

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Section 1: Needs of the students, families, and community members to be served

Basic demographic characteristics of the students, family members, and community members

The Red Clay Community Schools project is located in the heart of Wilmington, a medium-sized city in northern Delaware, situated along the Delaware River in New Castle County and bordering Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland. Wilmington is the largest population center in the state with 71,525 individuals residing within the city limits (U.S. Census Bureau estimate, 2013). African Americans are the largest population group in Wilmington at 58 percent, followed by whites (33 percent). Latinos/Hispanics of any race account for 12 percent of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Wilmington is a city beset by poverty, limited employment opportunities, and violent crime. For example, while the state of Delaware as a whole has a median household income of \$60,119 with 11.5% of persons living below the poverty level, Wilmington's median family income is only \$39,761 and 23.5% of its residents live below the poverty level – a rate that is twice that of the State.

(<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/10/1077580.html>). And according to the website *NeighborhoodScout*, which aggregates raw crime data from all 17,000 law enforcement agencies in America and then develops a violent crime rate per 1,000 population, Wilmington ranks as the 15th most dangerous city in the U.S. Violent offenses included forcible rape, murder and non-negligent manslaughter, armed robbery, and aggravated assault, including assault with a deadly weapon. Additionally, *NeighborhoodScout's* analysis shows that Wilmington has one of the highest murder rates in the nation when compared with cities and towns for all sizes of population. In December of 2013, Wilmington City Council passed a resolution asking the CDC to examine and respond to what it calls a pandemic of gun violence and homicides, and on June

13, 2014, the City announced that the CDC had accepted its invitation to study the impact of lethal violence within its borders (<http://www.wdde.org/63362-cdc-investigate-violence-wilmington>). *The News Journal*, Delaware’s largest newspaper, maintains data that demonstrates the upward trend in shootings in Wilmington:

Year	# Shooting Incidents	# Homicide Incidents	# Victims	# Killed
2011	88	21	95	22
2012	96	23	119	25
2013	127	16	154	18

<http://data.delawareonline.com/webapps/crime/>

The defined local community for the Red Clay Community Schools initiative (RCCS) is a subsection of the City of Wilmington defined as those living within the contiguous census tracts that comprise the feeder patterns for two local elementary schools in the Red Clay Consolidated School District. These census tracts include 3, 4, 5, 14, 22, and 23, with a total population of 18,417 (www.ci.wilmington.de.us/residents/cityfacts). These tracts include neighborhoods with concentrated poverty, high rates of crime and violence, unemployment and other risk factors. For the children who face the neighborhoods’ many challenges, the picture can be bleak. In order to begin to understand the level of need in the community, for a moment, imagine that you are a child growing up here....

...First, your chances of being poor are very high. Child poverty rates in almost every census tract in the identified neighborhoods are higher than the New Castle County average with one tract (22) almost three times as high (48.9 % as compared to 18.5% in the county) (*Kids Count in Delaware*, 2014, page 208).

...It is also likely that your mother is a single parent. In two of the feeder pattern's six census tracts, between 26.23 and 46.79% of households were headed by a single female (*Kids Count in Delaware*, 2014, p. 110).

...You may not be able to envision a stable future. Wilmington also has twice as many teens age 15 to 19 giving birth (74.1 per 1,000) than the state (36.6) or the nation (37.1) (*Kids Count*, 2014, p. 94). In all tracts in the identified Wilmington area, at least 12% and up to 40% of the adults are high school dropouts (*Kids Count*, 2014, p. 84).

...And you are likely to feel unsafe. As described, violent crime in the city is common, with shootings at an all-time high.

Magnitude of the needs to be addressed by the project

While a good education may be the strongest chance for a healthy and productive future, the identified neighborhood schools face significant challenges. Warner Elementary School is home to 559 PK–5 students (fall 2013). Most of the students are African American (73.9%), and nearly all are from low-income families (93.5%) (DE Dept. of Education, 2013-2014). The entire student body is Free and Reduced Lunch-eligible. Warner has not met requirements for Annual Yearly Progress. In 2012-2013, only 33% of Warner's 3rd grade students met the reading proficiency standard on the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS), and only 31% met the math standard (Dept. of Education School Profiles, DE Dept. of Education, 2012-2013). In addition, in 2012-13, 179 students were expelled or suspended (612 occurrences), a rate of 33%, which is more than twice the RCCSD and state rates of 14% (DDOE, 2012-13).

The school climate and academic results have been impacted by high rates of pupil transiency throughout the year. Delays in obtaining student information from other districts/states hinder the ability to appropriately address needs with correct interventions in real

time - greatly impacting teaching and learning outcomes. Warner Elementary experiences the district's highest student homeless numbers. In addition, 20% of the student population (over 110 pupils) has been referred to the visiting teacher for attendance issues and over 40% of those children missed an average of 30 days; 60% of 4th graders indicate they have attended 3 or more schools; and over 51% of the children in the building have an incarcerated relative (data presented in *Project LAUNCH application* prepared by DE Division of Prevention & Behavioral Health for submission to SAMHSA under opportunity SM-14-004, February 2014)

Shortlidge Elementary School enrolls 329 K–5 children (fall 2013); 93.3% of the students are African American, with the vast majority from low-income families (93.3%) (DDOE, 2013-14). The entire student body is eligible for free and reduced school lunch. Like Warner, Shortlidge has not made Adequate Yearly Progress, with only 35% of 3rd grade students meeting the reading and math proficiency standards on the DCAS in 2012-13 (Dept. of Education School Profiles, DE Dept. of Education, 2012-2013). In addition, in the 2012-13 school year, 94 students had disciplinary issues, accounting for 218 suspensions – a rate of 30% as compared to the RCCSD and state rates of 14% (DDOE, 2012-13). Much like at Warner Elementary, the climate and academic results at Shortlidge have been impacted by high rates of pupil transiency throughout the year, as well as the unexpected arrival of students from other schools and districts. Students arrive drastically behind academically, some without their IEPs, having not been assessed at all during their previous educational experience (*Project LAUNCH application*, February 2014).

