

The Effects of Attending an Afterschool Tutoring Program on
Students of Low Socioeconomic Status

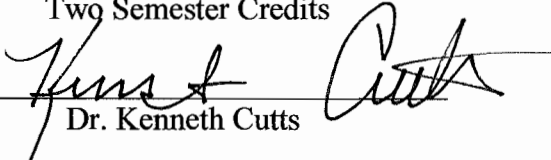
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ABSTRACT

Longfellow Elementary School, Eau Claire School District, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, serves a population comprised of large numbers of economically disadvantaged students. As a five-time recipient of the New Wisconsin Promise School of Recognition Award from the Wisconsin Department of Instruction, Longfellow has been recognized for advancing the achievement level of its students beyond the level that would be expected in a school with a seventy-five percent poverty level. One probable causal factor for Longfellow students' success has been academic assistance available at the Longfellow Community Learning Center (CLC) After School Program. This after school program has been funded through Twenty-First Century Community Learning Center Grants. Because our Twenty-First Century Community Learning Center Grant is in a waning phase, this grant will allow Longfellow to continue to provide afterschool tutoring and enrichment opportunities. This grant will also allow the hiring of a local author to work with Longfellow students to improve writing skills. Part of the monies will be used to create literacy

backpacks that may be sent home with children. Methodologies used in the afterschool program will be analyzed to determine the effects of program attendance on the literacy gains of low-income students. Results will be disseminated to school, local, and state agencies.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Longfellow Elementary is located in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Eau Claire is a city of approximately 65,000 citizens (City of Eau Claire, 2009). Eau Claire is in northwestern Wisconsin, approximately one hundred miles east of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota. A varied economic base consisting of health care, manufacturing, retail, and technology is found in Eau Claire (City of Eau Claire, 2009). Longfellow Elementary is one of thirteen elementary schools in the Eau Claire School District. There are also three middle schools, and two high schools in the district (Eau Claire School District Annual Report, 2007-2008).

Approximately 300 students attend Longfellow Elementary, which is part of the Eau Claire School District. With a nearly eight percent poverty rate, Longfellow has the highest poverty rate of any school in the Eau Claire School District (Longfellow Elementary Annual Report, 2007-2008). The school with the second highest poverty rate, Lakeshore Elementary (Lakeshore Elementary Annual Report, 2007-2008), has an approximate poverty rate of 54 percent. This makes Longfellow Elementary School's poverty rate about 20 percentage points higher than the rate found at Lakeshore Elementary, which has the second highest poverty rate in the district. Longfellow Elementary was the only school in the Eau Claire School District to be designated as a high poverty school in order to be eligible for national teacher certification monies (Wisconsin Department of Education, 2007).

Although approximately three-fourths of Longfellow Elementary students come from low socioeconomic backgrounds, Longfellow Elementary has been recognized five times as a New Wisconsin Promise School of Recognition. Longfellow received this award from the Wisconsin Department of Education. The purpose of the award is to recognize schools with high levels of students coming from poverty who achieve at a level beyond what would be expected. This

recognition was given to Longfellow Elementary five of the seven years this award has been available. Longfellow Elementary has received this award because Longfellow students' achievement scores have been higher than what would be expected at a school with a nearly eighty percent poverty rate (Longfellow Annual Report, 2007-2008).

Longfellow has also been awarded a Twenty-First Century Community Learning Center Grant through a federal program designed to fund auxiliary after school and summer academic and enrichment programs for children from low-income backgrounds. These monies have allowed Longfellow Elementary to fund after school and summer programs that focus on the needs of its disadvantaged students. These programs provide both academic tutoring and enrichment opportunities. When examining the possible causal factors for Longfellow students' achievement levels, informal data collected by teacher surveys has shown that the CLC program is seen as an integral part of Longfellow Elementary students' success.

The Twenty-First Century Grant funding is in a decreasing phase and will be ending in the next year. Longfellow Elementary is making an effort to gain alternative funding in order to be able to sustain and enhance the existing program. Longfellow Elementary personnel are working to garner support from community organizations, grant funding agencies, and the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

Statement of the Problem

According to Levin (2007), the need for narrowing the existing academic achievement gap between children from lower socioeconomic groups, as compared to nondisadvantaged youngsters, is a problem receiving worldwide attention. Levin states that some countries are progressing towards narrowing achievement gaps. Other countries, Levin writes, are showing little progress in narrowing the gap. Despite the variance between achievement gaps in different

countries, the fact remains that socioeconomic status is the most powerful predictor of academic achievement (Alexander & Salmon, 2007; Burmaster, 2007; Cunningham, 2007; Duncan & Magnuson, 2005; Krashen, 2005; Levin, 2007; Milne & Ploude, 2006).

At a national level throughout the United States, evidence may be seen to support the fact that socioeconomic status is highly correlated with academic achievement (Alexander & Salmon, 2007; Burmaster, 2007; Cunningham, 2007; Duncan & Magnuson, 2005; Krashen, 2005; Levin, 2007; Milne & Ploude, 2006). According to Alexander and Salmon, (2007) “reports of average test scores and spending levels that do not take into account the heavy weight of educational need attributable to poverty are largely unhelpful as measures of the health and effectiveness of a nation’s educational system” (p. 220).

Cunningham (2007) states that poverty is the most significant predictor of reading success and that one may usually make an accurate prediction of a United States school’s test scores by looking at the numbers of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch. Rothstein (2008) claims that school improvement reforms must address the impact of social and economic equalities along with an examination of instructional practices. In light of our lagging economy and the impacts of welfare reform measures (Rogers & Payne, 2007), it is especially important that we provide interventions for children of poverty. As a nation, we must recognize the seriousness of this problem.

Besides being a national problem, child poverty and academic achievement is seen as a problem in the state of Wisconsin. Elizabeth Burmaster, former State Superintendent of Wisconsin Schools, called attention to the problem of achievement gaps in Wisconsin. According to Burmaster (2007), Wisconsin students’ overall achievement on national assessments is consistently above the national average. However, despite Wisconsin’s high

overall achievement scores, Burmaster points out that the achievement gap between lower and middle/upper class students in the state of Wisconsin is one of the highest achievement gaps present in our nation (2007).

