

(C). QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN AND EVALUATION PLAN (30 PTS)

(1) CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION ACTIVITIES

We start with some underlying assumptions and context to our work in Kern County:

(1) Currently, besides our two schools, *only four other site-based charter schools exist in all of Kern County*, including two K-8 schools (one of which serves less than 100 students and is located in the Los Padres National Forest, the other is 100 miles northeast of Arvin) and two K-12 schools (both approximately 30 miles from GAS in the NW corner of the County). At 8,142 square miles, Kern County is twice as large as neighboring Los Angeles County, yet with approximately 890,000 residents, it has less than 1/10th of LA County's population.

(2) College degree attainment in Kern remains well below State average, as detailed above.

(3) Kern County's population has been steadily increasing and is projected to continue this growth. With this context in mind, our Theory of Action is that:



We know – as extensive educational research has documented -- that the success of our model lies in the efficacy of our teachers: high-quality teachers are the key. (E.g., Sanders and Rivers, 1996; Haycock, 1999) As detailed above, we invest heavily in time and resources to ensure our teachers have comprehensive, ongoing coaching and PD to continuously improve their teaching practice as they work to meet the needs of each individual student. As we grow as an organization, this commitment to our talent is paramount, and will guide us as we add positions at every level of the organization from our first Chief Operating Officer to HR support at the CMO to all levels of school site staff. (Org Charts are included in Appendix H.)

The extensive data included above and in Appendix F attests to the success of our personalized approach to student success. As we replicate our model at both the K-8 level and newly to the 9-12 level, we are continuously driven by data at every level. Just as teachers use data to differentiate the learning program for each student and revise their students' ILPs every six weeks, our senior staff and the Board review data to assess progress towards short and long-term goals. We note that Each Grimmway school will be guided by the outcomes and objectives detailed in its Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), required of all LEAs (including independent charter schools) under California's public school funding system, the Local Control Funding Formula. An LCAP must be submitted by each LEA by June 30 of each year for the upcoming fiscal year (starting July 1), involving all types of stakeholders in the process. The LCAP includes specific goal setting (school-wide and subgroup), objectives, actions tied to expenditures, identification of measures to assess progress, timelines (over a three year period) and specific funding allocations across eight state priorities (many of which have several sub-parts). Each LCAP includes both Absolute Measures (enrollment, standardized test data, graduation rates, etc.) tied to objective data, and Comparative Measures, tied to our comparison schools/districts' performance outcomes. A brief summary of anticipated school site goals and activities, aligned with the LCAP structure, is included in Appendix H. The LCAP will provide an important tool for new school leaders to engage stakeholders in a collaborative planning process and to set clear goals and objectives, allocate resources, and reflect on strengths and weaknesses. Beyond the grant evaluation, the LCAPs serve as the primary vehicles by which we measure the success of each school, hold school leaders accountable for achievement of objectives, and provide support from our network office.

(2) LOGIC MODEL

In collaboration with our partners at Bellwether, Grimmway has carefully designed the following Logic Model for CSP grant activities (a large version is provided in Appendix H):

