

1. Demonstration of Need: Location, Population, and Delivery Options

Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) has been one of the region's leading providers of Head Start programming for over 50 years. What makes Head Start's significance evident? Head Start stands as a vital cornerstone within the landscape of early childhood education in the United States, offering comprehensive support to low-income children and their families. The program's significance lies in its multifaceted approach to nurturing young minds and leveling the education playing field. K5 teachers in the district tell families and staff members that students who have been enrolled in the Head Start program before kindergarten are better prepared for school. Head Start extends its influence beyond the classroom, addressing crucial aspects of health and nutrition and ameliorating disparities that often plague our underserved communities.

Milwaukee is the largest city in Wisconsin with over 563,000 residents and more than 233,000 households according to the 2022 Census Reporter. The city is underscored by its distinction as one of the nation's most culturally diverse metropolises; however, it bears the label of one of the most deeply segregated cities in the United States, as affirmed by a sobering rating of 79.8 out of 100 from the Brookings Institution.

The loss of manufacturing jobs played a large role in the declining socioeconomic conditions of many neighborhoods that the proposed program will serve. As manufacturing plummeted from over 100,000 jobs to fewer than 50,000, there was a surge in both poverty and unemployment rates. The stark data, as reported by the Census Reporter, reveals a poverty rate of 22.1%, a figure that rises to an alarming 30.0% among the most vulnerable demographic – children under the age of 18. The current median household income for a resident in the city is \$45,318, which is \$9.00 below the average for the residents in the county and more than \$23.00 less than the state average. Unemployment as of August 2023 was 4.7% in the county, which is

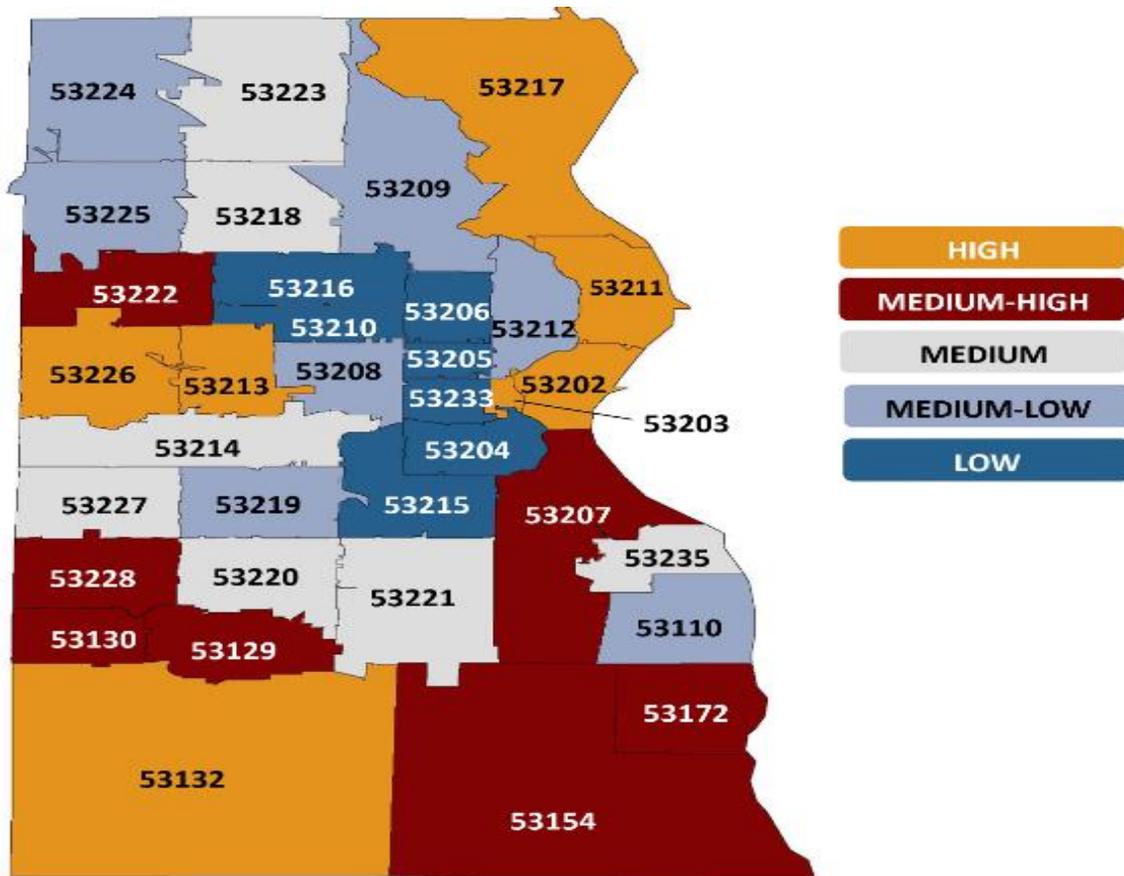
higher than the state at 3.3%. Notably, nearly 50.0% of the families with children in the city of Milwaukee rely on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, compared to a median value of 37.9% for all other municipalities within Milwaukee County. These statistics underscore the urgent and comprehensive interventions aimed at alleviating the multifaceted socioeconomic challenges confronting these communities.

MPS is the largest school district in Wisconsin, serving students from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. It offers a rich and multifaceted array of educational programs and extracurricular activities, accommodating children from as early as three years old through age 21 (for students with disabilities and school-age parents). With an enrollment of over 65,000, the district is a diverse community spread across 156 schools. The racial profile is 49.8% African American, 28.1% Hispanic, 9.3% White, 8.3% Asian, 0.4% American Indian, 0.1% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 4.0% Two or More. Over 12.0% of students are English learner students who collectively speak over 70 different languages. A total of 20.3% of students were identified with special education needs, and over 12.0% of students have limited English proficiency. Four out of five students, about 76.6%, are economically disadvantaged.

How Head Start resources will be directed to the geographic area(s) of greatest need.

According to the United States Census Bureau, there are an estimated 9,000 families in the city of Milwaukee with children under six years of age. In the MPS service area, 8.2% of the population is under five years of age compared to 7.3% in the city of Milwaukee and 5.8% in Wisconsin. Throughout Milwaukee, there is a need to provide a program to prepare young children for academic success and future careers. For these reasons, it is critical to offer community-proven programs, such as Head Start, to better prepare students for success in school and citizenship in the areas of greatest need.

During the five-year project, MPS plans to establish 56 full-day Head Start classrooms for three-year-olds and 5 full-day classrooms for four-year-olds in the areas with the lowest socioeconomic status in Milwaukee. The neighborhood zip codes to be served are 53204, 53205, 53206, 53208, 53209, 53210, 53212, 53215, 53216, 53218, 53221, 53224, and 53233. Socioeconomic status groups reflect the disparities in Milwaukee County. The map below from Milwaukee Health Compass organizes the zip codes into five distinct groups based on socioeconomic status, with “high” representing affluent communities and “low” indicating areas with lower economic well-being. Out of the 36 MPS Head Start sites, 20 are “low,” 11 are “medium-low,” and 5 are in the “medium” group. This classification offers a comprehensive and insightful view of the economic landscape in the region.



MPS is requesting federal funding to provide Head Start services to eligible low-income children within Milwaukee. The district has a demonstrated record of implementing Head Start services effectively and helping children to prepare for and achieve success in school and life. The district requests the support of the Office of Head Start to provide these critical services for more children and families in the Milwaukee community.

The table below not only lists the ranking of the most economically disadvantaged zip codes in the Milwaukee metropolitan area but also provides critical information on the percentage of children living in poverty within each of these zip codes, the proportion of households with children ages 0–4, and the specific schools that will host the Head Start program, highlighting the dedicated commitment to serving families in need. The zip codes with only one to two MPS Head Start locations are areas that are saturated with other opportunities for families.

Table 1: Demonstration of Geographic Areas of Greatest Need (<https://censusreporter.org/>, <https://www.healthcompassmilwaukee.org/>)

Zip Code	% of Children Living in Poverty	Households Predicted to Have Children Ages 0–4	Proposed Head Start Schools
53204	40	9.6	Allen-Field, Forest Home, Hayes, Kagel, Longfellow, Mitchell, Vieau
53205	55	9.7	Siefert
53206	50	9.0	Auer, Franklin, Grant Gordon, Jackson, LaFollette
53208	39	8.3	Bethune, Metcalfe, Westside

53209	37	7.6	Hawthorne, Pratt, Thurston
53210	39	8.3	Sherman
53212	39	6.7	Holmes, King Jr., Riverwest
53215	31	9.4	ALBA, Doerfler, Lincoln, Manitoba
53216	33	7.3	Carson
53218	47	8.5	Browning, Congress, Kilbourn, Kluge
53221	21	6.7	Lowell
53224	31	8.7	Bruce, Maple Tree
53233	73	4.4	Milwaukee Academy of Chinese Language

The rationale for which ages of children are proposed to be served.

As the staff reviewed current sites, many factors were taken into consideration such as historical enrollment of children, childcare deserts, and family needs. The service areas focus on recruiting children and families who are living below the poverty level. The Milwaukee Head Start Collaborative 2022 Community Assessment indicates that these zip codes have high concentrations of youth and child poverty, government support for low-income households, high mobility among impoverished residents, single-parent families, and high incarceration rates. There are 32,225 children ages 0–4 living within the MPS Head Start neighborhoods that are among the most racially diverse in the state: 52.0% Black, 23.0% White, 9.6% Two or More Races, 9.1% Some Other Race, 5.7% Asian, and 1.0% American Indian and Alaska Native, with Ethnicity: 19.4% Hispanic or Latino. Current Head Start demographics reflect the following

diversity: 70.0% African American, 2.6% Asian, 2.9% Caucasian, 23.0% Hispanic, 0.2% American Indian, and 0.9% Multi/Biracial.

The targeted population to be served under this funding are children who meet the eligibility requirements for three-year-old Head Start programs. Many families want to have a full-day program to alleviate the stress of finding additional care for their child in the half-day programs. The district will offer only full-day programs for families in need of comprehensive Head Start program services.

In the 2022–23 school year, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction estimated that 17,000 homeless children were enrolled in Wisconsin’s public schools. A total of 2,393 homeless youth were enrolled in MPS in the 2023–24 school year; of that total, 187 students who were enrolled in three- and four-year-old kindergarten identified as homeless. It is important to offer services that can support the families and provide consistency during the day for children.

The proposed program option is the most appropriate to meet the needs of the community.

The program will provide center-based options to accommodate the needs of the parents and community. Utilizing the center-based option, the program can meet the needs of a larger population of students. The Head Start program is embedded within a local education agency and therefore employs certified, licensed teachers in early childhood in every classroom.

Additionally, the program employs state-licensed social workers to support the mental health needs of students and families. The program also employs licensed nurses and healthcare professionals to meet the medical and nutritional needs of students and families.

As the largest school district in the state’s largest city, MPS has unique access to other state- and locally funded, high-quality early childhood education, care initiatives, and community resources. The district’s strategy includes offering Head Start services in conjunction with other

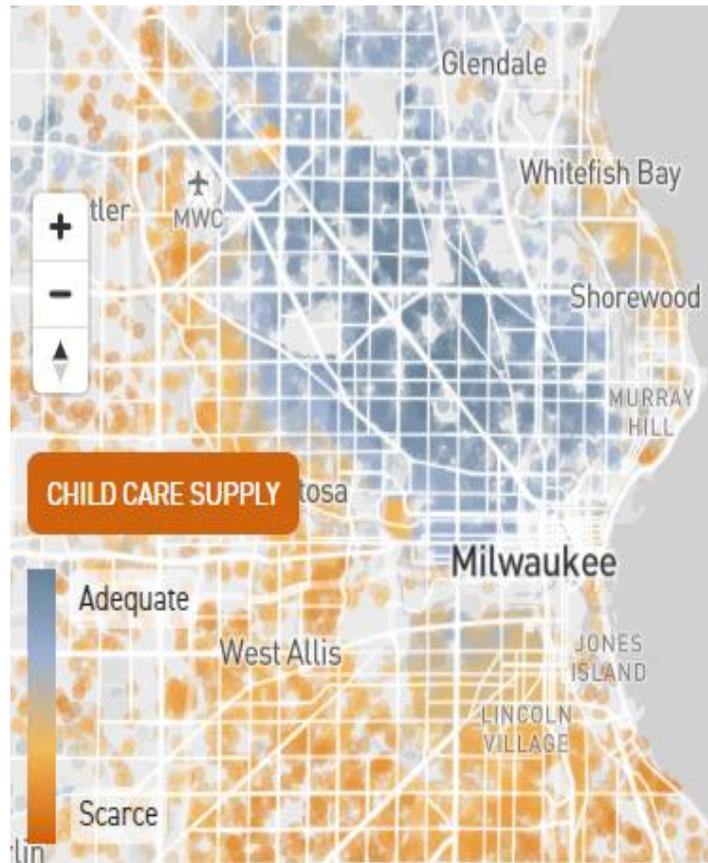
early childhood education and development services available locally to ensure that the greatest number of children and families are served and their diverse needs are met. The district strives to offer full-day educational opportunities for families to eliminate barriers to enrollment and the need for supplementary childcare services. Full-day programming is popular for many working families who struggle to find childcare options midday.

