

What they see and how they think about what they see and experience in those settings matters. Universal believes, literature supports, and our intuition tells us that safe, visually attractive and environmentally healthy passageways from home to school and other places play important roles in the emotional, psychological and physical development of our children and youth.

By any criteria used to determine a neighborhood in need, the Point Breeze and Grays Ferry communities would sadly qualify. The Point Breeze and Grays Ferry neighborhoods o have long suffered from the harsh conditions of poverty, homelessness, low academic attainment, violence, poor quality of housing, substantially high levels of vacant housing and vacant lots, substance abuse, and very poor health conditions that we have come to associate with the worst aspects of our urban centers. In recent years, these conditions have worsened, and are beginning to destroy what is left of the community. All of the data demonstrates that the targeted area representing some 50,000 residents, predominantly African American (80%), face some of the worst conditions in the nation - **The risk factors in today's urban centers are many and serious, consider:**

Violence & Crime - What sets Point Breeze apart from other neighborhoods is the level and prevalence of violence in schools, at home and on the street:

- In 2004, the police received 10,000 domestic abuse complaints, 25% higher than the city average (Philadelphia Police Department)
- In 2006 Point Breeze accounted for 32% of all crimes registered in Philadelphia for that year. The rate of major felonies (murder, rape, robberies, aggravated assault, etc.) exceeded the city rate from ten percent to as high as three times the rate. In 2009 there were more than 31 murders representing nearly 10% of the murders in the City (Philadelphia Police)
- According to Public/Private Ventures, better than 20 percent of children 18 years of age and under have an incarcerated parent;

- According to the State Department of Education and the School District, the three main public schools serving Point Breeze (including two elementary schools) were designated persistently dangerous, indicating that students assaulted one another and their teachers over several years.

Finally the incidence of gun shootings and homicides involving young people 25 years of age and under in Point Breeze is twice the city average according to police statistics. What these data indicate are that children who are subjected to violence, victims of violence, have had a family member or friend shot or murdered, have an incarcerated parent or sibling, and have performed poorly at school frequently become delinquent and develop other emotional problems. Violence, death and losses are all clear risk factors or stressors that impede the developmental and educational outcomes of children.

Socio-Economic Profile - The combined neighborhoods have a population of about 50,000; 80 percent are African-American with an increasing percentage of Southeast Asian and Mexican immigrants, now constituting nearly 10% of the population, up from 2% ten years ago. Nearly 50% of the population has incomes at or below 150% of the federal poverty level; about 40% are single female-headed households with 30% dependent on TANF. The unemployment rate is about 20%, almost twice the rate of the citywide average.

Housing and Physical Landscape - The neighborhoods were established in the early 1800s and show the vestiges of what once was a robust manufacturing section of the city. The housing stock of small two-and three-story row houses surrounded all sorts of factories that occupied a full square block, typical of Philadelphia's industrial development and growth. Now the factories sit empty, debris-filled, and sites for criminal activity. Given the nature of row housing, Philadelphia has one of the highest home ownership rates in the country; these two areas are no exception, with nearly 61% homeownership. However because the neighborhoods have and continue to be predominantly African-American, the area fits the socio-economic profile that predatory lenders target – low-income, minority, with nearly 20% of the homes owned by senior citizens, indicating that they have a good deal of equity. Recent HUD data confirms the fact that the area is at most risk of mortgage foreclosures.

The City Planning Commission recertified the area as blighted in September 2009, a designation that has followed the neighborhood for over years, given the prevalence of vacant properties (20% of the 11,000 parcels, the 5500 city code violations for health and safety, etc). As a result, Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority has targeted the neighborhood to participate in President Obama's Neighborhood Stabilization Program.

The parks and recreational facilities are far and few between and a source of constant irritation to the residents who all feel there is insufficient open space for the community, especially for children and youth. In total, there are four primary parks, three in Point Breeze and one in Grays Ferry that is also the only Grade A recreational facility operated by the city (full basketball courts, swimming pool, auditorium, dance rooms, etc). However, its location is the source of gang turf wars, making it particularly dangerous for younger children to travel to that facility. There is a lone basketball court in very poor condition in the heart of Point Breeze.

The neighborhood is harsh and unremittingly hot in summer months due to the lack of greenery and trees. Several years ago a neighborhood icon (now deceased) championed small neighborhood gardens, which have now fallen into disrepair with little neighborhood capacity to repair and restore them. This neighborhood, while geographically defined and small in nature, with slightly more than 15,000 residential homes, has over 2,500 vacant houses and lots, creating in-your-face deterioration and alarmingly unsafe conditions, which are adequate for crime, and illegal activity.

Health - A healthy start is a sound foundation for a healthy life. Children who are healthy and enter school ready to learn have a better chance to succeed in school and to make the transition to a productive adulthood. Some o statistics suggest otherwise. Although the city as a whole has made great progress in increasing the immunization rates for children 18 to 35 months old, our area continues to have one of the lowest immunization rates in the city (70% compared to 85% citywide); child protective cases have seen an increase in our neighborhood, suggesting that children are not living in stable and supportive homes.

The neighborhood is cluttered with small grocery stores or bodegas that sell food stuff that contribute to obesity with 20% of residents being obese. There is only one supermarket within a mile of the neighborhood.

In other cases, Point Breeze households have a higher incidence of asthma, high blood pressure, and obesity in comparison to the citywide rate, according to various Philadelphia Health Department reports.

In summary, this snapshot of the neighborhood indicates that it is in great distress by any measurement.

Indicators - A closer look at the indicators required by the notice further demonstrates that our neighborhood's children are in serious trouble. Of course more research and evaluation will enable us to better gauge the level of distress and to determine what interventions will be needed, see the following examples:

- **Indicator of Need: Children birth to five years old that have a place where they usually go, other than an emergency room, when they are sick or in need of advice about their health.**
 - Given level of unemployment, 50% of the children in the area depend on city and/or federally qualified health centers;
 - Teenage Pregnancy – 60 per 1000 which is higher than the citywide average – the neighborhood has one accessible prenatal clinic
- **Indicator of Need: Children from birth to kindergarten entry, participating in center-based or formal home-based early learning settings or programs, which may include Early Head Start, Head Start, child care, or publicly-funded preschool**
 - 100 Licensed childcare facilities (both family day care providers and center-based providers). However, there are only two that are nationally accredited by the NAEYC with four stars and two that are licensed childcare facilities with the Commonwealth's Quality Assurance Program as three star providers

- **Indicator of Need: Students at or above grade level according to State mathematics and English language arts assessments in at least the grades required by the ESEA (3rd through 8th and once in high school)**
 - 24% - Average number of 3rd graders reading at or above grade level
 - 21% - Average number of 3rd graders performing math functions at or above grade level
 - 12% - Average number of 5th graders reading at or above grade level
 - 7% - Average number of 5th graders performing math functions at or above grade level
 - 7% - Average number of 8th graders reading at or above grade level
 - 3% - Average number of 8th graders performing math functions at or above grade level
- **Indicator of Need: Attendance rate of students in 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th grade**
 - On any given day, the truancy rate for students in these grades is 30% which is school wide.
- **Indicator of Need: Three year olds and children in kindergarten who demonstrate at the beginning of the program or school year age-appropriate functioning across multiple domains of early learning (as defined in this notice) as determined using developmentally-appropriate early learning measures (as defined in the notice)**
 - Roughly 30% of the children entering kindergarten attended formal center-based child care and early education, indicating that more are not as well prepared to succeed in school.
- **Indicators of Need: Students who say they have a caring adult in their home, school, and community or # & % of family members who attend parent-teacher conferences.**
 - Available mentoring programs typically operated on ad hoc basis by faith base organization
- **Indicator of Need: Promise Neighborhood students who graduate with a regular high school diploma, as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b)(1)(iv), and obtain**

postsecondary degrees, vocational certificates, or other industry-recognized certifications or credentials without the need for remediation

- Dropout rate of first time 9th graders in South Philadelphia schools is 32% compared with the citywide rate of 26%;
- Only 48% of students in South Philadelphia graduated within 4 years, which is lower than the citywide rate

Educationally children and teens in our neighborhoods are not being prepared to succeed in school, so they are truant, which leads to poor grades and test scores, leading to dropping out, and then looking at a bleak future. Point Breeze and Grays Ferry are extremely distressed in every category (i.e. crime, housing, education, health, etc.), whereas the gaps in services, infrastructure and opportunities require a more careful assessment to determine where investments can make the greatest difference in the welfare of children and their families in addition to determining how to optimize the resources of our partners in establishing an effective continuum of services that will improve the developmental and educational outcomes of our children.

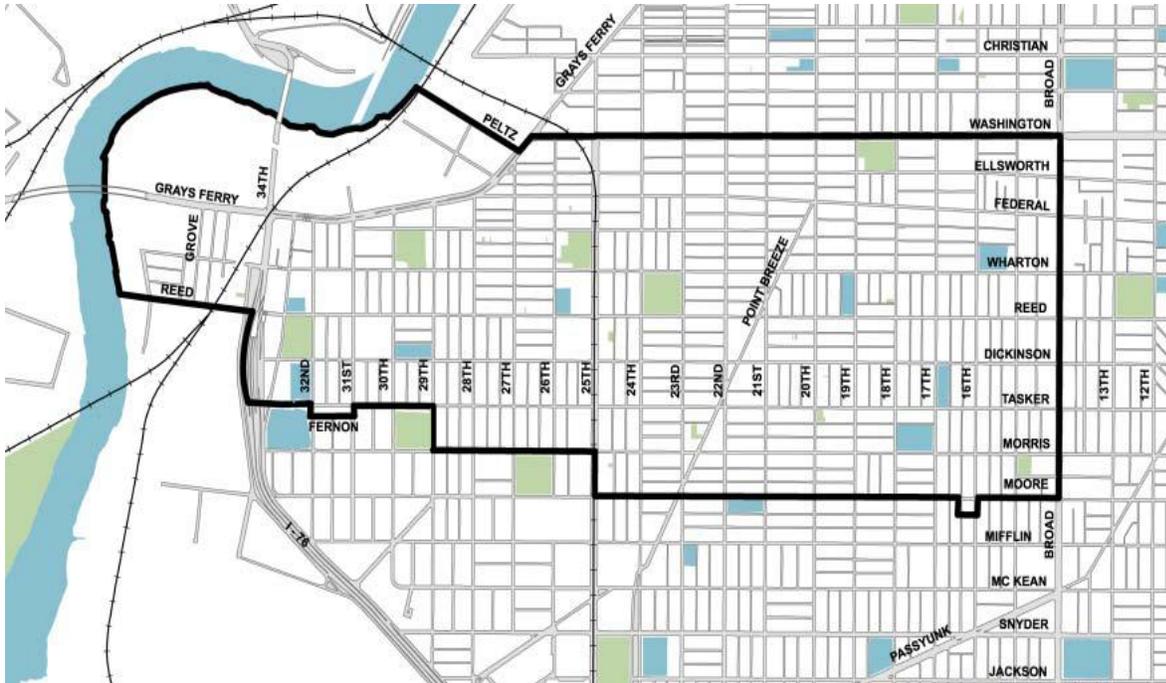
As we matched the indicators of needs, we identified those data that could gauge our neighborhood's capacity to adequately meet the developmental and educational needs of our children. We are convinced that we must take a full year to engage a community of stakeholders in a systematic planning process to thoroughly develop strategies that identify the strengths and weaknesses of our two targeted communities.

CONCLUSION - Universal and its team of partners will focus the first year of its Promise Neighborhood Initiative on strategic planning. It is important to note that the team of partners that Universal has assembled, in addition to helping to create a stellar comprehensive plan of action for this Promise Neighborhood Initiative, has also committed more than \$600,000 in contributions and staffing to ensure its success. In partnership with the Philadelphia School District, our health organizations and Free Library partners are prepared to begin working immediately during the upcoming 2010/11 school year to establish school-based health clinics and libraries.

As a committed group of community stakeholders, we will not abandon a sound and strategic, long term plan for quick fixes and short-sighted survival tactics to improve the developmental and educational outcomes of our children. Rather, we will take the necessary time to identify those community assets and determine how they can best work in tandem to implement a stealth continuum of solutions from cradle to career whereby all students will have maximum opportunities to improve their developmental and educational outcomes. Our planning process will examine the impact of “poverty” on our young children who reside within each of our targeted neighborhoods and be mindful of the research that suggests that children from low-income families often do not receive the stimulation and do not learn the social skills required to prepare them for school. Typical problems are parental inconsistency, frequent changes of primary caregivers, lack of supervision and poor role modeling. In targeting students in 2nd-10th grades, we are fully aware that the same risk factors impact their learning and overall development. This plan then, upon completion, will serve as the blueprint for implementation strategies that will revitalize the Point Breeze and Gray's Ferry neighborhoods as Promise Neighborhoods.

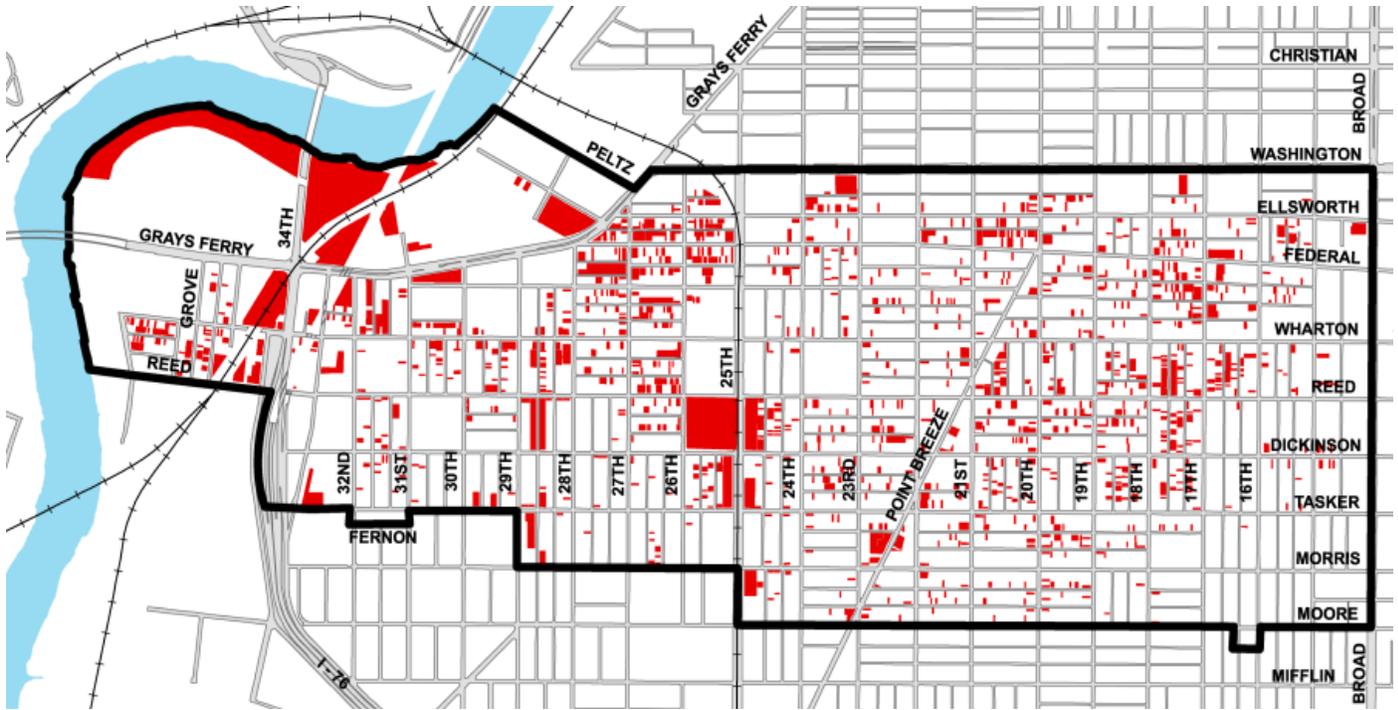
B. Extent to which the geographically defined area has been described

The geographic area to be served and ultimately designated as a Promise Neighborhood will be the Point Breeze and Grays Ferry communities in South Philadelphia. The two neighborhoods are contiguous and represent the most devastated areas of, not only south Philadelphia, but the entire City. As mentioned, in September of 2009, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission recertified these contiguous neighborhoods blighted, the borders of which shown below (schools in blue and recreation sites in green).



