

December 2009



# Redefining Futures

Achieving Academic Success  
*for All African-American Males*

DURHAM ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATORS  
AND DURHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Closing the Achievement Gap Grant Proposal to the NEA Foundation

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### Core Partners:

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Organization: Durham Public Schools  
Contact Person(s) and Title: Dr. Carl Harris, Superintendent  
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Tel: 919-560-3716  
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Fax: 919-560-2422

Organization: NC Foundation for Public School Children  
Contact Person(s) and Title: Kelvin Spragley, Executive Director  
Address: 700 S. Salisbury St., Raleigh, NC 27611  
Tel: 919-832-3000  
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Organization: University of NC at Chapel Hill  
Contact Person(s) and Title: George Noblit, Professor  
Address: 212E Peabody Hall, CB 3500, Chapel Hill, NC 27599  
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Contact Person(s) and Title: Kisha Daniels, Professor  
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Organization: Superintendent's Business Advisory Council  
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### B: Fiscal Agency and Grant Request:

- 1) Indicate which of the core partners is the proposed fiscal agent: NC Foundation for Public School Children
- 2) Grant Period: January 2010 to January 2011
- 3) Indicate grant request (maximum \$250,000): \$250,000
- 4) Indicate proposed match for Year 1: (A minimum of 100% is required in Year 1, equally split between Cash and In-Kind)
  - Total Cash: \$133,750  
% of grant request: 54
  - Total In-Kind (dollar value): \$125,000  
% of grant request: 50
- 5) List sources for each of the above match categories, and corresponding amount: see budget template.

C: Site Management (Please identify individual(s) responsible for coordination of compliance site visits, interim and final reporting, and other communications between the NEA Foundation and the site.)

Site Manager: To Come- will be hired on approval of funding proposal. In the interim, the fiscal agent will serve as the coordinator for all efforts.

## Executive Summary

(2000 character max)

Redefining Futures is designed to close the achievement gap between African-American males and their white counterparts. This particular focus was chosen through careful and thoughtful analysis of Durham Public Schools (DPS) data. Approximately 25% of DPS students are African-American boys, and their scores are among the lowest of any demographic. Coupled with a high discipline and dropout rate and a low cohort graduation rate, it was clear that working with these students would provide the greatest impact. The initiative is primarily a partnership between the Durham Association of Educators (DAE) and DPS. It is enhanced and supported significantly through the University of NC at Chapel Hill, NC Central University, and local business leaders.

The primary focus of this initiative is to empower educators to find solutions to meet their school's needs. To ensure everyone has a firm, common foundation from which to work, educators will begin their work by learning from Ron Walker, nationally-renowned for his work with boys of color. A summit will be held at which the educators will learn about Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) and be given time to work in their Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to incorporate this knowledge into plans for the upcoming year. Their work will continue through the year through PLCs and online communication. In the second part of the year, mini-grants will be made available to the partner schools to initiate or expand programming to meet their identified needs. UNC-CH will also offer a course on action research designed to guide teachers through the process of designing, implementing, and analyzing the results of a research project in their classrooms. At the conclusion of the first year (and years subsequent), a Research Summit will be held at which results of these projects and those of university researchers and Doctoral students will be shared with the hope of making more partner connections and pedagogical changes each year.

## Section II: Proposal Narrative

### Leadership Team Charge and Description

#### 1. Leadership Team Charge

The charge of the leadership team thus far has been to determine where the largest gaps exist, garner stakeholder input, and then to provide a roadmap of innovative and research-based strategies designed to close those gaps. To meet this educational charge, the team first examined data on student test scores, graduation rates, dropout rates, and discipline. From this analysis it was determined that the largest gap existed between African-American boys and their counterparts. Specifically, the team examined the difference in scores, growth, graduation, and discipline incidents between African-American males and their white counterparts, and concluded this initiative was the one most needed. To be clear, the team comparatively reviewed all subgroups and found other gaps as well. The most alarming was the gap was that of African-American boys, and this group also comprises nearly 25% of the entire DPS population. Those facts made the selection of this group most imperative. The initiative was titled *“Redefining Futures: Achieving Academic Success for All African-American Males”* to highlight the acknowledgment that too many of Durham’s African-American boys were not experiencing success in school and were too often involved with the justice system. The goal became to foster success for these students, not just raise their test scores. Changing the trajectory of African-American boys for better outcomes undergirds the essence of the leadership team’s vision and charge.

Once it was determined that the impact of this initiative could be maximized by focusing on this group, the team began to seek as much input as possible from stakeholders. To this end, students, teachers, community members, parents, Central Services personnel, and support staff were interviewed to determine which current practices were most helpful in working with this demographic and which were serving as hindrances. Further, they were asked what could be done differently to reach African-American male students and what they believe would give the greatest impact on their success. This information was then analyzed by university professors and doctoral students at UNC-Chapel Hill and by the team to determine if trends existed in the responses. Those trends have been distilled into this proposal and the plan for moving forward in Durham.

The leadership team should be described as a group of dedicated individuals with sufficiently diverse backgrounds to avoid “group think” without dissolving into argumentative chaos. The team has a healthy mix of professional association, school, community, university, and administration representation. It is also well-versed in current research on educational best practice and has a firm grasp on data analysis and use. Currently the team is working with nationally-renowned expert Ron Walker and others to develop a plan to redefine the futures of African-American boys in Durham. Dr. Walker’s charge will be to lead professional development efforts in working with boys of color and to provide guidance to principals as they collaborate with one another to identify and resolve barriers experienced by these boys.

One of the more subtle, yet critical, points of the team’s charge is to encourage open, honest discourse with one another and the community about strengths and weaknesses of the current educational system in Durham- particularly with respect to the achievement of African-American boys. These conversations are difficult and often politically and racially charged. This team began by initiating these conversations and has welcomed opportunities to continue the conversations through the media, community forums, and focus groups. As the initiative transitions into the implementation phase, these conversations will continue to be encouraged and facilitated. The overarching goal of each team

member and the initiative itself is to address the needs of children in Durham to best prepare them for the workforce and citizenship in the world.

Moving forward with the initiative, the leadership team charge will be to guide the efforts of the schools and to ensure a coordination of endeavors and resources to maximize effectiveness. One specific duty of the team will be to revise and refine the mini-grant application to be used by the schools. The team will then also be responsible for reviewing and approving the applications. In this way, schools will be empowered to make decisions regarding what will work best for their context but will also be held to high standards and levels of accountability. In addition, having the leadership team review the proposals ensures that all team members remain up-to-date on the status of the initiative, thus enabling them to be stronger advocates for additional support in the community and from their respective organizations.

As described in the “roles” section of this proposal, the team’s membership and structure will also change somewhat as the initiative matures and expands. The charge of the team during these transitions will be to critically review the function of the team and how well it serves the needs of the schools. If/when change is needed, the team will be expected to make those decisions so as not to impede progress or create more bureaucracy.

## 2. Leadership Team Description

Partner Name	Organization	Position
<b>Kristy Moore</b>	Durham Association of Educators (DAE)	President
<b>Dr. Kelvin Spragley</b>	NC Foundation for Public School Children	Executive Director
<b>Tyrone Melton</b>	North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE)	UniServ Director
<b>Dr. Carl Harris</b>	Durham Public Schools (DPS)	Superintendent
<b>Dr. Terri Mozingo</b>	Durham Public Schools	Chief Academic Officer
<b>Mehar Safvi</b>	DAE and DPS	DAE Executive Board/Teacher
<b>Kay Williams</b>	Durham Public Schools	Executive Director of Media Relations
<b>Dr. George Noblit</b>	University of NC at Chapel Hill	Professor
<b>Dr. Rita O’Sullivan</b>	University of NC at Chapel Hill	Professor
<b>Dr. Kisha Daniels</b>	NC Central University	Professor
<b>Steve Toler</b>	Superintendent’s Business Advisory Council	Business leader/owner
<b>Heidi Coleman</b>	DAE and DPS	DAE Membership chair/ Coordinator of Grants and Program Evaluation

The Leadership Team developed through extant partnerships, including DAE, DPS, and the Superintendent’s Business Advisory Council. Through DAE, the NC Association of Educators (NCAE) became a partner for professional development and teacher services. The NC Foundation for Public School Children (the non-profit arm of NCAE) is the fiscal agent for the grant funds, further defining the deepening relationship between the association and the district. This partnership will also serve to stabilize the initiative during the impending leadership change in DPS. In tandem, DAE and DPS tapped connections with local universities (the University of NC- Chapel Hill and NC Central University) for the facilitator and documenter. These higher-education partners have also offered their services in the implementation of the program. Specifically, UNC-CH is committing five percent of Dr. George Noblit’s time as a cash match. The business community is represented by a member of the Business Advisory Council who also serves as a community advocate for the team’s efforts. The school system itself is represented by members from several strata. The superintendent, chief academic officer, media relations, and grant coordinator each serve on the team, as well as a current teacher. The DAE president is a former district teacher as well. As the initiative moves forward, teachers from the partner schools will become part of the leadership structure (as noted later in this proposal).

This diversified strategy has served the team extremely well, allowing great flexibility and adaptation to change. One such change is the impending departure of the current superintendent. Dr. Harris has been chosen to serve as the Deputy Assistant Secretary with the US Department of Education. While this is a great honor, it presents challenges for the district as well as for this initiative. Dr. Harris has been an exceptional supporter of the collaboration between DPS and DAE and a champion of current efforts to help African-American boys. Although a deeper look into this is given in the section “Expected Barriers and Resolutions,” it bears testimony here that the team’s structure is such that the transition to an interim and then new superintendent will not prove the undoing of the initiative. Such resiliency to change was intentionally built into the team with the anticipation that as the needs of the initiative change so can the structure of the team. No one person has been responsible for the bulk of the programming, and progress has been well-documented and disseminated.

As the initiative moves forward, a Director will be hired to manage the day-to-day needs of the schools and their programming. This person will be responsible for planning the details of the Redefining Futures Summit for summer 2010 (and research summit for summer 2011), coordinating efforts with Dr. Ron Walker for professional development, communicating with Dr. O'Sullivan for evaluation purposes, and coordinating action research projects with UNC-CH. The Director will also help schools identify needs which can be met through mini-grants and will help the schools craft proposals to be brought to the leadership team. This individual will serve on the leadership team, but will not have voting power with respect to mini-grant approval for obvious conflict of interest reasons. The Director will be housed within the DAE offices and will be directly supervised by Dr. Kelvin Spragley.

### 3. Expected Barriers and Resolutions

The first barrier experienced has been a change in the leadership of Durham Public Schools due to the departure of Dr. Carl Harris to join the US Department of Education. While this was unexpected, the resiliency and flexibility of the leadership team will allow for fluid adaptation to changing school and district needs. An interim Superintendent has been named, Mr. Hank Hurd, and he has been fully informed of the work of the leadership team. He has offered his full support of the initiative and has submitted a letter to confirm his dedication. A search team has been formed for the new superintendent and when that person is found s/he will be brought into the leadership team as quickly as possible. The DPS Board of Education is guiding the efforts, and they are also in support of Redefining Futures. They have pledged to support the initiative and to ensure that the new leader understands the necessity of the work being undertaken through this program. Above all, clear and consistent communication among all parties will ensure consistent messaging and fluid continuation of efforts to close the achievement gap through this initiative.

Another expected barrier is sustainability over time. Traditionally, systemic change has been seen as a “flash in the pan” in education. Major initiatives rarely last more than a few years, and educators have become less adaptive to change as a result. However, several solutions will be critical in the resolution of this barrier. First, the initiative has a broad institutional base. Local university and business partners provide external commitment and accountability to closing the gap. In addition, efforts of Redefining Futures will be built into existing institutional processes. For example, the UNC action research course, professional development modules built by NCAE/DAE and DPS to address Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), and Professional Learning Community (PLC) reflection on how to close the achievement gap through the use of data. Second, the flexibility of the leadership team will allow for fluid adaptation to changing school and district needs. This will keep the initiative from becoming stagnant and irrelevant to current context. Third, clear and consistent communication within and between target schools and communities will be a priority with respect to the project. As the initiative moves forward, teachers and school-based leadership will become more intimately involved at all levels. Additionally, DAE and DPS media relations groups will continue to be involved in communication efforts with the local community and businesses. By ensuring ongoing communication the efforts are consistently in teachers’ and parents’ consciousness thereby helping to ensure sustainability. Finally, sustainability will be ensured through consistent benchmarking of progress and reflection on next steps. PLC teams at target schools will begin by reviewing their school’s data, and they will continue to do so. The leadership team will also regularly review and benchmark progress toward closing the achievement gap for African-American boys. Based on the progress of the initiative, the team will reflect on the best next-steps for Redefining Futures.

A third expected barrier is ownership of the problem wall-to-wall. Research shows that although the issue of African-American male achievement is known, no group accepts responsibility for a solution. To combat this lack of ownership, several resolutions will be enacted. As above, clear and consistent communication among all parties will be critical. This will ensure ownership and accountability from all parties to be active participants in the solution. Additionally, the initiative will be made a key component of PLC time and effort, ensuring educators are included in all discussions and solutions. Further, association, district, and school leadership will make communicating Redefining Futures efforts a priority when engaging community members and parents in discussions about increasing the achievement of African-American males. Specifically, DAE will use the initiative to engage and empower members for action on the issue. Further, community and business members will work closely with DPS and DAE staff to analyze employment trends and create pipelines to post-secondary programs which fit local business needs (including professional, high-tech, and trade employment). Finally, professional development and

action research projects will directly involve teachers in finding ways to improve the achievement of African-American males.

Another anticipated barrier is the advancement of PLCs and Data Teams. Although PLCs and Data Teams have been implemented for a few years, schools are still adapting to a true ownership of the process. Staff turnover is also creating a disconnect in understanding the process. Further, data teams are new to the district and no single process of training or guiding them exists. To resolve this issue, Data and PLC teams will receive data comprehension and analysis training, starting with the target schools. DAE and DPS will lead this effort collectively. The teams will also receive professional development regarding their individual school’s and classroom’s data with respect to the achievement of African-American boys. Further, new PLC teams will be developed for feeder system schools which will specifically focus on how to help students transition between schools and ensure they are well prepared for advanced coursework and enrolled in advanced programs. Finally, to ensure that PLCs fully understand and are prepared for their work with Redefining Futures, time will be provided during the initial summit for teams to do an in-depth analysis of incoming students, particularly focusing on those transitioning between schools. Teams will meet collectively during this time to identify students most in need of support to ensure success.