As the proposed program will offer 1,052 Head Start seats at 36 sites with 61 classrooms throughout the city of Milwaukee, the district will bring early childhood development services closer to the homes of qualifying families and the transitional living/emergency shelters. The locations of the sites aim to provide more flexibility to working parents by offering increased full-day options for three-year-olds. These locations will be spread out across the city, giving parents the choice of placing their child in an MPS Head Start location closer to their workplace rather than their home, making it a more convenient option for them.

The program is integrated into elementary schools, making wraparound educational, social, and recreational options accessible in a one-stop environment. The proposed program will operate full-day K3 programming five days a week for each year of the five-year project period. The program will keep a check on the attendance of all full-day three-year-old classrooms to ensure weekly compliance with the ratio of 2 adults to 17 children in each classroom. The district is proposing a project to open 56 full-day three-year-old Head Start classrooms and 5 full-day four-year-old Head Start classrooms in the lowest socioeconomic zip codes in Milwaukee.

The analysis of access to other early childhood education programs in the geographic area.

According to the Milwaukee Head Start Collaborative 2022 Community Assessment, there are approximately 45,000 children under the age of five living in Milwaukee. With only about 28,000 slots for childcare, families struggle to find adequate childcare options. This is especially true for Hispanic families as the south side of the city is considered a “childcare desert.” The map shows childcare deserts in orange throughout the city of Milwaukee. <https://childcaredeserts.org/>



Changes made in the certification requirements for family childcare providers have had a positive impact on childcare options for families. Families who receive Wisconsin Shares benefits can place their children in the care of neighbors, friends, or relatives if those individuals meet the minimum state requirements and are certified by Milwaukee County. This added benefit has helped to increase the number of family childcare providers certified by Milwaukee County. In 2014, the county certified childcare capacity for 880 children. As of 2022, Milwaukee County has certified 471 family childcare providers with the capacity to serve 3,783 children. In 2022, there were 273 licensed group centers with slots for 15,960 children, a 56.0% decrease from 2016. The number of state-licensed family providers dropped by over 50.0% from 1,014 centers

in 2009 to 471 in 2022. The decline in state-licensed childcare centers in Milwaukee County has taken place in the Head Start neighborhood zip codes where the majority of the Wisconsin Shares-eligible families reside. There were 319 licensed group centers in the Head Start neighborhoods with slots for 19,025 children in 2009. Thirteen years later, in 2022, there were 273 group centers with slots for 15,960 children. The number of licensed family providers in the Head Start neighborhoods dropped by half in the last 13 years from 865 providers (with a capacity of 4,078 slots) in 2009 to 471 providers (with 3,783 slots) in 2022. While these early childhood opportunities have decreased in the Milwaukee area, MPS seeks to offer services to a greater number of families in need.

The plan to enroll children with disabilities.

The program will ensure that at least 10.0% of Head Start enrollment consists of children with special needs by making specific recruitment efforts at community agencies that serve children with special needs and by giving additional points in the selection process to children with special needs. MPS has generally exceeded the 10.0% special needs enrollment target required in the Head Start Performance Standards. In the 2023–24 school year, 2,023 students in three-, four-, and five-year-old kindergarten were identified with a primary disability. The data indicates that the disabilities most identified among the early childhood student population were speech and language impairments (41.0%), significant developmental delay (24.0%), autism (27%), and other health impairments (6.0%).

Staff understands that young children vary in their learning and that individualized teaching provides more support to students with special needs. To assist with enrollment efforts, staff will use the following strategies:

Strategy One: Collaborating with the MPS Child Find program. MPS Head Start collaborates with the district's Department of Specialized Services and is tasked with identifying, locating, and evaluating all children with disabilities. Also included are children who are not yet three years of age, children of transient families, and homeless children.

Strategy Two: Coordinating with the Birth to Three Programs in the community. The Birth to Three Program, which is operated by the Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services and program implementation partners, uses multidisciplinary evaluation teams to assess children ages 0–3. The children can be identified as having developmental delays and/or disabilities requiring early intervention services. Rather than duplicating efforts as children transition from the Birth to Three Program, the MPS early childhood assessment team and Birth to Three Program professionals work collaboratively to pinpoint the specific needs of the given child and jointly plan the child's transition to ensure seamlessness in service delivery. As part of the transition, the team will develop an individualized education program (IEP) by the child's third birthday. The IEP continues to be revised throughout the child's participation in the program as the child achieves developmental milestones and advances toward school readiness. Staff will provide enrollment information to birth-to-three agencies to share with families whose children will be transitioning out at 36 months. Head Start staff will work collaboratively with the MPS early childhood assessment team to find the appropriate placement in Head Start sites with the necessary IEP services.

Strategy Three: Conducting assessments of Head Start enrollment. MPS recognizes that many children may have developmental delays and/or disabilities but have not had the benefit of the Birth to Three Program. Therefore, once a child is enrolled in Head Start, staff will initially rely on the results of the Acuscreen, the Brigance Early Childhood Screens III, and health screenings

to identify any potential developmental delays or disabilities. Staff will also gather additional input through parents, teachers, and other relevant stakeholders; observations; and collections of the child's work. This information will become the basis of the child's developmental profile. An MPS mental health professional will visit classrooms at least monthly, provide consultations with parents and staff regarding an individual child's behavior and/or developmental concerns, and recommend community-based resources to augment Head Start programming if needed.

While most children may not require special education services, the screenings and observations will contribute toward shaping an individualized Head Start learning experience aligned with the child's particular characteristics, strengths, and challenges. Creating an individualized learning experience may take the form of an adapted curriculum, tailored activities, or modified physical environments. These adjustments will take into account the child's individual development rate, interests, temperament, language, cultural background, and learning style. If this strategy is insufficient to meet the child's needs, and further diagnostic testing or evaluation demonstrates a need for specialized education services, MPS will work with the child and family to develop an IEP.

MPS special education services offer extraordinary expertise, specialized adaptive tools, and classes to educate children with disabilities. These district options may be wrapped around the child to intensify the early childhood development efforts and meet the childhood development needs more precisely, based on the degree of the disability and its potential impact on school readiness.

How the need for full-day, full-year services in the community will be met.

The MPS Head Start program will provide full-day three-year-old programs throughout the school year. Days and times for the three-year-old children are aligned to the district

calendars and meet the needs of state statutes regarding mandatory school days. Students are in attendance for 6.75 hours per day, 5 days per week, for 180 student attendance days or 36 weeks per year, for a total of 1,215 hours of programming per school year. Full-day programs are necessary for working families as they ensure that children receive proper care and education, enabling their parents and guardians to participate fully in the workforce. The programs will function within the district's annually approved calendar and school start and end times to ensure consistency of programs across the district, meeting the service needs of the community.

To fulfill the need for full-day, full-year services, grant funds will be used to support the staffing costs for all 36 Head Start sites. Staff will be employed as described in the budget. The school principals will play a role in ensuring that Head Start classrooms are an embedded component of their education programs, following the same schedules and hours of operation.

Evidence of community engagement in the proposed geographic location(s) that is designed to improve service delivery, increase access to services, and prevent duplication.

At MPS Head Start, our commitment to community engagement goes beyond mere intention; we have a comprehensive strategy designed to enhance service delivery, expand access to services, and prevent duplication. We prioritize the establishment of deep and active relationships with every family enrolled in our program. Our approach is rooted in a commitment to nurturing a culture in which every interaction is not just positive but contributes to the growth and meaningful relationships with our students, their families, and the broader community.

To further bolster access to our services, we have established citywide Welcome Centers. These hubs provide a wide range of comprehensive support that includes assisting with registration, providing transportation information, scheduling bilingual services testing, facilitating specialized service referrals, and addressing any concerns that parents may have.

In our dedication to effective communication with children and families, we ensure that our staff is proficient in delivering services in the family's primary language. This is made possible through the utilization of the district's interpretation services and the employment of bilingual staff who can help bridge any language barriers. This guarantees that families will receive the support and information they need in a manner that is accessible and convenient for them.

We conducted the Milwaukee Head Start Collaborative 2022 Community Assessment during the 2021–22 school year to gain insights into the needs and perspectives of low-income families with young children. Additionally, there was input from the staff and community partners who work with these families on a day-to-day basis. From October 2021 to January 2022, the coalition partners administered a survey to the families and staff. From February to May 2022, the partners conducted focus groups to better understand parent-staff perspectives. Focus group questions were informed by survey responses and included a focus on Milwaukee strengths and areas for growth, community challenges, unmet needs, and barriers to access to services.

The final report issued in 2022 indicated that the Milwaukee service area has seen a steady decline in the population. Key findings state that Black and Hispanic populations face higher poverty and crime rates, poorer health outcomes, lower education attainment, and high infant mortality rates in the inner-city Milwaukee neighborhoods. Much of this is due to the poverty rate in Milwaukee being double that of the statewide rate; however, there has been a decline in the rate over the last five years. Milwaukee has a higher proportion of low-income families, which contributes to less favorable health outcomes compared to those nationwide. For instance, Milwaukee continues to have one of the worst infant mortality rates in the nation,

specifically for African Americans, whose babies die at a rate about three times that of white babies. With Milwaukee County's total population having only 20.9% physician coverage in pediatrics, vulnerable children have limited access to needed healthcare services.

Nutrition continues to be a challenge, as many of the city's lowest-income residents live in food deserts. According to the 2022 City of Milwaukee Community Health Assessment, 21.0% of children in Milwaukee County experience food insecurity, with limited access to nutritious food, including fresh fruits and vegetables. Further, children from low-income families have fewer opportunities for physical activity due to safety concerns. With declining activity levels, children are at greater risk for obesity and associated health problems when they become adults. When it comes to oral care, services are even harder to come by, with 60 counties out of 72 in the state qualifying as a health professional shortage area for dental providers. Taking care of one's oral health is crucial for maintaining overall health. Additionally, lead poisoning continues to be a challenge for the Milwaukee community – in August 2022, the Milwaukee Health Department counted 15,766 children under six with higher levels of lead in their blood compared to other children.

As a leading provider of Head Start programming in Milwaukee County for over five decades, we are acutely aware of the health disparities faced by low-income three- and four-year-olds. The differences in social determinants of health, such as quality education, healthy food accessibility, healthcare access, and community safety, are obstacles that need to be addressed for equitable health and well-being progress to be attained. Milwaukee has several services designed to address these challenges, including home visits, prenatal care coordination, nutrition services, and screening services, among others. MPS Head Start maintains community partnerships with the City of Milwaukee's Office of Early Childhood Initiatives for play spaces,

Milwaukee Public Library for library cards, Book Ahead (a literacy initiative to build in-home libraries), and the City of Milwaukee Health Department for lead prevention programs. These continued partnerships contribute to improved program quality and efficient use of resources critical for the preschool-aged children and families in the program.

2. Achieving Early Learning and Development Outcome to Promote School Readiness for Children

The curriculum or set of curricula and teaching practices proposed that promote progress toward school readiness goals.

MPS Head Start will implement the Frog Street Threes and Pre-K curriculum. The Frog Street curriculum is a comprehensive, research-based program that is developmentally appropriate for three- and four-year-old children, based on brain research and aligned to the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. The curriculum has an organized developmental scope and sequence that focuses on early literacy in phonological awareness, letter knowledge, print concepts, vocabulary, comprehension, and building a strong foundation in early math skills from attributes, classification, patterns, one-to-one, order, and numeration. The curriculum is divided into nine thematic units and is provided in English and Spanish, which supports the dual-language learners within the program.