Within our local Eau Claire, Wisconsin community, the correlation between low socioeconomic status and academic achievement may be seen. The performance of students in the Eau Claire School District mirrors national and state trends. Longfellow Elementary and Lakeshore Elementary serve the two highest needs populations in the Eau Claire School District. According to Longfellow Elementary and Lakeshore Elementary 2007-2008 Annual Report Cards, nearly eighty percent of Longfellow Elementary students receive free and reduced lunch. The percentage of Lakeshore Elementary students who qualify for free and reduced lunch approximately fifty-four percent. Longfellow and Lakeshore Elementary students are the two lowest socioeconomic school populations in the Eau Claire School District. These two schools were also the two lowest-scoring Eau Claire School District schools on the third grade-reading portion of the 2007-2008 Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam (WKCE) (Eau Claire School District 2007-2008 Annual Report, 2007-2008).

This Eau Claire School District Annual Report shows that seventy-five/2008 percent of Longfellow third graders scored advanced or proficient in reading on the 2007-2008 WKCE. Seventy-five percent (75%) of Lakeshore third graders also scored advanced or proficient on the same reading portion of the WKCE. (Eau Claire School District 2007-2008 Annual Report, Eau Claire School District Lakeshore Elementary 2007-2008 Annual Report, Eau Claire School District Longfellow Elementary School 2007-2008 Annual Report).

According to Eau Claire School District data listed on the district's annual report (2007), one may see the probable correlation of the highest literacy rates residing within the two schools

that serve the populations with the highest socioeconomic status. Seventeen percent of Robbins Elementary students and twenty-one percent of Putnam Heights Elementary students receive free and reduced lunch (Robbins Elementary and Putnam Heights Elementary 2007-2008 Annual Reports). Thus, these two schools serve the populations with the highest percentage of middle and high economic class students in the district.

These two schools, serving the two highest socioeconomic student population groups in the Eau Claire School District, scored the highest on the WKCE third-grade test in reading. The Eau Claire School District Annual Report states that 91 percent of Robbins Elementary third graders scored at a proficient or advanced level on the 2007-2008 WKCE (Eau Claire School District 2007-2008 Annual Report). The report also states that 97 percent of Putnam Heights third graders scored proficient or advanced on the 2007-2008 WKCE. This means that the two schools with the two highest socioeconomic populations are the two schools whose third graders scored the highest on the reading portion of the WKCE.

In summary, the two schools in the Eau Claire School District that serve the populations with the highest poverty rate are the same two schools whose students scored the lowest on the 2007-2008 WKCE. The two Eau Claire School District schools that serve the students with the largest percentage of middle/high socioeconomic status students scored the two highest scores in reading on the 2007-2008 WKCE exam.

According to the recent report *To Read or Not to Read* (National Endowment for the Arts, 2007), strong readers find more financial-rewarding jobs and career opportunities. Also according to the report, employers rank reading and writing as the top deficiencies in new employees. If Longfellow Elementary School is unable to provide a quality after school program

for its clientele of disadvantaged students, we may not be able to raise student literacy levels to a degree that will allow our students to achieve future success.

Without funding to support the continuation of Longfellow's after school program, we will be unable to provide these low-income students with the assistance that they need to help them overcome the effects of poverty (Evans, 2007; Donlevy, 2002). We will have lost the opportunity to break the cycle of poverty that is often transmitted through the generations (Ludwig & Mayer, 2006).

If we do not receive this grant, we will be unable to add to the data bank of information regarding auxiliary school programs. This data is important in light of the large sums of money being spent on implementing community learning center programs in order to help disadvantaged children (Szekely & Padgette, 2006; Watts, Witt, & King, 2008). We need to continue to evaluate the effect of attendance of after school and summer programs on disadvantaged youth. We also need to look at methodology used in programs, so that we may determine the types of activities that best help to advance attendees' progress.

Purpose of the Project/Grant Proposal

This funding will allow The Longfellow Elementary Community Learning Center (CLC) after school program to continue. One of the purposes of this grant is to continue our established after school program with the full array of tutoring and enrichment opportunities that have been provided the past few years. The funding will also allow enhancements of the program. These enhancements will be in the form of take-home literacy backpacks and hiring a local author to work with students to improve writing skills. The monies will contribute to increasing the literacy achievement of approximately one hundred disadvantaged students in first through fifth grade who attend the CLC program.

These targeted students will come from low socioeconomic backgrounds. The Longfellow Elementary after school program will provide support for children who have families that are unable to support their children's' education because of second language difficulties, academic deficits, or homelessness. Some of the services provided will be an afternoon snack, homework assistance, reading tutoring, and enrichment opportunities. Besides supporting the education of disadvantaged youth, the continuation of our after school program will allow data regarding effective interventions provided at after school programs to be collected and reported. Longfellow's after school program, which is funded through a Twenty-First Century Community Learning Center Grant (CLC) and has been an integral part of Longfellow's reading achievement test scores, which are at levels that supersede what would be expected in a school with an approximately eighty percent poverty level (Longfellow Annual Report, 2007). Longfellow Elementary was awarded an initial CLC grant during the 2003-2004 school year. Forms of this grant have been available since the 2003-2004 school year. Part of the intent of this CLC grant is that schools will work to find other monies to sustain programming after the grant expires. The CLC grant monies decrease each year. Because Longfellow is receiving less funding to support our after-school program, it is becoming difficult to maintain the program at its current status. Currently, enough funding is available to allow the hiring of enough tutors so that students are able to get one-on-one or small group assistance. With approximately one hundred students attending the program, it is imperative that Longfellow be able to maintain the current number of tutors in order to give students the individual and small-group assistance needed to make academic progress. Without the funding to hire enough tutors for the program, the program could become simply a place to go after school, and not a program that helps students make academic progress.

Assumptions

This grant proposal was written for an authentic need to provide funding for the continuation of Longfellow Elementary School's after school program. One request for proposal for which this document will be used to apply is the Dollar General Youth Literacy Grant. The cover letter and request for proposal for this grant may be seen at the end of this paper.

