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Geographic areas we will serve: Cook County Region I-A, Cook County Region I-B-B, Cook County Region I-B-C, Cook County Region I-B-D, Region I-C, Region II, and Region V.

Grade spans – Pre Kindergarten – 12

## Requirement #1:--Planning and Pre-Implementation

For each school receiving its services, *Atlantic Research Partners* (hereinafter “*Atlantic Research*”) will provide a systematic, thorough and comprehensive performance audit of programs, systems, and personnel; this initial site-specific process will establish baseline data upon which *Atlantic Research* analysis, determinations and ultimate recommendations shall be based. Determinations shall be rendered solely upon the basis of validated and documented evidence, and in accordance with clearly articulated criteria. Further, *Atlantic Research* will identify educational standards achieved and not achieved at each school site, and provide detailed strategies for school leadership teams on implementing critical changes within their buildings; changes specific to identifiable needs, and deeply focused upon student academic performance.

Crucial to *Atlantic Research*'s value is the collaborative involvement of school leaders and teachers themselves at each building in which our teams work. Longitudinal studies by *Atlantic Research* and efficacy researchers nationwide establish that effective interventions and sustainable change occur only if those affected by the interventions “own” and participate in implementation. Consequently, *Atlantic Research* maintains a rigorous focus on collaboration, professionalism, respectfulness and sensitivity in all of its school improvement work. Issues are explored and probed *with* stakeholders—not independently or in isolation. High standards and high expectations are not compromised by collaboration; instead, opportunities for sustained growth are data-proven to be enhanced.

The *Atlantic Research* performance audit process will also provide each school with verbal and written feedback that is clear, easily understood and—most importantly—constructive. The core focus of the *Atlantic Research* performance audit team will be on six areas affecting each school: student academic achievement, teaching quality, curriculum alignment and rigor, school culture, resource management/efficiency, and school leadership.

The performance audit process itself is divided into three phases: Pre-Audit, Site Work, and Post-Audit.

### Evidence of Effectiveness:

“The partnership between Hampton County 2 (Estill, SC) and *Atlantic Research* was spread over three years. Three schools were addressed: elementary, middle and high school, totaling about 1500 students. Year One, a core group of teachers were trained, who then went on to train other teachers. Year Two was also the first year that *Atlantic* conducted Instructional Audits, which allowed us to drill down on specific areas that needed overhauling. Year Three, we were able to post double digit gains in English and Math at Estill Elementary School and double digit HSAP gains for Estill High School the following period.” Dr. Dionne Simmons, former Superintendent of Schools.

## Requirement #2:--Governance

*Atlantic Research* provides support and training in three critical areas for school leaders and faculty in low performing schools: (i) The development and implementation of protocols governing student behavior and academic expectations, (ii) Leadership training focused upon consistent, readily identifiable goals and (iii) The use of data to drive instruction effectively.

### Evidence of Effectiveness:

Atlantic Research has effectively worked with SIG schools in Chicago and Kankakee to create efficient operations and communications to drive student achievement forward and support teachers/administrators in their work. We provide leadership training and support at both the school and district levels, and our support has produced stronger leaders throughout the schools.

Requirement #3:  
Operational Flexibility

In today's climate of economic challenge and extraordinary competition, reliable, results-driven methods are crucial to achieving and sustaining organizational effectiveness. Practical, research-tested tools, strategies and protocols are pivotal. And seamlessly providing them is what *Atlantic Research* does for businesses, nonprofit organizations, and institutions engaged in delivery of preK-12 education services.

Our services begin with a dedicated team of experienced professionals clinically analyzing client needs and current practices, then ultimately building—with substantial client input and clear concurrence—specific management, education, organizational and leadership programs exclusively tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of each client site. *Atlantic Research* recognizes that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to mastering the complex issues facing managers, administrators, and leaders today. What we provide is real research. And real results. Immediate and long-term.

