

Southern Kern Unified School District
2601 Rosamond Boulevard
Rosamond, CA 93560

CCSPP Abstract

Part 1

This section is your opening and describes your vision for the proposed continuation or expansion of your Community School Program.

With this application, Southern Kern Unified School District (SKUSD) applies for the California Community Schools Partnership Program Implementation Grant. This grant will allow us to transform our six public schools, which are low performing, high minority and high poverty TK – 12 schools into six high performing community schools. The transformation will improve all students' academic achievement and mental health capacity by providing integrated student support and community partnerships. We will be able to invest in curriculum designed to meet the unique needs of each of our children.

SKUSD is a small rural district with 3,557 students, who serve the city of Rosamond, located in the Antelope Valley. Our six schools enroll students that are primarily Hispanic/Latino (61%), White (22%), African American (9%), Foster (1.3%), Homeless (8.8%), Special Education (17.5%), and English Learners (14.9%). The districts Unduplicated Count is 83%. Our Community Schools' Plan is designed to create and sustain systemic change in educational practices and school cultures grounded upon research-based practices that have demonstrated effectiveness with populations similar to ours.

Community Schools are a strategy for organizing various community resources around student success. The extended hours, services and relationships inherent in the Community School concept re-envision education as a coordinated, child-centered effort in which schools, families, and communities work together to support student's educational success, while strengthening families and communities at the same time.

We strive to reduce the isolation that minorities such as African American, English Learners, and low-income face and prepare our students academically, socially, and emotionally for the future. SKUSD will work with businesses, the city, Edwards Air-Force Base, Antelope Valley Community College, Kern County Superintendent of Schools and other educational partners. As a district with longstanding challenges related to student achievement, SKUSD is committed to making significant and sustained efforts to raise student achievement, address our students' mental health issues, and provide a well-balanced education that addresses the Whole Child. This is the vision of SKUSD, "We seek to teach and assist in the development of the WHOLE CHILD. We strive to create a Safe learning environment that combines Student Learning Outcomes with Creativity, Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, Character, and Citizenship so that students will flourish in and out of school."

The Southern Kern Unified School District is applying for Cohort 1 of the California Community Schools Partnership Program (CCSPP) Implementation Grant to further the efforts already in place. Our goal is to strengthen the bond/relationship with our educational partners that COVID negatively affected. SKUSD is determined to employ every opportunity to improve student academics and social and career outcomes for our students. To reduce as much as possible the disparate impact this Pandemic has had on children, families and learning at the following schools: Rosamond High Early College Campus, Rare Earth Alternative Education School, Abraham Lincoln Independent Study School, Tropico Middle School, Westpark Elementary School and Rosamond Elementary School. To meet this challenge, we understand the need to re-engage children with rigorous and challenging lessons, provide multiple opportunities for Peer-to-Peer interactions, and reignite the partnership between parents, family, and the educational community. We hope to meet students' needs and enable their academic and personal growth through this grant.

Part 2

(This section describes your existing programs and services and those that may be added, expanded or provided (via the LEA, the school site(s), a site near or adjacent to the school(s), or virtually).

Programs and services to be provided are modeled after the Four Pillars of a Successful Community School, and include: Integrated Support Services; Family and Community Engagement; Collaborative Leadership and Shared Decision-making; and Extended/Expanded Learning Time and Opportunities. At all sites, our Community Schools Program is dedicated to the following:

- Coordinating and providing integrated support services to students and families, such as childcare and expanded learning opportunities before, after school, and during intersession. The Training provided for staff and the specifics for each endeavor is included in the description of each proposed action. After the past school year of virtual learning due to the COVID-19 shut down, we have found that the grief, anxiety, and depression children endured during COVID is evident in the classroom. Therefore, SKUSD wants to address social and emotional concerns largely and impactfully. Providing access to integrated educational, health, wellness, and mental health services on campus and through nearby community partners. To accomplish this endeavor, we plan to utilize this grant for the following purposes:
- Hope Squad – SKUSD wants to expand upon our implementation of the Hope Squad curriculum to include all sites: elementary, middle and high schools. The Hope Squad is a peer-to-peer suicide prevention program. Hope Squad members are nominated by their classmates as trustworthy peers and trained by advisors. This program reduces youth suicide through education, training, and peer intervention. Through the implementation of the Hope Squad, the program promotes a culture that creates a safe school environment, promotes connectedness, supports anti-bullying, encourages mental wellness, reduces

mental health stigmas, and prevents substance misuse. To implement the Hope Squad, we will need teams to participate in Licensed Advisor Trainings. To identify them, we will need identifying objects, such as Shirts, Sweatshirts, and Lanyards. To support the program, we will purchase specific materials, such as bracelets and folders, brochures, flyers and banners.