Inputs/Context: <i>Kern County context:</i> Lack of charter school options in County (only 4 other site-based schools); college degree attainment far below State average; County population rising. <i>Grimmway Inputs:</i> Rigorous instructional model with personalized, differentiated instruction & inquiry-based learning; Data-driven MTSS; Partnerships with CSUB, BC, & local industry; Edible Schoolyard program; Intensive talent development with 260 hours teacher PD and Instructional Coaches at 13:1 ratio			
Activities	Outputs	Short- to Mid-Term Outcomes	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand GAS to add 90 students each in 7th and 8th grades; Grow model to 9-12 with new GAHS, adding 1,000 seats Replicate K-8 model in GA#3 with 450 seats (K-4) in grant term (ultimately 800 in K-8) Codify core elements of K-8 curricula, instructional strategies and MTSS model Develop & implement 9-12 program with four CTE pathways, incl. dual enrollment courses Provide comprehensive academic/college counseling starting in 9th grade Develop new facilities with ESY garden & kitchen classrooms, on-site Cafe Staff new schools with certified ESY staff Develop & implement standards-aligned ESY assessments and 9-12 ESY program including Food & Nutrition Science and Agricul. Business pathways alignment Add key roles to central management team Develop key talent pipeline initiatives Provide intensive, ongoing PD and coaching Continuously review data (state tests, attendance, surveys, financial, etc.) to assess progress towards annual goals in LCAP and grant and fidelity to Grimmway model; make appropriate adjustments <p>Collaborate with external evaluators (Bellwether) to assess grant progress and outcomes</p>	<p>Number of high quality seats increases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> #Grimmway schools increases to 4 by 2025 #K-8 seats increase to 2400 by 2025 #9-12 seats increases to 1000 by 2025 <p>Highly qualified, diverse staff delivering rigorous, personalized curriculum and MTSS</p> <p>Edible Schoolyard operating with fidelity at each school</p>	<p>Students' academic achievement is high and on track for college and beyond.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> >=60% students meet indivl. NWEA MAP Growth Targets Overall CAASPP Mean Scale Scores in both ELA and Math meet or exceed local Districts, County and State for the same grade levels by 2025 All statistically significant subgroups' CAASPP Mean Scale Scores in both ELA and Math meet or exceed local Districts, County and State for the same grade levels by 2025 HS students complete at least 3 college credits per year 100% HS students on track to meet A-G requirements each year 100% ACT/SAT participation by 2025 100% FAFSA completion by 2025 100% college application rate by 2025 <p>Students are meaningfully engaged and growing in awareness of personal health & wellness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> >=75% students pass Edible Schoolyard assessments benchmark each year >=75% students show increase in healthy eating & behavior by 2025 >=95% daily attendance rate each year >=90% annual student retention rate each year <p>Schools are sufficiently staffed and staff have the support they need to succeed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> >=75% staff satisfaction each year >=85% annual teacher retention each year <p>Schools are financially sustainable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <= 3% deviation from annual budget goals each year <p>Self-sustaining on public funds by Year 3</p>	<p>Over 3400 Kern County students receive a high-quality education that prepares them to succeed in college and career.</p> <p>More youth in Kern County enroll in and complete college.</p> <p>Schools are financially sustainable on public funds over long term.</p> <p>Grimmway Schools provide additional evidence that charter schools can help educationally disadvantaged students attain college and career success</p>

The logic model demonstrates how grant activities are aligned with outcomes and objective performance indicators that Grimmway has identified as part of a strategic growth planning process with Bellwether over the past year. These indicators include student academic outcomes (e.g., academic achievement, college credits earned through dual enrollment, college application and matriculation), health and wellness outcomes (e.g., ESY assessments, ADA) and operational processes (e.g., CMO staffing, financial sustainability). As Grimmway expands, ongoing reflection on these activities and performance indicators can support continuous improvement of network operations, school leadership, and instructional staff. Thus, the logic model provides an important foundation from which the rigorous evaluation of Grimmway will be built and sustained.

This evaluation will focus on two areas: 1) Grimmway's ability to add two additional schools while maintaining fidelity to core elements of its successful model and 2) Grimmway's impact on student learning. These evaluation areas align to major goals, objectives, and strategies proposed by Grimmway and represented in detail within the logic model.

EVALUATION FOCUS AREA #1: To evaluate Grimmway's ability to add expand while maintaining fidelity to its model during implementation, the evaluation will leverage existing data collected and aligned to Grimmway's approach at the macro level (e.g., important organizational milestones for expansion) and micro level (e.g., critical factors for implementation with fidelity, such as college credits earned, ESY learning assessments, and stakeholder surveys). These data will be complemented by primary data collection by the evaluator, including interviews of CMO staff, school administrators, and teachers (in both existing and expansion schools). Bellwether will develop semi-structured interview protocols focused on key components of the Grimmway model, as well as perceptions of central office support, student health and well-being, and family engagement. When appropriate, evaluators will discuss with the evaluation working group whether to seek additional and/or more in-depth perspectives by adding further qualitative data collection such as parent interviews, classroom observations, or case studies to describe specific innovative and effective network practices.

EVALUATION FOCUS AREA #2: To address the second focus area, benchmark data -- such as the performance of Grimmway students compared to other students in the District, Kern County, and State -- will be reported via descriptive, longitudinal trends to provide the larger contextual framework within which Grimmway is operating and to represent how Grimmway students are performing relative to similar peers in non-Grimmway schools. In addition, achievement gaps by socioeconomic status, EL proficiency, SpEd status, race/ethnicity and other subgroup status will be explored and reported.