Specific gaps in services, infrastructures, or opportunities to be addressed

In 2011, Nemours Health & Prevention, the policy and advocacy arm of Delaware's local children's health services network, convened a planning process with the Red Clay Consolidated

School District and a number of stakeholders, including Children & Families First, to identify gaps in health-related services for children and families served by Warner and Shortlidge Elementary schools. Their process identified and addressed a number of unmet needs around:

- Emotional/behavioral health: more than 300 children assessed with significant behavioral health needs, ultimately resulting in hiring of additional behavioral health staff on-site with agreement from Medicaid that services would be reimbursable
- Physical Health: High numbers of children visiting school nurse who lacked health information, resulting in basic data sharing agreement between Nemours pediatric health practices and Warner and Shortlidge

However, the group also identified other needs that were not successfully addressed during this abbreviated planning process, including increased opportunities for parent and community engagement, professional development around behavior management, long-term evaluation of data, and more. The group established a long-term goal for the RCCSD and the leadership of the Warner and Shortlidge Elementary Schools to work collaboratively with community partners to develop community schools at these two school sites based on a coordinated school health approach that offers services and resources based on the needs of the students and their families. The desired outcome from the establishment of community schools was for the children of the Warner and Shortlidge Elementary Schools to improve their academic achievement and ability to practice healthy behaviors and for their families to become active partners with the schools in promoting their children's success. Therefore, in early 2012, RCCSD and CFF began an official partnership to work to develop community schools at Warner and Shortlidge.

Section 2: Partnering Entities and Coordination of Resources

CFF and RCCSD have an MOU in place guiding our current work, as well as a Consortium Agreement for the development of this application (included in Appendix D).

Children & Families First – A Delaware non-profit that helps children facing adversity on their journey to adulthood. CFF uses proven methods to help families raise their children so they can flourish. In existence for 130 years, CFF offers a comprehensive continuum of services, serving more than 35,000 people each year. Since 2009, CFF has offered community school programming in the Christina School District, and since 2012, has partnered with Red Clay Consolidated School District to offer services at Warner and Shortlidge.

Red Clay Consolidated School District -- The mission of the Red Clay Consolidated School District (RCCSD) is to deliver a quality education in a safe and secure learning environment where instructional services and programs meet the needs of a diverse student population. The District's vision is that all members of the Red Clay community demonstrate the belief and expectation that every student be given equal opportunity and equal access to a high quality inclusive education with the ultimate goal of being college and/or career ready. RCCSD partners with CFF on its community schools project at Warner and Shortlidge, providing not only funding but also linkages to data, staffing, facilities and other resources.

Together, we place a significant emphasis on the development of relationships with partners that include other nonprofits, cultural institutions, corporate and educational entities in the community. CFF's Site Coordinators work hand-in-hand with school leadership to ensure that services are both well-coordinated and targeted to the needs of students, families, and the local community. By leveraging the resources of partners, we are able to greatly enrich the service offerings in support of the overall project goals. Our application MOU (included in Appendix B) includes the following partners:

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Delaware – providing on-site coordination of mentoring services which pair students at Warner and Shortlidge with volunteer mentors.

Boys and Girls Club – providing Before/Afterschool and summer programming at Shortlidge.

Delaware Center for Economic Education -- working to ensure that economics, personal finance and entrepreneurship are integrated into the K-12 core curriculum to prepare students to make informed decisions in today’s global economy. The Center will support the RCCS through professional development for K-12 teachers, special programs for students, and family events for students and their parents.

Delaware Readiness Teams/ Hanover Dream Team – a community-based initiative made up of school and community leaders, early childhood providers, and families, working to build partnerships to ensure coordination between early childhood and the K-12 system in the neighborhoods surrounding Warner and Shortlidge so that children have the critical resources and supports to enter kindergarten ready to learn and achieve early school success.

Food Bank of Delaware – providing multiple nutrition-related services to persons served by the RCCS initiative, including: Kid CHEF a skills and knowledge building program that teaches children about healthy eating and how to prepare nutritious foods on their own; a Backpack Feeding program which provides backpacks filled with food on weekends/holidays; and SNAP Outreach, reaching out to potentially eligible citizens to put “healthy food within reach” of people who may not be able to afford it.

Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids – designing and implementing food and garden-based educational programs at local schools that support content standards and promote student health. HFHK currently provides food and garden programs at Shortlidge, with a goal of expansion to Warner.

Project CHANCE—providing before and afterschool and summer programming at Warner.

Warner Arts Alliance – providing arts-based education and experiences to students at Warner with partners that include the Music School of DE, the DE Art Museum, Opera Delaware, Christina Cultural Arts Center, DE Symphony, and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

Westside Family Healthcare – Delaware’s largest non-profit federally qualified community health center providing family medical, prenatal and maternity, dental, and integrated behavioral health care in six health center locations, including two sites within two miles of the targeted community schools. Westside will provide access to high-quality healthcare to children, families, and community members served by the RCCS, regardless of ability to pay, in support of desired outcomes of improved access to health care and improved overall health.

YMCA of Delaware – offering an urban community youth development center in Wilmington, among its other programming that includes facility branches and before and after school services. The YMCA of Delaware provides programming for students at the Red Clay Community Schools focused on youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

Additional partners include:

Capital One – with credit card operations headquartered in Wilmington, Capital One believes strongly in investing in the local community, offering time, talent, and resources. Capital One has been the leading corporate supporter of the Red Clay Community Schools initiative. This includes not only direct support for our work and our partners’ work in the schools but also access to their connections to broaden support to the project. Capital One supported library upgrades and facilities improvements at the schools, and through their application to Heart of America Foundation, Warner School was awarded a library “READesign” grant which culminated in a library makeover in October, 2013 as well as the donation of research volumes

and take-home books to the students at both schools. Capital One Associates provide classroom-based financial literacy sessions on a regular basis in each of the schools, serve as mentors through Big Brothers Big Sisters, provide volunteer service for beautification projects, and much more. (Letter of Support included in Appendix D)

Delaware Division of Prevention & Behavioral Health – provides Family Crisis Therapists at both Warner and Shortlidge to support children with behavioral health needs. In addition, DPBHS recently submitted a proposal to SAMHSA to develop a Project LAUNCH program targeting Warner and Shortlidge designed to promote the wellness of young children from birth to 8 years by addressing the physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of their development. If funded, DPBHS will work in tandem with the RCCS to ensure coordination of child-serving systems and the integration of behavioral and physical health services. (Letter of support included in Appendix D).