A less specific, but still insidious anticipated barrier is the misconception of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP). Some educators have a negative view of CRP, having labeled it as “Politically Correct” teaching instead of the true intent of reaching students through cultural relevance and knowledge. To resolve this potential barrier, initial professional development will be provided for all teachers at the target schools. This will be provided by nationally-renowned activist and researcher, Dr. Ron Walker, from the Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color (COSEBOC) at the initial Summit. This will ensure that all educators have the same language and base of understanding of working with African-American boys in their schools. Professional development will continue throughout each year in PLCs, and more initial training will be provided at the subsequent summits for new staff. Further, DAE will communicate active support of the initiative to members, including being the primary provider of the ongoing professional development. Finally, as above, clear and consistent communication with all stakeholders is critical to ensuring no misconceptions of CRP exist to become a barrier to Redefining Futures.

The final barrier anticipated for implementation is maintaining partner relationships. While the diversity of the leadership team provides resiliency and flexibility, it also leaves much room for loss of continuity when membership changes. To ensure that partnerships are maintained past the five years of implementation, Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) will be developed for all partners for the duration of the initiative. These agreements will outline both the current expectations for each partner and the future commitments each institution is willing and able to make. Further, regular leadership team meetings will be held to assess progress and address needed shifts in focus. This will accomplish two goals- ensuring partners remain engaged in the initiative and providing time for reflection and adjustment of direction. In addition, all team work and knowledge will be aggregated into one place (such as a website or database) to prevent loss of corporate knowledge. This aggregation will serve two purposes- maintenance of continuity and documentation of the process. Examining this data in subsequent years will enable deeper reflection and analysis of best practice and provide context to lessons learned.

Issue	Description	Resolution
<b>Change in DPS Leadership</b>	Dr. Harris’s tenure with DPS will end Dec. 31, as he has been appointed to the US Department of Education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interim superintendent has been named and is in the process of becoming part of the leadership team</li> <li>• The DPS school board supports this initiative and will help ensure the new candidate will continue the efforts</li> <li>• The new superintendent will be brought into the</li> </ul>

		<p>leadership team as quickly as possible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear and consistent communication among all parties ensures consistent messaging</li> <li>• Resiliency and flexibility of the leadership team will allow for fluid adaptation to changing school and district needs</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability</b>	<p>Traditionally, systemic change has been seen as a “flash in the pan” in education. Major initiatives rarely last more than a few years, and educators have become less adaptive to change as a result.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resiliency and flexibility of the leadership team will allow for fluid adaptation to changing school and district needs</li> <li>• Inclusion of other sectors (IHEs, business, etc) ensures the initiative has a broad institutional base.</li> <li>• Clear and consistent communication with schools and community (including parents)</li> <li>• Consistent benchmarking of progress and reflection on next steps</li> <li>• Building efforts into existing institutional processes (e.g. the University action research course; CRP and African-American male professional development modules as regular offerings of NCAE)</li> </ul>
<b>Ownership of the problem wall-to-wall</b>	<p>Research shows that although the issue of African-American male achievement is known, no group accepts responsibility for a solution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear and consistent communication within and between target schools and communities regarding the project and involvement of all parties</li> <li>• Make the initiative a key component of PLC time and effort, ensuring teachers and other educators are included in all discussions and solutions</li> <li>• Administration (district and school) will make it a priority when communicating goals and targets to the schools and to parents/community members</li> <li>• DAE will use the initiative to engage and empower members for action on the issue</li> <li>• Community and business members will work closely with DPS and DAE staff to analyze employment trends and create pipelines to post-secondary programs which fit local business needs (including professional, high-tech, and trade employment)</li> <li>• Professional development and action research projects will directly involve teachers in finding solutions</li> </ul>
<b>Advancing Professional Learning Communities and Data teams</b>	<p>Although PLCs have been implemented in DPS for a few years, schools are still adapting to a true ownership of the process. Staff turnover is also creating a disconnect in understanding of the process. Further, data teams are new to the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide data comprehension and analysis training for all data team members, starting with the target schools</li> <li>• Provide professional development for all target school PLCs regarding their school’s data and current trends with regard to the achievement of African-American boys.</li> <li>• Develop cross-site (feeder system) teams which will look collectively at their data and current efforts to reach the students</li> <li>• Provide extra time during the summer “kick-off event”</li> </ul>

	district and no single process of training or guiding them exists.	for advance analysis of incoming students, particularly focusing on those transitioning from one school level to another (e.g. 5 <sup>th</sup> to 6 <sup>th</sup> grade and 8 <sup>th</sup> to 9 <sup>th</sup> grade). School teams will meet collectively to identify students most in need of support to ensure success during this event.
<b>Misconceptions of Culturally-Responsive Pedagogy (CRP)</b>	Some educators have a negative view of CRP, having labeled it as “Politically Correct” teaching instead of the true intent of reaching students through cultural relevance and knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial professional development for all teachers at the target schools (collectively)</li> <li>• Clear and consistent communication with teachers, parents, and community members regarding the strategies employed</li> <li>• Ongoing professional development each year through PLCs and during the summer months for new staff</li> <li>• DAE communication and active support of CRP, including providing additional professional development and resources for teachers</li> </ul>
<b>Sunset procedures</b>	DPS has implemented Performance Management Oversight Teams (PMOT), but they are relatively new and their function is evolving. The primary function is to streamline district initiatives and improve fidelity. Even so, few policies exist for streamlining initiatives and sun setting programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize the recently completed Literacy Audit to streamline programs and initiatives centered around literacy</li> <li>• In PMOT, clearly outline procedures and guidelines for sun setting programs in all areas</li> <li>• Evaluate current programs (through DPS departments or contractors) for efficacy and impact</li> <li>• DPS and DAE collaboratively analyze programming in areas such as math, science, and social studies to determine areas of overlap and determine appropriate steps to streamline</li> <li>• The CLT will provide oversight and help determine the relative effectiveness of efforts</li> </ul>
<b>Maintaining partner relationships</b>	While the diversity of the leadership team provides resiliency and flexibility, it also leaves much room for loss of continuity when membership changes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Memorandums of Understanding for all partners</li> <li>• Aggregate all team work to one place (such as a website) to prevent loss of corporate knowledge</li> <li>• Regular monthly team meetings to assess progress and address needed shifts in focus</li> </ul>

4. Please attach any other documentation you believe conveys or illustrates your Leadership Team’s: 1) shared vision for challenges to be addressed in this initiative; and 2) capacity to effectively marshal support for and operationalize this initiative.
- As a product of the collaboration between UNC-Chapel Hill and the leadership team, a concept paper was written and shared with the community at large. The paper outlined the current state of achievement among African-American males as well as suggestions for addressing the issue.
  - Dr. O’Sullivan’s summary analysis
  - Board policies, vision, and theory of action

## Data Collection and Analysis

### Existing Achievement Gaps

Gaps were seen between African-American students, particularly males, and their white counterparts in nearly all metrics evaluated and at all grade levels in Durham Public Schools. The leadership team examined data from the 2009 school year as well as data from 2007 and 2008. Consistently, African-American males scores were lower than any other subgroup. In 2009, 54.6% of fifth-grade African-American males were proficient on the state standardized math End-of-Grade (EOG) test across the district. Their Hispanic classmates scored 60.8% while their white classmates scored 85.6%. Similar results were found in 8<sup>th</sup> grade with relative scores of 39.8%, 50.3%, and 83.6% proficiency. Algebra I scores showed a more drastic separation between whites both other demographic groups, with a proficiency rate of 76.4% versus 32.9% for African-American males and 34.4% for Hispanic males. The same trends were found in reading/English I, science (5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and Biology tests), and social studies (Civics and Economics and US History courses). When this data was broken down further to show the school-level gaps, the same patterns were seen (see below).

North Carolina measures graduation and dropout rates very differently. The Graduation Cohort Rate refers to the percentage of students who enter 9<sup>th</sup> grade together and graduate four years later. Therefore if a student graduates in 4.5 years, s/he does not graduate on-cohort and “counts against” the school. However, dropout rates refer to the number of dropout events that occur at a given school in a given year. For example if a student begins the year but drops out mid-semester, that counts as one “dropout event.” If that same student then comes back for second semester but drops out again before the end of the year, then the student counts as a dropout twice for that school for that year. For this reason, DPS chose to include both the graduation and dropout numbers as they are NOT related but both have significance for whether a student is at-risk of academic failure.

With respect to the cohort graduation rate in DPS, the gap was also significant. In this category, however, it was found that Hispanics (particularly males) were most likely NOT to graduate within four years than their African-American or white counterparts. The gap between white and either group was nevertheless considerable. In 2009, 44.71% of African-American males did not graduate with their four year cohort, while only 13.49% of whites did not graduate with their cohort. Overall, the cohort graduation rate for the target schools was 74.6% at Northern and 52.4% at Hillside.

All Durham high schools offer advanced coursework including honors and Advanced Placement (AP) classes. However, only Hillside High School offers International Baccalaureate (IB) classes. Hillside’s largest ethnic group is African-American students. As a result, it is not surprising that this demographic comprises many of the students in IB or AP classes. However, the gap in this area exists in the number of African-American male students who enroll. In focus groups with students from this school, it was noted that the vast majority of AP and IB classes are female. This holds true when looking at the enrollment records. At least half, if not 2/3 of the classes are female. The gap here is not between African-American and white but between male and female. As the focus groups also indicated, the perception is that it is not “cool” for African-American boys specifically to be seen as “smart.” Therefore although capable and eligible, these students eschew the classes in favor of more socially acceptable “regular” classes. With respect to this fact, the leadership team will be reviewing data on the number of African-American boys enrolling in higher level classes with respect to BOTH their white and their female counterparts.

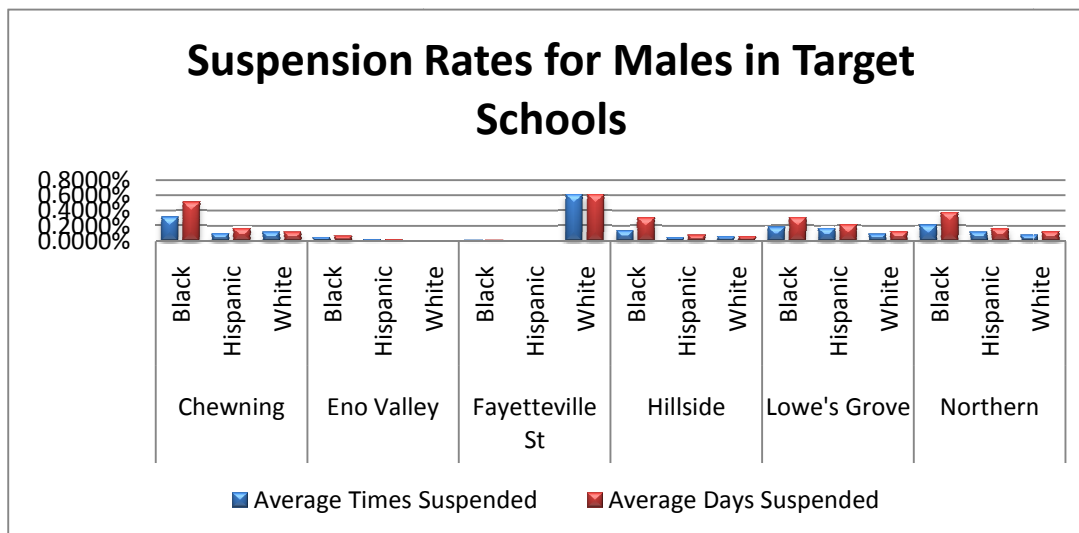
School	Baseline data from 2008-2009 school year (overall school)						
	Proficiency (Reading)	Proficiency (Math)	% Attendance	Cohort Graduation Rate	% Dropout	Enrollment in higher education	Action research projects
<b>Eno Valley</b>	49.4	66.9	96.0	n/a	n/a	Forthcoming	none

Elementary							
Fayetteville St. Elem.	35.7	51.6	94.8	n/a	n/a	Forthcoming	none
Chewing Middle	33.3	46.0	94.6	n/a	n/a	Forthcoming	none
Lowe's Grove Middle	38.9	47.6	93.6	n/a	n/a	Forthcoming	none
Hillside HS	42.9	35.5	90.5	52.4	5.4	Forthcoming	none
Northern HS	58.9	33.7	90.5	74.6	4.8	Forthcoming	none

\*\* HS Reading is based on English I scores. HS Math is based on Algebra I scores.

School	Baseline data from 2008-2009 school year (African-American Males)						
	State testing (Reading)	State testing (Math)	% Attendance	Cohort Graduation Rate	% Dropout	Enrollment in higher education	Action research projects
Eno Valley Elementary	41.1	56.6	95.9	n/a	n/a	Forthcoming	none
Fayetteville St. Elem.	23.2	35.7	95.4	n/a	n/a	Forthcoming	none
Chewing Middle	42.3	62.4	94.8	n/a	n/a	Forthcoming	none
Lowe's Grove Middle	25.9	38.8	93.4	n/a	n/a	Forthcoming	none
Hillside HS	34.6	32.2	91.2	28	To come	Forthcoming	none
Northern HS	53.0	30.8	90.7	34	To come	Forthcoming	none

\*\* HS Reading is based on English I scores. HS Math is based on Algebra I scores.