This document may be used in its entirety, or partially to satisfy specific grant proposal requests. This proposal may also be used to apply for requests for proposals from the following funding organizations: The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, Eau Claire Community Foundation Grant, Phillips Plastics Ann Marie Grant, Staples Foundation for Learning Grant, Target Corporation Reading Grant, United States Bancorp Foundation Education Grant, and the Verizon Foundation Grant.

Definition of Terms

Certified Teacher. A teacher who has been licensed to teach the state department that provides teaching certifications.

Children of Low Socioeconomic Status. The most common way students are categorized as being of low socioeconomic status is whether or not they qualify to receive free or reduced lunch under federal programming. In this paper, students of low socioeconomic means are identified in that manner.

Comprehension. In this paper, comprehension refers to a student's ability to understand what they hear and read. There are many ways to measure students' reading comprehension. Reading comprehension is often measured by a student's ability answers to questions about text they have read. Reading comprehension also may be measured by observing a student's ability to summarize and retell text.

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). The DIBELS assessment measures are quickly administered probes intended to screen students' reading achievement. DIBELS is used to monitor the attainment of early literacy competencies (Gonzales, Vannest, & Reid, 2008). Some of the DIBELS assessments measure students' reading rate, ability to blend and segment sounds, letter identification, and knowledge of sounds represented by letters.

Fluency. Fluency refers to the smoothness, rate, automaticity, and phrasing used in oral reading. Fluency is sometimes measured by calculating the number of correct words read per minute. Observations of the reader's smoothness, phrasing, and expression are also used to assess fluency.

Literacy. According to Cunningham, Manu, Carver, Gunderson, & Mosenthal, (2000), literacy is a difficult term to define. Cunningham et al states that most definitions of literacy include: being able to read and write, reflections of societal needs, and literacy proficiency that allows one to function in everyday life. Cunningham, et al, point out that technology is rapidly expanding the definition of literacy to include facility with locating information on the Internet. Also, definitions may include the ability use CD-ROMs and audio books, as well as other technological means. According to a definition adopted by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE, 2008), literacy includes technology skills and the ability to analyze and manage multiple sources of information. Also, the NCTE maintains that literacy includes the ability to work with others, both locally and globally, to solve problems.

New Wisconsin Promise School of Recognition. This award is given to qualifying Wisconsin schools. This recognition is given to schools that serve high numbers of disadvantaged youth. Schools that receive this award have shown an advancement of achievement beyond what would be expected as compared to the achievement of comparable

groups of students. This recognition is part of a larger promotion to narrow the achievement gap between disadvantaged and nondisadvantaged students in the state of Wisconsin (Burmester, 2007).

Six Traits of Writing. The Six Traits of Writing is an instructional and assessment program used to teach and assess writing. This program originated in the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland, Oregon (Weissmann, 2003). The six key traits addressed are: organization, ideas, word choice, sentence fluency, voice, and conventions (Weissmann, 2003).

Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam (WKCE) The WKCE is a standardized test used in Wisconsin. This test began to be used in the 2005-06 school year. Current testing takes place annually for students in grades three through eight and for tenth graders in high school in reading and math (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, History of the WKCE, 2008).

Methodology

Chapter Two of this paper summarizes current literature related to the topic of this proposal. The problem of child poverty and the history of after school programs are discussed. Information regarding after school programs today is given, focusing on current Twenty-First Century Learning Communities. Research results, along with arguments defending the importance of further study of after school programs are then discussed.

A set of goals and objectives follows the literature review, along with an action plan and timeline related to grant implementation. Evaluation plans and tools are presented. Following the evaluation plan, research dissemination procedures are available. A budget and budget narrative is then included. Finally, one may see a copy of a cover letter that will be used to apply for a Dollar General Youth Literacy Grant.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Introduction

The inequity present between children growing up in poverty, as compared to those living in higher socioeconomic circumstances, has been recognized for many years. The first section of this literature review examines the problem of childhood poverty. The second section looks at those in history who have promoted auxiliary school programs to promote educational equity for children of poverty. Following the historical information, after school programs today are discussed. This discussion of present day after school programs focuses on Twenty-First Century Learning Center Programs. Next, there is a section regarding research that has been done on the effects of after school programming on disadvantaged youth. Finally, arguments are made to support the need for further study of after school programs.

The Problem of Child Poverty

The problem of child poverty is recognized as a worldwide problem. According to Chen and Corak (2008), several nations are beginning to acknowledge the problems and costs of child poverty. Chen and Corak state that many nations are starting to set child poverty reduction goals in the course of setting public policy.

Besides being recognized as a worldwide problem, child poverty is also a significant problem at the national level. The United States, according to Chen and Corak, has one of the highest child poverty rates when compared to other modern, industrialized countries. In the United States, those citizens under the age of eighteen are affected by poverty at a higher rate than any other age group (Chen & Corak, 2007).

National and state statistics related to income levels are presented in this section. Correlations between income, age, sex, level of education, and race are also included. Other

correlations and causal factors are discussed. These factors include levels of education, family structure, social networks, and environmental factors.

According to United States Census Bureau American Community Survey Data (Bishaw & Semega, 2007), the median household income in the United States was \$50,740 in 2007. The median household income in Wisconsin was \$50,578. This data indicates that Wisconsin residents' median household income is not statistically different from the national median income.

The United Census Bureau Data Report *People and Families in Poverty by Selected Characteristics: 2007-2008* shows that that children, as a group, tend to have higher poverty rates than do those of other age groups. This report states that 11.7 percent of United States citizens in the age group of those from eighteen years to sixty-four years old earned wages below the poverty level in 2008. The report states that in 2008, 19.0 percent of related children under the age of eighteen living in families lived at an income rate below the poverty level. According to the same report, 47.8 percent of children under age eighteen living in unrelated subfamilies were supported by an income level below the poverty rate. Clearly, this data shows that children, as a group, tend to experience poverty at a rate significantly higher than other age groups (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008).

Another factor related to single women raising children living in poverty is the discrepancy of wages earned by women as compared to men in the United States. According to Bishaw and Semega (U.S. Census Bureau Community Survey Report, 2007), men working full-time and year-round in the United States earned a median salary of \$44,255 in 2007. According to the same report, the median salary of the average full-time, year-round female worker was \$34,278. This means that the women in this national sample earned only 77.5 percent of what

men earned. Women in Wisconsin earned only approximately seventy-three percent of what men earned. The national and state levels of women, as compared to men, show that women are earning only approximately seventy-five percent of the salary earned by men.