Grimmway administers the NWEA MAP reading and math assessments at every grade level throughout the network. Evaluators will analyze and report descriptive statistics on student progress toward individual Growth Targets on MAP reading and math assessments in each grade and school. In addition, NWEA provides a virtual comparison group that matches students with similar demographic and achievement attributes for comparison purposes. Evaluators will analyze Grimmway' NWEA results against this virtual comparison group to assess how Grimmway students are performing compared to a national sample of similar students.

To further study impact, we propose to draw on CAASPP results to implement a rigorous quasi-experimental design that meets What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Evidence Standards with reservations and will be complemented by appropriate qualitative and descriptive quantitative analyses. Propensity score matching (PSM) will be used to select a baseline equivalent comparison group of students required for this design. Comparison students will be identified within the County via PSM based on several criteria: grade levels served within comparison schools; student demographics; and baseline equivalence on achievement measures.

Once the comparison group is identified, evaluators will compare student achievement gains on the CAASPP ELA and math assessments using a regression model, adjusting for covariates as needed. Standard errors will be clustered at the school level. These comparative analyses will be conducted at two time points during the grant period: First in Year 3 for grades 4 and 8, after GAS has expanded through 8th grade; and again in Year 5 for grades 4, 8, and 11, after the HS has expanded through 11th grade (the first HS cohort will not reach 11th grade until Year 4 of the grant, and 9th and 10th graders do not take the CAASPP). It is anticipated that such analyses will be completed as summative reporting for the CSP grant is generated, giving Grimmway time to implement new tactics as needed. Careful discussion within the evaluation

working group, considering extant data and implementation trends, will guide which independent variables are included in the model.

An additional indicator of student learning is the degree to which HS students are on track for college acceptance and enrollment. While GAHS will not graduate its first cohort until just after the grant end (June 2025), for each cohort, evaluators will analyze and provide descriptive data summaries on number of dual enrollment college credits earned and progress toward completing A-G requirements. For the first cohort who will be in 12th grade in Y5, we will track the percentage who: take the ACT or SAT; complete FAFSA; and apply to college.

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK: A preliminary evaluation framework and associated performance measures have been developed to represent proposed evaluation questions and their alignment to Grimmway's expansion and performance goals. The related evaluation methods, including data that will be collected and analyzed, are described. This is not an exhaustive representation of measures and data collection tactics. Rather, it capitalizes on and complements those cited throughout this proposal that are or can be tracked and measured, e.g., number of schools and students, teacher and parent satisfaction, and student achievement indicators. This preliminary framework represents information and processes that drive the proposed evaluation design. Upon receipt of the award, the first task of the evaluation working group will be to work together to finalize the specifics of the evaluation framework.

Preliminary Evaluation Framework

Objective	Evaluation Questions	Data (Sources)	Analyses
Increase the number of high quality seats for students in Kern County	Is expansion unfolding as planned? Is Grimmway Schools continuing to serve high-need students?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of seats added, expansion of Shafter, opening of new HS & K-8 school (annual performance reports) Demographic data (Grimmway, district, county) 	Descriptive statistics on the number of new seats, number of students, and demographics of students in each school and for the Grimmway Schools overall
Replicate and continuously improve Grimmway's rigorous instructional model in K-8 schools, resulting in high academic achievement	Are students in Grimmway Schools meeting growth targets and attaining proficiency? Are achievement gaps narrowing? Are students on track for college enrollment? Do students at Grimmway Schools outperform their peers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student achievement data (Grimmway, NWEA, district, county) 	Descriptive statistics regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all students' NWEA MAP Reading and Math growth targets and annual growth NWEA virtual comparison group's MAP Reading and Math growth targets and annual growth The average mean scale score of students in each school and across network on CAASPP ELA and mathematics assessments at grades 4, 8, and 11 Achievement gaps by sex, ethnicity, socio-economic status, English language proficiency and special education status on the CAASPP ELA and mathematics assessments at grades 4, 8, and 11 college credits earned, progress toward A-G requirements, ACT participation, college application rate, FAFSA completion rate Quasi-experimental propensity-score matching to identify a comparison group, regression modeling to compare student achievement gains on the CAASPP ELA and mathematics assessments at grades 4, 8, and 11
In partnership with CSUB, BC, and industry partners, develop and continuously improve a new college prep, CTE-focused high school that guides students to high achievement and college enrollment			
Replicate and continuously improve Grimmway's Edible Schoolyard program at each school to improve students' personal health, wellness, and engagement	Is the Edible Schoolyard being implemented with fidelity at each school as the network expands? Are students growing in their understanding of personal health and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student performance on Edible Schoolyard learning assessments (Grimmway) Staff perceptions (Interviews) 	Descriptive statistics summarizing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> student performance, by grade, by school, and across the network on standards-aligned Edible Schoolyard learning assessments currently in development by Grimmway and ESY Average daily student attendance

