

NIET-TTU Leadership Instruction for Teachers (LIFT) Program
National Institute for Excellence in Teaching & Texas Tech University
SEED Grant Application

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Introduction to the Problem Addressed by the NIET-TTU Leadership Instruction for Teachers Program

Research has suggested that the top two variables impacting student achievement are the quality of teachers and the quality of the principal (Grissom & Loeb, 2011; Hallinger, 2011; McKibben, 2013; Papa, 2007; Papa, Lankford, & Wyckoff, 2002; Rampey, Gloria, & Donahue, 2009). Effective principals help establish a school culture of high standards, trust, professional development, and supportive structures where both teachers and students continuously learn (Youngs & King, 2002). Conversely, ineffective principals and principal turnover are related to a school culture of day-to-day survival, frequent restarting of school improvement initiatives (as principals change), lack of consensus around high standards, and teacher cynicism (Peske & Haycock, 2006).

High-poverty, low-achieving school districts, which arguably need the best principals, have difficulty attracting high-quality applicants (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2012; Miller, 2013). Across America, high-poverty rural and urban school districts struggle to recruit and retain effective principals. Principals working in high-poverty schools are under immense pressure to quickly turn around historically low student achievement. New principals often lack the needed *skills* to perform this challenging feat and long-standing principals may not have

received sufficient training (e.g., skills for coaching teachers to improve instruction, using data to target areas for improvement) to meet the demands.

In schools plagued by poor teacher quality and turnover, the principal has multiple challenges, including fostering the development of those teachers who will improve, removing the teachers who do not, and attempting to recruit effective teachers to fill vacancies. In high-poverty rural and urban schools, this task is even more daunting and often demoralizing.

Critiques of Traditional Principal Preparation Programs

Historically, initial preparation programs for principals in the U.S. have been a collection of disconnected courses covering general management principles, school laws, administrative requirements, and procedures, with little emphasis on student learning, effective teaching, professional development, curriculum, or organizational change (DeVita, Colvin, Darling-Hammond, & Haycock, 2007). Some critics contend that traditional coursework in principal preparation and development programs often fails to link theory with practice, is overly didactic, is out of touch with the real-world complexities and demands of school leadership, and is not aligned with established theories of leadership (DeVita, Colvin, Darling-Hammond, & Haycock, 2007; Gates et al., 2014; McKibben, 2013). Often missing from the curriculum are topics related to effective teaching and learning, the design of instruction and professional development, organizational design of schools that promote teacher and student learning, or the requirements of building communities across diverse school stakeholders (Gates, et. al, 2014).

Relatively few principalship programs have strong clinical training components - field-based internship experiences that allow prospective leaders to learn the many facets of their complex jobs in close collaboration with highly skilled veteran leaders. Traditional efforts to provide field-based internship experiences do not consistently provide candidates with the sustained, hands-on conditions in which they grapple with the real demands of school leadership under the supervision of a well-qualified mentor and coach. Instead, many programs require little more than a set of ad hoc, non-essential projects conducted while a candidate is still working as a teacher. The traditional student in many principal preparation programs is a full time educator who takes courses part time. This educational approach limits the clinical experience, data analysis skills and job-embedded competencies needed to lead schools in an era of high-stakes accountability (Hess & Kelly, 2007; Gates et al., 2014).

The weakness of many programs' field-based component is the result of the insularity of university faculty in educational leadership programs, along with the failure of these programs to find ways to use their local schools and the expertise within them as learning resources for prospective principals. This grant provides an opportunity for educational leadership faculty at Texas Tech University (TTU) to partner with the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET), a group with exemplary experience in building capacity and leadership in schools. Through this partnership, TTU will work with schools to refine existing program paradigms by examining national research on the most effective current principal preparation practices across the country and address the job-embedded clinical experience. As university-based and non-profit based educational leaders, comprised of both practitioners and scholars, we must continue

to refine the inquiry, literature, practices, competencies and skills of principals who will confront challenges in this era of accountability.

Hess and Kelly (2007) in Teachers College Record of Columbia University conducted a comprehensive assessment of what aspiring principals are taught in a national sample of 31 preparation programs and found that principals currently receive limited training in the use of data, research, technology, the hiring or termination of personnel, or evaluating personnel in a systematic way. The *LIFT Program* proposed addresses these areas of principal preparation.

Proposed Solution: NIET-TTU Leadership Instruction for Teachers Program

For this Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) proposal, the NIET-TTU Leadership Instruction for Teachers Program (hereafter referred to as the LIFT Program) is a collaboration between a national non-profit organization and a large, state-funded university. The *LIFT Program* will prepare 40 exemplary leaders in 11 school districts impacting 6,634 teachers and 102,856 students (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: LIFT Program Partner District Profiles (Year 1–3)						
State	District	# of schools	# of students	# of teachers	# of administrators	% of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch
Louisiana	Ascension Parish	27	21,223	1,353	67	48%
Louisiana	DeSoto Parish	9	5,047	376	26	65%
Indiana	Beech Grove	5	2,878	156	7	66%
Indiana	Goshen Community Schools	10	6,497	384	20	69%