This same trend of men earning more than women may be seen in the state of Wisconsin. Bishaw, Alemayehu, and Semega (2008) report that the median earnings of full-time, year-round working men in Wisconsin earned \$44,105. The median earnings of women was \$32,265. According to this data, women in Wisconsin earn only approximately seventy-three percent of what is earned by men.

In addition to the income level of women and children living in poverty, according to Duncan and Magnuson (2005), there are other important causal and correlational factors related to childhood poverty. Duncan and Magnuson state that these factors include level of education and family structure. Neighborhood environmental circumstances, such as safety, drug and alcohol use, and crime are important factors as well.

The educational level achieved by workers in the United States is a good predictor of economic success. United States Census Bureau data (2000 Census) shows that the educational level an individual attains has a direct influence on income earned. United States Census data (2005) shows the correlation between level of education and salaries. According to this data, full time workers in the United States earn a median salary of approximately \$33,000. Those who do not hold a high school degree earn a median salary of about \$21,000. Those individuals holding a high school degree earn a median salary of \$27,000 per year. Approximately \$32,000 a year is the annual earnings of those who have earned some college credits. Workers who hold a Bachelor's Degree earn a median income of about \$43,000. Finally, those who have earned an advanced degree earn a median salary of \$55,000. This same pattern of higher earnings reported

for those who have higher educational attainment may be seen in 2007 U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey reports annually (Bishaw, Alemayehu, & Semega, 2008).

The most common family structure found in children of poverty is families led by young, single mothers. According to DuGoff, et al., (2007), teenage pregnancy rates in the United States are among the greatest among the western, industrialized nations. Rodgers, Jr. and Payne (2007) point out that children born to teenagers and those living with single mothers are significantly more at risk for living in poverty than those children born to families where both a mother and father are present. Rodgers and Payne state that reducing child poverty requires reducing the birthrate of children to teenage parents. Also, Rodgers, Jr. and Payne write that the issue of male abandonment of children, along with nonpayment of child support from absent parents, must be addressed when seeking ways to reduce child poverty.

Many individuals and agencies appear to be experimenting with strategies to decrease the level of child poverty in the United States. Some of these proposed solutions are fiscally based, such as tax credits and raising the minimum wage (The Roosevelt Report, 2007). Other solutions are community based, such as community partnerships sponsoring programs to provide health care for children living in poverty.

One proposed solution to the problem of nonpayment of child support and teenage pregnancy, has been to increase financial support to programs that focus on educating male teenagers about parenting and required child support payments before the Office of Child Support and Enforcement Fund (OCSE) needs to intervene for nonpayment of child support (DuGoff, E., et. al, 2007). According to DuGoff et. al, there should be more focus on preventing teenage pregnancy and nonpayment of child support before these circumstances occur in the form of prevention. There have been a few such programs in effect that have produced positive

effects, but there needs to be more focus on funding these preventative programs (The Roosevelt Institution, 2007).

Another factor related to single mothers living in poverty is that these single mothers feel they have to maintain a lower income in order to qualify for government health and childcare benefits. In a case study done by Sandra Barnes (2008), she relates an example of this situation. The single mother whom she profiled knew the exact amount above which she could not let her salary rise above. If she did earn money above that amount, she knew that she would have to give up health and child care benefits for her children. She spoke to Barnes about refusing raises so that she didn't lose those benefits that she could never afford, even if she were to receive a substantial raise.

Cabrera, Deil-Amen, Prabhu, Terenzini, Lee, and Franklin (2006) point out that it is not only income-related factors that hinder students coming from low socioeconomic and/or minority backgrounds. According to Carbrera, et al., disadvantaged students need to establish relationships within the social and educational communities. Children from low socioeconomic backgrounds need to be provided with relationships that bring them in contact with the social and educational community structures. Without the establishment of programs that facilitate social networking and support, low-income students often are not able to enter the social milieu required to achieve educational and career goals.

According to Duncan and Magnuson (2005), the environment in which children of poverty live is a significant consequence of growing up in poverty. Evans (2004) states that children of poverty are exposed to numerous risk factors such as violent, unsafe neighborhoods and family turmoil. Poor and unsafe facilities, and polluted water and air are also commonly found in communities of poverty. Evans points out that it is often the cumulative effect of these

environmental risk factors, rather than one single factor, that produce negative effects on children of poverty.

Homeless is another significant environmental factor that affects children of poverty. Ziesemer, Marcoux, and Marwell (1994), studied the differences in academic performance and problem behaviors of homeless children as compared to low socioeconomic, housed children. They found that there is a great diversity of need in each of the two populations. Also, they found no appreciable difference between the reading and math achievement between the two groups. Ziesemer, Marcoux, and Marwell (1994) found that about one-third of both groups were functioning at or above grade level. They found that almost two-thirds of both groups were performing below grade-level. Similarly, there were no significant differences between the two groups found in the area of adaptive behaviors. Although the differences between housed and homeless children in poverty was not appreciably different, Ziesemer et al., point out that homeless mothers often come from family networks with a history of abuse. They state that homeless mothers often have a lack of social support networks. Whenever possible, Ziesemer, et al. recommends that community organizations such as shelters, local centers, and schools, should work to establish auxiliary programs that will assist with academics and providing the social support necessary.

The History of After School Programs

Most of the political activism related to trying to ameliorate the inequities present between children of poverty, as compared to nondisadvantaged youngsters, began in the late eighteen nineties. At that time, programs that took place outside of the school day began (Kliebard, 1995) to be examined and executed in order to provide educational equity for children of poverty.

According to Halpern (2002), after school programs in America began in the last few decades of the nineteenth century. These after school programs were in the form of “boys clubs”. These clubs were usually small groups that met in spare rooms in churches or other community buildings (Halpern, 2002). Most often, according to Halpern, these clubs were started by middle-class men and women and were usually found in urban, inner-city areas. After the inception of “boys clubs”, similar groups were started to serve girls. Many of these groups were interest-based. While boys may have belonged to groups interested in scouting, mechanics, and hunting, girls’ groups were usually centered on interests such as cooking and sewing.