Nemours Health & Prevention Services (NHPS) is part of the Nemours non-profit children's health organization, offering family-centered care in children's hospitals and clinics in Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Florida, as well as research, education and advocacy. NHPS works with people who influence the well-being of children to help make kids the healthiest in the nation, both physically and emotionally. NHPS provides linkages between the children served by the RCCS project and the Nemours health clinics as appropriate, and provides data on health indicators. (Letter of support included in Appendix D.)

Coordination of Resources

Since 2012, CFF and the RCCSD have been working together to align resources and services. The implementation of Community Schools helps the RCCSD achieve several components of its strategic plan, including:

- engaging parents and the community in the education of students (*Preparing Today for Tomorrow*, RCCSD Strategic Plan 2012-2016, page 15) and
- building strong relationships with students, families, and community partners (RCCSD Strategic Plan, page 18).

The RCCSD’s Superintendent, Manager for Federal and Regulated Programs/School Improvement, CFF’s CEO, and Program Manager for Community Schools meet regularly to coordinate efforts across the project. At the school level, the Site Coordinators are critical to coordination, working closely with principals and other school staff to enhance services for students and families. Through this proposal, we will add Service Navigators to the staff at each school to help connect families to needed resources in the community (one of these Navigators will be provided as in-kind support to the project). In addition, we will hire Connectors who will work with identified cohorts of families specifically around connection to and engagement in early learning services from point of entry through their school career in the RCCSD.

Section 3: Memorandum of understanding between the applicant and all partners

Children & Families First serves as the lead partner in the Red Clay Community Schools initiative, through a consortium agreement with the Red Clay Consolidated School District (the LEA). (Agreement included in Appendix D.) In addition, services and supports will be provided by a range of partners, as described in Question 2. A detailed MOU is provided in Appendix B.

Section 4: Organizational Capacity

About Children & Families First

Since 1884, Children & Families first (CFF) has served Delawareans in need, with a mission to help children facing adversity on their journey to adulthood. CFF uses proven methods to help families raise their children so they can flourish. CFF’s vision is communities where

children are nurtured and safe, individuals are valued, and families are strong. Services are provided by a staff of 275 in six locations throughout Delaware (including one in the schools' catchment area) as well as in homes, schools, and other locations. CFF is positioned to meet changing community needs through replication of evidence-based practices and rigorous outcomes management. CFF has strong fiscal and organizational management, with professional finance, human resources, information technology, and development/marketing departments. A committed Board of Directors, with an active committee structure, guides the organization. CFF is accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA). We are a member of the Alliance for Children & Families and Children's Home Society of America as well as a partner agency of the United Way of Delaware. CFF offers a broad array of services in support of the well-being of children and families:

Healthy Babies: We connect pregnant women with health care and social services to make sure that their babies are born and stay healthy. Our evidence-based *Nurse Family Partnership* (NFP) targets first time, low-income pregnant women and *Smart Start/Healthy Families America* helps women who do not meet NFP criteria.

Early Childhood: *Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)* assures that children in licensed child care receive nutritionally balanced meals. *Delaware Stars for Early Success* provides technical assistance to child care programs as they engage in quality improvement.

Positive Parenting: *Strengthening Families Program* offers family skills training to vulnerable families including those with substance issues and those reuniting from foster care; *Foster Care & Adoption* is provided to children and teens who cannot remain at home; *Parent Aide* serves families that have an open Division of Family Services case by matching them with a Parenting Coach.

Supporting Teens: *Seaford House* is a residential and day treatment program for adolescents with a mental health diagnosis; *Intensive Outpatient Services* are designed to serve youth with a primary mental health diagnosis by offering individual and family therapy in conjunction with case management; *Functional Family Therapy* provides counseling for youth ages 10 to 18 and their families; *Family Assessment and Intervention Response (FAIR)* uses evidence-based services to help keep teens out of foster care; *Adolescent Resource Center (ARC)* provides education on human sexuality-related topics in elementary, middle and high schools, as well medical services at clinics in Wilmington and Dover.

Family Resources: *Eastside, Red Clay, and Seaford Community Schools* are partnerships between CFF and identified school districts to ensure that a wide-range of vital in-house health, social services, parent engagement activities, and cultural enrichment opportunities are provided; *AccessCare Child Care Referral Service* helps users identify child care centers, family and child care homes, preschools, school-age programs and camps; *RespiteOnline Referral Service* allows individuals to search for Delaware providers who offer respite care (short-term relief for primary caregivers from the demands of care of a loved one with a disability or special need); *Kinship Navigator* is a free service for families who are caring for other relative's children. A navigator speaks with the family to determine needs and provide information and referrals.

Workplace Supports: *Rise Up* helps those moving from welfare to work succeed in employment.

Older Adults: The *Grand Time Off Program* provides respite for grandparents and relatives who are raising other family members' children in their homes.

In 2009, at the culmination of a community planning process on the Eastside of Wilmington, JPMorgan Chase issued an RFP for an agency to take leadership of the development and implementation of an Eastside Community Schools initiative. CFF was selected, and with

funding from JPMorgan Chase, began to develop a program framework targeting three schools in the on Wilmington's Eastside. CFF hired a site coordinator and then, with funding from 21st Century Community Learning Centers, began to provide afterschool and summer programming. In 2010, CFF was a successful applicant to the FSCS competition, which allowed for a significant expansion of services as part of the Eastside Community Schools (ECS) initiative, which continue today. In 2012, CFF began a partnership with RCCSD to develop community schools at two of its inner-city elementary schools, Shortlidge Academy and Warner Elementary School. It is important to note that these two Red Clay schools are within two miles of the schools we are working with through the ECS project which affords opportunities for systemic approaches to problems like neighborhood violence, transience, and school climate.

