

BUFFALO SCHOOL PROJECT PROPOSAL

9/1/05-6/30/06

I. SCOPE OF WORK

This project builds upon the work which has been carried out as part of the ACT for Youth initiative and the relationships established between the Upstate Center of Excellence and Erie County. In the proposed project, we are partnering with the Buffalo City School District in order to help them assess and improve their school environments so that students feel more connected and cared for. A key part of this project is the development of a tool to assess school climate. Instead of using an existing tool, we will use a participatory approach to develop a tool based on input from key stakeholders: school staff, community based organizations working with schools, parents and students.

We will use Concept Mapping to assist us in the development of the tool. This technique allows us to systematically gather the ideas of all the relevant stakeholders and identify what these individuals view is important for enhancing students feelings of connectedness to their school. We will use the results of the Concept Mapping process to develop a tool which we will pilot in the winter. We will revise this tool and by the end of the school year, administer the final survey to all school districts. We will use the preliminary findings to start a planning process on how to improve school environments in the Buffalo City School District.

The project involves developing an assessment tool, piloting the tool, revising the tool, and collecting data. Once collected, we will analyze the data and help the School District use the findings to improve school climate. The specific steps of this process are outlined in the time line below. The project spans a period of 16 months. Two separate subcontracts will be submitted to complete this work, one for the first 10 months; a separate subcontract will be submitted for the last six months.

II. TIME LINE

<i>September 2005</i>	Steering Committee Meeting Planning for October kick -off event Communicate with Team Members Identify pilot schools/plan engagement strategies
<i>October 2005</i>	Kick off event: 10/17-19/2005 Plan/organize Concept Mapping activity Start concept mapping: generate statements
<i>November 2005</i>	Subgroup: Cluster and Prioritize statements Cornell work team: Enter and Analyze data; generate maps and profiles
<i>December 2005</i>	Steering Committee: Interpret maps and key elements of survey Identify participating schools/plan engagement

January 2006

Work team: Develop pilot survey
Steering Committee: feedback on survey
Short report on project to public

February 2006

Administer pilot survey
Work team: data analysis

March 2006

Work team and Steering Committee: Interpret and revise survey

April/May 2006

Full administration of survey (**if viable**)
Work team: enter data, analyze data, write reports

June 2006

Interpret data
Begin to generate report
Start planning interventions based on survey results

III. Deliverables

- **October Kick Off Event**
- **Conduct Concept Mapping Process**
- **Collect, enter and analyze Concept Mapping data**
- **Develop Pilot School Climate Assessment Tool**
- **Collect Pilot Data and analyze findings**
- **Develop Revised Final Survey Tool**
- **Collect Survey Data and analyze the findings**
- **Assist School District Use the Data for Planning Purposes**