

I. NEED FOR PROJECT: ENTERPRISE COMMUNITY

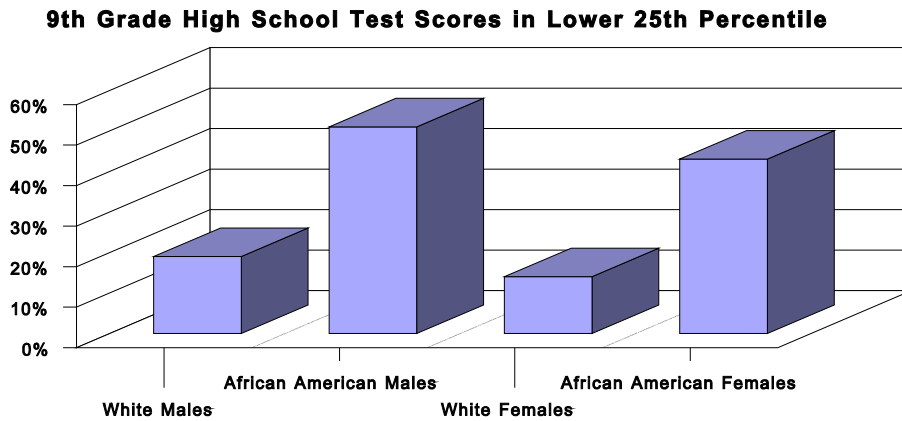
South Carolina ranks poorly in nearly every high-risk indicator. The Annie Casey Foundation and Kids Count (2001) ranked South Carolina as the 43rd worst state in the nation for children’s well being. According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, South Carolina ranks 46th worst in infant mortality. The Misery Index in the table below documents the **severe** problems found within our state and target area.

Risk Indicators	S.C. Statistics	State National Ranking
Per Capita Income	\$13,616	43 rd Lowest
Population in Poverty	19%	7 th Highest
Persons Committed to Prison	536 per 100,000	2 nd Highest
Births to Teenage Mothers	17%	7 th Highest
Infant Mortality	9.6 per 100,000	4 th Highest
Teen Death Rates	41 per 100,000	2 nd Highest
High School Graduates	46%	49 th Worst

The target area of seven poor rural S.C. public school districts is a high-poverty “Enterprise Community” and “medically unserved area” according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Office of Rural Development, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Competitive Priority). An Enterprise Community is an area certified by the federal government to have severe poverty and other life-threatening risk factors. A medically unserved area has a shortage of health care and the number of health care providers is insufficient to serve the region. Run-down homes, closed businesses, and dilapidated trailers are common in this area. Because of the lack of industry and extensive poverty, the seven school districts lack an adequate tax base from which to raise funds to develop quality afterschool and summer programs for our high school students. Many students ride the bus home to an empty house after school. To make matters worse, the target school districts have been informed their budgets will be reduced by \$5 million because of state budget deficits. Also, according to the S.C. Budget and Control Board (2001), the target area is the second most violent zone in the nation, exceeded only by Washington, D.C., in the number of violent crimes committed per 100,000 population.

Approximately 66% of the students in the target area are African-American. This group often experiences the greatest number of risk factors. It also has the highest rate of academic failure. More than 50% of African-American children live in poverty, and 25% are not prepared to enter the first grade, according to Kids Count (2001). Long term, many African Americans, especially males who do not succeed in school, drop out or take low-paying jobs. This may result in welfare dependence, high use of alcohol and other drugs, teenage pregnancy, violence, and crime.

According to the S.C. Office of Statistics and Research (2001), these seven communities and school districts exceed state averages in low-achieving students, juvenile crime, school violence, children living in poverty, violent teen deaths, lack of first grade readiness, teenage pregnancy, academic failure, and substance abuse. The chart that follows shows some alarming ninth grade failure indicators for high school students whose grades fall in the lowest 25th percentile in high school test scores. These state test scores are nearly identical for the fourth grade as well.



Certain **risk factors** contribute to academic failure, dropping out of school, substance abuse, pregnancy, and violence. The Annie Casey Foundation reported in March 2001 that many variables shape a child’s future. Research by the foundation suggests that adult family members significantly determine a child’s chances of succeeding in life. The family’s social and economic condition, parents’ involvement with their children, the family’s ability to secure health care, and a parent’s connections to the world of work all play a major role in how a family can secure the well-being and success of its children. According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Annie Casey Foundation (2001), six key risk factors strongly correlate with child outcomes: (1) child not living with two parents; (2) lack of family transportation; (3) parents or guardians who are illiterate and school dropouts; (4) lack of access to health care and medical insurance; (5) no afterschool programs to offset the risk factors; and (6) absence of steady, full-time employment in the family. Coping with any risk factor is a challenge, but when they are combined, they tend to be mutually reinforcing. According to Schorr (2000), as the number of risk factors increases, the greater the damaging impact of each. As documented below, most students experience four or more risk factors!

Risk Factor 1: Counties and school districts with intense poverty levels contain larger numbers of single-parent homes and students who experience academic failure and delinquency (Kids Count, 2001). Crime and juvenile delinquency are significant problems. The Budget and Control Board reported that nearly 20% of African-American males appear in court annually for illegal activities, and 1 out of 10 is eventually imprisoned. Poverty contributes to academic failure because poorer families cannot afford educational resources or participate in school and community activities. Poor rural families are often isolated and cannot easily access cultural events available in metropolitan areas. Families headed by single parents are more inclined to be poor, and South Carolina ranks 5th highest nationally in this category. The target area contains the poorest of the poor in the state and is considered one of the most impoverished in the nation. Most students live below the poverty level as noted in the chart that follows.

Indicator	Clarendon 1	Marion 1	Marion 2	Dillon 1	Chesterfield	Dillon 2	Latta
Free/Reduced Lunch, Poverty Level	95%	71%	73%	74%	66%	78%	73%
African-American Students	96%	71%	72%	55%	40%	67%	55%
School Drop-out Rate	30%	31%	31%	34%	29%	34%	34%
Students in Single-Parent Homes	64%	40%	40%	38%	40%	38%	38%

Risk Factor 2: Lack of transportation prevents students and families from accessing community services, becoming involved in educational activities, working, and attending cultural or other events (S.C. Office of Statistics and Research, 2001). Nearly 80% of our students rely on the school bus system to attend classes and do not have access to other forms of transportation. In the *2001 Community Needs Assessment*, key informants from the targeted rural region reported that many students have never been outside the county. With no transportation, distance to educational events creates an almost insurmountable barrier: the nearest zoo is 90 miles away; the movie theater, 40 miles; the state museum, 90 miles; and an art gallery, 50 miles away. Also, transportation is critical in obtaining and maintaining employment. Parents cannot be involved in school activities if they cannot get to them. School district 2001 studies report the lack of transportation as follows:

Indicator	Clarendon 1	Marion 1	Marion 2	Dillon 1	Chesterfield	Dillon 2	Latta
No Transportation	75%	65%	85%	80%	57%	89%	84%

Risk Factor 3: Students with illiterate parents have higher rates of academic failure. Kids Count (2001) reports that a child’s academic success is influenced by the parents’ education. In the target area, approximately 40% of adults are functionally illiterate. Many parents do not view their own schooling as a positive experience and have little academic ambition for their children. Nearly 40% of the area’s students failed the high school exit exam, and almost 75% of graduates do not pursue higher education. The chart below contains statistics from the S.C. Department of Education for 2001 that document the severity of illiteracy and academic failure.

Indicator	Clarendon 1	Marion 1	Marion 2	Dillon 1	Latta	Chesterfield	Dillon 2
Family Illiteracy	45%	40%	45%	45%	45%	46%	45%
9 th Graders Not Meeting State Standards	60%	51%	51%	61%	29%	50%	62%

Risk Factor 4: Poor families and students often do not have access to social, health, or other support services and are more likely to have problems leading to academic failure (U.S. Department of Education). The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2000) reports that a high percentage of youth mortality is caused by six factors: (1) use of alcohol and other drugs; (2) sexual promiscuity that results in sexually transmitted diseases; (3) use of tobacco; (4) poor nutrition; (5) physical inactivity; and (6) a high rate of injuries and accidents. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, in collaboration with the Duke Endowment, has designated this area as seriously impoverished and medically unserved. These foundations have provided grant funds for nurses in the district schools. The S.C. Office of Statistics and Research (2001) reported that one-third of all students in the target area have no medical insurance, physician, or access to health services and use the emergency room for necessary medical care. Many students come to school sick, have vision and dental problems, suffer from sleep deprivation, and have nutritional deficiencies. Kids Count (2001) reported that approximately one-third of our students are overweight, and many students are not involved in structured recreational or exercise programs that can improve health. As a result, they are unable to concentrate on school work. Our needs assessment also shows that students are exposed to substance abuse in the home and have siblings who use alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Many homes are unsanitary and lack proper plumbing or have old outhouses; our teachers reported many first grade students had to be taught how to use a toilet!

