

KIPP, Inc. -- Project LEADS: (Lifelong Education Achieves Determination and Success)

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PROJECT NARRATIVE – KIPP, Inc. -- KIPP, Inc. -- *Project LEADS: (Lifelong Education Achieves Determination and Success)*

How the Proposed Project Addresses the Priorities (1 and 2)
AP 1 -- Absolute Priority 1 -- Developing Non-Cognitive Skills in Middle-Grades Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● KIPP, Inc. (KIPP Houston Public Schools) student outcomes substantially outpaced the district and state outcomes due, in large part, to our focus on non-cognitive skill development in the middle grades. This project seeks to codify and study the program of non-cognitive skill development in the middle grades in KIPP, Inc. (KIPP Houston Public Schools) so that this practice can be effectively deepened, shared, improved, and expanded to reach high need middle grade students throughout the city, state, and nation.
AP 2 -- Absolute Priority 2 -- Supporting High-Need Students.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● In 2014-2015, KIPP Houston Public Schools served 11,500 students in 22 schools in the highest need areas of Houston, the fourth largest city in the nation. Our students represent the neediest areas of Houston. KIPP Houston has been successful in preparing underserved students for success in school, in college, and in the competitive world beyond for over 20 years. Our students are over 90% economically disadvantaged, 25% Limited English Proficiency, and 98% minority.● Through this proposal and research, different forms of the practice will be identified that are crucial to the success and sustainability of KIPP and other high need schools while adapting the practice to different teaching and learning environments and diverse learners.● A coherent and comprehensive plan for developing materials, training, toolkits, or other supports for entities to implement the practice effectively and with fidelity will be implemented.● This project will assess the replicability and adaptability of the practice by supporting the implementation of the practice in a variety of locations during the project period using the materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that were developed for the supported practice.
Eligibility -- As an LEA in the state of Texas serving PreK through 12 th grade students, KIPP, Inc. (KIPP Houston Public Schools) meets the <i>eligibility</i> requirements for the Skills for Success grant program.

Section A -- Significance

A.1. Utility of the products for a variety of settings. **KIPP, Inc.** (KIPP Houston Public Schools, hereafter KIPP Houston) will implement a Skills for Success initiative, entitled **KIPP, Inc. -- *Project LEADS: (Lifelong Education Achieves Determination and Success)*** or **Skills for Success Houston (hereafter referred to as SFSH)**, which is designed to build upon, expand, and share our efforts to prepare Houston’s underserved children to persist to and through college through the systematic development of non-cognitive skills such as grit, zest, purpose, optimism, gratitude, self-control, social skills, emotional skills, critical thinking, communication, planning, **KIPP, Inc. -- *Skills for Success Houston (SFSH)*** 1

goal setting, soft skills, teamwork, character, and cultural adaptation which have been highly correlated with success in life. The proposed project will: (1) refine and publish a sustainable, **replicable non-cognitive skills toolkit** for use by teachers and students in high need urban middle schools across Texas and the nation; (2) **expand the use of these tools** within our system to produce well-prepared, resilient students and provide teachers and schools with the ability to consistently develop and refine student non-cognitive skills in the middle grades; (3) test materials using a single case design; and (4) **build local, regional, and national capacity** to sustain and replicate the practices through high level research that **meets What Works Clearinghouse evidence standards**.

The **specific tools and products** will include a series of field tested **lessons and activities** for 6th and 7th grade students designed to increase their non-cognitive skills. Intensive training and support for schools and teachers will be provided to make sure that the curriculum is implemented with fidelity. Included in an **online platform** (student modules) will be growth mindset classroom activities, experiential learning opportunities and digital games. These online student activities are designed to enhance student's self-efficacy, resilience and perseverance. With this funding, SFSH will **expand this transformative non-cognitive skills curriculum and training program and study the impact**.

SFSH is a **research-based collaborative project** that uses a school-based systemic approach to build capacity of schools and districts in establishing a program that involves key instructional staff as well as all stakeholders—school leaders, teachers, students, families, and community members. SFSH is **based on substantial research and theory** to improve high-need schools with diverse populations. SFSH will (1) **build teacher and campus awareness and competence** in improving their children's educational outcomes through systematic development

of non-cognitive skills through the SFS modules which emphasize the Seven Character Strengths (as defined later in this narrative); (2) **enhance parents' and guardians' knowledge, skills, and abilities** to support student learning around non-cognitive skills and actions necessary for college and career success; and (3) **engage school staff** to support and cultivate positive environments, create family-friendly schools, and build relationships with students, teachers, and families that increase their capacity to support their children's non-cognitive needs (Dweck, 2006; Medina, 2008; Mischel, 2014; Seligman, 2011). After over 20 years of successfully working with low-income and minority students across Houston, **KIPP Houston is uniquely prepared to share this transformative program** with other schools and systems across the country. KIPP's expansion in the Houston area has been driven by demand from families in this, the fourth largest, fastest growing, most diverse urban area of the nation. Currently, in FY15-16, there are over 10,000 students on our **waiting list**, unable to find a seat in KIPP Houston (KIPP Houston started in 1994 with 48 students in a single classroom). Today, KIPP Houston serves 12,500 low-income and primarily minority students at 24 campuses across the neediest neighborhoods in Houston (90% economically disadvantaged, 25% LEP, 63% Hispanic, 35% African American, 1% Other). Despite this dramatic growth, KIPP alumni, tracking from the 8th grade, have graduated from college at six times the rate of their equivalent low-income peers (51% college graduation rate for KIPP Houston students as compared to 8% for low-income Students across the nation). In the 2010 and 2013, studies conducted by Mathematica, KIPP middle schools were shown through this highly reliable, multi-year controlled study, which met WWC standards, to have a positive and statistically significant impact on student achievement across all years and all subject areas examined. This finding confirms that KIPP has been able to maintain the high quality of our middle schools as we have expanded our network. The magnitude of KIPP's achievement impact

