

# Application Summary:

**Process: AFT Innovation Fund 2012**

**Expanding Learning Opportunities at Pulaski Elementary School Through Collaboration and Partnerships**

**Contact: David Sharron - david.sharron@meriden.k12.ct.us**

35 Pleasant St

Meriden, CT, 06450

Phone: 860-881-4220

Mobile:

Fax:

**Organization: Meriden Federation of Teachers / Local 1478 -**

**erin.benham@meriden.k12.ct.us**

35 Pleasant St

Meriden, CT, 06450

Phone: 203-634-8830

Mobile:

Fax:

## **Form: 2012 Request for Proposal**

### **Q1: Project Name\***

Name of Project

[100 characters allowed]

### **Answer(s):**

Expanding Learning Opportunities at Pulaski Elementary School Through Collaboration and Partnerships

### **Q2: 1. Funding Priority\***

What funding priority of the AFT Innovation Fund does your proposal address?

### **Answer(s):**

Rethinking and expanding learning time

### **Q3: Narrative: \***

Innovation typically involves taking an existing practice and doing it differently and better to solve a problem and achieve a goal.

Organizations must always look for fresh ideas to accomplish their desired outcomes.

What problem does your innovation solve?

How will your innovation allow you to achieve your goals?

[10000 characters allowed]

### **Answer(s):**

During the initial year of our proposed three year AFT Innovation Fund Grant, the Meriden Federation of Teachers (MFT), in collaboration with the Superintendent/Central Office Team of the Meriden Public Schools, has two shared objectives:

- 1) Establish the first Expanded Learning Opportunities pilot school in the District; and
- 2) Create a representative committee, co-chaired by the MFT President and the Superintendent of Schools, to plan and develop a partial flex-time schedule for implementation in the pilot school in the second year of the grant and full flex-time schedule in the third year.

### **The Problem to Be Solved**

Casimir Pulaski Elementary School is a diverse grade 1-5 elementary school located in a low income neighborhood in Meriden CT. Pulaski students feel respected and important, staff feel appreciated and empowered, and parents feel welcomed and valued. Yet many students at Pulaski face challenges, with 81% of families eligible for free or reduced meals (meaning their income is at or below 185% of the federal poverty level). Pulaski has a diverse student population, with 57% Hispanic, 28% White, and 19% Black.

Our students at Pulaski do not enjoy the same exposure to outside learning activities that more middle class students routinely have. Parents struggle to balance work-life challenges with demanding work schedules, often on second and third shifts, and a lack of experience and knowledge about how to best support their children's learning at home. As a consequence, many of our students lack the prior knowledge base and basic life skills that are instilled in middle class families before entry to school. Most Pulaski students have not had exposure to rich and varied out-of-school learning opportunities, experiences that prepare children for academic success.

This, in turn, contributes to the overall lower academic performance of Pulaski students compared to their peers in Meriden and the state (Grade 4 Reading: Pulaski, 41.5% goal or above; Meriden, 46.4%; State 62.4% / Grade 4 Math: Pulaski, 48.3% goal or above; Meriden, 51.1%; State 67.2%).

The Meriden project team seeks to enhance our forward-looking district and school reform efforts—including standards setting, curricula reviews, assessment and data-driven instruction, and professional development—with student-focused efforts, including parent-community partnerships and expanded learning time programs. Through this effort we will put in place a powerful combination of tools to engage students and enact changes that can set a new direction for our schools that are struggling to raise low Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) scores.

### The Innovation

Casimir Pulaski Elementary School will start the school day 90 minutes early, at 7:30 A.M., to provide additional learning opportunities beyond the current school day, becoming our first Expanded Learning Opportunity school. This expanded time is the equivalent of an additional 41 school days per year. Expanded learning opportunities have been shown to improve student outcomes in areas of discipline, academic achievement, and health.

Based on the results of more than a decade of research and evaluation studies, we seek to expand the availability of high-quality expanded learning opportunities that have been shown to have positive impacts in three key areas of a students' development:

- Academic outcomes, including but not limited to grades, improved assessment results ,and school attendance;
- Developmental outcomes (e.g., improved behavior and self-esteem); and
- Health outcomes (e.g., increased physical activity)

We believe our children in our schools can succeed if we embrace new partnerships with program providers in their community while we explore and pilot efforts to restructure the school day. It's a small step, but one with tremendous implications for the success of our students.

As a before school program, our approach has the unique advantage that students will not be tired coming home late in the day. After school programming can often be viewed as punitive, while before school programming is a learning opportunity.

During this expanded learning time, students will participate in three rotating cycles:

- Healthy Living which includes fitness, exercise and a nutritional breakfast sponsored by the USDA National School Breakfast Program;
- Reading Initiatives which include small literacy groups focusing on skill development, increased comprehension and enrichment; and
- STEM Enrichment which provides hands-on science activities, math enrichment projects, and technology education.

In addition to our own MFT teachers, each component will be further supported by several local non-profit agencies. The Healthy Living component will be in partnership with the YMCA; the Reading Initiatives component will be in partnership with the Meriden Children First's Senior Buddy Readers; and the STEM Enrichment component will be in partnership with the YMCA and its Mt. Mist Science Education Center. As an added benefit, starting the school day 90 minutes earlier permits the use of school buses without incurring additional transportation costs.

Our Family School Liaison team will also involve the families of Pulaski students, providing outreach as well as monthly parent events at the school.

An MFT teacher from Pulaski school will be hired to be Program Director along with three MFT teachers to serve as component Coordinators, and 12 MFT teachers to serve on the Planning Team for Flex-Time schedule and to support program instruction and activities. Additional MFT teachers from other Meriden schools, including MFT Officers, will also serve on the committee.

Common planning time for teachers occurs on weekly abbreviated Thursdays as part of a Letter of Agreement between the Board of Education and the Meriden Federation of Teachers regarding contractual obligations. Common planning time involves professional learning communities/data teams and professional development related to school climate, differentiation, Common Core State Standards and best practices.