Risk Factor 5: Lack of afterschool and other educational or cultural programs within the target area for high school students contributes to academic failure (Kids Count, 2001). As reported in *The State News* (2000), “the target area lacks and needs high school summer and afterschool activities, but no monies are available to support such programs for high-risk students.” According to the Budget and Control Board, 80% of our students are home after school without adults. There are few positive activities in which they can participate, they have no help with homework, and many become involved in risky or delinquency behaviors (Richardson, 1996).

Risk Factor 6: Quality jobs are unavailable, so students have no academic goals. Many drop out of school and obtain minimum wage jobs, most of which do not provide benefits. The school drop-out rate ranges up to 35% in the target area, and 52% of our ninth graders scored below state academic standards. Even for students with an adequate education, jobs are scarce. The region’s major employer, a 30-year-old Russell Stover Chocolate plant, closed and left nearly 1,000 workers unemployed. According to the S.C. Employment Security Commission (March, 2001), the target area experiences the state’s highest unemployment rate (up to 17%) as compared to the state average of about 3%. The 2000 “Skills that Work” study by the S.C. Chamber of Commerce found there is no transition from the school setting to the workplace, and students are not adequately prepared for employment. Therefore, many area employers search outside the region for workers. Local educators and business leaders believe that many students do not have the ability to find, apply for, and maintain good jobs. They have reported that students dress inappropriately, cannot market their skills, and exhibit poor manners. The report concluded that businesses and industries are not sufficiently connected with local schools and that schools do not understand their needs. Section II describes how we will address and remedy these risk factors for our at-risk.

II. QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN

The goals, objectives, and outcomes of *AIM HIGH* are clearly defined and measurable. The program will successfully address the needs and risk factors of the targeted population.

AIM HIGH is a consortium of seven rural South Carolina school districts located in an Enterprise Community (Competitive Priority). The name represents the program’s focus on academics and our high standards for making this program successful. *AIM HIGH* will unite the efforts of these communities to improve the lives of high-risk families and failing students. Our project will address the needs of 600 at-risk youth (75 per site), predominantly African-American, in grades 9–12, from eight consortium high schools. Most sites will be open five days a week during the school year (or at least 200 hours) and four to five weeks during summer.

Regional Planning: *AIM HIGH* is based on a model designed by representatives from 20 school districts in South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia. This regional effort produced a comprehensive, responsive program model that will be submitted by two similar collaborating coalitions. Planners agreed that for effective program evaluation and attainment of desired outcomes, the model must be flexible to address local needs yet patterned after the latest literature (1998–2001), which includes *Safe and Smart* by the U.S. Department of Education (DOE); *Transforming Schools into Community Learning Centers* by Steve Parson; *The Future of Children—When School Is Out* by The Packard Foundation; *Handbook of Research on Improving Student Achievement*, 2nd Edition, by the Educational Research Service; www.afterschool.gov; and *Keeping Schools Open As Community Learning Centers* by the DOE.

Local Stakeholders; Diverse Perspectives: As recommended by de Kanter (1997), each school district conducted its own needs assessment through a local planning committee comprised of educators, parents, students, community groups, criminal justice agencies, parent-teacher associations, businesses, private nonprofits, the faith community, and other professionals. Representatives from each school district then formed a Regional Planning Committee to identify common needs, problems, goals, and desired program activities. As recommended by Dryfoos (1998), planners met with and observed 13 other regional afterschool programs' activities funded by the 21st Century Community Learning Grant Program to build partnerships with those that have already attained success. In total, 50+ community stakeholders and professionals reviewed this grant proposal to ensure that *AIM HIGH* was designed "for us and by us."

Required Program Activities as Requested in the RFP (Absolute Priorities): While only four absolute priorities established by the U.S. Department of Education are required, *AIM HIGH* will address ten priorities including literacy education programs; integrated education, health, social service, recreational, and cultural programs; summer and weekend school programs in conjunction with recreation agencies; nutrition and health programs; expanded library service hours; technology education programs for all ages; senior citizen involvement; parenting skills education; employment counseling, training, and placement; and services for those who have dropped out of school. These required components and innovative services are described below.

Program Components that Address Needs and Risk Factors of Our Target Population: According to the literature, adolescents have these characteristics: concerns about bodies and appearance; highly developed motor skills; worries about clumsiness, illness, and diet; undeveloped abstract thinking ability; inclination to be influenced more by peers than parents; a need and demand for more freedom and privacy; the ability to mask feelings; and a desire to receive praise and adult recognition (www.afterschool.com). *AIM HIGH* incorporates the components required by the U.S. Department of Education and other activities as recommended by the national literature to address local need. These include (1) goal setting; (2) inclusion of high-risk students and families; (3) strong program management; (4) quality afterschool staffing; (5) linkages between school day and afterschool personnel; (6) family involvement; (7) transportation; (8) attention to safety, health, and nutrition issues; (9) enriching learning opportunities and tutoring; (10) student workplace preparation; (11) motivation and preparation of students for higher learning; (12) effective partnerships with community agencies, faith-based organizations, and universities; (13) dissemination of acquired knowledge; and (14) long-term sustainability and continuation funding. The discussion that follows provides details of these 14 program areas.

1. Goal Setting: Planners working with the district needs assessment committees and stakeholders examined our communities' risk factors and identified nine comprehensive program goals. Each goal addresses at least two of the previous community risk factors, and they all meet 21st Century grant funding priority guidelines. (Measurable, detailed process and outcome objectives associated with the goals are specified in the Management Plan on pages 17–19.)

<i>AIM HIGH</i> Goals and Outcomes	Funding Priority	Risk Factors (Pages 2-4)	Objectives (Pages 17-19)
Provide a safe, drug-free, supervised program in an Enterprise Zone	Competitive Priority	1, 2, 5	ALL
Deliver services and significant, expanded learning opportunities	Absolute Priority	1-5	1, 4-9, 16, 17, 21, 22
Assist students in meeting state standards in academic subjects	Absolute Priority	1, 3	1, 4-9, 16, 17, 21, 22
Reduce alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use	Absolute Priority	1-5	13, 20
Increase parental involvement in students' education	Priority	2, 3	3, 23
Collaborate with community and faith-based organizations	Invitational Priority	2, 4, 5	14, 15, 27
Reduce conflict and violence	Absolute Priority	1-5	13, 20
Prepare students for employment, college, or technical school	Priority	1, 2, 5, 6	ALL
Reduce high school drop-out rate and unemployment	Priority	1, 5, 6	ALL

2. Inclusion of High-risk Students and Families: The target population will include 600 students at highest risk, ages 15 through 18 in grades 9 through 12, and their families. *AIM HIGH* will welcome all races, genders, cultures, and ethnic groups (Funkhouser, 1995) but will target our highest risk African-American students. Steve Balkcom of the U.S. Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program endorsed our focus on African Americans because of their high number of risk factors and academic failure rates in our area. While all races/genders will be included, the student population will reflect the racial make-up of the targeted communities and is anticipated to be 50% African-American male, 25% African-American female, and 25% Caucasian/Hispanic/other races.

Student Selection Protocol: To identify students at greatest risk, our committee formulated a point system based on the criteria in the table below. An extra point is awarded to students with a disability, regardless of age, race, or gender. *Aim High* will attempt to engage students who have been referred to the districts' alternative schools and invite students who have dropped out of school. If more than 75 students are eligible for any *AIM HIGH* site, those with higher points will receive priority placement. Additional students will be placed on a waiting list according to their scores.