is substantial and large enough to be educationally significant. Researchers found that KIPP's achievement gains are similar for the matched comparison design and the experimental lottery analysis--demonstrating that parental motivation cannot explain our student's achievement gains. For students in the lottery sample, gains on the national norm referenced test mimicked those on state tests. SFSH would provide important extension of the research on KIPP's effective model that meets WWC standards and will allow KIPP Houston to share more effectively these important non-cognitive skills development strategies with our partners (Spring Branch ISD, United for College Success, Rice University's Center for College and Career Readiness, Yes Prep Public Schools, Harmony Schools, KIPP schools across the nation, as well as our more than 70 university partners). Considering that a college graduate earns on average \$1,000,000 more than a high school dropout, the contribution that KIPP Houston makes to provide a proven way out of poverty is substantial.

Employers confirm the fact that employees' soft skills as well as their ability to "communicate effectively and work on teams" are some of the most sought after skills in the labor force today (Downing, 2005). Smarts alone are not enough to drive a company to success. In order to meet this critical workforce need, schools are hard pressed to find effective solutions, especially for students that are from at-risk and/or backgrounds of poverty. It is more and more difficult for middle schools and their students to successfully navigate the transition from childhood to adolescence and beyond. It is especially true in a state that ranks 48th for per-pupil educational spending, that funds independent charter schools at 10% less (approximately \$1,000 less per pupil) than traditional school districts, with an ever-growing, ever-diversifying population. Fighting the potentially devastating effects of poverty and inequality, KIPP Houston students and staff have met many challenges to build a strong foundation for equity and

excellence in education through persistence and determination as well as through the development of important character strengths and non-cognitive skills. To continue improving and sharing a system that has worked for KIPP Houston, we are seeking additional support to continue inspiring and transforming our students and communities with the evidence that **every student can and will succeed.**

KIPP Houston commits to share with the broader education sector all the processes, practices, and strategies employed to accomplish the goals, objectives, outcomes described within this application. In addition, KIPP Houston commits to fully researching and reporting on the successes and challenges encountered through the research described herein that will meet WWC standards for research design as we deepen and share this promising practice with other middle grades schools.

A.2. Development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on existing

strategies. The seven character strengths are KIPP’s innovative approach to character and the development of non-cognitive skills grounded in the research of Dr. Martin Seligman, the late Dr. Chris Peterson (the “fathers” of Positive Psychology), and Dr. Angela Duckworth. KIPP’s character work focuses on the seven highly predictive character strengths that, across the major world religions and cultures, have been correlated to an engaged, happy, and successful life.

The Seven Character Strengths	
Curiosity	Curiosity is a strong desire to learn or know something – a search for information for its own sake. Eagerly exploring new things. Asking questions that deepen understanding. Taking an active interest in learning.
Gratitude	Gratitude is the appreciation for the benefits we receive from others, and the desire to reciprocate. Recognizing what other people do for you. Showing appreciation by saying thank you or doing nice things for people.
Grit	Grit is a critical strength of most people who are successful. It is especially complex because it is related to other skills and mindsets such as optimism, purpose, growth mindset, bravery, and even self-control. Finishing what you begin. Staying committed to your goals. Working hard even after experiencing failure. Sticking with a project or activity for more

	than a few weeks.
Optimism	Optimism is being hopeful about future outcomes combined with the agency to shape the future. Believing that effort will improve your future. When bad things happen, thinking about what you could do to avoid similar bad outcomes in the future. Staying motivated, even when things don't go well.
Self-Control	Self-control is controlling one's own responses so they align with short and long-term goals. Self-control is about harnessing your energy toward a particular end goal – it is not the same as obedience or following rules. Getting to work right away rather than procrastinating. Remembering and following directions rather than needing to be reminded. Remaining calm, even when criticized or otherwise provoked, rather than losing your temper. Allowing others to speak rather than interrupting. Being polite to all, even when stressed or angry.
Social/Emotional Intelligence	Social/Emotional intelligence is understanding feelings and using them to inform actions. Although there is some disagreement about the exact terminology to use, social and emotional intelligence both refer to the ability to understand your own and others' feelings and emotions and then to use this understanding to inform your decisions and actions. Socially/emotionally intelligent people solve interpersonal problems quickly by understanding what is upsetting others and being empathetic to these concerns. They tend to recognize when they've said something that made someone uncomfortable and know what makes others "tick." Socially/emotionally intelligent people are able to thrive in many different relationships and settings because they quickly learn the social rules. Finding solutions during conflicts with others. Demonstrating respect for the feelings of others. Adapting to different social situations.
Zest	Zest – also referred to as vitality – is an approach to life that is filled with excitement and energy. Zest is about exhibiting enthusiasm and feeling energized. But zest doesn't need to be loud – the quiet, introverted artist can approach her latest project with zest, even if she is alone in her studio. Most kids have enthusiasm for something. In school, we can work to find what that something is and be sure not to extinguish it as kids get older. Actively participating by asking questions or listening closely. Showing enthusiasm through smiles or excited comments. Approaching new situations with excitement and energy. Invigorating others around you. Zest is a skill you can choose to use when the time is right. Also, zest doesn't look the same for everyone.

