will receive an average 130 hours of tutoring, including: Individual and group support targeting underlying gaps in student skills

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and conceptions using tested curriculum: Do the Math, Do the Math Now, Navigator. 1) Targeted grade level support aligned to what students are learning in math class; and 2) Math Lab Mindset curriculum which provides social/emotional Support) to coach students on specific behaviors that support academic success. The evidence-based attendance intervention (all students and 9th graders) -- ED27B. This program will be provided to students who exhibit attendance levels of between 86% and 92% in order to support consistent attendance. Specific services include: 1) Implementation of an early warning system and a Response to Intervention protocol to identify students at the earliest possible sign of an attendance issue; and 2) Daily check-ins with students, home visits, and ongoing contact with parents or guardians to problem solve tardiness and attendance issues. RTI-driven case management (all grades) -- ED5 and ED27B. This approach ensures that service will be provided proactively and can be adapted to meet the changing needs of students, teachers and parents to support attendance and math performance outcomes.

EVIDENCE BASE: Strong Evidence (Dobbie and Fryer, 2013 and Balfanz and Mac Iver, M., 2009) is cited to support the proposed program model. As previously noted, research indicates the strong association between poor student attendance, lack of connection to school, course failure and increased dropout risk. For example, in a study of DPS' dropout data, 88% of 9th graders who dropped out had missed one or more weeks of school (Balfanz and Mac Iver, M., 2009). To address attendance problems, which can compound academic risks, SES' integrate best practices and research with existing models that recognize the value of bringing all available community resources to families so that barriers impeding student success can be overcome. This approach has proven successful in comparable populations of urban, low-income, minority students. The second evidence-based strategy (Balfanz and Mac Iver, M., 2009) is an early warning system triggered at the first sign of a student's attendance problem, paired with Response to Intervention, which recognizes that tiered interventions are needed to address students' individual needs. Fundamental to the success of an early warning system and the necessary interventions when a school staff's capacity is limited, is a team of adults and near-peer young adults who can help provide targeted and intensive supports to students at the needed scale. Attendance AmeriCorps members will check in with students daily, visit their homes, contact their parents or guardians when students have unexcused absences or excessive tardiness, and even assist students and families in accessing community-based resources. To support students in achieving math proficiency, DMF AmeriCorps members will use the evidence-based Blueprint Math pilot program. This program originated in Denver in 2011-2012 and focused on a cluster of

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turnaround schools slated for restructuring in the Far-Northeast corridor of DPS. Blueprint co-designed the DMF program alongside DPS/UESC and has collaborated with the district to train school Principals and teachers, provide tools and ongoing professional development, and communicate with principals on a regular basis to ensure constant adaptation and improvement. DMF and Site Coordinators work with teachers to align tutorial lessons to each student's needs. Lessons have two objectives: 1) build foundational skills; and 2) ensure mastery of grade-level content. Evidence shows that foundational skills help strengthen the computation and problem-solving skills students need to master before they can accomplish greater and deeper learning (Dobbie and Fryer, 2013). In addition, this intensive tutoring program designed is informed by research by Dobbie and Fryer (2012) which identifies high dosage small group tutoring as one important strategy for school effectiveness. The collaboration between the attendance and math interventions, the service projects and summer camp activities, is intended to strengthen the solid, school-wide instructional foundation suggested by Mac Iver & Mac Iver (2009) in each of the targeted schools. By incorporating parents and peers as part time members, DPS/UESC hopes to simultaneously outreach to families while improving the school's academic environment.

NOTICE PRIORITY : DPS/UESC's program will focus on several 2015 AmeriCorps Education funding priorities using the following interventions: 1) Provide evidence-based intensive daily tutoring and attendance interventions designed to help students maintain grade level proficiency ultimately leading to successful high-school graduation. 2) Promote service and volunteerism within DPS/UESC and the targeted school community through program requirements and engagement opportunities for parents and students. This focus on service and volunteerism will act as a model for families impacted by the interventions. All members will be trained to work alongside the students and parents who will be overseeing service projects. Both part-time, full-time AmeriCorps members and students will work as teams and have opportunities for service, and mechanisms are already in place to facilitate communication and ease of participation; 3) Clearly identify students with attendance problems (attendance falls between 86-92%) in underserved schools, as well as those who have fallen behind in math proficiency; and 4) Consistently increase financial and in-kind support through partnerships and district's general funds as well as the DPS Foundation. DPS leverages \$11,248,595 to support the AmeriCorps program.

MEMBER TRAINING: Training for SES and DMF will begin with a 2-week orientation boot camp in

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August. Parents and student part-time members will participate in a joint training session. Sessions involve a thorough review of AmeriCorps' history, goals, policies/procedures and duties and AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities. Additionally, training will include: history of DPS Schools, diversity and cultural competency; and setting and upholding high academic and behavioral expectations. There will be a school-based component with a focus on: delivering student-centered lessons and curriculum; creating a positive and productive learning environment; and analyzing student assessment data. These sessions include all-staff training sessions and math and attendance specific school-team development. Throughout their service year, SES' and DMF's will receive weekly trainings from Coordinators about: available resources to track student progress; goals and policies; and technical, procedural and interpersonal skills, e.g., working in DPS and the district's policies, recognizing child abuse/neglect; building the school's capacity to engage students; working with parents to deepen engagement; communication; conflict management; engaging students; cultural competency; risk factors for dropping out; and post-service job search and resume writing. At their weekly meetings, DMF's will specifically focus on: data analysis, curriculum, student progress and outcomes and lesson planning as well as collaborating with teachers and parents. All members at each school site will receive an additional 1.5 hour/week training on civic reflections and team building. Case management meetings will be held between SES', DMF's and teachers throughout the week. These sessions are designed to assess students' progress, risk factors and identity areas of support and needs. To facilitate implementation of service projects across multiple school sites, members will receive ongoing updates through text messages and social networks, such as Facebook and Twitter. Members consistently give DPS/UESC's training program high ratings and report that it helps them remain committed to their service. Because of its strong connection to retention, DPS/UESC will track member development internally using Efforts to Outcome (ETO). The ability to use social media plays a significant role in strengthening communities and member recruitment among multiple school sites. Topic specific training: During the pre-service boot camp Regional Coordinators, Site Coordinators, DMF's, SES', Parents and Students learn about activities prohibited under 45 CFR §2520.45, 45 CFR § 2520.65 and the AmeriCorps grant provisions. The orientation covers the member's service agreement, health insurance options, training manual and all AmeriCorps' rules/regulations (§2522.940) and requirements for successful completion of the program. The Director and Manager of AmeriCorps programs has attended the State Commission's trainings on implementing an AmeriCorps program and have access to its technical assistance. As district employees, all DMF's must meet paraprofessional qualifications under the No Child Left Behind Act, have no criminal record (nor

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sex offenses) and have earned an Associates or Bachelor's degree prior to selection. Selection will be based on an aptitude test and assessment of values and attitudes. Part-time members will receive the same level of support, training and supervision as full-time SES'. All AmeriCorps members will receive support and trainings to increase the number of volunteer parents at their child's school.