Planning for Flex-time. The companion, related activity will be the detailed planning for phased implementation of a District Flex-time Policy. A flex-time policy will allow the Meriden Public School system to increase learning time throughout the district.

The Planning Committee for a flex-time schedule will consist of 22 teachers from the Meriden Federation of Teachers, including members from our Executive Board; the Superintendent, and Central Office team; principal; and elementary supervisors. The Planning Committee will meet monthly during release time, release days and before or after school time to plan for a Flex-time Schedule with additional meetings as needed.

The committee will research successful flex-time models, develop a working schedule for Early Flex and Late Flex Teacher Day options, examine the feasibility of using support staff, develop guidelines for teachers to "opt in" or "out" of flex-time, plan for sustainability and collaborate on Side Letters for Agreement regarding contractual obligations. This year of planning will help ensure a smooth transition over the next two years from expanded learning time to a flex-time schedule at Pulaski School.

During Year Two, based on the planning results of the committee, partial flex time will be implemented in the pilot school using reading teachers, specialists and staff interested in volunteering. Ongoing monitoring and support will be provided by the committee to identify any problems or issues needing to be addressed. During Year Three, an expanded flex-time model will be implemented at Pulaski. The MFT President, Superintendent and the Pulaski principal and MFT teachers will disseminate information statewide and nationally about Meriden's flex-time model and welcome onsite visits from other school districts considering this option. Grant funding will be used for teacher stipends for participation in the planning process, consultant as needed for technical assistance, professional development, a planning retreat, and visits to nearby model programs in Boston.

These innovations in program and practice will address the defined problem in important ways. Expanded Learning Opportunities will expose children to more experiences to support their learning while also helping parents with additional coverage to allow them to get to work knowing their children are engaged in beneficial, constructive activities. The pursuit of a District flex-time policy will offer schools an additional tool for planning their programs and responding to student needs.

**Q4: Narrative: \***

Please describe how you will achieve your proposed innovation over three years.

In one paragraph for each year, summarize the work you will do and the outcomes it will produce.

Think of this question as akin to “sketching your idea on a napkin” for someone you’re trying to persuade to support it.

[10000 characters allowed]

**Answer(s):**

Our Meriden Extended Learning Initiative will produce a structured before-school learning model to demonstrate the efficacy of extending the school day for 600 students in a diverse, predominantly low income community. We will document the work to facilitate dissemination to other schools in Meriden and beyond.

Year 1: In Year 1, we will complete planning by our Expanded Learning Opportunity/Flexitime Planning Committee over the summer and implement the before school program beginning at the start of school in August 2012. This comprehensive, 90 minute before school program will involve MFT teachers and community partners in a series of activities to engage students and support their learning during school. Planning will include establishing schedules, working with teachers and partners on the content of each session, and working with the school-based support team on the logistics of how the program will work, including waves of students eating breakfast in the cafeteria, use of the new 80 student computer center and deployment of other school facilities to accommodate the rest of the program.

Starting in September, the team will monitor implementation and make adjustments in the program design based on experience in the early weeks of implementation.

Throughout Year 1, the MFT/District Flexitime Committee will meet to explore Flexitime for teachers and other staff,

how Flextime for teachers and others could be rolled out in Meriden based on the education literature and experience in other districts.

The Planning Committee will meet regularly in Year 1 as well as participate in a two day planning retreat to provide the time to undertake this important work on both Expanded Learning and Flex-time.

#### Year 1 Outcomes:

- Complete Operational and Curricular Plan for Extended Learning by the end of August 2012.
- Establish and implement data collection protocols for the initiative using PowerSchool.
- MFT/District Flex-Time Committee completes its assessment and makes recommendations on the feasibility of the plan and strategies for implementation of flex-time in the district, beginning with a partial flex time policy at Pulaski in Year 2.
- Delivery of a 90 minute before school Extended Learning program serving up to 600 students in grades 1-5
  - oEngages MFT teachers in providing a before school learning opportunity for students;
  - oAllows parents to go to work earlier with confidence their children are productively occupied and supervised
  - oBuilds relationships with community agencies brought in as partners
- At least six teachers from other Meriden elementary schools will serve on the Planning Committee for Expanded Learning Opportunities and Flex-time with all members of the MFT fully briefed and informed of implementation progress via MFT web site, in-person meetings, and optional web-based training programs.

Year 2: In Year 2, the Committee will evaluate the experience in Year 1 based on teacher and parent input and make further adjustments to the program model based on that evaluation. The evaluation will examine factors detailed in Question 5.

Flex-time: The Flex-time Committee will solicit feedback on its Year 1 Report and, assuming a positive recommendation in the report and a positive response to the report by the school community, begin the process in the summer of 2013 of implementing a partial flex time model at Pulaski School. A limited number of teachers will go on a partial flex time plan in September 2013 to pilot the approach.

#### Year 2 Outcomes:

- Year 1 implementation evaluated by August 2013 and adjustments made to model
- Delivery of a refined 90 minute before school Extended Learning program serving up to 600 students in grade 1-5
- Production of documentation and materials to support dissemination of the model
- Implementation of a partial Flextime program at Pulaski
- Most importantly, the Meriden Federation of Teachers and the Meriden Public Schools, with support and funding from the AFT Innovation Fund, will have provided Meriden students with a greater opportunity to experience success. Together, we will increase instructional time, launch flextime scheduling and create a model partnership between union and administration.

Year 3: In Year 3, the Committee will evaluate the experience in Year 2, refine the Expanded Learning Opportunities

implementation, evaluate the limited flex-time model in implementation, and make specific plans for possible replication of the Expanded Learning Opportunity to additional schools and implementation of the full flex-time model at Pulaski. The team will create materials to support dissemination (both print and web-based guides) and present the project at AFT conferences/institutes, unions meetings in other districts, interested school systems and other state and national conferences where feasible.

