



Executive Summary

Champions For Learning (CFL) proposes to restructure and expand its student programs in collaboration with Collier County Public Schools (CCPS) to reach more students with locally-designed pathways to college and career success. Building on the strengths of our current Take Stock in Children (TSIC; serving students in grades 8 to 12) and College and Career Prep (CCP; serving students in grades 10 to 12), we would create a Comprehensive CCP, allowing CFL to serve more students with greater program flexibility and closer alignment with student needs.

CFL served an average of 181 students through TSIC and an average of 112 students in the CCP Program in addition to TSIC participants during the three previous fiscal years. The proposed structure would eventually increase total capacity to approximately 500 students in TSIC and the Comprehensive CCP, while also serving approximately 100 other students in the Upperclass CCP (adding the phrase "Upperclass" to the current program name to distinguish it from the new more comprehensive version). This would be more than a doubling of students served.

The Comprehensive CCP would begin in 8th grade, providing students from low-income families with two-year Florida Prepaid scholarships and the opportunity for additional College Completer scholarships. The program would feature small-group mentoring, individualized coaching, and eight to ten workshops in most grades focused on academic planning, career exploration, and college access. TSIC would continue to serve students beginning in 8th grade with mentoring and coaching, as well as four-year Florida Prepaid scholarships, instead of the previous two-year scholarships.

CFL also proposes to renew and expand college access support for high school students not enrolled in its programs, working with CCPS and Future Ready Collier partners to increase FAFSA completion, scholarship applications, and college enrollment. Collaborative review of workshop design, student recruitment strategies, and program components will ensure alignment with CCPS initiatives and maximize impact. With more than 10,000 CCPS high school pupils, many students would benefit from greater college access support.

This strategic expansion, supported by existing staff capacity, prepaid scholarship funds, and the raising of additional scholarship dollars, will allow Champions For Learning to meet broader community needs while maintaining the personalized, high-quality experiences that define our programs.

Statement of Need

The fastest growing job industries in Collier County and Florida require education beyond high school, yet only 45% of Collier County residents aged 25-64 have obtained a post-secondary degree, workforce credential, or industry certification. College and career readiness is imperative for all students to be better prepared to successfully enroll and obtain post-secondary education.

Nearly 60% of Collier County Public School (CCPS) students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Many of these students would be the first in their families to pursue college or structured career pathways, even though their parents and relatives typically work tirelessly in essential jobs that sustain both their families and our community. Without access to built-in guidance, mentors, or enrichment experiences, these students must navigate complex and unfamiliar systems alone, making it harder to see what's possible and how to take the steps to get there. In addition to economic factors, 57% of these students come from households where English is not the primary language spoken, further complicating matters. The weight of poverty, including housing insecurity, limited exposure to professional networks, language barriers, and the need to balance school with work, creates obstacles that can cut short dreams before they even begin.

Champions For Learning (CFL) served an average of 181 students through Take Stock in Children (TSIC) and an average of 112 students in College and Career Prep (CCP) in addition to TSIC participants during the three previous fiscal years. Clearly, significant unmet need exists.

Serving More Students

CFL currently operates two major student programs (TSIC and CCP), while also providing limited college access support to students not enrolled in these programs. We propose collaborating with CCPS and other partners to significantly increase the impact of our student programs.

The proposed Comprehensive CCP would enable CFL to serve a larger number of student and provide greater program design flexibility than is possible under the TSIC model. Like TSIC, the Comprehensive CCP would begin in 8th grade, serve students from low-income families, and require participants to maintain academic and behavioral standards. However, the frequency of workshops and mentoring approach with the Comprehensive CCP would differ significantly from TSIC to allow Champions For Learning to deliver programming that better meets student needs and to serve significantly more students.

By admitting 20 TSIC participants annually, rather than forty, we could also admit 80 participants in the Comprehensive CCP. This would eventually result in serving a total of 500 participants in the two programs (100 in TSIC and 400 in

Comprehensive CCP. We could also serve approximately 100 students in the current version of CCP. We would rebrand the current version of CCP as Upperclass CCP to distinguish it from Comprehensive CCP, the latter of which admits grade 8 students and includes more program components.

We also propose expanding the college access support for students not enrolled in our programs, returning to and surpassing the number of students previously served through this work.

Moving Forward: TSIC, Comprehensive CCP, and Upperclass CCP

TSIC offers important benefits, including mentoring, coaching by CFL team members, and a structured accountability system. However, it operates under a statewide framework that significantly limits local flexibility in program design. Comprehensive CCP, in contrast, would be locally designed, allowing Champions For Learning to shape programming to better meet student needs.

All TSIC participants currently participate alongside other participants in the current CCP program to meet needs that TSIC alone would not satisfy. The current CCP Program, which will be rebranded as Upperclass CPP equips high school students for postsecondary and career success by developing students' knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to pursue college or technical pathways. With many more workshops and lab sessions than offered through TSIC, students receive guidance on college admissions, financial aid, and scholarship opportunities while also exploring career options with local businesses. Students tour college campuses and attend college fairs and recruitment presentations to gain first-hand knowledge of a broad range of colleges and universities.

Leadership, goal setting, and personal development are woven throughout Upperclass CPP, with an emphasis on communication, professionalism, and informed decision-making. The program requires both student commitment as well as parental attendance and participation, ensuring that every participant has a clear plan and a strong support network to guide their future success.

Comprehensive CCP would combine the best of TSIC and the current CCP: 8th grade program entry; numerous college and career readiness workshops, including support in applying for financial aid and additional college scholarships; long-term mentoring relationships; coaching from CFL team members; active parent participation; and college scholarships.