**MEMBER SUPERVISION:** The primary responsibility of DPS/UESC is to oversee the AmeriCorps program at school sites. The Director and Program Manager of AmeriCorps Programs and two Assistant Directors of the Math Fellows Division of DPS will focus efforts on overseeing member recruitment, hiring and training to ensure uniformity in the understanding of the program mission. Thirty-two (32) Site Coordinators will supervise 320 DMF's at each school site and fifteen (15) Regional Coordinators will supervise Parents (170), Students (50) and 25 SES' performing attendance duties and in-School Service Projects. The supervision ratio for DMF's is 1:10 while the ratio for SES', Students and Parent supervision is 1:15. Teachers in the school will help support parents and students who volunteer in classrooms and are also made aware of AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities. In addition, parents, students and AmeriCorps members will have school specific support from Site/Regional Coordinators. AmeriCorps Outreach Specialist (2 FTE) will be assigned to manage member time-forms in OnCorps to ensure accurate tracking of member service hours, social media, member transition due to relocation and support parents and students in developing and coordinating Service Projects in schools, and help with member recruitment and hiring. Directors ensure time is dedicated weekly by Site/Regional Coordinators to oversee member training, civic reflection and team building exercises at specific school sites (weekly) and across school sites within the district (monthly). Site/Regional Coordinators provide support, professional development and training to all members and assist with data tracking and analysis. Site/Regional Coordinators meet with the Assistant Math Fellows Directors, Manager and the Director of AmeriCorps programs, each of whom provide weekly training on leadership, communication, effective tutorial and attendance practices; Site/Regional Coordinators provide professional development to their members based on their needs. Formal observations of tutorials take place every 4 weeks by Site Coordinators based on a rubric of effective practices and provide written and oral feedback to identify areas of improvement. Two (2) times a year all 565 AmeriCorps members, students and parents gather for team-building exercises, debriefing the member experience and civic reflection exercises in an off-site all-day retreat. Each week, Coordinators meet individually with members to ensure that they are on track to successfully complete their project plan and review members' outputs. Coordinators also arrange for professional

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development or other needed resources.

MEMBER EXPERIENCE: DPS/UESC believes that the education system provides an optimal introduction to civic engagement. Each school-based team creates a service project plan, aligned with the needs of schools, outlining goals, tasks, deadlines, person(s) responsible and expected outcomes. Plans are reviewed and approved by Coordinators, updated every two weeks and benchmarked to ensure completion. Members see first-hand through their service projects how promoting education among students and their parents can impact social change. Members will also collaborate with local AmeriCorps Programs and participate in National Service Days. Members reflect on their service during weekly civic reflection team building meetings where members come together at their assigned schools sites to discuss positive outcomes, challenges and barriers to success. There is on-going discussion about members' roles in their communities and opportunities to improve service projects. In addition, members have daily access to one-on-one coaching from their Coordinator. The Site/Regional Coordinators have attended multiple civic reflection trainings in order to better facilitate civic reflection team building meetings and members submit a survey after participation, which informs future meetings and identifies future discussion topics. Members are encouraged to co-lead civic reflection session with Coordinators to improve facilitation skills and better understand civic engagement and coordinate with other AmeriCorps Programs to enrich days of service, such as the AmeriCorps\*Colorado Literacy Matters book drive. To help members identify as part of AmeriCorps, all DMF's, SES', parents and students wear AmeriCorps-branded clothing daily and actively manage Facebook (1,725 likes) and Twitter accounts which are branded with AmeriCorps logos. Facebook highlights service projects and promotes AmeriCorps activities: <https://www.facebook.com/denverpublicschoolsamericorps1>. Each school site openly displays AmeriCorps signage including banners throughout schools. DMF's and SES' will have a link to the program's webpage with AmeriCorps logos prominently displayed on the district's website. The DPS/UESC AmeriCorps Blog currently has (21,466) hits and 1,736 email subscribers, and is used as a tool to recruit new members. Recruiting new members and supporting current members is the primary role of DPS/UESC. DPS/UESC is committed to better engage alumni members. Through this AmeriCorps expansion, DPS/UESC will work to develop alumni networks through social media to engage members after completion of their service and to support them in living a life of active citizenship.

### Organizational Capability

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING: DPS/UESC will administer the AmeriCorps

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program. DPS brings extensive experience and insight to the proposed project in implementing, managing and evaluating complex initiatives. DPS/UESC is well qualified to manage a grant of the size and scope proposed. Denver Public Schools (DPS) manages an annual budget in excess of \$1.3 billion and has established fiscal controls and processes to oversee more than \$96 million annually in 48 federal and state grants. DPS conducts yearly financial audits and is in full compliance with government regulations. Management structure: DPS' Board of Education consists of seven elected members. The board is responsible for setting DPS' policies and evaluating and hiring a Superintendent. The superintendent is responsible to the board for carrying out district policy, administering the operation of the district, supervising district personnel and advising the board on all educational matters for the welfare of students. DPS aggressively seeks to develop its talent pool among underrepresented groups in order to build a diverse and culturally competent workforce. The DPS/UESC team consist of six Program Directors, Assistant Directors and Managers who are employees of DPS and have ultimate oversight for the AmeriCorps program, oversee the Site/Regional Coordinators who are also district employees and focus on program sustainability and managing DPS' contract with OMNI to ensure that the evaluation complies with CNCS expectations. Fifteen (15) Regional Coordinators and thirty-two (32) Site Coordinators will work with AmeriCorps members on site at each of the targeted schools, overseeing tutoring and attendance interventions, collaborating with school principals and teachers to identify ongoing school needs. Site/Regional Coordinators will also support school's community partners and stakeholders to promote collaboration and integration among service providers and assist in reviewing programs to determine progress toward performance measures. Site/Regional Coordinators must have college degrees or substantial relevant work experience in community engagement or in classroom teaching experience and are hired through a competitive selection process through the district. The average tenure of Regional Coordinators is five years. DPS/UESC provides training for the Coordinators designed to aid staff in developing skills to effectively manage and supervise members. The Coordinators also receive ongoing intensive training, as well as professional development from the District's Office of Culture, Equity and Leadership, an expert in evidence based models on which DPS/UESC's program is based. Coordinators are cross-trained to assist with supervision of all members, ensure that members' service projects result in positive outcomes and oversee member training. In addition, Coordinators have received training in AmeriCorps policies and procedures and have systems in place to monitor, support and discipline members, including daily/weekly checks for compliance issues and employing rapid means to address any concerns by debriefing with members. School principals have expressed and demonstrated