## Teacher Capacity

In your district, what is the capacity of teachers in low performing schools? Describe your indicators of these capacities (e.g., percent of credentialed staff, percent of out-of-field staff, rate of staff turnover, rate of staff absenteeism, percent of untenured staff, etc.). Do you plan to gather other kinds of data on capacity? (Not to exceed 2 single-spaced typed pages)

School	Baseline data from 2008-2009 school year						% National Board Certified	TWC Survey Empowerment responses
	% with Advanced Degrees	% Highly Qualified	% Turnover	% Absenteeism	% Untenured			
<b>Eno Valley Elementary</b>	45	100	12.0	4.8	41	0	2.96	
<b>Fayetteville St. Elem.</b>	40	97.8	4.0	4.0	20	0	3.12	
<b>Chewing Middle</b>	44	90.6	20.3	3.5	46	5.1	2.81	
<b>Lowe's Grove Middle</b>	48	90.3	20.0	5.1	47	6.0	3.02	
<b>Hillside HS</b>	41	95.3	22.2	8.4	53	6.1	2.69	
<b>Northern HS</b>	46	94.6	23.8	3.2	49	7.6	2.98	

DPS teachers have much to offer the students in the district. However, there is much untapped capacity. As seen in the chart below, turnover at 2/3 of the target schools exceeded 20% last year. Although all teachers are expected to be “Highly Qualified” under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), only one of the target schools is currently meeting that requirement. This means that up to 10% of the teachers at each of the remaining target schools are working out-of-field or are otherwise not properly credentialed to teach their classes. All research points to the fact that having a well-trained and prepared teacher is critical to student achievement, indicating that clearly this metric is a factor in the target schools. Further aggravating this point is that between 40% and 60% of teachers at five of the six schools are untenured. In NC, this means that they are working under provisional licenses. This could be because they are new to the state or district (but not new to teaching) or that they are new teachers with less than three years of experience. With the percentages of untenured teachers and the turnover rate so high, consistency and stability at the schools is difficult- further compounding the challenges of attaining high student achievement. The teacher absentee rate is typically an indicator of school climate, and the rates at the target schools are not outside of the norm of approximately 3% nationwide for sickness (Clotfelter, Ladd, and Vigdor, [www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org), 2009). This equates to each teacher being away from their school for just over one week out of 18. Although the number is in line with the rest of the nation, these absences do impact both classroom practice and school function. In a school of 45 teachers, that 3% equates to over a school year’s worth of absences.

North Carolina is known for being very friendly to the National Board Certification process. Until this year, teachers could engage in the process at no cost because the state paid the fees. Further, the state gave those in the process two days off with pay to complete assignments associated with the certification. Even with these accommodations, however, the chart below shows that two of the schools have no NBC teachers, while none of the others have more than 10% NBCTs. This is in stark contrast to the fact that DPS has the highest number of Nationally Board Certified teachers in the state. It is also surprising given that DPS and NCAE both provide significant support for teachers considering or currently in the process. DPS also has a partnership with the Center for Teaching Quality which provides

teachers with the opportunity to engage in the *Take One!* process which allows them to do one entry instead of all of them at one time. This score can then be banked and used toward full completion of the certification. Although National Board Certification is not a specific target of this initiative, engagement in this process will be encouraged and the action research projects are expected to bolster teacher confidence in their capacity to earn that additional level of certification. These facts further add to the understanding that these schools are in need of support to build the capacity of their teachers. Because DPS is strongly committed to helping teachers through the NBC process, the percentage of NBCTs are listed on each school's scorecard. The scorecards for the participating schools are attached to this proposal.

Finally, the Empowerment scores on the Teacher Working Conditions (TWC) survey are indicative of the turnover rates. This survey is given every year in DPS and every other year across the state of NC to all certified staff. The results of this survey are discussed by district administration as well as school-level PLC teams. Components of the survey are also now used to evaluate principal effectiveness. The Empowerment section explores how certified staff at each school feel with respect to how involved they are with school-based decisions such as hiring, scheduling, and school improvement.

There are many needs for capacity building. First, DPS, DAE and the leadership team must continue to deepen the capacity to communicate concerns and efforts. This communication is both internal to the organizations and external with the wider community. For DAE members and other educators, the capacity to study and build relationships and engagement must be developed and strengthened. Following efforts in Milwaukee, the initiative will develop the capacity for teachers to engage in action research to learn what works for them in their classrooms and schools. DAE and DPS both have expressed the need to develop the capacity to evaluate education efforts and to collaborate on research initiatives that create new knowledge. Here the goal is to prepare DAE members for involvement in research and evaluation efforts. For teachers in general, Redefining Futures will build capacity in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) as well as capacity to conduct action research on CRP so that teachers can learn what works best to engage African-American male students in their classroom. Finally, the initiative must facilitate African-American males building the capacity to redefine their own futures. Although schools will be encouraged and empowered to propose their own methods to accomplish this, one option which will be encouraged is building high school planning portfolios in collaboration with parents (possibly during home visits) to illuminate a pathway to advanced coursework and higher education. Following the leadership paradigm, each of these efforts will build on talents and strengths, work through relationships, and be learning and engagement focused.

Clearly, capacity must be developed both generally and in terms of this initiative. This will be done through professional development offered via DAE, UNC-CH and the Center for Teaching Quality (CTQ). Additionally, the mini-grant process is a way for the schools to take on the issue in ways that seem appropriate for them. With action research serving as a base for professional development and the mini-grants generating evaluative information, knowledge will be generated in conjunction with practice, yielding a wealth of resources and best-practices which can be adapted for others experience the same issues.

## Family, Community, and School Partnerships

In your district, what is the status of family, community, and school partnerships? Describe your indicators of these partnerships (e.g., frequency of formal communication with families, existence of out-of-school time academic and nonacademic support programs, support from local philanthropy, etc.). Do you plan to gather other kinds of data on partnerships? (Not to exceed 2 single-spaced typed pages)

In Durham Public Schools, parents, teachers and other staff members, and the community are all engaged in making the public schools the best they can be. In fact, people in this community feel so passionately that their input and involvement are welcomed, that when asked what a new Superintendent should sustain, they list Teacher, Parent, Student and Community Involvement right along with the magnet/small high school choice programs that are so popular here.

On an independent survey that is conducted by the Durham Convention and Visitor's Bureau, parents gave high marks to their image of the school district. In fact, the overall image of DPS by residents with children in the district improved from 72.6 percent in 2008 to 76 percent in 2009.

### Key Partnerships

Students—Ultimately students are the targets of all efforts in schools, but in this initiative they will also be partners. In planning the direction of *Redefining Futures*, several focus groups were held with students across the district, including the target schools. They expressed what motivated them and what served as stumbling blocks in their educational path, and those sentiments have helped shape this proposal. As implementation continues, students will continue to be key partners in the determination of programming to embrace or expand. Their input will be sought through continuing focus groups, Kitchen Table Conversations (community forums), and school-based discussions.

Parents—In informal dinners with parents before each meeting of the Board of Education (Be Our Guest), at structured discussions (Kitchen Table Conversations), and through Parent Workshops, the Board of Education and Superintendent are mobilizing parents to be partners. DPS reaches out to entering parents with a comprehensive kindergarten effort featuring “Dottie” the kindergarten mascot. Parents in the transition years, from elementary to middle school and middle school to high school feel more comfortable with these significant shifts after attending “Making the Move” events that are designed to answer their questions. The Board of Education adopted a new Parent/Family Involvement Policy in 2008 that outlines the commitment to engaging families.

Business Support--DPS is one of two school districts selected for funding of the Citizen Schools effort to bring business partners in to engage students in hands-on learning after school. The program is already at Lowe's Grove Middle school and will likely be expanded to other schools. The Superintendent's Business Advisory Council (BAC), which comprises approximately 40 area business leaders, is deeply involved with leadership support of principals, collecting books for elementary students and supporting career-tech education programs.

Community Partners—Two Community Learning Centers are open in housing communities as a collaborative effort among DPS, the Durham Housing Authority, the YMCA, North Carolina Central University, Durham Parks and Recreation and others in the community. These centers focus on providing tutoring and homework assistance. The state's second middle-grades Montessori school will open in Durham as a result of a partnership with Durham County and the YMCA. In conjunction with Communities in Schools, the Durham Performance Learning Center is a small high school that offers online learning.

In addition to district partnerships, the target schools also have community relationships which will benefit the initiative. For example, Lowe's Grove Middle School has formed a partnership with the South Durham Little League and the Durham Eagles to make the school's athletic fields into a top-of-the-line athletic complex. The school is also working with NC Central University and UNC-CH to support reading programs, parent involvement, and the culture of achievement in the school. These programs

are not specifically targeted to African-American boys, but do directly benefit this group. Similar partnerships with community based organizations such as the “100 Black Men of Durham,” Duke University undergraduate education student mentoring program, and sorority/fraternity projects at both the university and professional organization levels also exist and will be nurtured and developed through the work of *Redefining Futures* as well.

Higher Education--North Carolina Central University and Durham Technical Community both host small high schools on their campuses, and Duke University, through its Duke-Durham Neighborhood Partnership, is providing support to seven schools that are close to its campus. The university partnerships are well-established and growing all the time.

Communications--There are many channels of information that DPS uses to reach out to parents and the community. First and foremost is Durham Public Schools Cable Channel 4, where families can watch the board meetings from their living rooms and keep up-to-date with school initiatives. The district Website at [www.dpsnc.net](http://www.dpsnc.net) is an award-winner due to the diligence with which it is updated and the unique features it includes (photo galleries of each high school graduation; thank a teacher email messages and others). DPS consistently hears from parents and the community that they appreciate the many ways the district communicates with them.

Neighboring School Districts—Durham participates in a partnership with four neighboring districts, including Wake, Johnston, Orange, and Chapel Hill-Carrboro counties. These districts work together on a regular basis to share resources related to PLC work, collaborate to solve collective needs, and benchmark progress of becoming learning communities through the PLCs. Each year the districts participate in a PLC survey, the results of which may be used as a metric to determine how well the teams are being trained and used in their respective schools.

Schools- Last but most importantly, at the focus schools there are PTAs and site-based decision-making teams. Parents are involved in the schools as volunteers in various roles, including tutors, participants in special programs, chaperones for student events, members of booster clubs, etc. Although in the focus schools this area is not as strong as we’d like, parents will be included in the “PLC-type” groups which will be part of the leadership structure as the implementation moves forward.

No systematic data is collected across the schools on family and community involvement. This of course means that it is difficult for the schools to learn from their efforts. This must be remedied for the full efforts of *Redefining Futures* to be realized. A set of data collection efforts will be instituted to assess family and community involvement in school and school district activities. For the district wide efforts a ‘log’ will be developed for each activity that notes who participated in which tasks. These logs will then be compiled and compared year-to-year in order to discern trends and to see the particular trajectory of the initiative’s efforts for African-American males. As mentioned above, a parent satisfaction survey is administered each year to any community member who chooses to participate. These satisfaction rates are part of each school’s “scorecard” and will be tracked specifically at the target schools to measure increases in positive responses.

In the focus schools, logs will also be used to track communication and involvement of parents. Additional information which will be gathered to evaluate the work includes out-of school support program participation, philanthropic contributions, and community initiatives that affect the African-American males in *Redefining Futures*. Contributions of these students to the community through service learning and other efforts will also be tracked.

These efforts will provide critical knowledge to guide the initiative’s work with families and the community to undercut the deficit model that found during focus groups interviews in the planning phase.

## Collaboration Methods

In your district, do district administrators and representatives of the teacher association collaborate to improve teaching and learning? Describe your indicators of these collaborations (e.g., adoption of novel bargaining methods, inclusion of student learning objectives in the bargaining agreement, frequency of meetings between administrators and association representatives in non-bargaining years, existence of peer assistance and review programs, etc.). Do you plan to gather other kinds of data on collaboration? (Not to exceed 2 single-spaced typed pages)

North Carolina is a non-bargaining state, with state designed pay scales and incentives and standardized evaluation methods for all educators. Contracts are not developed at the district level nor are they negotiated on a rotating basis. As such, the relationship between the teacher's association and district/state administration is unique from that of union states. The NC Association of Educators and the Durham Association of Educators are primarily professional organizations focusing on the development of members and political advocacy for education. Interaction of district administration and the local/state association vary from district to district, however, just as it does for bargaining states. Many of the same issues exist including mediation/personnel issues, district decision-making, work-load expectations (including the use of non-instructional time), and school board policy.

In the planning grant application, the partnership of DPS and DAE was described as essentially fledgling. Previous administrations in DPS and leadership of DAE had developed a somewhat adversarial relationship. When the partnership began, it was welcomed by both sides but met with a level of trepidation. The relationship blossomed, however, and grew considerably and on a very positive trajectory through the concerted efforts of the then-president Donald Barringer and Superintendent Carl Harris. The expectation set for all parties was that this was a complete partnership with multiple stakeholder groups, none with complete control.

As a result of the initial grant development, the relationship between the two organizations grew considerably. Shortly after the grant was awarded, Mr. Barringer left DAE to serve as the Teacher Advisor to the Governor of NC. At that time his VP, Kristy Moore, moved into his position. She nimbly picked up the process where he left it and the DAE/DPS relationship deepened. Through the planning process, the level of collaboration and cooperation has continued to both deepen and widen. For example, previous to this process the DAE had not been granted access to schools for recruitment purposes and some schools were virtually closed to the Association entirely. Due to the relationships developed during this planning process, new guidelines have been developed which allow DAE full access to the schools. The partnership has also opened doors with Central Services departments including Human Resources and Instructional Services. The new Literacy Framework roll-out is an example of this new collaboration. The guidelines given to schools encountered some resistance, and the DAE was encouraged to gather feedback and suggestions from members. That information was then shared with Instructional Services and improvements made for teachers.

Further, conversations about the direction and focus of the grant developed into conversations ranging from policy reform to collaborative professional development efforts. Meetings between the Superintendent and DAE leaders have increased, as has the comfort level of both organizations in having those conversations. Noted recently in a collaboratively planned event was the idea that the DAE President feels comfortable picking up the phone at any time to call the DPS Superintendent with questions about leadership, how to help teachers, or where some information might be found. The Superintendent commented that he not only welcomes the conversations, he enjoys the opportunity to collaborate. NCAE UniServ staff seconded the thoughts.

Although the Superintendent, Dr. Carl Harris, is leaving the district at the end of December he has set the expectation with all of his leadership staff that the work of this initiative is imperative and collaboration is the ethic under which to commence. The primary DPS person to carry the work forward will be Dr. Terri Mazingo, the Chief Academic Officer. She has been involved since the beginning, and whole-heartedly embraces the collaborative spirit of the effort. She ensures that spirit carries to all

departments and the interim superintendent is also supportive of the efforts made through this initiative.

Both because the state is non-bargaining and because the district/association relationship has not always been positive, there are no metrics currently available to measure the level of collaboration. The district does have peer assistance programs in the form of mentors and academic coaches, but these operate as part of DPS initiatives to support and retain teachers not as an outcome from collaborative efforts. DPS also embraced the Professional Learning Community structure, which is also advocated by NCAE and DAE, but it was not developed as part of a collaborative process.

As implementation begins, however, it becomes much easier to develop and track metrics by which levels of collaboration can be measured. Numbers and types of meetings will be tracked, as well as possible focus groups with educators (members and non-members) regarding the perception of the relationship. Additionally, the number of initiatives/policies/instructional supports implemented as a result of collaborative planning will also be measurable.

