

# Education Grants

## Activity/Project Descriptions<sup>1</sup>

### 1. **Applicant ID:** 15398

**Applicant Name:** R'Club Child Care, Inc.

**Program Description:** ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND- R'Club Child Care, Inc.

R'Club Child Care, Inc. is Tampa Bay's leading childcare provider offering early learning, development, and support programs annually for 5,000+ children and youth ages two months to 22 years. With 48 licensed locations across Pinellas County, R'Club provides affordable, accessible, high-quality childcare programs at eight early learning academies, 31 elementary schools, seven middle schools, and two exceptional student centers.

Most of R'Club's licensed childcare programs are in high-needs communities serving Pinellas children from low-income families. Of R'Club's 31 elementary school programs, 22 are at Title 1 elementary schools offering Promise Time programs to deliver an evidence-based afterschool model during the school year. In Promise Time programs, elementary school students receive small group tutoring, online curriculum/teacher instruction, access to online academic supports (e.g., iReady ), and participation in project-based learning and fun enrichment opportunities.

To mitigate skills losses (academic and social-emotional) often experienced over the summer break, Promise Time students continue youth development programs in Summer Bridge. Each spring, the Pinellas County Schools releases a list of Summer Bridge locations for the summer.

The Promise Time Initiative and Summer Bridge programs collaborate with the Pinellas County School Board, the Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County, and select childcare providers. (ATTACHMENT A: Promise Time MOU) R'Club's Promise Time/Summer Bridge programs successfully improve participants' unexcused school absences, afterschool attendance, academic performance (reading and math), and social-emotional skills.

Historically, R'Club's Promise Time and Summer Bridge programs meet program outcomes for unexcused school absences, Promise Time attendance, and Florida State Assessment (FSA) scores in Math and English/Language Arts. During COVID-19, R'Club's Promise Time programs increased tutoring opportunities and academic support to focus on closing learning gaps resulting from the extended impact of the pandemic. For FY21, R'Club's Promise Time/Summer Bridge programs met three of four outcomes, with the unexcused school absences the exception. (ATTACHMENT B: R'Club Promise Time Outcome Results)

#### PROPOSED STEM ENRICHMENT PROGRAMMING- R'STEM Scholars (RSS)

R'Club Child Care Inc.'s proposal requests \$141,871 for the R'STEM Scholars STEM enrichment programming at six Title 1 schools to give underserved children access to STEM enrichment opportunities and to support closing learning gaps resulting from COVID-19.

At the six Promise Time school locations in Clearwater, R'Club proposes new STEM enrichment programming, named R'STEM Scholars (RSS), to engage elementary students' minds in fun STEM activities. RSS lends itself to implementation in the evidence-based Promise Time framework, allowing STEM enrichment programming to reach students ages 5-11 years with identified learning gaps. The R'STEM Scholars (RSS) programming improves students' access to STEM enrichment and activities that help to mitigate the learning losses experienced during the pandemic.

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<sup>1</sup> As submitted by Applicants

Typical hours of operation for R'Club's Promise Time programs are 6:30-8:45 a.m. before school and 2:50-6:00 p.m. after school. R'Club offers full day care during school breaks and in-service days from 6:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Over the summer break, Promise Time students can continue with Summer Bridge which is offered at select schools during specific hours. Each spring, the Pinellas County School Board issues a list of Summer Bridge locations and hours.

Based on historical data, R'STEM Scholars (RSS) will offer STEM enrichment programming to projected 393 students enrolled in R'Club's Promise Time programs at six Title 1 schools during the 2023-24 school year. These schools serve students from low-income families and offer free breakfast and lunch for all students. (ATTACHMENT C: Pinellas County Schools with Free Breakfast & Lunch for All Students)

The proposed RSS sites serve a diverse community of students. Of the projected 393 students, R'Club expects to enroll 242 students (62%) who identify as students of color, of which 150 (38%) are Black. About 128 students (33%) are anticipated to report Hispanic ethnicity. (ATTACHMENT D: Projected Promise Time Enrollment & Demographics Served with R'STEM Scholars)