- Character Strong – SKUSD will purchase the Character Strong program to implement with the Hope Squad program. This program focuses on fostering the Whole Child with vertically aligned lessons that teach Social Emotional Learning and Character side-by side and have the following Competencies.
 - SEL Competencies – Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making.
 - Character Development- Patience, Kindness, Honesty, Respect, Selflessness, Forgiveness, Commitment, and Humility. With this program, SKUSD will provide teacher resources, assemblies, videos, and activities that require small amounts of time but provide a significant impact. These resources are designed to also build staff morale and improve school culture. The Grant will assist in funding the following:
 - Program
 - Curriculum
 - Leadership Conference
 - Staff Professional Development
 - Support Materials (Character Bracelets, Shirts, Etc.)
- Student Assemblies/Family Events – SKUSD will contract with agencies to bring powerful and inspirational speakers to our school sites for meaningful student assemblies, which will be designed to address the following:
 - Improve Mental Health
 - Build a Positive School Culture
 - Empower our Student Voice
- Agencies of Interest include:
 - Teen Truth
 - Relevant Speakers
 - Amazing School Assemblies

The grant will fund these presenters.

- As needed, Student & Family Resources – SKUSD will purchase the Mental Health Awareness Complete Rack Card Display Package for student and family awareness with card refills. These resources will give our students and their families the tools they need to take care of their mental health. The package includes eighteen different areas of concern to mental wellness:
 - Feeling Overwhelmed, Depression, Suicide Prevention, Dealing with Trauma, Anger Management, Self-harm, Feeling Lonely, Anxiety, Coping with Substance Abuse at Home, Dealing with Stress, Top 10 Ways to improve Mental Health, Coping with Grief, Social Media and Mental Health, Understanding Mental Health, Improving Your Self-Esteem, Eating Disorders, Calming Techniques, Social Anxiety

- Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) – To improve the school climate, lower the suspension rate and align itself with best practices, the district is implementing MTSS/PBIS program. This program includes additional professional development for faculty and staff. The District will implement the Kern Integrated Data System (KiDS) to analyze student data to determine students' needs for support. MTSS is an integrated, comprehensive framework for local educational agencies that aligns academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning in a fully integrated system of support for the benefit of all students. SKUSD will increase our tiered levels of support, with a heavy focus on Tier 1 to address all students. To accomplish this goal, SKUSD will need financial assistance for the following:
 - Staff Professional Development
 - Positive Reinforcement Menus – including but not limited to the following:
 - Classroom and School Site Incentives/Rewards
 - Certificates
 - Assemblies
 - Fieldtrips
- Read 180, System 44 – Read 180 is an evidence-based intervention for struggling adolescent readers. Throughout the district, we use Houghton Mifflin Hartcourt's supplemental reading intervention programs, READ 180 Universal, and System 44. We have over 400 students currently in this program, grades 3 – 12 and now after the Pandemic, there is an overwhelming need for additional licenses to meet the student needs. We have ongoing training and support for faculty and administrators through an HMH consultant. Placement in the reading intervention program is fluid. Students can move in and out of the program based on their needs. Students in the reading intervention program continue to take their ELA classes.
- Visual & Performing Arts – After School Program – Elementary Schools – SKUSD will extend learning opportunities in the Visual and Performing Arts for elementary students through an After-School Program to address the needs of the Whole Child (Musical Instruments, Supplies, Staff, Transportation will be needed to provide this program)
- Math/Reading Academies – Intervention to close learning gaps – Afterschool/Saturday School/Summer School to mitigate learning loss before and after COVID resulting in learning gaps

In addition, our Collaborative is committed to engaging with our community educational partners regularly to elicit timely and purposeful feedback on the impact of the above programs on student learning and well-being. We have developed strategies to ensure continued successful relationships and progress with our goals and initiatives to accomplish this.

