

Application for Funding – Cover Page

Applicant Agency

Business Name	Northern Cass School	Street Address Including City, State, and ZIP Code	16021 18th Street SE Hunter, ND 58048
Contact Person	Amber Lockhart	Title	Community School Site Coordinator
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Authorized Representative	Dr. Cory Steiner	Title	Superintendent
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Federal Employer Tax Id #	91-1762623	Unique Entity Identifier #	LA2LULFD6249
Dates of Active Registration in System for Award Management			Current

Targeted Intervention(s) to be Implemented	Check and Connect, Targeted Case Management, Learner Success Coach
Total Amount of Funding Request	70,000
Willing to Accept Less Funding (Y/N)	Y
Evidenced-Based Program/Services (Y/N)	Y
Name and Source of Evidenced-Based Program/Services	Check and Connect Student Engagement Intervention, Targeted School Case Management
School(s) or School District to be Served	Northern Cass School District, Central Cass School
Estimated Number of Youth to be Served	55
Estimated Number of Minority Youth to be Served	10

Signature	Amber Lockhart <i>Signature of the Person Submitting this Form</i>	Name	Amber Lockhart <i>Name of the Person Submitting this Form (print)</i>
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Date of Signature	1/22/2025
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a. Description of the Project

1) A description of the school-based intervention(s) to be implemented.

Northern Cass School, a rural school with a PreK-12 population of 721 learners, will utilize the following programs and services to provide school based interventions and ensure learners are engaged in school. These programs interact with our Multi-Tier Systems of Support (MTSS) which identifies learners who need additional support while also planning interventions. These tiers are identified as: Tier 3: Universal support for all learners, Tier 2: Targeted supports for some learners, Tier 1: Intensive, individualized support.

Check & Connect

Check & Connect is an evidence-based mentor program in which a mentor works one on one with learners who are identified as being at-risk for disengaging from school. In ND, the program is run through the Central Regional Education Association (CREA) which provides oversight and fidelity checks with in-school mentors. This is a Tier 2 intervention.

Targeted School Case Management

Targeted School Case Management (TCM) program runs through a partnership with NexusPATH in Fargo, ND. The TCM works with the highest need learners to provide school-based child and family intervention. They meet with learners, parents and school staff to assess needs, link learner/s and family to services, and monitor needs inside the school. This is a Tier 1 intervention.

Learner Success Coach

Northern Cass (NC) will create a part-time Learner Success Coach that will work with learners who are not on track to graduate on-time to support them in building skills, setting goals, and preventing risk of disengagement. NC piloted this model in December 2024 and has determined it to be a promising practice. This is a Tier 2 intervention.

2) Data used to determine what intervention(s) are needed. - and -

3) What Strategies have been tried or implemented.

Learners are identified and referred to services based on a number of indicators such as poor attendance, behavior referrals, missing assignments and a lack of academic proficiency/performance. These indicators tell a story of whether a learner is at risk for not graduating. Research indicates learners who do not achieve a certain number of credits by the end of their freshman year are more at-risk to not graduate.

Northern Cass is in its second year of implementing the **Check & Connect Program** which has shown high impact:

- 6 of 7 participating learners have achieved 80% or better across all academic courses in the current SY.
- 3 of 5 learners in the program with at-risk attendance data have improved their attendance/decreased absences.
- 1 learner at-risk related to behavior has shown notable behavior improvement in less than 3 months in the program.
- When asked about the benefits of the Check & Connect Program, a participating learner stated: "It has helped me a lot with getting assignments turned in and kept me on pace and not failing school. Check & Connect is an amazing thing that the school is doing and if it helps me, it can help any future or current students that are struggling as well."
- A parent of a learner in the program said "Check and Connect has helped bridge the gap I felt there was between myself as a parent and knowing what my son needs to complete in his school work. Thankful for the updates so I can help my son stay on pace with his studies."

The Targeted Case Manager program has been in place for four years and works with six highest need learners and their families. Learners have demonstrated improved attendance, academic performance and social-emotional functioning. Families have been connected to many services such as the food pantry, rental assistance, transportation to appointments, and connection to mental health services. One of the senior learners in the program would not be graduating without this target intervention. Instead, they are graduating Choice Ready and have a variety of options for their future.

As enrollment increases, Northern Cass has seen an increase in middle and high school learners falling behind on coursework and not being prepared to be Choice Ready. This has required us to think creatively about how to provide short-term assistance to learners. Utilizing some of the techniques behind the Check & Connect program, we will create a **Learner Success Coach** as a tier 2 support. The pilot month for this intervention saw positive results:

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
Learners Participating in Program	16	16	16
Missing Assignments - Monday	111	78	65
Missing Assignments - Friday	42	33	53
Completion Rate	37%	42%	81%

4) The intended impact of the interventions to be implemented.