*Atlantic Research* customizes its work in each client engagement; however, there are certain non-negotiables that we are compelled to identify from the outset:

- A. An intense focus on teaching quality must underlie all our work, or sustainable gains will not be realized. (Please note: There is a distinction between *teacher* quality and *teaching* quality: the intensity of our focus is not on individual attributes but on teaching behaviors and their effectiveness in engaging students and communicating academic content.)
- B. We *blend* training, facilitation and organizational problem-solving rather than introducing each in isolation. Our reasoning for this non-negotiable is straightforward: it ensures the highest levels of candor and the most sustainable implementation of reform.
- C. We will not implement any tactic, strategy or methodology that is not research-driven; our work recognizes that authentic reform requires data-backed practices—practices arising solely from valid and authenticated study.
- D. Because reform is not sustainable without strong collaboration, candor and timely, two-way feedback, our strategies employ on-site partnerships and joint problem-solving; top-down mandates and isolated directives are proscribed.
- E. *Atlantic Research* faculty members are selected wholly on the basis of their record in accelerating student academic achievement, and on their demonstrated commitment to *Atlantic Research's* driving principle: *all kids can and must succeed*.

Evidence of Effectiveness:

Atlantic Research supports operational flexibility granted by the district to buildings under the SIG. This operational flexibility allows building level leaders to make decisions to uniquely impact their building regardless of district policies. Atlantic works closely with schools to assess their needs as a building and often acts as a liaison between the building and the district to ensure that the unique needs of a SIG building are being met and all provisions of the grant are being followed.

#### Requirement #4:--Teacher/Principal Evaluation with Student Growth Component

*Atlantic Research* assists schools in communicating that performance evaluation is a necessary component of successful schools. Performance measures must be in place as an evaluative tool for educators and a check on student learning. Multiple measures, including measurement of student growth, must be used in the performance evaluation system in order to provide a clear picture of the value that teachers and principals bring to the school and, more importantly, provide an accurate measure of students.

*Atlantic Research* designs a rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation system that takes into account performance measures in the school. The system is customized for each school, creating unique performance measures as appropriate for that building. However, there are certain commonalities that will exist in each of the performance evaluation systems created. Each will include individual and group facilitation and evaluation for school principals and teachers. The individual evaluations will allow for an analysis of student growth on a classroom level and provide opportunity for deep evaluation into the performance of the teachers and growth of the students. Group evaluations (in a particular grade level, subject area, etc.) will allow for a broader analysis of student growth and take a holistic approach to student achievement and educator performance.

Individual educator reviews will permit an analysis of performance data collected from a variety of sources and observations. Standardized test results will be one component of the analysis, along with a growth model method of evaluating teachers and student performance over time. Additionally, *Atlantic Research* will conduct individual and anecdotal observations to add to the analysis and overall evaluation process. The performance data collected from multiple methods and reflecting multiple measures will determine with specificity certain linkages, causality, and documentation related to student achievement. After the data on each individual teacher is collected, it will be analyzed from a performance evaluation standpoint and will also provide an opportunity to work with the school on planning, action, and processes for principals and teachers; this process enables team members to provide a greater impact on student learning both as individuals and as members of an institution.

There are four general phases to *Atlantic Research's* performance evaluation system and analysis of performance measures. As stated above, these phases will be customized in each school building to provide the most accurate information possible.

#### Evidence of Effectiveness:

In each of the SIG schools supported by *Atlantic Research*, we provide continuous support for teachers and administrators. Our support is based on observational data in the classroom and building levels, as well as a careful examination of student data. *Atlantic Research* is not involved in the evaluation of any teachers or administrators in any school; however, we do support teachers in the work they are doing to ensure that they are meeting expectations of district evaluators. For example, the teacher-level supports that *Atlantic* provides to teachers in Chicago Public Schools, including in class coaching and mentoring, are all tied to the REACH standards that CPS uses to evaluate teachers, so that teachers can both improve their teaching methods while meeting the expectations of their evaluators.

## Requirement #5:--Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention Incentives and Strategies

*Atlantic Research* will partner with the school community, school district, and ISBE to source, recruit, assess, and select replacement members of the turnaround school. Further, *Atlantic Research* will leverage its other existing partnerships and establish relationships with Teach For America, The New Teacher Project, Teachers Placement Group (India sourcing), and Illinois higher education venues to build candidate pipeline for teaching, school leadership, and other critical roles for the work ahead.