Part 3

(Explain how the community (ties) (including students, families, community partners, educators, and other school staff) and potential cooperating agencies will be engaged in

the process of school transformation through the implementation of the Community Schools initiative.

Through data analysis, community and district meetings, focus groups, surveys, and collaborations with parents and community leaders, SKUSD will review the critical identified needs. Multiple meetings, facilitated by the Community School Coordinator, during the 2022-2023 school year will result in meaningful consultation with our educational partners and allow the community the opportunity to provide input on the development of and implementation of this Plan.

Parent Information Nights: Southern Kern includes a large Spanish speaking population, many of whom do not regularly interact with our District. Therefore, we would like to hold Parent information nights for our parents, families, and community members, conducted in both English and Spanish. This will require Flyers, Brochures and PowerPoints to be created in both languages and interpreters to be present at the events. These nights will be designed to provide additional education to our community partners in pertinent areas; some examples include: Student Interventions and Supports (Student Success Teams, Section 504 Plans, and Individualized Education Plans); Multi-Tiered Systems of Support; Social-Emotional Health; Communicating with Your Struggling Student; Behavioral Intervention Strategies; Self-Care; Understanding the IEP Process; Alternative Dispute Resolution; Etc. These events will be held in the evenings and provide childcare for those families who need it. We will also include snacks and beverages to make this event more personable and inviting.

Triple P Parenting Classes: Southern Kern will be offering Triple P Parenting Classes, open to our Community Partners. The Triple P–Positive Parenting Program is one of the most effective evidence-based parenting programs globally. Triple P gives parents simple and practical strategies to help them build strong, healthy relationships, confidently manage their children’s behavior, and prevent problems from developing. Southern Kern will offer the classes at varying times and days to ensure access to all community partners. We will also provide Child-Care for those attending, and snacks and beverages. This program will be implemented for both English and Spanish speaking members and will require the purchase of books for each member, along with mailers to send home.

Hope Squad Events: Southern Kern is preparing to implement a District-wide Suicide Prevention program called the Hope Squad. Our Community has suffered numerous Suicides and Suicide attempts over the past few years, devastating for our small community. We want to educate and include our Community Partners in our endeavor to enact Suicide Prevention. The goal is to prevent suicide through public awareness and education, reduce stigma, and serve as a resource to those touched by suicide. This would include Partnerships with Mental Health Agencies; Training for Community Partners, Hope Squad Community Events, Etc.

The Hope Squad’s Core Values include:

1. Education

Educators in partnership built the Hope Squad program with mental health experts.

2. Taking initiative

Hope Squad members are trained to act when someone is struggling.

3. Openness

Hope Squad members are trained to be aware of their peers and watch for warning signs.

4. Self-care

We advocate for maintaining healthy boundaries, building resilience, and avoiding burnout.

5. Community

The Circles4Hope model recognizes the role of mental health partnerships, school programs, and community connections working together for suicide prevention.

Read 180 - Read 180, an evidence-based program that meets the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards without reservations. The purchase of additional licenses and professional development for staff is necessary to meet student needs and implement the program with fidelity.

Sustainable Funding:

Establishing sustainable Community School Funding Sources is a major goal of our strategic plan. To date, the following funding sources have been identified: Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), Title I and II, State and Federal one-time funding,

Evaluation Criteria:

To ensure there is ongoing reflection and assessment that supports school-wide continuous improvement through our Community Schools initiative, our collaborative will use various forms of data to assess effectiveness of the grant programs. SKUSD has a high number of students scoring low on statewide-standardized tests. Data from local benchmarks, Common Formative Assessments, teacher data, student discipline records, student achievement from state tests, student's responses on the *California Healthy Kids Survey* (CKHS), and data from parent and staff surveys will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the grant.

Specific Needs:

Other factors that demonstrate need in our schools that are not included in the Evaluation Criteria listed on page 19 are: Chronic Absenteeism – 27.9%, Attendance – 89%, Differentiated Assistance for the African American student group for Chronic Absenteeism and Suspensions from the 2019 Dashboard.

Our Community School program provides infrastructure and support for the planning, implementation, operation and sustainability of full-service community schools that improve the coordination, integration, accessibility, and effectiveness of services for children and families. Comprehensive academic, social, and health services for our students, their family members, and the wider community will improve children's educational outcomes and enrich community environments. Thank you for providing this historic opportunity for California's educational community, and, more importantly, our children.