#### Year 3 Outcomes:

- Continued refinement of the Expanded Learning Opportunity model, including recruitment of new partners and identification of additional community resources for expansion of the model.
- Implementation of an expanded Flextime program at Pulaski
- Development of a plan for replicating the Pulaski Expanded Opportunities/ Flex-time models to other schools in the district.
- Completion of dissemination materials documenting the work across the years to support teams in other districts seeking to implement both Expanded Learning Opportunities and Flextime.

With support from the AFT Innovation Fund, Meriden will have achieved and refined a new model of Extended Learning based on a before school model and a Flex-time Policy to support our school reform efforts, all within the three year project period and fully documented to facilitate replication.

#### **Q5: Narrative: \***

Describe what you believe will be the effects of your innovation and the specific measures you will use to determine its success.

Be sure to describe any effects related to building your union's capacity, relationship-building with partners, and broader effects in the communities where our members work.

[10000 characters allowed]

#### **Answer(s):**

The Planning Committee will form an Evaluation Work Sub-Group to work with the Innovation Fund and the District Director of Research and Evaluation, Dr. Al Larson, to design an evaluation approach and system in the summer 2012 before start-up with students. Dr. Larson holds a doctorate in Educational Psychology with an emphasis in evaluation and measurement. A highly regarded researcher, he represents Connecticut LEA's at the US Department of Education, Center for Education Statistics National Forum.

The evaluation plan will address both Expanded Learning Opportunities and the related Flex-time Policy and its implementation.

The evaluation will examine the effects of the innovation on the following factors:

- Student attendance

- Increases in student contact and instructional time
- Even though learning outcomes are not the primary measure for this initiative, student growth will be measured by DRA scores, Meriden District Assessments (local assessments highly recognized by SDE) CT Mastery Test results, as well as attendance, suspensions and truancy rates.
- Student and family satisfaction with the program and feedback, incorporating results of the annual District Student Climate Survey
- Teacher reports of changes in student attitudes, behavior, or learning in their classroom
- Ease of administration of the program
- New relationships built with community partners & union capacity built

School outcomes include more time to support student achievement, teacher collaboration and a well-rounded education. A major outcome will be the implementation of a flex-time school schedule planned and developed by MFT Executive Board, MFT teachers and Central Office with Side Letters of Agreement between the Board of Education and MFT.

The Planning Committee will use the Sharepoint archive and other records to assess accomplishment of planning and operational benchmarks. The Evaluation Work Sub-Group of the Planning Committee will survey participating teachers, other teachers in Pulaski, community partners, and parents at regular intervals to assess the success of the implementation and provide feedback to refine the model.

The essential questions guiding the evaluation include:

- Did we do what we say we were going to do? (covering both process and program implementation) How much was delivered?
- How well did we do it? Did we successfully adapt the program to meet challenges as they arose?
- Has the MFT, in collaboration with Central Office, developed an innovative before school learning program and a successful flex-time model?

The Committee will produce regular memos and an annual report as inputs to the ongoing improvement of the program and the preparation of dissemination materials.

Students, parents and teachers responses on surveys will provide valuable data to us as we move forward. All students can benefit from additional learning time.

**Q6: Narrative: \***

Innovation involves risks and obstacles: professional, cultural, political, financial and the like. Mapping them in advance helps you manage their inevitability.

Discuss candidly the risks and obstacles that may get in the way of your innovation's success (e.g. membership resistance; leadership turnover; local politics; funding; or school culture).  
How will you overcome them?



[10000 characters allowed]

**Answer(s):**

Both the related innovations – Expanded Learning Opportunities before school and Flextime - involve major changes to the way Pulaski Elementary School will operate and in the lives of teachers and families of students. The major risks and obstacles we have identified include:

- Obtaining full parent buy-in to deliver their students to school 90 minutes earlier. The team will overcome this by active outreach to all parents through the District Family School Liaison team and community partners as well as through Pulaski’s PTA, the “Alert Now” call system and attendance at neighborhood events
- Sustaining curricular elements for the entire year. Keeping the program engaging and fresh each day for the entire year will require constant attention to curriculum detail and content.
- Financial implications of Flextime. Flex time alone will not change the fact that adequate coverage of all hours of an extended day will require additional resources to support teacher time in schools. In a time of scarce resources, this poses a challenge to broader use of Flextime. Creative scheduling of specialists, reading teachers, staff, office personnel and custodians will be required.

**Q7: Narrative:\***

A key outcome of successful innovation is to make it sustainable and replicable, so it is available for others to use.

What outcomes and products (e.g. websites, manuals, videos, trainings) will your innovation produce that will enable it to be replicated in other states and locals?

Why would a union-district partnership in another part of the country see your innovation as essential?

[10000 characters allowed]

**Answer(s):**

The MFT teachers supported under this grant will work with District staff and consultants hired for the grant to produce a comprehensive “Planning Guide” and Implementation Manual detailing how the MFT assumed a leadership role in the planning of extended learning time and the development and implementation of a flextime schedule in an urban community in collaboration with the District administration. The guide will be distributed in a limited print run and downloadable from the project web site as a PDF.

This Guide/Manual will include both the planning process used to develop the two main components (Extended Learning and Flextime), any tools used (schedules, curriculum, notices, etc), financial and management considerations, and the results of the initiative. This Guide/Manual will also provide content for pages of an online guide on the web linked to both the District and the MFT web sites.

In addition, the team will develop a series of short videos including interviews with participating teachers and families and a simpler brochure for broad distribution.

In support of dissemination, the team plans to offer one or more webinars per year open to all union/district partnerships interested in replicating these components as well as make presentations at the AFT Annual Meeting and other appropriate conferences.

**Q8: Narrative: \***

Identify any partners with whom the union plans to collaborate and be specific about their roles.

Provide examples of their capacity to help implement the proposal.

What is your relationship with each partner? Have you worked together in the past?