One of the most well known figures in the recognition of the needs of children born into poverty was Jane Addams. Addams worked to provide for the needs of the disadvantaged by establishing settlement houses, programs for women and children, and educational programs in Chicago (Crocco, Munro, & Weiler, 1999).

John Dewey is another educator well known for his involvement in initiatives with the goals of providing for the social and economic needs of women and children. Besides his involvement with schools and children, he was also involved in women’s clubs and settlement houses (Crocco, 1997). Dewey believed strongly in the ability of educational institutions to provide equal educational opportunities to the citizens in our democracy (Tanner, 2006). He supported a multitude of democratic social movements, many of which centered on providing educational opportunities in order to achieve a sense of social justice and as a means to help balance the inequities between economic and social classes (Tanner, 2006).

According to Brick (2005), Dewey sought to make equal opportunities available by increasing the power of educational institutions to fill the role of creating social justice. Dewey

believed that it was the responsibility of schools to provide programming that allowed each individual to realize their full potential (Brick, 2005).

Marion Thompson Wright was another educator who believed that schools should provide programming in order to decrease the gap between economic classes. Wright was influenced by John Dewey (Crocco, 1997) and believed that education could help solve racism and economic problems in the schools and in the American society at large (Crocco, 1997). She documented the substandard nature of schools which African American students attended. Because of her hope that the end of segregation in the schools would cause the station of black students to rise, Marion Wright fought tirelessly to end segregation in the schools (Crocco, 1997).

After School Programs/Twentieth Century Community Learning Centers Today

James-Burdumy, Dynarski, and Deke, (2008) state that the number of after school programs have increased rapidly in the past few years. According to James-Burdumy et al., one reason for the increase is the concern for the safety of unsupervised children in the hours after school lets out. Also, they write that the pressure to increase academic achievement, and the fact that more mothers are working, has prompted the increase of after school programs.

According to Parsad and Lewis (2009), fifty-six percent of public schools in the United States offered formal after school programs in 2008. Forty-six percent of our nation's public schools programs are fee-based, stand alone daycare programs. Ten percent of the after school programs are Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers (Parsad & Lewis, 2009). Eighty-one percent of public school CLC programs serve no grade higher than grade six. Nineteen percent of after school CLC programs offer services to at least one grade higher than grade six.

In 2008, twenty-one percent of public school after school CLC programs were open less than ten hours per week (Parsad & Lewis, 2009). Thirty-five percent of the CLC programs were open ten to fourteen hours per week. Forty-five percent of the CLC programs were available fifteen or more hours per week in 2008.

This discussion will view current after school programs in the context of Twentieth Century Community Learning Centers (CLC's). This section focuses on CLC's, because grant monies would help to fund a CLC after school program already established at Longfellow Elementary School. The other reason after school programming is viewed in the context of CLC programs is that many of the current after school programs that do not charge fees are being funded through CLC grant monies.

The United States government designated four and one half billion dollars in grant monies to fund after school programs through the Twentieth First Century Community Learning Centers grant in 2001 (Chappell, 2006). The focus of these funds is directed towards improving the academic performance of students in high poverty schools (Chappell, 2006). This grant is administered through the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) and is made available to State Education Agencies (SEAs) in the form of formula grants (United States Department of Education, 2009).

State education agencies administer grant monies through awards to local education agencies, community-based organizations, and other public and private agencies (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). In fiscal years 2006 and 2007, \$981,166,230 was appropriated through this grant. During the fiscal year 2008, \$1,081,166,187 in grant monies was awarded.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has managed the grant program in Wisconsin since 2002 (Burmester, Executive Summary 2006-07). Priority has been given to

awarding money to schools serving large numbers of disadvantaged children. Some of the components of these programs have been instruction, tutoring, and other forms of academic assistance (Burmester, 2006-07). Although grant recipients may offer enrichment activities, the intent of the program is to provide academic assistance. The Wisconsin DPI views the CLC programs as an integral part of Wisconsin's focus on closing the achievement gap between students of lower and higher economic status (Burmester, 2006-2007).

Research Results Related to After School Programming

There are those that question the efficacy, construction, and premises made in creating after school programs (Chappel, 2006). A review of the research studies available on the effects of after school programs shows a mix of research results. It seems as if most of the reviews and research are beginning to show that both social and academic benefits can occur when a child attends after school programs consistently.

Durlak and Weissberg (2007) conducted a review of reports that gave information on seventy-three after school programs. A meta-analysis was conducted in order to determine the effects of after school attendance on student behaviors, attitudes, and academic performance. One conclusion made by Durlak and Weissberg was that after school programs may significantly affect the behavior, academic skills, and attitudes of children attending after school programs. The other important finding was that programs using evidence-based programs to teach social skills and academic competencies were much more successful in producing positive effects than were programs not using evidence-based approaches. Also, Durlak and Weissberg found that programs including specific periods of time devoted to improving academics were more successful than those programs not allotting specific time to improve academic skills. Durlak and Weissberg report that there is great public support for after school programs because of the large

numbers of children left alone for periods of time after school. They also reported the need for further research on long-term benefits of after school program benefits. They recommend that further study be done on who benefits most from after school programs, how to improve attendance and participation, and how to best pre-assess students entering the program.

Lauer, Akiba, Wilkerson, Apthorp, Snow, and Martin-Glenn (2006), state that research shows mixed results regarding the effectiveness of auxiliary school programs. Lauer, et al., (2006) conducted a meta-analysis that looked at thirty-eight out-of-school-programs. The authors concluded that attending out-of-school-programs showed small, but significant positive effects on attendees' reading and math achievement. Another important finding was that attendees advanced in reading most rapidly when they received one-on-one tutoring as an intervention delivered at auxiliary school programs. Furthermore, they found that it did not matter whether students attended an after-school or summer program in terms of the gains students made. As long as the hours attending each type of program are similar in number, this study showed that whether the interventions were received during the school year or after school made little difference in the effectiveness of the interventions.