Comprehensive CCP would differ from TSIC in several important ways.

- It would provide approximately eight to ten workshops per grade level during high school, compared to two or three in TSIC.

- Rather than 7 sessions with College/Career Success Coaches, participants would benefit from 11 sessions with College/Career Success Coaches from 8th grade through graduation.
- It would use a hybrid mentoring and coaching model, blending individual and small group sessions, rather than relying solely on individual mentoring and coaching.
- Approximately 6 to 8 mentor sessions would be required annually, rather than 16. This makes it more feasible for students to participate in a dramatically expanded menu of workshops and labs.
- The increase in the number of program participants will also make it more feasible to offer many mentor and coaching sessions on high school campuses in addition to in the Champions For Learning lab.

Like TSIC, Comprehensive CCP eligibility requirements relate to family income and involve academic and behavioral accountability. Preference would be given during the selection process to students who meet the TSIC income requirement, which is based on eligibility for free- and reduced-price school meals. For example, the FY26 maximum annual household income for a family of four is \$59,478. Space permitting, Comprehensive CCP would also admit students who meet the income requirements for the current CCP, which are based on requirements for the Florida In-Demand Scholarship Program. These criteria specify that the FY26 maximum annual household income for a family of four is \$89,478.

Our current TSIC participants are guaranteed a two-year Florida Prepaid scholarship, with opportunities for two years of additional College Completer scholarships. We would make this guarantee to Comprehensive CCP participants, while guaranteeing TSIC participants a four-year Florida Prepaid scholarship to motivate them to commit to meeting the more rigid TSIC program requirements.

Comprehensive CCP would complement, not replace, the rebranded Upperclass CCP as well as a smaller TSIC program. The Upperclass CPP would continue to serve students who join later in high school, while the new comprehensive version would begin in the 8th grade and provide more extended, structured support.

College Access Support

We propose a significant expansion of our current work in support of college access for secondary students generally. As noted above, our Upperclass CCP will serve students starting in spring of their 10th grade year. When we employed a Chief Program Officer and served as the backbone for Future Ready Collier, we served students not enrolled in our programs through individual events designed to support college access. In partnership with Collier County Public

Schools and Future Ready Collier, we led coordinated outreach to increase FAFSA completion, applications for college scholarships, and college enrollment. This included school-based financial aid events, virtual workshops, on-demand instructional videos, and “Ask a Question” sessions to guide students and families through the college application and financial aid processes. Now that we no longer employ a Chief Program Officer or serve as the backbone of Future Ready Collier, our work in this area is more limited.

We have started conversations with CCPS on this topic and plan to continue this collaboration, bringing in the wider Future Ready Collier network as well. With more than 10,000 high school students in CCPS, we could greatly increase the number of students who benefit from our work.

Collaboration

Collaboration with CCPS and other community partners is central to the success of Champions For Learning’s proposed program expansion. CFL will collaborate with CCPS to refine the focus and design of workshops for both Comprehensive CCP) Program and Upperclass CCP, ensuring alignment with district priorities and existing college and career readiness initiatives. CFL and CCPS will also collaborate to identify the most effective components of broader college access support for high school students across the district and develop coordinated strategies for recruiting eligible students into each program. These joint efforts, supported by partners in the Future Ready Collier network, will strengthen continuity across programs, reduce access barriers, and ensure that Collier County students receive cohesive, high-quality preparation for postsecondary success.

Financial Considerations

State TSIC funds pay for a portion of our local TSIC program but the TSIC funding model provides fewer dollars per student the more students are served. For example, in FY26 our base student funding is \$550 per student, whereas if we were to serve more than 200 students we would only receive \$325 per student. The highest performing local programs (the Luminary Gold Level), such as our program, received performance funding of \$8,952 in FY26. The level of performance funding does not vary based on the number of students served. We believe that the appeal of significantly increasing the number of students served will facilitate additional fundraising to more than make up for lost state dollars.

Our current funding is sufficient to provide staffing for the proposed TSIC, Comprehensive CCP, and Upperclass CCP. We have prepaid scholarships that will meet some of the needs for the expanded programs. Additional funds will need to be raised to meet scholarship needs.

A modest increase in college access support that we provide will be possible with existing staff. A more significant increase would require staff time that is not currently available. Returning to employing a Chief Program Officer would allow that individual to devote a portion of their time to this work.

Next Steps

Staff will solicit feedback from Board members in November through the Strategic Planning Committee meeting, the full Board meeting, emails, and conversations. Assuming that most of this feedback is positive, staff will further develop the financial details, staffing implications, and other aspects of this proposal before seeking approval of these concepts at the January Board meeting.

This proposal is for FY26 and FY27. Even with the proposed expansion, unmet need will still exist. When we start our multi-year strategic planning process in 2026, the Board of Directors, CCPS, and CFL staff members can collaboratively assess the relative emphasis we wish to place on specific student and educator programs as we seek to expand our impact across student and educator programs even further.

Summary

Champions For Learning proposes to restructure and expand its student programs to reach more Collier County students with locally designed pathways to college and career success. The plan would realign the current TSIC and CCP by creating Comprehensive CCP that combines the strongest elements of both current programs: early entry in 8th grade, expanded workshops, small-group mentoring, individualized coaching, and scholarship support. This shift would allow CFL to serve approximately 500 students across TSIC and the Comprehensive CCP, while also serving approximately 100 other students in the Upperclass CCP. This would be more than a doubling of students served.