The *theory of action* upon which SFSH is based is a systematic and integrated model which includes school leader, teacher, student, and family engagement. This is an action model that develops shared responsibility, strength-based collaboration, student ownership and continuous improvement. It is a model that is learner-outcome driven and sustainable. Each year of the

grant, SFSH will train campus SFS instructors and teachers in its weekly lesson modules that will be reviewed, refined, implemented, and published online. SFSH training includes face-to-face training as well as independent research and homework. Beginning in Year 1 of the grant, exceptional “graduates” of the SFSH training are invited to join the SFS Leadership Team, SFS Parent Leadership Team, or SFS Student Leadership team to further develop their abilities to advance these critical skills.

A.3. Development and advancement of theory, knowledge, and practices in the field of study.

The seven character strengths, when combined with a firm understanding of the growth mindset and purpose, propel children, teens, and adults to a prosperous and productive future. To date, the results of KIPP Houston’s implementation of these practices at the middle school level has been dramatic. Even though KIPP Houston has exponentially expanded the number of students served, KIPP Houston’s college graduation rate is 51% as compared to 8% of for low-income students is remarkable (Fry and Parker, Nov. 2012 and Mortenson). Although KIPP Houston has already invested heavily in the development, refinement and training in this model and has been nationally recognized for their work with the KIPP school model, with this funding KIPP Houston will be able to test critical aspects of this model based on reliable evaluation tools. KIPP also has a huge national reach with their network of 183 schools and their 70 university partners. Funding will also allow the testing and refinement of modules for parents, which is non-existent in the field today.

Section B -- Project Design

B.1. The proposed project is supported by strong theory. Project developers and planners have adopted an evidence-based four dimensional model (Conley, 2010) of career and college readiness that will build: **1. Key Cognitive Strategies**, patterns of thinking and specific ways of approaching and attacking challenging learning situations; **2. Key Content Knowledge**,

strengthening literacy through proficiency in reading, writing, English, math, science, social studies, world languages, and arts, mastering and processing information and then probing, consolidating and applying it; **3. Academic Behaviors**, self-management, awareness, monitoring, control; and, **4. Contextual Skill and Awareness**, understanding how to select a life pathway and a college, how and when to apply, which tests and materials to provide in an application, how to complete financial aid forms, how to access college support structures, and how to understand and navigate college culture. Enhanced student capacities attributable to this approach are: a) consistent intellectual growth and development; b) deep understanding of and ability to apply key foundational ideas and concepts; c) ability to use knowledge to solve problems; d) reading and writing skills sufficient to process the full range of textual materials commonly encountered in entry-level college courses **without remediation** and; e) ability to understand college cultural, social, and emotional norms to interact well with peers, faculty and administrators.

Key Concepts and Skills for Success Responses	
Core Concepts	Skills for Success Response
Concept 1: College and Life Vision	Students develop a Personal Life Plan for college and career success that a. builds a belief in their ability to succeed in college in order to succeed in a chosen profession, and then b. backward-plan selecting the right college and preparing for success there. 6 th /7 th Grade: In middle school, students connect how their interest match to career pathways, and create a 4 year high school academic plan.
Concept 2: Social Capital	Students learn to take ownership of and advocate for their education and build support systems of individuals and networks to help them attain their Personal Life Plan goals. 6 th /7 th Grade: Students are building a middle school network of support among their peers, teachers, and other mentors. Students develop adult mentors who are invested in and guidance on their future.
Concept 3: Student Success Skills	Students develop the academic, personal, and professional skills for success in high school, college, careers, and life including critical thinking, communication, planning, goal setting, social, emotional, and

	cultural adaptation skills. 6 th /7 th Grade: Student actively communicates with teachers and are able to meet high stakes deadlines.
Concept 4: Strong Student Profile	Students learn the criteria that high schools, colleges, and employers use to admit or to hire in order to develop their individual competitive profiles that will align with their own Personal Life Plans. 6 th /7 th Grade: Students can identify qualities of a college prep high school. Students can identify admissions criteria for public and private colleges.

B.2. Exceptional approach to priorities. KIPP Houston has systematically developed curriculum modules for middle school students that are grounded in the research in non-cognitive skills development (described above and below). These lesson modules will be implemented on a weekly basis in 6th and 7th grades at three middle schools. Each lesson module focuses on character strength (s) and a concrete skill or concept while also emphasizing the growth mindset, which is so critical to ongoing student development and growth. The modules are carefully modeled on the work of Seligman, Peterson and Duckworth and include the following:

Module	Character Connection
Intro to SFS - KTC	Purpose, Optimism
What is College?	Grit
Why College?	Purpose
Personal Finance	Self-Control, Gratitude
Making Plans for High School	Zest, Optimism
Calculating GPAs	Self-Control
Student Profiles: Personality, Interests, and Skill Sets	Zest, Self-Control
College Research Capstone	Grit, Curiosity
Benefits of a KIPP High school	Gratitude/Social Intelligence
Benefits of being a KIPP Alumni	Gratitude, Social Intelligence
Submission of capstone – Student Success Plan	Grit, Zest
Revisiting Student Success Plan (from 7 th)	Self-Control, Social Intelligence
GPA and Character	Zest, Self-Control
What is a College Prep High School?	Curiosity
How to Get Value from a High School Open house?	Optimism
Student Activity Sheets (resume development)	Social Intelligence
Requesting Letters of Recommendation	Social Intelligence