How do your partner organizations plan to contribute to the initiative, financially and otherwise?  
[10000 characters allowed]

**Answer(s):**

Our primary partner is the Meriden Board of Education with whom we have a deep, ongoing daily relationship. Mutual trust and collaboration exist between the MFT and Central Office. Invited by the AFT to attend its Extended Learning Institute, this joint proposal is an outgrowth of that positive experience.

All parties have the capacity and desire to support this project. Meriden, a progressive and innovative urban school system, was recognized by the State Education Commissioner, "This school district is creating a model for the rest of the state", (Record-Journal, Nov 15, 2011). Meriden was one of 15 cities awarded a \$465,000, Promise Neighborhood Initiative Grant by the U.S. Department of Education, in large part based on the commitment of the Meriden Board of Education to aggressive implementation of evidence-based school reforms (see letter of commitment form Promise Neighborhood grantee, Meriden Children First, Inc).

From the start, this initiative has been developed directly with the Principal of Pulaski Elementary School and representatives from Central Office. The Board of Education administrative staff have been extremely supportive of this innovative proposal, committing substantial resources to making it happen. The Meriden Public Schools is in the middle of implementing significant district and school reforms in partnership with the State Department of Education. These reforms, detailed in our District Improvement Plan and each School Improvement Plan, include a number of initiatives in the following areas, all of which intersect with and create synergy with this proposed innovation:

- Leadership Development. The District has created a Leadership Academy facilitated by the Connecticut Association of Schools to cultivate the skills of 20 MFT members who are aspiring leaders.

- Instructional Improvement. Efforts to improve instruction are grounded in a local, frequent online diagnostic assessments with rapid feedback to teachers for use in guiding and individualizing instruction. District and School-level Data Teams to work as a professional learning community to develop instructional strategies and diagnose issues. The district and MFT have side letter of agreement to have a weekly early release day for data teams. Our voluntary peer coaching model involves training and release time for coaches to work in a collegial atmosphere supporting each other.

•Community and Parental Engagement. The District has appointed five Family-School Liaisons, replacing earlier investments in anti-truancy programs who will be proactively reaching out to families of students with learning issues and facilitating stronger family and community connections to the schools. Pursuant to a new state law, many schools are instituting School Governance Councils to amplify parents' voice and create a table to work together to develop strategies that will improve instruction, school climate, and parental involvement.

The District is using Promise Neighborhood Planning Grant funds to partner with the Connecticut Center for School Change to advance its practices on all three of these fronts.

The District's financial contributions include extensive in-kind staff and logistical support for the planning and implementation of the Extended Learning component. The District is covering the costs of opening the facilities early, of providing administrative and custodial staff support, and of providing release time for MFT members to participate in the planning process.

In addition, the District is providing over \$110,000 for renovating and equipping an 80 student state-of-the-art computer center that will serve as a critical curricular resource for the before school programming.

From outside the District, MFT is partnering with community agencies to support programming in the Expanded Learning Time component at Pulaski Elementary School. These include:

•The Meriden YMCA. The "Y" will deliver its STEM program as a core component of the before school curriculum. In addition, the Y will provide fitness and exercise classes, access to its ropes course and skilled trainers for the team building and leadership training for the Planning Team. The Y and will provide support for the two day planning retreat.

•Meriden Children First Initiative (CFI). Meriden Children First recently received funding through the U.S. Department of Education's Promise Neighborhood Program to create a continuum of solutions from "cradle to career" (modeled on the Harlem Children Zone) to improve educational and life outcomes for families and children in a zone which includes Pulaski School and many of its families. CFI will be working closely with the District and MFT to connect families to this initiative through its ongoing outreach and family engagement activities. In addition, CFI has recruited a corps of Senior Buddy Readers, senior citizens that are trained to work one-on-one with elementary school students on literacy skills, who will be deployed in the before school program.

**Q9: Narrative:\***

To be a successful Innovation Fund grantee, you need capacity to manage a project: from planning, assigning tasks, and meeting deadlines, to reviewing, improving, and delivering final products.

Describe how the work for your innovation will get done over the grant period.

**Be sure to answer:**

1. Who will be responsible for directing the effort for the union?
2. Will they work full or part time?
3. Include (if applicable) what staffing support, skills and experience partners will be providing, and any joint task force or steering committee that will facilitate collaboration between the union and its partners.
4. Explain if there are other people needed to accomplish the activities.
5. Will you need technical assistance? What kind?
6. Who will be responsible for producing materials, ultimately for the replication of the innovation?
7. Who will be in charge of internal and external communications?

[10000 characters allowed]

**Answer(s):**

The project will be overseen by Erin Benham, President of the MFT, and the MFT Executive Board who in consultation with the MFT/BOE Planning Committee will appoint a part-time Project Director to direct project planning and implementation. The Project Director will use the District's Sharepoint account to establish a Sharepoint Project that will support tracking of all tasks, as a repository for all documents and data from the project, and a hub for communications with automatic notifications. Sharepoint has become an important tool to support all District planning efforts and teams at the District and school levels(e.g. District and School Data Teams, Curriculum Planning Teams). With a click, all involved will be able to see the overall work plan, track progress against schedules, and understand how their tasks fit within the larger plan. All responsible will receive regular project updates and reminders of deadlines. The Sharepoint Project Wiki and Forum will be used to document critical information and as a place where all MFT members can provide input on and discuss key design features and issues. Links on Meriden's website([www.meridenk12.org](http://www.meridenk12.org)) will be available to access Sharepoint and information on the Meriden site about the program.

The partners will form an Extended Learning/Flex-Time Planning Committee that will facilitate collaboration between MFT and its partners. This Committee will be connected to the preexisting District Labor/Management Liaison Team consisting of the MFT President and the district Director of Curriculum. The Committee will involve 22 MFT representatives including officers, the MFT Project Director, members involved in the project at Pulaski school, and members from other schools; the Principal of Pulaski; Central Office leaders including the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, Director of Curriculum Elementary reading and Math Supervisors and community representatives involved in the project, including the Executive Director of Meriden Children First David Radcliffe ( who serves as Project Director for Meriden's Promise Neighborhoods initiative) and Meriden YMCA Operations Director, Steve Markoja, who oversees over 400 students in preschool programs and approximately 5,000 children and families in a variety of programs.