Each proposed RSS site maintains an "active" childcare license issued by Pinellas County Licensing Board and is a requirement for Promise Time programs. (ATTACHMENT E: Pinellas County Childcare Licenses for R'STEM Scholars Sites)

#### R'STEM SCHOLARS (RSS) SPECIFICS

R'Club Child Care, Inc. requests \$141,871 to launch the new RSS STEM enrichment programming in coding and robotics at the six proposed Promise Time sites for the FY2023-24 school year. Introduction to coding and robotics will excite students and encourage participation and frequent attendance at these Promise Time locations. Consistent before- and afterschool attendance improves students' outcomes during the school day. Engaging students to participate in afterschool programs helps to mitigate learning loss, closing the gaps in academic performance and social-emotional areas experienced with COVID-19.

Coding activities develop and deepen math skills, scientific knowledge, and growth mindsets. (ATTACHMENT F: 7 Reasons Why Kids Should Learn to Code Article) Teaching children how to code builds problem-solving skills, persistence, computational thinking, creativity, digital literacy, and social-emotional skills like confidence and peer communications in cooperative learning experiences. Coding supports students' development of essential skills needed for academic and social-emotional success in school and life.

Each RSS site receives 20 laptops, one locking cart for laptop security, 10 Fire tablets with cases to be used as remotes, and three Sphero robotic packages with 39 "bots" offering different levels of complexity and challenge. Our proposal plans for equipment procurement, laptop setup, program standards development, lesson planning, and staff training to take place during Quarter 1 (July 1-September 30, 2023). The programming implementation schedule will move accordingly if unknown supply chain delays happen with laptop delivery. (ATTACHMENT G: R'STEM Scholars 2023-2024 Implementation Timeline)

In Quarter 2 (October 1-December 31, 2023), students electing to participate in RSS are introduced to coding fundamentals with online coding programs using the proposed laptops in our application. After the coding introduction, students work in teams with 2-3 partners to code Sphero robots, known as "bots." Through the trial-and-error process, teams configure bots for different types of uses and movements, advancing to coding more complex bots.

During the school year, RSS students receive presentations about coding-related industries. These presentations cement the abstract concepts of coding with real-life applications. The use of coding helps to develop students' career interests by planting early seeds for future coding career opportunities. Participating RSS students receive three surveys to document their growth in STEM knowledge, coding, robotics, and career knowledge. Surveys are

offered at three checkpoints— pre, mid, and post-year. Data and survey information are analyzed for students participating in at least two surveys.

Student engagement and interest will increase participation and attendance in both the afterschool and Promise Time programs. Other programming measurements include student data about attendance in Promise Time, RSS participation, and the number of hours (dosage) spent in RSS programming.

**BENEFITS OF R'STEM SCHOLARS (RSS) :** The R'STEM Scholars (RSS) enrichment programming improves students' access to opportunities and activities that help to mitigate the learning losses experienced during the pandemic. In existing Promise Time programs, RSS allows STEM enrichment programming to reach students with identified learning gaps.

RSS programming, as proposed, provides benefits, and will improve student outcomes in multiple ways:

1. Improves equitable access to STEM enrichment opportunities.

Creating STEM enrichment access is a focus under the Student Achievement area in Pinellas County Schools' Bridging the Gap Plan, a plan to improve educational outcomes for Black students. Access to STEM enrichment improves student academic performance in math and science.

2. Expands access to tools that strengthen project-based learning.

Giving students more time for online project-based learning research and project implementation supports student learning through hands-on projects aligned with classroom instruction and concepts taught during the school day.

3. Increases opportunities to work on iReady and other online academic supports.

Easier computer access allows students to readily work on their required online iReady reading and math programs and school assignments. Having laptops in Promise Time settings gives students more time to spend on required school assignments and less time waiting to access schools' computer labs.

4. Builds growth mindsets in children.

Participating in coding and programming nurtures students' growth mindsets through problem-solving, computational thinking, persistence, and creativity, all essential skills for academic improvements and school success. Coding also helps social-emotional skills by strengthening student confidence and peer communications. The R'STEM Scholars (RSS) enrichment programming increases students' access to activities that improve academic performance and help mitigate the learning losses in academic and social-emotional skills experienced during the pandemic.