Drafting a Request for a Letter of Recommendation	Grit
Academic Interviews/ Professional Interviews	Social Intelligence, Self-Control
Lunch and Learn/Mentoring	Purpose, Social Intelligence
Quality High School Applications	Grit, Purpose
High School/College/ Job Admissions Committee	Social Intelligence, Optimism
Writing a Short Answer/ Short Essay	Grit, Social Intelligence
Thank you notes and gratitude	Gratitude
Self Advocacy and Self Agency	Gratitude, Social Intelligence
Field Experience Opportunities:	Social Intelligence
Pennant Ceremony to recognize and celebrate KIPP Graduates Attending College	Grit, Gratitude
College Visits to and from local colleges (UH, Rice, Lonestar and Houston Community Colleges)	Social Intelligence, Grit

Each module is also aligned with the key principles as outlined by Conley (2010). Below are specific examples of alignment with the Key Principles of College and Career Readiness.

Key Principles and Activities of Skills for Success	
Principle	Skills for Success Response
Principle 1. Create and maintain a professional college and career-going culture in the middle school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Require all students to identify a postsecondary goal and steps to achievement in a Life Plan. b. Make preparing for and transitioning to high school, career and postsecondary education a key focus from 6th through 8th grades with key communication and self-management skills taught beginning in 6th grade. c. Establish high expectations for all students.
Principle 2. Create a core academic program aligned with and leading to career and college readiness by the end of 12th grade.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Prepare students for high school and college readiness in general, Pre-AP, and AP/dual credit courses specifically. b. Vertically align course expectations, assignments, goals and activities, using Texas' College Readiness Standards. c. Use common assessments, MAP (Measures of Academic Progress), assess progress objectively and indicate risks.
Principle 3. Teach key self-management and academic behaviors and expect students to use them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Incorporate time management and task prioritization skill building into all middle school English courses. b. Use Social Studies to teach study skills, goal setting and create opportunities to exercise these skills in all subsequent grades. c. Use the curriculum to support acquisition of self-management skills.

<p>Principle 4. Make college and careers real by helping students manage the complexity of preparing for high school and postsecondary education.</p>	<p>a. Require all students to take use the results from MAP to determine career and college readiness and course selection. b. Provide information to students and parents about financial aid and college savings accounts from 6th through 8th grades. c. Require all middle school students to engage in continuous career and postsecondary educational research, methodically refining their knowledge to facilitate informed decision-making.</p>
<p>Principle 5. Create assignments and expectations that approximate college and career expectations.</p>	<p>a. Provide professional development to middle school teachers in effective ways of helping students take responsibility for their own learning for a smoother transition to college education and on applying college-modeled coursework requirements. b. Expand the number of middle schools offering Pre-AP.</p>
<p>Principle 6. Make school meaningful and appropriately challenging.</p>	<p>a. Require all students to enroll in an English, math, science and social studies courses. b. Provide field experiences that focus on decision-making and preparation for career and college entry, adapting to different cultures and expectations. c. Connect students to an internship facilitating real-world demonstrations of knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes necessary for success.</p>
<p>Principle 7. Build connections to postsecondary institutions.</p>	<p>a. Expand existing partnerships with local IHEs to better align curricula and methods with college expectations. b. Distribute information about how colleges gauge academic performance and college readiness.</p>

SFSH Staff Training Sequence. To implement these modules, the SFS Project Coordinator, Instructors, and Technology Specialist will implement a regular series of trainings which include regular feedback, review, revision, and adjustment.

SFSH Project Training and Continuous Improvement Activities		
Activity	Responsible	Time
Train Instructors on each module including research basis and concrete implementation techniques	Project Coordinator	Weekly
Train Teachers in module implementation (Social Studies/English)	Instructors	Biweekly
Implement modules with support from Instructors	Teachers	Weekly
Feedback provided both to instructors with suggestions on effective teaching strategies and the team as part of community of practice to refine the	Instructors/Teachers	Monthly

modules		
Review and revise modules to improve and provide variations on lessons for different classroom needs creating a community of learning	Instructors/Teachers	Weekly
Revise modules into replicable online formats for campus use	Instructors and Tech Specialist	Weekly
Develop training materials for each module that is publishable in both paper and electronic formats for easy replication with future Teachers in a 45-60 minute training module per module.	Instructors and Technology Specialist	Weekly
Technology support to Instructors/Teachers	Tech Specialist	Weekly
Review parent component for each module with School Leader and Academic Dean	Instructors/Teachers	Monthly
Parent outreach training at each middle school	Instructors	Biannually

Parent Training Sequence. In addition, a sequence of training activities for SFS parents will include: (1) parents’ roles in the education of their children and how to engage their children in learning activities in the home; (2) knowledge of school systems, accountability, and socio-emotional needs of their children; (3) parents’ role as advocates for their children and the impact of their engagement on student learning; and (4) their participation in decision making and school leadership committees. Parents who complete the parent training become “**Parent Heroes.**” These are parents who know the community and schools, and become partners with project staff to increase the number of parents participating in the program. The training is facilitated by Parent Specialists who are SFSH staff. They are experienced in working with families, schools, and communities; are experts in conducting the sessions using the SFSH modules; receive coaching support from project staff; and participate in a community of learning, meeting quarterly to review program components, to share practices and ensure consistency of use of identified methods. In Year 3 of the project, each school will activate the Parent Leadership Team to be trained to work with stakeholders to develop a plan for continued family involvement. The team will work to implement the plan in Years 4 and 5, and provide an infrastructure to sustain the family engagement program.