The lead players with a hands-on role in implementation beyond the MFT Project Director will include the Principal of Pulaski School and the School's Instructional Associate (MFT), and the three subject area Coordinators who will be responsible for discrete components of the before school programming as well as serving on the Committee. This school-based team will be supported as needed by Central Office staff with responsibility for curriculum and operations.

We have budgeted for technical assistance on the design of our before school program and on the development of a flex-time policy for the district. The Planning Committee will also send delegations to investigate programs on-the-ground in districts with experience in implementing elements of what we are proposing.

The Project Director will work with a team of MFT members to produce the materials required to support the project and its replication. There are funds in the budget for graphic design and editorial assistance in this task. Internal and external communications for the project will be handled by existing staff and leaders of the District and MFT that handle these functions for their organizations presently.

#### **Q10: 2. The Work Plan\***

Complete a step-by-step, 12-month workplan for planning, development, and implementation of the first year of your proposal.

(The Innovation Fund will approve work plans for additional years as grantees reapply for second and/or third year support.)

List the objectives, activities, dates, and any detail in a notes section to accomplish the proposed innovation.

The work plan should identify all tasks related to planning, piloting and implementing the innovation.

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to complete the AFT Innovation Fund 2012-2013 Work Plan.

**Note:**When you are finished, **SAVE** the document to your computer, click the **BROWSE** button below to locate the document, then double click your document for it to be uploaded onto the system.

[2 MB(s) allowed]

#### **Answer(s):**

Attachment: IFworkplan0212\_MFT.docx

#### **Q11: 3. Budget: \***

Please show the projected costs and contributions for the 12-month work plan. The budget should support the staff and activities you have outlined, so consider and discuss with your partners what you will need in categories such as:

multimedia/publications, staffing, meetings, stipends/honoraria, consulting or any other services.

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to complete the AFT Innovation Fund Budget form.

**Note:**When you are finished, **SAVE** the document to your computer, click the **BROWSE** button below to locate the document, then double click your document for it to be uploaded onto the system.

[2 MB(s) allowed]

**Answer(s):**

Attachment: MFT-AFT Innovation Fund\_Budget FORM.xlsx

**Q12: Funds Requested from Innovation Fund: Year One\***

(\$150,000 maximum)

**Answer(s):**

150,000

**Q13: Budget Notes: \***

Please provide detailed notes on **EACH** line item in the budget for which you are requesting funding. All budget requests must relate to the Work Plan and be necessary for you to accomplish your goals.

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to complete the AFT Innovation Fund Budget Notes form.

**Note:** When you are finished, **SAVE** the document to your computer, click the **BROWSE** button below to locate the document, then double click your document for it to be uploaded onto the system.

[2 MB(s) allowed]

**Answer(s):**

Attachment: IFbudgetnotes0212\_MFT.docx

**Q14: 4. Letters of Commitment (Optional)**

If your proposal involves having outside partners play a role and/or provide funding, you must include letters of commitment that make clear their specific roles and what resources (financial or in-kind) and time will be committed to the initiative.

[2 MB(s) allowed]

**Answer(s):**

Attachment: signed copy aft letter.pdf

**Q15: Letters of Commitment (2)**

[2 MB(s) allowed]

**Answer(s):**

Attachment: cfi letter - aft 3-21-12.pdf

**Q16: Letters of Commitment (3)**

[2 MB(s) allowed]

**Answer(s):**

Attachment: YMCA AFT grant support letter.pdf

# Files Summary

## **Process: AFT Innovation Fund 2012**

### **Expanding Learning Opportunities at Pulaski Elementary School Through Collaboration and Partnerships**

#### **File Uploads**

IFworkplano212\_MFT.docx

MFT-AFT Innovation Fund\_Budget FORM.xlsx

IFbudgetnotes0212\_MFT.docx

signed copy aft letter.pdf

cfi letter - aft 3-21-12.pdf

YMCA AFT grant support letter.pdf



**AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS INNOVATION FUND**  
**Work Plan**

**Affiliate Name: Meriden Federation of Teachers**

**Grant Year: 2012**

(Please note: this template will expand as you type. Also, to add a bullet, simple press “enter” after typing on each bullet.)

QUARTER	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	Date (e.g. Monthly)	NOTES
<b>1<sup>st</sup>:</b> <b>July 1<sup>st</sup> – Sept 30<sup>th</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a detailed implementation plan for August 29, 2012 Launch (first day of school)</li> <li>• Engage all partners</li> <li>• Launch Extended Learning Opportunities before school program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire MFT Project Director and MFT Coordinators</li> <li>• Hire MFT Teachers</li> <li>• Notify parents about program/transportation</li> <li>• Secure detailed agreements with partners</li> <li>• Develop detailed operational plan and curriculum for three components</li> <li>• Establish data collection protocol</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• July</li> <li>• July</li> <li>• Aug</li> <li>• Aug</li> <li>• Aug</li> <li>• Aug</li> </ul>	❖
<b>2<sup>nd</sup>:</b> <b>Oct 1<sup>st</sup> – Dec 31<sup>st</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue Extended Learning Opportunities before school program</li> <li>• Establish Flex-time Planning Committee and begin planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before school program services delivered</li> <li>• Initial research and planning on Flex-time in process</li> <li>• Consultant assistance on Flex-time planning</li> <li>• Site visits to model programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sep-Dec</li> <li>• Sep-Dec</li> <li>• Oct-Dec</li> <li>• Oct-Nov</li> </ul>	❖
<b>3<sup>rd</sup>:</b> <b>Jan 1<sup>st</sup> – Mar 31<sup>st</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue and fine tune Extended Learning Opportunities before school program</li> <li>• Continue Planning Committee</li> <li>• Collect and maintain all dissemination materials and plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before school program services delivered and refined based on feedback from 2nd Quarter</li> <li>• Planning Committee retreat</li> <li>• Continued planning on Flex-time, Interim Report issued</li> <li>• Commence dissemination materials and create plan for dissemination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jan-Mar</li> <li>• Mar</li> <li>• Mar</li> <li>• Mar</li> </ul>	❖
<b>4<sup>th</sup>:</b> <b>Apr 1<sup>st</sup> – June 30<sup>th</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extended Learning Opportunities before school program completed and evaluated</li> <li>• Issue Report of Flex-time Planning Committee</li> <li>• Plan for launch of partial Flex-time schedule for August 2013</li> <li>• Continue planning for expanded Flex-time implementation in Years 2-3</li> <li>• Disseminate before school model</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year 1 before school program services completed</li> <li>• Program evaluated based on first year of operation</li> <li>• Complete report and recommendations for Flex-time</li> <li>• Create partial Flex-time schedule and share plan with faculty</li> <li>• Plan schedules for reading teachers, specialists, and interested others for August 2013 launch of Flex-time</li> <li>• Conduct before school dissemination activities – publish Guide, create Presentation, conduct webinars</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apr-June</li> <li>• June</li> <li>• June</li> <li>• May-Jun</li> <li>• Jun</li> <li>• May-Jun</li> </ul>	❖