2. **Applicant ID:** 15351

**Applicant Name:** St. Petersburg College

**Program Description:** St. Petersburg College is the largest postsecondary education provider in Pinellas County (1). In the 2021/22 academic year, SPC served 33,651 credit students; 78.4% of students attended part-time, indicating the majority of students balance work and family obligations. In the same year, approximately 70% of those who applied for federal aid were Pell-eligible, and of these students, 21.1% showed the highest need possible (Estimated Family Contribution of zero). Approximately 40% of students are age 26 or above, with an age range of 15-80, 70% work at least part-time, and 29% have children.

St. Petersburg College serves students within 16 federally-designated opportunity zones, or economically distressed areas near the campus sites, including the Clearwater campus. (2) Students live throughout Pinellas County, with the largest number of students attending the Clearwater and Seminole Campuses. In Pinellas County, the poverty rate is highest for Black residents, with 24.3% having income below poverty level, compared to 10.6% of White residents and 14.1% overall. With 41% of Pinellas households earning less than the annual basic cost of living, (3) there is a significant need to increase educational opportunities for residents, particularly those in black/African American households. These challenges create barriers for students trying to complete a degree and work towards economic mobility, as evidenced by an average completion time of 5 to 6 years. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these challenges, as many individuals put their educational goals on hold due to financial insecurity and rising education costs. (4) In fact, in the 2021/22 Academic Year, enrollment in SPC credit programs decreased by 9.35% from the previous year. (5) Although Florida's public school system fared better than most states due to its emphasis on in-class instruction during the Covid-19 pandemic, the full cost of students' academic performance and college readiness will take years to understand.

St. Petersburg College's GAIN project will address COVID learning loss through the following objectives: Generate new ideas and approaches to help students succeed; Address student challenges posed by the pandemic; Inspire students to think creatively, solve problems and pursue their educational passions; and Nurture students by providing support and encouragement so that their learning thrives. The project will accomplish these objectives through the following activities: (1) summer bridge programming; (2) student readiness for successful transitions from high school to postsecondary education; and (3) STEM enrichment. Through Project GAIN, students who have fallen behind academically due to the COVID pandemic will have access to evidenced-based, innovative and Clearwater-community focused programming to help them gain learning in new and imaginative ways through partnership and engagement. All programs will be evaluated regularly.

To address learning loss, Project GAIN will include three components: Summer Bridge, Student Readiness for Successful Transition from high school to postsecondary and STEM enrichment programming:

Summer Bridge Programming:

(1) Operation Graduation (OG) is an existing summer program that we will expand through a partnership with North Greenwood to bring high school juniors and seniors to campus and discuss our programs and certificates. The program will be enhanced to cover the cost of a 3-credit Earth Science course which integrates a lot of STEM skills. 6 week summer bridge, will be a competitive program for 20 Clearwater students and will address learning loss through academic course work, career awareness discussions and goal setting.

(2) Reignite your Imagination with Science and Engineering (RISE) summer program will be a newly created program partnering with local Clearwater Engineering companies to build a foundation of success for 25 students interested in engineering and science career programs. The program will be geared to rising juniors and seniors to provide exposure to career and academic pathways and prepare students for industry careers. The program is unique as a large component of the program will be engagement with students and industry while most summer programs focus exclusively on college readiness. Will address learning loss through hands-on learning in engineering field, awareness of educational opportunities, and engagement with local community industry who may act as mentors or future intern sites.

#### Student Readiness for Successful Transition from High school to Postsecondary:

(1) Titan Transition is a new educational excellence workshop series to be developed with the Hispanic Outreach Center offered from October – June. High school students will be invited to participate in a wide array of topics to better prepare themselves and their families to transition to college. These topics include addressing learning loss for minorities, guest speakers who overcame life challenges, and College and Career Paths. Thirty students will attend a kickoff orientation followed by 3 workshop series in the Fall, 2 post-workshop series in Spring. Will address learning loss by strengthening transition from high school to post secondary with engaging workshops on topics that will prepare students and their families for college by building confidence, subject matter familiarity and connection.