By **building capacity through ongoing training and support programs**, the SFSH **Parent Leadership Team** will increase: (1) district support and policies related to schools’ parental engagement practices, (2) knowledge in schools about research-based practices related to family-friendly schools and family engagement, and establish a commitment on the part of school personnel to actively engage in these practices, (3) school capacity to make continuous use of data related to the project’s “promising practices” to improve student outcomes, (4) parents’ knowledge of schools and their ability to use this knowledge to engage with school personnel, (5) parents’ commitment to be actively engaged in their child’s school, and (6) parents’ capacity to share school-related information with other parents. SFSH contends that building capacity of all stakeholders (district administrators, school administrators, school staff, and parents) to work collaboratively on a shared vision of school improvement will ultimately lead to improved student achievement. Each school will benefit from the presence of **“Parent Heroes”** along with cohorts of parents that will work with teachers, support staff, and administrators to develop and implement an Action Plan for Parent Engagement. These plans, built on a foundation of research-based strategies related to school cultural proficiency and parental engagement (on which administrators, school staff, and parents will be trained), will be developed in Year 2 of the grant and implemented in Year 3.

B.3. Coherent sustained program of research and development. Despite the importance of non-cognitive skills’ in our education and, more broadly, our lives, education analysis and policy have tended to overlook their impact. Thus, there are currently few strategies to nurture them within the school context. However, after a relatively prolonged lack of consideration, non-cognitive skills are again beginning to be acknowledged in discussions about education, leading to the need for thoughtful and concerted attention from researchers, policymakers, and

practitioners. KIPP Houston has an advantage as we have been using a non-cognitive model from the beginning. Thus, KIPP Houston modules have been developed and used over time. What is missing from this context is a systematic testing of the modules using statistical analysis along with refinement and student growth modeling tied to specific non-cognitive skills.

As we have seen, multiple studies identifying the interdependence between cognitive and non-cognitive skills indicate that we may fail to boost cognitive skills unless we pay closer attention to non-cognitive skills (Dweck, 2006; Peterson, 2006). In other words, focusing on non-cognitive skills may actually further improve academic performance. This study will use not only non-cognitive measures but will also use individual student growth models for student academic growth. Correlations will be made between the two.

B.4. Feedback and Continuous Improvement. The evaluation team will use a range of methodologies to ascertain the mix of strategies in use across SFSH, the extent to which these are implemented and any significant process challenges, specific accomplishments associated with activities (quantitative and qualitative outcomes), lessons learned, along with promising practices resulting from implementation. Findings will be shared regularly in ways that help to inform continuous improvement efforts throughout implementation such as monthly feedback to the district implementation teams, and timely examination and reporting of data.

The evaluation entity (Wexford, Inc.) uses a developmental evaluation approach, which allows the use of evaluation to provide feedback to support developmental decision-making and course corrections throughout project implementation. This approach includes the use of performance scorecards, frequent briefs and reports, and other feedback mechanisms to support continuous improvement. In this role, the evaluators' serve as part of the implementation team, helping to conceptualize, design, and test new approaches in a long-term, ongoing process of

continuous improvement, adaptation, and intentional change. This approach takes maximum advantage of this expertise and process.

Section C -- Management Plan

C.1. Ensuring feedback and continuous improvement. Effective management will require clear routines and procedures followed up by regular monitoring, quality assurance and feedback loops that disseminate results to all team members. The Project Coordinators will develop implementation plans and timelines and will share the structure with the team members and all partners. Linking project goals with staff assignments will ensure efficient procedures and will motivate staff by highlighting purposes and outcomes. Technology will facilitate regular communication among team members in different locations. Face-to-face interaction, i.e., weekly staff meetings, will be helpful in the early stages of project development; thereafter, plans, notes, and progress reports will be posted in a central, web-based workspace, so that all staff members, regardless of location, can easily refer to them. Conference calls, frequent email, and technology-facilitated file sharing will support information flow. Meetings will be run efficiently through use of standard meeting management techniques and the American Productivity and quality Center (APQC) methodology. Each meeting will have specific goals and will be driven by an agenda. The project team also will monitor the budget using detailed cost reports with expenses by line item and budgeted and actual variances. The evaluators will conduct data reviews each month will all project staff.

C.2. Management plan – on time, within budget, defined responsibilities, timelines, milestones.

As part of Total Quality Management (TQM) process, a detailed implementation plan for all three years will be developed during the first month of operation. A **Rapid Start-Up** process, described below, will ensure that all staff are ready to begin operations on day one.