**Affiliate Name** Meriden Federation of Teachers

**Local Number** 1478

**Project Name** Expanding Learning Opportunities at Pulaski Elementary School Through Collaboration and Partnerships

**Beginning and Ending Dates of requested funding\*** July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013

Direct Costs	Year 1 Total Projected Budget	Year 1 Contribution from District/State	Year 1 Contribution from Union	Year 1 Total Request from AFT Innovation Fund
Salaries		\$22,857.00		\$0.00
Fringe Benefits				\$0.00
Subtotal:	\$0.00	\$22,857.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Conferences/Meetings (e.g. meeting space/AV/ registration/food/materials)	\$1,000.00			\$1,000.00
Multimedia/Publications (e.g. materials and products)	\$2,026.00			\$0.00
Office Expenses (incl printing & postage)				\$2,026.00
Travel (e.g. flight/hotel for internal ppl & consultants)				\$0.00
Stipends/Honoraria	\$131,333.00		\$6,459.00	\$124,874.00
Other				\$0.00
Substitutes	\$6,600.00			\$6,600.00
Planning Retreat	\$4,000.00			\$4,000.00
Professional Development	\$5,000.00			\$5,000.00
Field Trips to Visit Model Schools	\$1,500.00			\$1,500.00
Computer Center Installation	\$110,000.00	\$110,000.00		
Curriculum and Program Supplies	\$3,500.00	\$3,500.00		
Janitorial, staff, and security	\$16,200.00	\$16,200.00		
Partner In Kind- Buddy Readers	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00		
Partner in Kind: YMCA Programming	\$3,500.00	\$3,500.00		
Subtotal:	\$289,659.00	\$138,200.00	\$6,459.00	\$145,000.00
Total Direct Costs:	\$289,659.00	\$161,057.00	\$6,459.00	\$145,000.00
Consultants/Subcontracts (fees)	\$5,000.00			\$5,000.00
<b>Total Year 1:</b>	<b>\$294,659.00</b>	<b>\$161,057.00</b>	<b>\$6,459.00</b>	<b>\$150,000.00</b>

**Signature of Financial Officer** Erin Benham

**Date** 3/21/2012

\*The beginning and ending dates of requested funding and the total amount requested from the AFT Innovation Fund should match the dates and amount requested in the proposal. Proposed funding should begin on the first day of the month.

**AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS INNOVATION FUND  
Budget Notes Template**

**Affiliate Name: Meriden Federation of Teachers**

**Grant Year: 2012**

\*Please note: to add additional rows to the categories, simply press tab after filling in the last row/column (bottom right text box).

**Category: Staff Costs (Salary & Fringe)**

Item Description	Cost Breakdown	Total Cost	District/Union Cost	AFT IF Cost
Principal, Casimir Pulaski School	For participation in work of Extended Learning Opportunities initiative (180 hours at daily rate of \$540 /day)	13,886	13,886	
Director of Curriculum, Meriden Public Schools	For participation in Planning Committee and related activities (45 hours at daily rate of \$540/day)	3,471	3,471	
Secretary, Meriden Public Schools	Project-related Clerical support for Planning Committee and Meriden Public Schools staff (50 hours at daily rate of \$320)	1,000	1,000	
Financial Administration, Meriden Public Schools	Processing of all expenses, stipends, and contractual payments; financial reporting (90 hours at Ave daily rate of \$400)	4,500	4,500	

**IF Cost: 0**

**Notes: Fringe included in daily rates**

**Category: Conferences/Meetings (e.g. meeting space/AV/registration/food/materials)**

Item Description	Cost Breakdown	Total Cost	District/Union Cost	AFT IF Request
Food and refreshments for meetings	For a portion of the cost of food and refreshments at Planning Committee or related events. This will be supplemented by sponsorships or other sources as needed.	1,000		1,000

**IF Cost: \$1,000**

**Notes:**

**AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS INNOVATION FUND  
Budget Notes Template**

**Category: Multimedia/Publications**

Item Description	Cost Breakdown	Total Cost	District/Union Cost	AFT IF Request
Publicity for Dissemination	This covers costs associated with efforts to disseminate the results of the initiative, including publication of a brochure about the program as well as other collateral materials	2,026		2.026