Selection Criteria	Points	Selection Criteria	Points
Receives free or reduced lunch	4	Has a sibling who dropped out of school	2
Is failing one or more subjects	5	Is home alone in the afternoon	2
Is an African American	4	Failed or repeated one or more grades	3
Works or tests below grade level	5	Has disability	1
Is at risk of or has dropped out of school	4	Maximum Possible Score	30

Family Recruitment: A simple flyer about *AIM HIGH* and its benefits will be designed and distributed to selected families. Since some parents may be illiterate, school staff and volunteers will contact those who do not respond to encourage their involvement. Classroom teachers, selected youth, parents, and administrators will market the program. Community meetings will acquaint the public and families with *AIM HIGH* and emphasize it as a resource for **both** students and families.

Serving Individuals with Disabilities: Students with disabilities will receive a one-point preference in the screening process. The Office of Exceptional Children of the school districts will work with program planners and teachers to ensure that students with special needs and disabilities will be served whenever possible. All

facilities are handicap-accessible, and each site committee will assess the needs of teachers and program applicants to provide the necessary resources to ensure compliance.

3. Strong Program Management: Each program site will be directed by a Site Coordinator who is a certified employee with strong curriculum experience and management skills. Each site will be supported by an advisory committee that will provide local site management (de Kanter, 1997) and will be comprised of students, parents, site teachers, and educators working with representatives from business, community, criminal justice, and faith-based organizations. Representatives from each site will exchange information to assess challenges, provide data for evaluation, and discuss our most successful practices. Decision-making representatives from the seven school districts and advisory committees will form a Regional Task Force that will meet every 60 to 90 days to enhance communication, exchange ideas, resolve problems, and promote high-quality programs. We do not want to create a bureaucracy, but this concept is working well in 21st Century multidistrict programs in South Carolina and Georgia.

Regional Project Director: This position was recommended by the U.S. Department of Education since our program is comprised of multiple school districts. It will be funded jointly by the coalition from school district funds. The Regional Task Force will have overriding authority for policy and implementation, but each site will be flexible, yet coordinated, and receive input from all local stakeholders. Since *AIM HIGH* will be too complex for one Project Director, this professional will be assisted by Site Coordinators, district office staff, and evaluators in the project administration. This structure and position has already been proven in both South Carolina and Georgia.

4. Quality Afterschool Staffing: Experienced professionals of different races and genders, concerned about high-risk students and committed to making a difference, will be selected to work in the program. School administrators will identify and recruit competent teachers. Staff-to-student ratios of 1:12 (or less) will be maintained to ensure group sizes are manageable. Staff will receive professional training through local funding to maintain enthusiasm and learn the skills needed to work with high-risk youth. Afterschool teachers will share positions to reduce burnout.

Training the Teachers: Elmore (1996) reports that staff development can profoundly affect teaching quality and effectiveness. Educators will be provided with a clear outline of skills students need to master, team-based approaches, training programs based upon foundational ideas, instructional processes, curriculum content, and well-designed training with followup (Sparks, 1991). Afterschool staff will receive training on state academic standards for incorporation into the afterschool curriculum and academic activities. Training will be provided on topics such as how to work with high-risk students, negotiation techniques, meeting the needs of a diverse student population, teaching strategies for various learning styles, new techniques for enrichment and hands-on activities, computer and other technology, improving student performance in core academic subjects, and assessing student progress. This training will improve teaching skills, motivate educators, reduce burnout, and decrease staff turnover (Vandell, 1995).

Volunteer Mentors: Many youth lack positive role models (*Risk Factors 1 and 2*). Each site will select at least ten mentors to become caring friends for these students (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1994). The number of mentors will increase as the program grows. Other mentors will communicate with students through Internet e-mail. Identifying mentors in rural areas can be difficult, as was experienced by South

Carolina 21st Century grantees. Mentors will be recruited through an active marketing program, word-of-mouth, and media stories. Law enforcement professionals, senior citizens, business men and women, members of the faith community, and older students will be solicited as volunteers. Mentors will be matched to students according to their interests and will provide one-on-one tutoring and assistance with homework, share an occasional lunch with their assigned student, and offer simple companionship. Local faith-based organizations will be assigned to certain high-risk families, not in an authoritative or religious role but as a resource for parents, students, and staff. The program will design a mentoring manual, and training will be provided to mentors by the Site Coordinator.

5. Linkages Between School Day and Afterschool Personnel: Before school starts, educators and administrators will learn about *AIM HIGH*. The connection between school day and afterschool personnel will be strong. Several school-wide orientation programs will be held before *AIM HIGH* is implemented. Thus, the school day faculty will be familiar with the program and be given local ownership “up front.” The school day teachers will be partners in *AIM HIGH* and may even be employed as afterschool educators. Site Coordinators will provide progress reports for classroom teachers or school administrators and solicit input during regular staff meetings. *AIM HIGH*'s goal is to encourage students to participate in nonschool activities so they will be more productive and eager to learn during regular school hours. Again, job rotation and sharing will reduce teacher burnout and enhance enthusiasm.

6. Family Involvement: Parent influence is critical to a child's academic, physical, and emotional success, so both high-risk students and their families will be targeted. Parents will be involved as partners in every aspect of the planning and implementation of *AIM HIGH* including serving on committees; attending orientation sessions; chaperoning educational field trips; attending monthly parent nights; and volunteering as teacher helpers, tutors, readers, and mentors. This is a significant challenge, but parental participation is crucial.

Parent Engagement: Parent orientation sessions will be offered at each site or surrounding neighborhoods three times (afternoon, evening, and Saturday) so that working parents and shift employees can attend. Food, transportation, festivals, and other incentives will be provided to motivate attendance. The host will explain upcoming events and solicit input on activities, communicate with teachers, participate in activities, and receive program updates.

Parent Assistance: Parents will be encouraged to become partners, supporters, and teachers in their homes. Some individuals, however, may not possess the skills, education, desire, or background to support the education of their children. Therefore, each participating school district will establish a *Parent Academy* to provide an array of services for parents (Burness, 1997), including information on the varying stages of adolescence. The *Parent Academy* will also encourage higher education by providing (1) information on available financial resources (e.g., grants, scholarships, and low interest loans); (2) instruction on academic preparation (e.g., SAT and ACT testing); (3) admission procedures and requirements; (4) educational field trips to colleges and technical schools; and (5) Internet access at the school lab to examine potential technical and college campuses. A Job Fair, where local business people discuss job opportunities, will also be held for both students and parents. In addition, *AIM HIGH* will sponsor a Community Service Fair where social, health, and other local agencies can inform parents about available services. Since many parents are illiterate (*Risk Factor 4*) and unemployed (*Risk Factor 6*), *AIM HIGH* will work with Adult Education Programs to help parents

improve academic skills and possibly enable them to obtain a General Education Diploma (GED). They will be able to take other adult classes such as technology, arts and crafts, life skills, finance, and health.

7. Transportation: Nearly 80% of district students do not have reliable transportation (*Risk Factor 2*) and must use the public school bus system. Therefore, providing transportation will be critical to the success of *AIM HIGH*. Following the afterschool program, students will be transported to their homes, employment opportunities, or educational field trips. Transportation will also be offered to parents for events and activities.

8. Attention to Health, Safety, and Nutrition Issues: Before young people can learn, they must be healthy (*Risk Factor 4*). One goal of *AIM HIGH* is to provide students a safe, drug-free, supervised, and accessible environment. All program components are related to this goal directly or indirectly. Health and nutrition issues are incorporated throughout the curricula. However, as Botvin (1992) reported, “simply teaching *facts* about health does *not* change behavior.” Thus, unless students learn how to apply knowledge, the usefulness of the cognitive approach is questionable (Sawyer, 1999). In addition to the existing school health program, *AIM HIGH* will implement six health education strategies recommended by the Joint Committee on National Health Education Standards (1995): (1) comprehensive health promotion and disease prevention concepts; (2) training on health and available services; (3) curricula focused on enhancing healthy behaviors and reducing health risks; (4) information on the impact of culture, media, technology, and other societal factors on health; (5) lessons on the use of communication skills to enhance health; and (6) implementation of goal-setting and decision-making skills that enhance health.