Project Management Timeline

KIPP, Inc. -- Skills for Success Houston (SFSH)

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Action	Responsible Person(s)	Timeline
Send Press Release to Media and Schedule News Conference	Project Director, Project Coordinator, Communications, HR	Month 1, Wk 1
Schedule monthly collaborative meetings	Project Director, Project Coordinator	Month 1, Wk 2 (ongoing monthly meetings for life of grant)
Advertise SFS Positions	Project Director, Project Coordinator, and ISD Human Resources	Month 1, Wk 2
Screen Applicants and Conduct Interviews	Project Director, Project Coordinator, Human Resources, Selected MS/HS Principals	Month 1, Wk 4
Recommend Candidates and Sign New Employees	Project Director, Project Coordinator, ISD Human Resources	Month 2, Wk 1
Meet with curriculum and instructional leadership staff to provide overview and discuss action steps related to SFS curriculum, schedule SFS Instructors	Project Director, Project Coordinator, SFS Instructor	Month 1, Wk 1
Schedule and meet with middle school principals, leadership, and all grant partners to provide 3 year grant overview	Project Director, Project Coordinator, SFS Instructor, School Leaders	Month 1, Wk 2 & 3
Meet with finance staff and set up budgets, order laptops for new staff	Project Director, Project Coordinator, Finance Compliance Specialist	Month 1, Wk 2 & 3
Set up lesson sharing systems in sharing platform	Project Director, Project Coordinator, SFS Instructor	Month 1, Wk 2 & 3
Set up lesson implementation, review schedule	Project Director, Project Coordinator, SFS Instructor	Month 1, Wk 2 & 3
Meet with MS Principals to provide detailed overview of services, expectations for 6 th and 7 th grade,	Project Director, Project Coordinator, Middle School principals	Month 2, Wk 1
Principals and SFS staff interview campus teachers for SFS implementation	Project Director, Project Coordinator, Middle School principals	Month 2, Wk 1
Finalize partner contracts based on agreed upon services and timelines	Project Director, Project Coordinator, SFS administrative staff	Month 2, Wk 2
Create and disseminate service and activities calendar to all campuses	Project Director, Project Coordinator, SFS administrative staff	Month 2, Wk 2
Schedule monthly meetings with campus SFS Instructors and Teachers, provide	Project Director, Project Coordinator, SFS	Month 2, Wk 2 (ongoing)

orientation, assign to campuses	administrative staff	monthly meetings for life of grant)
Finalize campus budget allocations and provide expenditure guidelines for campus and principal	Project Director, Project Coordinator, SFS administrative staff and district Finance Staff	Month 2, Wk 4
Schedule monthly SFS Partner Meetings	Project Director, Project Coordinator, SFS administrative staff and Project Evaluator	Monthly following Month 2, Wk 2
Create SFS Leadership Team representative of campus principals/academic deans, instructors, teachers, SFS staff	Project Director, Project Coordinator, SFS administrative staff, Instructors, Teachers, Principals, SFS	Quarterly following Month 2, Wk 4
Create SFS Parent Leadership Teams from each campus	Project Director, Project Coordinator, SFS Lead Instructors Principals, Parents	Quarterly following Month 2, Wk 4
Create SFS Student Leadership Teams from each campus	Project Director, Project Coordinator, SFS Lead Instructors, Principals, Parents	Monthly following Month 3

Once the project begins, the Project Leadership Team and evaluators will review the goals, objectives and strategies and methods for delivering outcomes and will finalize all language related to such. TQM, a proven strategy for design, deployment and continuous improvement of high performance programs, will advise an operational framework that ensures each milestone: has a clear focus, all members of the management team agree on what is to be accomplished; is outcome-based; and corresponds to the needs and expectations of the district. Human resources and processes will be examined to ensure they are appropriate and adequate and, if not, the system will be restructured. This approach ties the management and evaluation process together ensuring that the project is continually reviewed, and evaluation results are useful and of good quality. The lead project evaluator is trained in the mechanisms of TQM through APQC in Houston, Texas, and will work closely with the management team in implementing these processes. ***Time Commitments.*** The project team, under the direction of Bryan Contreras, will have complete administrative oversight along with the district’s school leadership that will be **KIPP, Inc. -- Skills for Success Houston (SFSH)**

intimately involved with the process. He will dedicate 10% of his time to leading the team and project. The Project Coordinator, Project Instructors, and Technology Specialist will dedicate 100% of their time to day-to-day management responsibilities. The Instructors will report directly to the Project Coordinator and will be responsible for facilitation of student and parent support activities. In addition, the project will have access to the expertise of the district budget, fiscal, human resources and technology management departments to ensure that project funds are expensed properly, within the scope of work and project timeframes, and aligned with grant restrictions and fiscal accountability standards.

Diversity of Perspectives. KIPP will apply an inclusive model of engagement for students, parents, academic staff, counselors and public and private partners. They will jointly foster a community-wide character development and college/career readiness culture starting with the systematic development of non-cognitive skills in the 6th grade. To ensure the broadest possible reach, an **Advisory Board** of key district staff and other community stakeholders will meet quarterly. The **Advisory Board** will be charged with constantly reviewing all aspects of the initiative and will hear any implementation concerns. This **Advisory Board** will enable the community to participate in the development and operation of the project, identifying strengths and challenges from a variety of perspectives.