Additionally, the Frog Street curriculum incorporates content from Conscious Discipline[®] strategies for social-emotional development. Frog Street is filled with songs, chants, playful activities, and games to tap into children's imagination and foster a sense of joyful learning. Last, the Frog Street curriculum was selected by a committee made up of administrators, educators, and parents to ensure continuity of services for all Head Start children throughout MPS, as all pre-K instructional staff follow a consistent Frog Street pacing guide to support the transient population of students who may move from classroom to classroom or school to school, including students who may move into or out of the program.

MPS Head Start will also implement the Second Step program, which is focused on developing social-emotional skills and techniques for the youngest students in K3 and K4 classrooms. The Second Step program provides lessons that address cooperation, communication, and decision-making, which assists in building confident students in their daily interactions with school peers. Similar to the Frog Street curriculum, all instructional staff members follow a district-wide Second Step pacing guide to support transient children.

Describe the process for establishing and measuring school readiness goals.

School-readiness goals will be intentionally written for students to be successful as they enter kindergarten. The Head Start school-readiness goals will be created using the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (HSELOF) and the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) as guides. These will help ensure that the goals are aligned with HSELOF and WMELS and are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate. Goals will be created for the learning domains of language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge, approaches toward learning, physical well-being and motor development, and social and emotional development to prepare children for kindergarten.

The MPS Head Start school-readiness goals will also be developed and reviewed using data from the progress monitoring tool as well as the early learning standards that are used throughout the district. To support K3 and K4 students as they enter kindergarten, standards-based reports will be used three times each program year to inform parents of the progress that their child is making in each of the learning domains. MPS, along with Head Start, uses these progress reports to provide a system of continuity for families as they transition from Head Start into kindergarten.

If the school readiness goals were or will be established in consultation with the parents of children who will be participating in the program.

The formulation of school-readiness goals is a collaborative effort, with a special focus on the holistic development of our students, who include dual-language learners and children with disabilities. These goals are not developed in isolation but are a product of active engagement with our Head Start parents.

We have established a dedicated school-readiness committee, in full compliance with MPS Head Start Policy Council bylaws, to rigorously assess our current set of five school-readiness goals and their associated outcomes. This committee's role is to deliberate on the existing goals, consider data-driven insights, and ensure that our objectives are developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate.

To ensure transparency and accountability, the finalized school-readiness goals will be presented to the policy council for thorough discussion and feedback. This process will confirm that our goals remain relevant, are responsive to data, and are aligned with the unique needs of our diverse student population.

How the applicant will meet the needs of infants, toddlers, and/or preschoolers with disabilities.

The district's commitment to facilitating full participation is deeply rooted in our educational framework. Our practices are guided by a comprehensive spectrum of education guidelines and legal mandates, including HSELOF, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Milwaukee Head Start Collaborative 2022 Community Assessment, curriculum strategies aimed at supporting individualized learning, WMELS, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Individual Child Development Plan ,

and a wealth of Head Start resources available on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center website.

Within the dynamic learning environment that we provide, the wealth of resources and insights drawn from these resources empowers our dedicated teachers and program staff to create classrooms that are both engaging and inclusive. Our approach ensures that developmentally appropriate instructional strategies and equipment, as well as the physical space and materials, are accessible to every child.

Our staff actively collaborates with families, teachers, MPS staff, and special education evaluation teams to guarantee that children with disabilities receive the most inclusive and least restrictive environment for the delivery of specialized services. This holistic approach embodies our unwavering commitment to fostering a learning environment that caters to the unique needs of every child.

As an integral part of the Milwaukee Public Schools system, the Head Start program collaboratively designs its strategies with input from special education teams, Head Start teachers, and staff within the local education agency. Employing tools such as ChildPlus and Infinite Campus, we collect and monitor critical data to support every child. Head Start staff is committed to meeting the individual needs of children with disabilities and will ensure a highly inclusive and supporting learning environment through the following:

- Staff will support the use of an evidence-based curriculum allowing for differentiation and specialized instruction to support the child's IEP goals.
- Staff will support the special education team in writing appropriate goals that are developmentally appropriate, functional, and measurable.

- Staff will ensure that learning environments, materials, and accessibility are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate.
- Staff will provide resources that will support parent engagement in their child’s IEP, ensure that parents are aware of their rights in the special education process, and support the family in the acquisition of skills to advocate for their child.
- Head Start staff will attend and participate in a minimum of 95% of initial special education and re-evaluation meetings of children enrolled in Head Start.
- Upon request from the initial evaluation team, staff will assist in obtaining parental consent for a continuation of the special education process or specialized services. This is to ensure that the child is evaluated in a timely manner and determine whether the child meets the criteria for services to be implemented.
- Staff will ensure that the program and instructional staff have the necessary training and knowledge to meet the needs of families and children with disabilities.
- If a child does not qualify for special education services, staff will collaborate with school-based personnel to provide additional resources – such as behavioral clinics, observations, strategies, materials, and collaboration between parents and schools in the development of plans via the Response to Intervention – to support the needs of the identified child.

The plan to meet the needs of the applicant’s targeted population in the child welfare system, dual language learners, homeless children, and pregnant women.

Our program is unwavering in its commitment to ensure equal access and opportunities for all children, including those with disabilities, dual-language learners, children experiencing homelessness, and those in foster care. We prioritize their active engagement in program services

and activities, which are designed to foster social and emotional development, enhance language and literacy skills, and promote growth across all developmental domains.

In pursuit of program excellence, the Head Start education coordinator, school nurse, and school psychologist work collaboratively. An internal communication form is completed for any child identified as needing support in areas such as speech, language, or developmental delays. This effort is followed by a meticulous process to ensure that each family receives additional resources, which may include the child being referred for a special education evaluation.

To cater to the specific needs of dual-language learners, MPS Head Start offers a diverse range of programming options, encompassing developmental bilingual, dual language, and English languages. In our mainstream classrooms with English as a second language (ESL) services, we provide robust support to English learners (ELs). Our approach emphasizes home-language oral and literacy development with core content areas instructed in Spanish while strategically connecting to English. ELs not enrolled in the bilingual program are seamlessly integrated into monolingual classrooms. Here, students receive essential support from bilingual teaching assistants and teachers wherever possible. Furthermore, students immersed in a non-bilingual program receive additional ESL support, promoting their overall well-being and academic growth.

Additionally, we have instituted a comprehensive system to accurately identify all enrolled ELs in every school. This process involves the appointment of an EL champion who acts as the liaison between the school and the district. The primary responsibilities of the EL champion include facilitating communication with families about the Home Language Survey, collecting and managing survey data, administering the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Screener to determine baseline English proficiency levels, and promptly

submitting Home Language Surveys and WIDA Screener score sheets to the Lau Compliance Center. These measures ensure that schools can effectively interpret and utilize data from the WIDA Screener to inform their daily instructional practices.

At the point of registration, we proactively identify and prioritize families experiencing homelessness, quickly referring them to the Homeless Education Program, an integral component of the MPS Department of Specialized Services. In our commitment to addressing students' unique needs comprehensively, we provide dedicated, on-site school-based homeless contacts at each program site to extend direct assistance to these families and students. The Homeless Education Program offers a wide array of services aimed to ensure that every student facing homelessness receives the essential support they need. These services include the following:

- Enrollment assistance, including help in obtaining needed school and medical records and immunizations
- Transportation to the school of origin
- Free breakfast/lunch
- Tutorial programs
- Before- and after-school programs
- Books and school supplies
- Waiver of school fees
- Preschool/early education programs
- Translation to the school of origin and ESL services
- Referral to social services agencies, community resources, and other related services that can assist homeless families with basic needs

- Assistance with the appeal process if there is a concern that rights have been denied

Children in foster care are granted categorical eligibility for Head Start. Upon a child's enrollment, our staff works diligently, collaborating with and advocating for the child's well-being. Should the child in foster care have an IEP, Head Start staff will work with the evaluation team, foster parent(s), and biological parent(s) when possible. Some aspects included in this support are informing parents of the special education process, securing parent signatures upon request, and advocating for the least restrictive environments.

When a child in foster care is identified as having behavioral concerns, Head Start staff will work with school-based team(s) and families to support positive changes in the child's behavior. This support is documented in the Response to Intervention district database. Head Start staff will, upon request, support school-based teams and/or special education teams to secure parent signatures for interventions, services, and/or special education evaluations. Examples of supporting teachers and school-based staff include but are not limited to developing visual aids to support daily transitions, offering behavioral strategies (e.g., first/then charts), developing social stories, or providing an individualized, positive behavioral tracking system targeted to the child's high-interest area. Supports include training staff to use software that enables visual support (such as daily picture schedules) as well as to use routines and procedures. Students who require fidget tools receive tactile or sensory tools to stay focused during instructional time.

The Head Start school social worker collaborates closely with the district's dedicated social work staff, who serve as the vital link for children in foster care. This district social work liaison works with the student's case manager to create a comprehensive "education passport," a document brimming with information regarding the student. This invaluable resource is then

shared with our MPS liaison. Through this collective effort, our Head Start staff ensures that the child receives the most comprehensive support while enrolled in our program. To further strengthen this support network, our Head Start staff maintains open communication with the school-based social worker at the child's attending school, ensuring coordination of services.

How the applicant will meet the health, mental health, nutritional, and oral health needs of program participants.

In collaboration with a multitude of community outreach initiatives, MPS Head Start has been at the forefront of promoting wellness by advocating for well-child visits, encouraging the fatherhood initiative to empower fathers in the community, participating in community health fairs, and forging a pivotal partnership with Preferred Dental.

Meeting the health of all children is a component of the program. During registration, MPS Head Start will work with families to obtain information related to health, nutrition, and oral health for each child. The health team will ensure that each child is up to date with physical exams, including immunizations, hemoglobin, and lead levels as evidenced by ChildPlus reporting. An established program spreadsheet will also be used to document elevated child lead levels and low hemoglobin levels. This data will allow the health coordinator to track subsequent levels and follow up with individual families with information regarding care and repeat labs. Communication will take place between the health team and the child's medical provider to obtain up-to-date exams, verify health information, and obtain a signed consent for medication administration at school.

The health team will meet the nutritional needs of each child by identifying their nutritional status through medical records review and parental reporting and using that information to identify dietary/modification needs and food allergies. MPS Head Start will verify nutritional needs and confirm them with each child's medical provider. The health team will

assist children and families with resources for establishing a medical provider if students do not already have an established medical home. The health team will share new or additional dietary requirements with the MPS Department of Nutrition Services for appropriate accommodations and nutritional needs with the teacher, school nurse, and Department of Nutrition Services. The health coordinator will continue to work with the local Health Services Advisory Committee to find local health services that provide accommodations for children with special needs.

Each child enrolled in the program will receive a dental exam and preventive services provided by a qualified oral health professional. In addition to each child receiving daily fluoride through an adequate water supply and daily tooth brushing, staff will provide each child with a toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste. The health team will assist children and families with resources for establishing a dental provider for long-term oral health needs and follow-up as evidenced by ChildPlus reporting. MPS Head Start will partner with Preferred Dental hygienists to provide comprehensive on-site dental screenings and preventive care with fluoride applications. Also, for the 2024–25 school year, dentists from Preferred Dental providers will provide dental exams on-site for Head Start students. Through this partnership, we facilitate comprehensive dental cleanings and exams for our students on school premises, eliminating

barriers to access. This partnership will include assisting children and families with accessing emergency and/or urgent oral health concerns if necessary.



The school nurse associates will conduct hearing and vision screenings for each student. The results of these screenings will be given to parents/guardians and shared with MPS Audiology Services with more precise reporting, including the anatomy of the ear and possible causes for failed hearing exams. Follow-ups for failed hearing screens will be conducted by Audiology Services or other audiology services of the parent's choice. A list of local providers, as well as resources for obtaining eyeglasses, will be given to parents/guardians for any child who fails their vision screening to ensure that appropriate follow-up is completed by an ophthalmologist.