As recommended by the Educational Research Service (1999), the following research-based activities will be incorporated into our health education program: (1) *Development of personal competence*. Strategies will aim to improve students’ self-esteem and self-management skills so they will be more committed to positive behaviors. (2) *Development of values awareness*. Students who understand other values and their own can associate them with productive courses of action. (3) *Practice in critical analysis of the media*. Special instruction will increase student awareness of negative messages and their impact on an individual’s perspective. (4) *Activity-oriented, interactive learning*. The program will utilize activity-oriented curricula, classroom activities, small-group work, and peer discussions. (5) *Use of high school students as teachers*. Students who are trained as assistant teachers have increased self-esteem and personal responsibility. Furthermore, adolescents are more receptive to information presented by their peers. (6) *Development of parental support*. Parents will be involved in the planning and implementation of the health education curriculum since this is critical to its development. (7) *Practice in goal-setting and decision-making*. Students need to have short- and long-term goals for their lives since this is the foundation of behavioral change. We will help students set realistic goals and help them to reach them.

Health Screening and Referral: Local health departments and school nurses, jointly funded by the Robert Wood Johnson and Duke Endowment Foundations, will conduct medical screenings of *AIM HIGH* students and their families who need assistance. School nurses will oversee the treatment of students and family members as needed. Community or retired medical staff will volunteer to provide these services. Local medical associations will assist in this effort.

Pregnancy Prevention: Youth today are exposed to media filled with excessive sexuality. Many young people are sexually promiscuous (*Risk Factor 4*), and the teenage pregnancy rate is high. Although the

presentation of sexual information is controversial and requires sensitivity, the District Planning Committees, in collaboration with school district planners, will select a curriculum appropriate for its students (will include abstinence-based curricula). In conjunction with the regular day school curricula, information on topics such as AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, date rape, and how to say *no* will be offered. Pregnancy prevention initiatives will be combined with the previously discussed education strategies recommended by the Joint Committee on National Health Education Standards (1995).

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Prevention and Violence Reduction: Local Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commissions will provide ongoing prevention assistance for *AIM HIGH*. Project staff will receive training in preventing substance abuse, conflicts, and violence. Student sessions will include the importance of maintaining healthy lifestyles; the dangers of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs; safety; effective communication; conflict resolution skills; and anger management. Prevention curriculum will include the most current research as recommended by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP). Commission staff will also provide assessment, referral, and treatment for students.

Mental Health Counseling: Many *AIM HIGH* students reside in families that qualify for Medicaid. Under Medicaid, the Department of Mental Health can be reimbursed for mental health services to high-poverty families. For districts that wish to participate, a Medicaid-funded master's level social worker (MSW) will be assigned to each site to provide mental health assessment, case management, treatment, and referral to other services provided by the county mental health or community agencies. Students with problems (e.g., depression, family conflicts, suicidal thoughts) will be able to make appointments for counseling or will be referred by afterschool staff as a voluntary option.

Recreation and Physical Education: Educational Research Service (1999) reported that scientific studies suggest moderate, vigorous physical activity, such as quality physical education programs, contributes to a student's ability to learn by enhancing the development of brain synapses and the motor-related functioning of the cerebellum (Black, 1994). The report further documents that physical exercise can reduce many problems adolescents face such as stress, depression, disease, and excess weight (*Risk Factor 4*). Structured physical education can teach values, conflict resolution, and teamwork while improving physical conditioning (Steinberg, 1993). It can contribute to feelings of self worth and positive goal setting.

The local recreation departments will partner with *AIM HIGH* to encourage students to enroll in their organized recreational programs (e.g., basketball, baseball, soccer, tennis, martial arts, board games, and tag football). A Student Advisory Committee will assess student interest in activities. High-risk students unable to participate in afterschool activities because of a lack of transportation (*Risk Factor 2*) will have access. Special weekend programs will provide youth with alternative activities to reduce risky behaviors such as alcohol and other drug abuse. Youth will be required to participate in the academic program as an incentive to be eligible for extracurricular activities.

Nutrition: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), in conjunction with local funds, will provide a daily nutritious snack for students since 75% qualify for free and reduced-cost lunch. (This information will be kept confidential, and refreshments will be available for all students.) Summer students will also receive USDA certified breakfast, mid-morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack. The curriculum will incorporate instruction on the food pyramid components and benefits of eating nutritious foods. Students will be taught about daily

vitamin requirements and nutritional data on product packaging. The program will also incorporate creative learning activities about nutrition that were developed by Kathleen Elam, a teacher in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Students will plan snacks with the nutritionist. In addition, teachers, students, parents, and businesses will be encouraged to advocate good nutrition practices. Program activities will include sponsoring Food and Fun festivals, teaching the effects of junk food, involving students in meal planning (e.g., students will develop healthy menus using culturally diverse foods and cook and serve the meals), and incorporating nutrition into activities (e.g., sending students to the grocery store to purchase healthy foods for senior citizens).

9. Enriching Learning Opportunities and Tutoring (Absolute Priority): One of *AIM HIGH*'s primary goals is to help students meet or exceed state and local standards in the core subjects of reading/language arts, science, and mathematics. This priority addresses the risk factors (1 and 3) of academic failure, low self-esteem, and related behaviors that result when students drop out of school (Gregory, 1996). The core academic subjects will be reviewed for at least one hour each day in the regular afterschool program and for at least 15 hours per week during summer sessions. Varying and comprehensive approaches will be applied to make learning fun and to build student confidence and self-esteem (Funkhouser, 1995). The program will utilize a challenging curriculum that accommodates individual needs, coordinates with school day instruction, and incorporates other topics such as computer technology, art, music, reading for pleasure, youth leadership, and participation in community activities. These academic activities will comply with the U.S. Department of Education's *National Goals 2000* and state academic standards, which were developed to define the learning level students should attain in their grade in the subjects of science, reading, mathematics, and language arts. *AIM HIGH* teachers will receive diagnostic assessments from the school districts that detail each student's academic status relative to academic standards. Parents will also be empowered with activity suggestions and educational resources that will help them reinforce at home the subjects taught in the regular classes and the afterschool program. Specific learning strategies are outlined in the sections below.

Linkages Between School Day and Afterschool Classes: Integration of school day activities into the afterschool program is critical. Afterschool teachers will communicate weekly with school day teachers to ensure that the subjects taught in regular class sessions are reinforced in the afterschool program. Practical activities will be implemented to make the regular classroom more exciting.

Incorporating Computer and Other Technology: Each *AIM HIGH* site has a modern computer lab for students. At least one computer-literate teacher per site will provide instruction in computer technology. Students will learn to explore and navigate the Internet, conduct research, write reports, and complete assignments that reinforce the academic core standards (Gregory, 1996). Partners will include the districts' adult education programs, county libraries, and the district technology coordinators.

Educational Field Trips: Many area families are isolated (*Risk Factors 2 and 5*) and have never visited the ocean, mountains, or even a mall. *AIM HIGH* students will take field trips that correlate with academic topics of the regular classroom and the learning center. These trips will be planned by the school day and afterschool teachers with input from parents, students, and the site planning committees. Destinations will include regional libraries, museums, colleges, the ocean, technical schools, malls, and educationally stimulating environments that our targeted students may have never visited. Students will study and write about the sites using computer technology. Parents will be encouraged to assist the students with follow-up reports to develop a stronger

connection between school and home. All students will be allowed to take at least one annual field trip, but the privilege of taking additional trips will be earned by an incentive point system based upon attendance, academic improvement, and behavior.

Homework Assistance Centers and Tutoring: Each center will provide assistance with homework. The goals here include reducing homework frustration, providing the resources needed to fulfill difficult assignments, and encouraging homework completion in the daily routine. Students will be provided with a quiet environment where volunteer mentors such as older students, high school teacher cadets, university students, and/or senior citizens can assist them with assignments (Posner and Vandell, 1994). Students will be encouraged to visit the county library and have access to the school library after hours to obtain additional reading materials.

Writing Centers: Since high school students write many reports as classroom assignments, we will operate group writing centers and solicit assistance from retired educators, senior citizens, older students, and other volunteers. The center will help students appreciate pleasure reading, improve reading and writing abilities, and increase reading comprehension levels. Tutors will help students who have specific difficulties (Morris, 1990).

