### Problem

**Problem:** Youth school graduation rate is decreasing

**Data that supports problem:**
- The number of high school students who do not graduate from high school has increased over the past five years, with the graduation rate in a steady decline from 2017 to 2021 (86% to 74%)

**Linking the problem to the funder's interests:**
- Problem addresses the NC Department of Public Instruction and the U.S. Department of Education's priority to improve graduation rates, thereby enhancing the long term success of citizens through career opportunities.

**Research and data support that**
1. Access to high speed internet, afterschool tutoring to improve school success.
2. Recreation activities that introduce fitness and health habits are shown to improve grades.

### Objectives

**Objectives:** Snapshot of what will be at the end of the program, based on goals & purpose of program

- By the end of the project, according to school district reports, the number of economically disadvantaged students not completing high school will have decreased by 3 percent as compared to data for the base year, 2017.
- By the end of the project, the number of surveyed students at the target schools who respond that they have improved their grades will increase by 50%
- The number of students engaged in regular physical exercise will increase by 60%

### Methods

**Methods:** What will be done to address the problem—approaches, strategies, etc.

- Mentoring program - professionals in the community will provide students with personal support, shadowing opportunities, social activities, and career awareness.
- Afterschool community room with high-speed internet, and computers will provide structured time for students to complete homework.
- Health and fitness activities will be provided to teach students the value of combining physical activity, and healthy eating habits for overall student success through building lifelong habits.
- Tutors - to work students, and their families, to improve study habits, develop problem-solving skills and explore career opportunities.

### Evaluation

**Evaluation:** How the project effectiveness/objectives will be measured

- Summative (statistical) evaluation conducted for project objectives relating to improving scholastic achievement. Data collected and analyzed annually.
- Official school reports to see range of grades by subject to establish positive change of at least 15 percent as compared to the base year.
- Cross analysis of fitness and health program participants with grade results to compare correlation between the two activities.
- Evaluation of student perception of grade outcomes and physical activity / healthy habits by conducting a survey that duplicates the survey administered prior to project implementation.
- On-site evaluations at each of the project centers three times a year for each of the four project years to provide ongoing feedback for program improvement.

### $ Budget

**Personnel & Fringe Benefits:**
- Director
- Secretary
- Street Counselors

**Travel**
- Local: community centers, schools
- Professional Conferences

**Equipment**
- High-speed internet connections
- Computers for afterschool center
- Fitness course equipment for each student
- Accelerometers

**Materials**
- Software
- Office supplies
- Printing

**Other**
- Consultant for staff training
- Contract with Project Evaluator
- Study space furniture for afterschool center

Adapted from Grant Development Workshop.