To ensure that every child and family receives the support they need, our staff will guarantee delivery of services in their primary language. We achieve this through the utilization of Language Line Services and the presence of bilingual staff, ensuring that language barriers do not impede our connection with families. Moreover, our commitment extends to written resources, which are offered in multiple languages to cater to the diverse needs of our families. Additionally, using visual communications, we employ video formats to disseminate educational resources, effectively reaching and engaging caregivers in multiple languages, fostering an inclusive and accessible learning environment.

Drawing insights from conversations with our current parents, we have gained a deeper understanding of their desire for enhanced health resources to ensure the well-being of their children and fellow classmates. In an initiative commencing in the 2024–25 school year, we are taking steps to promote at-home care. Each family will receive a health kit containing health essentials such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss sticks, and thermometers, along with comprehensive health information and guidelines that explain when it is advisable to keep children home from school due to illness. In addition to this, we have created a “Milestone

Moments” book, featuring expert information from the CDC, which we will distribute to families. This book serves as a comprehensive resource to help families comprehend and actively monitor their child’s health and developmental journey from birth to five years old, reinforcing our commitment to the health and well-being of our children.

Mental health staff will be available for families and staff to connect and consult with for purposes of supporting students’ social and emotional well-being in the classroom and/or home setting. We take a personalized approach, tailoring resources and interventions to meet the unique requirements of each student. Our flexibility ensures that we can provide the support they need, adapted to their individual circumstances. Mental health staff members will be available to consult with teaching staff and caregivers to identify strategies or resources that can support students’ social and emotional well-being. Additionally, mental health consultants will be available to offer support and resources to family members and Head Start staff members. Mental health consultations may begin with caregivers at the time of registration or at any time throughout the child’s enrollment. Consultations will occur in person, virtually, or via telephone, with the use of bilingual staff members or translators when necessary. Consultations may lead to providing specific school resources, offering interventions, or observations to gather additional information to best support the individual. Referrals to community resources will be made when appropriate.

Our mental health staff plays a pivotal role in enhancing the daily teaching experience by providing each classroom with a rich array of social-emotional materials. These valuable resources are selected to foster self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness among our students. Visual schedules and timers act as seamless aids, facilitating smooth transitions between activities and from school to home. Additionally, visual resources are instrumental in

reinforcing one- and two-step directions delivered by instructional staff, while visuals and fidgets are powerful tools that strengthen self-awareness and self-regulation strategies. To further enrich our program, we have introduced the “Feelings Buddies” set from Conscious Discipline, empowering instructional staff to effectively convey emotions and appropriate responses. These are just a glimpse of the materials provided to our classrooms, underpinning our unwavering commitment to social-emotional learning.

Concurrently, we have forged vital partnerships with community agencies in an initiative known as the School Community Partnership for Mental Health (SCPMH), actively operating in numerous schools and including 19 MPS Head Start sites. SCPMH brings community-based mental health providers directly into the school environment to deliver crucial services to children with emerging or unmet mental health concerns, surpassing the scope of school support staff. This pioneering program centers on delivering timely mental health services; offering expedited access to resources for school staff, families, and students; and providing comprehensive mental health awareness training to these stakeholders. Moreover, SCPMH plays a pivotal role in reducing the stigma around youth mental health services. In a further step toward enhancing accessibility, we have collaborated with community-based mental health providers to offer teletherapy for children who have experienced acute traumatic experiences. These services are initiated via school support staff referrals, with parental consent being a prerequisite. Importantly, these services are offered either entirely free of charge or possibly with a nominal co-pay, with service providers actively working with families in need of financial assistance.

Describe a plan for observing teacher practice, including teacher-child interactions.

The program has intentionally designed a plan of action to observe instructional staff within the program. At the beginning of each school year, instructional staff take a needs assessment survey focused on teaching practices in the areas of emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support as well as on the creation of a short-term instructional goal for the school year. In order to ensure that teachers are building positive relationships with their students, education coordinators and program support teachers will conduct fidelity of implementation walkthroughs for Brain Smart Start, a component of Conscious Discipline that will help students feel safe and welcome as they transition to school on a daily basis. Informal observations will be conducted using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) tool to observe teachers and provide feedback to improve teacher-child interactions. MPS Head Start coordinators and program support teachers will be trained and certified as CLASS observers.

At the beginning of the school year, Head Start instructional staff will participate in targeted professional development opportunities on CLASS to inform and support positive teacher-child interactions within the learning environment. In addition, all Head Start teachers will receive access to myTeachstone, an all-in-one digital platform that focuses on social-emotional learning, language, and literacy skills and supports dual-language learners through positive teacher-child interactions. This platform offers learning resources such as articles, blogs, and videos in English and Spanish on emotional support,



classroom organization, and instructional support. Instructional staff may direct their own learning, and education coordinators will assign specific resources after CLASS observations.

The program is committed to elevating the proficiency of our educators through practice-based coaching, extending this invaluable opportunity to individual educators who proactively seek support. Our commitment to fostering excellence is reflected in our data-driven approach, which identifies instructional staff in need of support based on a variety of critical data points, including needs assessments, CLASS observations, fidelity and compliance evaluations, and teacher-initiated requests for instructional support. To ensure a targeted approach, our dedicated Head Start program support teachers are assigned to those instructional staff members identified as needing support.

These program support teachers are not just educators but also reflective practitioners who bring a wealth of experience to the table, holding state licenses and holding a minimum of five years of hands-on experience in early childhood classrooms. They undergo specialized training in the implementation of the Frog Street curriculum and achieve reliability in using the CLASS tool. Through a two-week coaching cycle, they work in tandem with educators to enhance teacher-child interactions, foster greater fidelity to the curriculum, and address any other identified areas of instructional needs, thereby advancing our commitment to educational excellence.

All data points, including informal observations, fidelity of implementation of curriculum, CLASS observations, and instructional checklists, will be used to provide additional instructional support and resources on an individual basis for Head Start instructional staff. The data will be reviewed and analyzed to provide intentional and strategic PD for the Head Start program as a whole. Additionally, we will provide orientation and onboarding to new

instructional staff and ongoing support and training as needed. The district will assign new teachers a mentor from the MPS Induction and Support office. Head Start teachers will be provided with support and PD on a monthly basis during the New Educator Institute.

Additionally, appointed school-based teacher support is provided through building mentors such as school support teachers.

The process for selecting the specified assessment tool. The plan to use child assessment data to individualize the instruction and learning for each child and, refer for additional evaluation and intervention; and to aggregate and analyze child-level assessment data.

MPS Head Start will use four tools to screen and measure children’s progress: the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), the Brigance Screens III, the Brigance IED III, and a forthcoming early literacy assessment, set to replace PALS Española, pending approval by the Wisconsin state legislature. The DRDP is an online database designed to assist teachers and administrators in the ongoing collection and analysis of children’s progress in all of its domains. This formative assessment for students and families will be used to inform daily instruction as well as programmatic development. The progress monitoring tool, which is grounded in research, valid, reliable, and aligned to HSELOF, will focus on student development. The DRDP will be able to record teacher observations focused on HSELOF in the central domains of approaches to learning, social and emotional development, language and literacy development, cognition and perceptual, motor, and physical development. This tool was selected by a focus group of program administrators and educators based on the ability to assess children on a full continuum of development, teacher- and parent-friendly reports, and the ability to look at outcomes data in relation to the demographic data in the ChildPlus system. The DRDP automatically “customizes each child’s rating measures based on individual requirements” and is developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate. Educators will use the DRDP to

document data collected through observation, developmental checklists, anecdotal records, and work samples. The data collected will be aggregated and analyzed three times each school year by the education coordinators in order to assess the progress of classrooms, schools, groups of students based on demographic data, and the program as a whole. This analysis will be used to plan for relevance and effectiveness in promoting student achievement and school readiness.

Wisconsin Statute 118.016(1) requires that an early literacy screener be administered to all K4–grade 2 students. Areas assessed include name writing, alphabet knowledge, beginning sound awareness, print and word awareness, and rhyme awareness. The Brigance IED III and the early literacy screener results, for the bilingual classrooms, is provided to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction for all K4 MPS Head Start students following the MPS testing window. Instructional staff also uses the results from these assessments to guide lesson planning and allow for differentiated instruction. In addition, the instructional staff uses ongoing assessments from the Frog Street curriculum to inform instruction and identify students’ developmental progress. Data from ongoing assessments is collected through observation, developmental checklists, anecdotal records, and work samples. Developmental screeners provide information that indicates whether a child is within developmentally appropriate limits or is potentially at risk for delays. In the summer of 2021, the district adopted the Brigance Early Childhood Screens III for all K3 and K4 classrooms to monitor the development of children in K3, K4, and K5. Full implementation took place the following year, 2022–23. MPS Head Start made the decision, with the approval of the policy council, to follow the district’s lead as there are several benefits to adopting the Brigance Screens III. Staff administers only one screener in order to meet both district and Head Start requirements. Having the same screener creates continuity when students transition from K3 to K4 or when students move from special

education classrooms to regular education classrooms. The Brigance Early Childhood Screens III is available in English and Spanish. The Parent Report—Self-help and Social-Emotional Scales, which gains the caregiver’s perspective on their child’s development, has already been translated into Hmong, Karen, and Arabic. Other languages will also be made available if a need arises. Following the completion of the Brigance Screens III developmental screener and the baseline assessment for each domain in the DRDP, teachers will develop short-term learning plans based on the results of the screening and the evaluation of each child’s current needs, interests, and abilities in consultation with each student’s parent or guardian.

The plan is to coordinate with public and private entities to assist the program in providing child health and developmental services and program management services.

Head Start plans to maintain the relationships with entities it has already coordinated with in the past to continue to meet the health and developmental needs of students. Head Start will continue to develop new relationships with other service providers through partnerships with the Head Start Health Advisory Committee and other local agencies.

Head Start plans to maintain its strong partnership with Dr. Nolten from Preferred Dentistry, who for the last five years has provided dental screenings and fluoride applications to all Head Start students with parental consent. Through screening results and program information report (PIR) data, it was determined there is a great need for oral care and dental exams, cleanings, and preventive care for students. The health coordinator and the dentist have partnered together to work out the logistics of credentialing and the consent process to perform comprehensive dental exams and cleanings for students at each site during school. Preferred Dental has also established working relationships with other area dentists and dental homes to refer children directly for follow-up care based on the results of the exam. Head Start plans to

work with local area dentists to assist families in establishing a dental home, allowing families to receive routine and follow-up dental care.

Head Start will coordinate with the City of Milwaukee Health Department. Resources are obtained from the Childhood Lead Primary Prevention Program to give to families of students with elevated lead levels. Through this partnership, environmental health coordinators have offered to come speak with families to discuss the risk of elevated lead levels and assist with setting up a property inspection for lead level checks. The Milwaukee Health Department provides up-to-date information on health and safety matters that affect the Milwaukee area so that the program can assist in helping families obtain the resources and services they need.

The district plans to maintain its collaboration with the city-wide Health Services Advisory Committee. The health coordinator attends quarterly meetings and monthly planning committee meetings. This committee brings together various health resources, dental professionals, and medical professionals to offer support, make resources known, and discuss health concerns that affect our students, families, and community. This partnership allows the health coordinator to be aware of what services and health needs are most needed in the community.

The MPS early childhood assessment team will work collaboratively with area Birth to Three Programs as children transition from the Birth to Three Programs into the MPS Head Start program. Staff will provide enrollment information to birth-to-three agencies to share with families whose children will be transitioning out at 36 months. Staff will work collaboratively with the MPS early childhood assessment team to find the appropriate placement in Head Start sites with the necessary IEP services.

Furthermore, the MPS Head Start program will maintain a strong partnership with MPS, which can provide a plethora of resources to the Head Start families and students. The program will be housed within the public schools to make the transition seamless from the Head Start program into kindergarten. Additional school-based support staff, such as psychologists, speech therapists, and social workers, are additional resources and provide a level of individualized support to Head Start students. School-based family engagement nights allow students and families to participate in district-wide activities such as family literacy and math nights and in focused workshops regarding financial literacy and community resources. MPS Head Start teachers are included in district-wide professionally developed training that is developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate along with district teachers to allow for a continuous delivery of services to students and families.