Music, Art, Dance, Drama, and Cultural Awareness: These activities will reinforce state academic standards through multisensory experiences and demonstrate the importance of cultural integration outside and within the curriculum (Gregory, 1996). This part of the program will include the following subjects: (a) *Music*: Students will learn to explore movement and exercise, self-expression, self-discipline, social skills, and responsibility through music-related activities. Singing can be pleasurable and reduce the anxiety of adolescent pressures. Local musicians will perform for the students to expose them to the musical world. (b) *Art*: Each site will have at least one *AIM HIGH* teacher with arts and crafts experience. Local artists will be invited to create a work of art while students observe and then participate. Students will draw and paint and use computer “paint brush” programs. Student art work will be displayed at the school, and talented student artists will be featured in contests and local media. Our students will also visit a museum where artwork is displayed. (c) *Dance*: Our students will be introduced to different dance styles (e.g., Native American, Hispanic, Asian, European, or African-American). A dancer and/or dance company will be engaged for a district-level performance and demonstrate its techniques. (d) *Drama*: Simple plays that deal with topics such as substance abuse, conflict resolution, mediation, and other life issues will be performed. Drama will expose students to the artistic outlet of live theater and help them realize their own potential for performance. (e) *Multicultural awareness*: Students need to understand and appreciate different races and cultures, including their historical significance, development, and leadership. Activities will include interviewing senior citizens to trace their heritage and learn of the past, using the Internet to study different cultures and customs, sampling ethnic foods, and listening to speakers of various nationalities or local cultures.

Service Learning: Students can improve feelings of self-worth through community service (Carlisi, 1996). Each student will participate in at least two community service projects annually (e.g., picking up trash in run-down neighborhoods, cleaning an elderly person’s home, making greeting cards for homebound senior citizens, or singing/reading to nursing home residents). Parents will also be involved.

10. Employment Preparation (Finding and Keeping a Job): According to “*Skills that Work*,” a 2000 report by the S.C. Chamber of Commerce, nearly 500 South Carolina businesses stated that our school systems were **not** preparing high school students for the workplace (*Risk Factor 6*). This lack of training often leads to

unemployment or underemployment. Key findings of the report indicated that the following were the greatest needs of the business community in preparing students for the workplace: character traits such as honesty and integrity; computer literacy; writing skills; problem-solving ability; responsibility; listening skills; ability to learn new tasks; and reasoning abilities.

To prepare students for the workplace, a part-time Workplace Coordinator will be stationed at each site. Students who enter the workplace component must spend three days a week in *AIM HIGH* to focus on academic performance and other skills. During the other two days, they will go to work and be compensated. Our primary objective is to encourage students who are at-risk or who have dropped out of school to complete their high school education. High school students need encouragement to perform academically, and employment will be the incentive. Also, students will earn one high school credit each year they are involved.

This program will have four stages with applicable curriculum. **Stage One** will prepare students to apply for a job. This will include employment assessment, résumé development, career counseling, verbal communications, and adopting the proper attitude toward employers. Students must become suitable employees before being placed in an employment position.

Stage Two will prepare students for the job application process and interview by teaching them to dress properly, speak correctly, act mannerly, market their assets, ask the right questions, and follow up after the interview. Business personnel directors will speak to the group and conduct mock interviews with students to ensure they are exposed to real-life situations.

Stage Three will include actual placement in work situations for students 16 and older. *AIM HIGH* will partner with local business owners to establish working classrooms at the job site. To attract business owners, we will pay students a stipend that will be matched by the participating company. (Without the pay, the program is not effective because students want to make money and business owners need an incentive to participate in *AIM HIGH*.) As a result, students will be paid above minimum wage so our program will not be competing with fast food restaurants for student employees. While times and days may vary, students will share a part-time position from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. during the week for two to three days. Transportation will be provided for students to and from the workplace by a public school bus if they lack transportation. On the job site, they will work with another employee or job shadow until they have learned the skills needed to perform the desired task. In Stage Three, students will continue workplace classroom training in areas such as resolving conflicts and other problems; appreciating diversity, gender differences, and varying cultures in the workplace; cooperating with other employees and supervisors; adopting work ethics such as dependability and punctuality; maintaining high work standards; and having a positive attitude.

Stage Four will focus on starting and running a business. The few jobs available in the area are mostly retail or fast food, giving students little hope of attaining the lifestyles they dream of (*Risk Factor 6*). Research indicates that the more students are able to improve their motivation to achieve and self-esteem, as well as demonstrate creativity, the more likely they are to avoid self-destructive behavior such as teen pregnancy, drug abuse, violence, and gang participation (Calcich, 1998). In a study of 450 students in New Jersey public schools, researchers found that students receiving entrepreneurial training have a significantly higher motivation to achieve, higher self-esteem, and higher sense of personal control (Rasheed, 1999).

To prepare students for the workplace, classes will be taught two days per week, one hour each day for nine weeks. Each student will develop a small business plan, take field trips to local small businesses or the local bank to open a checking account, and have the opportunity to start their own businesses during the training period. At least one teacher per district will be trained to teach the entrepreneurship curriculum. Students will keep the income generated from their businesses. Rasheed (1999) documented that students who received entrepreneurship training scored 20% higher in all subject areas compared to those who had no training. This program will encourage high-risk youth, who might have otherwise become involved in risky behaviors, to turn their life in a positive direction.

11. Motivation and Preparation of Students for Higher Learning: High-risk students typically do not attend college or technical school. Many live in homes where illiterate parents have low expectations of their children and do not encourage them to continue their education (*Risk Factor 3*). Most of these families are unfamiliar with college or technical school settings and do not know about financial resources, application procedures, or the benefits of a higher education.

AIM HIGH planners will encourage and help these students to attend college or technical school. Initially, we will assess each participant's school performance and personal goals to develop a customized plan to help the student find a job or attend technical school or college. For students who desire to go to college or technical school, we will design a comprehensive training program that will include (a) providing instruction on college entrance exams such as the ACT and SAT; (b) preparing a résumé for admission counselors; (c) taking educational field trips with parents to the institutions to view the campus and meet staff or sit in real classes; (d) conducting a private fair where school representatives can visit the high school to meet prospective students and explain their programs; (e) instructing students in finding and obtaining financial resources such as low interest loans, scholarships, and grants; (f) inviting college-educated mentors from their neighborhoods to speak to students about the importance of furthering their education; and (g) sponsoring a weekend trip to colleges and technical schools.

We anticipate that some students will drop out of our program. We will continue to provide outreach directly to them and through contacts with family, peers, and staff. *We will attempt to keep them engaged*

12. Links with Other Organizations and Universities to Provide Services . Building trusting relationships with community, government, private nonprofit, business sector, faith-based, and volunteer organizations requires time and effort (Burness, 1997). Most agencies are focused on meeting needs in their service areas and do not appreciate the value of working together. Many community agencies and businesses do not see value in developing true partnerships with the school districts. Many are partners "on paper" but frequently do not provide ongoing and specific support. Since many of the program components necessitate partnerships with community organizations, *AIM HIGH* will make this happen! This proposal and the detailed Letters of Commitment in Appendix A document *AIM HIGH's* strategy for developing a collaborative delivery system. Site Coordinators and principals will serve as the bridge between these community organizations and our seven school districts. In addition, strong connections will be established with local colleges and technical schools. Student teachers will participate in learning center instruction and work directly with high-risk youth; university student volunteers will serve as mentors and tutors for the students.

13. Dissemination of Acquired Knowledge: We will disseminate information about *AIM HIGH* to the community, professionals, and volunteers who wish to replicate our model elsewhere. This will be accomplished as follows: (1) *Parents and local key informants* will be invited to meetings to discuss successful strategies; (2) An *Internet webpage* will provide access to exportable products such as curricula, flyers, project manuals, videotapes, and brochures; (3) An *AIM HIGH Project Manual*, to be developed near the end of the program, will identify successes and weaknesses and explain how to replicate this project elsewhere; (4) *AIM HIGH* program materials will be presented and distributed at state or national conferences; (5) The Evaluation Team will publish academic articles about the program; (6) *AIM HIGH* program will become a training center in Year 3 so school and community representatives can visit, observe, and learn; and (7) A three-state afterschool learning center coalition will be formed to exchange acquired knowledge.