About Red Clay Consolidated School District

The Red Clay Consolidated School District was formed in 1981, one of four districts created when the New Castle County School District was reorganized following federally-mandated desegregation. Red Clay includes northwestern sections of the City of Wilmington and its suburbs, all the way to the Pennsylvania state line. Red Clay is the 2nd largest public school district in the state. The district serves more than 15,000 students in 14 elementary schools, six middle schools, five high schools, four special education schools, and three charter schools. Of the more than 1,900 full-time employees, about 1,300 are teachers. The district operates on a budget of more than \$215 million. About one-third of which is derived from local property taxes and the remainder from state and federal funds.

Red Clay is a comprehensive K-12 public school system with excellent educational opportunities for students of all levels. 100% of district teachers are state certified. The instructional program begins with the mastery of basic skills by all students and is centered

around individualized programs to meet the needs of each student, from the least able to the most gifted. All Red Clay schools feature libraries, and there are planetariums and observatories, swimming pools, science labs, technology labs, industrial arts shops, and theatre and music facilities in the district. Other features of the district include: college prep, vocational, business and agriculture courses; programs for gifted students from age four through grade 12; free and appropriate programs for children requiring special education, based on the least restrictive environment; and in-school and out-of-school alternative programs for disruptive students.

Experience partnering with the target schools and other partner entities

In July 2012, as a result of a planning process conducted in partnership with Nemours, CFF and the Red Clay Consolidated School District (RCCSD) successfully launched the Red Clay Community Schools Initiative. The purpose of the partnership is to transform Warner Elementary School and Shortlidge Academy into Community Schools to support parent engagement, student achievement, and community improvement.

At the outset of the project, Red Clay Consolidated School district provided seed funding, which was then supplemented by private funding from Capital One and Bank of America to support staffing, build parent and community engagement, and offer enhanced learning activities at the schools. CFF hired Site Coordinators for each school, with oversight by CFF's Community Schools Program Manager. CFF manages the day-to-day operations of the program, maintains regular communication and consultation with school and district representatives and implements the program's events and activities regularly at each school. CFF's Community Schools Program Manager and the Warner and Shortlidge Site Coordinators meet regularly with Principals and School District personnel. CFF also links consultative support to the project from the Children's Aid Society National Center for Community Schools.

The RCCSD has integrated Community Schools operations into the school facilities at Warner and Shortlidge Schools. At Warner, a community schools center on the first floor accommodates office space for CFF's Community School Site Coordinator, as well as school behavioral and intervention staff. At Shortlidge an entire section of the school has been upgraded as the *Shortlidge Community School Center*, with a separate entrance, space for parent resource room and mentoring, food pantry and other resources, as well as work areas for the Community School Site Coordinator and mentoring staff.

Our staff currently provide facilitative support to school activities and events, enrichment programs for students, and learning and networking opportunities for parents and community members. Our Site Coordinators work with school staff and community partners to ensure that parents and community members are aware of opportunities for engagement and are more connected to services that benefit their families.

The RCCS project has been working over the past two years learning, planning, and building relationships so that we are able to align resources and develop a comprehensive continuum of services. In partnership with local funders and service providers, we have leveraged significant dollars and services in support of our efforts. The FSCS program offers a unique opportunity to make the RCCS program much more robust, by enhancing the infrastructure to position community schools for growth, providing and coordinating critical services, as well as increasing support for parent and community engagement. It will also allow us to test new models of service, including a cohort-based Achievement Zone that will work with parents from the very beginning of their child's life to set the expectation that their child **will** graduate from high school and **will** go on to post-secondary education, training, and/or employment.

Examples of how CFF has responded to challenges working with these schools and entities

The RCCSD has a core belief in the value of innovation, and as such, has been a true advocate for the development of community schools at Warner and Shortlidge, providing staff support, linkages to stakeholders and services, and some funding. However, funding is a continual challenge facing the RCCS initiative. CFF has successfully leveraged our relationships with both Bank of America and Capital One in to garner financial support for the RCCS. Our relationship with Capital One also led to an extensive library makeover at Warner, volumes donated to both schools, financial literacy training in classrooms, and school beautification projects. In addition, we have worked with Capital One to develop funding support to program partners such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, who provides mentoring services at both schools. CFF has also leveraged our relationship with the Children’s Aid Society in support of the RCCS project. They provide technical assistance and mentoring to both our RCCS and our ECS projects, and we have been able to have Site Coordinator training and exchange of “case studies” across the two projects.

Lessons learned from similar work or previous community-school efforts

Children & Families First has been operating community schools programming for five years now, filled with extensive learning. Our experiences have reinforced the importance of:

- Collaboration and communication across all partners and participants;
- Garnering buy-in from not only District and school leadership, but also teachers and staff, parents, community members, and stakeholders;
- Development of feedback mechanisms for community input to drive programming; and
- Leveraging resources to maximize support to the project

Perhaps the most important lesson we have learned is around the importance of commitment to the project and the community – community schools take time to grow, mature, and bear fruit. As the project lead, CFF has to be clear about the vision for the future and work diligently to support the long-term sustainability of the initiative.

Infrastructure to support implementation and sustainability of the community school.

CFF has been operating Community Schools since 2009, building significant infrastructure to carry out our work. We offer community schools programming in seven schools, across three school districts. In addition to federal funding from a 2010 FSCS grant, we have raised significant financial support from funders that include the Christina, Seaford and Red Clay School Districts, the United Way of Delaware, JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, and Capital One. We employ a Community Schools Program Manager and Site Coordinators at each school which allows for important economies of scale. We will provide the full-time salary of a Service Navigator as well as two series of the Strengthening Families Program as in-kind match to the RCCS project each year. Documentation of Match included in Appendix C.

Experience building relationships and community support to achieve results

Through our Community Schools work, CFF has gained significant experience in building relationships and community supports. In addition to building critical funding support from an array of grantors, we have developed well-established relationships with a wide range of community partners, including those described in our MOU. These relationships are critical to the success of our community schools efforts, bringing a wealth of services, resources, and expertise to the project that CFF, districts, and schools could not provide on their own. Our work with community schools has increased our involvement in education reform efforts, and Children

& Families First's CEO is a leading voice for the community schools movement in Delaware, and the importance of connecting with early childhood initiatives in our state.