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commitment to AmeriCorps by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Since 2009, DPS/UESC has had minimum issues of noncompliance (e.g item missing from a members' case file in 2011 and a delay submitting financially reimbursement request in 2012). DPS undergoes an annual A-133 financial audit. DPS' Office of Federal Programs will work closely with the AmeriCorps management team to ensure accountability. In addition, DPS' grants team will conduct due diligence to ensure that the program remains in compliance and within budget and has dedicated a full-time budget analyst to oversee financials for this program. The AmeriCorps program is integrated within DPS' strategic goal around deepening engagement with families and communities. The district's strategic plan supports the following AmeriCorps' activities: mobilizing members to identify and work with students with habitual attendance problems; increasing the number of parents who volunteer in schools; and supporting Site/Regional Coordinators to coordinate and link students and their families to community-based services. AmeriCorps members' work is appreciated and recognized by program staff, school administration and parents through: site- level events and recognitions; thank-you notes to members from school staff and teachers; published "kudos" in newsletters; homemade food from parents for members as a way to thank them; informal thanks over the phone and during home visits; donated gift cards, and an annual end-of-year celebration with students, parents, school staff and teachers. To strengthen stakeholder support among community partners, members volunteer a limited number of hours at nonprofit and faith organizations during the summer. DPS/UESC works with over 75 non-profit, business and faith organization who both employ and serve DPS students and families. Services range from job placement, basic needs, and health and social emotional support. Furthermore, some DMF and SES' transition into professional roles within the district or with community partners where they promote life-long participation in service opportunities among students and families.

COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY: Regional Coordinators and Site Coordinators supervise DMF, SES and part time members. The Site/Regional Coordinator reviews each member's schedule weekly to verify that members are not engaged in prohibited activities. Coordinators are on site while members conduct their service projects. Community Outreach Specialist audits members' time sheets weekly. DPS has demonstrated compliance in the past, and no significant compliance issues or areas of weakness/risk were noted in the last four years of audits. Trainings will stress compliance and AmeriCorps members will have multiple parties to consult and online training tools to review if there is a question or issue. If a school site is responsible for noncompliance, that site will receive extensive

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training and additional support from the district to ensure it returns to compliance. The State Commission's annual audit will alert DPS if there are compliance issues. In the event that noncompliance is discovered, the member or site will be sanctioned and retrained in accordance with program guidelines outlined in service contracts or MOUs. If removed from the program, the incident will be disclosed to the State Commission. All school Principals have signed MOUs that outline prohibited activities and expectations of compliance with AmeriCorps. School Principals meet with a Program Director monthly to discuss AmeriCorps program compliance.

PAST PERFORMANCE: Student Attendance Intervention: DPS/UESC has a four year history of meeting CNCS performance measures (member enrollment and retention, number of participating students, increasing attendance by 3% or to 95%, etc.) while providing students and families with support and access to resources to increase student attendance and academic achievement. In this past year of the AmeriCorps program, over 2,000 students received individualized support, encouragement and more than 20,000 referrals to partner agencies which provide access to support basic needs. As a result, 50% of the students receiving SES support increased their attendance by 3%. A 3% increase in attendance equates to over 5 additional days of school or approximately 35 additional hours of instruction. Among middle school students receiving SES support, 50% increased their attendance by 5%. A 5% increase in attendance equates to approximately 9 additional days of school or approximately 63 additional hours of instruction. The attendance intervention is most effective for middle school students and 9th grade is a key grade in the prediction of dropout risk, which is why the intervention includes 9th graders. In middle school, an additional 9 days can likely make the difference between completing high school and dropping out. In addition to the one-on-one attendance support, students serve alongside parents who are engaged in school service projects such as community beautification projects, mentoring younger students and implementing anti bullying campaigns in their schools. Participation in service projects helps demonstrate to students that they are not only the recipients of services but they themselves can drive community solutions, support engagement and citizenship. DPS/UESC has been able to further expand its impact by recruiting recent DPS graduates and parents to serve as SES'. DPS/UESC work actively with non-profit organizations and diverse communities in the Denver Metro area to assist in recruiting diverse populations. Parent and student members are leveraged to assist with recruiting students and families in school communities. SES' consistently report that they find satisfaction, meaning and opportunity through their role. Over the past three years, member satisfaction is clearly demonstrated in the 100%

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enrollment rate and 98% retention rate. Also, this year (30%) of full-time and 15 half-time members have re-enrolled for the 2014-15 term of service and 30-35% of former members find employment with DPS or partner agencies after completing their terms of service. Six former SES members are employed with DPS/UESC this year alone. Denver Math Fellows Intervention: The DMF program aligns with the CNCS initiatives to specifically address educational challenges students face in low performing schools in economically disadvantaged communities. Data from 2013 at Turnaround school sites revealed that roughly 91% of students in 4th, 6th, and 8th grade tested below basic on their first Scholastic Math Inventory (SMI). This is significantly greater than the district average of 51% of students below average in TCAP scores, which was the score used to predict and set SMI performance measures and targets, as there was no previously available SMI data for the Turnaround schools. This clear divide between the district average and the targeted schools illustrates the grave need for math intervention. However after a year of DMF intervention, 40% of students scored proficient or advanced at the last SMI. In addition, 64% of students scored below basic on the first Scholastic Math Inventory (SMI) and only 34% scored below basic in the last SMI. DPS/UESC strives to ensure every student reaches proficiency after a year of tutoring, but it is also significant to recognize the drastic improvement that schools did see. The performance measures indicated students would improve by one performance level and the SMI data clearly supports the benefits of small group, intensive tutoring. In addition to the evidence based success of math tutoring for low performing school children there is a reciprocal benefit for the student, the school, the member and surrounding community. AmeriCorps is a conduit for DMFs' to serve beyond the classroom and add value to their schools and communities. The CNCS' goals and strategies include supporting capacity building in local education agencies as well as ensuring that members have a meaningful experience. Most DMFs' engage with students, parents, teachers and community members by participating or creating in-school service projects including: assisting teachers by providing classroom support, helping with sporting events, providing a math or craft club after school, and weekly parent outreach phone calls. As is expected, teachers, administrators, parents and students greatly appreciate the direct service that DMFs' provide throughout the school. DPS/UESC anticipates mirroring performance results at expansion schools sites given its 4-year track record of successfully managing AmeriCorps.