## Challenge and Interventions Identification and Expected Outcomes Specific to the NEA Foundation Theory of Change

Goal	Outcome Indicators	Process Indicators
Eliminate achievement gaps for academically underachieving poor and minority student populations	Increased graduation rates	Increased college-readiness activities
	Increased participation in rigorous coursework in middle and high schools (including AP/IB courses)	Increased attendance rates
	Increased literacy and mathematics achievement	High-quality out-of-school-time (OST) academic and nonacademic supports and expanded learning opportunities
		Student mentoring and tutoring opportunities in school and out of school
		Use of formative assessment and intervention models

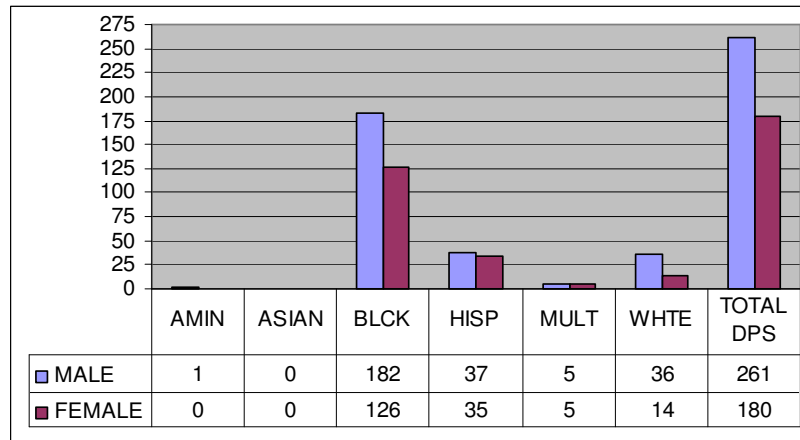
### Increased Graduation Rates

Please indicate baseline data at year one. Please describe (in detail) processes and strategies to be implemented to address this outcome in year one. (Not to exceed 2 single-spaced typed pages)

School	# events	Male	White	Black	Hispanic
Hillside	80	49	1	69	8
Northern	87	46	15	66	3

\*\*NC DPI website

## DROPOUTS BY GENDER AND ETHNICITY 2007-2008



Baseline data for graduation includes two primary metrics. North Carolina tracks both graduation within four years and dropout rates. Graduation cohort data is calculated each year based on when a student completes his/her 8<sup>th</sup> grade year. Students are expected to graduate four years after that date, and are tracked across the state using a state-wide data system. The rate is calculated by determining the percentage of students who begin 9<sup>th</sup> grade in a given year and graduate four years later (from any school in the state). The baseline year for the graduation cohort percentage will be 2008-2009. In this year, Hillside showed a 52.4% graduation rate while Northern High School showed 74.6% graduation. The rates were considerably lower for African-American males, as only 28% of African-American males graduated with their cohort at Hillside, and 34% graduated with their cohort at

Northern. This does not mean that these students are not still in school. Frequently the students are still in school but are behind by as little as a few credits or several years. However, the students may also have dropped out of school or moved out of the state/country without requesting their school records be transferred to the new school. Schools are asked to track where each individual student is currently located, where ever that might be.

The second metric is dropout rate (see Tables 5 and 6: Dropout Events and Dropout Rates). This number is not directly related to graduation rate, as it is based on the number of “dropout events” at a given school in a given year. For example, if a student drops out of school but returns only to drop out again later in the year, the student counts as two dropout events for that school. In the 2008-2009 school year, Hillside experienced 80 dropout events, 49 of which were male and 69 of which were African-American. Northern experienced 87 events, 46 of which were male and 66 of which were African-American. Although the data is not currently published as broken down by gender and ethnicity, this metric will be developed as a metric for the grant’s purposes.

Because graduation is a multi-variant event, it is difficult to attribute any given activity to its increase or decrease. This is particularly true with initial implementation of any program. The DAE/DPS proposal focuses heavily on improved teacher practice through professional development and data collection and analysis to facilitate data-based decision making during the first year. As such, increases in graduation rates are expected but may not be wholly attributable to the efforts of teachers under this grant.

That said, several strategies will be aimed at increasing graduation cohort rates and decreasing dropout rates at both target high schools. One such strategy will be better analysis of data related to student achievement, needs assessment, and planning through the PLC process. During the summer after award, a conference/kick-off will be held for all participating schools. Educators and administration will be invited to attend to learn not only about the grant and their options for fund use, but also about data use and analysis on a deeper level than currently exists. They will be exposed to the baseline data used for the grant, and provided with guidance on how to interpret that information with relation to educational and administrative practice. Educators will also be given time to work in school-based PLC groups, as well as to collaborate with colleagues from the partner schools. Currently, principals don’t participate in role-alike PLC teams but under the grant a cohort of principals from the six target schools will be formed. Additionally, a PLC group consisting of representatives from each of the feeder pattern schools (Eno Valley-Chewning-Northern and Fayetteville St-Lowe’s Grove-Hillside) will be formed to analyze trends of data when students transition from school to school and determine ways to support students through those transitions more effectively.

Additionally, a major component of *Redefining Futures* is to empower schools to determine what programming or supports are needed at their individual schools. This process will be completed through the award of mini-grants. Teams from the schools will complete the application, which will require them to develop goals/outcomes, describe the activities, determine evaluation methods, and develop a timeline for the use of the funds. Schools will also have to show some evidence of effectiveness for the proposed activities as well as show how they involved the whole school in the decision-making process for requesting funds. These proposals will then be evaluated by the Central Leadership Team (CLT), which is composed of DAE, DPS, business community, and university partners.

These mini-grants will be awarded for a variety of activities including direct service provision such as mentoring, tutoring, after-school programming, home visits, or high-quality out-of-school-time (OST) activities. This mini-grant process was chosen with the explicit purpose of empowering schools and educators to make decisions for their schools. Too often, decisions on program offerings are made by administrators not in the school or by district policy that may not have specific relevance to a given school. By providing the support of the CLT and by setting clear expectations for the use of the funds

and the evaluation of the programs offered, schools will make decisions based on their needs and be held accountable for the results.

The combined efforts of the summer event, PLC work, and mini-grants for programming will affect the graduation rates for the high schools positively. The empowerment and scaffolding that will be provided to the teachers will re-energize them to engage students more deeply and in more meaningful ways. It will facilitate educators making more focused, effective decisions about instruction which will in turn affect student achievement and graduation.

### Increased participation in rigorous coursework in middle and high schools (including AP/IB courses)

Please indicate baseline data at year one. Please describe (in detail) processes and strategies to be implemented to address this outcome in year one. (Not to exceed 2 single-spaced typed pages)

School	Baseline data from 2008-2009 school year											
	AP				IB				Honors			
	AA		White		AA		White		AA		White	
	All	Male	All	Male	All	Male	All	Male	All	Male	All	Male
<b>Hillside HS</b>	6.8	2.4	0.3	0.3	34.4	12.7	3.4	1.5	46.5	16.3	1.5	1.3
<b>Northern HS</b>	4.4	1.6	15.3	7.3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	28.9	11.9	41.5	21.4

\*\* Data calculated as percentages of advanced course enrollment at the school

As seen in the chart above, enrollment in advanced coursework differs significantly at the two target high schools. Hillside HS is composed of predominantly African-American students, and that is reflected in the percentage of African-American students enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses. Even so, only 12.7% of African-American students enrolled in IB courses are male. This indicates that the majority of students in the IB classes are female. This is supported by student focus-group reports by African-American males who state that they are in mostly female classes. These numbers are echoed in honors and AP classes, indicating that the numbers of male African-American students taking advanced coursework of any kind is extraordinarily low at Hillside despite it being a predominantly African-American student body.

Northern HS statistics, however, indicate a gap in both male enrollment in advanced courses and a gap between the percentages of African-American and white students by significant amounts. Because Hillside is the only school to offer the IB program, no data is available for Northern for these classes. Additionally, it is clear that fewer African-American students in general enroll in advanced courses than white students. Compounding this issue is the fact that only 1.6% of advanced course enrollment consists of African-American males.

Although not listed above, the middle schools also provide high school coursework beginning in seventh grade. These include Algebra I and Geometry currently, but will also include English I and a science next year and a social studies course the following year. The course enrollment and/or success of students in these courses could also be incorporated as metrics as the initiative progresses.

*Redefining Futures* will work to alleviate this issue primarily through strengthening educator practice by incorporating Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) elements by way of professional development in the first year. The content of this philosophy of education will be explored in another section, but the purpose of providing it to educators first is to encourage them to ask questions of themselves to determine their own “blind spots” and weaknesses in reaching all students.

Although the focus in the first year will be primarily on increasing educator capacity and understanding, this will have an effect on the way students are scheduled and how they are recruited into courses. Simply seeing the data, discussing it and coming to terms with the fact that the enrollment in these courses is lower than it should be is a great eye-opener and naturally focuses efforts on improving the enrollment. Knowing that the data has not been broken down into these categories before shines light on areas of practice which had previously been unknown and therefore unaddressed in structural practices (such as enrollment).

Another contributor to the increase in advanced coursework should be the use of action research. As mentioned above, action research will not be offered until the second semester of the first year. This is to provide the time necessary to provide CRP training to teachers and to develop the

university-based course to be offered to teachers for credit. This is not to say that teachers must take the course to do action research, but that it will be an additional support for those who wish to participate. Teachers may choose to focus their action research on why students in their schools are not enrolling in more advanced courses and what might help encourage them to do so. This data would provide the schools with the resources, as well as the instructional strategies, to address the issue of recruiting more minority students into advanced coursework of all types.

### Increased literacy and math achievement

Please indicate baseline data at year one. Please describe (in detail) processes and strategies to be implemented to address this outcome in year one. (Not to exceed 2 single-spaced typed pages)

School	Subject Area	% Proficient White	% Proficient African-American	% Proficient Hispanic
<b>ELEMENTARY</b>				
<b>Eno Valley</b>	Reading	54.8	38.4	38.9
	Math	67.7	51.5	69.4
<b>Fayetteville</b>	Reading	50.0	22.0	30.0
	Math	100.0	34.1	47.6
<b>MIDDLE</b>				
<b>Chewning</b>	Reading	61.0	21.6	26.1
	Math	61.9	26.1	37.4
<b>Lowe's Grove</b>	Reading	56.7	29.6	29.4
	Math	63.3	35.3	51.3
<b>HIGH</b>				
<b>Hillside</b>	English 1	66.7	41.3	43.5
	Algebra 1	60.0	34.6	26.1
<b>Northern</b>	English 1	83.2	47.2	49.90
	Algebra 1	52.0	26.4	37.0

\*\*Compiled by Dr. Rita O'Sullivan and students, School of Education, UNC-CH Fall 2009

Clearly, improving literacy and math achievement in the target schools will be critical to the success of *Redefining Futures*. As seen in the chart above, African-American students overall performed lower on the state-standardized End-of-Grade (EOG) and End-of-Course (EOC) tests than their white counterparts.

To address this issue, *Redefining Futures* will begin a two-pronged approach to raising achievement of African-American males in the target schools. To address only students would ignore the larger concern of ensuring that the teachers are effective in the classroom. To address only teachers would ignore the fact that students enter classrooms with specific needs which need to be addressed academically. Therefore, the first year of implementation will first focus on ensuring all teachers have a firm, common foundation from which to address the needs of their students. The second part of the year will focus on evaluating what is working at the school through action research and PLC data analysis as well as expanding those programs that show results.

The focus on teachers will begin with the *Redefining Futures* summit which will kick off the initiative's work. At the summit, teachers will begin their exploration of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) with Ron Walker, who is an expert in working with boys of color. Additionally, they will begin to interact with one another through partner and feeder schools. For example, teachers at Hillside and Northern will have the rare opportunity to discuss with one another their experiences with students as well as strategies which have worked well with the target population. The same will be true of the elementary and of the middle school pairs. Further, the feeder pattern schools will form teams (Eno Valley Elem., Chewning Middle, and Northern HS; Fayetteville St. Elem., Lowe's Grove Middle, and Hillside HS). These teams will discuss how students transition between the schools, what each school has found to work with their populations, and how to work together to ensure a firm foundation in the lower grades and support in the upper grades. This work will continue for the course of the year through embedded professional development using existing NCAE curriculum on cultural competence as well as by teacher work in PLC groups. This will be facilitated through online communication using existing

platforms. It will further be enhanced through periodic interaction with Mr. Walker as well as the development of three new PLC groups: feeder patterns, partner schools, and principals. These groups are novel to the district, as existing groups currently only exist inside a distinct school building or with role-alike groups such as media coordinators. No formal partnerships between schools exist, nor are there leadership-based PLC groups. These teams are being formed for this initiative because it is clear that better communication and collaboration is critical to the success of the students. This sentiment was expressed both by focus groups with students, teachers, and the community.

In the second part of the year, teachers will have the opportunity to do action research projects in their own classrooms. Although this option is always open to teachers, many teachers do not feel equipped to complete projects on their own. To facilitate effective project development and research execution, UNC-CH has agreed to develop a research course specifically to address the needs of the teachers involved in *Redefining Futures*. Although the course will not be restricted to only teachers at the target schools, the course will be structured specifically to support those teachers and financial support through the grant funds will be provided to facilitate their enrollment. Further, UNC-CH students currently enrolled in doctoral programs in education will be paired with teachers at the target schools to develop and implement research projects that will yield meaningful results for the schools and the teachers. This mentoring relationship for the teachers will be beneficial to all parties: schools, teachers, mentors, and students. By encouraging teachers to examine their own classrooms for biases, strengths, and best practice student achievement will be impacted on a broad basis and the teacher's skills will be greatly enhanced, leading to years of more rigorous and relevant teaching which naturally impact student achievement levels.

Also in the second part of the year, mini-grants of \$5,000 to \$10,000 will be available to schools to use for programming that will support their students' academic success in more direct ways. These grants will be offered to schools through a vetting process overseen by the leadership team. Schools will complete an application which includes a logic model describing what they will do, how it will be measured, and how they will know it is proving effective for students. They will also have to identify how the program fits into the focus of the *Redefining Futures* initiative. Although it is not expected that the programs will only serve African-American males, it is expected that the program will target these students first and will have specific relevance to needs expressed by this group.