14. Long-Term Sustainability and Continuation Funding: The U.S. Department of Education reported in 2000 and 2001 that about one-third of Year 1 21st Century federally funded afterschool programs have no strategy to continue the program after federal funding ends. We will provide for sustainability by (a) recruiting community leaders to advocate for resources and policies to sustain the 21st Century programs in collaboration with our state’s Governor and the Legislature; (b) inviting potential funders who share our commitment to youth development to contribute to the sustainability plan; (c) co-sponsoring training for all stakeholders to identify and apply for foundation, corporate, and government grants in 2002; and (d) organizing a three-state coalition in NC, GA, and SC to share ideas on sustainability. Once we have succeeded in sustaining this 21st Century grant beyond federal funding, we will publish a manual that documents our strategies so others can learn with us.

III. ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES

A. There is extensive support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources from the seven partner school districts and eight school sites. *AIM HIGH* includes seven South Carolina public school districts and eight school sites that will employ local funds, in-kind (non-cash) services, and district resources. Program activities will be coordinated with other state, federal, foundation, and corporate grant programs. While exact contributions may vary among the districts, decision-makers have agreed to integrate local resources with 21st Century federal funding as shown in the chart below. Since over 50 community, private nonprofit, and faith-based organizations are involved in this proposal, a chart illustrating their involvement, with Letters of Commitment, is included in Appendix A.

Contribution	Amount
Indirect Costs. To conserve costs and ensure all funds flow to the program, <u>no</u> indirect costs are charged.	\$50,000
Project Director. Full-time position paid for by participating school districts; <u>fringe not included in amount.</u>	\$45,000
Payroll Support. The local school districts will pay for accounting and audit expenses.	\$18,000
District Office Technical Support. Consultants from the district office will provide support.	\$16,500
Computer Labs. Each site will house 20 computers and have Internet access: \$20,000 x 8 sites.	\$160,000

Contribution	Amount
Classroom Space. Approximately 10 classrooms will be used at each school site: \$10,000 x 8 sites.	\$80,000
School Library .Students/parents will have access to the library after school hours: \$5,000 x 8 sites.	\$40,000
Outdoor Playgrounds and Gymnasium. Students will exercise and participate at 8 sites: 8 x \$5,000/site.	\$40,000
Utilities. The District will pay for the excess utilities (electricity, gas, water): \$3,000 per site x 8 sites.	\$24,000
Janitorial Services. Janitorial help needed to maintain each site: \$15 per hour x 400 hours = \$6,000 x 8 sites.	\$48,000
Educational Supplies. Some educational supplies will not be paid for by the grant: \$2,000 per site x 8 sites.	\$16,000
Parent Educator. The district's parent educator/parenting programs will emphasize the target population.	\$22,000
School Nurse. Health screening will be provided by a site school nurse and health department: \$4,000 x 8 sites.	\$32,000
Regular School Teachers. Locally funded teachers will collaborate with afterschool teachers.	Unknown
Administrators. School and District Office staff will actively participate without compensation.	Unknown
Cafeteria Facility, Staff, and Cooks. Employees will prepare the meals and snacks: \$14,000 x 8 sites	\$112,000
School-to-Work Coordinators and Adult Education Directors. They will provide a variety of services.	\$23,000
School District Social Workers. The workers will link students and families into community services.	\$46,500
Library Materials and Textbooks. Students will be loaned textbooks and other educational resources.	Unknown
Copying and Printing Machines. Printing and copying will be provided by each school site: \$525 x 8.	\$4,800
USDA and Summer Feeding Programs. This program will pay for most food/snacks; \$10,000 x 8 sites	\$80,000

B. The following is the extent to which costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits. *AIM HIGH* will serve 600 high-risk students. Each site will assist 75 youth and 125 adults and cost \$124, 996 in federal funds. Since most costs will be assumed by the school districts and local community, federal funds designated for each student will be about \$9 per day (the equivalent to a meal at a fast food restaurant). One school districts will serve as lead fiscal agent to draw down and audit the funds, then distribute them to the partner districts. The Regional Task Force will oversee and monitor the project to ensure local resources are used appropriately. Each Site Committee will coordinate local resources and ensure community involvement. This will allow for overall grant administration, ensure local site management, reduce high overhead and administrative costs incurred by most grants, and channel most funds into program activities. Federal funds will primarily cover teacher salaries, fringe benefits, food, and transportation. These costs are detailed in the enclosed budgets.

IV. MANAGEMENT PLAN: RESPONSIBILITIES, TIME LINES, OBJECTIVES, MILESTONES

Logistics: While there may be some variation, *AIM HIGH* will be held for about 25 weeks (September through May) for an estimated two hours each day during weekday afternoons (parents' typical work hours). As recommended by existing 21st Century grantees, *AIM HIGH* will end early in May to give students a break before the summer session. We also plan to offer an occasional Saturday program. While some sites will start earlier due to advanced planning, September 2001 was selected as the beginning for most sites for two important reasons: (1) South Carolina and Georgia 21st Century grantees, who initiated and rushed their programs to start in June, reported that teacher/student recruitment was problematic and program efficiency was diminished because of limited planning time (grantees were not notified of funding by the U.S. Department of Education until late May); and (2) High school students returning from summer vacation in August need time to adjust to a

school setting. *AIM HIGH* will begin in September 2001, providing ample funds to conduct a Year 3 summer program and to implement our sustainability plan. While hours and days may vary, the summer program will take place at least 4 weeks during June and July, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and will offer similar services and academic training.

Diversity of Perspectives in Program Operation. The community’s commitment is shown by the Memorandum of Agreement in Appendix A, and the program is endorsed by each district’s Superintendent, site principals, and representatives from the Planning Committees. Appendix A also contains a list of the 50+ consortium members and partners in the target area with examples of their commitments.

Time Lines, Tasks, Responsibilities, Milestones, and Persons Responsible. The following chart shows how *AIM HIGH* program activities will be implemented during the three years (June 1, 2001 through May 31, 2004).

Dates	Tasks and Milestones	Persons Responsible
June '01	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notify stakeholders of award -Develop/mail public service announcements 2. Arrange financial draw-down from government for lead district 3. Review grant proposal to refresh key informants and partners of plans 4. Establish budget in district financial computer systems 5. Schedule Regional Task Force meeting in July 6. Begin evaluation 7. Convene Learning Center Sustainability Task Force 	Project Director:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 Evaluator: 4 and 7 Task Force: 7 Note: The numbers in this column represent the tasks outlined to the left.
July '01	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Convene Regional Task Force to review plan and grant proposal 2. Implement financial draw-downs by sites from lead agency 3. Address coordination and/or communication issues 4. Prepare employment and student risk-factor screening forms 5. Prepare evaluation structure using FORECAST evaluation model 	Project Director: 1, 2, 3 Evaluator: 4, 5, 6
Aug. '01	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold meeting with Project Director and Evaluation Team 2. Inform district faculty/administrators of grant goals, objectives, activities 3. Inform school day teachers and guidance counselors about program 4. Screen and identify high-risk youth 5. Solicit parent feedback and answer program questions 6. Train staff on data collections and reports 7. Advertise for and employ afterschool teachers - Identify Site Coordinators 8. Screen students for youth at highest risk - Select students for program 9. Distribute marketing flyer to parents - Contact parents who do not respond 10. Finalize transportation plan with District Transportation Coordinators 11. Form Site Advisory Committees 	Project Director: 1-11 Evaluator: 1 and 6 Site Coordinators: 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10 Note: Persons listed in this column ensure the task is accomplished, although others may do the work.
Sept. '01 through Oct. '01	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Convene evaluation team and Project Director/Regional Task Force 2. Assess problems and strengths of program with site committees 3. Train afterschool teachers on grant expectations and academic standards 4. Hold parent and community orientations (3 different times per site) 5. Finalize afterschool curriculum 6. Form waiting list or refer students to other programs 7. Form Site and District Committees 8. Hold meeting with Project Director and Evaluation Team 9. Identify/Employ certified (adult) bus drivers 10. Convene evaluation team and Project Director/Regional Task Force 11. Assess problems and strengths of program with site committees 	Project Director: 1-11 SiteCoordinator:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11 Evaluator: 8