### **Budget/Cost Effectiveness**

DPS' program remains cost efficient this year, not-withstanding the program's proposed expansion into additional schools from 25 to 47. CNCS Funds will be used for program operating costs at each school site, some instructional material, uniforms, copying, training elements and transportation to

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retreats and three Site Coordinators. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of overall program costs are covered by state, local and private funding. DPS has strong relationships with local businesses, foundations and corporations and will use this award to leverage support. Costs are reasonable in relation to scope, scale, and impact: Investing in tutors is one of the most cost effective ways to impact student achievement. The specific tutoring program DPS is proposing has been piloted successfully with a similar student population in Denver. Managing the tutoring program in tandem with the attendance program allows DPS/UESC to provide intensive daily interventions in a broader fashion for high-risk students. Through a 2012 voter-passed mill levy, DPS raised over \$60 million to support district initiatives, including the AmeriCorps program and Denver Math Fellows. Approximately \$11,248,595 is budgeted and committed to support DPS/UESC programs to increase student attendance and increase math proficiency, which includes (\$21,000 in living allowance for 320 DMF and \$13,100 for 25 SES'). Accordingly, 6 Program Directors, Assistant Directors and Managers, 32 Site Coordinators, 15 Regional Coordinators and 2 Community Outreach Specialist will support this program. The total budget allocation will include salaries, training, curriculum, supplies and program operating cost for each school site. The request for CNCS funds do not exceed \$800 maximum cost per MSY. DPS current MSY has decreased substantially from \$5,797 to \$800 per MSY. This is a result of DPS committing to matching funds to expand AmeriCorps services from 25 schools to 47 schools throughout the district. BUDGET ADEQUACY: The program structure of AmeriCorps was designed so that members would work alongside professional staff, parents and students to maximize cost effectiveness without compromising the quality of service. The bulk of program funding (97%) comes from in-kind and cash from the district's general funds and mill levy. Accordingly, the Program Directors will actively work with the DPS Foundation to raise additional funds to sustain AmeriCorps. Program administrative, personnel and benefits, member living allowance and program evaluation will be paid for using district funding. The district will actively seek financial support to sustain and further expand this program --as demonstrated by its large initial investment. Neither Mill levy nor CNCS funds will be used to supplant DPS/UESC funding nor any other funding streams. Notably, DMF's and SES' have very low overhead ensuring that the vast majority of funds will flow directly to students and families.

### Evaluation Summary or Plan

The problem to be addressed through the DPS/UESC program is multi-pronged. Students in the 4th, 6th and 8th grades exhibit poor proficiency in math. This puts them at risk for ongoing school performance issues, successful participation in later math coursework, and dropping out of school due

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to poor performance. Secondly, these students and targeted 9th graders present attendance issues which negatively impact school performance and increase the potential for dropping out. Students and families, especially non-English speakers, immigrants, low-income and refugees, often face barriers to school engagement that are illustrated by a student's poor attendance and poor math proficiency.

The specific CNCS outcomes that will be measured to assess performance in these problem areas are:

1. ED5: Number of students with improved academic performance in literacy and/or math.
2. ED27B: Number of students in grades K-12 that participated in the mentoring or tutoring or other education program, including CNCS-supported service learning, who demonstrated improved academic engagement (behaviors).

Additionally, ED1 (Number of economically disadvantaged students or students ... who start in a CNCS-supported education program) and ED2 (Number of economically disadvantaged students ... who complete participation in CNCS-supported K-12 education programs) will serve as output measures for each outcome. Project Outcomes: Two primary outcomes will be assessed in relation to project efforts. ED5: Number of students with improved academic performance in math and ED27B: Number of youth in mentoring/tutoring programs with improved school attendance that demonstrate improved academic engagement (behaviors). The primary behavior targeted in the ED27B is improved and sustained attendance.

Achievement of these outcomes will occur through the implementation of a theory of change based on critical process efforts and the provision of evidence-based services that, together, lead to achievements on these outcomes. Process components that ensure quality service implementation are as follows:

1. Use of the evidence-based Response to Intervention model that guides service delivery through a targeted and tailored process including ongoing critical reflection using an Analyze, Plan, Implement, Adjust and Evaluate framework
2. The provision of training and ongoing support related to the rigorous implementation of evidence-based math and attendance related efforts at the onset of the program and through ongoing observation, school-based meetings, and supervision by site-based and regional coordinators to support member efforts and ensure continuous quality improvements
3. Implementation of various social media efforts with members to assist in recruitment efforts, ensure deep engagement in program service efforts and support member retention
4. Implementation of school service projects involving volunteers, school personnel, family members

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and students to improve school culture, academic success and student engagement

The DPS/FACE program will use the Scholastic Math Inventory (SMI) to assess student progress on math skills and competency. The SMI is a computer-adaptive assessment that provides a direct measure of students' readiness for math instruction on the Quantile Framework for Mathematics. SMI is aligned to the Common Core State Standards and to major math textbooks, and can be used for purposes of universal screening, initial placement and progress monitoring in math studies. The SMI will be administered with each student 5 times per academic year and results will be used to track student growth in relation to the goals of this project. The SMI results in a quantile score which is assigned one of four performance levels (Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, or Advanced). The project goal associated with this outcome is that 1,400 students participating will achieve one or more levels of math improvement on the SMI at the conclusion of one year of tutoring. The DPS Infinite Campus system will be used to measure the attendance-related outcome. Service provided by Student Engagement Specialist (SES) will be entered into a data system created for the program in Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) software, and include date and type of each contact (i.e., attempted, successful) made for each attendance-targeted student, as well as any community-based referrals made during the course of working with students/families. The data from ETO are then matched to student-level attendance data reported by schools. The two data sets will be merged to analyze student-level attendance rates before and after contact by the AmeriCorps members. The targeted goal for this program is that 1,750 students with between 86% and 92% attendance rates either: a) meet or exceed an attendance rate of 95%, or will demonstrate a 3 percentage point increase in attendance rate over the course of the CNCS program's involvement with the student. In addition, parent satisfaction surveys, which are distributed by DPS to all parents, will be reviewed to track engagement and parent satisfaction with the targeted school.