The mini-grants are being offered for two reasons. First, in the leadership's work with focus groups and principals from each school as well as the community it was expressed that many programs are already in use and partnership with the schools but that they have limited reach and/or support. Second, because research and best practice show that when a school is empowered to use their professional judgment to solve problems, the solutions are fully accepted and "owned" by the staff and students at the school. As noted above, one of the expected barriers in working with the target schools is "owning" the problem and solutions wall-to-wall. By encouraging the staff to find solutions that work for them and their school, the initiative is more likely to have a stronger impact on student achievement in the long run. In addition, schools will be encouraged to work with their partner schools as well as their feeder pattern schools to submit applications that show collaboration and collective ownership of the students' success.

The programs that schools will fund must also be related to research-based practices such as mentoring, tutoring, out-of-school programming, or school-based programming for classrooms. The target schools already have some of these programs functioning, but need additional resources to expand them and/or adapt them to the target group. For example, Northern HS has the "Siblings" program in which local university students (UNC-CH or Duke) are partnered with high school students for mentoring and tutoring. Another notable program is the "Citizen Schools" after-school program at Lowe's Grove which focuses on project-based learning which involves community members as leaders.

**Increase Local and District Work Capacity (Page 8 of 13)**

Goal	Outcome Indicators	Process Indicators
<p><b>Increase capacity of districts and local associations to work independently and collaboratively</b></p>	<p><b>Increased use of novel negotiation processes</b> (for example, increase in the utilization of interest-based collaborative processes)</p> <p><b>Improved collective bargaining agreements that reflect a focus on teaching and learning and which support human capital development</b> (for example, shifts in teacher pay structures; peer coaching and evaluation; flexibility in teacher assignment and increased union participation in recruitment, induction and retention practices)</p>	<p>Increased collaboration between district and local association</p> <p>Systemic alignment of district curricular and instructional improvement efforts</p> <p>Development of capacity to use data at district, school, and classroom levels</p> <p>Engagement of district-level and association staff to help ensure depth and sustainability of efforts</p>

**Increased use of novel negotiation processes**

Please indicate baseline data at year one. Please describe (in detail) processes and strategies to be implemented to address this outcome in year one. (Not to exceed 2 single-spaced typed pages)

As North Carolina is a non-bargaining state, negotiation between district or state administration and teachers is not an issue. No collective bargaining agreements are developed, but a focus on teaching and learning which support human capital development is a critical collaboration point for association and district personnel. The outcome in this area is more difficult to track, however, because of the lack of bargaining. Therefore, the focus in *Redefining Futures* is on the increased collaboration of DAE and DPS administration, the empowerment of educators, and the use of data at district, school, and classroom levels. It is important to note here, however, that collective bargaining and contract negotiation have been part of the NCAE legislative agenda and constitution (via the Platforms and Resolutions) for at least the last 15 years. Although the Association has not been successful to date in working with state legislators on this point, it will continue to be a goal and a point of conversation for the foreseeable future.

The baseline data for these efforts is slim. There has never been a tracking of collaborative efforts between DAE and DPS, but accounts from members as well as DAE and DPS leadership acknowledge that the relationship has not always been proactive or positive. Since Dr. Carl Harris’s arrival as Superintendent and the election of the most previous president, Donald Barringer, the relationship between the parties has steadily improved. Those efforts have ballooned far past the two leaders, and permeated multiple levels of DAE and DPS leadership. When Mr. Barringer was called upon to serve the state by advising Governor Bev Perdue on education issues, Ms. Kristy Moore was well-equipped to step into his place to continue the efforts. She continued and expanded the positive relationship between the district and the association leadership. Dr. Harris also made clear his expectation of collaboration with his senior staff, who embraced the opportunity. Dr. Terri Mazingo, DPS Chief Academic Officer, works closely with Ms. Moore and the rest of the DAE staff. Since Dr. Harris has been called to work at the US Department of Education, she has been taking the lead on DPS involvement in the initiative and working collaboratively with the leadership team. In tracking these efforts, qualitative measures such as interviews will be used. Additional metrics may include initiatives branded as collaborative efforts, joint presentations to the Durham School Board, and adaptation of school board policy with respect to DAE presence in individual schools.

Although DPS has been aligning curricular and instructional efforts for a number of years, the efforts have not always included the DAE leadership or membership. However, under this initiative the collaborative efforts have improved significantly. In addition, the transparency of the efforts made by the district to improve instruction has increased, opening new doors for input and collaboration on the issues. During the first year of implementation, it is expected that this collaboration will continue to improve, with DAE becoming a more visible partner in education for the district. Facilitating this effort is the fact that the leadership team for *Redefining Futures* is comprised of a balance between association, district, community, and higher education partners. Through the work on this team, the partnership has become considerably more effective and productive. Several non-initiative related efforts have begun as a result of the relationships built while working on this plan. By overseeing the professional development efforts as well as the mini-grant approvals during the first year (and continuing thereafter), this team will continue to grow and develop relationships that facilitate additional collaboration and alignment of efforts to help Durham's students achieve at their highest levels.

Another example of the increased capacity of local and district administration is the increased use of data at district, school, and classroom levels. The use of data has been a focus of the district for some time now, but as noted above has not always included DAE. Through the development of this proposal, much data has been analyzed and shared with all parties- including DAE, media, and the community at large. While this level of transparency is often met with trepidation, it is being embraced and encouraged by DPS administration as the initiative moves forward. The identification of African-American boys as the target group was entirely driven by data and decided upon by the entire leadership team. Further, the expectation has been set that all PLC teams will use data to analyze teaching and improve learning. However, it is already known that although many teachers and leaders are familiar with data, their understanding is often flawed or incomplete. To assist them in having a full understanding of the data as well as how to analyze it, target schools will receive training on the topic beginning at the *Redefining Futures* Summit. NCAE, DAE, and DPS staff will team up to work with the teachers and leaders to ensure they are well-equipped to continue the data journey. Their analysis of data will continue through the PLC work and their action research projects.

Finally, district-level and association staff will be deeply engaged in *Redefining Futures* to ensure sustainability of the initiative far beyond the initial five years of this proposal. The leadership team will continue to meet regularly to ensure the goals of the initiative are being met as well as to review mini-grant proposals for the use of funds. The team will also work with evaluators both from UNC-CH hired through the grant and those from NEA Foundation. The team will always consist of at least one Executive-level DPS staff, the DAE President, 1-2 DAE members, the UniServ director for Durham, the Executive Director of the NC Foundation for Public School Children (the fiscal agent), as well as business and higher education representatives. This balanced leadership structure will help ensure that all decisions are data-based and within the mission of *Redefining Futures*. Principals will also be involved in decisions made by the group through regular PLC meetings as well as being invited to leadership meetings (other than those to review mini-grant applications).

## Improved collective bargaining agreements that reflect a focus on teaching and learning and which support human capital development

Please indicate baseline data at year one. Please describe (in detail) processes and strategies to be implemented to address this outcome in year one. (Not to exceed 2 single-spaced typed pages)

As noted elsewhere, North Carolina is a non-bargaining state and therefore has neither collective bargaining agreements nor any flexibility in teacher pay rates. Further, evaluation tools are developed by the state and are uniform across all districts in NC. To that end, the NC Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI) has opted to adopt the McREL (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning) Teacher Evaluation System effective next school year (2010-2011). This system will dramatically change the way teachers are evaluated and how performance is measured. NCAE has been a leader in providing both information and professional development for teachers and principals on the new system. Association leaders are trained in how the system works and what to expect from the instrument and provide sessions regularly for members and non-members.

As the new evaluation tool will come online next year when the *Redefining Futures* efforts are in full swing, NCAE will play a pivotal role in working with DPS teachers and PD staff to ensure all educators are aware of and ready for the change. This will be critical to the work of *Redefining Futures* as many of the changes in the evaluation tool will be aligned with the work of the initiative. The partnership between DAE and DPS will deepen as this new tool is rolled out, as each will have the other as a resource to support and educate staff throughout the district. Because the McREL tool has not been implemented yet, there is no metric by which to measure existing collaboration. However, it also provides an ideal opportunity to exemplify the deepening relationship between association and district staff. The number of professional development sessions and advertisements showing a united front of DAE and DPS staff could be included as part of this metric.

Another strategy that will be part of the *Redefining Futures* initiative is the development of PLC groups at the target schools. These teams already exist, but are in need of data analysis development as well as expansion. DAE, NCAE, and DPS will collaboratively develop modules designed to provide a strong statistical background for educators as well as provide guidance for the effective use of data in the classroom. The PLCs will also be expanded to include two new groups: principals and feeder patterns. Currently, principals do not participate in PLC groups with other principals. However, the principals in the target schools have indicated an interest in working with one another to ensure their school is providing the highest level of support for students possible. This focus on human capital development will both increase the level of effectiveness at individual schools, but also provide depth and sustainability of efforts at these schools. It is not expected that the principals will leave their schools in the near future, but that is never out of the question. By providing support and connection between the principals in a PLC, the initiative gains significant stability should leadership at any of the schools change.

The second PLC group to be formed is the feeder pattern team. The need for this team surfaced through discussions with teachers, leaders, and the community. It was found that little communication or planning is currently done to support students as they transition from one school to the next. This is not to say that no supports exist, but that they are not aligned nor well communicated through the school patterns. The development of the feeder PLC will serve to increase that alignment and communication which will strengthen the efforts currently in place and ensure consistency for the students. Forming this team will also serve to develop the human capital at each of the schools. Teachers will be better prepared for the next group of students entering their schools and will build stronger relationships with the schools from which and/or to which their students are fed. Doing this will also contribute to teachers' satisfaction within their schools and therefore affect retention (and likely recruitment).

Both teams will be initially developed only for the target schools, with the intention of expanding the practice to all schools if it proves to be effective. The development and support of the teams will be a collaborative effort between DAE and DPS, further strengthening the partnership. Additionally, DAE members will be actively recruited to serve on the feeder school PLCs as often as possible to ensure that the team is aware of all that both DPS and DAE have to offer in the way of support, resources, and professional development.

Finally, DAE and DPS are collaboratively developing the *Redefining Futures* Summit which will serve as a kickoff event the first year and be an annual update and research sharing event thereafter. It will be an opportunity for teachers from the target schools to meet, collaborate, and learn together. The focus will be on meeting the needs of African-American students, and will include professional development with Ron Walker, time in PLC teams, and team building activities focused on student learning and relevant instruction. At this event, DAE will also provide information on the services and advantages provided through membership for the partner schools. As such, DAE and DPS visibly demonstrate the strength of the partnership formed through this initiative.

Increase Teaching Capacity in High Poverty/Minority Schools (Page 9 of 13)		
Goal	Outcome Indicators	Process Indicators
Increase teaching capacity in high-poverty, high-minority schools	<p><b>Increased availability of and engagement in high-quality professional development to build instructional capacity</b></p> <p><b>Increased cultural competency</b></p> <p><b>Increased teacher retention rates</b></p>	<p>Increase in teacher satisfaction levels</p> <p>Increased participation in and quality of professional learning communities</p> <p>Coaching and mentoring opportunities for teachers</p> <p>Increased percentage of National Board Certified teachers</p>

**Increased availability of and engagement in high-quality professional development to build instructional capacity**

Please indicate baseline data at year one. Please describe (in detail) processes and strategies to be implemented to address this outcome in year one. (Not to exceed 2 single-spaced typed pages)

There has been a steady erosion of support for professional development in North Carolina. With the advent of high stakes accountability testing in 1995, the NC Department of Public instruction was gutted both to cut costs and make funds available for testing and accountability. Until then, NCDPI had been a major force in providing and funding professional development. Local districts have been able to use local funds for professional development but have been squeezed both by efforts to reduce property taxes and even to set end and beginning dates of schools that allow for maximum summer time to benefit the tourism industry. Currently, most professional development is of limited duration and provided by external sources (i.e. not embedded nor provided by educators).

It is well-established that high quality professional development has the following characteristics: 1. based on research and best practice knowledge; 2. both intensive (highly focused) and extensive (continuous over time); 3. Job-embedded; and 4. professional discretion in what and how to learn (Becoming a Learning School, p. 18-21). In practice of course there are limits on how well each of these can be developed. For this initiative, the leadership team gave considerable thought to how to best provide high quality professional development while both increasing the amount and the engagement of teachers. The team concluded that this can best be accomplished by providing professional development that sets the stage for engagement, enabling schools to determine what practices are going to serve their African-American students best, using action research processes that allow teachers discretion in what and how to study, preparing teachers to develop advanced competencies in their profession, and linking all this with the already existing professional learning communities in the schools.

The *Redefining Futures* initiative is based on developing high levels of teacher capability. This will begin by providing professional development on effective practices for African-American males (with Ron Walker and NCAE), culturally responsive pedagogy, developing school based efforts (a mini-grant process for the focus schools), action research, and achievement (and other) data analysis. Each of these will covered intensively at the Redefining Futures Summit the first summer and ongoing professional development throughout the school year will build on these and move them to new levels in the school based efforts. Action research projects will be sponsored by UNC-CH in cooperation with

other local universities. The school level PLCs will be the school-level decision making bodies and will incorporate what has been learned into the school plans.

There is more detail on the content of these efforts under the next outcome indicator of increased cultural competency. The professional development will have the most current knowledge about African-American males and cultural responsive pedagogy at their centers. Intensive workshops and open discussions at the Summit will mature into ongoing school based efforts, action research projects, and incorporated into the CTQ professional development. Action research will embed the professional development in classrooms and provide new knowledge that will be collected and distributed amongst the schools. Teachers will have discretion over the school based efforts through the mini-grants process, in the choice of action research projects, and in whether they choose to work with the mini-grant and/or action research. Having such high quality professional development will lead to both increased competency and better teacher retention (by increasing NBCTs in the schools). It will also generate teacher knowledge of best practices.

During the first year of implementation, the focus will be on providing teachers with the scaffolding in CRP that is critical to improving the success of African-American males in the target schools. This will be done through direct professional development work first then continued through individual PLC groups at the schools. In addition to the professional development on CRP, the university partners for the project will provide guidance to teachers regarding the development and implementation of research projects. These sessions will be partially provided by the NC Association of Educators (NCAE) Center for Teaching and Learning, with support from the university partners and Ron Walker, who is a leading researcher of and activist in working with African-American males. To supplement their efforts, the DPS Research, Development, and Accountability office will provide instruction on the analysis and use of data provided through the district.