Experience collecting and using data for decision-making and continuous improvement.

CFF has a strong Performance/Quality Improvement (PQI) program, including records review, client satisfaction, and outcomes monitoring. All agency service units are required to collect both demographic and outcomes data, using the agency's internal data collection system, as well as other program-specific data management systems as required. CFF employs a full-time Database Manager, tasked with maintaining system security, tracking data quality, providing staff training and assistance, and producing data reports for both internal and external use. CFF uses data continuously to make program improvements and mid-course corrections. By focusing strategically on performance, CFF is able to make informed decisions about the effectiveness of its programs and then refine or even discontinue service. In addition, through our 2010 Full-Service Community Schools grant, we have had the opportunity to work closely with an evaluator on our Eastside Community Schools project (we will retain the same evaluator as part of the RCCS project). Current evaluation activities include: collecting and analyzing student level data for students participating in the Eastside Community Schools initiative; playing a lead role in analysis of quantitative data required for reporting to Federal and other funders; working with CFF to develop and implement data collection methods and instruments; working with CFF to build the necessary collaborations and systems with Delaware Dept. of Education, School District and School leaders in regards to data needs; facilitating group discussions, focus groups, interviews and other methods necessary to support evaluation redesign work; and collecting qualitative data for reporting on progress in achieving benchmarks and targeted outcomes within the Federal FSCS goals and performance measures.

Section 5: Comprehensive plan based on results-focused partnerships

Since its inception, the RCCS effort has evolved purposefully. As a result of its planning process with Nemours, RCCSD made the decision to include the development of community schools at Warner and Shortlidge as part of its overall school improvement strategy. RCCSD then partnered with Children & Families First to develop services and strategies in support of the FSCS purpose to “provide comprehensive academic, social, and health services for students, students’ family members, and community members that will result in improved educational outcomes for children” (FSCS Application document, p. 2). Our early work together has resulted in enhanced coordination of services at Warner and Shortlidge Elementary Schools as well as significant leveraged funding in support of our efforts.

Moving forward, CFF will coordinate all activities proposed in the grant application; as such CFF fully commits its organizational assets and the resources provided under the grant to ensure that all required planning, implementation, and evaluation activities are successfully completed. CFF will support the infrastructure of the RCCS effort through a comprehensive staffing plan and management structure. Private funding currently supports the costs associated with full-time Site Coordinators and some student enrichment and parent engagement activities. Funding from the FSCS grant will allow for the significant enhancement of our work, with a goal to achieve the results described in the application document: “improved attendance and student achievement, increased family and community engagement, and improved student behavior and youth development” (FSCS Application document, pp. 7-8). With FSCS funding, we will:

Develop a Shortlidge-Warner Achievement Zone (SWAZ) focused on building the connection between the early childhood and the K-5 education systems using existing evidence-based home

visiting services and other early learning resources. (This concept is based on the work of the Northside Achievement Zone in Minneapolis, MN.) The SWAZ will include:

- The recruitment of two small neighborhood-based cohorts of 15 to 20 parents: 1) pregnant women and new moms served by either the Nurse-Family Partnership or Healthy Families America; 2) parents of young children enrolled in pre-K or Kindergarten at Warner or Shortlidge. These cohorts will be served by CFF “Connectors,” trained peer mentors from the local community (to be hired). Connectors will work with parents to identify needs and barriers, set family goals, encourage behaviors that support academic outcomes, and connect them with promising and proven strategies to support success. By developing Achievement Plans, families will put their kids on a path to college—partnering with their Connector through every step on their journey. By targeting these two different cohorts, we will be able to compare outcomes of a very early intervention strategy to those of an elementary age intervention.
- Participation in the Red Clay Consolidated School District’s recently-developed Parent University, designed to increase parent involvement in the schools and empower parents to raise children who are successful in school and in life. Parent University emphasizes the District’s Strategic Plan goals that impact the achievement gap, literacy growth, and college and career readiness. All Shortlidge and Warner parents, as well as parents enrolled in the SWAZ Early Learning cohort, will be eligible to participate in Parent University offerings. Parent University classes will give parents the tools they need to reach the goals laid out in their Achievement Plans. The skills they develop in class will be reinforced through one-on-one interactions with their Connector.

Place one full-time Service Navigator at each school (one provided in-kind to the project) to ensure that children and families have access to the resources that they need in the community to achieve success;

Provide two series of the evidence-based Strengthening Families Program each year, as in-kind support to the project;

Offer regular parent enrichment and community engagement activities

Work with MOU partners to provide access to services that include mentoring, nutrition, health, financial literacy, cultural enrichment, and more; and

Conduct rigorous evaluation of our efforts in partnership with our current community schools evaluator, Audrey Noble, Ph.D.

A more detailed description of the services to be offered can be found in Section 6.

Section 6: Eligible services to be provided or coordinated by the applicant and partners

The RCCS project has been working over the past year to align resources and to develop a comprehensive continuum of services. In partnership with local funders and service providers, we have leveraged significant dollars and services in support of our efforts, including the placement of Site Coordinators at each site, the development of community school/parent resource centers in each building, the rehabilitation of the library at Warner Elementary, and more. Funding from the FSCS offers a unique opportunity to make the RCCS program much more robust, by enhancing the infrastructure to increase focus on long term academic achievement, provide and coordinate critical services for youth and their families, all while increasing support for parent and community engagement. The RCCS project proposes to provide the following the following eligible services, as described in the Absolute Priority:

High Quality Early Learning Services

In 2005, RAND Corporation researchers synthesized research literature about the short- and long-term benefits of early intervention programs. Their research showed that early childhood intervention programs yield benefits in academic achievement, behavior, educational progression and attainment, delinquency and crime, and labor market success, among other domains (RAND, 2005).