The Importance of Further Study of After School Programs

There is a need for data regarding interventions that have been shown to lift literacy achievement of children from low-income backgrounds (Lauer, et al., 2006). The No Child Left Behind Act has caused a greater awareness of the problem achievement gaps between students of low-income backgrounds, as compared to students from higher socioeconomic circumstances (Donlevy, 2002). According to Rothstein (2007), funding after school programs for students of low socioeconomic status is one of the ways that a significant positive impact on achievement may be made. According to Elizabeth Burmaster, Wisconsin State Superintendent of Schools,

(2008), the Wisconsin Department of Public Education states that the academic assistance provided in after school programs as an essential component in closing the achievement gap between students from low income and higher socioeconomic backgrounds.

There are large sums of money are being spent on Community Learning Center (CLC) programs throughout our country and state. At the national level, the funding appropriated for CLC programs has grown from forty million dollars in 1998 to approximately \$3.5 billion in 2008 (Afterschool Alliance, 2008). During the 2006-2007 school year, the state of Wisconsin funded \$11,600,000 to 119 CLC programs (Burmester, 2008). In these economic times, data must be collected on the overall effectiveness of after school programs. The effectiveness of different methodologies and structures in after school programs must be studied in order to ensure that grant monies are being wisely spent. More data needs to be collected in order to determine whether or not the money spent on after school programs is an economically effective means to combat the costs of children living in poverty.

According to Holzer, Schanzenbach, Duncan, and Ludwig (2008), the costs of allowing children to live in poverty are significant. Holzer et al. estimated that costs associated with child poverty equal about five hundred billion dollars per year. These estimated costs included costs incurred by high crime rates and poor health care often present in low socioeconomic settings. This is close to four percent of the yearly gross domestic product in the United States. Holzer, et al. emphasize that we need to view the costs of decreasing child poverty as an investment.

Chapter III: Project Goals and Objectives

Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of the Longfellow Community Learning Center after-school program is to raise the reading and writing literacy rates of students coming from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Another goal will be to compile assessment data in order to measure the effect of the afterschool program on improving literacy rates.

Goal One. Raise reading and writing competencies in low-income students who are attending the Longfellow after school CLC program.

- In order to raise reading competencies, students will receive additional practice reading with the help of a tutor.
- In order to develop an interest in reading, a local author will promote reading and writing, showing children that reading and writing may be enjoyable activities.
- Tutors assisting the children will be trained in research-based strategies to increase fluency and comprehension.
- Literacy backpacks will be compiled. These backpacks will be filled with literacy materials that students may use at home. These materials will correlate to the content areas the students are studying.
- Parent involvement will be increased by providing meals in order to encourage families to participate in literacy training with their child(ren).

Goal Two. Collect data regarding the effectiveness of the Longfellow CLC program in raising the literacy rates of students receiving free and reduced lunch.

- Data will be collected by using a survey given to staff and parents in order to measure family involvement, use of literacy backpacks, and writing motivation fostered by authors present.
- Data will be collected from Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts standardized reading test scores.
- Scores from the computerized Scholastic Reading Inventory reading comprehension assessment will be gathered.
- Fluency will be assessed by using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment.
- Writing capabilities will be evaluated using Six Traits rubrics to score students' writing.

Goal Three. Collect data from teachers and parents regarding the effectiveness of Longfellow's CLC program.

- Survey teachers to assess the effect of the program on homework completion of attendees.
- Teachers complete surveys in order to gain information regarding the effect of the program on participants' academic achievement.
- Survey parents to gain information regarding the effect of the program on their child's homework completion rate.
- Start out with an introduction. Some suggestions include reiterating the statement of the problem and briefly discussing what this chapter will include.

Chapter IV: Project Methodology

Action Plan and Timeline

This section should address the activities, persons responsible and timeframe aligned to each goal/objective.

Longfellow Community	Learning Center Timeline
Month	Activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact and confirm employment of project directors and lead teachers • Notify University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire of tutor employment positions • Confirm schedule for fall semester CLC program • Confirm transportation for students who ride buses • Assemble literacy backpacks • Schedule CLC lead team/staff collaboration meetings
September 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate fall semester schedule to parents and teachers via emails to teachers and letters home and posting in newsletter to parents • Give teachers referral forms to distribute to parents at fall conferences • Identify and confirm seventy-five students who will attend program • Hire tutors from University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire • Seek volunteer tutors • Set up schedule for visiting local author • Set up system for literacy backpack checkout • Investigate and begin scheduling October enrichment activities • Plan family night for October • CLC lead team meeting • Submit dissemination information to school newsletter • Write and send home CLC newsletter to parents • Post dissemination information on Eau Claire School District website • Write and send home CLC newsletter to parents • Post CLC information to Longfellow Elementary websites • Invite school board members to visit CLC program • Schedule presentation for October school board meeting • Submit press release to Eau Claire Leader Telegram and Family Times magazine • Invite local television channels to report on CLC program
February 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent dinner and activity night • Local Author visits CLC program

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLC lead team/staff collaboration meeting • Submit dissemination information to school newsletter • Write and send home CLC newsletter to parents • Post CLC information to Longfellow Elementary websites
March 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule Parent activity night for April • Schedule enrichment activities for April and May • CLC lead team meeting • Submit dissemination information to school newsletter • Write and send home CLC newsletter to parent • Post CLC information to Longfellow Elementary websites
April 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform parents, students, and staff of last day of CLC schedule by the end of April. • Purchase cards and small gifts for volunteers and tutors • Post-survey parents, teachers, and students • CLC lead team/staff collaboration meeting • Submit dissemination information to school newsletter • Write and send home CLC newsletter to parents • Post CLC information to Longfellow Elementary websites
May 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last day of CLC on Thursday, May 5 • Get information from college tutors and volunteers who are interested in returning next year • Give cards and small gifts to tutors and volunteers • Collect, reorganize, and store literacy backpacks • Get out information to parents about summer library program • Analyze post-survey data and report data to granting agency • CLC lead team meeting • Write and send home CLC newsletter to parents • Post CLC information to Longfellow Elementary websites

Evaluation Plan and Tools

Standardized test scores from the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts standardized achievement test will be collected. Test scores from the Scholastic Reading Inventory computerized assessment will also be used to evaluate students' reading progress. Reading fluency data will be collected with the DIBELS assessment. Student writing achievement will be assessed using Six Traits rubrics to score students' writing.