The specific boundaries of the Universal's Promise Neighborhood are as follows:

- Point Breeze borders are: Broad Street on the east, 25th Street on the west; Snyder Avenue on the south; and Washington Avenue on the north; and
- Grays Ferry borders are: 25th Street on the east; Grays Ferry Avenue/Schuylkill Expressway on the west; and Snyder Avenue on the south; and Schuylkill Expressway on the north.



Vacant lots are shown in red (source: Philadelphia Board of Revision of Taxes)

- *Vacant buildings:* while available data sources do not provide an up-to-date list of vacant buildings, staff inspection indicates that many vacant buildings exist in the two neighborhoods. Some of the vacant buildings can be seen in the photos in this report. If data were available, the total number of vacant buildings would be added to the aforementioned 1,991 vacant lots to generate a total number of vacant properties in Point Breeze and Grays Ferry. Vacant lots are shown in red (source: Philadelphia Board of Revision of Taxes)
- *Code Violations:* many properties in the study area exhibit signs of neglect and deferred maintenance. There are 5,175 properties in violation of the City Code in the census tracts under study (source: University of Pennsylvania NIS and Department of Licenses and Inspections, 2005). This is evidence of unsafe and inadequate conditions.
- *Deteriorating infrastructure:* the condition of the railroad viaduct at 25th Street is a major safety concern. Approximately 95 years old, the elevated freight railroad extends for eight blocks through the study area. Many small sections of concrete have fallen off the elevated

structure, placing pedestrians and motorists at peril. This ongoing safety problem, which is happening all along the railroad structure, is documented in photos provided in the Appendix.

- **Economically or Socially Undesirable Land Use**

- Economically undesirable land use exists in the study area. Code violations, vacant properties, low property values and deteriorating infrastructure provide evidence that this criterion is being met in Point Breeze and Grays Ferry. The 5,175 code violations indicate that the level of economic investment in local property is substandard. The 1,991 vacant land parcels represent economically undesirable land use because they downgrade the overall physical environment of the neighborhood, reduce the area's vitality and property values, and increase the potential for vandalism, arson, and other crimes. Abandoned properties also deprive the neighborhood, the City and region of revenue from income taxes and real estate taxes. The Point Breeze and Grays Ferry study area has significantly lower property values when compared to the City, and this is additional evidence of economically undesirable land use. In some of the census tracts, median residential sale prices are as low as one fifth of the city median price (\$20,500 for Tract 34 in 2007 compared to the city median of \$120,500). The census tract with the highest median sales price was still only 68% or roughly two thirds of the city median for that year (\$82,000 for Census tract 22 in 2007). See a map of Census Tracts and pictures in the Appendix.

C. Extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities will be identified and addressed by the proposed project

As articulated in section 1A-B, Point Breeze and Grays Ferry are extremely distressed in every category (i.e. crime, housing, education, health, etc.). Our planning process will identify the gaps in services, infrastructure, and opportunities so that we can determine where to make strategic interventions that will positively impact the educational and social development of children in the neighborhood. At the same time the planning process will enable us to optimize the resources of our partners. Anything short of that will not make a difference and will not be sustained. Our Plan will intelligently provide guidance on how

best to attack these problems, especially given the limited resources and our ability to leverage the numerous of partners that have agreed to be part of the ultimate solution – new paradigm for addressing delivery of services..

The planning process that Universal will carry out will be driven by commitments on the part of all of the stakeholder groups of these communities to support and help advance the learning, growth, development and maturation of children, students, and their families. The overarching goal of the proposed project is to develop a “continuum of solutions” that removes barriers to academic achievement by children and youth, from pre-school to graduation. This will be accomplished by effectively equipping and resourcing targeted:

- schools so they have effective academic programs and provide strong, healthy learning environments;
- families so they are capable of providing strong, nurturing home environments for their sons and daughters from the point of birth to high school graduation to college matriculation; and
- communities so they provide safe and secure environments for both to flourish.

Promise Neighborhoods represents an historic opportunity to invest in the current generation of children and youth that will be expected to play a prominent role in determining the future stability and viability of Point Breeze and Grays Ferry, or whichever neighborhoods students eventually are a part of as citizens, neighbors, spouses, parents, employees, employers, and leaders in their own right. Universal’s planning process will identify specific gaps or weaknesses in educational and community-oriented services and infrastructure, and develop strategies to address them. The mechanism for achieving this goal will involve a close collaboration between community residents, parents, educators, business and industry, and institutions and government who will be represented on an Advisory Committee and Work Groups meeting regularly to shape the plan. This will involve creating a vision and a means to that vision that helps create and sustain a strong constituency for investing and reinvesting in:

- Pre-school aged students from prenatal care through early childhood education to ensure their physical, emotional and psychological health and well-being critical to their growth and development in their more formative years;
- School students and the curriculum, personnel, systems, facilities, and technologies that help create foundations for learning and high academic performance;
- Parents and extended families whose role is to inspire their children to learn, provide a nurturing home environment for that to occur, and to instill within them strong and lasting values needed to be caring and productive persons and citizens; and
- Communities and neighborhoods comprised of extended families, business and industry, and civic institutions, and endowed with the physical and environmental features that together help shape, inform and help nurture social, cultural, and economic relationships.

The children (students) are the principal and core constituent group to be served by the planning process and to, therefore, reap the benefits of the activities and resources anticipated from this Promise Neighborhoods initiative. Accordingly, they are at the epicenter of attention in this model; their families and neighborhoods which surround them and nurture their growth and development as individuals and as the succeeding generations of citizens needed to sustain and improve upon the model. This interrelationship will guide and drive the planning work for Universal's Promise Neighborhoods commitment. The continuum of solutions, from Universal's perspective and its experience in serving children, students, families and communities in South Philadelphia, translates into:

- Ensuring the full range of services – nutrition, recreation, education – to support student development from early childhood through primary and secondary school;
- Extending resources to ensure that post-secondary education continues and translates into career choices and successes in those careers that are fulfilling and beneficial to society at-large; and
- Enabling the surrounding community of extended families and neighborhood support systems to carry out their important role in child, youth and family development.

Universal’s planning process will identify appropriate strategies and related tactics to strengthen each of these essential components of a healthy and caring society – children, students, their families, and their neighborhoods – by addressing the needs of each and the linkages between them as a first step to identifying and leveraging the necessary to implement the plan over time. As coalition-building, the planning process is designed to instill an ownership of ideas to be shared by local constituents and to fostering a commitment to ideas that will drive future action. Without an informed, proactive and dedicated network of local stakeholders, no plan will move forward. It is important to note that the team of partners that Universal has assembled, in addition to helping to create a stellar comprehensive plan of action for this Promise Neighborhood Initiative, has also committed more than \$600,000 in contributions and staffing to ensure its success. In partnership with the Philadelphia School District, our health organizations and Free Library partners are prepared to begin working immediately during the upcoming 2010/11 school year to establish school-based health clinics and libraries. The Universal Promise Neighborhoods’ plan will a statement of ideas, commitments and actions around which targeted schools, families, neighborhoods and institutions can collaborate and commit to making “cradle-through college-to career” a reality.

II. QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN

A. Extent to which the applicant describes how it will plan to build a continuum of solutions designed to significantly improve the academic and family and community support indicators

The initial step in our planning process across the three subject areas – student development, family development and community development – will involve: (1) assessing needs, (2) identifying and quantifying the number of programs in each neighborhood that align or are designed to align with those needs, (3) evaluating the performance of existing programs with respect to outcomes, impacts, accessibility to client group(s), and efficiency and effectiveness of service-delivery, and (4) determining gaps.

Universal is fully prepared to plan and provide a continuum of cradle-through-college-to-career solutions that will include examination of already existing programs, policies, practices, services, systems, and supports that:

- can result in improving educational and developmental outcomes for children from cradle through college to career;
- are based on the best available evidence, including, where available, strong or moderate evidence;
- are linked and integrated seamlessly (as defined in the notice); and
- include academic programs and family community supports. Essential to the development of our continuum, Universal will review the myriad ways both neighborhoods do and do not function with the assets available to our children, youth, adults and families. Neighborhood assets that will be reviewed and used for planning activities will include:
 - developmental assets that allow residents to attain the skills needed to be successful in all aspects of daily life (e.g., educational institutions, early learning centers, and health resources);
 - commercial assets that are associated with production, employment, transactions, and sales (e.g., labor force and retail establishments);

- recreational assets that create value in a neighborhood beyond work and education (e.g., parks, open space, community gardens, and arts organizations);
- physical assets that are associated with the built environment and physical infrastructure (e.g., housing, commercial buildings, and roads); and
- social assets that establish well-functioning social interactions (e.g., public safety and community engagement).

It is important to note that the team of partners that Universal has assembled, in addition to helping to create a stellar comprehensive plan of action for this Promise Neighborhood Initiative, have also committed more than \$600,000 in contributions and staffing to ensure its success. In partnership with the Philadelphia School District, our health organizations and Free Library partners are prepared to begin working immediately during the upcoming 2010/11 school year to establish school-based health clinics and libraries.

B. Extent to which the continuum of solutions includes a strategy, or a plan to develop a strategy, that will lead to significant improvements in one or more schools described in paragraph 2 of Absolute Priority 1

Universal will develop plans to develop a strategy that will lead to significant improvements in the educational and social development as the following examples indicate: 1) Given the dearth of quality early childhood education opportunities, we will organize a community of practice whereby providers receive technical assistance and funding to move forward on the Commonwealth's Keystone Stars Qualitative Program, and 2) Universal will engage the School District, the City's Out-of-School Time Program, and other Universal partners in organizing a similar community of practice for children in grades K to 12. To that end, Universal has established a unique and forward thinking partnership with the School District of Philadelphia that will significantly transform not one school, but potentially ten (10) schools, which represents a complete High School Feeder system. Universal's Promise Neighborhood is defined by the catchment area, which we believe represents , all of the students who are likely to attend Audneriend High School. Because of Universal's unique ability to undertake community revitalization

(the largest in the City) combined with its ability to manage and transform schools (Universal manages 3 charter schools and 2 contract public schools), Universal has partnered with the School District of Philadelphia to target nine (9) public schools to be included in this initiative. The District is currently committing considerable resources to the development of a Facilities Master Plan for all schools, which will involve making fundamental decisions about the targeted schools, including those that will be consolidated or closed. This process, in addition to other transformative initiatives, will be brought to bear in working with Universal. The District will continue to work with Universal and its charter school, Universal Institute Charter School (UICS), to improve the academic, physical, and community aspects of the proposed Promise Neighborhood. The students in this cohort are enrolled in the eight (8) schools that are likely to attend the Audenreid High School. The full cohort includes:

- Audenreid High School
- Alcorn K-8 School
- Vare Middle School
- McDaniel Elementary School
- Girard Elementary (K-4) School
- Smith K-8 School
- Childs K-8 School and Barrett (8th Grade Only) School
- Stanton K-8 School
- Arthur K-8 School

The District has agreed to work with Universal to create the Promise Neighborhoods Advisory Committee and corresponding subcommittees (“Work Groups”) that will be comprised of professionals, community stakeholders, and Universal to work with the District on all aspects of the schools, budgets and operations. In addition, an Advisory Board with representatives of the target areas of Point Breeze and Grays Ferry in South Philadelphia, also be created to manage and ensure consistency in data analysis and program development, and to ensure the appropriate mix of policies, programs, and resources across

all the work groups. The Work Groups will be formed to focus on four subject areas, as outlined below, to address the continuum of solutions and fulfill the needs that are identified during the planning process. The following represent the mechanism by which the research analysis activities will be conducted and providers, experts and clients are engaged:

Work Group 1: Pre-School/Early Childhood Development

- **Primary Functions** - Evaluate program “best practices”, effectiveness, needs and gaps with respect to parenting, healthcare, nutrition, and wellness.
- **Data Research and Analysis (via surveys, focus group discussions and stakeholder interviews)** - Identify and document the core developmental needs of and corresponding obstacles pre-school aged children confront in their formative years, by assessing the number and proportion of children from birth to five years old who:
 - are in stable, caring families that protect and nurture them;
 - have access to preventive health care services and emergency services when needed;
 - have access to resources (books, media, arts, technology, people, etc.) in the homes and neighborhoods that help stimulate their physical, cognitive and emotional development;
 - have access to affordable fresh fruits, vegetables and other healthy foods in the home and neighborhood that help stimulate their overall growth and development.

Identify the core developmental needs of and the corresponding obstacles this target population confront in their formative years, by assessing the number and proportion of children from birth to kindergarten entry who:

- are participating in center-based or formal home-based early learning settings or programs, which may include Early Head Start, Head Start, child care, or publicly-funded preschool; and
- three-year-olds and children in kindergarten who demonstrate at the beginning of the program or school year age-appropriate functioning across multiple domains of early learning as determined using developmentally-appropriate early learning measures.

Work Group 2: Student Development/Career Development (K-6, 7-9, and 10-12 and beyond)

- **Primary Functions** - Evaluate program “best practices”, effectiveness, needs and gaps with respect to curriculum and cognition, healthcare/nutrition/wellness, career exploration, internships, externships, apprenticeships, and mentoring and after-school programs.
- **Data Research and Analysis (via surveys, focus group discussions and stakeholder interviews)** - Identify and document the core developmental needs of and obstacles students from kindergarten to 12th grade confront by assessing the number and proportion who:
 - have a caring adult in their home, school, and community and family members who attend parent-teacher conferences;
 - who participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily and consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily;
 - have access to preventive health care services and emergency services when needed, resource materials (books, media, arts, people, etc.) in the homes and neighborhoods that help advance their physical, cognitive and emotional development and role models/ mentors;
 - are at or above grade level according to state mathematics and english language arts assessments in at least the grades required by the ESEA (3rd through 8th and once in high school) and have attendance rates that preclude learning and foretell dropping out, especially of students in 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th grades; and
 - graduate with a regular high school diploma and obtain post-secondary degrees, vocational certificates, or other industry-recognized certifications or credentials without the need for remediation.

Work Group 3: Family Development

- **Primary Functions** - Evaluate program “best practices”, effectiveness, needs and gaps with respect to parenting, healthcare, nutrition, wellness, vocation/workforce, and recreation.

- **Data Research and Analysis (via surveys, focus group discussions and stakeholder interviews)** - Identify and document the core development needs of and corresponding obstacles families of pre-school-age students confront by assessing the number and proportion of families who:
 - have graduated from high school and obtained post-secondary degrees, vocational certificates, or other industry-recognized certifications or credentials and are consistently gainfully employed;
 - have access to job training and continuing education classes within the broader community;
 - are well-equipped as parents to provide the care and nurturing required to raise healthy, developmentally capable children and students;
 - who participate in at least 4 hours of moderate to vigorous physical activity weekly; and
 - who consume age-appropriate amounts of fruits and vegetables daily and have access to preventive health care services and emergency services when needed, resource materials (books, media, arts, people, etc.) that help advance their physical, cognitive and emotional maturation and continuing education, and parenting skills-building resources in their community.

Products from Work Groups 1, 2 and 3 - Universal team will use the quantitative and qualitative data to devise strategies for:

- improving the performance of the ten schools in the target area and launching or extending early learning programs for young children and providing quality, performance-based education for students in kindergarten through 12th grade.
- enhancing and aligning standards, practices, strategies, and activities for children from birth through third grade to ensure they enter kindergarten and the early elementary school grades demonstrating age-appropriate functioning across the multiple domains such as, physical well-being, motor development and social and emotional development.