Primary Research Questions: Both process and outcome research questions will be answered through the evaluation. In addition, process and outcomes variables will be modeled to examine the relationship between services provided and outcomes achieved. The key process questions are as follows:

1. How much outreach service does each student receive in efforts to improve attendance and does this vary by student demographics or presenting issues?
2. What is the average number of hours each participant receives in the Math Fellows program and

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does this vary by grade, student demographics or other important variables (e.g., level of proficiency, parental involvement)?

3. What challenges are observed in both SES member and DMF member efforts and to what degree do these inform program efforts moving forward?

4. What is the relationship between level of service provided and outcomes achieved within SES and DMF efforts?

5. To what degree do students receiving SES and DMF services out-perform students receiving only DMF services

6. To what degree does increasing the number of part-time members have on the number of total parents engaged in the schools?

Research Design: The project will use a simple pre-post design to evaluate the effects of both the DMF and SES programs. Students who participate in the DMF program will be selected within targeted schools based on math performance that is either at a "basic" or "below basic" level of proficiency as reflected in prior year's data. To the extent that there are more students than can be served by available Fellows, additional students will be selected for participation. SES services are to be provided in targeted schools in the 4th, 6th, 8th and 9th grades. Students in the 4th, 6th, and 8th grade will be selected based on a co-occurrence of attendance issues and math levels that are at either the basic or below basic proficiency level. These students will receive both SES and DMF services. Targeted students in the 9th grade will receive SES services and be selected based on attendance levels between 86% and 92% in the prior year. Additional students may be added for service delivery as student attendance rates stabilize, however, those in the 4th, 6th and 8th grade will continue to receive DMF services throughout the year. Students in both the SES and DMF programs will be assessed at year-end relative to baseline rates. Baseline for students in the SES program will reflect either the average attendance rate from the preceding year or the average rate in the current year for the month preceding program enrollment. This baseline will be compared to the average attendance rate at year-end from the start of services. For DMF participants, baseline will reflect the starting math proficiency level. This level will be compared to the final SMI score to determine change in proficiency. In addition, logistic regression will be used in each program to determine whether outcome achievement varies by length or amount of service delivery and/or by key demographic variables (e.g., race/ethnicity and gender). To determine the durability of effects, students will be followed into their next school year to examine the degree to which attendance and math proficiency levels are

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maintained. Staff Training: All staff and AmeriCorps members will undergo training to utilize Effort to Outcomes (ETO) and related internal systems to track and manage data. Program Directors will work with Omni Institute, DPS Research and Accountability and Regional/Site Coordinators to implement and oversee quality control measures to ensure data integrity. Evaluator Qualifications: The evaluation will be completed by both an internal and external evaluator. Math proficiency levels will be analyzed by Denver Public Schools evaluation staff. This staff possesses all the qualifications and experience to complete this work and has conducted analyses for large district initiatives and programs. In addition, DPS will continue to contract with the OMNI institute to support process data collection and analyze attendance outcomes. OMNI has been the contracted evaluator for this program for a number of years and implemented the Efforts to Outcomes data system to support AmeriCorps volunteer services entry. OMNI has extensive experience conducting analyses of education-related interventions, has conducted evaluation projects for a number of DPS programs, and is needed to provide ongoing training and support to the ETO system.

Estimated Budget: Cost should not exceed \$30,000 for the external evaluation. Denver Public Schools Department of Research and Accountability will cover all cost for internal evaluations, staff training and data collection system.

### **Amendment Justification**

N/A

### **Clarification Summary**

CLARIFICATION SUMMARY:

GENERAL:

This application is under consideration for a grant in the amount of \$276,000, 345.00 Member Service Years (MSYs), 345 slots, at \$800.00 cost per MSY.

Please ensure that your Executive Summary, budget, and performance measures reflect the funding levels indicated above and the inclusion of strategic engagement or no-cost MSYs or a reduction in the cost/MSY as is requested further in the letter. Completed on egrants.

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The budget was modified and increases by \$3,200 as a result of adding 4 full-time strategic engagement member slots. The total budget increased from \$276,000 to \$279,200

### A. PROGRAMMATIC CLARIFICATION ITEMS:

#### RESPONSE TO QUESTION 1:

Please remove the last sentence from your Executive Summary; Completed in eGrants.

#### RESPONSE TO QUESTION 2:

The 47 schools listed below will be served by this grant. None of the schools listed below are currently being served by the School Turnaround AmeriCorps grant. A minimum of 320 full-time Math Fellows- AmeriCorps members will serve at non-Turnaround schools to support math tutoring. Accordingly, 25 full-time members along with parent volunteers will serve at non-Turnaround schools to support student attendance. To ensure parity among schools and to ensure adequate support services are in place (math tutoring and attendance interventions) the precise number of members serving per school site will not be finalized until enrollment projections are completed in early August. Based on the current student population count, current enrollment projections including choice applications and current data for the number of students below proficiency in math and with poor student attendance, DPS will fill all allocated member slots among the 47 schools.