Check & Connect Mentor / Targeted Case Manager - Intended Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce chronic absenteeism• Increase in school engagement• Increase family engagement• Decrease in inappropriate behaviors• Increase in resource connection• Increase in trusted adult / school connection

Learner Success Mentor - Intended Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in trusted adult / school connection• Increase in school engagement• Prevent learners falling behind• Reduce absenteeism• Increase in Choice Ready learners• Increase in 21st century skills / NC Portrait of a Learner attributes (adaptability, accountability, leadership, learner's mindset, and communication)

b. Project Planning, Design, and Implementation

Check and Connect: Utilizing our current partnership with the CREA, we plan to expand the number of learners we will serve from seven to 14. This position will be incorporated into our Multi-Tier Systems of Support (MTSS) which identifies learners who need additional support while also planning interventions. This position will meet weekly with the Middle School Principal and High School Principal.

Targeted Case Management(TCM): The district will continue its partnership with Nexus Path as well as the Central Cass School District. The position will work closely with The Village Family Service Center therapists who are on-site five days per week at Northern Cass.

Learner Success Coach: The NC Board of Education has approved creation of this position which will be incorporated into our Multi-Tier Systems of Support (MTSS) and provide updates to the administration.

Additionally, this position will work with administration to assist with communicating with families whose children have been identified as at-risk or chronically absent (missing

10% or more days). Poor attendance is a strong indicator of future disengagement at school and often the precursor to low academic achievement.

Each of these positions are currently funded in a variety of ways. Check and Connect is funded through a behavioral health grant through CREA. Targeted Case Management is paid through the district's general fund. The Learner Success Coach has been piloted with funding from a grant the district received for innovation. For all three of these initiatives, fiscal capacity for the next budget cycle is a concern. If Northern Cass is awarded this grant funding, it will have the time to build these positions into its budget allowing for long-term sustainability.

c. Capabilities and Competencies

Check and Connect Mentor - This position is supported by the Middle School Principal and High School Principal who provide guidance to the mentor and meet regularly to discuss program effectiveness, share data and discuss interventions for learners. Currently this position is in the school one day per week. Additionally, the mentor works with the Central Regional Education Association (CREA) which provides a statewide program Check and Connect mentor to support the school mentor as well as professional development, training and program efficacy checks.

Targeted School Case Manager (TCM) - This position is supported by a team which is composed of the Superintendent, Elementary, Middle and High School Principals, Elementary and Secondary Counselors, the Speech and Language Specialist and the Community School Site Coordinator which meets monthly to discuss programs and services. The TCM is an employee of NexusPATH that does school-based child and family intervention in the school building as well as providing professional development and licensing. The Targeted Case Manager is a shared position between Northern Cass School and Central Cass School in Casselton, ND. Currently, the TCM serves six learners/families being served at Northern Cass and seven at Central Cass.

Learner Success Coach - The Learner Success Coach will be a new part-time position at Northern Cass. This position would create a mentoring program designed for short-term academic interventions for learners who have been identified by counselors and learning center educators and approved by administration. The coach will also provide an additional point of contact for families who need further support; assist with developing programs and resources that aid in learners developing Choice Ready skills; collaborate with classroom educators, the Secondary Counselor, Director of College, Career, and Life Readiness, and special education educators; and proactively communicate with families about learners whose attendance is concerning but does not yet meet our requirements for working with the Check and Connect mentor.

d. Plan for Collecting Performance Data and Continuous Quality Improvement

Check and Connect and Targeted Case Management

Intended Impact	Measurement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce chronic absenteeism• Increase in school engagement• Increase family engagement• Decrease in inappropriate behaviors• Increase in resource connection• Increase in trusted adult / school connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connections to families around attendance / goals• Attendance reports• Tracking behavior referrals• Count of resources connected to / introduced• Learner survey• Family survey• Learners graduating out of service

Learner Success Coach

Intended Impact	Measurement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in trusted adult / school connection• Increase in school engagement• Prevent learners falling behind• Reduce absenteeism• Increase in Choice Ready learners• Increase in 21st century skills which Northern Cass refers to as their Portrait of a Learner attributes (adaptability, accountability, leadership, learner's mindset, and communication)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learner interaction count• Missing assignment and completed assignment count• Eligibility Reports• Assignment completion rate• Learner survey

Northern Cass utilizes a data management system called Abre. The ABre Whole Child dashboard tool will enable the school to track behaviors, social emotional health, needed resources of individual learners and across the district as an early warning system. The school will use this data to determine which learners need additional support and continuously monitor learner progress.