Work Group 4: Community Development

- **Primary Functions** - Evaluate project “best practices”, effectiveness, needs and gaps with respect to affordable housing, business development and commerce, transportation, and quality community facilities and public services.
- **Data Research and Analysis (via surveys, focus group discussions and stakeholder interviews)** - Document the physical, environmental and economic strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities of the target community that represent the context in which children youth and families live, work, learn and play, including:
 - housing conditions and affordability;
 - access to retail and service markets and job markets;
 - conditions of and access to public parks/open space and public transit; and
 - quality and sustainability of community facilities public infrastructure and government services.

Products from Work Groups 4 - Universal team will use the quantitative and qualitative data to devise strategies for:

- Intervention strategies for those blocks that are in decline or are deteriorated that are in closest proximity to the targeted schools and along the pathways children and students travel to school;
- Strategies for aggregating vacant land and buildings situated on those blocks and leveraging public and private investments to develop affordable housing and neighborhood-oriented facilities on those blocks; and
- Strategies for involving and engaging a variety of public, civic, and private sector stakeholders (especially students, parents, teachers and administrators of the schools) in the creation of a vision for revitalization of those and other troubled blocks in the Point Breeze and Grays Ferry neighborhoods.

C. Extent to which the applicant describes strategies for using data to manage program implementation, inform decision-making, engage stakeholders, and measure success

Led by The Reinvestment Fund (TRF), Universal has created a Data Management Team (Data Team), which includes Temple University will undertake all data management, collection and analysis activities. The team anticipates using a variety of methods to analyze the data and validate the evaluation findings. These methods include triangulation (gathering data from several independent sources to assess the extent to which these data point to the same findings) and pre-/post analysis (comparing conditions or characteristics at baseline with those observed following an intervention). TRF will capitalize on its strengths as a product innovator, a financier of charter schools and a systems and markets evaluator to lead the support team for the Universal Promise Neighborhoods Plan. Specifically, the Data Team will:

- Provide information that responds to the needs of educators, school administrators, consumers (parents and families within the community), researchers, policy-makers, public health officials, key stakeholders and others who need to understand the data, issues and impacts of programs;
- Develop clear logic models that link inputs, activities, measurable outcomes, and goals;
- Work closely with community members and with the data advisory group (a group of researchers, service providers and subject matter experts), while also using the best available data and analysis techniques, in order to establish valid, reliable and relevant indicators and baselines to measure progress. These baselines can be updated regularly and supplemented as new data are identified;
- Work closely with awardees, technical assistance providers, and the national evaluator to foster a collaborative environment and to create a shared sense of purpose around data collection, analysis, and application of findings;
- Effectively communicate evaluation findings to awardees, funders, and other project stakeholders so that lessons learned may be used to make mid-course corrections and improvements; and
- Create a forum for sharing information, policies, important research findings, and program results with both the national evaluator and local partners.

Important parts of this process include coming to agreement on which the partners in the local initiative are; what programs, services, and activities the initiative is supporting, and how outcomes that are

difficult to quantify – or that take more than three years to achieve – will be quantified. The Data Team will develop a comprehensive information gathering and presentation framework to bring together the information that currently exists, while keeping in mind the level of sophistication that users command, so that data can be used most effectively to inform the Promise Neighbourhood local strategy. To that end, Universal and the Data Team will engage stakeholders and subject matter experts (SMEs) in this information-gathering phase of the design process. Universal has already begun by identifying an extensive list of potential partners including but not limited to educators and school administrators, researchers, policymakers, public health officials, advocates, advocates representing the African American communities in the area, elected officials that represent the area, and elected officials who are focused on education issues.

A Plan of this magnitude requires that our team has the ability to manage large groups of partners. Universal has significant experience in managing very-large public/private partnership (i.e. Universal has successfully led two HOPE VI Developments). In addition, both members of our Data Team have extensive experience managing large teams like this for similar large-scale evaluations. TRF has experience developing contract management processes and tools for overseeing the work of subcontractors and consultants, and we have longstanding relationships with most of the research partners on the team. Dr. Goldstein and Ms. Califano will work closely with Universal to ensure that team resources are deployed efficiently and effectively and that the right subject-matter and analytic expertise is brought to bear on each deliverable. Temple University, who has substantial capacity in all of the data requirements for this project, including analyzing and mapping community conditions, conducting surveys in urban neighborhoods, and evaluating community and school programs, has worked on a number very large similar projects like Project PRIDE Evaluation. Project PRIDE is a large, school-based drug abuse prevention program conducted throughout the Philadelphia school system. This long-term project includes a sequence of studies that reflects a continuous process of program revision and improvement in response to formal and informal evaluation. The outcome evaluation uses self-

administered questionnaires and a pre-post experimental design with random assignment of two hundred 6th- and 7th-grade students to treatment and control groups.

All of the partners are committed to working with the Department of Education (DOE) to ensure that the initiative is a success, and each will contribute to the project to the extent needed based on where they can add value. Additionally, the data management framework will be designed to analyze short-term programmatic process outcomes. These short-term outcomes will be analyzed and reviewed using rapid-time data analysis and mapping (discussed below). The rapid-time system will allow for program staff to quickly make necessary adjustments to program delivery. As part of the framework development process, the Data Team will ensure that all identified data sources meet both basic data quality standards and the USDOE's objectives. Generally speaking, there are two critical dimensions of indicator quality: reliability and validity. Reliability means that the indicator collected consistently, is collected in such a way that it is comparable over time and space. Validity means that the indicator actually measures what it purports to measure. One always strives to use measures with a high degree of both reliability and validity. However, in the real world, that is not always possible. Because the DOE is looking to track trends in indicators over time, we will favor in our framework indicators that may be less-than-perfect, but that are measured consistently over time, as opposed to measures that are perfect at one time or at one place but are measured differently at a different time or place. Clearly, balancing the need for reliability with the need for validity of indicators is both important and difficult. In response to this problem, we propose the following methodology as our screen:

- Ensure that the data indicator is a valid representation of the issue we are seeking to measure, demonstrated by the fact that the indicator is one that professionals in the field endorse. Validity of the indicators will be reviewed and passed upon not only by the Data Team, but also by the subject matter experts who are part of this project's team.
- Ensure that the information is updated through an appropriate and consistent method. All of the data sources that we propose to use will be from sources with well-documented data-collection procedures and that are reported in a consistent and routine method.

- Select information that is available on a predictable basis. We recognize that the DOE seeks to design a system that remains relevant and accurate. We will propose data sources that are updated annually, or for which reasonable annual (or bi-annual) estimates are available.

Specific Framework:

- **Establish Promise Neighborhoods Data Advisory Group** – In addition to the Data Team of TRF and Temple University, Universal will create and manage the Data Advisory Group (Advisory Group) that will be led by TRF and composed of researchers, service providers and subject matter experts. TRF will coordinate meetings during the planning year to review the outcome measures recommended by the DOE and to help determine valid and reliable data to measure progress toward goals. The Advisory Group will help determine appropriate time-intervals for data collection. If survey instruments are deemed necessary, the group will assist in their development and in the development of a survey sample strategy. In addition to the core results to be collected by all Promise Neighborhoods communities, the group will help identify data sources that can be used as additional indicators related to promoting children’s healthy development, school success, high school graduation, and completion of post-secondary education or credentialing. The Advisory Group will also review Data Team’s recommended baseline indicators and help determine the level of change in each indicator that will correspond to program goals being met. The questions the Data Team will pose will focus on the following categories of information: *1) What data systems are people currently using? 2) How is that data currently used? 3) What measures are most useful? 4) What geographic levels (state, county, zip code, census tracts, etc.) would be most useful? 5) On what topics/geographies is additional data needed? 6) Who currently provides the data? 7) What data is most useful to view visually through maps? 8) What are alternative methods for quickly sharing and distributing data to inform the process?*

Universal and its partners propose to plan, build, adapt, or expand a longitudinal data system that will measure academic, family and community support indicators for all children in the neighborhood,

disaggregated by the subgroups listed in section 1111(b)(3)(C)(xiii) of the ESEA. This longitudinal data system will be linked to school-based, LEA, and state systems, and accessible to project partners while abiding by privacy laws. Subsequently, we will make the data accessible to program partners, researchers, and evaluators abide by federal, state, and other privacy laws and requirements, and manage and maintain the system, using the expertise of our Data Team members TRF and Temple University. Both organizations will work with Universal and the project partners to develop a web based data entry system that will allow partners to upload data into a single secure database that adheres to FIRPA and HIPPA data standards and ensure that the private information of children and families is protected.¹ Both TRF and Temple University have a diversity of experiences using Graphic Information Systems (GIS)² technology to track and associate multiple indicators to a single parcel (i.e., home or school address) or client file. Indicators of child health, school performance and community condition as well as utilization of program activities and services will be collected longitudinally and stored in a systematic way that will allow for the reporting of programmatic trends over time. Some data (e.g., school data) will not be conducive to the web-based data entry system, so the Data Team will coordinate the quarterly retrieval of school data from Pennsylvania Department of Education, Pennsylvania's PIMS³ database, crime data from the Philadelphia Police Department, and other data from other large data systems. These datasets will be reviewed for quality, geocoded using GIS, disaggregated to the smallest level of geography and connected to parcel- and client-level data where possible. Data collected and gathered in the planning process will help to form the baseline levels, which will then be analyzed to help plan the geographic targeting of interventions and phases of geographically scaling up the program over time.

¹ More about FIRPA and HIPPA can be found in *The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) Privacy and Security Rules*

<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/index.html>

² A geographical information system is a system that captures, stores, analyzes, manages, and presents data that are linked to a location.

³ PIMS, Pennsylvania Information Management System, is a new initiative from the Pennsylvania Department of Education aimed at unifying the manner in which school districts submit reports. This streamlined function will provide administrators with longitudinal data, enabling them to make data driven decisions for their districts. PIMS was established with 24 million in federal funding over three grants plus annual funding of \$4.5 million from the Pennsylvania Department of Education. PIMS is already integrated with the records of Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) as stipulated in the grant proposal requirements, and school-based records are integrated with those of the Philadelphia School District.

On a quarterly basis, Universal and the Data Team, led by TRF, will host CitiStat-style⁴ process meetings to report process evaluation findings. This will include spatial representations of the data as well as tabular summaries of programmatic utilization. The presentation of data at these meetings will be organized around individual goals, so that all programs focused on the same goal will be presented and analyzed together. Universal will be able to use the meetings to regularly discuss with partners progress toward goals and ask questions about findings to-date. The Data Team will also use dashboard reports to show progress over time towards the benchmarks established by the advisory group. The most recent long-term indicator data will be presented longitudinally and compared to prior performance period in order to show progress towards goals. Note that the long-term indicators will not be collected quarterly so the dashboard will most likely be reviewed at yearly meetings. Finally, we will use data to document the planning process, including descriptions of lessons learned and best practice strategies.

The following strategies for using data to manage program implementation, inform decision-making, engage stakeholders and measure success will include the following: (1) We will engage in data collection by first determining whether or not we already have data to address the Promise Neighborhood program and project indicators and if these data can serve as a baseline. If we have determined that we don't have the data, then we must establish a plan to secure the data that we need; (2) We must engage in data analysis whereby the planning team must conduct a thorough needs assessment, based on an analysis of data for each of the 10 required project indicators of need. The team will also conduct a segmentation analysis to identify how certain subgroups of children and adults are faring in each of the 10 indicator categories. The team will need to identify how the needs assessment and segmentation analysis will be conducted, who will compile the data, and who will analyze the data. Finally, the planning team needs to determine how it will ensure that all segments of the community will have access to the data and how they will be involved in the analysis and interpretation of it and the subsequent development of solutions.

⁴ CitiStat is a system used to manage all city programs and services. Information is gathered on an array of performance indicators, including response times for things like pothole abatement, trash collection, and snow removal, as well as the prevalence of problems such as illegal dumping, vacant buildings, and sewage overflows. This information is analyzed with the assistance of computerized databases and geographic mapping to zero in on areas of underperformance. Managers from each city department then meet with the mayor's office every two weeks to answer questions about their results

(3) The planning team will establish a Longitudinal Data System will be created and linked to school-based, LEA, and state systems, and accessible to project partners while abiding by privacy laws. As the team meets to approach its task of creating a longitudinal data system, it needs to identify whether or not it will build on ongoing efforts and identify those various challenges we may face such as systems, technological, political, logistical, and legal and how they will address them. Team members will determine a realistic timeframe for rolling out the project and who need to be at the table to make this happen – taking into consideration the consultants and/or equipment needed to accomplish this. All of these strategies are intended to lead to significant improvements in each of our Promise Neighborhood’s targeted schools.

Neighborhood measures will include (a) census and other administrative data, (b) windshield surveys, (c) rating scales, (d) structured/unstructured interviews (including ethnographies), (e) residents’ written descriptions, (f) photographs, (g) drawings, and (h) mixed method constructions, just to name a few. When pertinent, the role of children’s voices in these measures will be discussed. In addition, the conceptual nature of the neighborhood will be discussed from the perspective of environment and place. Practices among entities and neighborhood residents will be enhanced by building bridges between measures representing environment and measures representing place. Such bridges will offer opportunities to develop interventions that will be viable for creating lasting change.

D. Extent to which the applicant identifies and describes academic and family and community support indicators to be used for the needs assessment during the planning year

During the course of the planning grant, Universal and Data Management Team (Data Team) which includes The Reinvestment Fund and Temple University, led by TRF, will work with the Data Advisory Group (Advisory Group) to conduct an assessment of those academic and family/community needs in direct alignment with the academic, family and community support indicators published in the notice. The Data Team will initiate a systematic needs assessment process to acquire an accurate, thorough picture of an existing community assets to determine the level and quality of community assets needed to more adequately support: (1) the needs of our young children birth to five years old who have a place

where they usually go, other than an emergency room, when they are sick or in need of advice about their health; (2) the quantity and quality of early learning programs so that our children, from birth to kindergarten entry, can participate in center-based or formal home-based early learning settings or programs, which may include Early Head Start, Head Start, child care, or publicly-funded preschool; (3) students performing at or above grade level according to state mathematics and English language arts assessments in at least the grades required by the ESEA (3rd through 8th and once in high school); (4) improved attendance rate of students in 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th grade; (5) three-year-olds and children in kindergarten who demonstrate at the beginning of the program or school year age-appropriate functioning across multiple domains of early learning (as defined in this notice) as determined using developmentally-appropriate early learning measures (as defined in the notice); (6) students who say they have a caring adult in their home, school, and community; (7) family members who attend parent-teacher conferences; and, (8) children who participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily and consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily.

The results of the needs assessment will be used as the basis for our Promise Neighborhood comprehensive plan and will serve as a response to the academic and family and community support needs of all students for improving student achievement and meeting challenging academic standards. The academic needs assessment will focus on whether neighbourhood children are ready for kindergarten, proficient in core subjects, successfully transitioning from middle school to high school, graduating from high school, attending college, and achieving career success. The family and community needs assessment will focus on whether neighborhood children are healthy, feel safe, live in stable environments, receive support from family/community, and have access to 21st century learning tools. The data used in this needs assessment will ultimately be represented spatially by census block group and each block group and data will be analyzed in such a way that each block group will be segmented into classifications of low, medium, or high need. Both quantitative and qualitative methods will be used to identify the precursor, primary, secondary, tertiary conditions that might be barriers to neighborhood

success in these areas. These findings will be used to help prioritize geographic areas and schools with the highest need and inform the development of programs to address the needs.

Develop the logic model built upon the local theory of change - The results of the needs assessment will be used to help the professional services committee identify and develop inputs (What services/programs will be used to help achieve the stated project goals?) and activities (What are the main activities the project will do/provide?). The Data Team will then work with the providers to develop realistic outputs (How many and what observable/tangible results will be achieved?), short-term outcomes (What will occur as a direct result of the activities and outputs?) and medium term outcomes (What indicates movement toward final outcomes?).