*Atlantic Research* has also engaged in more than 15 years of research in recruitment, selection, and retention of top-talent educators and leaders. Its meta-analysis of behavioral-based interviewing protocols has been used to certify hundreds of school leaders, and other organizational hiring managers and executives in several states. Among the TAO of Interviewing clients *Atlantic Research* has served in this capacity are the Charlotte Mecklenburg (NC) Schools, The Walt Disney Organization, US Relocation, Edison Learning, state departments of Education in TN and FL as well as the Seminole County (FL) and Orange County (FL) Public Schools. The research and expertise *Atlantic Research* has established in recruitment and selection is a positive fit for this project.

Additionally, *Atlantic Research* has several team members with direct experience negotiating, hiring, and recruiting qualified staff members. Dr. Joseph Wise was a union negotiator and a superintendent who recruited and hired many qualified individuals for positions throughout his districts. David Sundstrom and Todd Zoellick both have a background in labor and employment issues and experience negotiating employment contracts and other related skills.

### Evidence of Effectiveness:

*Atlantic Research* has worked closely with all of its SIG schools to ensure that retention strategies are put in place and effective teachers are being hired to support the important work in schools. These retention strategies include but are not limited to incentives provided to teachers and supports specifically targeting teacher needs in the classroom. When schools are not able to effectively retain teachers, *Atlantic* supports schools in the new hiring process. One example is a Lafayette Elementary School in Kankakee School District 111 where two thirds of the teaching staff were being replaced in one year. Our faculty members worked with building leadership to identify viable, long-term candidates and conduct interviews with building leadership to ensure that candidates reflected the important SIG work being done in the school.

## Requirement #6:--Awards Associated with (Improving Student) Achievement or Graduation Rate

Atlantic Research Partners has helped schools develop incentive plans to award teachers and/or administrators for effectively supporting student achievement. When students reach certain benchmarks predetermined by the school administration and teacher, awards are provided to teachers who achieve the benchmarks. These incentives are different for each school but include items like additional training for teachers outside the school day, attendance and offsite conferences, paying for all or a portion of a teachers advance studies toward a masters degree, and/or additional supplies for the classroom. All incentives are based on student achievement data and clearly defined for teachers.

### Evidence of Effectiveness:

One example of Atlantic Research developing incentive awards is at Lafayette Elementary School, where Atlantic developed a plan with building administration to provide incentives for teachers who met certain student achievement levels. Teachers at Lafayette who met the achievement levels received a reimbursement for 75% of the cost of their work toward a master's degree in education.

## Requirement #7:--Extended Time

Atlantic Research Partners supports the concept and implementation of extended time under the SIG. It is imperative that struggling schools and students have increased instructional time in the classroom to increase achievement and focus instruction on areas of greatest need.

### Evidence of Effectiveness:

Atlantic Research has worked closely with Chicago Public Schools and Kankakee School District 111 to develop targeted extended time in the classrooms. In Chicago, this has manifested itself in a variety of ways, including but not limited to adding an additional period into the school schedule and/or providing after school supports. In Kankakee, students have attended school for an additional 15 days and teachers have been required to attend additional training during the summer. In all of the schools where extended time has been implemented, data demonstrates that student achievement increased and extended time played some role in those increases.



## Requirement #8:--Comprehensive Instructional Reform

*Atlantic Research's* School Improvement Model is a robust and multifaceted approach to evaluating, intervening, and training teachers, staff, and systems. The most common component of low performing schools, particularly low performing high schools, is a lack of systems in place within a school. The lack of systems can arise from multiple factors, including inadequate rules and regulations, ineffective teaching and building leadership, and/or failure to provide professional development and coaching. Nationwide research establishes one fundamental tenet: sustainable and effective school reform must begin with systems that meet both (i) the academic and (ii) the logistical needs of a school and its faculty.