**IF Cost: \$2,026**

**Notes:**

**Category: Office Expenses (incl printing & postage)**

Item Description	Cost Breakdown	Total Cost	District/Union Cost	AFT IF Request

**IF Cost:**

**Notes:**

**Category: Travel (e.g. flight & hotel for meetings, consultants, etc.)**

Item Description	Cost Breakdown	Total Cost	District/Union Cost	AFT IF Request

**IF Cost:**

**Notes:**

**AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS INNOVATION FUND  
Budget Notes Template**

**Category: Stipends/Honoraria**

Item Description	Cost Breakdown	Total Cost	District/Union Cost	AFT IF Request
Project Director	One MFT Member will serve as the Project Director to coordinate all activities and make sure milestones are met in a timely fashion. This person will serve on the Planning Committee and associated work groups teachers will receive a stipend for the year of \$8,750 for (a) serving in the school from 7:20-8:50 AM each school day, (b) participating in a minimum of 10 Committee-related meetings (mix of evening and daytime meetings for which they will have coverage from a substitute, and (c) a two day Committee planning retreat.	8,750		8,750
STEM, Literacy, Healthy Lifestyles Coordinators	3 MFT Members will participate in the program as content area Coordinators in the areas of STEM, Literacy, and Healthy Lifestyles. They will work with the Committee to define the activities, curriculum, and assessments for the Extended Day Initiative. They will serve of both serve on the Planning Committee and associated work groups. These teachers will receive a stipend for the year of \$6,750 for (a) serving in the school from 7:20-8:50 AM each school day, (b) participating in a minimum of 10 Committee-related meetings (a mix of evening and four daytime meetings for which they will have coverage from a substitute, and (c) a two day Committee planning retreat.	23,250		23,250
MFT Planning Team	15 MFT additional members will participate in the program and serve on the Planning Committee and associated work groups. All these MFT teachers will participate in a minimum of 10 in Committee-related meetings (a mix of evening and daytime meetings for which they will have coverage from a substitute), and a two day Committee planning retreat. Twelve of these teachers will receive a stipend for the year of \$6,750 for the planning work and also serving in Pulaski school during the before school program time each school day. Three additional MFT teachers from the schools most likely to implement the program in the next phase will be invited to serve on the Planning Committee to help with program and will be paid a stipend of \$1,500 to engage in the planning process described above (two paid by the grant and one by the union).	85,500	1,500	84,000
Planning Team Members – MFT Officers	3 MFT Officers will assist in leading the Planning Committee. These duties will be considered as a union contribution of an average of \$1,500 per officer attributable to their level of effort on this initiative over the year. These teachers will also participate in Team meetings and work plan meetings .	4,500	4,500	
Fringe Benefits (FICA)	7.65% times stipends for FICA taxes, per Meriden Public Schools Administration	9333	459	8,874

**IF Cost: \$124,874**

**Notes:**

**AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS INNOVATION FUND**  
**Budget Notes Template**

**Category: Other**

Item Description	Cost Breakdown	Total Cost	District/Union Cost	AFT IF Request
Teacher substitute Fund	Fund to provide for substitutes for teachers from other schools to participate in activities related to the project (48 days @ \$75 per day) and for teachers to cover for Planning Committee members to attend team and committee meetings (100 units @ \$30)	\$6,600		6,600
Planning Retreat	Expenses associated with the Two Day Planning Retreat for the Extended Learning Team to develop the overall plan as well as the longer term vision for the initiative and implementation of Flex Time. Includes venue, food, and activity costs.	4,000		4,000
Professional Development Activities	Professional development activities for the Extended Learning Opportunities team and other MFT members from other schools	5,000		5,000
Filed Trips to Model Programs	For expenses associated with field trips to visit programs in other districts nearby to engage those district leaders and teachers in discussions contributing to the design	1,500		1,500
Computer Center installations	Installation of a major 80 computer at Pulaski School with high speed internet connection and staff training in use of the lab.	110,000	110,000	
Curriculum and Program supplies	Books, supplies and other materials essential to operating a high quality program	3,500	3,500	
Janitorial, staff and security	Incremental non-teaching staff costs associated with the project over the first school year (2012-2013). Calculated at 3 three staff for 180 days at a rate of \$20 per hour.	16,200	16,200	
Partner In-kind: YMCA	Value of contributed services across several program components delivered in Pulaski before school program, as described in the narrative and letter of support.	5,000	5,000	
Partner In-kind: Buddy Readers	Value of contributed services across the literacy delivered in Pulaski before school program, as described in the narrative and the CFI letter of support.	3,500	3,500	

**IF Cost: \$17,100**

**Notes:**

**AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS INNOVATION FUND  
Budget Notes Template**

**Category: Consultants/Subcontractors**

Item Description	Cost Breakdown	Total Cost	District/Union Cost	AFT IF Request
Technical Assistance in program design and Flex-Time policy development from expert consultant	Estimated 5 days @ \$1,000 per day	5,000		5,000

**IF Cost: \$5,000**

**Notes:**

**Total IF Cost: \$150,000**



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MERIDEN, CONNECTICUT

Administrative Offices, 22 Liberty Street  
P.O. Box 848  
Meriden, Connecticut 06450-0848  
Telephone: (203) 630-4171  
Fax: (203) 630-0110  
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Erin Benham, President, Meriden Federation of Teachers  
35 Pleasant St., Suite 1A  
Meriden, Connecticut 06450

Dear Ms. Benham,

The Meriden Public School System strongly supports the Meriden Federation of Teachers (MFT) proposal for the AFT Innovation Fund to provide extended learning time through flexible teacher scheduling in the Meriden Public Schools. As Superintendent of Schools, I had the pleasure of attending the AFT's extended learning time institute with you and several other MFT Executive Board members and administrators. We all came away from the experience excited about the unique opportunity to work together to expand learning time in our schools.

As you know, the MFT, with full collaboration and support of our Central Office team, will establish the first expanded time school in Meriden with a before school program at Casimir Pulaski Elementary School. Mr. Daniel Coffey, who will be principal at Pulaski School this September, also attended the institute and is enthusiastic to be the principal of our pilot model. Lois Lehman, Director of Curriculum and Professional Development, will serve with you as the labor/management team liaison to facilitate the program.