MPS Head Start also maintains community partnerships with the MPS/MKE Early Childhood 1,825 Initiative. The first five years (which equals 1,825 days) of the life of a child are the most important when it comes to a child's education and development. This initiative is an opportunity for members of the Milwaukee community, as key stakeholders, to partner with MPS in a collective effort to provide learning experiences of the highest quality for all of Milwaukee's children. Additional partnerships include the City of Milwaukee's Office of Early Childhood Initiatives for play spaces, Milwaukee Public Library for library cards, and Book Ahead, a literacy initiative to build in-home libraries. These continued partnerships contribute to improved program quality and efficient use of resources critical for the preschool-aged children and families in the program.

The plan to facilitate the meaningful engagement of parents in activities designed to help them become full partners in the education of their children. Barriers to parent participation should be discussed.

Integrating parent and family engagement strategies into all systems and programs will create quality learning environments that respect, reflect, and accommodate diversity. Supporting parental knowledge, skills, and confidence is an endeavor that the program enacts by offering a series of skill-building experiences that impact parenting practices. The implementation plan includes providing culturally relevant practices within sessions that encompass seminars, opportunities for small-group discussions, pre- and post-survey evaluations, and one-on-one support and coaching. This implementation plan is supplemental to an evidence-informed, research-based family engagement and early learning curriculum known as Ready Rosie. The program will offer opportunities and promote parent engagement by providing families with access to resources through online and face-to-face training as outlined in the Office of Head Start's Training and Technical Assistance plan. By continuing to offer bilingual (English and Spanish) school and community-based parent meetings with foci aligned to interests and needs, district-wide training (ESL classes, GED courses), consistent multilingual parent communications inclusive of academic and social-emotional supports, school representation opportunities via a policy council, and content-driven modeled family moments videos, the program will see parent engagement.

To support families in improving their self-sufficiency and addressing areas of need, MPS Head Start will continue to improve family engagement efforts for the upcoming five-year grant cycle, which will include the following:

- The development and implementation of strategies to expand the delivery of the Ready Rosie curriculum tool is crucial so that more families can benefit from

parenting curriculum information. Instead of offering the parenting curriculum twice yearly, the program will use various strategies to deliver the school's social-emotional learning of early learning and Parents as Teachers for families' parenting modules. For example, the program will develop webinars and videos using the Ready Rosie curriculum or family parenting modules and offer whole-group sessions during the school year to accommodate and engage families.

- Milwaukee Public Schools Head Start will work toward becoming a more trauma-informed program by completing a trauma-informed program assessment. Based on the assessment, the program will develop and implement an action plan to create a more trauma-informed workforce and environment. As a part of this, the program will offer training on and resources in trauma-informed care for staff and families.
- The program will expand its efforts beyond the typical back-to-school event. Instead, a policy council campaign will be implemented leading to Back-to-School Night so that more parents will be encouraged to participate in the nomination and voting processes.
- Parent engagement and FPA staff will form a parent, family, and community engagement committee and identify goals, including establishing family outcome measures and a database approach to tracking progress in this area. FPA staff will work with the education team to identify goals for the children in Head Start.
- By conducting monthly parent committee meetings, parents are empowered to actively participate in a shared decision-making process. A formal structure of shared governance through which parents can participate in policy making or in other decisions about the program is established and maintained. Parent committees are

established for every site. They provide every parent of an enrolled child an opportunity to assist in the development of activities that address their interests and needs, nurture their child's development, and keep them linked to resources in the community. The policy council is made up of parent representatives from each parent committee and includes representatives from the community. The policy council has policy-making authority and is governed by locally determined bylaws that ensure clarity and consistency in function and purpose.

Additionally, the program will emphasize adult male engagement by focusing on strengthening and supporting fathers and father figures. As one of a child's primary teachers, fathers and father figures will feel empowered to support and promote their child's learning and development. The fatherhood initiative will focus on supporting fathers and father figures who may need support in areas including

but not limited to employment, financial literacy, child support services, employment retention, and driver's license acquisition. This focus will not only improve outcomes but also strengthen relationships and broaden awareness of community resources available to address needs.



Even though there may be barriers to parent engagement such as time limitations, work conflicts, lack of transportation, childcare needs, internet access and language differences, we will make efforts to address these barriers and implement a variety of strategies to encourage

inclusion and support. First and foremost, clear and consistent communication is important for the foundation of effective engagement. The program utilizes email, newsletters, websites and face-to-face interactions to regularly communicate with families. Parent meetings are held later in the day to accommodate family schedules and day care is provided. Documents translated, Language Line Services and the presence of bilingual staff, ensure that language barriers do not impede our connection with families.

The coordination of services within a community that supports transitions for children and families.

Transitions to and from Early Head Start

The program will collaborate with surrounding daycare facilities and Early Head Start community agencies to assist families in selecting an MPS Head Start site that provides the comprehensive services offered. The ERSEA coordinator will reach out to ERSEA coordinators of Early Head Start programs to develop these strong partnerships and offer services to those families interested in attending MPS Head Start.

Transitions from Head Start to Kindergarten

The program will ensure that every student is successful as they enter their classroom community. Students and families will feel welcomed and at ease as they begin their journey of lifelong learning through the support that they will receive from program staff. A focus on transitions from home to school will be an integral part of creating positive relationships and learning environments for students. Transition strategies will support students and families and promote a sense of ease as they move from the home setting to the school, from one classroom to another, and from one activity to the next.

At the beginning of the school year, MPS Head Start will send a welcome letter to each family accepted into the program. This letter will share information regarding their selected

school, classroom assignment, and information regarding staggered start days. The staggered start is a strategy that limits the number of students in attendance for the first three days of school. One-third of the class attends for each of the first three days of school to provide a small class size and ample adult interaction to ease the transition into a new classroom. Parents and caregivers are welcome to join their child on their assigned first day of school. This opportunity allows for parents to become oriented with the school and classroom instructional team and to ask any questions or share information about their child.

The program will conduct a parent orientation meeting at the beginning of the school year to share important information regarding MPS Head Start and expectations in the classroom. Families unable to attend the in-person parent orientation will receive an email with a link to a recorded presentation. The topic of transitions will be addressed during fall and spring home visits as well as several of the parent committee meetings scheduled throughout the school year. Family partnership associates will support families who enroll students in the program by offering individual assistance along with resources as the child transitions from a Head Start classroom to a new one, a Head Start classroom to a non-Head Start classroom, or relocate to a Head Start program within a new city or state.

At each Head Start site, a transition plan will be developed by the instructional staff to support students and families throughout the school year. The plans will begin in K3 and will follow students through K4 until they exit Head Start and enter kindergarten. Instructional staff will work collaboratively with colleagues to design a plan that includes transition strategies from when students enter the classroom and continue throughout the school year. Intentional lessons and activities using children's literature will focus on transitioning into and out of the program along with daily routines, procedures, and changes outside of the learning environment to help

children with the day-to-day transitions while at school. During parent-teacher conferences and home visits, instructional staff will share strategies implemented in the classroom along with upcoming transitional activities with parents. At the end of each school year, instructional staff will provide students and families with resources and instructional activities from the Frog Street Pre-K curriculum that will focus on the theme of changes. This will help and support students during the summer and prepare them for the next school year.

Transitions between Programs

Family partnership associates will provide resources and support to assist families who inform them of a move to a Head Start program within a new city or state. The ECLKC website's Head Start Center Locator will be used to identify Head Start programs or early childhood programs in the family's new community. This resource will be available to assist families in finding a neighborhood Head Start center with ease in order to provide a seamless transition for each child and family.

3. Past Performance

The ability to effectively administer a project of the size, complexity, and scope of the proposed program.

With over 50 years of experience in administering the Head Start program and serving over 1,000 students in the city of Milwaukee, the Milwaukee Public Schools system for administration is driven by its mission to provide a high-quality learning option that equips students and families for success. Accordingly, the program management staff utilizes an ongoing continuous improvement approach, "plan, do, study, act," to monitor the systems that are part of the program's standard operating procedure.

With services to be provided at 36 school sites to 1,052 students, the entire management team is tasked with program planning. This heavy lift is not done in isolation but in collaboration

with additional input and support from the MPS Head Start Policy Council, the Milwaukee Board of School Directors (MBSD), and the Offices of School Administration, Academics, and Finance. Communication among all key stakeholders is vital. Through the integrity and efforts of this combined group, the program management staff can exercise accountability and oversight of program services in a multifaceted manner.

The program has a proven history of preparing children for kindergarten. School-readiness data from past years shows that children make significant progress toward the school-readiness goals and are prepared to meet the expectations of the receiving schools. School-readiness data is formally analyzed three times each program year. During the 2022–23 school year. (Appendix X) provides the school-readiness data from the 2022–23 school year.

Describe the professional experience of its proposed management team, and whether that supports its ability to effectively administer a project of this size, complexity, and Scope.

MPS Head Start Management Team

Krissy Washington, **early learning manager for Milwaukee Public Schools’ early childhood education office**, oversees the MPS Head Start program. Ms. Washington has nearly 30 years of early childhood experience, including two years of administering Head Start. Ms. Washington has earned a master’s degree in educational leadership and holds principal, special education director of instruction, and reading licenses through the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Meredith Welch, **Head Start program supervisor**, has 26 years of professional experience as a social worker, mental health practitioner, administrator, and educator. She has earned a master’s in social work and certification in administrative leadership. Ms. Welch holds

a pupil services lifetime license, a director of special education and pupil services lifetime license, and licensure as an advanced practice social worker.

Erin Hermann, **Head Start education coordinator**, has 21 years of experience in early childhood development, including 19 years administering Head Start programming. Ms. Hermann has a master's in education and a master's in administration and supervision. She holds educator/elementary teacher, principal, and director of instruction lifetime licenses through the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Raquel de la Cruz Gutierrez, **Head Start education coordinator**, has 32 years of professional experience in bilingual and regular education, including four years as a paraprofessional and eight years administering Head Start programming. Ms. de la Cruz Gutierrez has earned a master's in curriculum and instruction with an emphasis on bilingual education with a reading specialty. She holds elementary/middle education, bilingual-bicultural education, early childhood–adolescence reading specialist, and director of instruction lifetime licenses through the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Julie Schlipmann, **Head Start education coordinator**, has 26 years of experience in early childhood development, including four years administering Head Start programming. She holds a bachelor's in early childhood, a bachelor's in elementary education, a master's in curriculum and instruction with a focus on early childhood education, and an education specialist degree in administration and supervision. Ms. Schlipmann holds a lifetime educator license, a principal provisional license, and a director of instruction license from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Dorcas Lopez, **Head Start ERSEA/FPA coordinator**, has 25 years of early childhood experience, with 15 years working within Head Start and five years as an ERSEA/FPA manager

for Head Start. Ms. Lopez holds two master's degrees: one in school social work and administration and one in educational leadership. Ms. Lopez holds a school social work lifetime license, a provisional license for principal, and a director of instruction license through the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Natalie Philippe, **Head Start mental health and disabilities coordinator**, has 15 years of education experience in bilingual, immersion, regular, and special education. Ms. Philippe has earned a bachelor's in Latin American studies and Spanish language, a master's in public administration, and a masters in educational leadership. Ms. Philippe holds middle childhood–early adolescence for regular and cross-categorical special education, bilingual-bicultural education, principal, director of instruction, and director of special education and pupil services lifetime licenses through the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Ms. Philippe has worked in the Head Start program for almost four years with continuous education in the Head Start Program Performance Standards and how to apply them in the program's policies and procedures.

Unique Hardy, **Head Start health coordinator**, has 12 years of registered nurse experience and 10 years of emergency, community, and preventive care experience. She has specialized in pediatric medicine for six years, obtained her Emergency Nursing Pediatric Course certification, and was a pediatric nurse educator for three years. She specializes in the care and understanding of pediatric illnesses and health conditions. She has six years of experience in collaborating with child advocates, social services, and the health department for the care of children. She has a year's experience of working as the health coordinator, assessing the health needs of students, formulating care plans, managing the screening process, and collaborating with local health agencies to provide resources and care for students and families. Ms. Hardy is a

certified CPR instructor and provides training and support to teachers, paraprofessionals, and other staff members.

For the proposed project, Ms. Washington will work with the current Head Start program team to ensure the successful implementation of program practices and Head Start Program Performance Standards. Collectively, these key staff members will manage a high-quality early childhood education and care program that will serve 1,052 students within the MPS Head Start program.

The ability to provide effective financial management in operating a Head Start program.