Colorado- Denver Metro Area Schools/Denver Public Schools Communities: FAR NORTHEAST: 1. Amesse (ECE-5th); 2. Denver Center for International Studies at Ford (ECE-5th); 3. Green Valley (ECE -- 5th); 4. Maxwell (ECE -- 5th); 5. McGlone (ECE -- 5th); 6. Oakland (ECE -- 5th); 7. Farrell B. Howell (ECE -- 8th); 8. Florida Pitt Waller (ECE -- 8th); 9. Denver Center for International Studies at Montbello (6th -- 12th); 10. John F Kennedy High School (9th -- 12th); 11. Noel Community Arts School (6th -- 12th); 12. Collegiate Prep Academy (9th -- 12th); and 13. High Tech Early College (9th --&#8232;12th); NEAR NORTHEAST: 14. Barrett (ECE -- 5th); 15. Columbine (ECE -- 5th); 16. Gilpin (ECE -- 5th); 17. Harrington (ECE -- 5th); 18. Smith Renaissance (ECE -- 5th); 19. Stedman (ECE -- 5th); 20. Swansea (ECE -- 5th); and 21. Morey (6th - 8th); NORTHWEST: 22. Barnum (ECE -- 5th); 23. Beach Court (ECE -- 5th); 24. Centennial (ECE -- 5th); 25. Colfax (ECE -- 5th); 26. Columbian (ECE -- 5th); 27. Denver Center for International Studies at Fairmont (ECE -- 5th); 28. Eagleton (ECE -- 5th); 29. Garden Place Academy (ECE -- 5th); 30. Skinner (6th -- 8th); 31. Career

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Education Center Middle College of Denver (6th - 12th); 32. Contemporary Learning Academy (6th - 12th); 33. West Generation Academy (6th -- 12th); 34. West Leadership Academy (6th -- 12th); and 35. West Career Academy (9th - 12th); SOUTHWEST: 36. College View (ECE -- 5th); 37. Johnson (ECE -- 5th); 38. Valverde (ECE -- 5th); 39. Henry World Middle (6th -- 8th); 40. Thomas Jefferson High School (9th -- 12th); 41. Summit Academy (6th - 12th); 42. Abraham Lincoln (9th - 12th); and 43. John F. Kennedy (9th - 12th); SOUTHEAST: 44. Place Bridge Academy (ECE -- 8th); 45. Hamilton (6th -- 8th); 46. Hill Campus of Arts and Sciences (6th - 8th); and 47. Merrill (6th -- 8th);

### RESPONSE TO QUESTION 3:

Please remove the reference to 220 HT members from your executive summary, as your application is being considered for the proposed FT positions only. Please also revise the funding amounts noted in the Executive Summary to reflect the clarification amounts; Completed in egrants.

### RESPONSE TO QUESTION 4:

This requirement does not apply to DPS' AmeriCorps program because the 320 Math Fellows and 25 Student Engagement Specialists (SES) do not fit the criteria of a Professional Corps as outlined below:

1) The 25 full-time SES AmeriCorps and 320 Math Fellows-AmeriCorps positions that support student attendance, parent engagement and math tutoring are not structured, nor do they align with a professional preparation and training category as defined by CNCS's Professional Corps programs. Both of DPS' interventions are designed and structured to solely support students and do not offer training or preparation that will facilitate members transitioning into a specific professional career, which is the primary characteristic of a Professional Corps.

1) National Professional Service Corps programs typically operate in at least two states. DPS' program only operates in one state.

2) Professional Corps members are paid the salary levels of the profession rather than the living allowance otherwise specified for AmeriCorps members; the salary/living allowance is not included in the budget. DPS' AmeriCorps program will pay a living allowance and does not pay cost for full employment benefits associated with salaried employees or Professional Corps programs.

### RESPONSE TO QUESTION 5:

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The rationale and decision aligns with DPS' "Framework for Math Fellows Effectiveness". The Framework for Math Fellow Effectiveness outlines the expectations for creating a powerful tutorial culture for all students in order to support and develop rigorous instruction that ensures high levels of motivation and engagement. These expectations are in support of DPS' shared vision that Every Child Succeeds! The evidence-based strategy used (Balfanz and Mac Iver, M., 2009), is an early warning system triggered at the first sign of a student's attendance problem, paired with Response to Intervention. Providing math tutoring interventions in 4th grade addresses the critical support that students transitioning from 3rd grade need. Accordingly, supporting students with math tutoring and attendance interventions for two consecutive years (8th and 9th grades and 6th grade) builds on student knowledge to identify patterns and new concepts from year-to-year by:

- \* Ensuring students have appropriate support to mitigate the risk-factors, which contribute to student dropouts associated with students entering middle school and transitioning to ninth grade
- \* Mitigating risk of course failures in middle school, which is a precursor to student dropouts
- \* Utilizing materials from previous year's learning to connect to new concepts
- \* Providing opportunities for students to make connections between mathematical concepts and procedures
- \* Engaging students in the exploration of patterns in numbers, pictures, models and vocabulary words
- \* Activating prior knowledge to support students in finding patterns and making connections to what they have learned

### RESPONSE TO QUESTION 6:

No staff will be displaced and no staff are being duplicated. DPS' AmeriCorps members founded summer literacy camps and oversee the day-to-day operations of the camps, which are staffed by members in collaboration with Family and Community Engagement (FACE) staff. The concept of summer literacy camps originated from the need to support summer learning loss and to offer AmeriCorps members' additional opportunities to complete their term of service during the month of June, after school has ended.

Power Punch! Summer Camp is a collaborative effort between AmeriCorps, Denver Public Schools' Family and Community Engagement (FACE) and Mile High United Way, to coordinate efforts between AmeriCorps members and students to increase opportunities for summer learning. This collaborative was formed by AmeriCorps members in June 2012 and was piloted at three targeted

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school sites that were identified as needing literacy support to increase student proficiency. The primary goal of this program is to build and foster relationships with individual students, provide a structured and balanced literacy based program that will utilize volunteers to connect with students, and to increase reading levels in the communities AmeriCorps members serve throughout the summer. Throughout the duration of the camp, members provide research-based literacy instruction and activities for three-four hours each day. The program then collaborates with the DPS research department to measure the impact on student attitude and literacy achievement. The Power Punch! 3-week Summer Camp provides students the opportunity to participate in a learning based summer camp at no cost. All meals are provided through Denver Public Schools as well as most activities associated with camp. The variety of community partners that have collaborated with the Power Punch! Summer Camp is an essential part to the camps continued success. Through these efforts, AmeriCorps, Denver Public Schools' Family and Community Engagement and Mile High United Way were able to serve over 150 3rd and 4th grade students each year, to increase literacy proficiency and student engagement. If funded, DPS will be able to expand summer learning camps into 4-6 additional elementary schools slated for expansion in this grant. All 345 full-time members will be able to participate in the summer camp coordination and operations during the month of June, based on student enrollment in the summer camp program. The average number of hours per member served for this activity would be 114.

### RESPONSE TO QUESTION 7:

Duties performed by Denver Math Fellows will not duplicate or displace teachers. The scope of tutoring, coaching and homework given to students are specific to the preparation and instruction that occurs during tutoring sessions.