Relevant Training and Experience, of the Project Director and Key Personnel		
Staff Title	Responsibilities	Qualifications
Project Director	Total oversight and responsibility for fiscal and programmatic management of the initiative. Leads the total initiative with vision, leadership, and hands on management of staff.	Graduate Degree in related field preferred. Previous experience with large-scale federal initiatives. Highly experienced in complex management tasks.
Project Coordinator	Planning, coordinating, implementing, and evaluating	B.S. (minimum) in education or related field. Previous

	<p>program activities; managing budget and program expenditures; completing project-wide data collection and analysis; serving as liaison between community partners and school/program staff; supervising project staff; producing public relations materials. Works closely with project data needs.</p>	<p>experience in grant implementation and management; data analysis; reporting; managing budgets, and supervising employees. Leadership and interpersonal skills. Bilingual preferred.</p>
<p>SFS Instructors (3)</p>	<p>Overseeing implementation and coordination of SFSH activities at assigned campus(es); strengthening campus college readiness culture; serving as direct contact for assigned cohort of students; conducting professional learning, coordinating with campus administration staff, and partners. Developing and preparing informational products.</p>	<p>Bachelor’s Degree. Previous experience teaching or working with youth (three years), facilitating parent involvement, and preparing students for college and careers. Knowledge of best practices in college readiness and non-cognitive skill/character development.</p>
<p>Technology Specialist</p>	<p>Assists with the strategic implementation of the project and assists Project Director and all related staff working toward implementation. The Technology Specialist works with the KIPP Houston Public Schools region on the overall scope and focus of service, as well as any issues related to implementation. This individual facilitates the formatting, uploading, production, delivery of lessons through the online platform, creates a web site and other print materials associated with the project. This individual should be able to utilize online tools effectively</p>	<p>The Technology Specialist works with the KIPP Houston Public Schools region on the overall scope and focus of service, as well as any issues related to implementation. This individual facilitates the formatting, uploading, production, delivery of lessons through the online platform, creates a web site and other print materials associated with the project. This individual should be able to utilize online tools effectively, train staff in use of instructional technology, and implement new technologies.</p>

Grant Specialist/Compliance Monitor (in-kind)	Performing complex financial, technical and support services involving data review, program compliance and budgeting.	Knowledge of federal financial management policies and procedures. Accounting background preferred.
Parent Leadership Team/ Student Leadership Team	Performs oversight and outreach activities in connection with the program.	Student or parent from KIPP Houston who has participated in the SFS training modules.
Campus Leadership (in-kind)	Responsible for making sure that the SFS Instructors and teachers have access to all resources in their school. Oversees activities and programs at respective campuses to include all stakeholders.	Master's Degree. Management and coordination of all school operations. Knowledge of school improvement, management of federal initiatives

C.3. Relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner. Each partner has made significant investments of time and energy to plan the activities required for SFSH to reach success. Financial and non-financial partners have significant roles in this effort as demonstrated throughout the proposal and verified on the Partner Identification forms. The project evaluators (Wexford, Inc.) have gone through a rigorous district procurement process and were selected based on their past experience with experimental designs and complex evaluations.

KIPP will continually involve all relevant stakeholders in the project. The student enrollment in SFS Courses is expected to almost double with this cohort of students. In addition, funding for additional equipment and supplies needed to expand our current SFS program has been proposed and requested. Through the synergy of our *partners*, including Spring Branch ISD, Harmony Public Schools, Rice University's Center for College and Career Readiness, YES Prep Public Schools, KIPP schools across the nation, as well as our 70 university partners, KIPP Houston is well equipped to build and share the SFSH program through specific, targeted assistance and general support to *create a highly replicable system of non-cognitive skill*

development at the middle grades. The proposed initiative builds upon prior investments and **KIPP, Inc. -- Skills for Success Houston (SFSH)**

expands *new networks of information and training* by systematically developing the partners to provide the research based support that students, families, and teachers need to fully prepare students for the post-secondary environment. Specific mechanisms will facilitate ongoing communication such as video conferencing units (which are available on the campuses) to enable communication with project partners, to attend virtual tours, to visit classrooms around the world in experiential learning opportunities.

Section D -- Project Evaluation

D.1. Methods of evaluation. The Wexford Institute is the identified evaluation entity for this initiative bringing substantial knowledge and skills and years of experience in research (quantitative/qualitative/experimental) and evaluation to this project. The selected project team is listed under resumes. SFSH will be implemented in 3 middle schools within the KIPP Houston district and matched with 8 other middle school control schools. The *Performance Measures/Research Questions* are: (1) *Performance Measure/ RQ1*: Does the implementation of SFSH improve the average student growth in Reading (ELA) achievement in grades 6-7 measured at the end of the 3rd year of implementation? (2) *Performance Measure/ RQ2*: Does the implementation of SFSH improve the average student growth in Mathematics achievement in grades 6-7 measured at the end of the 3rd year of implementation? (3) *Performance Measure/RQ3*: Does the implementation of SFSH demonstrate at least one tool or approach for enhancing participating student's non-cognitive skills is effective?

Evaluation Design, Methodology. The population of interest for this single-case, quasi-experimental design is all 6th and 7th grade students in KIPP Houston Middle Schools (11 schools). The treatment population that is accessible to this study consists of all 6th and 7th grade KIPP middle school students in 3 middle schools who receive the modules between September 2015 and May 2018. The control population consists of 6th and 7th grade KIPP middle school

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students in 8 of the 11 middle schools. The selection of the control middle schools will be matched to the treatment group to best fit. Although KIPP does not allow for a random sample, KIPP will allow for a **matched control group within the KIPP district**. This will result in a treatment sample size of **approximately 600 students per year** for the three-year course of the study. In Year 1 - 600 6th and 7th grade students, Year 2 - 600 6th and 7th grade students, Year 3 - 600 6th and 7th grade students, Student participants will be approximately 11-13 years old. The student with a student population will be predominantly low-income and minority.

Measures. All of the measures used in this study are well-known instruments in the research literature on non-cognitive functioning and in creating a college going culture. All of the measurements (pre/post test) will be administered by project researchers and evaluators.