(3) GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES ARE CLEARLY SPECIFIED AND MEASURABLE

Based on the Grimmway model, the Logic Model included above, and our annual LCAP goal setting process for each school aligned with California’s eight state priorities, we have identified the following Goals, Objectives and Performance Measures for the CSP grant. We are confident that each of these goals and objectives is attainable within the five year grant term.

Goal 1: Increase the number of high-quality K-12 charter school seats that prepare Kern County students for success in college, career, and life	
Objective	Performance Measures
1. Increase the number of high quality seats for students in Kern County	Number of Grimmway charter schools increases from 2 to 4 by 2025
	Number of K-8 seats increases from 1430 to 2400 by 2025
	Number of 9-12 seats increases from 0 to 1000 by 2025
2. Replicate and continuously improve Grimmway's rigorous instructional model in K-8 schools, resulting in high academic achievement	>=60% of all students meet individual NWEA MAP Growth Targets in Math and Reading each year
	Overall CAASPP Mean Scale Scores in both ELA and Math meet or exceed local Districts, County and State for the same grade levels by 2025
	All statistically significant subgroups' CAASPP Mean Scale Scores in both ELA and Math meet or exceed local Districts, County and State for the same grade levels by 2025
3. Replicate Grimmway’s personalized learning model with embedded MTSS in new college prep high school in partnership with CSUB, BC, and industry partners, featuring CTE pathways with dual enrollment and work-based learning to prepare students for college and meaningful careers	>=60% of all students meet individual NWEA MAP Growth Targets in Math and Reading
	Overall CAASPP Mean Scale Scores in both ELA and Math for 11 th graders meet or exceed Kern HS District and County for the same grade levels by 2025
	All statistically significant subgroups' CAASPP Mean Scale Scores in both ELA and Math meet or exceed local Districts, County and State for the same grade levels by 2025
	100% of students earn at least 3 college credits (one semester course) per year
	100% ACT or SAT participation rate by 2025
	100% FAFSA completion rate by 2025
	100% of 12th graders apply to at least one college in 2025
	100% of students rated by counselor as on track to meet UC/CSU’s A-G requirements
4. Replicate and continuously improve ESY program at each school to improve students’ personal health, wellness, and engagement	>=75% of students achieve passing score on ESY assessments (currently in development) each year
	>=75% of students report increased awareness of and practice of healthy behaviors on ESY pre/post survey
	>=95% average daily attendance rate each year
	>=90% annual student retention rate each year
Goal 2: Build network capacity and systems to ensure sustainability, quality, and fidelity to the model as network grows	
5. Recruit and develop a diverse, mission-aligned, highly effective leaders, coaches, and teachers	>=75% teachers express satisfaction with their school on teacher survey each year
	>=85% annual teacher retention
6. Effectively manage finance and operations	<=3% deviation from annual budget goals
	Each new school self-sustaining on public funds by Year 3

(4) DESIGN FOR IMPLEMENTING AND EVALUATING THE PROJECT

Because of the centrality of data to our MTSS and ILP model, the Grimmway model is data-driven, at all levels of the organization. We use a comprehensive data management system, Illuminate, which allows us to create a variety of reports on student achievement, including disaggregated data by content strand, student subgroup, grade-level, and classroom. School leaders rely on data to evaluate teacher efficacy along with the impact of curriculum, instructional strategies and other initiatives. CMO leaders continuously review data to ensure school leaders are on track towards goals stated in the school's LCAP and any other short- and long-term goals, and the Board similarly reviews data against stated goals for all facets of the organization: academic, fiscal, operational. In this way, data continuously drives improvement both broadly across the organization and specifically for individual students in their ILPs.