*Atlantic Research's* approach begins with a systemic, thorough and comprehensive audit of the site with an intense focus on six key areas: Student achievement, Teaching behaviors, Curriculum alignment and rigor, School culture, Resource management and efficiency, and School leadership.

The specific methods *Atlantic Research* employs every day at each school site are differentiated to meet the needs of the school and customized to the issues affecting the building, but there are some common themes in our approach to school reform.

- Student achievement is the driving purpose of our work.
- Teaching quality must be evaluated and changed into a highly effective process for educating students.
- All professional development for teachers must be job-embedded, on-going and aligned to documented strategies for increasing student achievement.
- School culture must be changed from the inside out; it requires working with teachers and staff members to create positive factors daily.
- Management and effective use of existing resources is critical to student achievement within any school site.
- School leadership is a necessary component to overall building success and student achievement.

*Atlantic Research* will employ a variety of staff members and experts in content areas and school management/leadership for the purpose of increasing student achievement in school buildings and addressing underperformance. *Atlantic Research* will provide a general project manager who will manage budgets, staffing and client relationships at each building. Further, *Atlantic Research* will provide an assistant to the general manager who will provide back-up assistance throughout the overall project. In addition to these logistical/facilities/staffing managerial positions, each school will have a lead team member charged with guiding academic performance and initiatives in the building. This individual will drive the school reform initiatives and will be assisted by an associate lead team member in the building.

Evidence of Effectiveness:

Our work at Lafayette Primary School in Kankakee has affected student achievement in a positive way. There is strong evidence that the students in the greatest need – Those at risk in Reading and Math achievement – are responsible for swathes of positive gains in their AIMSWeb assessments. The overall conclusion is that a substantively larger proportion of students will be at grade level by the end of the year – The ultimate goal of school improvement efforts in historically underperforming schools

## Requirement #9:--Job-Embedded Professional Development

*Atlantic Research* will assess existing needs at a site and ultimately plan for the training and professional development of faculty on the basis of that assessment. *Atlantic Research* believes that every teacher, regardless of his or her experience, competency, or the quality of the school, needs ongoing training and professional development. Each school in which *Atlantic Research* provides services will mutually develop with *Atlantic Research* a detailed schedule and required time for professional development.

*Atlantic Research* will work with school leadership to include regular and dedicated mandatory professional development, outside of the regular school day, for teachers and staff. This schedule will be included in the master calendar. *Atlantic Research* will work with building leadership to provide common prep times for grade level teachers or content area teachers. Common prep times are research-established to serve as an effective vehicle for teachers to collaborate on all issues related to their teaching. *Atlantic Research* will ensure that the school bell schedule and teaching schedule is structured in a manner that allows for common prep times throughout the buildings.

The professional development provided to teachers and staff will be dictated by the needs of the teachers. In some cases, these may be requests directly from teachers for assistance; however, it is more likely that *Atlantic Research* team members will observe (i) areas needing improvement in the classroom or (ii) inadequate teaching techniques being implemented in the classroom. *Atlantic Research* will respond by integrating appropriate training into professional development sessions. All *Atlantic Research* professional development will use practical teaching methods that can be put into place in the classroom and everything discussed will be data driven. Teachers will learn to interpret, and rely on data in their classrooms and in planning lessons for students. *Atlantic Research* team members will also evaluate whether the professional development training is having a positive impact on the classrooms through observations, coaching, and interaction with teachers on a daily basis. These supports additionally allow for further professional development instruction where needed.

### Evidence of Effectiveness:

An excerpt from one of our high school's Q1 Report to the LEA:

During the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, Atlantic Research Partners continued their work with teachers in the English, Math, Science and Social Science departments. Content area instructional coaches work in classrooms daily to observe and offer instructional feedback to teachers. Based on the observations in the classrooms and the interactions with teachers, ARP along with the school administration, determines professional development programs for individual teachers based on their specific area of growth. Atlantic develops an intervention and support plan for each teacher for whom they provide coaching support. These individually determined supports vary from teacher to teacher; however, all supports are designed to improve instructional quality and student engagement, while integrating the district's instructional framework and the gradual release of responsibility.