Develop a rapid-time data response system - During the course of the planning year the data collection, reporting and management infrastructure will be developed so that when program delivery begins data can be entered, analyzed and used to quickly guide program staff. The Data Team will work with Universal and the project partners to develop a web-based data entry system that will allow partners to upload data into a single secure database. The Data Team will adhere to FIRPA and HIPPA data standards to ensure that the private information of children and families is protected.⁵ Both TRF and Temple University have a diversity of experiences using Graphic Information Systems (GIS)⁶ technology to track and associate multiple indicators to a single parcel (i.e., home or school address) or client file. Indicators of child health, school performance and community condition as well as utilization of program activities and services will be collected longitudinally and stored in a systematic way that will allow for the reporting of programmatic trends over time. Some data (e.g., school data) will not be conducive to the web-based data entry system, so the Data Team will coordinate the quarterly retrieval of school data from

⁵ The FIRPA and HIPPA standards are described in *The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) Privacy and Security Rules*

<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/index.html>

⁶ A geographical information system is a system that captures, stores, analyzes, manages, and presents data that are linked to a location.

Pennsylvania Department of Education, Pennsylvania's PIMS⁷ database, crime data from the Philadelphia Police Department, and other data from other large data systems. These datasets will be reviewed for quality, geo-coded using GIS, disaggregated to the smallest level of geography and connected to parcel- and client-level data where possible. Data collected and gathered in the planning process will help to form the baseline levels, which will then be analyzed to help plan the geographic targeting of interventions and phases of geographically scaling up the program over time.

On a quarterly basis, Universal and the Data Team, led by TRF, will host CitiStat-style⁸ process meetings to report process evaluation findings. This will include spatial representations of the data as well as tabular summaries of programmatic utilization. The presentation of data at these meetings will be organized around individual goals, so that all programs focused on the same goal will be presented and analyzed together. Universal will be able to use the meetings to regularly discuss with partners progress toward goals and ask questions about findings to-date. The Data Team will also use dashboard reports to show progress over time towards the benchmarks established by the advisory group. The most recent long-term indicator data will be presented longitudinally and compared to prior performance period in order to show progress towards goals. Note that the long-term indicators will not be collected quarterly so the dashboard will most likely be reviewed at yearly meetings.

E. Extent to which the applicant demonstrates a commitment to work with the Department and with a national evaluator for Promise Neighborhoods to ensure that data collection and

⁷ PIMS, Pennsylvania Information Management System, is a new initiative from the Pennsylvania Department of Education aimed at unifying the manner in which school districts submit reports. This streamlined function will provide administrators with longitudinal data, enabling them to make data driven decisions for their districts. PIMS was established with 24 million in federal funding over three grants plus annual funding of \$4.5 million from the Pennsylvania Department of Education. PIMS is already integrated with the records of Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) as stipulated in the grant proposal requirements, and school-based records are integrated with those of the Philadelphia School District.

⁸ CitiStat is a system used to manage all city programs and services. Information is gathered on an array of performance indicators, including response times for things like pothole abatement, trash collection, and snow removal, as well as the prevalence of problems such as illegal dumping, vacant buildings, and sewage overflows. This information is analyzed with the assistance of computerized databases and geographic mapping to zero in on areas of underperformance. Managers from each city department then meet with the mayor's office every two weeks to answer questions about their results

program design are consistent with plans to conduct a rigorous national evaluation of the Promise Neighborhoods Program during the implementation phase and of specific solutions and strategies pursued by individual grantees

Universal and all of its partners are fully committed to working with the Department and a National Evaluator for Promise Neighborhoods. Both TRF and Temple University have sufficient experience as a lead evaluator and as a grant recipient in which a national evaluator is tasked with assessing progress and analysis. Example: TRF led the Philadelphia site of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's seven-year Jobs Initiative. TRF was responsible for maintaining an extensive data system, coordinating with a local evaluator, national data consultants and then hosting periodic site visits from Abt Associates' national evaluators. Data from Philadelphia and the other six sites was then vetted in periodic national meetings of various advisors to the initiative. In many other instances, TRF has been the lead evaluator, instituting the data requirements and protocols. From experience on both sides of data collection, we understand the importance of sharing data that allows for cross-location evaluations, evaluation of the program design, and evaluation of the performance of the local grantee to achieve those goals. TRF will work with Rutgers-Camden and our local partners to create an environment where information on performance and program success is transparent and accessible to local constituents, to policymakers and to the Department of Education.

F. Extent to which the proposed project will be coordinated with similar or related efforts, and with other appropriate community, State, and Federal resources

In addition to Foundation, The Philadelphia School District, and a number of community and private organizations, The Universal Promise Neighborhood Initiative is being supported by nearly every local public agency in the City, including but not limited to the following:

- Philadelphia Commission on Health
- Office of the Mayor of Philadelphia
- Philadelphia District Attorney's Office

- School District of Philadelphia
- Office of Housing and Community Development
- The Redevelopment Authority of Philadelphia
- 17th Police District

In addition to the professional team above, Universal has secured more than fifty (50) letters of support from various public and private individuals and organizations who have committed to work with Universal in this planning process. It is important to note that the team of partners that Universal has assembled, in addition to helping to create a stellar comprehensive plan of action for this Promise Neighborhood Initiative, have also committed more than \$600,000 in contributions and staffing to ensure its success. In partnership with the Philadelphia School District, our health organizations and Free Library partners are prepared to begin working immediately during the upcoming 2010/11 school year to establish school-based health clinics and libraries. Managing extremely complex projects that have multiple (layer) financing has been one of Universal's core organizational strengths.

III. QUALITY OF PROJECT SERVICES

A. Extent to which the applicant describes proposed solutions to be provided by the proposed project that are based on the best available evidence including, where available, strong or moderate evidence

Universal planning grant activities will focus on solutions that will consist of two main types: 1) School Reform Solutions. Universal and its partners will comply with the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) requirement for Promise Neighborhood programs to work with at least one school. Our strategy includes a high school along with 9 potential feeder schools. The school reform solutions above will only address project indicators in the Academic Program categories dealing with students at specific schools in our neighborhood. Our targeted schools are representative of elementary school, middle school, or high schools students, or a combination.

2) We will incorporate and use best-practices and data- and evidence-based solutions to ensure that our children have access to a continuum of cradle-through-college-to-career solutions designed to support their academic achievement, healthy development, and college and career success.

We have assembled a cadre of leaders and institutions across the education, family/human service and community development sectors that have the capacity to collect, analyze, and use data to evaluate our efforts as we plan to implement academic programs and family and community supports. Our academic programs, family and community supports, and participating schools will work together and closely integrate our efforts so that time and resource gaps that contribute to children missing academic and developmental milestones do not occur. As an example, members of the Advisory Committee will ensure that the agencies they represent are fully aware of all the obstacles (i.e. policies, procedures and practices) that are impeding program performance and return to their respective agencies to discuss these issues with the decision-makers to facilitate changes needed and in so doing break down any “silos” causing the problem.

It is also important to note that the team of partners that Universal has assembled, in addition to helping to create a stellar comprehensive plan of action for this Promise Neighborhood Initiative, have also committed more than \$600,000 in contributions and staffing to ensure its success. In partnership with the Philadelphia School District, our health organizations and Free Library partners are prepared to begin working immediately during the upcoming 2010/11 school year to establish school-based health clinics and libraries.

We will use this same approach in the area of family and community supports through the leaders of their respective organizations. Our intent is to utilize place-based approaches that can leverage investments by focusing resources in targeted places, drawing on the compounding effect of well-coordinated actions. Universal has experience developing comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategies that address each of the essential neighborhood assets – physical, social and economic -- that are vital to transforming distressed neighborhoods into healthy and vibrant communities of opportunity.

It is upon this foundation that we will succeed in the Promise Neighborhoods planning process and strive to leverage our city's broader neighborhood revitalization strategies. As such, our Promise Neighborhood project focuses on accessible, high-quality academic programs, effective schools, and family and community supports. We believe that only through the development of such comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plans, which embrace the coordinated use of programs and resources to effectively address the interrelated needs within a community, will the broader vision of neighborhood transformation occur.

B. Likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will lead to improvements in the achievement of students as measured against rigorous academic standards

The Universal Promise Neighborhood Initiative will help all children meet challenging academic content and academic achievement standards. A major strategy will encourage coordination of academic, social, and health services through partnerships between public elementary and secondary schools, the schools' local educational agencies, and community-based organizations, non-profit organizations, and other public or private entities. The purpose of this collaboration is 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.

Our academic programs will employ a student-centered learning philosophy that will focus on empirically measuring student performance. Our curriculum and instructional implementations or programs will incorporate a host of many progressive pedagogical models and ideas, such as block scheduling, project- and inquiry-based learning and real-world, experiential learning. Assessment will be embedded in instruction and learning so that students can demonstrate that they have learned the required skills and content. Key to the success of the Universal Promise Neighborhood Initiative is an aggressive and forward-thinking School District, which we have in Philadelphia. All of the key stakeholders are fully aware of the efforts of the Philadelphia School District's Superintendent to improve the education achievement of students. We are all cognizant that as schools across America strive to improve student achievement, a critical component of their success is the ability of administrators to lead schools and districts in the right direction. Dr. Ackerman, Superintendent of the Philadelphia School District knows very well how strong leadership can contribute greatly to the success of individual schools and an entire district. Upon her arrival in 2008, Dr. Ackerman immediately announced that critical to our work of creating excellence, equity, and accountability within our District is a need to build strong teams of dedicated leaders from inside and outside of our schools. Dr. Ackerman established task forces and working groups that would serve as the foundation for the District's strategic plan known as *Imagine 2014*.

Demonstrating a keen understanding of the importance of engaging community stakeholders in the education of our young children, Dr. Ackerman subsequently established "IMAGINE 2014" working groups that would form the core of the strategic planning process. These nine (9) groups would have the primary responsibility of collecting the wealth of information from existing evaluations and research, the work of other task forces, and feedback from the community, to create a set of findings and recommendations that will serve as the backbone of the District's plan to achieve excellence, equity, and accountability. Recognizing the negative effects of paralysis due to analysis, Dr. Ackerman demonstrated

her action-oriented management model by immediately initiating district-wide changes through the implementation of “what works” or best practice programs and strategies while simultaneously engaging the community in planning and research.

In addition, on January 27, 2010, Dr. Ackerman announced the launch of the Renaissance Schools initiative, a major reform program that is designed to turn around low-performing schools directly aligned with President Obama’s education reform agenda. This initiative is a key component of the District’s five-year strategic plan, known as *Imagine 2014*. The Renaissance Schools initiative is intended to transform the District’s lowest performing schools by working with school communities to recruit and select individuals and organizations that have proven track records of operating and supporting high achieving schools. The goal of this initiative is to turn under-performing schools into highly effective schools that provide exceptional opportunities for student academic achievement and preparedness for success in college and the workforce. As part of the Renaissance School initiative, Dr. Ackerman unveiled a list of fourteen (14) schools, named *Renaissance Eligible Schools* that are eligible for “turnaround” under the initiative for the 2010-2011 school years. On that same day, Dr. Ackerman released a list of twenty-five (25) schools that have earned the designation of Vanguard School due to their high academic performance, and a list of twelve (12) chronically low-performing schools, labeled *Renaissance Alert Schools*, that will receive further academic supports. Universal was awarded two schools that will be converted to charter schools.

These new designations, *Vanguard Schools*, *Renaissance Alert Schools*, and *Renaissance Eligible Schools*, are part of the District’s commitment to continue to monitor schools according to their instructional gains and overall academic performance with Dr. Ackerman’s ultimate goal of building a system of great schools. The Renaissance Schools plan is largely based on recommendations developed by the Renaissance School Advisory Board, which consisted of approximately 60 educators, business and community leaders, parents and District personnel from across Philadelphia, a process of comprehensive community engagement/input characteristic of Dr. Ackerman’s leadership style. The Board’s recommendations were presented to the School Reform Commission and Superintendent Arlene

Ackerman on October 21, 2009. This initiative was further informed by community feedback the District collected through eight (8) community information sessions conducted in November 2009 throughout the City of Philadelphia. Renaissance Schools will differ from traditional District schools by having greater degrees of autonomy in school management in exchange for a high degree of accountability for performance. Renaissance Schools must use these autonomies to implement a school design that provides a high-quality educational experience for students. Renaissance Schools will continue to serve as neighborhood schools with a defined geographic boundary for assigning students. Student retention will be a key performance indicator for the Renaissance Schools and the District expects that successful Renaissance Schools will achieve higher rates of student retention as a result of engaging curriculum, high-quality enrichment programs for students, and skilled and caring teachers and school staff.

The School District is not waiting; nor are we waiting. In addition to the academic reform efforts of the District, Universal, in partnership with the School District, several health organizations, and the Free Library are prepared to begin working immediately during the upcoming 2010/11 school year to establish school-based health clinics and libraries.

C. Extent to which the applicant explains how the needs assessment and segmentation analysis will be used to determine that children with the highest needs receive appropriate services to meet academic and developmental outcomes.

During the course of the planning grant the Data Management Team (Data Team), comprised of The Reinvestment Fund (TRF) and Temple University, will work with the Data Advisory Group (Advisory Group) to conduct an assessment of the academic and family/community needs. The academic needs assessment will focus on the whether neighborhood children are ready for kindergarten, proficient in core subjects, successfully transitioning from middle school to high school, graduating from high school, attending college, and achieving career success. The family and community needs assessment will focus on whether neighborhood children are healthy, feel safe, live in stable environments, receive support from family/community, and have access to 21st century learning tools. The data used in this needs assessment will ultimately be represented spatially by census block group and each block group and data will be

analyzed in such a way that each block group will be segmented into classifications of low, medium, or high need. Both quantitative and qualitative methods will be used to identify the precursor, primary, secondary, tertiary conditions that might be barriers to neighborhood success in these areas. These findings will be used to help prioritize geographic areas and schools with the highest need and inform the development of programs to address the needs.

- Develop the logic model built upon the local theory of change** - The results of the needs assessment will be used to help the individual Work Groups identify and develop inputs (What services/programs will be used to help achieve the stated project goals?) and activities (What are the main activities the project will do/provide?). The Data Team will then work with the providers to develop realistic outputs (How many and what observable/tangible results will be achieved?), short-term outcomes (What will occur as a direct result of the activities and outputs?) and medium term outcomes (What indicates movement toward final outcomes?). Example:

GOAL	INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	SHORT TERM OUTCOMES <i>(measurement)</i>	MEDIUM TERM OUTCOMES <i>(measurement)</i>	LONG TERM OUTCOMES <i>(measurement)</i>
Children enter kindergarten ready to learn	Identified during planning year based on needs assessment	Identified during planning year based on needs assessment	Identified during planning year after program developed	Identified during planning year after program developed	Identified during planning year after program developed	- # and % of children who demonstrate age-appropriate functioning; have a medical home and participate in early learning programs

- Develop a rapid-time data response system** - During the course of the planning year the data collection, reporting and management infrastructure will be developed so that when program delivery begins data can be entered, analyzed and used to quickly guide program staff. The Data Team will work with Universal and the project partners to develop a web-based data entry system that will allow partners to upload data into a single secure database. The Data Team will adhere to

FIRPA and HIPPA data standards to ensure that the private information of children and families is protected.⁹ Both TRF and Temple University has a diversity of experiences using Graphic Information Systems (GIS)¹⁰ technology to track and associate multiple indicators to a single parcel (i.e., home or school address) or client file. Indicators of child health, school performance and community condition as well as utilization of program activities and services will be collected longitudinally and stored in a systematic way that will allow for the reporting of programmatic trends over time. Some data (e.g., school data) will not be conducive to the web-based data entry system, so the Data Team, with TRF as its lead, will coordinate the quarterly retrieval of school data from Pennsylvania Department of Education, Pennsylvania's PIMS¹¹ database, crime data from the Philadelphia Police Department, and other data from other large data systems. These datasets will be reviewed for quality, geocoded using GIS, disaggregated to the smallest level of geography and connected to parcel- and client-level data where possible. Data collected and gathered in the planning process will help to form the baseline levels, which will then be analyzed to help plan the geographic targeting of interventions and phases of geographically scaling up the program over time.