Three measures of non-cognitive functioning will be used: **(1) The Duckworth Laboratory** at the University of Pennsylvania has developed measurements that **predict achievement grit, and self-control/social emotional competency**. The Grit scale and the self-control social emotional scale are both an 8-12 -item scale for both students and their parents/guardians. **(2) The US Department of Education measure of student aspirations** will be used to determine a student's aspirations. The US Department of Education survey has been tested and refined in all of the GEAR UP awardees for the past 15 years. **(3) Student Growth Measures** include both the control and the treatment student academic achievement and will be assessed using the **NWEA MAP student growth assessment**. The development and use of NWEA student growth assessments are guided by the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing that were developed jointly by the American Educational Research Association (AERA), American Psychological Association (APA), and the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME). NWEA regularly conducts a variety of studies and analyses such as pool depth

analysis, test validation, comparability studies, and Differential Item Functioning (DIF) analysis to ensure test reliability, validity, and fairness across all populations. **A pre-test/post-test two-group quasi-experimental single case design will be used.** In notational form, the design can be depicted as:

R O X O
 R O O
 where:
 R = the groups were assigned
 O = the measures (i.e., University of Pennsylvania/The Duckworth Lab (Grit/Social Emotional Intelligence for students and parents, US DOE (Aspiration), NWEA MAP (math, reading individual student growth model)
 X = non-cognitive measure/student growth measure

The in-district control group will receive the standard 6th and 7th KIPP curriculum without SFSH. All participants (treatment and control) will be measured at the beginning of 6th and 7th grade (pre-test) and at the end of each school year (6th and 7th grade) (post-test) with measures of Grit, Social Emotional Intelligence and Aspirations. Student growth scores will be compiled from the NWEA MAP student growth assessment, administered each year to all KIPP students. Teachers and administrators at these 3 middle schools will be trained and supported on the model so that each school can effectively integrate the series of lessons and activities more efficiently into regular classroom instruction on a weekly basis providing the sustainable low-cost nature of the practice.

Agency	Type of Data Collection	Data Sources	Timeline
KIPP Houston	Bi-Annual Meetings with District Staff - to discuss progress of the project, provide and discuss annual project reports and data reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Selected District Administrators/Staff ▪ Project SFSH 	1 in Fall 2015-17 1 in Spring 2016-2018
	Student data – attendance, demographic, state assessments – for 6 th 7 th grade for Participating and Comparison Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research or Assessment Department 	Baseline: Oct 2015 Yearly: Oct 2015-17

Biannual Surveys –Pretest/Posttest non-cognitive skills survey (student and parent) for each identified area of examination related to SFSH.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Counseling staff ▪ Teachers ▪ Principal ▪ Project Coordinator 	Yearly: Fall and spring
Annual survey on parent non-cognitive skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Selected District Administrators and District Staff 	Yearly: Fall 2016-2018
Module Information - Module Feedback, Final Project Assessment Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project Director ▪ Project Coordinator ▪ Evaluation Staff 	Yearly Beginning in AY2015-2017
Observations –District training of Non-Cognitive Modules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluation staff 	Fall-Spring beginning in AY 2015
Observations - Staff meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluation staff 	One for each school site each year
Focus Groups - to collect feedback about and determine changes in module development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Counselors, Teachers, project Coordinator 	Yearly beginning in AY2015-16
Review of student growth data from NWEA MAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project Director ▪ Project Coordinator ▪ Research and Assessment Department 	Twice a year beginning in AY 2015-16

D.2. Guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication and testing in other settings.

The major purpose of SFSH is to determine whether a specific non-cognitive program can increase specific areas of non-cognition. In addition to increasing these specific **non-cognitive areas**, SFSH will also determine the **student’s aspirations**. Evidence in this study will be generalizable to high minority, high poverty urban school districts that are similar in composition to KIPP Houston. Based on research, the Seven Character Strengths and this model of non-cognitive skills development would be a viable model for replications in other high need urban centers in the country based on findings from this study. **The replication of this model is easily transferable to other areas of country** as it allows for on-going training of staff on the model.

D.3. Contribution to research policy or practice. Policy analysis and public policy have been focused on increasing student academic achievement through increased rigor, teacher and administrator effectiveness and academic standards. Although recently a few studies have shown how specific non-cognitive skills affect academic performance, non-cognitive skills have not been addressed enough in the field since we lack the controlled and tested materials needed to sustain such an effort. Further explorations of non-cognitive skills can boost knowledge of how education processes and interventions work, particularly how behavior, and interactions determine student learning. Improved definitions of non-cognitive skills as well as more reliable and valid metrics systems and instruments to measure non-cognitive skills are key to improving both practice and policy. SFSH will significantly contribute to such a knowledge base with a comprehensive set of training materials that support a substantial non-cognitive program. KIPP Houston proposes an impressive outreach working closely with partners - Spring Branch ISD, United for College Success, Harmony Schools, Rice University's Center for College and Career Readiness, YES Prep Public Schools, KIPP schools across the nation, as well as our 70 university partners.

D.4. What Works Clearinghouse Standards with Reservations. SFSH meets the following WWC Standards: 1) the study is highly relevant to the particular topic area and has quality outcome measures; 2) the intervention designed is highly relevant for the topic area of non-cognitive interventions and academic gains and, 3) the sample consists of students relevant to WWC review; and 4) study is quasi-experimental single-case design.