Requirement #10:  
Use of Data to Drive Instruction

*Atlantic Research* provides teachers supports and protocols for meeting student needs on the basis of student assessment data. Three major components govern this work: (i) formative assessments, (ii) summative assessments, and (iii) State standards that must be student mastered. We assist teachers in analyzing data from student formative and summative assessments, using that data to develop strategic instructional plans, and ultimately assisting their students in attaining mastery of concepts required to be mastered by State standards. *Atlantic Research* customizes its work on the basis of each school's—and often each classroom's—specific needs.

Evidence of Effectiveness:

In our work with our School Improvement schools, we are engaged daily with administration, teachers and support staff in conversations around student data. In our high schools, students are involved in this conversation through the BAG reports (Behavior, Attendance, and Grades), and are encouraged to self-advocate and interface with their data. We also provide a data strategist to work with school staff to put data systems in place to support the data conversations. Not only are reports generated, but staff are involved in professional development sessions to support the interpretation and use of data daily in all classrooms. Teachers are continuously monitoring formal and informal data to inform their instruction.

## Requirement #11:--Program Monitoring

Atlantic Research Partners has developed a comprehensive system for monitoring SIG implementation progress and ensuring that schools are embracing research-based practices and meeting the requirements of the grant. This system is multi-faceted and includes a Scope of Work, written collaboratively with the school, daily coaching reports from our faculty, weekly check-in meetings with school administrators, monthly check-in meetings, and quarterly reporting with the LEA.

A Scope of Work document is created at the beginning of each school year and sets out the objectives that have been set collaboratively with the school administration, the actions that Atlantic Research coaches will be implementing with school staff to meet those objectives, and the metrics that will be used to determine whether those objectives are being met. Each of the areas that the school has chosen to focus on is monitored with this system. The Scope of Work document is revisited continually by our team to ensure that Atlantic Research faculty is addressing these objectives as they perform their instructional coaching, professional development sessions, and other activities as agreed upon with the school administrative team.

### Evidence of Effectiveness:

Weekly reports are distributed to each of the SIG school principals summarizing the work that each of Atlantic Research's faculty members have completed in their school. These reports tie the activities of our staff to the objectives agreed upon in the Scope of Work. Check in meetings with school administrative teams review this progress and allow our team to make adjustments to these activities to ensure that the needs of the school are being met and progress is being made towards meeting the agreed-upon objectives.

## Requirement #12:--Family and Community Engagement

Schools that become a center of a neighborhood or community—and not just a place to send students for a few hours each day—have historically higher academic achievement, regardless of the social and economic status of those within the local environment. When a school serves as a community “center,” school culture and climate extends throughout the community and not just within the walls of the building.

*Atlantic Research* conducts an analysis of school culture; analysis that consists of deep inquiry into counseling available to students, attendance of students, community and parent attendance at school functions, existing behavioral rules/discipline for students, conflicts, if any, that have historically occurred at the site, parental complaints, perceptions of the school by members of the immediate community, and a multiplicity of related factors more focused on *perception* than academics. Team members will be analyzing parent and community involvement, and will be reaching out to those beyond the school walls who affect the way students in the school are perceived.

*Atlantic Research* begins with the fundamental understanding that “family” includes far more than two biological parents and their children; at a minimum “family” (for school outreach purposes) must also include guardians, custodians, grandparents, step-parents, siblings and step-siblings. Consequently, after-school family activities that traditionally targeted only parents can no longer be presumed to resonate with extended families because they target only parents. The bottom line is, “relationship-building” starts, according to sociological studies, with acknowledgement of who we are seeking to establish a relationship *with*.

*Atlantic Research* also works with schools to either create or augment formal parent groups within the school (e.g., PTA, LSC, etc.). Stakeholders will have opportunities to participate in the reform process in tangible ways by active involvement in the school and by attending community meetings where the school leadership (with *Atlantic Research*, if requested) will discuss reform at the school, seek input from the community groups, request their involvement in more tangible ways.