- On a quarterly basis, Universal and Data Team will host CitiStat-style¹² process meetings to report process evaluation findings. This will include spatial representations of the data as well as

⁹ The FIRPA and HIPPA standards are described in *The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) Privacy and Security Rules*

<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/index.html>

¹⁰ A geographical information system is a system that captures, stores, analyzes, manages, and presents data that are linked to a location.

¹¹ PIMS, Pennsylvania Information Management System, is a new initiative from the Pennsylvania Department of Education aimed at unifying the manner in which school districts submit reports. This streamlined function will provide administrators with longitudinal data, enabling them to make data driven decisions for their districts. PIMS was established with 24 million in federal funding over three grants plus annual funding of \$4.5 million from the Pennsylvania Department of Education. PIMS is already integrated with the records of Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) as stipulated in the grant proposal requirements, and school-based records are integrated with those of the Philadelphia School District.

¹² CitiStat is a system used to manage all city programs and services. Information is gathered on an array of performance indicators, including response times for things like pothole abatement, trash collection, and snow removal, as well as the prevalence of problems such as illegal dumping, vacant

tabular summaries of programmatic utilization. The presentation of data at these meetings will be organized around individual goals; all programs focused on the same goal will be presented and analyzed together. Universal will be able to use the meetings to regularly discuss with partners progress toward goals and ask questions about findings to-date. The Data Team will also use dashboard reports to show progress over time towards the benchmarks established by the advisory group. The most recent long-term indicator data will be presented longitudinally and compared to prior performance period in order to show progress towards goals. Note that the long-term indicators will not be collected quarterly so the dashboard will most likely be reviewed at yearly meetings.

buildings, and sewage overflows. This information is analyzed with the assistance of computerized databases and geographic mapping to zero in on areas of underperformance. Managers from each city department then meet with the mayor's office every two weeks to answer questions about their results

IV. QUALITY OF PROJECT PERSONNEL

A. Description of the applicant's organizational capacity to plan and implement a Promise Neighborhood

Since its inception in 1993, Universal has built the capacity to challenge and reverse the effects of urban decline and has become one of the largest and most successful community revitalization movements in the history of the city of Philadelphia. Universal has been a change agent in several neighborhoods in the city of Philadelphia and has been a conduit to nearly a billion dollars of public and private investment. In addition, Universal manages five (5) public schools (3 charters, 2 contract schools), which three (3) are in the proposed Promise Neighborhood supported by this application. Our school academic success partnered with our ability to plan, finance, and build our solutions, uniquely positions Universal to undertake this planning process. In addition to committing its entire organization to the successful implementation of a Promise Neighborhood Initiative, Universal has assembled the "A" Team of professionals, consultants, and experts in the field of education, community development, human services, data management, and finance to undertake this effort. The team of partners which Universal has assembled, in addition to helping to create a stellar comprehensive plan of action for this Promise Neighborhood Initiative, have also committed more than \$600,000 in contributions and staffing to ensure its success. In partnership with the Philadelphia School District, our health organizations and Free Library partners are prepared to begin working immediately during the upcoming 2010/11 school year to establish school-based health clinics and libraries.

Universal, with its President/CEO as the Executive Project Leader, will fulfill overall oversight for implementation and management of our Promise Neighborhood. Universal has organized the following organizations and individuals to implement this plan:

- Executive Project Management Team – Universal Companies: A. Rahim Islam, President/CEO; Shahied Dawan, CPA, CFO; and Dr. Janis Butler, EVP Education;

- School District of Philadelphia - Dr. Lee Nunery, Deputy Superintendent; David Weiner, Chief Accountability Officer; and Renee Queen Jackson, Acting Deputy Chief, Office of Early Childhood;
- Project Management -Wilson Associates, V. Lamar Wilson, Managing Partner;
- Project Support – Osirus Group, Heseung Song, PhD, Managing Partner;
- Project Support – C.A. Keating Consulting, Carole Keating, Managing Partner;
- Project Support – Point Breeze Performing Arts CDC; Al Brown, Executive Director;
- Data Manager – The Reinvestment Fund, Ira Goldstein, PhD, Director of Policy solutions, and Ken Gross, PhD, Senior Policy Analyst;
- Data Consultants and Support – Temple University; Dr. Heidi Grunwald, Interim Director of the Institute for Survey Research; Dr. Heather Hammer, Study Director at the Institute for Survey Research, and Dr. Carolyn Adams Professor and Graduate Director of Metropolitan Philadelphia Indicators Project Department of Geography & Urban Studies;
- Health and Human Services – 1) Greater Philadelphia Health Associates, Dr. Janet Young, and 2) Diversified Community Services, Cheryl Weiss, Executive Director; and
- Education Consultant Support – Foundations, Inc.: Rhonda Lauer, President/CEO; Emilio R. Matticoli, Ed.D, Chief of Staff; and Dr. Bernard McMullen, Director of Evaluation Center for Afterschool Education.

In addition to the professional team above, Universal has assembled a very impressive group of nearly 50 key institutional stakeholders, who have committed to making this Project a reality, including:

- Commissioner of Health, Dr. Don Swartz
- Community College of Philadelphia
- Free Library of Philadelphia
- Drexel University
- Office of the Mayor

- Urban League of Philadelphia
- Philadelphia District Attorney's Office
- 17th Police District

B. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the applicant, including the project director, and the prior performance of the applicant on efforts similar or related to the proposed Promise Neighborhood.

Universal has created a comprehensive plan to support revitalization of blighted neighborhoods, known as the Universal Plan. The Universal Plan is an extremely close replica of the Harlem Children's Zone Model (HCZ), which the Promise Neighborhood notice acknowledges as the model which the US Department of Education wants individuals who will compete for funds to emulate. Similar to the HCZ, the Universal Plan addresses the inter-related and inter-connected systems that comprise a community (i.e. leadership, family, political, business, religion, education, etc.) and embraces the notion that the cornerstone upon which to begin revitalizing these neighborhoods resides with the transformation of their failing schools.

With more than 250 employees and a total operating budget of more than \$20 million annually, Universal has been a major catalyst impacting significant community change in a number of neighborhoods in South Philadelphia and other neighborhoods in Philadelphia. These sweeping community changes are due partially to the partnerships forged by Universal among a number of community-led task forces and coalitions that provided on-going community leadership in the creation of neighborhood improvement. Local Leadership is a key principle of the Universal Plan. In addition, Universal has developed more than 1,000 units of affordable and market rate housing; established a successful adult training center (i.e. job training, job placement, business development training and comprehensive financial training); operate after school and summer youth programs; and has implemented far-reaching public education initiatives and is one of the largest community managers of schools (3 Charter Schools, and 2 Contract Management Schools) in the Nation. Utilizing the criteria for neighborhood transformation, Universal has significantly

revitalized 5-6 neighborhoods and embraced the key characteristics stated in the Grant Notice, which include:

- Supporting efforts to improve child outcomes
- Identifying and increasing the capacity of eligible entities
- Building a complete continuum of cradle-through-college-to-career solutions
- Integrating programs and breaking down agency “silos” so that solutions are implemented effectively and efficiently across agencies; and
- Supporting the efforts of eligible entities, working with local governments, to build the infrastructure of policies, practices, systems, and resources needed to sustain and “scale up” proven solutions.

Universal’s organizational capacity far exceeds the threshold for eligibility, per the grant requirements (“entity must operate a school or partner with at least one school, and coordinate with the school’s local educational agency”) and is uniquely and exceptionally qualified to undertake the lead role in developing and implementing a Comprehensive Plan of Action and fulfilling the inherent goals of the Promise Neighborhood Initiative for several reasons: (1) Universal’s history and comprehensive approach to community revitalization mirrors the Harlem Children’s Zone approach; (2) Universal has demonstrated its ability to work with and forge partnerships by bringing all key stakeholders together (i.e. community, political, governmental, corporate, private, etc.); (3) Universal has demonstrated its ability to get those stakeholders to focus on the key issues at hand and develop a consensus for obtaining a single vision for implementation; (4) Universal has demonstrated its ability to effectively communicate the concerns of the community to ensure that the public sector responds quickly and correctly; (5) Universal has demonstrated its ability to identify public and private resources needed to implement and manage a plan of action; (6) Universal has implemented an education growth model to include early intervention programs for Pre-K4 and Pre-K5 utilizing the company’s education management team’s skills and abilities; (7) Universal has also demonstrated a community based organizational growth model utilizing

its core management personnel's skills and abilities (i.e. human resources, business planning, finance, technology, etc.); and (8) Universal Companies has been publically recognized for its notable experience in the implementation of large federal and state grants and management of very large public/private projects, which include:

- HOPE VI Developments – Universal has successfully managed two (2) HOPE VI projects representing over \$200 million in development;
- Public School Neighborhood Revitalization – Universal has designed and built two (2) public schools representing more than \$150 million in development; but also became the catalyst for the rebuilding of the neighborhoods representing millions of dollars in additional private investments;
- Education Reform – Universal has led or served at the forefront for education reform in Philadelphia's Charter School Movement. In 1999, Universal's first charter school was approved in the second year of state legislation. Universal was one of the pioneers leading another movement, the private management of public schools. In 2001, Universal was awarded three schools to privately manage for the Philadelphia School District. In 2010, Universal solicited and was awarded the right to convert two chronically failing public schools into charter schools under the District's Renaissance School initiative;
- Neighborhood Transformation Initiative – In 2003, Universal, in partnership with the City and Fannie Mae, developed a \$200 Million Housing Initiative; and
- Avenue of the Arts Redevelopment – As co-developer, Universal was responsible for the development of two signature "market-rate" residential complexes representing more than \$200 million on South Broad Street Avenue of the Arts.

Without a doubt, Universal's greatest strength towards creating a Promise Neighborhood is our organizational capacity because of our collective experiences towards urban renewal/revitalization. Universal has taken a leadership role in bringing the resources needed into a blight community to (1) improve the housing and home ownership for residents; (2) improve education opportunities for children,

youth and adults; and, (3) improve economic/job opportunities for residents. Universal is second to none when it comes to coordinating the effective tenets of urban renewal/revitalization in the city of Philadelphia.

Our other community partners are: 1) The Point Breeze Performing Arts program which has worked hard over the years to bring about social change in its blighted community through the medium of art has served thousands of children and young adults over the years; 2) Diversified Communities has embodied the historic attributes of settlement housing by offering responsive services that are close to home and easily accessible, serving as an “extended living room” and providing leadership in bringing resources into the community. In addition, the Free Library of Philadelphia has been innovative in bringing library resources into the community, now referred to as “place-based” services and will develop a library branch at one of our schools. Universal and its partners are prepared to “hit the ground running” upon immediate notification of a Promise Neighborhood grant award. We are equally confident that, because of our history of involvement and success in revitalization of adjacent neighborhoods we have invested in that we will be able to bring resources (capital, technology and know-how) to support a Promise Neighborhoods plan of action and, based on that plan, generate and sustain the same category of resources required to achieve Promise Neighborhood goals established by DOE and shared by the Universal team. It is important to note that the team of partners that Universal has assembled, in addition to helping to create a stellar comprehensive plan of action for this Promise Neighborhood Initiative, has also committed more than \$600,000 in contributions and staffing to ensure its success. In partnership with the Philadelphia School District, our health organizations and Free Library partners are prepared to begin working immediately during the upcoming 2010/11 school year to establish school-based health clinics and libraries.

C. Applicant’s experience in and lessons learned by working with the school or schools described in paragraph 2 of Absolute Priority 1

Universal is significantly credentialed to undertake the Promise Neighborhood Initiative because of its successful education track record and its documented ability to attract and manage the human, financial,

and strategic partnerships necessary to achieve success in large public/private partnerships. Since 1999, Universal has managed Universal Institute Charter School (UICS) and is responsible for all aspects of school operations, which include school leadership selection and oversight, curriculum, design, accounting and fiscal management, staffing and personnel, fund development, technology infrastructure and educational integration, parent and family supportive services, and community partnerships.

UICS' education focus is "Science is Universal" backed by a strong performing and language arts program, UICS has made AYP for the past five consecutive years. Student performance data reveals a steady growth rate of student achievement in both math and literacy. In addition, Universal polls its students' parents annually and receives 90%+ approval ratings and UICS is justifiably proud of its 90%+ annual student retention rate. In addition to UICS, Universal-contract managed schools have achieved dramatic levels of improved performance as measured by state standardized tests such as the Pennsylvania State System of Assessment (PSSA) and the Terra Nova assessment and local assessments. A common trend across all Universal-managed schools is the steep decline of percentages of students performing at Below Basic levels in math and literacy. Our data show significant improvements in the percentage of students advancing their reading and math performance levels to proficient and advanced levels of achievement.

In the period from 2002 through 2006, Universal managed three (3) public schools: E. M. Stanton, Edwin Vare Middle School, and W. S. Peirce Middle/High Schools, collectively representing approximately 2,500 students. As an outside manager, Universal was primarily responsible for: 1) the selection and oversight of the school leader; 2) support of the core curriculum with staff development; and, 3) parent and family support services. In 2006, Pierce Middle/High School, one of the schools that Universal managed, was closed due to the District's policy to eliminate middle schools, in addition to a general decline of student enrollment in the neighborhood. Universal's contract managed schools have made steady and consistent progress, specifically:

- Edwin Vare Middle School has demonstrated dramatic decreases in Below Basic student performance with significant improvements in percentages of students progressing to proficient

and above performance in math and literacy. As compared to 2002, this growth in student performance has been attained over the duration of Universal's EMO contract in spite of major obstacles related to staff turnover through the years that included four principals, three vice principals, high teacher turnover and a significant special education population. Changes in personnel were the result of staff retirements, long term illnesses, resignations and/or voluntary transfers due to instability of school leadership.

- E. M. Stanton is recognized as a “turn-around” model school. In 2007, the Pennsylvania State Department of Education recognized those schools in the Commonwealth that demonstrated the most improvement in reading skills among their students. We are proud that one of our schools, Stanton, tied in first place with another school in the Commonwealth. One year later (2008), Stanton was listed among the top ten schools in Pennsylvania for *Most improved in grade 6 math performance*. It is important to note that Stanton's academic progress in reading surpassed the School District of Philadelphia citywide results in 2006 in the percentage of students achieving proficient and above levels in grade five. By 2009, Stanton received dual premier status awarded by Philadelphia School District for schools that demonstrate continuous improvement for reaching eighty percent and higher on designated targets established by the Annual District Report Card, as well as attaining AYP.

Lessons learned as a result of Universal's education efforts, include some of the following:

- Those that seek lasting school improvement must face the fact that effective change takes time and resources
- That limited funds may mean that certain types of improvements are never considered. The availability of school resources influences implementation strategies.
- How to Increase Parent Participation;
- How do convert current schools into charter schools;

- That when time for planning and implementation activities or money to purchase materials is scarce, change activities will not make much progress
- That funding is important because underfunding a project may result in the inability to address problems until the next fiscal year;
- That it is important to Change the Culture of Failure to an Attitude of Achievement;
- That allowing the time needed for new programs to demonstrate results is often overlooked as a bridge to school improvement;
- That it is important to infuse the community in the delivery of public education; and,
- Those public school reform methods are vulnerable to faddism in their desire for quick-fix solutions to mounting problems.

D. Applicant’s experience in and lessons learned by serving the neighborhood and its residents

Universal has first-hand experience in community revitalization from planning to implementing to evaluating results across a broad spectrum of community structures to include businesses, schools, homes and community-based organizations. Universal and its partners have been in the business of working with and for neighborhoods long enough to know the “land mines” and the “gold mines” that exist and that can make a world of difference between whether or not their revitalization efforts will result in long-lasting effects or not. Both the “land mines” and the “gold mines” have taught us many lessons including the following:

- Recognizing the hardship to internally manage “silo” inputs against comprehensive outputs;
- Understanding how to create scale while maximizing financial sustainability and creating greater outreach;
- To collaborate, develop partnerships, and build consensus (Universal is currently working in 9 neighborhoods and each one involves a local partner). In addition, Universal has managed several very large public/private partnerships which are critical to moving all of the aspects of the Promise Neighborhood Initiative.