Data will also be collected from surveys given to parents and teachers regarding student performance. Surveys will be administered in the fall before the program starts and again in the

spring when the program is finished. See Appendix C for a copy of the survey that was used to collect data from parents, along with the survey distributed to teachers. Human subjects will be protected because parents and teachers will be asked to complete all surveys anonymously, placing no names on surveys.

Dissemination Plan

Communication of program effectiveness will be disseminated throughout Longfellow's school community. The Longfellow Community Learning Center's lead team will meet monthly in order to collaborate. Every other month, school staff will be invited to come to these meetings. School staff will also be informed through staff updates and memos. Parents will be informed through CLC and school newsletters, along with other written communications sent home. In addition, information will be posted on our school website.

At the school district level, we will disseminate information to other schools in the Eau Claire School District through our district and school website. We will also do presentations at school board meetings that are open to the public. Finally, we will invite school board members and school administrators to visit and our program and review our data.

We will share data with the public through press releases to local newspapers, television channels, including newspaper and television coverage of CLC events and programming. Presentations and meetings with students and faculty from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire will facilitate communication with our local university.

Through presentations, partnerships, and involvement with community organizations, we will provide information regarding our program. Some of the organizations with which we will communicate include our local North Hill Nationhood Association, the Eau Claire Literacy Volunteers of America, and the Noon Exchange Club. The Eau Claire Children's Museum, Eau

Claire Public Library, and Eau Claire County UW-Extension will also receive information. The City Parks and Recreation department staff, police department, parks and recreation departments will also gain knowledge of our activities.

At the state level, information will be disseminated through the Wisconsin Department of Education on the department's website. On the website, our name will be included as a grant recipient and we will submit a PowerPoint that showcases our program. This PowerPoint will be available to other Community Learning Center recipients and interested citizens. Dissemination at the state level will also occur through submitting a required report to the Wisconsin Department of Instruction. We will send representatives to collaboration meetings at the state and regional level for the purpose of sharing information with other grant sites. Finally, results will be reported to the granting agency upon the completion of the project.

Budget

See Appendix D for a copy of the Budget and Budget Narrative.

Personnel

The CLC Site Leader will be on site at Longfellow Elementary from 3:45-5:45 p.m. every day the CLC program is in session. She will observe all facets of the program and be available to solve problems that may occur onsite. She will be responsible for hiring college students that will act as tutors. She will schedule tutors and make sure they have filled out necessary paperwork in order to be paid. She will also schedule and facilitate meetings between CLC staff and teachers for the purpose of encouraging communication about students' needs. This program will serve approximately one hundred students and most of the tutors working with the children will be college students and noncertified teachers. Therefore, it is imperative that a site director be present at all times.

CLC Certified Teacher – The academic coordinator will be a certified teacher who will be on site for one hour per day during the tutoring portion of the program. This person will have a background in education and will be able to train tutors to use research-based methodology to use while tutoring students. She will observe and make recommendations to the tutors regarding appropriate curriculum and methodology to use in working with students. She will be responsible for identifying materials to be purchased for use in the program. Because most of our tutors will be college students, it is necessary for them to have the proper training and supervision to be able to effectively further students' academic levels.

Tutors – will work under the direction of a certified teacher. Most of the program assistants will be college students who will be working directly with students helping them to gain academic skills. Because this program will serve approximately one hundred children at-risk for academic failure, it is necessary to have enough tutors available so that students may receive individual or small-group assistance. As many volunteers as is possible will be recruited to volunteer in this program. However, because we will be serving about one hundred children in five different grade levels, it is necessary to have a core group of tutors who will be present on a regular basis. In order for this program to function and help students make true academic progress, we need to have at least two paid tutors present for each grade level section. Each grade level session will serve approximately 20 students.

The Enrichment/Parent Coordinator – The enrichment coordinator will seek community liaisons that will contribute to the enrichment portion of the CLC program.

Katy McKy – Katy McKy is a local author who lives in the Longfellow neighborhood. She has worked with Longfellow students in the past and been highly successful in motivating

students to enjoy literacy activities. She will work primarily with students to further writing skills.

Administrative Support – Payment for clerical support will be necessary to produce parent letters and calendars, as well as written communications with teachers, the public, and other agencies through which information will be disseminated.

Nonpersonnel Costs

Most of the direct costs will go towards literacy backpacks that may be sent home with children. The backpacks will contain books and tape sets, along with motivating hands-on activities to encourage student engagement in literacy activities with their parents and family. Parts of these items will be stored in heavy plastic bags.

Backpacks - The literacy kits we send home must have a rugged container in order to help ensure that the materials inside are not lost or destroyed. Backpacks will also be a way for students to easily transport their literacy kit to and from home.

Books – One hundred fifty books are needed to fill the literacy backpacks. At approximately \$10.00 per book, the request equals a total of \$1500.00. As much as possible, we would like to provide a balance of fiction and nonfiction books in these kits. Another reason we need three books per backpack is that one of our objectives is to coordinate these backpacks with the content area learning in science and social studies that is present within the individual grade levels.

Book/Tape Sets – Fifty book-tape sets were requested at the cost of \$15.00, with a total request of \$750. It is important that there is at least one auditory means to provide students with content area backgrounds, since many of our students come from families for whom English is a second language. Many of our literacy backpacks may go to families little facility in English, and

for whom reading abilities may still be somewhat limited. This will provide another way for the student to learn the content information presented in science and social studies.

Heavy Plastic Bags – Sixty dollars was requested to pay for heavy plastic bags. These bags will be used to store the books, tapes, and activity packets included in the literacy backpacks that will go home with students. These bags are necessary in order to protect the investment made in books, tapes, and activities.

Postage – Thirty dollars in postage was requested. The postage costs will be needed in order to mail surveys that will help us monitor the effectiveness of the CLC program. Postage will also be used when it is necessary to mail documents to parents and workers involved in the CLC program.

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Appendix A

Cover Letter

Dollar General Literacy Foundation
P.O. Box 1064
Goodlettsville, TN 37070-1064

Dear Program Director,

Longfellow Elementary School is pleased to submit a grant application for the Dollar General Youth Literacy Grant. Longfellow Elementary School, in Eau Claire, WI, has successfully helped our disadvantaged school youth overcome reading difficulties and increase academic achievement, a goal that your company supports through funding Youth Literacy Grants. Longfellow Elementary has furthered students' academic achievement through an afterschool Community Learning Center (CLC) tutoring and enrichment program.