Through this proposal, Children & Families First plans to pilot a community-based early learning initiative called the Shortlidge-Warner Achievement Zone (SWAZ). The SWAZ will include two small cohorts of between 15 and 20 families:

- 1) Early Start Cohort, targeting pregnant women in the Warner/Shortlidge feeder pattern (identified through Children & Families First's Nurse-Family Partnership or Healthy Families America home visiting programs)
- 2) School-Age Cohort, targeting families who enroll in the project when their child enters PK or Kindergarten at Warner or Shortlidge.

Each cohort will have an assigned Connector who will work with the families to set the expectation that their child will graduate high school and go on for further education, training or employment and who will provide access to the supports needed for school success. For families who participate in the Early Start Cohort, Connectors will also work to keep targeted families stable in the neighborhood feeder pattern to decrease transience, setting the expectation that the children will enroll in Warner or Shortlidge. Connectors will serve families throughout their tenure in the RCCSD. We will compare outcomes from the two cohorts.

In addition to the specific SWAZ cohorts, home visiting services will be broadly available to pregnant women, their babies and young children in this community. CFF provides two evidence-based home visiting services: the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) which serves

first-time pregnant low-income women, and follows the family until the child is age two; and Healthy Families America (HFA) model, targeting pregnant women who are already moms or who enroll in service late in their pregnancy, and following them until the new baby turns three. As part of a collaborative agreement with home visiting providers across the state, both the evidence-based Parents As Teachers model and Early Head Start are available to families upon discharge from NFP or HFA, offering follow-up until age five.

While the RCCSD currently offers full-day Pre-Kindergarten services at Warner to ensure that students who enter at school age are prepared to learn, there are limited neighborhood options for high quality early learning. In the Red Clay Consolidated School District as a whole only 70 of 173 licensed programs (40.4%) that refer children to Red Clay schools are enrolled in DE STARS, the state's early childhood quality improvement program and of those only 14% are at Star Level 5 (highest level of excellence). Within the largest zip code area feeding the two elementary schools, only 27.5% of the early learning programs are enrolled in STARS with only one rated at the highest level of excellence (PBHS Project Launch application, 2014). The Red Clay Community Schools initiative will work closely with the Delaware Readiness Team/ Hanover Dream Team to build smooth transitions between quality early learning programs and Warner/Shortlidge.

Family engagement, including parental involvement, parent leadership, etc.

A 2004 study by the Harvard Family Research Project examined the school-level effects on student achievement in high poverty elementary schools that implemented comprehensive parent-engagement strategies. The strategies included parent participation in decision making at the school and outreach through home visits, family nights, and a family resource library. The study proved that comprehensive parent engagement efforts can have statistically significant

positive impacts on student learning. The comprehensive nature of the parent engagement efforts was itself the source of impact on learning rather than the individual parts (Redding, Langdon, Meyer and Sheley, 2004). RCCS will use multiple strategies to engage parents.

- Each school offers a Parent Resource Center where families can use computers, access information on education, social services, etc., and participate in workshops and training opportunities. Site Coordinators schedule regular Parent/Family Nights and other activities designed to encourage parents to be involved at the school.
- The Saturday Library program is a component of RCCSD's student and adult literacy campaign. On one Saturday each month special programs are facilitated to draw families and their children to the library sites. Events at the Warner and Shortlidge libraries this year included an interactive session about nutrition with a nurse from Christiana Care Health Systems, financial literacy presentations, and holiday events.
- The RCCSD's Parent University is designed to increase parent involvement and empower parents to raise children who are successful in school and in life. Cohort families will be asked to commit to long term achievement plans for their children. Parent University includes three formats: forums – large scale opportunities for family learning based on topics identified by the majority of parents from last year's parent forum series, strands – one hour sessions focusing on specific topics with each session building on the previous one, and seminars – one time interest workshops for targeted audiences.
- Parents in the SWAZ cohorts will work closely with Connectors to access supports that will help them fulfill the Achievement Plans for their children. Service Navigators placed at each school will also offer case management and resource connection to all children and families in need.

- CFF will provide two series of the research-based family skills training model known as the Strengthening Families Program (SFP) each year. SFP is presented in 14 consecutive weekly sessions, each lasting approximately 2 hours. Each series is targeted to a specific age group (parents of children age birth to 3, 4-5, 6-11, or 12-16). The SFP starts with a family meal. Then, Parents participate in Parent Skills Training, and children participate in Child Skills sessions. To increase recruitment and retention, a number of incentives are used, including: meals, transportation, rewards for attendance and participation, child care for siblings. SFP's outcomes include reduced risk factors for problem behaviors in high risk children, including behavioral problems, emotional, academic and social problems. SFP will be offered at no cost to participants using non-federal funds.
- In addition, parents will be empowered to guide planning and implementation of the RCCS through membership on Advisory Councils (to be established), and feedback will be solicited regularly using surveys and focus groups.

Mentoring and other youth development programs.

One-to-one mentoring relationships with students can have a powerful impact on youth outcomes. The RCCS program partners with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Delaware (BBBSDE) to deliver mentoring services to students. BBBSDE uses an evidence-based model which has been named an Exemplary Program in the OJJDP Model Programs Guide. An 18-month evaluation of eight BBBSA affiliates found that mentored youth skipped half as many days of school as control youth, had better attitudes and performance in school, and had improved peer and family relationships (McGill, Mihalic, and Grotspeter, 1997).

Funding from the FSCS project will support mentoring coordinators at each school who will work with school and RCCS staff to identify youth in need of support, to recruit and train mentors, and to provide on-going support to mentoring relationships.

Assistance to students who have been chronically absent, truant, suspended, or expelled.

According to the National Center for School Engagement, truancy has been clearly identified as one of the early warning signs of students headed for potential delinquent activity, social isolation, or educational failure. Effective truancy programs include parent/guardian involvement, a continuum of supports, and collaboration among community members. While there is little research focused around truancy in elementary school, the RCCS project believes that parent engagement will be a critical component of addressing school lateness and attendance issues. As such, the RCCS plans to use a multi-level approach by intervening with parents at the earliest signs of school disconnection – excessive tardiness, frequent absences, behavior problems – which will include:

- Targeted outreach by Service Navigators to identify and address reasons for lateness and absences;
- Referrals to Big Brothers Big Sisters for mentoring support as appropriate;
- Working closely with school staff to ensure that children with continued absence issues are referred to the existing School Psychologist and/or Family Crisis Therapists for more intensive services;
- Establishment of a Balance Room at each school which will serve as a place for additional behavioral supports for youth while continuing their academic assignments. This will be an alternative to school suspensions. Time spent will vary.