The CTQ will also serve as a partner in the project through providing a technology platform through which teachers will be expected to communicate and share ideas, experiences, and effective strategies for working with African-American male students. This will serve not only as a method of sharing information but of furthering collaborative efforts, strengthening teachers' 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills, and proving a way for all parties to communicate asynchronously.

In the second semester of the first year, the focus will expand to include not only CRP professional development but also research methodology. UNC-CH is developing a course for teachers to learn action research methodology for use specifically to address the purpose of this proposal. Teachers will be offered the opportunity to both gain research knowledge and experience and CEU/graduate course credit. They will engage in high-quality action research in their own schools and classrooms to investigate the needs and successes of their school with respect to working with African-American males.

Another strategy is the use of the mini-grants. Schools will be offered funds specifically set aside to provide professional development as they deem appropriate for working with AA male students. By providing the flexibility for the schools to choose programs that meet their own needs as well as the opportunity to work with partner schools to increase funding availability, the schools are empowered to own the problem more fully. Schools will be able to apply for mini-grant funds (either individually or in partnerships) in the second semester of the first year of implementation.

### Increased cultural competency

Please indicate baseline data at year one. Please describe (in detail) processes and strategies to be implemented to address this outcome in year one. (Not to exceed 2 single-spaced typed pages)

Focus groups revealed that African-American males are seen through a deficit model. Moreover, this is broadly true across stakeholder groups. It will take a concerted effort to alter this, and it will have to involve more than teachers. Thus the communications plan will work broadly across the community. In the schools, the DAE will lead a professional development effort across the focal schools. The initiative has several program processes: a widespread professional development process, an action research focus that cuts across all schools, and a mini-grant program that allows the schools, individually and collectively, to design efforts to 'redefine the futures' of African-American males that fit their context. The professional development and action research foci are linked and have three elements: cultural competence, action research, and bolstering professional knowledge and competence.

The *Redefining Futures* initiative will offer professional development to increase the cultural competence of teachers in the participating schools. This will include professional development regarding home visitations. Seattle noted the importance of this. The professional development will work to develop increased cultural competence of teachers. This will be developed through a collaboration of three partners: Dr. Ron Walker, UNC-CH and the Center for Teaching Quality. All of this work will directly address race and gender. The African-American male is not thriving in Durham schools, and professional development and action research will be the primary tools used to directly address this. NCAE will contract with Dr. Ron Walker of The Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color (COSEBOC), who is a specialist in male students of color to design, and in part deliver professional development to teachers at the target schools. Efforts in this area must include developing an awareness of the issues involved, challenging the myths and assumptions that undergird a deficit understanding of African-American males, creating new beliefs and practices that honor and respect these young men, creating enabling learning and social environments, using culture and racial identity to enhance achievement, and creating sustainable practices and beliefs. NCCU and UNC-CH have considerable expertise to offer in this area as well. The evaluation and leadership teams have reviewed several instruments to assess cultural competence and have not found one that is relevant for this effort. Given this, a set of assessments will be built into cultural competence professional development, which will enable tracking resultant changes and identifying resistant issues.

Milwaukee taught the planning team about the potential role of action research in the initiative's efforts. An unstated understanding is that the focus on African-American males will challenge teachers emotionally, intellectually and practically. However, there is no magic wand to create the kind of change being sought. It will take teachers taking risks with their practice and learning from these efforts. Teacher action research is ideal for this. Thus action research will be promoted as a vehicle for teachers to learn and share but also as a way for them to take charge of the changes needed. They will design studies in their classrooms and schools that help them develop practices that increase the learning of African-American male students. Thus the teachers will try out some of the professional development ideas on cultural competency in their classrooms and create practices that if effective can be shared. *Redesigning Futures*, in partnership with UNC-CH, will also offer professional development on doing action research to all teachers across the six schools. This professional development will be continuous starting with designing projects, their execution, the results of the study and sharing these across all the schools in an annual summer conference. What is learned each year at this conference can then be cycled into the cultural competence professional development as well as lead to more action research studies.

Clearly, the efforts above will require teachers being paid for this work. But one of the real limits of reform efforts is time, and time that is spent together is the hardest to sustain. A partnership with the

Center for Teaching Quality (CTQ) is being sought for development of an online collaborative platform. However, other venues such as an existing intranet at DPS and an expansion of an existing curricular warehouse are also possibilities. The use of technology will mediate some of the needs and sustain the work over time. A virtual platform will enable continuous contact with the educators both for the development of cultural competence and to help manage the action research processes (both reflective and material). This is a unique opportunity to experiment with this type of support for action research. It will create teacher leadership capabilities for the schools and for DAE. This collaboration builds on existing CTQ/DAE/DPS collaborations on mathematics and administrator training for the new teacher assessment process.

These three efforts in collaboration with DAE, Dr. Ron Walker, the local universities, and the CTQ will create high quality professional development that increases cultural competency and professional capabilities to enable teachers to redefine the futures of African-American males in their charge.

While the mini-grant process is designed to enable schools to determine their priorities, it will also lead to capacity building. It will be required that each grant-funded project generate an annual “what was learned” report. These can be part of the knowledge base teachers will create. Currently, DPS and Duke University host an annual research symposium for university education researchers to share their research findings with one another and the school district. This model has worked well and created many points of collaboration between university researchers in the subsequent years. In the implementation of this program, the symposium will either be expanded to include teacher action researchers and the initiative’s other university partners or a new symposium will be held specifically to focus on the work of these teachers and the UNC/NCCU researchers focused on African-American males in DPS. This forum will further serve to increase cultural competency of the partner schools through learning about experiences in each of the projects therefore multiplying the effect of the work done in each individual school.

### Increased teacher retention rates

Please indicate baseline data at year one. Please describe (in detail) processes and strategies to be implemented to address this outcome in year one. (Not to exceed 2 single-spaced typed pages)

School	Baseline data from 2008-2009 school year	
	% Turnover	TWC Survey Empowerment scores
<b>Eno Valley Elementary</b>	12.0	2.96
<b>Fayetteville St. Elem.</b>	4.0	3.12
<b>Chewing Middle</b>	20.3	2.81
<b>Lowe's Grove Middle</b>	20.0	3.02
<b>Hillside HS</b>	22.2	2.69
<b>Northern HS</b>	23.8	2.98
<b>DPS</b>	18.0	2.90
<b>NC</b>	13.3	2.91

\*\* Data pulled from NC School Report Cards and from DPS records

As noted in the table above, all but one of the turnover rates for the target schools are at or above the district and state rates. These numbers are slightly higher than in previous years, however, as DPS eliminated and re-distributed many positions during the 2008-2009 school year to adjust for the reduced revenue experienced across the state. As a result, many of the positions which were turned over were simply moved to other schools and/or departments reflecting higher than expected turnover. That noted, the numbers are still considerably higher than anyone would like.

The second metric above is the teacher response for each of the target schools to questions on the Teacher Working Conditions survey with respect to empowerment. These questions are scored on a one to five Likert scale of "Strongly Disagree" equaling one and "Strongly Agree" equaling five. This survey is given annually in DPS, and biannually across NC. Therefore, the NC score is based on the 2008 survey responses, but the DPS and school level responses are based on the 2009 administration. As evidenced by educator response, empowerment is mediocre at best. Other areas scored by teachers include time, professional development, leadership, and facilities/resources. These metrics could also be included in any evaluation, however the leadership team felt that the section on empowerment was most applicable to this initiative's efforts and would be most closely linked to changes in rating.

As noted elsewhere, PLC efforts will be a keystone in the *Redefining Futures* initiative. Through these groups learning communities will be developed to their highest potential and using the definition from the National Staff Development Center (NSDC) sponsored book "Becoming a Learning School." (Killion and Roy, 2009). This definition states that "professional development means a comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers' and principal' effectiveness in raising student achievement" (p. 18). PLCs serve this purpose, and teams within the target schools will be provided with additional support in the analysis and use of their student data as well as instruction on how to ensure their pedagogy is culturally responsive and tailored to their students' backgrounds. This work will begin with the summit and continue during the year through small PLC groups, staff meeting sessions, and online collaboration with colleagues at partner schools. Learning and analysis will be job-embedded and provided by educators, school or district leadership, new teacher mentors, and national experts on working with African-American boys. These efforts will support teachers in learning content and delivery best-practices, therefore providing the scaffolding required to develop and retain high-quality teachers for the district's students.

The significance of the schools becoming learning communities is two-fold. First, these schools will serve as models for others of how to fully utilize the PLC concept. While all schools have PLC groups,

few have fully implemented them or done so with high fidelity to the concept. Additionally, no cross-site PLC teams exist currently. This initiative will develop two such groups, which will provide vertical and horizontal alignment and accountability. Additionally, the focus will be on understanding and using the existing data with respect to a specific demographic of students. Currently data is used, but not always fully understood. Also, it is rarely broken down to smaller subgroups and analyzed by teams of teachers on a deep level. *Redefining Futures* will help schools do just that, and will provide the support needed to find and fully implement strategies which will close the achievement gap in their school.

Secondly, becoming a learning community gives schools a venue in which to safely acknowledge gaps in knowledge and explore collaboratively ways to bridge those gaps to increase classroom effectiveness. This is neither a simple nor quick process, and requires a shift in the culture of the school. All schools targeted for this initiative are experiencing a significant gap in the achievement of African-American boys with respect to their white counterparts. Many of these same schools also have high poverty rates, compounding the school's challenges. In this situation, schools often try to highlight as much of the positives in the situation as possible. While important to celebrate success, it is also important to acknowledge gaps in both knowledge and practice. As noted in NSDC's *Becoming a Learning School*, high performing schools focus on raising capability (helping people learn), promoting excellence, and a hunger for improvement. Low performing schools focus on developing repartee, making allowances for personal circumstances, and creating a collegial working environment (p. 37). Therefore, to become high performing, these schools may have to have difficult and uncomfortable conversations and look at disturbing data reflecting on current practice. This is not possible if the school culture is such that competition is the norm not collaboration. *Redefining Futures* will help to shape the culture of the school through open, honest analysis of and reflection on the data on student achievement at the target schools, then by empowering teachers through development, guidance, and accountability to make changes in their practice as well as fund programming that will enhance their efforts. Through this empowerment and development of human capital, school culture will inevitably change and student achievement improves across the board. By putting a particular focus on African-American males, the goal will be to help this group improve most dramatically thereby closing the achievement gap. By empowering and supporting teachers, retention rates and TWC ratings will increase as well.

One final way the teacher retention and satisfaction rates will be addressed is through action research. During the first part of the year, schools will be analyzing their own practice and data to determine where their areas of greatest need exist. They will be forming research questions and begin thinking about what projects they'd like to explore to address those needs. In the second part of the year teachers will be invited to develop action research projects, paired with graduate students at UNC-CH, and offered scholarships to enroll in an action research course developed for this initiative at UNC-CH. Teachers will implement these projects in their classrooms, gather data, and analyze it with both their PLC teams and with their UNC partners and/or professor. At the end of their projects, the teachers will be asked to participate in a research symposium to share their results and lessons learned. Teachers from all target schools as well as educational researchers from other surrounding universities (Duke, NC Central University, NC State, etc) will be invited to present results and network with one another to develop more and more meaningful projects. The purpose of these experiences will be not only to contribute to the teachers' and schools' understanding of what works best in Durham schools but also to empower them to think and act in analytical ways to improve classroom practice. This will further increase their sense of empowerment and is intended to translate into lower turnover rates. Additionally, a compendium of the action research is being considered for publication by the University and, if possible, would provide another metric for evaluation as well as an excellent reference for the next generation of those seeking research in the classroom.

Goal	Outcome Indicators	Process Indicators
<p><b>Develop and Leverage parent, family and community assets to support student learning</b></p>	<p><b>Increased parent involvement and communication</b></p> <p><b>Increase in financial and other support from private sources</b> (e.g., philanthropy, business, nonprofit sector youth services providers)</p>	<p>Establishment or expansion of home visiting programs</p> <p>Information and opportunities for engagement for families</p> <p>Increased collaboration among schools and community-based support (for example, extended learning opportunities and non academic supports)</p> <p>Enlistment of a broad base of supporters and advocates for gap closing and sustainability</p>

**Increased Parent Involvement and Communication**

Please indicate baseline data at year one. Please describe (in detail) processes and strategies to be implemented to address this outcome in year one. (Not to exceed 2 single-spaced typed pages)

The leadership team agrees that a home visiting program needs to be established for families with African-American male students. The literature on culturally responsive education is clear that the schools must actively reach out to the families and seek their guidance as well as assistance. Although schools will have final oversight of programming, Redefining Futures is recommending that families be visited twice a year—once early and once midyear. The first visit will be to learn what academic and social supports the family feels are appropriate for their son(s) and to discuss what the school can do to help with this. In this meeting the student’s educational career plans will be discussed and parent input will be obtained. The second visit each year will review the student’s progress and seek parent input into how the teacher and school should proceed. Although schools will ultimately design their own programming, the recommendation from the leadership team will be for elementary schools to begin with those entering school (kindergarten and first grade), for middle schools to start with sixth graders and for high schools to focus on those transitioning into ninth grade. In this manner, schools can begin relationships with the families of those entering their schools and those relationships can be nurtured throughout the students’ tenure. Further, for middle schools this will be a critical time during which seven-year academic plans can be written to provide a pathway for students to be well prepared for high level courses in high school. This will serve a dual purpose for students and their families by both ensuring they take advanced courses sooner and more often, but also that they are aware of the options available to them to gain college credit while in high school (at no cost). This will lower the cost of attending college and therefore make it more likely that the students have true access to higher education. The partnerships with UNC-CH and NCCU will enhance this as they progress through their educational career by way of mentoring programs already established at the university and of the presence of university staff and students on school campuses.

During each home visit, the focus will be on the needs of the student, not the requirements of the school. This will keep these conversation future oriented and focused on possibilities not deficits. Seattle’s efforts taught Durham’s leadership team that teachers will need to be coached on how to conduct these visits and be particularly prepared to listen. Therefore, this will be incorporated this into the professional development for teachers. It will begin with the Redefining Futures Summit in the summer of 2010, and will continue throughout the year while the visits are occurring. Because the educators may or may not be visiting their own students, they will be expected to complete the visits then meet with the students’ teacher and/or academic team to review the family’s requests. Students

may also be assigned a Child and Family Service Team (CFST), which would include a social worker, counselor, and possibly others. If they have been assigned a team, the educator would be expected to hold the review meeting with the CFST. A document will be prepared for each school level which will be used to document what was learned and what next steps are needed for each student.