Approximately eighty percent of Longfellow Elementary students qualify for free and reduced school meals. One-third of our children are members of minority groups. The economically disadvantaged students at Longfellow Elementary School have shown literacy growth through tutoring and enrichment received in our after school program. Longfellow Elementary School has been recognized as a New Wisconsin Promise School of Recognition by the state of Wisconsin Department of Instruction for advancing our disadvantaged students to a level beyond which would be expected.

Receiving Youth Literacy Grant funding would allow us to meet our goal of continuing and expanding our after school tutoring and enrichment activities in order to increase the academic achievement of approximately one hundred students who are academically deficient. Funds would allow us to expand our program through the development of take-home literacy kits designed to increase content area knowledge and increase parent involvement. We would also like to provide students with monthly visits by a local author who lives in the Longfellow neighborhood in order to provide motivation to engage in literacy activities.

The number of children living in poverty is increasing. The causal effect of poverty on literacy attainment has been well documented. By providing a quality after school program tutoring and enrichment program, our students will be able to break the cycle of poverty through increased literacy rates. Information regarding the effect of our after school program on literacy gains will be disseminated in many ways, including through our local school, school district, university community, and numerous other local organizations. Information will also be disseminated through the State of Wisconsin Department of Education website and collaboration meetings.

Thank you for accepting this grant application in order to support our shared efforts and vision to increase literacy rates in youth coming from economically disadvantaged and minority backgrounds.

Sincerely,

Anne Felton

Appendix B

Grant Foundation Proposal Request

As stated below, the 2010 Youth Literacy Grant applications will be available after February 2010. This document will be used to apply for that grant at that time.

Dollar General Youth Literacy Grant

The Dollar General Youth Literacy Grants provide funding to schools, public libraries and non-profit organizations to help with the implementation or expansion of literacy programs for students who are below grade level or experiencing difficulty reading.

Click here to download the [2009 Dollar General Literacy Foundation Back to School and Youth Literacy Grant Recipients.](#)

The 2010 Youth Literacy Grant applications will be available in February 2010.

Link: <http://www.dollargeneral.com/ServingOthers/Pages/GrantPrograms.aspx>

Appendix C
Teacher Surveys

**Longfellow Elementary School
21st Century Community Learning Center
Parent Survey**

Please return by _____

We are interested in knowing how your child(ren) benefited from participating in the after school program. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following by checking one response for each statement.

In our experience, the after school program provides children . . .	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Point Value Descriptors	1	2	3	4	5
A safe, well supervised play environment.					
A caring staff and environment.					
Adults that are good role models for children.					
More opportunity for healthy physical activity.					
Fun recreation.					
Opportunity to feel successful in activities.					
Over the past year, your child . . .					
Received the help they needed with studies after school.					
Improved his/her reading skills.					
Improved grades at school.					
Improved in turning in his/her homework on time.					
Experienced less stress at home because of homework and less study time needed at home.					
Received more positive comments from teachers/tutors.					
Improved their behavior at school.					

Improved their attitude toward school.					
Said they feel better about themselves.					
Was motivated to engage in reading and writing Activities by bringing home literacy backpacks					
Has been able to participate in CLC activities with you					
Reported that they are getting along better with other students.					

Longfellow CLC Teacher Survey

Thanks for taking your time to give us your valuable feedback on the Longfellow CLC Program. Please check the category that best describes each descriptor.

Point Values	Significant Decline 1	Moderate Decline 2	Stayed the same neither declined or inclined 3	Moderate Improvement 4	Significant Improvement 5
Turning in his/her homework on time.					
Completing homework to your satisfaction.					
Participating in class.					
Volunteering.					
Attending class regularly.					
Being attentive in class.					
Behaving well in class.					
Academic performance.					
Coming to school motivated to learn.					
Getting along well with others.					
TOTALS					

Appendix D

Budget

Longfellow 2009-2010 Community Learning Center (CLC) Budget

I. Personnel Summary

Name	Position/Title	Total Salary	Cost-Shared Expenses	Total Cost
To Be Determined	CLC Site Leader	\$7,500 300 hours@25.00 per hour		\$7,500
To Be Determined	CLC Certified Teacher	\$4,000 160 hours @25.00 per hour		\$4,000
To Be Determined	Ten Tutors	\$8,960 112 hours apiece @8.00 per hour		\$8,960
To Be Determined	Enrichment/Parent Coordinator	\$1,300 65 hours @20.00 per hour		\$1,300
To Be Determined	Administrative Support	\$975 65 hours @15.00 per hour		\$ 975
Katy McKy	Visiting Author	\$2,000 8 monthly sessions @250.00 per visit		\$2,000
Provided by Chippewa Valley Literacy Association Paid for by Longfellow Puddle Jump Funds	Tutoring Services	Tutoring @ 15.00 per hour	\$3,000	
Provided by Chippewa Valley Literacy Association Paid for by Longfellow Bake Sale Funds	Parent Training	by Chippewa Valley Literacy Association	\$4,000	
Total Cost Shared Funds			\$7500	
Total Personnel Funds Requested				\$24,735

II. Nonpersonnel Costs

Item	Unit Cost	Quantity	Total Cost
Backpacks	\$15.00	50	\$750
Books to go in backpacks	\$10.00	150	\$1,500
Book/Tape Sets for backpacks	\$15.00	50	\$750
Miscellaneous hands-on activities To go in backpacks	\$15.00	50	\$750
Heavy Plastic Bags For book storage	\$3.00	20	\$60
Postage			\$50
Travel costs for CLC site leader and certified teacher to travel to CLC collaboration day in Madison, WI	Mileage costs- \$200.00 Conference Fee - \$300.00		\$500
Total Nonpersonnel Costs Requested			\$4,360

III. Indirect Costs (3%)

Description	Total Cost
Indirect Costs 3% x \$4,360	\$131

Grand Total Requested Funds Including Personnel Costs, Nonpersonnel Costs, and Indirect Costs	\$29, 226
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