- Partnering with the Red Clay Consolidated School District to enhance professional development opportunities around classroom management techniques, particularly targeting supports to Pre-K and Kindergarten classrooms
- Opportunities for cross-school (Warner-Shortlidge) professional peer mentoring

Nutrition services and physical activities.

A 2002 study in the journal *Pediatrics* found that for both preschoolers and school-aged children, severe child hunger was associated with higher levels of internalizing behavior problems and was also associated with higher reported anxiety/depression among school-aged children (Weinreb, Wehler, Perloff, Scott, Hosmer, Sagor, and Gunderson, 2002). Hunger also makes it difficult for children to focus and learn.

Hunger is a great concern due to the poverty levels at both Warner and Shortlidge. Because all students at both schools qualify for the free and reduced school lunch program, youth are able to eat breakfast and lunch during school days. However, RCCS wants to ensure that children have access to food outside of normal school hours. As such, the Food Bank of DE sponsors a Backpack Feeding Program, providing food to children for weekends and holidays when school is not in session. Backpacks are stocked with kid-friendly, nutritious food. The Food Bank will offer Kid CHEF (Cooking Healthy Easy Foods), a program that teaches children about healthy eating and how to prepare nutritious foods on their own. In addition, RCCS is partnering with Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids to provide school-based gardening programs, which will reinforce education about healthy eating.

Primary health and dental care.

Scientific reviews have documented that health programs can have positive effects on educational outcomes, as well as health-risk behaviors and health outcomes (Basch, 2010).

While health resources in the identified neighborhood are many, with low-cost primary health services available within walking distance of both Shortlidge and Warner, families do not always access these services, or easily navigate the service-delivery system. The RCCS initiative's Service Navigators will play a critical role in ensuring that families are enrolled in benefits for which they are eligible (e.g. Medicaid, Affordable Care Act). Through our partnership with Westside Family Health Care and the close proximity of Christiana Care's Wilmington Hospital, we will have a ready point of contact for family medicine. But perhaps most important, as a result of an existing data sharing agreement between RCCSD and Nemours that grew out of the planning process for community schools, school nurses at Warner and Shortlidge have access to the health records of their students who are seen at Nemours (the state's largest pediatric health network), which allows them to better coordinate care for students.

Access to social service programs and promotion of family financial stability.

There are many reasons that families in need do not access social services to the fullest extent, including lack of awareness of services or eligibility; lack of transportation; inconvenient hours; anxiety about sharing personal information, etc. It is important to note that there are no community centers located in the identified neighborhoods. This means that the RCCS project must work to address barriers to service in a comprehensive way to ensure that families are able to secure the resources they need – financial assistance, job training, housing, health care, etc. – to ensure that children and adults achieve positive outcomes. For example, Service Navigators will provide resource connection directly with families who are in need of services and supports. Parent Resource Centers will be hubs for information on services – including regular information sessions, computer access to benefits applications, and more. Through partnerships with Capital One and the Center for Economic Education, financial literacy training will be offered on-site.

The Food Bank of Delaware will offer SNAP Outreach to ensure that families who are eligible are connected to federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance, as well as a Backpack Feeding program to students in need of extra support. Transportation will be made available to families as needed to provide access to benefits and services. We will work with housing providers to assure a strong referral network as well as data sharing.

Services Summary

All RCCS programs and services are designed to support positive outcomes, including improved academic performance; higher attendance rates; positive school environments; and greater parental involvement. The chart below describes the intended results of the services and the numbers to be served.

Input(s)	# to be Served	Provider(s)	Result(s)
Annually			
Early childhood programs available on-site and in the community	75 children	CFE (SWAZ), Red Clay (Pre-K), home-visiting providers, Delaware Readiness Teams	Children are ready to enter school
System in place to respond to attendance issues	100 children	Service Navigators, Red Clay Family Crisis Therapists, school personnel	Students attend school consistently
Availability of in-school and afterschool programs	200 children	Before and afterschool providers (Boys & Girls Club, Project CHANCE); Warner Arts Alliance; BBBSDE mentoring	Students are actively involved in learning and

			their community
Parent Engagement activities	300 parents	CFF (Site Coordinators, Service Navigators, Strengthening Families Program) and Red Clay (Parent University)	Schools are engaged with families and community
Access to needed social services	200 parents	CFF (Connectors, Service Navigators, Parent Resource Centers); Food Bank	
High quality academic programming	800 children	Red Clay School District, schools	Students succeed academically
Health and nutrition services	200 children	Christiana Care, Nemours, Westside Health, Red Clay (school nurses); Food Bank; Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids	Students are healthy: physically, socially, emotionally
Positive adult relationships	100 children	Big Brothers Big Sisters; YMCA; CFF (Service Navigators, Connectors); Schools – teachers and staff; Parents	

Per requirements established in GEPA Section 427, CFF will ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program

beneficiaries with special needs. CFF will not discriminate based on gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age.

Section 7: Use of Data to Guide Decision-Making and Measure Success.

Evaluation of the RCCS Initiative is critical to its long-term success. CFF will work with Audrey Noble, Ph.D. to conduct a comprehensive program evaluation of RCCS and its impacts. The Community Schools Program Manager will work closely with the evaluator with support from a full-time Data and Administrative Coordinator. Dr. Noble serves as our evaluator for our current FSCS grant for our Eastside Community Schools initiative. Dr. Noble holds a Doctorate from Arizona State University in Educational Leadership & Policy Studies with an emphasis on Qualitative Research Methodology & Evaluation. Prior to starting her evaluation consultation firm, Dr. Noble was on faculty at the University of Delaware (UD), beginning in 2000, where she continues as a Faculty Affiliate. During her tenure at UD, Dr. Noble taught undergraduate and graduate level courses, served as Director of the Education Research Center, and oversaw the implementation of numerous research projects. Her CV is included in Appendix A.