Fellows use student data to plan and differentiate instruction from teachers by:

- \* Designing tutoring session plans to meet individual student needs
- \* Adjusting pacing of tutoring sessions according to informal and formal assessment data
- \* Updating data trackers, including work book with daily exit ticket scores
- \* Utilizing non-tutorial data, such as language proficiency scores, to guide sessions
- \* Delivering "Exit Tickets" that align with objectives and measure mastery
- \* Reviewing student work on a proficiency scale that reveals mastery level
- \* Designing "Do Now" activities that meet the needs of students, giving them fluency practice or

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number sense tasks at their instructional level

### RESPONSE TO QUESTION 8:

DPS has allocated significant fiscal resources to ensure that AmeriCorps members are effectively managed to meet program goals, in accordance with grant requirements. DPS has also committed a significant financial match to complement the AmeriCorps brand. Building on the last five years' best practices for AmeriCorps program and member management, Memorandums of Understanding have been developed and strengthened with each school site so that school leaders and site coordinators are trained and aware of all policies, procedures and prohibited activities. Likewise, site coordinators undergo ongoing training specific to AmeriCorps requirements.

DPS' AmeriCorps program has strong systems in place to effectively manage members. For the 2015-2016 Grant Year, additional staff members have been allocated to enhance and support member training and management. The program already has a robust training program, enabling members to spend more than 10% of their service hours receiving trainings related to member service, the AmeriCorps experience, and Life After AmeriCorps. Over the existence of the program, member satisfaction has remained at 90% for member trainings. Additional member trainers have been allocated to ensure that members receive sufficient one-on-one, small group and whole group training, Civic Reflection and team building.

In addition to building on the program's strong member training foundation, additional staff training has been implemented to make certain that members adhere to program policies, procedures, and prohibited activities, as well as ensuring members remain on track with service hours and record service hours accurately in OnCorps. Additional staff has been allocated to execute the program's internal compliance monitoring plan, which includes monthly school visits, ongoing school trainings, and multiple member file checks over the course of the grant. This system was used effectively when the program originally expanded from 20 members to 88 members over a two-year period.

Over twenty additional full-time site coordinators have been hired, such that the member to site supervisor remains at or below 1:10. These site coordinators provide daily member supervision. This low ratio helps ensure that the program is able to identify and respond quickly to member needs. It also allows for careful oversight of member activities to ensure compliance with grant requirements.

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Additionally, the program's affiliation with DPS' Denver Math Fellows will strengthen the program's overall ability to manage the increased number of members and provide targeted support for member activities.

Finally, OMNI institute provides ongoing training and technical assistance to ensure data quality for all AmeriCorps activities. In addition to internal data checks that occur on a weekly basis, twice each year, program data undergoes a thorough review and quality check through OMNI Institute's Efforts to Outcomes system.

### **B. BUDGET CLARIFICATION:**

#### **RESPONSE TO QUESTION 1:**

This program has requested the lowest possible amount of funds for an AmeriCorps grant at \$800 per MSY. The school district will match the requested funds with \$10 million to support the expansion of the program, dollars that will fund all member stipends, site coordinators, and additional program managers to ensure adequate support and successful program oversight. CNCS funds will support member training and other operating costs. Furthermore, the most important aspect of this funding request remains the AmeriCorps brand, benefits, program model, and education award for members. Without these elements, a program like the Urban Education Service Corps could not be successful in serving DPS' most vulnerable students.

#### **RESPONSE TO QUESTION 2:**

Fixed amount applicants should enter the total dollar amount of funds that are used to run the program, other than CNCS share, in the "Other Revenue Funds" field of the Funding/Demographics section of the application. Please update the Other Revenue field and the match fields of the application. Completed in eGrants.

#### **RESPONSE TO QUESTION 3:**

DPS is applying for an Education Award AmeriCorps program, which is the lowest MSY for this grant. The current MSY is \$800 and cannot be decreased for Education Award programs per CNCS guidelines.

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### C. PERFORMANCE MEASURE CLARIFICATION:

General Clarifications:

#### RESPONSE TO QUESTION 1:

Attendance Targets ED1 were reduced from 4,000 to 3,000 as a result of the elimination of 150 part-time member slots. Accordingly, ED2 targets were reduced from 3,500 to 2,500 and ED27B targets were reduced from 1,750 to 1,250.

#### RESPONSE TO QUESTION 2:

The current data systems used to collect data records for each student's daily attendance and the administering of the Scholastic Math Inventory (SMI) Pre/Post Test are separate and unique to tracking the specific data. This system will prevent double counting.

Increase Student Attendance:

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 1: Students referred to AmeriCorps must have an average attendance rate below 95% to be eligible for AmeriCorps services. The district's Infinite Campus (IC) system used to track student attendance and academics is automated and can identify the average daily student attendance rate so that schools will refer appropriate students for services. In addition, members will also have access to Infinite Campus, which provides a breakdown on the average daily student attendance rate, to ensure all students served meet eligibility requirements.

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 2: Students are considered to have completed the program if they remain enrolled in school throughout the duration of the attendance intervention.

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 3: Attendance Targets ED1 were reduced from 4,000 to 3,000 as a result of the elimination of 150 part-time member slots. Accordingly, ED2 targets were reduced from 3,500 to 2,500 and ED27B targets were reduced from 1,750 to 1,250. These new targets and anticipated outcomes align with the data reviewed during the past five years of DPS AmeriCorps attendance interventions. On average 50% of students who complete the program improve attendance rates.

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Increase Student Proficiency in Mathematics:

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 1: Students referred to math tutoring must be below math proficiency as illustrated through the pre-SMI testing and review of current State Standardized test scores in mathematics to participate in tutoring interventions. The district's Infinite Campus (IC) system used to track student academics is automated and can identify the current test scores so that appropriate students receive services.

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 2: The targets for students who will complete tutoring (ED2) were reduced from 2,800 to 2,500 as a result of this feedback. Accordingly, ED5 targets were reduced from 1,400 to 1,250. These new targets and anticipated outcomes align with the data reviewed for DPS AmeriCorps interventions. In addition, many students arrive at the next grade level significantly below proficient in mathematics and other important subjects. As a result, DPS' performance measures and targets might be ambitious given that so many students tested below proficiency. Accordingly, roughly 44.9% of students' SMI results remained the same or declined, however, tutoring resources used to target the lowest performing schools show promise, given that 52% of student did improve 1 level on their SMI test.