(2) The Clearwater Community Ambassador Program, a unified community of leaders will address conditions that help students learn and address Covid learning loss. A new program to the Clearwater Campus which works with Clearwater community partners to address learning loss by assisting in reengaging students that SPC has lost due to the pandemic. SPC's successful Community Ambassador model in South St. Petersburg will be replicated in Clearwater to expand opportunities and enhance community building. Ambassadors who have direct access to residents will be identified throughout the Clearwater community, disseminate information about SPC's education and training programs, which will expand access and awareness. Thirty students, and 20 Ambassadors will work in this engagement project.

#### STEM Enrichment programming

(1) Women in STEM Workshop Series will be offered to 20 participants and will address learning loss through enriching academic content knowledge in the STEM field delivered to women of all age groups to re-engage career interests in the high-income areas of STEM careers. Members in the STEM field from Clearwater will be guest speakers for this exciting workshop series.

### 3. **Applicant ID: 15488**

**Applicant Name:** Boys & Girls Clubs of the Suncoast

**Program Description:** In partnership with the administration of Clearwater Intermediate School, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Suncoast (BGCS) is seeking to implement its Prosperity Pathways program in the school. Activities and support will take place throughout the school day and during afterschool hours. This innovative program will target students enrolled in Clearwater Intermediate School (CIS), and is intended to reduce unexcused absences, disciplinary actions, and school suspensions while simultaneously providing initiatives that will build a comprehensive prosperity pipeline for youth most in need of support for academic success and college and career readiness assistance, a critical component of BGCS' most recent strategic plan. Students at CIS range from grades 5 through 9 and most have been sent to the school as a result of past academic and behavioral issues. The program is targeted for these individuals as it utilizes a positive behavior intervention and supports (PBIS) system, an evidence-based framework for behavioral interventions along with Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) to systematically assess data efficiently, in order to motivate students to achieve their greatest potential. Implementing both models in the operation of a college and career pathway, students will gain knowledge and skills that will prepare them for future success after graduation. The school will have a trained BGCS staff member who will serve as a Prosperity Pathways Specialist to assist students, with a priority for at risk students. Prosperity Pathways Specialists will be placed in each school throughout the school day to provide support to students and school personnel.

The program consists of a several components designed to provide support to the students most at risk for dropout and other adverse events. First, students will participate in an evidence-based workforce readiness curriculum through our Prosperity Pathways framework. The curriculum will allow students to choose modules through an online platform that will help prepare them for the workforce. Each module will contain a pre and post

assessment, and students will earn incentives upon completion. The modules include, but are not limited to, education of specific industries, required education/skills, soft skills development, college preparation, financial literacy, and professionalism. Clearwater Intermediate School students will complete modules through the Life Hub program. Students will also utilize BGCS' Club Re-Imagined virtual platform to have the opportunity to participate in the E-Sports and Future Leaders program. The Future Leaders program provides real work experience through visits to a variety of local businesses to gain firsthand experience. E-sports allows students to participate in competitive virtual tournaments which expose them to concepts relating to STEM, teamwork, and positive decision making.

Additionally, the program will include Power Hour. This initiative is designed to help young people develop academic, behavioral and social skills through homework completion, high-yield learning activities, incentives and tutoring. The program model is designed to create a climate of celebration around academic success during out of school time hours, with specific focus in literacy and math skills. In addition to conducting homework help for students; the program implements fun and beneficial learning activities intended to instill a life-long love of learning. Program directors work with youth to determine the unique needs and challenges of each student in order to ensure maximum potential is achieved.

An opioid prevention program will also be facilitated in CIS during health class. This initiative, funded through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, will provide access to skills-building programming through a strengths-based approach to avoid risk behaviors. Lastly, BGCS plans to run youth cooking classes designed to provide kids and teens with the resources and skills needed to prepare healthy and nutritious meals in their homes for their own families and siblings. This initiative is funded through the Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County.