All expenditures must be approved by both the early learning manager and the senior director of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. Vendor payments are submitted and paid on a weekly basis. A copy of all invoices and bills is kept in the MPS Head Start office. Payroll records are reviewed regularly and compared with personnel and department records. The program maintains an efficient, effective reporting system that is clear and comprehensive. Fiscal reports are reviewed monthly at policy council meetings. The program has a dedicated grant accountant responsible for keeping spending records on track as well as offering support to the program staff. The grant accountant will be responsible for filing claims and drawing down funds on a monthly basis and helping the management team to budget funds as needed to ensure that all grant monies are spent by the end of the program period.

As applicable, includes any violations, such as deficiencies, areas of non-compliance, and/or audit findings, if the applicant is a current or former Head Start.

After conducting an on-site monitoring review of the MPS Head Start program in June of 2022, the Administration for Children and Families determined that the program had three noncompliance issues with the requirements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards. The areas in which the program performance did not meet the regulation and policy requirements

were implementing a management system, maintaining appropriate ratios and group sizes, and enforcing a system of health and safety practices that ensured that children were kept safe at all times. Thus, a written timeline of correction and continuous program improvement for these noncompliance areas was due within 120 days of receipt of the program performance summary report, which was May 9, 2023. Further, in December of 2022, an additional monitoring review of the MPS Head Start program was conducted. The resulting program summary, released in March of 2023, found that the program had three deficiencies and one noncompliance issue in not meeting applicable Head Start Program Performance Standards, laws, regulations, and policy requirements. The deficiency was found in discipline that refrained from maltreatment or that endangered the health and safety of children, a lack of implementing a system of ongoing program oversight and in submitting reports in a timely manner to the regional office, and noncompliance in supervision. Therefore, a written timeline of actions that reflect the correction and continuous program improvement for the deficiency areas was due within 30 days of receipt of the program performance summary report, which was April 25, 2023. Subsequently, the noncompliance with supervision became a deficiency after a monitoring review in May 2023 was conducted. Another corrective action plan was to be completed and submitted by October of 2023.

MPS developed and implemented numerous practices and strategies that reflected the overall commitment toward continuous improvement. These practices will be maintained and continued as the program is implemented. Through collaboration with the Office of School Administration and the Office of Academics, the plan for oversight of the program was reorganized. The system of support will now be provided by six team leads who will support a specific group of schools with a program support teacher. The teams establish and implement

effective and efficient practices that support the processes and progress of the program. This structure makes it easier to provide oversight with smaller caseload management and immediate communication with individual schools as the program continues to support children's growth and development in a positive learning environment. Additionally, MPS revised its health and safety monitoring tool to align with deficiency areas and provide the program with key measures of program performance. Data will continue to be collected in the key areas as monitoring within the teams of schools is completed. Oversight consists of regularly scheduled on-site visits, internal and external meetings, school-based interviews, walkthrough reviews, and analysis of data. The analysis involves the ongoing use of the "plan, do, study, act" approach, which will guide program-specific actions and plans.

Communication was a major focus, with improvement strategies involving a monthly newsletter (*Head Start Highlights*), Head Start policies and procedures, a frequently asked question document, presentation materials, and videos housed within a Head Start school leader-specific Google Folder. Ongoing live communications between the school and the Head Start office will be maintained via the Head Start program email with updates on staffing, ratios, or daily classroom activities information being shared.

Another ongoing action to address health and safety involves the dissemination and receipt of the standards of conduct and the Information Memorandum on Reporting Child Safety and Health Incidents. During the required monthly PD, performance standards and creating a culture of safety with a focus on active supervision will continue to be ongoing agenda items with a review conducted of check-for-understanding responses.

Finally, the program will continue to align with the Ambitious Instruction district-wide focus on engagement, formative assessment, and explicit instruction. Through the creation,

implementation, and review of annual goals on wellness, engagement, and culture. The program will be assessed for impact on overall social, emotional, and learning outcomes.

As of September 2023, the Administration for Children and Families reported within the performance summary that the information gathered during the review of the program resulted in the closure of the previously identified findings, which included ongoing monitoring and continuous improvement, reporting, and discipline. MPS will continue to implement the strategies and abide by the policies and procedures that were enacted during the corrective action period to ensure that program quality is maintained.

As applicable, include a description of any ongoing under-enrollment, including being designated as chronically under-enrolled, if the applicant is a current Head Start, EHS, or EHS-CC Partnership recipient. N/A

4. Staffing and Supporting a Strong Early Learning Workforce

Evidence of the proposed program director and proposed key program staff's ability to meet the required qualifications to administer a Head Start program.

Keeping young learners as the focus and core of the Head Start program motivates all Head Start staff to continue to pursue the early childhood mission. Although Head Start has access to a variety of resources, it is essential that the program maintains the personal touch with a united first-class team. It is through a team that MPS Head Start can continue to nurture young minds by providing a high-quality learning experience. The provision of a first-class education requires input and support from a sizable team. The MPS Head Start program will offer services through one program supervisor, three education coordinators, one enrollment, recruitment, selection, eligibility, and attendance (ERSEA) coordinator, one family partnership associates (FPA) coordinator, one enrollment specialist, one mental health and disabilities coordinator, and one health coordinator. This service number allows for a stronger support system intentionally

designed by MPS Head Start to meet the needs for guiding, training, monitoring, and leading the program. The early learning manager will continue to support the overall program while collaborating with the Head Start program supervisor, leadership team, school-based leaders, policy council, and the MBSD.

The early learning manager is responsible for the overall leadership and accountability for the early education programs including the Achievement Gap Reduction, Head Start, and Montessori programs. The early learning manager is responsible for planning, managing, supervising, and evaluating MPS early childhood programs and services; monitoring outcomes for overall impact; assisting in the facilitation and implementation of professional learning for administrators and instructional staff; overseeing the fiscal and programmatic management of early childhood grants and services; and participating in special projects at the local and state level.

The Head Start program supervisor performs the following major functions and responsibilities: ensuring that all Head Start program requirements and performance standards are met daily; supervising the management team; providing day-to-day management for MPS Head Start compliance, quality, and effectiveness; and developing structure, systems, and procedures to facilitate this. The program supervisor will assist in the fiscal and programmatic aspects of the program, with management of the budget and approval of the plan for PD for instructional staff, administrators, and the policy council. At local and state-level meetings, the program supervisor represents MPS Head Start and prepares and submits reports to the Office of Head Start.

The ERSEA/FPA coordinator is responsible for the overall administration, supervision, coordination, and organization of the ERSEA and FPA functions within the MPS Head Start

program. The position, in collaboration with the enrollment assistant, oversees all aspects of the district's systems for Head Start eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment, and attendance tracking for the ERSEA system of the MPS Head Start program to ensure compliance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards; communicates with parents and families regarding their enrollment status; and utilizes a variety of software applications and platforms including ChildPlus for communicating and data management. This position mentors and coaches the FPAs in the areas of family services as well as developing community partnerships.

The health coordinator organizes and delivers the healthcare services component of the MPS Head Start program; ensures compliance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards through planning, organizing, staffing, and evaluating the health services provided within the mandated time frames; monitors and implements comprehensive health, dental, environmental, safety, and nutrition programs for children and families in collaboration with MPS and the community; coordinates on-site dental, vision, and hearing screenings; communicates with families; and supervises school nurse associates and a nutrition dietician.

The education coordinators are responsible for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the MPS Head Start program related to early childhood, ensuring improvement in the content, quality, and consistency of curriculum and assessment of student progress and performance. The position supervises, monitors, and evaluates Head Start teachers and educational assistants. The education coordinators will integrate Head Start educational components by supervising opportunities and activities for children and by collecting information for the eight domains of student learning and development.

The mental health and disabilities coordinator will ensure that Head Start enrollees receive family supporting services consistent with all Head Start Program Performance

Standards. The position will oversee the coordination of the interrelated areas of health, mental health, and disabilities for the Head Start program and ensure compliance; identify resources for families and ensure appropriate follow-up for necessary services; regularly conduct classroom observations and evaluate students; work with teachers, children, and parents to identify and address any special needs; and oversee two school social workers.

The school-based leaders play an integral role as Head Start site supervisors. They will work in collaboration with the Head Start program supervisor and leadership team to ensure monitoring and oversight of the program within their schools daily. School-based leaders will supervise Head Start instructional staff and provide evaluations for educators.

Accordingly, each member stays abreast of best practices and program expectations by attending National Head Start Association conferences and referring to the Head Start ECLKC, the Office of Head Start Training and Technical Assistance, and Head Start Region V for resources and support.

For the proposed project, the early learning manager will work with the current Head Start program team to ensure the successful implementation of program practices and performance standards. Collectively, these key staff members are capable of managing a high-quality early childhood education and care program that can serve 1,052 students within the MPS Head Start program.

Applicants must describe how they will attract and retain qualified staff, with the necessary competencies to implement a high-quality, comprehensive program, including competitive wages and benefits and support for a positive work climate.

The Department of Talent Management is the focal point for the delivery of high-quality human resources through targeted recruitment, where procedures are designed to attract, select, and retain staff. Every Head Start staff member hired is also a Milwaukee Public Schools district

employee, and therefore, the Head Start personnel guidelines will parallel those of the district. Salary and benefits will be the same for district employees in similar positions. The work year and workday will be the same; however, job responsibilities and working conditions, such as student contact time, class size, nonteaching duties, and student attendance days, may differ because of Head Start regulation requirements.

MPS advertises open positions according to district procedures that the Office of Human Resources sets forth. One way of advertising open positions is through recruitment fairs. The fairs are held throughout the year with the jobs being posted for at least two weeks on the district's website.

To compete with other districts and schools in the area, MPS offers financial incentives for the Head Start workforce. Grant funding from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction is used to provide signing bonuses for Head Start teachers. This financial incentive for staff will help stabilize and support the Head Start workforce in the near term. MPS will also offer stay incentives for Head Start teachers who commit to serving in the most challenging zip codes. We will offer \$1,500 each year for three years. In addition, we will provide a housing allowance of \$5,000 for anyone who relocated at least 500 miles to join the team. Another financial incentive will be a referral bonus – a current employee refers someone, and once the new employee completes 90 days successfully, the current employee is awarded (paid through payroll) \$250.

Aside from the financial incentives, there are many job opportunities to teach in the MPS Head Start program. We will offer PD to retain qualified staff because we know that it provides growth opportunities and can improve worker satisfaction. We aim to increase staff efficacy and

feelings of competency, thereby bolstering motivation and a sense of belonging in the program.

Staff will receive/take part in the following:

- An orientation to Head Start and their specific job by the Head Start program supervisor or appropriate education coordinator
- Periodic conferences with the education coordinator responsible for regular supervision with a program support teacher
- Regular staff meetings and required professional learning sessions and workshops/conferences appropriate to their role in Head Start
- Working with a mentor to which all first-year teachers are assigned by the district
- Professional learning in conjunction with the district's Department of Professional Development
- The New Educator Institute, an intensive, five-day program for new teachers, which runs before the beginning of the school year and focuses on Common Core State Standards, educator effectiveness, curriculum development, and cultural awareness

Promoting continuous quality improvement is a significant goal of the program. The staff recognizes that coaching is more crucial than formal training; therefore, to enhance teacher capacity and promote developmentally appropriate practice, job-embedded PD will be provided through coaching to improve classroom staff training and maintain high-quality services.

Equally important to our commitment to staff development is our dedication to retaining all staff members, including those in nonteaching roles, such as FPAs, nurses, social workers, and nutrition technicians. These staff members contribute significantly to the success of our program. Just as with our teaching staff, we strive to attract, retain, and foster a positive work environment for all personnel, irrespective of their roles within the organization.

Applicants must describe the strategies to understand wages for similar positions in high-quality early care and education and elementary school programs and how the program will use this information and account for experience, job responsibilities, and credentials to provide competitive wages.

The MBSD recognizes that attractive compensation plans, which include adequate base salary, salary incentives, and employee benefits, are necessary to attract and retain highly qualified staff to administer and provide effective educational programs. As required by state statutes, the MBSD negotiates agreements concerning salaries, hours, and conditions of employment with certified collective bargaining units. Fringe benefits shall include a comprehensive insurance program, tax-sheltered annuity programs, retirement benefits, tuition reimbursement, vacations and holidays, various other types of leave, and other benefits that may be granted by the MBSD, and it shall establish salary schedules for all other employees excluded from bargaining units by being classified as confidential or supervisory.