- How to market new ideas and stay focused on the goals and objectives of a comprehensive approach

E. Applicant’s experience in and lessons learned in collecting, analyzing, and using data for decision-making and ongoing improvement.

Universal has initiated and participated in many community development plans that have guided efforts around community revitalization to include the management of five public schools. As a manager overseeing the day-to-day operations of each school in the provision of education we were constantly engaged in collecting, analyzing and using data to “inform” our curriculum and instructional programs as well as professional development and parent training programs.

Data Management Team - Universal has learned that its strengths related to data management are in the areas of planning and implementation. However, we recognized that, because we were so busy engaged in community improvements through revitalization efforts, we did not have the time to effectively evaluate our progress. Therefore, we have secured two credible partners who will be charged with establishing our data management system for our Promise Neighborhood. These two partners, The Reinvestment Fund (TRF) and Temple University’s Metropolitan Philadelphia Indicators Project and the Institute for Survey Research, bring a wealth of expertise in the field of data management. Several examples include:

- Completing a socioeconomic study to statistically estimate the percentage of students eligible for free- or reduced-price meals for the School District of Philadelphia (PSD). PSD is the only district approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to determine National School Lunch Program eligibility using a socioeconomic study instead of traditional paper applications. The study findings allow the PSD to feed all children in the majority of the public schools for free, regardless of their individual financial circumstances and receive reimbursement from USDA based on the statistical estimates of eligibility. The most recent study was completed with the full cooperation and participation of USDA program staff and statistical experts, as well as officials from the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Because of the integrity of the evaluation and the innovative nature of the approach (i.e., the ability to produce high-quality estimates of

eligibility without the administrative burden or social stigma of paper applications), the study has received national attention.

- Providing a nationally-recognized foundation with pre-award analysis of applicants' proposed activities and the market conditions; data and technical support for grantees with Neighborhood Planning Grants; data and technical support for CDCs with Neighborhood Development Grants; data collection and analysis workshops for grantees; PolicyMap¹³ premium subscriptions for all current grantees and WRF staff to post data, share program activities with other grantees and evaluate proposed development opportunities and market strengths;
- Evaluating the progress of grantees towards funded goals and objectives;
- Deliverables include presentations, development memorandums and access to analysis and data for grantee planning and evaluation purposes. Recent presentations can be viewed at http://www.trfund.com/resource/downloads/policypubs/WRF_Presentation_may09.pdf.
- Providing neighborhood-based intervention services to families at-risk of mortgage foreclosure;
- Using data to determine how and where to allocate resources to mitigate against the individual and community impacts of sub-prime lending and foreclosures;
- Using data to identify and target outreach and counseling to the communities where the problems are most acute and emerging;
- Using data to develop and maintain web-based data collection and reporting systems for partners;
- Using data to evaluate the impact of projects; including collection and analysis of data focused on measurable outcomes and creation of detailed outcomes table;
- Using data for continuous evaluation, mid-course corrections to the programmed, adjustments in geographic targets and tactics;

¹³ PolicyMap, a service of The Reinvestment Fund (TRF), is an national online data and mapping tool, with over 10,000 data indicators including demographic information, home sale statistics, education data, and many others. PolicyMap is an easy, new way to explore geographic information through maps, tables and reports.

- Using data to monitor the outcomes of policy advocacy and the number of and outcomes of cases where CLS raise claims to enforce homeowner-protecting regulations and laws;
- Incorporating data into a “live” mapping programmed which allowed participants to dig deeper into a broad array of additional demographic, market and economic information;
- Using data to identify elements for replication on a larger scale;
- Conducting interviews with all partners in the process, a sampling of participants as well as lenders, brokers, community organizations and elected officials to assess their experience and perspective on the effectiveness of the programmed;

Temple University has substantial capacity to meet the data requirements for our Promise Neighborhood including analyzing and mapping community conditions, conducting surveys in urban neighborhoods, and evaluating community and school programs.

- Community analysis and mapping are the core capabilities of Temple’s Metropolitan Philadelphia Indicators Project (www.temple.edu/mpip), a multidisciplinary research team that gathers and makes available data to accurately describe communities throughout this region, as well as identify changes and trends.
- MPIP gathers social indicators that include economic and health conditions, education, crime, housing, and many others, and then organizes, cleans and presents the data for use by community organizations, regional nonprofits, local governmental agencies, and both faculty and students in the academic community. Recent innovations in computing and GIS technology have made it possible to integrate data with visual aids such as maps, graphs and charts to help community leaders track change and to help them shape their responses accordingly. Over the last 7 years, MPIP has assembled a rich database of indicators built with over \$2 million invested by the William Penn Foundation and Temple University. MPIP has served dozens of nonprofit and government organizations to apply data to solve community problems. A recent engagement has used maps and geospatial data to support an anti-violence initiative in Lower North Philadelphia.

- Temple's Institute for Survey Research (www.temple.edu/isr) has provided research services to the public and private sectors since its founding in 1967. The Institute has conducted hundreds of studies across a broad spectrum of health, population, and environmental issues working under grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements. ISR has substantial experience conducting field research in Philadelphia communities. For example, ISR's recent projects include:
- Philadelphia Youth Violence Reduction Partnership (YVRP) Evaluation: The purpose of this project is to reduce youth homicide and other violent crime in Philadelphia's most violent areas by coordinating a collaborative effort involving the city, nonprofit organizations and local churches. It targets youths deemed by initiative partners "most likely to kill or be killed." Almost all of the youth have arrests for a violent crime, weapons offense and/or drug-related crimes. ISR conducted 30-minute interviews with 356 youth age 12-24 who had been referred to the YVRP in Philadelphia Police precincts.
- Project PRIDE Evaluation: Project PRIDE is a large, school-based drug abuse prevention program conducted throughout the Philadelphia school system. This long-term project includes a sequence of studies that reflects a continuous process of program revision and improvement in response to formal and informal evaluation. The outcome evaluation uses self-administered questionnaires and a pre-post experimental design with random assignment of 200 6th- and 7th-grade students to treatment and control groups.
- Evaluation of Project Youth Connect: The Project targeted low-income, African-American middle school youth who had been bystanders to serious violence in their home, school, or community or who had been directly affected by violence and may have been suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The Project utilized an intergenerational mentor advocacy approach to address individual school and family risk factors. Three waves of data collection with individual cohorts were completed. Both process and outcome evaluations were conducted.

- Youth Development Project (YDP) Evaluation: YDP was designed to affect a positive impact on youths' knowledge of drugs, drug resistance, communication skills, interracial/ethnic sensitivity and tolerance, and self-esteem. Participant youths were 7- to 11-year-old students who attended five different Philadelphia public schools. Group-administered surveys included six scales measuring self-perception, attitudes towards race-relations, drug and alcohol use over the previous month and year, knowledge of the harmful effects of alcohol and drug use, and attitudes toward avoiding drugs.

F. Applicant's experience in creating formal and informal relationships, and generating community support to achieve result

Reaching Out to the Community - Universal has built its success on a Golden Rule: To create community environments where trusted relationships could flourish and stand to gain a competitive advantage through innovation and invention. One of the greatest lessons that Universal learned throughout its years of revitalization was to establish both formal and informal relationships by listening generously to each strata involved in the change processes of community revitalization. We learned that each of the essential community assets that our children, youth and families need to thrive had to be represented and relationships with those partners had to be formed if we were going to realize any progress. Universal always engaged in community revitalization from a community building or asset-based community development is approach that was always focused on "strengthening the capacity of residents, associations, schools and organizations to work, individually and collectively, to foster and sustain positive neighborhood change. Universal always sought to leverage the resources within a community by mapping assets and then mobilizing them to facilitate productive and meaningful connections. Every major project undertaken by Universal has required and received community support. Universal has extensive experience in leading and organizing very large-scale, multi-year public/private partnerships that required building significant community and political support while merging the needs of the community within the specific project. The following projects illustrate a representation of the organization's ability to secure community support, which includes but is not limited to the following:

- Martin Luther King Revitalization – \$100 Million, HOPE VI mixed use development that represented the cornerstone for the revitalization of the Hawthorne neighborhood and a catalyst for millions of dollars in additional private investments;
- Catto School Demonstration Project - \$90 Million, New School Construction, Revitalization of 40 Acre Park, served as a catalyst for a neighborhood revitalization in East Camden;
- Development of the New Audenried High School – Universal Companies pioneered the effort to bring the community together: A severely disjointed community, to address closing, demolition, and ultimately the rebuilding of the new Audenried High School;
- Schuylkill Falls Revitalization - \$85 Million, HOPE VI mixed use development that revitalized the worst neighborhood in East Falls;
- Universal Institute Charter School Application – In addition to securing a school charter that included a “community” focus, the facility cleared an extensive community zoning approval;
- Universal South Philadelphia Initiative - \$200 Million mixed income housing development, the largest in the City, in partnership with the City, the Reinvestment Fund, Fannie Mae and the South-Central and Point Breeze Communities. This partnership generated the construction of 400 homes in both neighborhoods;
- City-Wide Study for Public Education Privatization – In the summer of 2001, as part of the State’s due diligence to take over the Philadelphia School District, Universal received a contract to gauge the sentiment of the entire city. This required numerous town-hall meetings, focus groups, interviews, surveys, polling, and public dialogues that resulted in a 200 page report submitted to the State. After our report was completed, the State and City agreed on the direction of the Philadelphia School District and the School Reform Commission originated;
- Participation with SRC’s Request for Partnership Schools (Private Management of Low Performing Public Schools) – Universal successfully obtained contract awards to manage

three public schools and engage the surrounding communities for their participation and partnership;

- Participation with SRC's Request for Management of Renaissance Schools - Universal successfully obtained contract awards to convert two public schools into charter schools;
- Universal's community success is linked to the organization's overall ability to redefine the issues and communicate "real" solutions with all key stakeholders. Universal uses communication as a means to address all of the issues and explain them in all their complexity and deliver resources more powerfully and effectively. Universal has partnered with the following:
 - Local, state and national organizations (i.e., sororities and fraternities) to create a scholarship fund for students who exemplify many of the organization's values and goals;
 - Local businesses to establish a career shadowing day by pairing students with community leaders and business professionals;
 - Local community based organizations to afford students opportunities for community service by participating in a school beautification activity;
 - Local banks and businesses to sponsor a student recognition program to honor students who are improving their grades, attendance or behavior;
 - Local organizations and/or businesses to sponsor a teacher recognition program at meetings or events;
 - Local organizations and/or businesses to start a Principal for a Day program where members shadow a school principal on a designated day of each year to better understand how our schools are operating;
 - Local organizations and/or businesses to partner with a class to conduct a community service project;
 - Local organizations and businesses to sponsor a "Cool To Be In School" program to honor students with perfect attendance;

- Local organizations and businesses to sponsor student field trips to academically related events such as regional or state science fairs, leadership conferences, state spelling bees, math camps, etc;
- Local banks and businesses to participate as a tutor or mentor during our after-school homework center for students;
- Local community organizations to volunteer as “early literacy readers” for young children in Pre-K-3rd grade;
- Local community organizations to serve as a school ambassador;
- Local art museum stores and/or community facilities to exhibit student artwork or projects; and
- *Wellness of You* to organize a health fair event to educate students on the importance of healthy lifestyles.

G. Applicant’s experience in securing and integrating funding streams from multiple public and private sources

Over the past 15 years, Universal has been the recipient of approximately a billion dollars in private and public investment and has complied with and correctly managed all grant requirements without ever receiving any programmatic audit exceptions. Throughout its history, Universal has been a catalyst for bringing the community together to address serious issues like education reforms. Essential to the success of a successful Promise Neighborhood will be our organization’s ability to secure and manage the appropriate utilization of federal funds and comply with accompanying programmatic requirements. Universal has notable experience in the implementation of large federal grants. Also critical to the sustainability of a Promise Neighborhood will be our organization’s ability to raise, secure and manage funds. This characteristic is sufficiently demonstrated by the activities listed below.

In addition to Private Foundations, The Philadelphia School District, and a number of community and private organizations, The Universal Promise Neighborhood Initiative is being supported by nearly every local public agency in the City, including but not limited to the following:

- Commissioner of Health
- Office of the Mayor
- Philadelphia District Attorney's Office
- School District of Philadelphia
- Office of Housing and Community Development
- The Redevelopment Authority of Philadelphia
- 17th Police District

In addition to the professional team above, Universal has secured more than 50 letters of support from various public and private individuals and organizations who have committed to work with Universal in this planning process. Managing extremely complex projects that have multiple (layer) financing has been one of Universal's core organizational strengths.

V. QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT PLAN

- A. **The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks**

Planning Process:

The Universal Promise Neighborhoods planning process will complete the following principal tasks across the three phases summarized below and discussed more fully in this section:

- **Organizational Phase**
 - Affirm/reaffirm administration and management functions and structure
 - Affirm/reaffirm technical assistance and professional services for each planning category
 - Develop overall monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems needed to ensure accountability
 - Develop internal decision-making protocols
- **Data Research & Analysis Phase** (to be carried out across all five planning elements)
 - Develop baseline data describing conditions and recent trends
 - Assess strengths, successes and available resources
 - Identify “best practices” in the industry
 - Assess weaknesses, unmet needs and resource gaps
- **Action Plan Development Phase** (to be carried out across all five planning elements)
 - Develop program/project interventions to address unmet needs and fill gaps
 - Devise outcomes to effectively measure and track impacts of interventions
 - Vet and refine recommendations/interventions through advisory committee and work groups
 - Devise capitalization strategy with partners
 - Devise program/project evaluation system (measuring outcomes/impacts)
 - Rollout plan to secure resources for implementation

Organizational and Management Structure and Responsibilities

The “Universal Promise Neighborhood Project Management Team” has the following principal resource people committed to managing the planning process¹⁴:

- **Project Executive Team** – Rahim Islam, President/CEO of Universal Companies, Shahied Dawan, CFO, Dr. Janis Butler, EVP of Education of Universal Companies (will solicit and commission technical and professional services to carry out specific functions necessary to complete planning tasks and assignments identified in each phase of the planning process).
- **Project Management Team** – Day to day responsibilities for directing and managing the planning process will be provided by Lamar Wilson, Principal of V. Lamar Wilson Associates, Inc.
 - Project Support by K.A. Keating Consultants, Carole Keating, Principal
 - Project Support by Point Breeze CDC, Al Brown, Executive Director
 - Project Support by Osiris Group, Heseung Ann Song, Managing Partner
- **Project Consultants/Technical Advisors** – The team of outside consultants and advisors projected to provide technical and professional services include:
 - Data/Information Management by The Reinvestment Fund (TRF) and Temple University
 - Community Planning and Development /Support Systems by TRF
 - School Performance/Curriculum Analysis by Foundations, Inc.
 - Family/Human Service Support System Analysis by Diversified Community Services

Universal will create an Advisory Committee of 20-25 stakeholders to help direct the planning process and five Work Groups comprised of service providers, constituent representatives and other resource people which will function as subcommittees of the Advisory Committee to help develop the plan. Each will play a part in informing, guiding and driving the planning work for the Universal Promise Neighborhood to ensure the connections between the children and students, their families and their

¹⁴ See organizational chart, biographical sketches and resumes in Appendix

community as outlined below, and each will be comprised of institutional and individual leaders and resource people – including potential funders – whose missions, work and goals all align with those of Promise Neighborhoods and Universal.

Five Work Groups will be created to function as subcommittees to the Advisory Committee. Their primary functions are as follows:

Work Group 1: Pre-School/Early Childhood Development

- **Primary Functions** - Evaluate program “best practices”, effectiveness, needs and gaps with respect to parenting, healthcare, nutrition, and wellness, and recommend strategies to address service gaps and enhance performance (outcomes and impact, and available resources).