Budget Summary

Applicant: Northern Cass School District

Project Period: July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2027

	Grant Request	Match	Total
Budget Categories:			
Personnel	36,000.00	12,595.00	48,595.00
Fringe Benefits	4,000.00	4,216.00	8,216.00
Travel	-	-	-
Supplies	6,000.00	-	6,000.00
Subaward/Contractual	24,000.00	24,000.00	48,000.00
Other Direct Costs	-	10,000.00	10,000.00
Indirect Costs	-	-	-
Total Grant Funds	70,000.00	50,811.00	120,811.00

Budget Detail Worksheet and Narrative

Applicant: Northern Cass School District

Project Period: July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2027

Personnel				Total Grant Period		
Position	Name	Annual Salary	Grant Allocation %	Grant Request	Match	Total
Year 1 Check & Connect Mentor; Learner Success Coach	\$19 per hour	23,675	76.03%	\$18,000	\$5,675	\$23,675
Year 2 Check & Connect Mentor; Learner Success Coach	\$20 per hour	24,920	72.23%	\$18,000	\$6,920	\$24,920
Total Personnel Costs				\$36,000	\$12,595	\$48,595
Personnel Narrative: Northern Cass would expand the Check & Connect Mentor program from 1 day per week to 2 days per week, enabling the school to double the number of learners served. This will also cover any licensing fees for the mentor to access the Check & Connect program. The program is overseen by the Central Regional Education Association (CREA) who provides training and professional development as well as a supervising mentor for the Check & Connect Mentor in the school building. A part-time Learner Success Coach position will be created who will provide a system-wide approach for learner intervention and oversee duties such as working with learners with challenges in attendance, behaviors, academic performance using one-on-one mentoring. This position would also connect with families to increase family engagement and learner attendance. The Learner Success Coach would be in the school 3 days per week.						

Fringe Benefits				Total Grant Period		
Position	Name	Annual Benefits	Grant Allocation %	Grant Request	Match	Total
Year 1 Check & Connect Mentor; Learner Success Coach	\$19 per hour	4,003	49.96%	\$2,000	\$2,003	\$4,003
Year 2 Check & Connect Mentor; Learner Success Coach	\$20 per hour	4,213	47.47%	\$2,000	\$2,213	\$4,213
Total Fringe Benefits				\$4,000	\$4,216	\$8,216
Fringe Benefits Narrative: Fringe benefits include FICA and NDPERS retirement which are required for those employed through Northern Cass and working more than 20 hours per week.						

Travel			Total Grant Period		
Purpose	Location	Expense Type (Hotel/Mileage/Per Diem)	Grant Request	Match	Total
Total Travel Costs			\$0	\$0	\$0
Travel Costs Narrative:					

Supplies			Total Grant Period		
			Grant Request	Match	Total
Item	Quantity	Per Unit Cost			
ABRE - dashboard tool	1	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$0	\$6,000
Total Supply Costs			\$6,000	\$0	\$6,000
Supply Costs Narrative: Northern Cass utilizes ABRE, a data collection system tailored to individual schools and districts. The system collects pre-determined data for the school using school systems as well as state data collection tools such as Powerschool and Empower (Learning Management System) and compiles the information into a dashboard for each learner. The system can track individual, grade-level and school-wide information on learners around areas such as attendance, behaviors, career readiness, and family engagement. Each of these tracking area requires a unique dashboard tool. For this program, Northern Cass will work with ABRE to create a dashboard tool which will allow data collection around the goals of the Check & Connect and Learner Success programs. This, paired with the current tools of attendance, behaviors and academics will enable the district to create a powerful early warning system that can be easily used by educators, administrators and mentors.					

Subawards/Contracts				Total Grant Period		
				Grant Request	Match	Total
Description/Purpose	Computation					
Nexus PATH - Year 1				\$12,000	\$12,000	\$24,000
Nexus PATH - Year 2				\$12,000	\$12,000	\$24,000
Total Subaward/Contractual Costs				\$24,000	\$24,000	\$48,000
Subaward/Contractual Costs Narrative: The Targeted Case Manager program would continue and increase the number of learners served. This position is a parentership with Nexus PATH which provides a trained case manager in the school setting as a resource to learners and their families. This position works with the highest need families. School case managers work closely with the student, their family and the student's support team (e.g., educators, therapists, childcare providers, etc.) to build relationships and implement an individualized care plan. School case managers meet with the student, family, and teachers regularly to assess the student's needs and strengths, advocate for the student, link the student to appropriate services and monitor those services to determine any further needs. School case managers are committed to meeting with the student and/or their families at school, home, daycare, or any other location that is convenient for the student and their family. The Targeted Case Manager (TCM) is a shared position between Northern Cass and Central Cass in Casselton, ND. Each district is responsible for providing half of the salary for the TCM and the TCM splits their time between the two districts. The matching funds will be provided by Central Cass School.						

Other Direct Costs		Total Grant Period		
		Grant Request	Match	Total
Type	Computation			
Supervision	District Administrative assistance in identifying learners	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000
Total Other Direct Costs		\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000
Other Direct Costs Narrative: Northern Cass will utilize local funding to support the time needed for administrators to meet with the Check & Connect Mentor and Learner Success Coach to identify learners and ensure goals are being met. The match amount is an estimate based on 5 hours per month for the superintendent, three building-level principals, and counselors to meet with the employees and Nexus PATH case manager				