D. Strategic Engagement Slots

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 1:

In addition, 8 half-time Strategic Engagement Slots will be requested representing 1% of the overall AmeriCorps MSY. Please see an explanation of the program's plan for outreach and recruitment of members of the disability community in number 2.

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 2:

Denver Public Schools (DPS) plans to recruit and enroll 8 half-time AmeriCorps Members with disabilities. The DPS AmeriCorps program has developed a number of partnerships and internal systems to recruit, engage and support members with disabilities. DPS will recruit members via established relationships with Vocational Rehabilitation Services, the American Council of the Blind of Colorado, and Easter Seals Denver. Each of these organizations has provided recruitment support, as well as training to DPS staff and AmeriCorps Members, on inclusion and engagement of individuals

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with disabilities over the past 6 years. Additionally, the DPS AmeriCorps Program will coordinate with internal departments to provide support and training for both individuals with disabilities, as well as the larger AmeriCorps team and staff affiliated with the program. These departments include the DPS Transitions Team, which supports young adults age 17-21 with disabilities as they transition from school to post secondary and career fields, and the Department of Student Services which provides support to students with disabilities. Finally, the Program's affiliation with the DPS Family and Community Engagement Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Program will allow qualifying members with disabilities to receive targeted resources which support school and career development including transportation assistance, career planning counseling, etc.

### CLARIFICATION SUMMARY (Part II)

#### RESPONSE TO QUESTION 1:

Correction: 20-25 additional Site Coordinators will be hired as a result of the expansion. Eight current Site Coordinators are already providing supervision to 88 current AmeriCorps members serving at 9 Turnaround and low performing DPS Schools. DPS is currently undergoing the process to hire the additional required positions in preparation for next year's expansion. There are no individuals performing AmeriCorps duties that are not AmeriCorps members. DPS currently has 40 full-time Denver Math Fellows AmeriCorps members serving at the following Turnaround schools: 1) Bruce Randolph; 2) Trevista; 3) Lake; 4) Greenlee; 5) CMS; 6) Castro; 7) Cheltenham; 8) Fairview and 9) Ashley.

#### RESPONSE TO QUESTION 2:

If this proposed AmeriCorps expansion is approved by CNCS, Denver Math Fellows AmeriCorps will expand to an additional 47 low performing schools in the district so no individuals and staff will be supplanted, displaced or duplicated. This tutoring program is very specific to the Blueprint model.

#### RESPONSE TO QUESTION 3:

The Labor Concurrence is not applicable and does not apply to this DPS grant application for the reasons outlined below:

\* There are no employees engaged in the same or similar work being proposed

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- \* Denver Math Fellows are not represented by a labor union
- \* AmeriCorps members will not be placed in positions that have been recently occupied by staff
- \* AmeriCorps members will not be placed into any positions were staff have resigned or been discharged

### RESPONSE TO QUESTION 4:

As fixed amount applicants do not have a match requirement, please remove the match information from the Funding/Demographics section of the application, only keeping that data in Other Revenue Funds. Completed in egrants.

### Performance Measure Clarifications:

### RESPONSE TO QUESTION 1:

On average, eighty to ninety percent of targeted students attend Title I schools and receive Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL). The criteria for these programs are that students and families have incomes at or below the poverty line. Accordingly, DPS demographic data consistently shows that DPS students who are economically disadvantaged, have special needs, and who are below proficient in mathematics and other subjects overwhelming attend lower performing schools. As such, these students will be targeted for the Student Attendance Intervention. DPS uses current data for FRL in these schools in determining the number of students who will be targeted and served in this grant application. This number of students is listed in the performance measures.

### RESPONSE TO QUESTION 2:

The method DPS used in determining the outcome of students who are projected to improve attendance is by using current data from the AmeriCorps attendance intervention that has been in place for over 5 years at current schools being served. The number of students projected to improve attendance for ED27B is being extrapolated from the prior results at current underperforming schools, which shows that on average 45% to 50% improve daily attendance rates. Given the scope of the proposed expansion there is really no real way to determine the outcomes without 1-2 years of reviewing new data across all school sites that will be served through this proposed expansion.

### Increase Student Proficiency in Mathematics:

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### RESPONSE TO QUESTION 1:

On average, eighty to ninety percent of targeted students attend Title I schools and receive Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL). The criteria for these programs are that students and families have incomes at or below the poverty line. According, DPS demographic data consistently shows that DPS students who are economically disadvantaged, have special needs, and who are below proficient in mathematics and other subjects overwhelming attend lower performing DPS schools. As such, these students will be targeted for the Math Tutoring Intervention. DPS uses current data for FRL in these schools in determining the number of students who will be targeted and served in this grant application. This number of students is listed in the performance measures.

The targets in ED2 were reduced as a result of the questions raised in the initial request for clarification. The CNCS review panel raised concerns about the current targets being ambitious. DPS only has data and results for one year at the current Turnaround AmeriCorps school sites served by Denver Math Fellows unlike the attendance results, of which there is five years of data to review. In addition, DPS proposes to reduce the Performance Measures in ED2 as a result of 150 part-time parents/student slots being removed from the grant application. Data indicates that parent engagement is a key contributor to increase academic performance. Without the support of parents in schools, the outcomes will be impacted. DPS will continue to actively engage parents to serve as volunteers in schools. DPS goals is to exceed all PM but wants to be realistic given the targeted population at low performing schools and reduction in parent/student part-time slots.

### RESPONSE TO QUESTION 2:

This tutoring program is very specific to provide the targeted math intervention discussed in the application narrative. Based on last year's data, 91% of students attending Turnaround schools scored Below Basic (BB) or Basic (equate to below proficiency) on their first SMI. 47.2% of students remained below basic, and (52.8%) improved at least one Proficiency category on the post SMI. Given these result this program model shows the most significant and promising results. This also demonstrates the overwhelming need for the AmeriCorps Denver Math Fellows intervention. Given the academic improvements, this intervention is a worthwhile investment to support improved student academic gains.

## Narratives

Strategic Engagement Slots:

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 1: Due to an eGrants issue, DPS was not able to add 8 HT slots, but this is the intent. DPS request 4 MSY/8HT slots due to the population being recruited with the support of the Dept. of Student Services.

End of Summary.

### Continuation Changes

N/A

### Grant Characteristics