Dr. Noble will coordinate with the RCCSD and its Data Center to ensure that data around academic achievement, school discipline, and school attendance are included in the evaluation process. Dr. Noble will ensure that the evaluation: produces scientifically-credible results on student and family outcomes; assesses the program outputs and program quality such as number of students served, how often, and in what way; provides ongoing feedback to the program to facilitate continuous improvement; and provides lessons for the field. Dr. Noble has assisted with the development of a basic logic model for the RCCS initiative, as well as a preliminary evaluation plan. Evaluation activities will include the following:

- Conducting data collection with community participants to explore what additional community partnerships would need to be built to positively change the lives of involved in the project (i.e. employment training, housing assistance);
- Working with partners to develop common assessment and data management tools to evaluate outcomes across services (i.e between early childhood/kindergarten; afterschool providers)
- Collecting and analyzing individual-level data for students participating in the project;
- Collecting qualitative data for reporting on progress in achieving benchmarks and targeted outcomes, including the required federal performance indicator: % of individuals targeted for services who receive services during each year of the project period;
- Facilitating group discussions, focus groups, interviews and other methods necessary to support evaluation work;
- Conducting an evaluation of the Shortlidge-Warner Achievement Zone, to include a comparison between the two identified cohorts to examine: children's age-appropriate development toward kindergarten readiness (Early Start Cohort) and adequate progress towards literacy, numeracy, and social/emotional skills (School-Age Cohort)

Performance data will be analyzed continuously, and will drive decisions throughout the implementation of the RCCS. Programs that do not demonstrate intended results may be altered or even discontinued. Results will be shared with the school-based Advisory Committees (to be established) every six months, at a minimum, to ensure success. Upon completion of the grant term, Dr. Noble will work with CFF to complete a comprehensive evaluation of the RCCS, to include a process evaluation as well as a final report on outcomes and results. A basic RCCS outcomes and data collection framework is below.

Results	Indicators
SHORT TERM	
Children arrive at school on time and prepared to learn	Shortlidge-Warner Achievement Zone data; School tardiness data; Early childhood enrollment rates; Health data; Parent survey data
Students attend school regularly	Attendance data
Students are actively engaged in learning	Participation rates in after-school activities; Teacher survey data
Families are actively involved in their children's education	Parent survey; Participation rates for school and school-related activities; Participation in Parent University
Schools are engaged with their students' families & community	Schools are open to community (Saturday Library, etc.); Family attendance rates at activities; Participant feedback
LONG TERM	
Students succeed academically	Standardized Test scores; Report card grades; Teacher surveys; Retention rates
Students are healthy: physically, socially, & emotionally	Parent survey; Health data; Teacher surveys; Disciplinary data
Schools, students, and families benefit from being connected to a learning community	Employment and employability of families served by schools; Parent surveys; Mobility rates; Partnership stability

Section 8: Roles and Responsibilities of Staff

About Site Coordinators

Site Coordinators are at the heart of the Community Schools model. They work closely with and plan jointly with the school principal to drive the development and implementation of the community school effort, while facilitating partnerships and coordination of service delivery. CFF has a Site Coordinator in place at both Warner and Shortlidge.

Tamara Sumpter, Site Coordinator at Warner – Ms. Sumpter joined the staff of Children & Families First in 2011, serving as a research coordinator for a federal home-visiting grant. She became the Site Coordinator at Warner in October 2012. Ms. Sumpter has worked in a variety of roles in the social services field, including Family Crisis Therapist and Guidance Counselor. Ms. Sumpter has a B.A. in Social Relations from Cheyney University and is working on her Masters' in Social Work at DE State University. Ms. Sumpter is bi-lingual (English/Spanish).

Desiree Faison, Site Coordinator at Shortlidge – Ms. Faison joined the staff of CFF as Site Coordinator at Shortlidge in 2013. She has a vast array of experience in the social services and education sectors, with positions that have included Family and Community Engagement Specialist at an education agency and Program Lead at an afterschool program. Ms. Faison has a BS in Business Administration from Wesley College Center for Adult Studies.

Other Key Personnel

Chief Executive Officer – Leslie Newman. Ms. Newman has worked for CFF for almost 25 years, serving as CEO since 2007. She supervises the Community Schools Program Manager and plays a lead role in community outreach and in facilitating the planning process. She holds a B.S. and M.Ed. in Education. Ms. Newman is a strong advocate for the needs of children and their families, as evidenced by her active presence at Delaware's Legislative Hall. She is involved in leadership activities such as the Delaware Early Childhood Council and serves on various advisory boards for state agencies.

Community Schools Program Manager – Sue Weimer. Ms. Weimer joined the staff of CFF in 2011 as a Grants Manager. She became the Community Schools Program Manager in 2012. Ms. Weimer has held a number of positions in the non-profit sector, including Executive Director of an AIDS service organization and Project Director at a legal services non-profit. Ms. Weimer has a JD from Antioch Law and has been a member of the DE State Bar Association since 1983. Resumés for Sumpster, Faison, Newman, & Weimer are included in Appendix A.

Additional Staff

Service Navigators (2) – bachelors’ level staff assigned to work directly with families to ensure access to resources like health care, housing, financial benefits, job training, employment opportunities and more, based on the individual plan developed with each family; *Family Connectors* (2) – paraprofessional staff assigned to work with cohorts of families as part of the Shortlidge Warner Achievement Zone pilot. Will develop Achievement Plans with each participating family and will provide linkages to community partners and Parent University offerings; *Administrative and Data Coordinator* (1) – bachelor’s level staff person assigned to provide administrative support to the Community Schools Program Manager, to include basic data tracking, analysis, and reporting (in coordination with the program evaluator)

Planning with School Leadership and Community Stakeholders

CFF and the RCCSD have been working with a variety of partners and stakeholders on the development of the community schools project. During the upcoming school year, CFF plans to establish Advisory Councils at each school, whose membership will include school leadership, teachers, parents and community members. The Advisory Councils will meet at least quarterly to identify gaps in services and supports, opportunities for expanded programming and services, review progress and data, and to provide overall feedback into the design and implementation of the RCCS.