MANAGEMENT AND LEGAL STRUCTURE: Grimmway operates autonomously from its authorizers with the exception of supervisory oversight as required by statute and other negotiated contracted services (e.g., SpEd). The Grimmway Schools Board maintains control over each school's operations (subject to authorizer oversight, including a charter renewal process pursuant to CA law) and is fully responsible for the operation and fiscal affairs of the schools. In addition to fiscal oversight (see above), the Board hires, supervises, and evaluates the Ex. Director/CEO and ensures the organization and each school is meeting academic, operational, fiscal, and other goals per the LCAPs and overall organization goals and objectives. (Board biographies are included in App. B.) In accordance with California's Brown Act, all Board meetings are open public meetings, with notice provided in advanced to the public and minutes published on the schools' websites.

Our CMO, led by the CEO, supports the instructional and operational needs of all our schools and ensures accountability. (See detailed Organizational Charts at App. H.) Our CMO will support all Grimmway schools and ensure accountability, yet allow site-based autonomies such as selecting specific curricula that best needs students’ needs. We require uniform tech platforms to ensure consistency in data collection, management and analysis. The functions outlined below provide a high level overview of the areas to be handled by the schools and CMO office. The bars show the level of responsibility that falls between schools and network for each given function.

Area	School	CMO
Human Capital		
Facilities		
Technology		
Finances		
Communications		
Curriculum		
Instruction		
School Culture		
Assessment		

Prior to opening a new school, the Founding Principal will spend a full year in a Residency, engaged in comprehensive PD with our other school leaders and CMO staff, working at the existing school sites as an Assistant Principal and shadowing that site’s Principal, designing the new school’s curricula and engaged – with CMO support – in teacher/staff hiring, student outreach, purchasing supplies and equipment and preparing the school for opening. Once each new site is open, CMO staff will continue to provide comprehensive support as each school grows to scale and operates at full capacity, continuously refining programs and operations based on student achievement data, stakeholder surveys, evaluation outcomes and other feedback. This centralized support enables each new school to leverage the experience and

expertise of staff who not only are experts in Grimmway’s model, but have opened new schools and understand the challenges faced, and offer experience-based solutions.

DESIGN AND IMPACT: As we grow and scale our network, the Grimmway Board and our senior leadership team will lead an organizational design that 1) maximizes both local school autonomy and CMO functional expertise; 2) maximizes collaboration between the schools and CMO office, and 3) promotes organizational clarity through well-defined roles and responsibilities. The proposed evaluation plan will contribute high-quality evidence on the impacts of the Grimmway Schools model, and will provide insights to the field with regard to best practices in charter school expansion and replication. As the CSP grant evaluates the extent to which Grimmway is replicating its model with fidelity at each new site, including growing into grades 9-12, the evaluation will provide helpful information for Grimmway’s leaders that can inform future replications and “best practices” in charter school growth.

THE EVALUATION WORKING GROUP: Bellwether Education Partners (Bellwether) will provide the evaluation for this project. Bellwether’s evaluation approach includes tethering rigorous evaluation methodology to evidence-based decision-making of an evaluation working group represented by organizational leaders and its own lead evaluator(s). Bellwether believes this approach will simultaneously ground the rigorous evaluation and deepen the capacity of Grimmway leaders for evaluation and continuous improvement in a way that will strengthen the organization as it grows.

The evaluation working group will meet in person to kick off the evaluation process and virtually in years two through five to continue planning and reflecting upon results each year of the grant. Other virtual meetings will be scheduled as needed). The objectives for the evaluation working group will include: ensuring the evaluation questions, design, tools, execution, and

related findings speak to expansion and replication goals and grant reporting requirements throughout the course of the grant; providing context and information that may guide the evaluation process and help ground findings and recommendations; optimizing participation from stakeholders during data collection; providing an opportunity for Grimmway leaders to collaborate around solutions; and identifying optimal ways to disseminate findings.

REFLECTING UPON AND REPORTING RESULTS: Data will be analyzed and reported formatively (quarterly and annually) and summatively (project end) in response to the evaluation questions posed in the evaluation framework. The evaluation working group will reflect on formative results quarterly (e.g., project milestones, implementation variables) for ongoing decision-making related to program implementation and enhancement. Annually, the group will assess progress toward longer-term goals (e.g., project milestones, implementation variables, and student outcomes), review formal evaluation reports and draft publications, and refine plans for the dissemination and communication of results to the sector and public at large. The evaluators will present all findings internally for discussion and refinement prior to broader dissemination, which may include posting briefs and reports on Grimmway and/or Bellwether websites, in-person or virtual presentations with members of the school community (e.g. staff, families, board), presenting at state and national conferences blog posts, and sharing findings via social media.