Work Group 2: Student Development/Career Development (K-6, 7-9, and 10-12 and beyond)

- **Primary Functions** - Evaluate program “best practices”, effectiveness, needs and gaps with respect to: curriculum and cognition; healthcare/nutrition/wellness; career exploration, internships, externships, and apprenticeships; mentoring and after-school programs; and recommend strategies to address service gaps and enhance performance (outcomes and impact, and available resources).

Work Group 3: Family Development

- **Primary Functions** - Evaluate program “best practices”, effectiveness, needs and gaps with respect to: parenting; healthcare; nutrition; wellness; vocation/workforce; and recreation.

Work Group 4: Community Development

- **Primary Functions** - Evaluate project “best practices”, effectiveness, needs and gaps with respect to: affordable housing; business development and commerce; transportation, quality community facilities, and public services; and recommend strategies to address service gaps and enhance performance (outcomes and impact, and available resources).

Work Group 5: Resource

- **Primary Functions** – Identify and assess potential financial and in-kind resources to support Promise Neighborhoods during the implementation phases.

Overview of Principal Deliverables

The following chart outlines the primary roles and responsibilities to be carried out by our partners and the corresponding timelines and milestones.

RESPONSIBILITIES	PRIMARY PERSON/AGENCY RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINES	MILESTONES
Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of children along the cradle-through-college-to-career continuum	TRF and Temple University, Foundation, Inc. and Diversified Community Services	Months 1-4	All Stakeholders can access a comprehensive Needs Assessment
Conduct a segmentation analysis to better target solutions for the children in that neighborhood	TRF and Temple University, Foundation, Inc. and Diversified Community Services	Months 1-4	All stakeholders can access a segmentation analysis to target solutions.
Develop a plan to deliver the continuum of solutions that addresses the challenges and gaps identified through the needs assessment and segmentation analysis.	TRF and Temple University, Foundation, Inc. and Diversified Community Services	Months 5-8	A plan is now developed to deliver the continuum of solutions.
Work with public and private agencies, organizations (including philanthropic organizations), and individuals to gather and leverage resources needed to support the financial sustainability of the plan.	TRF and Temple University, Foundation, Inc. and Diversified Community Services; Point Breeze Performing Arts Center, School District of Philadelphia	Months 5-8	Adequate level and quality of resources support the financial sustainability of the plan.
Identify strategies for building upon and leveraging high-quality academic programs and family and community supports	TRF, Foundation, Inc. and Diversified Community Services, Foundation, Inc. Point Breeze Performing Arts Center	Months 5-8	All stakeholders have contributed to strategies for building upon and leveraging high-quality academic programs and family and community supports aligned with the project indicators and results.
Build community support for and involvement in the development of the plan, which includes establishing outcomes for children in the neighborhood that are communicated and analyzed on an ongoing basis by leaders and members of the community	Promise Neighborhood Advisory Committee, TRF, Foundation, Inc. and Diversified Community Services	Months 1-12 and beyond	Outcomes for children in the neighborhood are being communicated and analyzed on an ongoing basis by leaders and members of the community.
Obtain commitments from partners to work long-term to implement the plan, help ensure continued programmatic success of their plan, and develop a strategy to hold partners accountable for meeting performance goals and milestones.	Universal Companies, Promise Neighborhood Advisory Committee	Months 9-12	Operating Agreements/MOUs from partners to work long-term to implement the plan help ensure continued programmatic success of their plan, and meeting performance goals and milestones.
Plan, build, adapt, or expand a	Promise Neighborhood	Months 9-12	A longitudinal data

comprehensive, longitudinal data management system, while abiding by Federal, State, and other privacy laws and requirements, for all academic and family/community support indicators.	Advisory Committee, TRF and Temple University		management system is in place.
Planning grantees must cooperate with the national evaluator to ensure their project design and data collection plan allows for a rigorous evaluation, using standard methodologies across Promise Neighborhoods sites, of the overall impact of the Promise Neighborhoods Program and the relationship between particular solutions pursued by the grantee and student outcomes.	Promise Neighborhood Advisory Committee,	Months 1-12 and beyond	Evidence that all stakeholders are cooperating with the national evaluator
Participate in a community of practice	Promise Neighborhood Advisory Committee, Universal Companies, Diversified Communities, Point Breeze Performing Arts Center, Philadelphia SD, Free Library, Dept. of Health and Human Services, Philadelphia Housing and Planning Commissions Foundation, Inc. Education Consultants	Months 1-12 and beyond	Evidence that all stakeholders are participating in a community of practice.

B. The extent to which the memorandum of understanding described in paragraph 5 of Absolute Priority 1 describes each partner’s financial and programmatic commitment; how each partner’s existing vision, theory of action, and theory of change, and existing activities align with those of the proposed Promise Neighborhood; and the governance structure of the proposed Promise Neighborhood

Entities signed-on to Universal’s Promise Neighborhoods planning process:

- School District of Philadelphia
- Diversified Community Services
- TBED 21
- Reach for America
- Greater Philadelphia Health Associates
- Keystone Mercy Health Plan

- The Reinvestment Fund (TRF)
- Point Breeze Performing Arts Center
- Foundations, Inc.
- Temple University

Overview of Commitments by Partner:

Each of the ten (10) MOUs provides an explanation of the respective partner’s existing vision, theory of action, and theory of change, and how their existing activities align with those of the proposed Promise Neighborhood’s and our governance structure.

- **School District of Philadelphia** - The School District is in full support of Universal’s Promise Neighborhoods planning process and is prepared as evidenced by the executed MOU to:
 - Commit sufficient staffing time over the 12-month planning process to ensure success of the effort and contribute to covering the match required for this project, including portions of the professional time of three senior administrators: Dr. Leroy Nunery, Deputy Superintendent; David Weiner, Chief Accountability Officer; and Renee Queen Jackson, Acting Deputy Chief, Office of Early Childhood. It is also anticipated that a number of additional staff members will be contributing time as well, including, for example, representatives from the Offices of Management and Budget; Transportation; Climate and Safety; and Family, Community Engagement and Faith-Based Partnerships, as various school-based personnel. The total estimated value of the portions of salaries and fringe costs associated with this in-kind contribution is \$100,000.
 - Participate in the rollout of the entire 12-month planning process as a member of both the Project Management Team and the Advisory Committee Steering Committee;
 - Assist the partners in raising the private matching funds for the project by identifying potential sources;

- Actively support the implementation of the Plan, especially in the areas of public education delivery, specifically by:
- Targeting nine (9) public schools to be in this initiative. The District is currently committing considerable resources to the development of a Facilities Master Plan for all schools. This will involve making fundamental decisions about schools, including those that will be consolidated or closed. This process, in addition to other transformative initiatives, will be brought to bear in working with Universal. The District will continue to work with Universal and its Universal Institute Charter School (UICS) to improve the academic, physical, and community aspects of the proposed Promise Neighborhood. The students in this cohort are enrolled in the eight (8) schools that are likely to attend the Audenreid High School. The full cohort of schools includes:
 1. Audenreid High School
 2. Alcorn K-8 School
 3. Vare Middle School
 4. McDaniel Elementary School
 5. Girard Elementary (K-4) School
 6. Smith K-8 School
 7. Childs K-8 School and Barrett (8th Grade Only) School
 8. Stanton K-8 School
 9. Arthur K-8 School
 10. Universal Institute Charter School
- Working with Universal in the creation of the Promise Neighborhood Board of Directors that will be comprised of professionals, community stakeholders, and Universal. Universal will work with the District on all aspects of the schools, budgets and operations. In addition, an Advisory Board with representatives of the target areas of Point Breeze and Grays Ferry in South Philadelphia will be created.

- **Diversified Community Services** - Diversified is in full support of Universal's Promise

Neighborhoods planning process and is prepared to:

- Commit the staffing time over the 12-month planning process of a Senior Manager and Administrative/Manager to work with Universal in every capacity to help develop the plan;
- Participate in the rollout of the entire 12-month planning process as a member of both the Project Management Team and the Advisory Committee; and
- Actively support the implementation of the plan, especially in the areas of early child care and children and family supportive services.

It is important to note that the team of partners that Universal has assembled, in addition to helping to create a stellar comprehensive plan of action for this Promise Neighborhood Initiative, has also committed more than \$600,000 in contributions and staffing to ensure its success. In partnership with the Philadelphia School District, our health organizations and Free Library partners are prepared to begin working immediately during the upcoming 2010/11 school year to establish school-based health clinics and libraries.

C. The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to sustain and “scale up” the proposed Promise Neighborhood

In the final analysis, creating and implementing a strategic approach to ensure the sustainability of any quality programs matters more than anything else. Our sustainability efforts will not only help us to secure adequate support to maintain programs over time, but also to do this in a way that allows for managed growth, continual quality improvement and solid, ongoing stakeholder investments. Ultimately, our funding strategies will be balanced and diversified to include a combination of local, state and federal financial resources – in cash, and reserve in-kind contributions for program enhancements. Our sustainability plan was developed and will be implemented by our leadership team in concert with key stakeholders. All partners agree that without clear, strong and sustained leadership, and positive management skills and approaches, the transformation of low-performing schools into effective

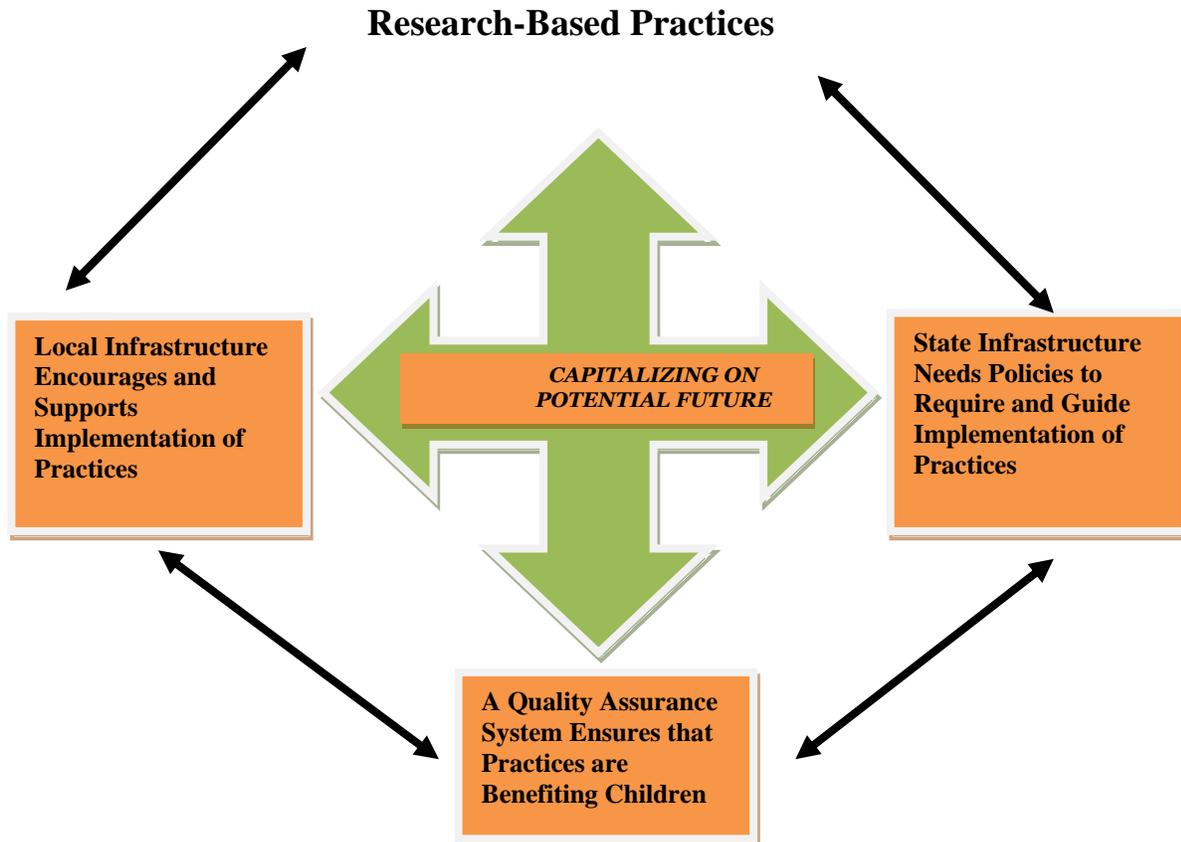
community schools will flounder. During the planning stage of our Promise Neighborhood project, partners who are considered pillars of the great city of Philadelphia created enthusiasm and excitement about the value of everyone's work that will be sustained well beyond the end of the funding period by the US Department of Education. Our organizational leaders perceive themselves as "champions" responsible for upholding and sustaining the practices of maximizing the utilization of community assets as central to the mission of improving developmental and educational outcomes for our children have pledged to allocate resources accordingly. Finally, we have secured ongoing, balanced and diversified funding that will result in financial sustainability.

The following strategies were discussed among all stakeholders as having the potential to scale up the effective tenants of our Promise Neighborhood model: Transportation of a project in exactly similar situations at other locations by the same partner or similar project personnel; replication of strategies and operations when the same partner is not available and a new partner has to be involved; optimizing a service delivery chain in an existing partner's chain through simultaneous visualization and removal of successive bottlenecks; creating projects/partners banks with a rough cut plan of matching the projects considering their target group, needs of community and other relevant factors that we utilized in our planning and implementation stages; and identifying nucleus projects. Nucleus projects will normally come with the advantage of having a framework in terms of captive audience infrastructure and systems and other supports that are easy to scale up. Advance preparation of generic partners supports those who may not carry out project intervention directly but can support and help those partners who do that e.g. we may have partners for school reform and capacity building and, data collection, analysis and interpretation, or a counseling and/or professional development component. Optimum project bundling for replication and overall visualization of the possibilities of the project beyond one year and its total scope will be assessed initially for the appropriate roll out and then scaling up. We will widen our reach to different target audiences; Connecting to a wider program or other neighborhoods with low-performing schools.

VI. SIGNIFICANCE

A. Likelihood that the proposed project will result in long-term systems change or improvement

Universal Companies (Universal) and its partners model for long-term systems change acknowledges and is grounded in conceptual frameworks found in the literature on systems change and systems thinking.



The underlying logic of the model is that for results to improve for children and families, practice needs to be research-based, of high quality and appropriate for the individual child. For such provider practices to occur, the local infrastructure must encourage and support implementation of those practices; a system of personnel development must be in place and designed to teach those practices to new and current practitioners; and the state infrastructure needs policies to require and guide implementation of those practices and a quality assurance system to ensure that practices are benefiting children and families. Because these components of a state system are interrelated, a change in one component is not likely to be sustained unless accompanied by supportive changes in all related components.

Activities at the local system infrastructure level will be designed to strengthen local support/operations, guidance, policies, procedures and coordination of services. Activities at the local level will involve conducting pilot programs or providing training on new policies, practices, assessments and data collection systems.

Examples of impacts of our system change plans on local administration and infrastructure will include:

- Creation of local committees and/or local interagency agreements that will support collaboration by clarifying roles and responsibilities across various programs;
- Changes in local system policy and procedures in order to streamline operations (e.g., eligibility determination and assessment practices);
- Restructuring of programs and/or creation of new community programs to increase the number of inclusive settings in which to provide services;
- Improved support to professional staff to take advantage of educational opportunities (e.g., training on evidence-based practices); and,
- Increased use of data reporting mechanisms to inform improved practices

B. Extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population

A significant component of Universal's Plan will be to articulate strategies to build "Enduring Capacity". Stakeholders representing our targeted communities will be required to think strategically during the planning process about how to:

- Financially support their work;
- Advocate for and drive supportive policies; and
- Form key partnerships at all levels of government and assure partners' interests are aligned with the goals of Promise Neighborhoods.