### Evidence of Effectiveness:

Atlantic Research has evidence of effectiveness in parent and community engagement through building the capacity of school-level personnel to effectively reach parents and community members. Atlantic’s goal is not simply to increase parent participation at school events or facilitate a certain number of community/business interactions with the school. Rather, Atlantic’s goal is the building of capacity in building-level parent/community outreach leaders for sustainability purposes. For example, Atlantic employs a Family and Community Engagement Coach in SIG schools most struggling in this area. The FACE Coach works with building level leadership to develop an outreach plan customized to each school/community. These plans detail outreach to parents, home visits, business outreach, etc. Each plan is customized to the school and community.

Requirement #13  
Sustainability

*Atlantic Research's* School Improvement Model follows, fundamentally a, *train-the-trainer* prototype. Our staff and faculty works alongside teachers and staff members in the process of school reform, under the premise that once trained, the site's existing staff will continue the embedded work. *Atlantic Research* is responsible for intervention and manages all of the programs, training, initiatives and changes prescribed in the school. But *Atlantic Research* recognizes what nationwide data establishes: "top-down" management techniques are consistently resisted, and any implemented change employing such techniques is unsustainable. Consequently, the *Atlantic Research* team works *with* school leaders and teachers to initiate necessary changes and achieve results. By working alongside teachers, leaders, and staff, *Atlantic Research* establishes a collaborative environment that enables participatory buy-in to reforms that might otherwise appear threatening or initially overwhelming. The school will be ultimately a high achieving institution because the teachers and staff are part of the School-*Atlantic Research* team, and share in clearly defined goals. When *Atlantic Research* leaves the site at the end of its engagement, school leaders and teachers are positioned to seamlessly carry on the implemented reforms—primarily because the reforms are *theirs*.

Evidence of Effectiveness:

Atlantic Research's school improvement services are designed to ensure that by the end of the grant, school-based staff members are leading the school improvement activities initiated by the lead partner. Our evidence of effectiveness is seen in the Summer School program at Chicago Vocational Career Academy in Chicago, a Cohort 3 school. Teacher leaders are working alongside our faculty members and delivering the professional development that is part of the school's summer program..

## Requirement #14--Lead Partner

*Atlantic Research* is an educational advisory, research and technical assistance provider who are committed to providing consistent, high-quality school improvement services that advance teacher and leader abilities, improve both school culture and student academic performance, and deliver increased student achievement. We do not have a one-size-fits-all approach to mastering the complex issues building leaders, teachers, students and families face each day. Instead we are committed to providing customized, high-quality school improvement services that advance teacher and leader skills and knowledge while also improving school culture so as to significantly impact student achievement.

*Atlantic's* work with districts and schools nationwide has contributed to significant increases in student achievement as well as substantial, measureable growth of educator practice. As a result of employing Atlantic Research Partner's School Improvement Model, schools utilizing our processes and procedures can accomplish the following:

- Complete a comprehensive and systemic analysis of school data indicators to identify critical areas for improving student achievement.
- Focus on a *few targeted issues* that when accomplished will have the greatest impact on student achievement;
- Developing *focused goals* that respond to the most critical needs;
- Agree on evidence-based or research-based *measurable strategies* to reach the goals;
- Delineate a small number of *actions with purposeful timelines*, responsible person(s) and necessary resources to implement them;
- Determine focused, content-specific professional development for staff;
- Create a schedule and *explicit steps to monitor* strategies, actions, adult practices, and student performance;
- Establish methods and techniques to **communicate** the plan, plan progress and results.

School Improvement represents large-scale change that occurs over time. Sustaining a focus on school improvement requires that schools engage in several core processes that include:

- ✓ Viewing continuous improvement as the core work of the school and recognizing it is recursive in nature;
- ✓ Reliance on quality data (collection, organization) as well as quality analysis and interpretation of data to identify critical problems that in turn inform development of a focused plan, monitoring process and evaluation plan to assess impact;
- ✓ Establishing the expectations for substantive change in student performance and adult practices;
- ✓ Ensuring the use of collaborative and collegial engagement – every plan is only strengthened from people committed to the school's success; and
- ✓ Regular and ongoing communication focused on interim and long-term improvement and change