4. **Applicant ID:** 15488

**Applicant Name:** Mathnasium Tutoring

**Program Description:** Mathnasium of Countryside is a Clearwater-based math-only learning center franchise. Franchise owner Andrew Kelly, who is also the manager, is a Clearwater resident and decorated military veteran. We specialize in providing individual, customized math tutoring to children from Kindergarten through 12th grade. Each child receives a comprehensive math skills assessment, which identifies foundational math skill gaps. We then use our vast curriculum database to craft a customized learning plan for the child. Children then work through the materials, with guidance from our instructors, to achieve mastery of each concept. Children are regularly re-assessed to ensure progress is being attained. Average membership length is 6 months.

Mathnasium of Countryside has been open since January of 2014. In that time we have worked with hundreds of local children, and gained significant insight into the state of math skills of our members, which can be used as a gauge of the general state of math skills in Clearwater. Since the start of the pandemic in March of 2020, we have seen significant, borderline shocking, evidence of decrease in math skills relative to children of the same age prior to this date. Often these children are 2 years behind in their math skills, as measured by our assessments. As math is a foundational subject, its difficult for these children to succeed in their current math classes, where these gaps in knowledge hinder learning current topics. For example, a 5th grade student will learn the concepts of area, circumference and volume, but if they lack multiplication skills they will not master these concepts. As time goes on, the problem gets larger, as the foundational gaps widen. At Mathnasium, we start on the appropriate concepts for each child, based on their individual math educational health, which results in motivation, confidence and positive attitude toward their math education. Unfortunately, many parents come to us with the need, but cannot afford our services, which are already aggressively priced low (the Tampa Bay area has the lowest rates for Mathnasium in the state).

5. **Applicant ID:** 15424

**Applicant Name:** Pinellas Education Foundation

**Program Description:** The mission of the Pinellas Education Foundation is to accelerate educational achievement for all students through the effective mobilization of innovation, relationships and resources. Our vision is that every student will be prepared for life after high school, whether the choice is to attend college, to enter the workforce, or to obtain technical training. We accomplish our mission by addressing key issues and needs within the public education arena and presenting effective, efficient, accountable, and results-oriented opportunities for the private sector to support quality public education. The Pinellas Education Foundation acts as a liaison between the private sector and the public school system providing avenues for philanthropy, business, industry, and community engagement in public education.

The Pinellas Early Literacy Initiative (PELI) calls for a strategic focus on prioritizing improvements in literacy instruction for PreK-2 students and teachers in 16 Title I schools and 8-16 private PreK providers. By leveraging high quality professional development with instructional coaching for a cohort of PreK-2 grade teachers, kindergarten readiness rates will increase and PreK-2 student literacy gaps will dissipate more rapidly, effectively preparing students for the more rigorous content of grades 3-5 and reducing the need for additional resources in later grades. Working from an existing partnership with the Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas, Pinellas County Schools (PCS) will support PreK teachers by engaging them in monthly communities of practice focused on high-quality learning environments designed to provide children a space where they can explore, discover, and learn through play, all the while developing important literacy foundations and the building blocks for literacy success. PCS will support private preschool feeders in an outreach program by targeting the largest feeder schools based on data. The investment in PreK education will result in a high-quality education that extends the science of reading to three and four-year-olds. This work is supported through wide-ranging, specific partnerships with the Helios Education Foundation, United Way Suncoast, the Pinellas Education Foundation, Pinellas County Schools, the Pinellas Early Learning Coalition, the University of Florida's Lastinger Center, and other local partners.

Recognizing that the most important factor impacting student outcomes are teachers and leaders at the top of schools, the direct population served through The Pinellas Early Literacy Initiative are the teachers and leaders participating in these targeted schools. Low-income, underperforming youth in the classes led by these teachers in grades PreK-2 are the indirect population. Other educators, administrators, and families will also be impacted by this initiative. Reading proficiency has been linked to nearly every quality of life indicator. The success of this initiative has the potential to position Pinellas County as a national leader in research-based early literacy professional development. The Pinellas Early Literacy Initiative will influence the way the district allocates time, funding, and support for PreK-2 teachers and students, including a shift in current staffing models to include funding for PreK-2 literacy coaches at targeted schools.

Funding from this request would support teachers and students attending schools in the City of Clearwater. Clearwater schools participating in PELI are Sandy Lane Elementary School and Belleair Elementary School. These Clearwater schools are Title I schools, serving economically disadvantaged students.