Applicants must provide evidence of a sustainable mechanism for providing competitive compensation to staff, including a clear description of how proposed salary or wage targets are competitive with other employers providing high-quality early care and education and elementary school education in the community

MPS must remain competitive in its compensation package to attract and retain well-qualified staff to serve the children. One of the budget priorities to increase access to high-quality educational opportunities and positive, supportive school environments that will result in better academic outcomes for students is to implement a salary schedule with a cost-of-living increase. MPS works with the Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association to review wages. The average hourly pay for an early childhood teacher in Wisconsin is \$18.17 an hour. The average salary for Head Start teachers in the district is about \$50.00 an hour, and for paraprofessionals, it

is \$23.00 an hour. The district implemented salary steps and lanes as part of the 2019–20 budget process. For the 2023–24 school year, MPS provided to staff an 8% cost-of-living adjustment to help attract and retain them. These actions were supported by the union.

Applicants must also describe how they will provide career development opportunities for professional, paraprofessional, and other staff.

Professional development opportunities will include individualized support and modeling, which will be offered in collaboration with the MPS early childhood office. These opportunities will be scheduled throughout the school year to include after-school and Saturday session options. Head Start student release days will be designated monthly for Head Start–specific training and career development. Professional development and training will be designed using data from formal (CLASS) and informal observations, progress monitoring data, and completed instructional staff needs assessments submitted to education coordinators. Individualized professional learning in the dimensions of CLASS will be offered to teachers on the myTeachstone platform throughout the year in the form of exemplar videos, articles, and blogs, which provide a venue for communication between instructional staff and coaches.

Along with the support given by the education coordinators, the school district assigns to new teachers a mentor from the MPS Induction and Support office. New teachers are provided with support and PD every month during the New Educator Institute throughout their first year of teaching.

Mental health staff will attend internal department meetings to stay abreast of procedural changes. Two of the staff are school social workers, and they must maintain licensure with the state’s Department of Public Instruction and/or the state’s Department of Safety and Professional Services. Licensure through the Department of Safety and Professional Services requires that staff obtain 30 continuing education units on a biennial basis. Additionally, staff is provided with

opportunities to attend local, state, and national conferences on a variety of topics including mental health and trends impacting families in the community.

Health team staff will attend monthly staff meetings to discuss upcoming events, procedural and policy changes, and any other matters. School nurse associates keep their LPN license and CPR and first aid certifications current and receive training every other year in the prevention of blindness. The dietician maintains and keeps a current dietician license that renews every five years and obtains 15 continuing education units annually. The dietician also maintains an up-to-date CPR certification. The health team also participates in training on mandated reporting yearly.

If the plan to evaluate job applicants to determine which applicants are most capable of implementing a high-quality, comprehensive program is realistic.

Rita Pierson, a revered educator, once said, “Every child deserves a champion – an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists that they become the best that they can possibly be.” At MPS, this is not just a sentiment but a commitment. We hold our job applicants to the highest standards, requiring them to meet the “highly qualified” benchmark as identified by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction for the roles they seek. The Department of Talent Management serves as the bedrock for providing top-tier human resources, leveraging targeted recruitment strategies designed to attract, select, and retain exceptional staff.

Our recruitment process is distinguished by the use of the Haberman Star Teacher Pre-Screener interview instrument, which serves as the initial interview screener for job applicants. Candidates who pass this initial screening are then recommended to school leaders for in-person interviews. School leaders interview and evaluate job applicants based on the applicant’s level of understanding of and commitment to the principles and best practices of high-quality early

childhood education and care, including those embodied in the WMELS and HSELOF. School leaders and Head Start leaders use scoring and prioritize applicants with demonstrated experience working in urban educational settings. Also considered are the applicant's skills, experience, and professional alignment with the foundations of Head Start programs. Ongoing evaluation after hiring continues to be based on principles and best practices. The results of ongoing evaluations drive individual career planning and professional development, reinforcing our commitment to cultivating a dedicated and highly qualified team that champions the best interests of our students.

As a result, our current staff undergoes a comprehensive performance review and evaluation process. This evaluation not only offers performance feedback but also serves as a catalyst for the refinement of job skills that are closely aligned with their respective job tasks. The overarching aim is to evaluate performance levels, effect change in positive behavior, and stoke a heightened motivation to foster the implementation of an outstanding quality program.

How the applicant will facilitate strong staff-child relationships that support the development of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

The program will provide a positive, safe, and nurturing learning environment for students. A plan will be created to ensure that positive teacher and student interactions occur from the moment a student arrives at school until a student leaves for the day. Since the program started implementing the Frog Street curriculum, the approach of Conscious Discipline has played an integral role in classroom management and supporting social-emotional learning. The comprehensive classroom management approach of Conscious Discipline is based on brain research and sets the foundation for creating a learning environment in which students feel safe, cared for, and loved. The daily greeting circle was designed to promote student learning, literacy, and social skills and to build relationships within the classroom. The Brain Smart Start is a

morning routine that includes four brain-based components: unite, calm, connect, and commit. In addition, “I love you” rituals by Dr. Becky Bailey are integrated through daily personal greetings, absent child rituals, and special welcome back messages to foster a school family. The education coordinators and program support teachers will monitor the fidelity of implementation of the Brain Smart Start in the area of the morning greeting circle. School leaders and school support teachers at each site will receive the Frog Street Pre-K Administrator Classroom Observation for Curriculum Fidelity Checklist to support the implementation of the Frog Street greeting circle and provide specific feedback to teaching teams.

To support strong and positive teacher and student interactions within the classroom, instructional staff will be observed using the CLASS tool. CLASS is based on the studies by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and National Center for Early Development and Learning and focuses on quality teacher-student interactions in the classroom. The tool rates teachers’ engagement in three domains: emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support. Results and feedback will be shared with instructional staff to support positive interactions and daily instruction.

In addition, the program will closely monitor the staff-child relationships and the culture of the classroom with weekly Head Start compliance checks. These weekly classroom visits will be focused on safety practices, supervision, discipline, and positive teacher-student interactions within the Head Start classrooms. The Head Start program will consist of team leads who are responsible for the ongoing monitoring to support positive child outcomes within the classrooms.

A plan to ensure that staff are prepared for and supported in implementing evidence-based instructional practices that are individualized to support positive child outcomes.

In alignment with our commitment to staff development, we have established a comprehensive approach to support both staff-child interactions and individual teacher

improvement. Teachers needing additional intervention will receive a performance improvement plan as an effort to assist them with improving their practice. Goal statements will be created with the school-based leader to target assistance, support, and professional growth for the teacher. An action plan will also be developed describing activities in which the teacher will engage to accomplish the goals. Additionally, the “measurable by” portion of the performance improvement plan will be used to describe the types of evidence of practice required to show progress and success in meeting the goals. A timeline for the completion of the goals will provide an opportunity to set clear and attainable deadlines for success. The principal and teacher will meet initially to develop the performance improvement plan and periodically throughout the year to review the progress that the teacher is making toward achieving the goals. MPS Head Start will review various data points such as ChildPlus, Infinite Campus, and performance monitoring conferences to inform the training and PD of staff. Training and PD will include biweekly meetings, webinars in skill building, and ongoing education to build competencies. Individual staff PD will be identified and supported through program and district training or workshops.

How all staff will successfully partner with families in supporting children's development.

For the purpose of supporting staff-child interactions, families will receive monthly Frog Street newsletters that share in detail the focus of the greeting circle/Conscious Discipline routine such as calming techniques, daily commitments to a specific behavior, and integrated educational activities. Parent-teacher conferences and mandatory Head Start home visits will take place twice a school year and will focus on the child’s learning and development milestones along with parent resources. Ready Rosie, the parent curriculum, will be implemented to share

family engagement strategies and activities as well as strengthen the teacher and parent partnership.

5. Planning and Implementation

State and local licensing requirements for each proposed age group, the length of time required to obtain licensure for early childhood learning environments, and the impact on the proposed implementation plan for the timely provision of services.

MPS Head Start operates classrooms for three- and four-year-old children that comply with state and local licensing regulations. Maintaining a safe and healthy learning environment for multiple program sites requires the organization and implementation of a system for compliance and dedication to maintaining it. Every classroom is equipped with developmentally appropriate materials and is ready for active student engagement. The learning environments are monitored for alignment by staff as well as the Department of Children and Families with licensing requirements to ensure that health and safety standards are maintained. As the program has been operating in this capacity, the program is ready for immediate implementation and provision of services.

The availability of appropriate facilities for proposed program models, and the anticipated timelines for completing any construction, renovation, or adaptation of space to meet requirements.

Beginning in 2024–25, MPS Head Start will begin the process of either updating and/or replacing Head Start site playgrounds and tot lots. The schedule is for this project to be completed at five locations: Sherman, Metcalfe, Westside, Pratt, and Thurston Woods. The scope of the work for this project may involve the repair of the school’s fence, landscaping, and installation of equipment. It should be noted that every school site is different and will require field measuring, site assessment, and determination of what the full scope of work will be before proceeding with the request for a vendor. The timeline for completing this type of project typically takes 6–12 months from the design to the bid to the construction stage. Since the

installation for some of the school sites occurs when school is in session, the Head Start students will receive active learning resources, and instructional staff will receive outdoor activity recommendations.

In the meantime, in collaboration with the Department of Facilities and Maintenance, MPS Head Start will continue to conduct regular monitoring checks of the outdoor play spaces. The monthly check-in between the two entities will involve a review of data that includes the check of the fencing, cleanliness of the outdoor areas, and fall zones for depth of mulch support. This collaboration ensures that a quality measure is put in place to maintain the safety of students. MPS Head Start plans to continue to follow the outdoor safety procedure and submit work orders for repairs when necessary. This procedure requires instructional staff to conduct a safety check before students are allowed in the play spaces and to notify the MPS Head Start office to submit a work order for repair.

As applicable, plans for alternative service provision (e.g., temporary home-based services) during start-up, until facilities are fully operational.

Not applicable as MPS has the sites and classrooms.

Where facilities are not available, a plan to acquire facilities in accordance with federal Head Start regulations.

Not applicable as MPS has the sites and classrooms.

The ability to recruit, hire, and train qualified staff to support the proposed start of Head Start and/or EHS programming.

The education team is familiar with nonteaching staff and has access to their education and professional qualifications. For the purpose of recruiting qualified staff, the team is reaching out to staff who meet the Head Start requirements for teachers and paraprofessionals. Based on their previous experiences and current interests, some staff may see this as a new opportunity. If

there are any unfilled positions, the team will interview current staff in the hopes of getting new hires from within. MPS operates under an affirmative action/equal opportunity policy that encourages and actively seeks to employ qualified persons from traditionally underrepresented groups.

MPS is committed to hiring and developing individuals who represent Milwaukee's diverse community to properly represent the community to our students. Students need to see themselves in their educators and those in leadership positions.

The Department of Talent Management is constantly hiring for positions similar to those requested in this proposal. Position descriptions will be readily available for recruitment specialists to ensure that project staff are hired in an expedited fashion. Following standard district interview protocol, all grant-funded positions will be approved by the MBSD and MPS Head Start Policy Council at the July 2024 meeting for appointments beginning in August 2024. A pool of qualified candidates will be quickly identified to recruit, hire, and train qualified staff to support the opening of classrooms in the 2024–25 school year. Training and professional development will be conducted in August 2024 to prepare for student attendance in September 2024. Any position that becomes vacant during the grant will be filled according to district hiring policies and procedures.

6. Organizational Capacity and Governance

The capacity of the senior executive managers and governing board to manage the following: to exercise effective oversight of program operations and accountability for federal funds.

In Milwaukee Public Schools, program management and MBSD maintain a strong leadership relationship which allows the delivery of high-quality Head Start services to children and families. This collaboration fosters an environment that supports innovation and continuous program improvement as well as a combined capacity to provide effective oversight of both

Head Start program operations and federal funds. MPS will maintain compliance by continuing to implement multifaceted strategies to manage program operations and financial oversight. The strategies include having an infrastructure that effectively manages the MPS Head Start program operations and financing, maintaining a management team experienced in early education, reporting and collaborating with the policy council and school board, and providing oversight transparency with ready accessibility of financial documentation for public review.