We are converting a large room at Pulaski Elementary School into a state-of-the-art computer center which will accommodate 80 children in the Before School program. Michael Grove, Assistant Superintendent for Finance/Administration, is arranging for this renovation as well as providing early morning bus transportation to Pulaski. Sue Perrone, Supervisor of Elementary Language Arts, Neil Weathers, Supervisor of Mathematics, and Barbara Haeffner, Supervisor of Instructional Technology, will be working closely with the MFT Project Director and MFT Coordinators to implement a strong instructional component. Non-profit community agencies actively involved in the before school program include Children First Initiative, YMCA, Literacy Volunteers and our Senior Buddy Readers.

The establishment of an Extended Learning Time Committee consisting of you, MFT Executive Board, MFT teachers at Pulaski and MFT teachers from other schools, will help facilitate the opening of an expanded-time school in September as well as pave the way for planning a




flextime schedule to be piloted in 2012-2013 and fully implemented in 2013-2014. Release time for planning and professional development will be provided to MFT teachers to work on the Extended Learning Time Committee as well as paid stipends funded from the AFT Innovation Grant.

This grant opportunity comes at an especially relevant time for Meriden as the Meriden Children First Initiative is the recipient of a federal Promise Neighborhood Planning Grant to improve the lives of children in the Meriden Family Zone in which Pulaski School is located.

While recognizing the enormous task ahead, our Central Office team is looking forward to continued mutual collaboration and the opportunity to work together in new and exciting ways. On a personal level, I am extremely enthusiastic about this project and will do all I can to ensure its success.

I fully expect that our excitement, enthusiasm and collaboration in this project will spill over into the classrooms and positively impact children's lives. We welcome the opportunity to participate with you in this worthwhile AFT Innovation Fund initiative. I am confident we can create a model program that can be replicated in other Meriden schools and in schools across our state and country. We would welcome the opportunity to share our innovative program with others. Thank you for undertaking this important project!

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark D. Benigni". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Mark D. Benigni, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools



165 Miller Street, Meriden, CT 06450

March 20, 2012

Erin Benham, President  
Meriden Federation of teachers  
35 Pleasant Street, Suite 1A  
Meriden, CT 06450

Dear Ms. Benham:

I am pleased to write in support of the Meriden Federation of Teachers' (MFT) proposal to work with the Meriden Public Schools to institute Extended Learning Opportunities at Casimir Pulaski School through a 90 minute before-school program of activities. Meriden Children First has a long and deep partnership with the Meriden Public Schools and MFT as a parent leadership development and child and education advocacy organization.

As you know, Meriden Children First, Inc. received a Promise Neighborhood Planning Grant in December 2011, one of only 15 in the nation, to support our work with you and many other community partners to implement a "continuum of solutions" from cradle to career that will support dramatic improvement in educational outcomes for children in the Meriden Family Zone, the area with the highest concentration of poverty and other stressors in the City. Extended Learning Opportunities, both before and after school, are critical components of the continuum of solutions we are working to build in Meriden.

Pulaski School is one of the elementary schools serving the Zone children and is prominently featured in our Promise Neighborhood application and plans. The grant provides resources for the Connecticut Center for School Change to work with the Meriden Public Schools and the Principals of all Zone schools to focus on the most effective techniques for leadership development, instructional improvement, and parent and community engagement.

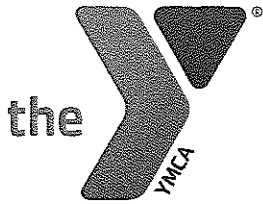
We look forward to collaborating with the MFT and the Meriden Public Schools to make this Extended Learning Opportunity a success. We will work with you in several specific ways: (a) to work with our Youth Committee and School Improvement Committee to explore incorporating this initiative into our continuum of solutions and seek Promise Neighborhood implementation funds to expand and replicate it if the initial results are positive, (b) to recruit members of Senior Buddy Reading corps to work with individual children at Pulaski during the before school program as part of the planned literacy focus, and (c) we will help connect parents to the program and the school through our Promise Neighborhood-funded community outreach and organizing work.

Please keep us informed and we look forward to working closely with you on implementation of this important initiative.

Sincerely,

*David W. Radcliffe*

David W. Radcliffe  
Executive Director



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
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Erin Benham, President, Meriden Federation of Teachers  
35 Pleasant St., Suite 1A  
Meriden, Connecticut 06450

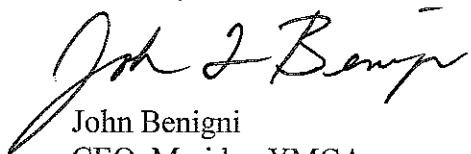
Dear Ms. Benham:

The Meriden YMCA strongly supports the Meriden Federation of Teachers (MFT) proposal for Extended Learning Time. The YMCA welcomes the opportunity to work collaboratively with the Meriden Public Schools, MFT and Casimir Pulaski Elementary School. The Y's previous experience with STEM at our Mt. Mist Science Education Center has proven highly successful. In July, 2011, the Meriden YMCA was awarded a NASA Summer of Innovation Grant for its innovative approach to STEM Education. The activities provided by the program have certainly helped to improve the quality of science instruction in schools.

We look forward to working with the MFT Project Director, Coordinators, and teachers to implement a valuable and integral STEM component for the Before School Program. We anticipate assigning a staff member to run a STEM Education Program for the Pulaski Before School Program. In addition, we will be participating in the Healthy Lifestyles component and offering Family Nights for children and parents from Pulaski School which will include use of our pool and recreation facilities. Also, please let us know if our certified Yoga, Zumba, and fitness instructors could support your efforts in any way. We also look forward to providing a Leadership Retreat and other training opportunities for the Extended Learning Committee members.

Last, but not least, the YMCA has a long history of strong collaboration with the Meriden Public Schools and look forward to being actively involved in this exciting MFT project with you. We stand ready, willing and able to assist you and the Meriden Public Schools in launching this innovative endeavor.

Sincerely,



John Benigni  
CEO, Meriden YMCA