Dates	Tasks and Milestones	Persons Responsible
Nov. '01	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Convene Project Director, Evaluation Team, Regional Task Force meetings 2. Hold weekly meetings with afterschool and school day teachers 3. Host parent meeting at each site 4. Select and train mentors 5. Provide for drug prevention and conflict resolution training for all staff 	Project Director: 1, 4, 5 Site Coordinator: 2, 3, 4
Dec. '01	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold meeting with Project Director and Evaluation Team 2. Continue weekly meetings with afterschool and school day teachers 3. Host parent meeting at each site 4. Begin mentoring component 5. Provide for additional staff development training 	Project Director: 1, 4, 5 Site Coordinator: 2, 3, 4, 5
Jan. '02	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Convene Project Director, Evaluation Team, Regional Task Force meetings 2. Continue weekly meetings with afterschool and school day teachers 3. Host parent meeting to assess student progress at each site 	Project Director: 1 Site Coordinator: 2 and 3
Feb. '02	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Examine budget expenditures to ensure spending and program activities are aligned with grant and on schedule 2. Hold meeting with Project Director and Evaluation Team 3. Continue weekly meetings with afterschool and school day teachers 4. Host parent meeting at each site 5. Provide for additional staff development training 	Project Director: 1, 2, 5 Site Coordinator: 1, 3, 4
Mar. '02	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Convene Project Director, Evaluation Team, Regional Task Force 2. Continue weekly meetings with afterschool and regular-day teachers 3. Host parent meeting at each site 4. Meet with Site Advisory Committees about summer program planning 5. Begin planning for Year 2; work on April Performance Report to DOE 	Project Director: 1, 4, 5 Site Coordinator: 2, 3, 4, 5 Evaluator: 5
Apr. '02	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold meeting with Project Director and Evaluation Team 2. Continue weekly meetings with afterschool and regular-day teachers 3. Host parent meeting at each site 4. Provide for additional staff development training 5. Finalize summer program curriculum (by end of April) 6. Carefully review program objectives (adjust as needed) and develop specific objectives and time lines for Year 2 with input from stakeholders 7. Complete annual evaluation and performance report due to DOE 	Project Director: 1, 4, 5, 6, 7 Site Coordinator: 2, 3, 4, 5 Evaluator: 5, 6, 7
May '02	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Convene Project Director, Evaluation Team, Regional Task Force for Year 2. 2. Advertise for summer program employees 3. Select students for summer program based upon assessment of risk factors 	Project Director: 1 and 3 Site Coordinator: 2 and 3
June '02 through Sept. '02	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Begin 5 week summer program with afterschool program components 2. Complete annual evaluation report 3. Meet with planners in August and September to plan fall program 4. Meet with Evaluation Team to assess program weaknesses and strengths 5. Finalize planning for fall afterschool program 	Project Director: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Evaluator: 2, 3, 4, 5
Oct. '02 through Sept. '03	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Repeat above activities to include new, best practices from sites 2. Implement 21st Century Learning Center Sustainability Plan 	Project Director, Evaluator, and Chair, Task Force: 1 and 2
Oct. '03 through Sept. '04	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Repeat above activities include new, best practices from sites 2. Continue 21st Century Learning Center Sustainability Plan 	Project Director, Evaluator, and Chair, Task Force: 1 and 2

Measurable Objectives/Evaluation. The project management plan was designed to work with our program evaluation. Our evaluation plan is also presented in the chart that follows. Section V, Project Evaluation, highlights the *process* of how our performance indicators will be assessed. The project management plan includes specific objectives. These objectives, process and outcome, are detailed in the charts below. The process and outcome objectives define the minimum accomplishments that *AIM HIGH* will achieve. As listed

below with their performance indicators, the objectives will measure and define progress. These objectives are based upon information gathered from the South Carolina and Georgia 21st Century grantees and the performance levels of students already in 21st Century programs. Although this list of objectives may appear to render excessive documentation, most of this information is already required by the local school districts in other programs. The Evaluation Team will ask only for the minimal documentation to ensure objectives are reached. The number of objectives may also appear to be excessive, but existing South Carolina 21st Century Community Learning Center grantees report that these charts, which specify clear objectives, provide excellent road maps to keep programs on track.

PROCESS OBJECTIVES	
June 1, 2001–May 31, 2004	Indicators and Benchmarks (Responsible Persons)
Objective 1. The 7 school districts will operate 8 learning centers. Target population will be assessed by 9/1/01 using the 9 risk-factor criteria. Each center will serve at least 75 high-risk students (600 total) with at least 50% African-American males, 25% African-American females, and 25% Caucasian/Hispanic/other races between 6/1/01–5/31/04.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites visited and observed (Evaluator) • Activities /enrollment documented (Site Coordinator) • Student race/gender documented (Site Coordinator) • Screening process documented (Site Coordinator)
Objective 2. The Project Director will be identified by 7/1/01, and all project staff will be employed by 9/1/01. Staff-to-student ratios will be 1:12 or less. A Site Coordinator will be identified for each location by 9/1/01 to serve in this position through 5/31/04.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District employment records obtained (Evaluator) • Actual staff/students ratio determined (Evaluator) • Sites visited and observed (Evaluator)
Objective 3. A marketing flyer will be distributed to high-risk families by 9/1/01. 90% of non-responsive families will be contacted. Orientations will be held by 9/1/01. Orientations will be held annually thru 5/31/04.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flyer/distribution documented (Site Coordinator) • Meeting notification documented (Site Coordinator) • Meeting verified (Evaluator)
Objective 4. Staff will assess student records to develop an individualized student afterschool plan by each year between 9/1/00–5/31/04.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student plans documented (Site Coordinator) • Sample records reviewed (Evaluator)
Objective 5. 100% of the afterschool teachers will communicate at least every 2 weeks with the school day teachers beginning 9/1/01–5/31/04.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications documented (Site Coordinator) • Sites visited and observed (Evaluator)
Objective 6. Each of the 8 sites will employ at least 1 teacher who is computer literate. This teacher will train at least 90% of the 600 students on the use of computer technology between 9/1/01–5/31/04.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment/ training documented (Site Coordinator) • Lesson plans /attendance records (Site Coordinator) • Sites visited and observed (Evaluator)
Objective 7. At least 100% of the (600) students will take at least 1 educational field trip annually between 12/1/01–5/31/04. We anticipate additional trips will be offered during the program year. Students will produce projects about each trip/site/experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trip agenda/visits documented (Site Coordinator) • Bus travel logs documented (Bus Driver) • Evidence of students' work and activities produced (Site Coordinator and Evaluator)
Objective 8. Each of the 8 programs will include a homework center and a reading center as part of the afterschool program through 5/31/04.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities documented (Site Coordinator) • Sites visited and observed (Evaluator)
Objective 9. Each of the 8 sites will incorporate music, art, dance, drama, and cultural awareness components into activities of the programs (performance pieces may be district-wide) between 9/1/01–5/31/04.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verification of curriculum (Site Coordinator) • Sites visited and observed (Evaluator)

PROCESS OBJECTIVES	
June 1, 2001–May 31, 2004	Indicators and Benchmarks (Responsible Persons)
Objective 10. All 600 students will receive a daily refreshment snack during the afterschool and summer program operation through 5/31/04.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation of food items served (Food Staff) • Sites visited and observed (Evaluator)
Objective 11. At least 3 days per week, 90% of students will participate in recreation at each afterschool site between 9/1/01– 5/31/04.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity/recreation agenda (Site Coordinator) • Sites visited and observed (Evaluator)
Objective 12. One (1) session per month will be held for students/staff that focuses on alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse or violence prevention during the afterschool / summer programs through 5/31/04.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduled activities documented (Site Coordinator) • Training involvement verified (Evaluator) • Sign-in sheets or rosters developed (Site Coordinator)
Objective 13. Students will be screened each year by a healthcare professional between 12/1/01 - 5/31/04.	List of students screened by site (Site Coordinator)
Objective 14. At least 90% of all 600 students will participate annually in at least 2 community service projects between 12/1/01 - 5/31/04.	List of service projects /student names participating in each project documented (Site Coordinator)
Objective 15. Each site will establish linkages with at least 5 community/business/civic/faith partners between 12/1/01 - 5/31/04.	List of partners and observations documented (Site Coordinator)