In order to advance, manage, and ensure the effectiveness of district-wide early childhood initiatives, MPS established the early childhood education office within the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. The MBSD appointed a manager to lead this office and oversee the district's Head Start programming. In this position, the manager is accountable for program operations as well as budget preparation and financial management involving over 1,052 Head Start seats annually and more than \$13 million in Head Start funding annually. The manager not only is responsible for all aspects of Head Start oversight but also is responsible for ensuring that the curricula used in Head Start align with the district's vision to increase school readiness and academic success. The early learning manager is supported and supervised by the senior director of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and the chief academic officer. These district administrators empower Ms. Washington to exercise effective oversight of the program operations and accountability of federal funds and provide the resources needed. By placing responsibility for all early childhood education and development initiatives under a single manager, the infrastructure ensures clear management accountability for Head Start and consistency across such initiatives.

The team under the manager's leadership provides daily oversight of all aspects of program operations across all elementary schools hosting MPS Head Start services. The

oversight regimen includes reviewing Head Start application, outreach, and selection processes; regularly monitoring classroom activities, including instruction, teacher-child interaction, and individual child development; and monitoring program expenditures against the fiscal year budget.

Ability to provide effective financial management in operating a Head Start program.

All MPS employees are responsible for managing internal controls. Under the leadership of the chief financial officer, employees in the Office of Finance review reports, statements, reconciliations, and other information for consistency and reasonableness. The ongoing reviews of performance provide a basis for detecting problems. Senior staff within the Office of Finance compares information about current performance to budgets, prior periods, and benchmarks established by the superintendent and the MBSD to measure the extent to which goals and objectives are achieved and to identify unexpected results or unusual conditions that require follow-up. Review of reports, statements, reconciliations, and other information is documented as is the resolution of items noted for follow-up and/or system improvement.

MPS has a rigorous financial management infrastructure with proven experience in managing grants and board funding. The BusinessPlus system is used by the district for approving, tracking, and reporting funds and expenditures. In addition to ensuring compliance with fiscal policies and procedures, BusinessPlus supports the collection and maintenance of data on district assets. The system is password-protected and includes data encryption and firewall protections along with input, output, and processing controls. All employees are required to annually sign an Acceptable Use Policy that defines for employees the acceptable use of MPS network systems. Access to district network systems is limited to an employee's scope of duties, responsibilities, and authority. Every transaction requires at a minimum two sets of approvals.

The program budget is developed based on the needs of services outlined in the Milwaukee Head Start Collaborative 2022 Community Assessment. The policy council then approves the budget, which is then submitted to the MBSD for approval. There are written policies and procedures for the development of the budget along with a timeline. The early learning manager reviews the budget summary and expenditure reports weekly from the accounting system and reviews reports to ensure that policies are followed and the budget is in order according to the rules set in place by the MBSD and policy council. The manager works collaboratively with the MPS Office of Finance to monitor expenditures and maintain compliance. Payroll records are reviewed regularly and compared with personnel and department records.

Include the Policy Council and Parents in the Decision-Making Process.

The MPS Head Start Policy Council is composed of a representative and alternate from each of the 36 neighborhood-based MPS Head Start locations distributed throughout Milwaukee. MPS Head Start will establish a policy council early in the year to ensure that a governing body is run by parents. The policy council will be made up of a parent representative from each school, will make decisions regarding the best interests of the Head Start program, and will ensure that parents have an opportunity, annually, to become a representative on the policy council for a one-year term. The policy council representatives are elected by parents from each MPS Head Start parent committee, which will ensure the diversity of representatives and a voice from each school community.

Efforts to improve participation will be founded on building capacity among both groups to partner for student success. A process condition for this success is based upon the ability to build and enhance the capacity of members in the four “C” areas, which are capabilities (skills

and knowledge), connections (networks), cognitive (beliefs, values), and confidence (self-efficacy). It will be through training that relationship building will occur with both the governing body and policy council building upon the four “C” areas. Director Erica Siemsen, the assigned MBSD liaison, is present at monthly policy council meetings to share pertinent district information with families and gain information that will be shared with the MBSD as a whole.

Policy council representatives will assist in recruiting volunteer services from parents, community residents, and community organizations and will assist in the mobilization of community resources to meet identified needs. Policy council representatives will serve as a link to the parent committees, grantee agency governing bodies, public and private organizations, and the communities they serve. They will assist with parent committees in planning, coordinating, and organizing program activities for parents with the assistance of staff and ensuring that funds set aside from program budgets are used to support parent activities. Representatives will also assist parent committees in communicating with parents enrolled in all program options to ensure that they understand their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities in Head Start and to encourage their participation in the program.

Every policy and procedure affecting Head Start is first submitted to the policy council for discussion and action. The council will review and approve the Head Start annual budget as well as federal and state applications. Additionally, the program coordinators and manager report monthly to the policy council at each meeting on the status of enrollment, overall program activities, and efforts specifically associated with serving children with disabilities. Planning and decision-making are at the core of the function of the policy council.

Policy council representatives will be elected by parent committees at each site and have voting rights on decision-making. These representatives will lead and share information at parent

committee meetings. These meetings will be held monthly at each school site and will be facilitated by FPAs. These meetings will focus on various topics such as employment, education, finance, housing, GED, ESL, lead, and transitions. Parent surveys and needs assessments will be used to determine future topics. Each policy council representative is responsible for communicating parent committee concerns and suggestions to the policy council each month.

The MBSD and policy council members will receive training in Robert's Rules of Order, performance standards, roles and responsibilities, leadership, and other training as requested by policy council members. The MPS Head Start program has bylaws that outline a means for meaningful consultation and collaboration around joint decisions.

Policy council is the parents' voice in major program decisions, including such things as recruitment and selection of children, governance, school readiness, training, health and wellness, personnel policies, budgets, and funding proposals. Head Start Program Performance Standards require that every Head Start program has an active policy council.

Ensure representation of the diverse community served.

The MPS Head Start Policy Council is composed of a representative and alternate from each of the 36 neighborhood-based MPS Head Start locations distributed throughout Milwaukee. MPS Head Start will establish a policy council early in the year to ensure that a governing body is run by parents. The council will be made up of a parent representative from each school and will make decisions regarding the best interests of the program and to ensure that parents have an opportunity, annually, to become a representative on the policy council for a one-year term. The MPS Head Start Policy Council representatives will be elected by parents from each MPS Head Start parent committee, which will ensure the diversity of representatives and a voice from each school community.

Set and monitor overall agency priorities and operational systems.

The Head Start program leadership team, collectively, has extensive experience managing and overseeing the program. This system of operation involves two teams working in collaboration to set and monitor program priorities. This team includes Head Start program leadership such as the program supervisor, coordinators, instructional staff, and an administrative team that involves the chief of the Office of School Administration, the chief of the Office of Academics, the senior director of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, and the early learning manager. With continuous analysis of policies and procedures, record keeping and reporting, fiscal management and accounting, and review of data, the leadership team informs the MBSD and policy council so that programmatic decision-making and planning can take place. Operational actions are reviewed and approved by the MBSD's student achievement and school innovation (SASI) committee. The full MBSD reviews and approves any actions taken by the policy council and SASI committee and enacts the Head Start budget.

Conduct community assessments, annual self-assessments, and outcome-based evaluations.

Leadership regularly conducts assessments and evaluations at a variety of levels and through several means. In addition to conducting self-assessments regularly and surveying Head Start-enrolled families, the district as part of the Milwaukee Head Start Collaborative contracted with Shine Early Learning to conduct a comprehensive community assessment. This report assesses the need for Head Start and Early Head Start within the geographic areas served by the agencies that include Acelero Learning-Wisconsin, Next Door, Milwaukee Public Schools, and United Community Center. Data from the Milwaukee Head Start Collaborative 2022 Community Assessment underscores the need for Early Head Start and Head Start programs in Milwaukee to provide consistent service to address needs and support families within the community.

The ability to plan, constitute, and train a governing body in compliance with Head Start regulations.

As established by law, the MBSD consists of nine members: one member elected at large and eight members elected from numbered districts as determined by the MBSD. The regular term of each member is four years and until their successors have been elected and qualified. The MBSD is the policy-making body for the school system, serving within the framework provided by law, the will of the local citizenry, and the ethics of the education profession. Milwaukee Board of School Directors members oversee the following: Committee on Accountability, Finance, and Personnel; Committee on Student Achievement and School Innovation; Committee on Legislation, Rules, and Policies; Committee on Parent and Community Engagement; and Committee on Strategic Planning and Budget. Five members of the MBSD are on each committee: a chair, a vice chair, and three other members. The Committee on Student Achievement and School Innovation oversees the Head Start program in the district. As a service to the students, parents, and staff of the program and in the spirit of shared governance between the MPS Head Start Policy Council and the MBSD, the Office of Board Governance will publish public notices for the meetings of the MPS Head Start Policy Council and its committees.

In order to meet Head Start policies and regulations, appropriate training and technical assistance is to be provided to the members of the MBSD and policy council. The training provides members with information so that they can effectively oversee the programs. Both the MPS Head Start Policy Council and the MBSD will receive separate training from the Gravely Group on their roles and responsibilities in accordance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards, Part 1301: Program Governance. Participating in this training ensures a strong program that can function as mandated in the Head Start Act.

The existence of management systems for program planning, internal and external communication, recordkeeping, issuance of internal and external reports, and program self-assessment and monitoring.

Oversight of MPS Head Start is provided by the MPS administrative team composed of the chief of the Office of Academics, Jennifer Mims-Howell; the senior director of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Felicia Saffold; and the early learning manager, Krissy Washington. The administrative team monitors and guides the program through regular analysis of the progress that MPS Head Start is making toward advancing the goals and outcomes of the program. As a result, the team ensures quality through connective district-wide efforts to ensure that Ambitious Instruction is provided. A consistent PD focus for leaders and staff on explicit instruction, formative practices, engagement, and evidence-based practices that are developmentally and academically supportive ensures that learning needs are being met.

MPS Head Start managing officers ensure continuous improvement by adhering to a system that involves the “plan, do, study, act” approach. This continuous improvement process is fulfilled by weekly walkthroughs conducted by coordinators to collect CLASS, district, and curriculum data in addition to providing resources and instructional support to teachers. Data is reviewed when the coordinators meet with the early learning manager. During the weekly meeting, plans for action are created to address issues or concerns.

The program supervisor will review budget summaries and expenditure reports weekly to ensure that the program adheres to the rules and procedures set forth by the MBSD and policy council. For the purpose of monitoring expenditures and maintaining compliance, the MPS Head Start program supervisor works collaboratively with the Office of Finance.

The budget is developed based on the needs of services outlined in the Milwaukee Head Start Collaborative 2022 Community Assessment. The policy council approves the budget. After

approval by the policy council, it is submitted to the MBSD. There are written policies and procedures for the development of the budget. All expenditures must be approved by the program supervisor, the early learning manager, and the senior director of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. Vendor payments are submitted and paid on a weekly basis. Copies of all invoices and bills are kept in the program office. Payroll records are reviewed regularly and compared with personnel and department records. The program maintains an efficient, effective reporting system. Fiscal reports are reviewed monthly at policy council meetings.

Oversight is provided by the early learning manager, who reviews the budget summary expenditure reports weekly to ensure that the budget is in order according to the rules set in place by the MBSD and the MPS Head Start Policy Council.

MPS complies with the Wisconsin open meetings law and Wisconsin public records law. Every policy council and MBSD meeting is publicly announced, with meeting agendas and attachments provided. All meetings are open to the public, and any interested person can make inquiries or speak. The MBSD meetings are live streamed whereas both meetings are recorded for later accessibility for viewing.

Recordkeeping is maintained through the use of district-specific systems, such as BusinessPlus, Office 365, Google Drive, and Infinite Campus. Additionally, MPS Head Start will continue to use the required recordkeeping systems Galileo and ChildPlus. Both systems are used to generate reports and manage Head Start records.

The final component of program management and oversight involves the generation and review of self-assessments and monitoring reports. Program direction is guided by the data results from monitoring reports that include self-assessments, monthly program and financial reports, program information reports (PIR), child outcomes, and monitoring compliance checks.