As we plan for our program's success, we will focus on new, creative, and strategic ways of ensuring financial support and consider a range of financing strategies such as:

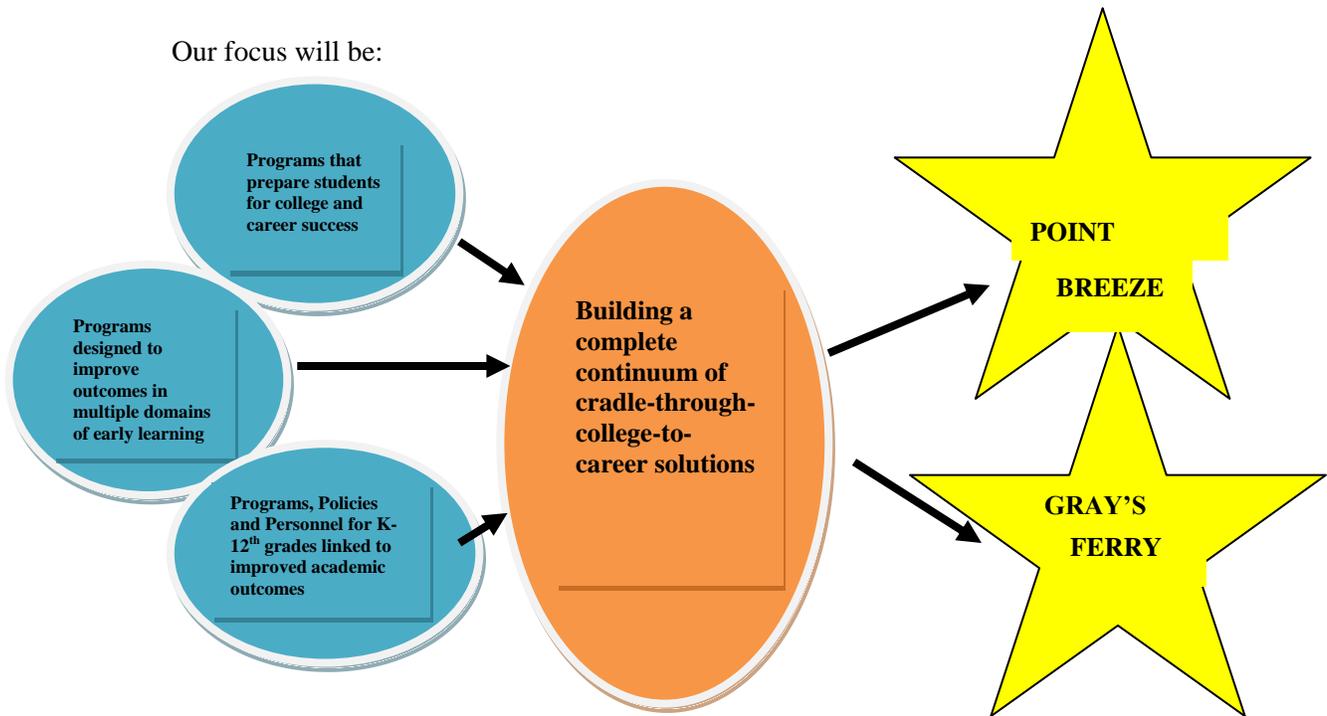
- Make better use of existing resources;
- Maximize public (federal, state, and local) resources;
- Ensure continued, supportive public financing and policy by building partnerships between the public and private sectors;
- Create more flexibility in existing funding streams through partnerships, demonstrations of program success, and knowledge of best practices in other communities;
- Explore new dedicated revenues sources.

It is important to note that the team of partners that Universal has assembled, in addition to helping to create a stellar comprehensive plan of action for this Promise Neighborhood Initiative, has also committed more than \$600,000 in contributions and staffing to ensure its success. In partnership with the Philadelphia School District, our health organizations and Free Library partners are prepared to begin working immediately during the upcoming 2010/11 school year to establish school-based health clinics and libraries.

C. The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.

As we plan and build a complete continuum of cradle-through-college-to-career solutions with both academic programs and family and community supports, we will place strong schools at the center. We will involve the development and demonstration of promising new strategies that will build on already- existing strategies rather than serve as alternatives to those existing strategies.

Our focus will be:



- **Programs Designed to Improve Outcomes in Multiple Domains of Early Learning** - The instructional programming for preschool-age Even Start children is provided through the District's own Head Start, Bright Futures and CELC programs. For children who are younger than three and not enrolled in one of the School District of Philadelphia's formal early childhood programs have the option of being enrolled in the Parent Child Home Program, a national program over 40 years old. A trained home visitor visits each family twice a week, the families are given a high quality toy or book that will promote literacy and language development. Each home visitor is trained on how to engage families in creative ways to read and play with the item given to the family.

The *District's Pre-kindergarten Core Curriculum and Head Start Outcome Frameworks* have been rigorously designed to promote continuity and articulation between Pre-K and regular school programming, thus effectively coordinating *locally* identified expectations/priorities with *national* performance standards. The *Core Curriculum and Outcome Frameworks* provides a sound instructional methodology that addresses all aspects of a child's development. The framework addresses eight independent domains (language development, literacy, mathematics,

service, creative arts, social emotional development, approaches to learning, and physical health development) and provides examples of methods for promoting a broad array of competencies for young children. Under the *Frameworks*, children will be exposed to a broad range of meaningful, hands-on experiences (e.g., movement, music, use of manipulatives, etc.) that will be modified to suit special needs or accomplished through a process of self-selection where necessary and appropriate. The ultimate objective of these activities is to develop individual self-esteem and foster a natural inclination toward inquiry and learning.

- **Programs, Policies and Personnel for K-12th grades Linked to Improved Academic Outcomes** – (*Imagine 2014, Race to Top, Renaissance Program*, etc.), Utilizing school and student data from the current targeted schools will assist Universal to leverage all existing initiatives as our proposed project evolves. Working with the District, we will seek to embrace and adopt all best practices to improve the academic outcomes of our K-12th grade students as 21st Century Learners. We will use best practice models grounded in the scientific research; balanced reading for K-3rd grade students so that they can read and comprehend what they read by grade 3; shift our focus on maximizing our student’s ability to read so that they can read to learn and ultimately become independent learners and thinkers; introduce more project and inquiry-based learning experiences; teach problem-solving and critical thinking, --- (4th – 6th grades); introduce greater use of technology as a learner strategy with a focus on global learning strategies; develop small learning communities and/or introduce the “communities of learners” concepts – high school — experiential, real world learning experiences.
- **Programs that Prepare Students for College and Career Success** - College, apprenticeship programs – credit recovery programs, etc. – college campus experiences – apprenticeship programs among the variety of trades – union participation/input. Following is an example of the programs that we will implement to prepare students for college and career success. We will: (1) create and support partnerships with the Community College of Philadelphia, Lincoln and Cheyney Universities that will help instill a college-going culture in the neighborhood; (2)

Provide dual-enrollment opportunities for secondary students to gain college credit while in high school; (3) Provide through relationships with businesses (AFL-CIO) and other organizations, apprenticeship opportunities to students; (4) align curricula in the core academic subjects with requirements for industry-recognized certifications or credentials, particularly in high-growth sectors; and, (5) provide access to career and technical education programs so that individuals can attain the skills and industry-recognized certifications or credentials for success in their careers.

- **Family and Community Supports** - Student health programs, such as mental health and physical health programs (e.g., home visiting programs Early Head Start programs to improve nutrition and fitness, reduce childhood obesity, and create healthier communities); Family and community support needs will be carefully addressed during the planning year as we collect, analyze and interpret data regarding each of the following risk factors as we plan to address the family and community support needs in each of our targeted neighborhoods:
 - Percentages of children with preventable chronic health conditions (e.g., asthma, poor nutrition, dental problems, obesity) or avoidable developmental delays;
 - Immunization rates;
 - Rates of crime, including violent crime;
 - Student mobility rates;
 - Teenage birth rates;
 - Percentage of children in single-parent or no-parent families;
 - Rates of vacant or substandard homes, including distressed public and assisted housing; and
 - Percentage of the residents living at or below the Federal poverty threshold.
- **Programs to Improve Student Health** – Here, we need someone from the health department to discuss current initiatives re: student health improvement programs (i.e., childhood obesity, wellness, nutrition, etc. (Future: We will secure a Carol M. White Health and Phys. Ed grant)
- **Programs to Improve Student Safety** – During our planning year, we will study those risk factors that contribute to reducing or eliminating student safety. For examples, we will review

such as programs in school and out of school to prevent, control, and reduce crime, violence, drug and alcohol use, and gang activity. The data gleaned from surveys, questionnaires and other sources as part of our comprehensive needs assessment will then help us to address classroom and school-wide behavior and conduct with program supports such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports; programs to prevent child abuse and neglect; programs to prevent truancy and reduce and prevent bullying and harassment; and programs to improve the physical and emotional security of the school setting as perceived, experienced, and created by students, staff, and families.

- **Program to Improve Community Stability** – Universal and its partners will establish a component of its Plan to focus on increasing the stability of families in our targeted neighborhoods by expanding access to quality, affordable housing, and providing legal support to help families secure clear legal title to their homes, and providing housing counseling or housing placement services. We will collect that information that will help us to ensure the provision of employment opportunities and training to improve job skills and readiness in order to increase employment, with a goal of increasing family stability and sustainable wages. Information collected during our planning year will help us to improve families’ awareness of, access to, and use of a range of social services, if possible at a single point of contact. Furthermore, we will identify the gaps and weaknesses in financial education for families so that we will be able to provide family supports by: (1) providing unbiased, outcome-focused, and comprehensive financial education, inside and outside the classroom and at every life stage; (2) increasing access to mainstream financial institutions (e.g., banks and credit unions) rather than alternative financial institutions (e.g., check cashers and payday lenders); (3) helping families increase their financial assets and savings; and, (4) helping families access transportation to education and employment opportunities.
- **Programs to Improve Family and Community Engagement** – Planning for family and community engagement programs, such as family literacy programs and programs that will

provide training and opportunities for family members and other members of the community to support student learning and establish high expectations for academic achievement will be conducted. We will collect and analyze data that will inform the need for such programs as mentorship programs that will create positive relationships between children and adults; and programs that will provide for the use of such community resources as libraries, museums, and local businesses to support improved student academic outcomes.

- **Programs to Improve Student Access to 21st Century Learning Tools** – One of our major partners is TBED 21, a STEM-focused company that provides instruction and professional development in the core curriculum areas of science, technology and math and utilizes 21st Century learning tools for their instructional delivery to students and teachers. Representatives of TBED 21 will participate in our planning activities during Year 1 and help us to ensure that our schools and students will be equipped with scientifically-based research programs that incorporate 21st Century learning tools that will afford opportunities for students to attain high standards of learning and compete globally with their peers in the areas of science, math and technology. Our plan will help us to collect and analyze data that help us equip our schools with the tools students need to develop 21st Century knowledge and skills in such areas as reading and writing, mathematics, research, critical thinking, communication, creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, our planning strategies will seek out data that will help us to encompass the development of a continuum of solutions that will be linked and integrated seamlessly so there will be common outcomes, a focus on similar milestones, support during transitional time periods, and no time or resource gaps that create obstacles for students in making academic progress. The information that we collect and analyze will be based on the best available evidence including, where available, strong or moderate evidence and include findings related to programs, policies, practices, services, systems, and supports that will result in improving educational and developmental outcomes for children from cradle through college to career.

A portion of our planning year will be devoted to establishing surveys, questionnaires, interviews and other analyses that will assist in examining ways that we can fortify the integration of programs and break down agency “silos” so that solutions will be implemented effectively and efficiently across agencies. We will place a concentrated effort during our planning year on working with local governments to build the infrastructure of policies, practices, systems, and resources needed to sustain and “scale up” proven, effective solutions that we have identified and plan to implement across the broader region beyond our two initial neighborhoods. Finally, during our planning year, all stakeholders will be meeting on a regular basis and develop an agenda that will include updates about the overall impact of Promise Neighborhoods and about the relationship between particular strategies in Promise Neighborhoods and student outcomes, including any information related to rigorous evaluations of the program.

D. The potential to sustain and apply the model of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation of the model in a variety of settings.

The past experiences of Universal, the District and other partners have taught us that the participation of stakeholders at all levels makes the most important difference in understanding the nature of a neighborhood’s challenges and in defining a vision of the solution that will reflect the key perspectives relevant in a neighborhood. Although not statistically significant, Universal Companies contends that initiatives with more varied or representative stakeholders involved in the development of the plan will have greater chance to succeed.

E. Description of how the applicant will plan to track available sources and funding levels of federal, state, and local funds that could be utilized in the project (Absolute Priority One Requirement-6)

During the planning year, another focus of the Promise Neighborhood board will be to assess our ability to track public and private funds at the local, state, and federal levels that will help our two targeted communities access and maximize any new funding streams for long-term support. Our first step in this direction will be to document the extensive experience many of our partners have had in doing so as well

as the knowledge they can tap about potential funding streams. Universal will explore and identify a computerized fund raising and development data base, such as FundEZ.

F. Description of how the applicant will identify federal, state, or local policies, regulations, or other requirements that would impede the applicant in achieving its goals.

When the ideas held about how schools should operate are written down, regulations, rules, and policies are produced. Because schools are public agencies, they must adhere to local, state, and federal regulations that make it difficult for schools to set their own educational goals. In preparation of our proposed planning proposal, we studied the following research. We will continue to use this research as we craft our planning strategy to include: data collection, data analysis, data systems, planning solutions, leveraging resources, and, evaluation.

According to Clune's (1991) historical review of educational policy, these policies have not been effective or coordinated (i.e., pointed in the same direction) in improving achievement. Clune (1991) points out that the United States has produced more educational policy than any other country, but it has been the least effective. This vast array of regulations runs counter to the findings of Chubb and Moe (1990), who found that schools with a greater percentage of academically achieving students have "substantial school autonomy from direct external control". Likewise, Wehlage et al. (1989) found in their study of schools successful with at-risk students that "without exception, educators cited autonomy as significant in their ability to construct programs that respond to students".

"Desired connections between policies and practices are difficult to find. Policies are seldom carried out to the letter" (Deal, 1985). This may be true due to the loosely coupled nature of schools. Fine (1991) describes how some policies, such as allocation formulas and required procedures for student discharge, actually exacerbated the dropout problem in particular schools.

Past attempts to reform schools have generally sought to use policy mandates to drive changes from top to bottom in schools. "This strategy either has not worked or, at best, has gone as far as it can in creating authentic and sustained change in our schools. Some of the most essential elements necessary to restructure a school are: commitment; engagement; or a sense of invention that cannot be mandated"

(Lieberman & Miller, 1990). According to Cuban (1988), a lack of understanding regarding "first-order" changes, which are defined as attempts to make what already exists more efficient and effective without altering basic organizational features, and "second-order" reforms, which seek to change fundamental organizational structures, has resulted in ineffective solutions.

We believe that it seems more is known about factors that contribute to educational outcomes than is reflected by educational reform policies. Hobbs (1988) notes that the work of Kerr (1984) devoted itself to the problem of why schools are not doing better considering what is known. Kerr's analysis focused on bureaucracy, professionalization, and "research systems" as barriers to the alignment of knowledge and policy.

Levine (1991) argues that "substantial change in instruction frequently requires departures from district or state policies and regulations". In a review of the literature on school and community influences, Shields (1990) notes that states can limit local efforts with restrictive regulations or promote local efforts through such strategies as increased funds, technical assistance and cooperative efforts between school districts and state departments. District and state policies that foster building autonomy build alliances with the community, and encourage the sharing of information, skills and understanding which can improve and maintain effective classroom instruction (Shields, 1990).

The existence of state test scores may lead state officials to assume more responsibility for the schools, to feel obliged to act to solve problems and, if necessary, to make curricular policy directly, according to Corcoran (1985). The use of state tests appears to be associated with increased administrative control over both the process and the content of instruction (Corcoran, 1985; Shields, 1990).

Basic education policy should be shaped at state and district levels, but the day-to-day decision-making should shift to the local school, according to a report of the Carnegie Foundation (1988). This report concludes that what is needed is school-based authority with accountability at the school level.