While the leadership team views both home visits and the career plan as new ways for us to engage families, there must also be efforts to increase the involvement and engagement of parents in the schools. However, the team is also convinced that parent involvement is a persistent issue and that there is no one single solution that will bring all parents to schools in meaningful ways. Thus Redefining Futures will encourage schools to experiment with innovative ideas to engage parents and the community. The mini-grant process will allow schools to explore research based ideas and to garner input from their stakeholders with respect to engagement. There are many ideas including community celebrations, parents as teachers, family service projects, and so on that could be attempted. The mini-grant process will require the documentation of the efforts and what was learned from them. These can be shared across the schools and district.

Another factor built into Redefining Futures is the collaboration and communication between schools. As noted elsewhere in the proposal, two new PLC teams will be built for the initiative. Principals from the target schools will meet as a team to chart progress, discuss student data, and develop ways to collaborate for meeting the needs of their students. Additionally, feeder pattern PLC teams will be formed (two) which will be responsible for discussing transition plans for students and areas of support needed from one another. For example, middle schools may identify an area of instruction in which their students consistently enter at a deficit. This could be addressed through conversations with the feeder elementary school and supports put in place. The teams will also discuss how to help students successfully transition from one school to the next and how to recruit them into higher level coursework in the lower grades. This would dovetail with the home visits to ensure students achieve at the highest levels possible.

### **Increase in financial and other support from private sources**

Please indicate baseline data at year one. Please describe (in detail) processes and strategies to be implemented to address this outcome in year one. (Not to exceed 2 single-spaced typed pages)

Both DAE and DPS have strong relationships with community organizations, and are consistently developing more partnerships. One of the strongest relationships is with the Superintendent's Business Advisory Council (BAC). This group of local business leaders is a strong supporter of education, and one of the key members of the group has served on the Redefining Futures leadership team from the inception. As the implementation of Redefining Futures progresses, the BAC has pledged its support through partnering with schools, continuing to work closely with the Redefining Futures leadership team, and is currently discussing how to support the Summit and Research Symposium efforts. They have also included a letter pledging support to the project.

Other partnerships which will be leveraged to support the initiative's sustainability include those with UNC-CH, NC Central University, and Duke University. The partnership with UNC-CH has been extensively described throughout this proposal, and the Dean of the Education department has written a letter of support. NCCU has been part of the leadership team's work and the partnership will continue through action research projects and other forms of collaboration. Although Duke only has an undergraduate program in education, the university provides support to DPS in a variety of other ways. For example, the school runs several programs aimed at supporting at-risk students, some specifically focusing on African-American males. These programs are already in the target schools and the partnerships will be deepened through the mini-grant proposals. Other forms of collaboration will also be sought, including research partnerships. Duke researchers from a variety of departments implement projects in the school system and the district is currently in discussions with them to focus efforts on the academic and social success of African-American males.

Many community-based organizations also exist in Durham to help at-risk students. Although not all are focused specifically on African-American males, all work with that population. For example, the Duke BOOST program provides high quality experiences for students interested in STEM areas (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). This group has already expressed an interest in supporting the initiative and provided a number of students as role models for encouraging other African-American males to enter advanced coursework. Another example is the Durham At-Risk Youth Collaborative (DARYC). This organization has a very strong relationship with DPS already, and is a collective of several smaller community organizations which provide mentoring, summer experiences, tutoring, and year-long internships for at-risk students. DARYC is a relatively new organization, however, and many schools do not know of their services. Through the mini-grant process their support will be provided to the schools and through their partnership with DPS they will be part of conversations around creative ways to expand both the schools' and their capacity.

Additional supporters exist in faith-based organizations (FBO). Although this relationship is currently informal and not well-defined, many members of DAE and employees of DPS are associated with them and provide support through volunteering in their programs and through helping schools find partners for individual initiatives. As the implementation of Redefining Futures continues, these partnerships will be formalized and similar partnerships formed with additional FBOs. Several of the target schools already have strong ties to local churches, and these relationships will be nurtured and expanded through this initiative. Specifically, volunteers will be sought to provide services to students and existing programming that has shown effectiveness will be utilized to its fullest extent.

The Durham Closing the Gap Committee will also serve as an excellent advocate for the efforts of this initiative. This team was formed several years ago when the state of NC recommended that every county develop a community-based committee to address the schools' needs in this area. The team consists of faith-based leaders, community organizers, business leaders, concerned parents, DPS staff, and School Board members. As described in the "Resources" section of this proposal, this team will be

redeployed and a new structure created to guide their functioning. Their focus will be centered on the efforts of this initiative and will be aligned with the work occurring in Redefining Futures. This team will serve as excellent community supporters and communicators, which will only serve to strengthen the sustainability of the project.

Finally, additional financial support will also be sought from philanthropic and grant-based sources. For example, the DAE President has been involved in discussions with the Governor regarding North Carolina's application for *Race to the Top* funds. Her insight into this proposal development will provide a strong platform from which to develop a proposal for Durham when/if the funds become available. Additionally, several leadership team members have personal relationships with funders and have expressed willingness to approach them with a proposal to expand the impact of Redefining Futures for the target schools. Other funding sources are being considered, including the Investing in Innovation (I3) Funds from the US Department of Education.

## School Demographics (Page 11 of 13)

The following section relates to School Demographics and Student Performance Data for Intervention Schools (Intervention Schools are those in which each site's theory of action will be implemented.)

### School Demographics

Name of Intervention Schools	Total Student Enrollment	AYP Y/N	Free/Reduced Lunch	Avg. Class Size	% African American	% Hispanic	% White	%ELL	%with IEP
Fayetteville Elementary	283	Y	79.09	16	83.0	18.0	0.4	14.5	10.6
Eno Valley Elementary	648	Y	66.77	20	70.4	10.3	9.3	10.0	21.1
Chewning Middle	485	N	73.59	17	48.5	17.5	8.4	20.6	17.1
Lowe's Grove Middle	613	N	62.52	18	68.4	18.9	6.7	15.0	19.6
Northern High	1668	N	40.29	21	54.3	7.6	33.8	3.7	9.7
Hillside High	1386	N	62.04	19	87.4	7.9	2.5	5.6	12.3
Average for each category	847		64.05	19	68.7	13.4	10.2	11.6	15.1

\*\* Statistics based on 2008-2009 school year, pulled from DPS website and NC School Report Cards

The intervention schools include two separate feeder patterns with similar demographics. The first set is based in East Durham and includes Fayetteville Street Elementary school, Lowe's Grove Middle school, and Hillside High School. The second set is based in North Durham and includes Eno Valley Elementary School, Chewning Middle School, and Northern High School. These schools were chosen because they all have high percentages of African-American students, low performance levels, and high Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL) rates. Further, the achievement gap between African-American students and their white counterparts is significant.

The East Durham set of schools has a history of low performance on state standardized testing and has been categorized as low-performing or identified as in need of improvement through either a state judge's mandate (Judge Howard Manning) or through No Child Left Behind sanctions. Fayetteville Street is a small elementary school housing students in Kindergarten through fifth grade. The school is directly across the street from some Housing Authority homes in a relatively high-crime area. However, several community-based organizations are involved with the school and it recently was able to reopen an after-school program which had been cut due to budget issues and the end of a previously funded grant.

Lowe's Grove Middle school has been on and off of the state's low-performing list for several years. The school has long been high minority and high poverty and is located in a mostly rural area of the county. It was plagued by low expectations and teacher morale, and had several leadership changes in the past few years. The school's leadership changed for the last time almost two years ago, however, and the performance has been on the rise. Teacher satisfaction is improving based on the Teacher Working Conditions survey, and the school was recently renovated to provide more space and updated resources for its students. The principal has also been actively recruiting community organizations to come into the school and currently has at least two local university professors donating a significant

amount of their time to work with both African-American students and their families and with the teachers to best understand the students' home context in order to meet their needs. There is much work to be done in the school, and Lowe's Grove is poised in a perfect position to take the next big steps with the help of Redefining Futures.

Lowe's Grove feeds into Hillside High School, which has also historically struggled with student achievement and discipline. They have also had several leaders recently, and the newest principal began his tenure this school year. Teacher turnover was high last year, and student test scores and graduation were particularly low. The school has also had several recent incidents involving police activity. Despite this, Hillside also has the district's only IB program and has a large number of AP courses. The school is well supported in the community, evidenced by both their support of school functions and their direct involvement in the search for the new principal. Like Lowe's Grove, Hillside is poised to make great strides with Redefining Futures through the empowerment of teachers and engaging the community in positive ways.

The feeder pattern from Northern Durham has experienced several of the same issues as the one in East Durham. Eno Valley Elementary school has struggled with student test scores, and has a large special needs population. The school serves over 600 students in pre-K through fifth grades, of whom two thirds are low-income. Seventy percent of the population is African-American. The school's principal has been with the school for several years and has made significant changes in the school's operation. Classroom and departmental decisions regarding student achievement are made using data, and teachers are empowered to try innovative teaching methods to assess best practice.

The majority of Eno Valley's students attend Chewning Middle School, one of the district's two year-round middle schools. Although Chewning is relatively small with just under 500 students, it is racially diverse with a large special needs population (approximately 17%). As with several of the others, this school has also had recent changes in leadership, with the new principal having only been hired a few months ago. The school is located in a rural area of the county with few community organizations nearby and struggles with parental involvement. However, because of the new principal's former experience with both struggling schools in Wake County as well as having served in the DPS Central Services curriculum department the school is well poised to make significant changes to support student achievement and teacher empowerment.

Most of the students from Chewning feed into Northern High School, which is also located in a rural area of the county. It is a relatively large school with over 1,600 students, and has been on and off the list of low performing high schools in the state for the past few years. Interestingly, however, the school has also been listed on the "Newsweek's Top 100 High Schools" in several of the past few years as well. This fact highlights the clear achievement gap which exists there. *Newsweek* calculates their rankings based on the number of advanced courses offered and other national test metrics. Based on this information, the school is doing well as it has many AP and honors courses. Unfortunately, many students are not enrolled in those courses, specifically the African-American population. Additionally, those enrolled in regular courses seem to be struggling with the coursework as evidenced by state testing scores. As a large school, it is often difficult for Northern to identify and quickly address trends in achievement. However, the school's leadership has been seeking ways to address the achievement gap for the past few years and has made great strides to do so. Data is provided to teachers in increasing quantities and professional development on using that data is ongoing. The principal and assistant principals are making a concerted effort to empower teachers to work together to solve the school's challenges and to use data when making decisions related to student achievement and school operation.

In summary, these schools were chosen because they will provide a continuity of services from the time students enter school through their graduation. Redefining Futures will provide an opportunity for schools to work together as never before through cross-site collaboration. Because there are two of

each level of school, no school will be working in isolation in this initiative. Similarly, schools will be working with their feeder schools to identify areas where they can coordinate their efforts more closely to ensure successful transitions and continuity of service to all students. Further, as noted above the schools have new and/or newly empowered leadership teams. These teams are eager to tackle the issues their schools are facing and are excited about the opportunity to work together in new and different ways. All are committed to teacher empowerment and the use of data to identify the specific needs of their population and to find creative solutions to meet those needs. Finally, Durham is in a unique position demographically, as the school district is the combination of both rural and urban areas. As such, the selection of Eastern and Northern Durham patterns will provide the Redefining Futures leadership and evaluation teams valuable data regarding best practice for schools in primarily rural and primarily urban areas. This information will then be used to sustain and expand the initiative to additional struggling district schools. The hope is that the knowledge gained will also provide insight for neighboring urban and rural districts struggling with the same issues.

## Initiative Sustainability (Page 12 of 13)

Sustainability is a broad concept that can be operationalized in several ways. The NEA Foundation posits that smart leadership, data-driven organizational learning and direction, and alignment and coherence of goals, strategies, activities as described in the previous sections of this application constitute the core sustainability strategy.

In this section, please elaborate on additional dimensions of sustainability according to the categories specified below. Please respond to each of the questions below.

### Roles

What district, association, or community functions or responsibilities do you anticipate will be modified to support achievement and continued impact of initiative efforts? (Not to exceed 2 single-spaced typed pages)

The first modification of resources will be to the planning team, which will transition from a focus on planning and input gathering to the Community Learning Team (CLT) which will have a focus on oversight and guidance. This does not mean that the planning team will be dismantled- each of these individuals is essential to the continuity of Redefining Futures. The team is bonded in important ways and has a unity of vision that will remain the basis of this effort. That said, the need to evolve into the CLT is clear. To date, efforts have been focused on learning what may be done and how this may be best accomplished. With NEA Foundation funding, the leadership structure will be re-deployed as a structure that allows stakeholders to learn from each other. The CLT will be expanded to represent the various stakeholders more completely by adding members who represent the faith community and other community-based organizations, such as those represented on the Closing the Gap Task Force. To more fully involve the various stakeholders, a set of substructures will be created that allow more full engagement in the initiative. Following Senge, these will be about building connections across stakeholder groups.

The diagram below shows how the leadership team will evolve to sustain the initiative. The Executive CLT will include the project director as well as members from DAE, NCAE, and DPS. The Executive CLT will handle much of the day-to-day decisions under the guidance of the CLT itself. The CLT will have representatives drawn from the community, parents and school task forces, and will largely be concerned with sustaining the initiative. This team will also most likely review and approve the mini-grants for schools. This both enables the team to be actively involved, but encourages collaborative decision-making which involves more than just education-based input. The work of the initiative will be done by those in the seven workgroups. The DAE is the lead organization in this effort and its members will play key roles in all the workgroups and task forces. A research workgroup is also being developed to support this initiative. This workgroup will include the evaluation as well as research projects to support the effort. This would be built on the efforts that led to the (attached) concept paper, focus group data analysis, and gap analysis undertaken by university faculty and their doctoral classes and will likely move into doing analysis of district generated data sets, conducting qualitative case studies, supporting action research projects, and other collaborative efforts.

These workgroups and task forces will develop approaches to learn from the efforts. What is being learned then will be communicated to the CLT and all other groups, and new ideas will be developed and studied as the initiative proceeds. In each of these efforts existing resources will be aligned with the initiative, building them into a range of community efforts and even into the research agendas of university faculty. This will contribute greatly to sustaining the initiative's efforts.