OUTCOME OBJECTIVES	
June 1, 2001–May 31, 2004	Indicators and Benchmarks (Responsible Persons)
Objective 16. At least 70% of the <i>AIM HIGH</i> students (420) will exhibit improved academic performance annually by 20% when comparing 2001–02 grades to 2002–03 and 2002–03 to 2003-04.	Year-end grades of <i>AIM HIGH</i> students compared between 2002–02 to 2002–03 to 2003–04 (Site Coordinator and Evaluator)
Objective 17. <i>AIM HIGH</i> students will improve performance on State testing standards at least by 10% annually between 9/1/01 and 5/31/04.	Test scores compared of students pre/post-participation (Site Coordinator and Evaluator)
Objective 18. There will be a 25% annual increase in the number of the <i>AIM HIGH</i> students who exhibit positive attitudes towards the school environment between 9/1/01and 5/31/04.	Pre/post-tests designed by the Evaluation Team will measure attitudes prior to intervention and after intervention (Site Coordinator and Evaluator)
Objective 19. <i>AIM HIGH</i> students will have higher behavioral standards, exhibiting reduced levels of violence by 20% annually by 5/31/04.	Total # of referrals for discipline problems for the targeted group compared annually (Site Coordinator)
Objective 20. Students will exhibit reduced attitudes to use alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs by 30% annually between 9/1/01- 5/31/04.	Student pre/post-attitude surveys of substance abuse compared annually (Site Coordinator and Evaluator)
Objective 21. <i>AIM HIGH</i> students will exhibit a 20% annual increase in positive attitudes towards learning between 9/1/01and 5/31/04.	Pre/post-testing scores on <i>AIM HIGH</i> student attitude survey compared (Site Coordinator and Evaluator)
Objective 22. <i>AIM HIGH</i> students will exhibit a 20% annual increase in positive attitudes towards homework between 9/1/01and 5/31/04.	Pre/post-testing scores on <i>AIM HIGH</i> student attitude survey compared (Site Coordinator and Evaluator)
Objective 23. <i>Parents</i> will increase in positive attitudes by 20% annually towards their child's learning and school work between 9/1/01and 5/31/04.	Pre/post-testing on <i>AIM HIGH</i> parent attitude survey compared annually (Site Coordinator and Evaluator)
Objective 24. <i>AIM HIGH</i> parents will increase their participation in their student's school activities by 25% annually between 9/1/01and 5/31/04.	Pre/post-testing scores on <i>AIM HIGH</i> Parent Attitude Survey compared (Site Coordinator and Evaluator)
Objective 25. A Sustainability Strategy will be developed by 5/31/03 that will maintain <i>AIM HIGH</i> beyond Federal funding. Half of the program components will be operational with local funds by 8/1/04.	Verification of the development of written resource strategy verified (Evaluator)
Objective 26. A web site will be developed by 5/31/02 for active dissemination of <i>AIM HIGH</i> program knowledge. This web site will be actively operational and supported without Federal funds on 6/01/04.	Webpage development verified annually (Evaluator)

OUTCOME OBJECTIVES	
June 1, 2001–May 31, 2004	Indicators and Benchmarks (Responsible Persons)
Objective 27. At least 30% of the participants will enroll in the Workplace Program and become employed upon graduation each year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actual% of students enrolled of students employed upon graduation
Objective 28. At least 70% of the students in the program will complete high school and the drop-out rate will decrease by 20% when comparing the 2000-01 graduation rates each year between 2001 and 2004.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparison of drop-out rate each year to 2001 Actual percentage of <i>AIM HIGH</i> students graduating
Objective 29. A project manual will be developed by 5/31/04 to outline specific steps and activities required to operate a successful afterschool program. This will allow other new sites to build upon our knowledge.	Verification of the development of project manual documented (Evaluator)

V. PROJECT EVALUATION

This section describes the *process* that will be used to conduct our evaluation by Research Associates, a university-affiliated organization with offices in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Mike DuBose, M.S.W., will be Senior Evaluator along with five evaluators and graduate students. He served as principal investigator in over 100 federal grants since 1986 and is a field instructor with the University of South Carolina College of Social Work. Mr. DuBose has been the grants administrator for seven state agencies, a private nonprofit, and two governors. He has a strong background in education, grants administration, and afterschool programs. He serves as a grants evaluator for the U.S. Department of Education , the S.C. Department of Education, and 25 school districts. The Evaluation Team will report to the Project Director and Regional Task Force. Research Associates is currently evaluating six 21st Century Community Learning Center grants for 15 school districts. Consequently, *the experienced evaluators will become valuable communication linkages with existing grantees*. Evaluators will meet monthly with all key informants.

Evaluation Design: The evaluation will analyze the extent to which the project goals and objectives have been achieved. It will provide ongoing feedback to program staff and Planning Committees to allow changes to improve program effectiveness and fiscal efficiency. In addition, the evaluation will include quantitative and qualitative examination of both process components (services and management tasks) and outcome components. Both program activities and budget spending will be monitored.

Process Evaluation: Process evaluation will determine if the project is being implemented as intended. This data will be available throughout the program phases so that needed corrections can be made in a timely fashion. Process evaluation provides meaning for the outcome evaluation. (Outcome evaluation measures the impact of the program on the population being served.) The evaluators will use the FORECAST model (Formative Evaluation, Consultation, and System Techniques) to help guide project planning and implementation (Goodman, 1994). This system employs models, markers, measures, and meaning. The evaluator develops an “action model” of the program in a diagram format so that planners and key informants can visualize the proposed activities. Evaluators then meet with the planners and afterschool staff to refine the model and ensure that all agree with the evaluation process and proposed activities. This collaboration will occur early in project implementation. Markers, or indicators of project achievements, are then developed from the action model. They are used to determine if each project component has been implemented in the action model. Because projects such as *AIM HIGH* are complex, program activities may not be implemented exactly as planned. When this

happens, there is increased likelihood that the program will not produce desired outcomes. As a result, the Evaluation Team will meet monthly with program planners to discuss progress and make adjustments.

Measures and Data Collection Instruments. Measures provide the details on how the project will attain each marker. The measures will emphasize items to collect during program implementation such as staff activity calendars, academic grades, and test scores. A variety of instruments will be used to collect confidential data in this program: (1) surveys containing open and closed questions directed at students, parents, teachers, and project staff; (2) focus groups to achieve informal consensus regarding issues of concern; (3) records including course grades, internal behavioral and disciplinary actions, and attendance records; and (4) formal and informal observations. The evaluator will develop attitude surveys using Likert-type scales for administration to students, teachers, parents, and agency partners as a measurement tool for pre/post-test design. Satisfaction surveys will be used in training and activities.

Forecasting. This will determine the meaning of criteria used to assess achievement of each marker. Selection of the criteria establishes the minimum level of adequacy for each marker. If the marker is not attained, staff and evaluators have the opportunity to forecast consequences and implement solutions to allow timely corrections.

Outcome Evaluation. Outcome evaluation answers the question, What was the impact of the program? Short-term outcomes measure the effects of the program on the participants, while long-term outcomes examine the reduction of problems or the increase in the positive factors that will reduce problems. The outcome objectives listed previously represent the minimal measures that will assess the level of success of this project.

Scheduling of Evaluation Activities. The evaluation process will begin as soon as the grant is awarded. When evaluation operations are closely aligned with the efforts of management, the direction of a program is more refined. Thus, the Evaluation Team will be linked closely with the staff and planning teams of *AIM HIGH* throughout the first three years of operation. Also, the senior evaluator and project staff will meet on a monthly basis. Progress reports will be developed to facilitate the tracking of each marker and will record, at a minimum, each of the objectives described in the markers and measurements. The staff who will complete these reports will be asked to help design them with the evaluators to ensure that forms capture pertinent information and do not include unreasonable documentation.

Reducing Project Paperwork and Evaluation Burdens. *AIM HIGH* will not be evaluator-driven but rather community-owned. Since the evaluation team has administered programs in the past, evaluators will be sensitive to the needs of educators, staff, students, and parents in the implementation of evaluation activities to ensure that excessive or unnecessary documentation is not required. Evaluators will always ask themselves, Why do we need this information and how will it be used? Evaluators are evaluating six other 21st Century Community Learning Center grants and will transfer valuable information and proven practices between the funded sites in South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia. Evaluators will serve as guides to help planners and staff stay on track and offer support to the Project Director. The Evaluation Team has been involved throughout the development of the *AIM HIGH* model and has developed partial ownership of the model.

Working together has been our theme throughout this grant proposal. We will continue to do just that once we implement *AIM HIGH*! Thank you for considering our hard work.