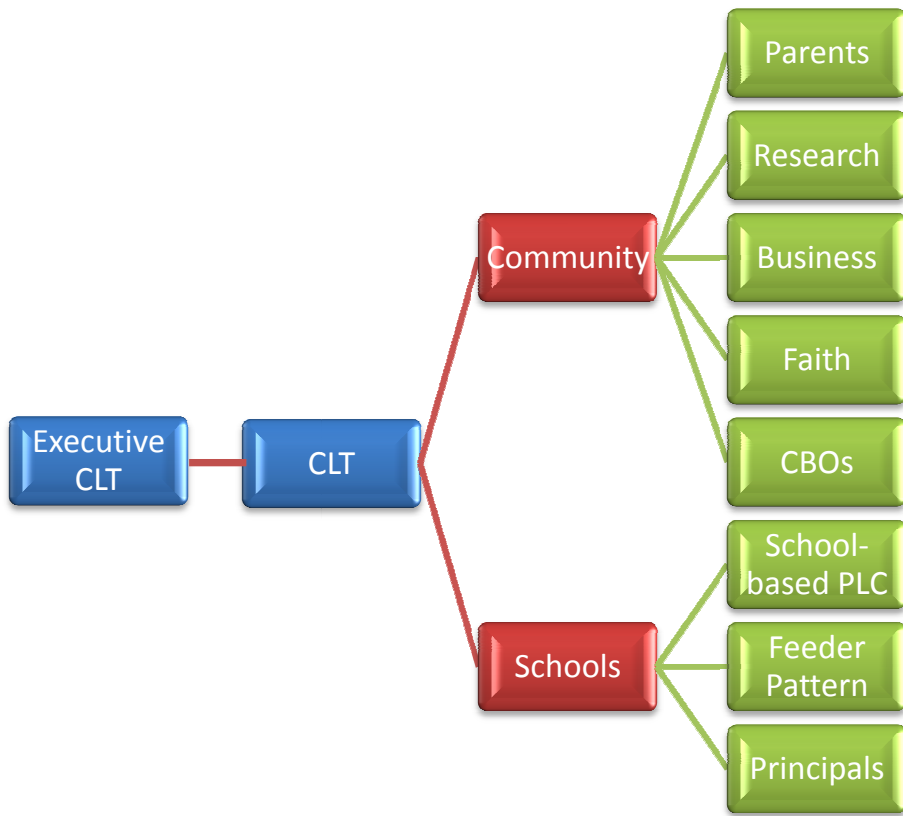
The evolution of the Redefining Futures leadership team to include substructures will engage educators and community members in sustaining this project over time. It organizes the efforts of partner organizations and gives them more focus. All partners are committed to learning what can serve young African-American men best, and to make it happen in Durham. It is important locally as well

as nationally. Because the trends found in Durham are not unique across the nation, many efforts underway which will be used as supports to fuel the efforts of Redefining Futures in Durham. The leadership team and its partners are committed to this effort for the long haul.

Further, conversation around and planning of research projects and needs has developed into new directions for research approval processes in DPS and in proposal development at the partner universities. Previously, the district had only basic goals for projects proposed by university researchers. As a result of the team's work, DPS will begin aligning research approval with addressing the needs of African-American males in the district. In this way, external research projects will directly support the efforts of this initiative. Additionally, these researchers will be invited to participate in the annual research symposium which features action research projects in the target schools. Further networking opportunities and research ideas are likely to result from these experiences, deepening the relationship between the schools and universities.

Another role expected to be modified to maintain sustainability of Redefining Futures is that of the Closing the Gap Task Force. As described elsewhere, this committee has been in Durham for a number of years but has not been particularly successful in showing progress. The Task Force has value to the initiative, as it is comprised of many passionate, community-oriented individuals who have the common goal of helping Durham's students succeed. By re-deploying this team as part of Redefining Futures and providing them with goals, guidelines, and action items, it is expected that their productivity and impact will increase dramatically. This will serve to further sustain the initiative through fostering community advocates who can garner additional financial and service support for the partner schools and for the formal partner organizations.

What the formal structure does not reveal is the relationships that the NEA foundation planning grant developed and how those connections will serve as a web overlaying the formal structural relationships. Even before the official start of the initiative, ideas, plans, and networks have been shared between partner organizations in unprecedented style and number. Communication between organizations, particularly DAE and DPS, has increased to levels previously impossible and certainly unprecedented in Durham. The planning team has developed not only a shared vision, but a collective and individual commitment to this initiative.



## Rules

a) What existing local, state, and/or federal education policies do you anticipate will support achievement and continued impact of initiative efforts?

Several existing educational policies will support achievement and continued impact of Redefining Futures. Although there is no existing local policy explicitly addressing the achievement gap, there are several policies relating to equity and achievement of all students. These include Durham Board of Education (BOE) policy 3011.1 “Academic Accountability,” 2000.1 “School/Community/Business Partnerships,” and 2005 “Site-Based Decision-Making.” The Academic Accountability policy charges Central Services staff to manage the core educational functions of schools “in ways that guarantee equity, consistency, and ingenuity across schools, with the ultimate intent of maximizing achievement for all students.” This policy calls for the use of data in educational decisions made, establishes the use of a “data dashboard” for the district as well as individual schools, and requires that improvement goals be set each year based on the dashboard scores. Each of the components of this policy will support the initiative’s efforts on closing the achievement gap, using data, and tracking success. The policy on partnerships encourages community members, organizations, and parents to become actively involved in the school and charges school administrators with communicating the needs of the school to their community. Finally, the Board currently has a policy on Site-Based Decision-Making (SBDM) teams. This policy is being revised in collaboration with DAE and Board attorneys to align with the reform governance work of the Board. The new policy will ensure that decisions are not made top-down and that teams are elected by school staff, not selected by principals.

The most significant local policy for Redefining Future support is the Board’s Theory of Action and Vision. The Durham BOE recently completed extensive governance training and redefined their management structure as a result. The new Theory of Action (policy 3010) is titled, “MEET the Challenge- Manage, Empower, Energize, and Transform.” As the name implies, the philosophy is designed as a framework for improving student achievement through empowering schools to find their own solutions to challenges and to think critically and creatively about meeting the needs of their students. It recognizes teachers as crucial to success and as professionals. In addition, it endorses the use of data and of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). These two concepts are keystones in Redefining Futures, and are well-supported by MEET the Challenge. Finally, it also encourages creative reform efforts which may be “outside the box” for some- providing critical support for this venture.

In addition to local policy, the State Board of Education (SBOE) and the state legislature have adopted several policies which will help support the efforts of Redefining Futures. Not the least of these are the state accountability statutes which set goals for achievement and growth of NC’s students. Specifically, these statutes require state testing based on the NC Standard Course of Study and set annual goals for student achievement. Testing and accountability is not unique in the nation, but the NC system is two-tiered. Not only does it provide proficiency goals but it also measures and sets goals for growth. By measuring growth, it allows better identification of areas of excellence in instruction as well as areas in need of improvement. For example, although high-performing students are clearly proficient in their coursework but they are not always growing in their proficiency. In another case, a student may not score as proficient, but may significantly improve their scores from the year before thereby showing strong growth toward proficiency. For Redefining Futures, this will allow better identification and tracking of students in need of intervention using multiple layers of metrics. It will also facilitate schools finding students who are not being challenged at their highest levels and encouraging them to enroll in higher level coursework and/or programming. Having this data also provides a stronger argument for support of school efforts through this initiative.

Another state policy that supports the work of Redefining Futures is the suggestion that districts form “Closing the Achievement Gap” task forces. Although not a requirement, Durham formed this team

several years ago when the policy was first adopted. This team is composed of community activists, parents, business leaders, and DPS staff. Together they identify achievement gaps and discuss ways to address those gaps. This group has gone through several transitions and has lost some of its focus and effect as a result. However, under this new initiative it will be re-designed and re-deployed with established guidelines and specific outcomes. The task force will be used as a vehicle for input and communication on the efforts and effects of Redefining Futures.

At the Federal level, the No Child Left Behind Act supports the initiative. First, it forces schools to examine more than overall scores- subgroups are a requirement. Because of this, data on African-American, white, Hispanic and other demographic groups began to be compared- illuminating gaps and putting the information into the consciousness of the schools. Second, the results are more transparent now than ever before. Because the Federal law requires that the sub-groups be reported, the public now sees this information providing new levels of accountability. It also allows parents to ask more critical questions and to better understand the what the data tells them about their child's school. Redefining Futures is taking that data, identifying a group of students who are not being fully served, and empowering schools and community partners to find solutions to meet the needs of the students at that school.

b) What new policies (especially local or state) do you anticipate supporting over the course of five years? Why have these been selected and what activities do you anticipate undertaking to achieve creation of each policy. (Not to exceed 2 single-spaced typed pages)

Much is happening in education right now. This initiative will be part of a positive change, and will support a number of new policies over the course of the next five years. At the local level, Redefining Futures will serve as a model for how to close the achievement gap and empower staff to use data and research to find the best solutions for their students. It will work with the Board's policies to empower teachers, use data, and provide high-quality education for all students.

One of the largest policies this initiative will support is the new teacher evaluation tool by McREL. The new tool requires the use of data in new and more ways than ever before. It also requires teachers to become leaders, embed technology in practice, and become a part of a learning community. Redefining Futures promotes all of those efforts and demands accountability from all partners, and encourages difficult conversations. Training on the new tool is currently underway as a partnership between DAE and DPS, and involving NCAE. This initiative will be an extension of that partnership.

Two additional policies are on the horizon, but have not materialized yet. The first is value-added pay scales. As the state continues to discuss and develop an application for Race To The top (RTTP) funds, the topic of value-added pay is still on the table. While it is not known how this may develop and/or when it might become policy, the Redefining Futures initiative is likely to be supportive of the policy. The focus on the use of data, action research, and becoming a learning community will most likely be exemplary of the guidelines for determining the use and distribution of value-added pay. The initiative hopes to be a model for how to achieve greatness while empowering staff and creating systemic change.

## Resources

What association, community, or district resources do you anticipate will be redeployed, created, or enlisted to support achievement and continued impact of initiative efforts? (Not to exceed 2 single-spaced typed pages)

As noted elsewhere, many resources are being enlisted to support the continued impact of Redefining Futures. Aside from DAE, DPS, and NCAE resources, the business community is being engaged, resources at institutions of higher education are being leveraged, community non-profit organizations are providing assets, legislators are having conversations about ways to collaborate, and media outlets are providing public awareness of the initiative's efforts and focus.

Specifically, DAE and NCAE will be providing guidance, professional development, and oversight of Redefining Futures. The professional development module *Culture, Abilities, Resilience, and Effort* (CARE), will be provided through NCAE as teachers undergo their learning of culturally responsive pedagogy. NCAE and DPS are currently in discussions of how to create modules on the interpretation and effective use student data in classrooms. This could lead to expanded impact of initiative efforts by being deployed and/or offered to all districts across North Carolina.

Several local institutes of higher education will also provide significant support for the initiative. The University of NC at Chapel Hill has agreed to create an action research course which focuses on the achievement of African-American boys. In addition, they are providing at least 5% of Dr. George Noblit's time to the initiative. The Durham Technical Community College (DTCC) has recently received a grant to provide educational opportunities for disenfranchised students, providing a gateway to college and an alternative to traditional education. This program will be enlisted to help students from the target high schools find an alternative when appropriate. The partnership is still being discussed, but is showing much promise. Duke University also has several programs that support the efforts of Redefining Futures and will be enlisted as the initiative progresses to enhance that programming.

Community resources abound in Durham, and many schools already have partnerships with them. For example, one partner school is associated with the One Hundred Black Men of Durham for tutoring and mentoring services. Another school has a partnership with a local church to provide food for low-income students over the weekend. One partnership school has leveraged an existing consultant to develop the "Fathers, Families, and Friends" program which works specifically with African-American boys in the school. Others exist, and more will be developed and nurtured through the efforts of this initiative.

Also as has been mentioned previously, the business community is deeply engaged in the work of Redefining Futures. However, many relationships have yet to be tapped for resources and/or support. The BAC has pledged their commitment to the initiative and will be enlisted for action as the initiative progresses. Support from this sector may include connections to additional business/industry leaders who are interested in supporting the target schools, space to provide professional development, and/or opportunities for students to experience the opportunities available in the local workforce. Moreover, the local Chamber of Commerce will be engaged in the initiative through the BAC and through DPS relationships with the organization.

As progress is made in closing the gap, DAE and NCAE will engage local and state legislators to become advocates and supporters of the initiative's efforts. The focus of the program is already an agenda item for several of them, and the results shown over the next five years will be used to encourage similar programming and to push education-friendly policy.

Additionally, the media will continue to be engaged in the initiative not only for publicity, but for generating conversation around the direction of Redefining Futures. It is the belief of the leadership team that discussion leads to understanding, which leads to meaningful relationships, which leads to systemic transformation and sustainability. As such, the DPS Media Relations department will continue to serve on the leadership team and to leverage relationships with local newspaper and television

stations. In addition, the district's public access channel (Channel 4) will feature the work of the initiative, providing a broad base of exposure and support which will further buttress sustainability efforts.

To maximize volunteer resources, DAE and DPS will use existing networks to engage and grow pools of volunteers to work with the target schools and the programs they implement or expand. DAE will encourage all members to take advantage of opportunities to further their influence through volunteering with the target schools. DPS will work through the Community Education department and the Volunteer Coordinator to vet volunteers using the established protocols of background checks and other safety measures required for all individuals working with students. This will greatly reduce the "red-tape" which has the potential to slow progress at times.

Also as mentioned elsewhere, the Durham Closing the Achievement Gap Task Force will be redesigned and redeployed as a community-based component of the Redefining Futures initiative. This team will be provided with some of the same professional development offered to educators, which will provide a common basis of understanding and touchstone from which to work. Additionally, this team will be given specific guidelines and direction for their work. They will be asked to revise their mission and vision to align with the work of the initiative and will be encouraged to think creatively about ways their businesses, organizations, and talents can be leveraged to support the work of the initiative and to ensure its longevity.

Finally, the DPS Board of Education's Theory of Action, Vision, and accountability policies will be reviewed and engaged to support the work of Redefining Futures. While these policies already support the efforts of the initiative, they are regularly reviewed and revised. As that happens, leadership team members, especially those from DAE and NCAE, will be engaged in the process of ensuring that these policies incorporate the lessons learned and best practices engaged as a result of the target schools' work. These efforts will collectively ensure that Redefining Futures is not just "another program" but a wide-spread cultural and philosophical shift with respect to closing the achievement gap in Durham.