Texas	Grand Prairie ISD	39	26,803	1,660	121	73%
Texas	Lubbock ISD	54	28,929	1,913	112	67%
Texas	Monte Alto ISD	3	1,046	63	4	94%
Texas	Roosevelt ISD	3	1,055	90	5	73%
Texas	Slaton ISD	4	1,272	114	6	77%
Texas	Somerset ISD	7	3,888	234	18	79%
Texas	Terrell ISD	8	4,218	291	19	78%
TOTALS	11	169	102,856	6,634	405	66%

Sources:

- Louisiana: <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/data/reportcards/2014/> 2014 School Report Cards; <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/> 2012-2013 District Directory Information; http://xhs-dps-la.schoolloop.com/portal/school_list
- Indiana: <http://www.doe.in.gov/accountability/find-school-and-corporation-data-reports> 2013-2014 School and Corporation Data Reports; <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/> 2012-2013 District Directory Information
- Texas: <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/snapshot/2013/district.srch.html> 2013 District Snapshot

In Year One of the SEED project, the *LIFT Program* will be further refined and expanded in collaboration with several high-need TAP school districts near Texas Tech University in northwest Texas. The basis for this program comes from the Denver Public Schools Ritchie Fellows Program, a longstanding and proven program recognized by the Wallace Foundation and the Rainwater Leadership Alliance. The *LIFT Program* was piloted with three Principal Fellows in Lubbock Independent School District (ISD), a district serving almost 30,000 high-needs and diverse students, during the 2014-2015 school year.

In Year Two of the SEED proposal, the *LIFT Program* will be expanded to a number of high-need TAP districts across Texas through distance technology, and strategic and intensive use of principal coaches. Finally, in Year Three, NIET and TTU will expand the *LIFT Program* into several high-need TAP school districts in Louisiana and Indiana, thus testing the viability of the model as a means of producing exemplary school leaders for high-need schools nationally.

Through job-embedded training and technology-enabled, competency-based shaping, the *LIFT Program* will produce highly effective leaders prepared to foster high-fidelity implementation of the principles pioneered in the TAP System in high-need schools. These include performance based evaluation, support and compensation systems, distributed leadership structures and leadership teams, and the capacity to design and deliver high quality professional development using school-based teacher leaders and administrators. This technology-enabled, competency-based approach will result in leaders who can implement more effective structures to support instructional growth and schools that produce significantly higher student achievement than matched control schools. There is a growing need for schools to cultivate a principalship grounded in instructional coaching and support for teachers. Principals should be the instructional leaders of their schools and therefore it stands to reason that teachers trained in effective human capital management systems can grow into these leadership roles.

The online portal that will support the *LIFT Program* includes a video collaboration feature with an accompanying iPad application that will allow principal fellows to capture instructional coaching episodes and to receive feedback on their instructional coaching from their mentors through the portal. The portal will also house resources such as training modules, training materials, data management systems, feedback structures, video uploading and archiving, virtual training and observation for the principal fellows to strengthen their instructional proficiency. Another aspect of this technology-enabled approach will include capturing film of principal fellows in action on their campuses and then housing these scenarios on the portal to support their professional development. The portal will include a video library

of these principal-specific video episodes. These web-based resources will support the principal fellows to become effective instructional leaders. Sample screenshots from our existing portals can be seen in Appendix A.

The Lead Institution – The National Institute for Excellence in Teaching

The National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET), a leader in performance based human capital management systems and educator development. NIET is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a proven system for teacher and student advancement—the TAP System. NIET is equipped with a diverse staff from education and business combined with a broad coalition of school practitioners. Over the last fifteen years, NIET has served over 600 TAP Schools (95 percent are high need schools) and 6,000 Best Practices Center Schools in nineteen states across America. Over 1,000,000 students in these schools are being impacted by the TAP Teaching Standards and evaluation process, and an additional 1.8 million students with NIET's training and resources. Through national conferences, regional training and site-based coaching, NIET has built the capacity level of over 1,800 school-based leaders, who lead these schools. Currently NIET has active contracts with four states supporting teacher evaluation efforts through the Best Practices Center. This system is based on four interrelated components: multiple career paths for teachers; ongoing applied professional development; instructionally focused accountability; and performance-based compensation (see Appendix B). When implemented with fidelity, the TAP System has been shown to allow students in high-need schools to outperform their peers in comparable schools. Specifically, student achievement increases significantly, as does the retention of effective staff (Barnett & Hudgens, 2014;

Barnett, Wills, & Kirby, 2014; Daley & Kim 2010; Hudson, 2010; Mann, Leutscher, & Reardon, 2013; Schacter et al., 2002; Schacter et al., 2004; Schacter & Thum, 2005; Solmon et al. 2007) (see Appendix C for list of references).

The Partner Institution – Texas Tech University

To ensure the consistent fidelity of school implementation and to infuse the TAP System core elements into initial principal preparation, NIET is partnering with the College of Education at TTU. Now, with the backing of the SEED grant program, NIET and TTU will extend an increasingly unique national non-profit + university partnership model to implement the *LIFT Program* that promises to become an easily transportable, highly effective prototype for use across the entire country. The dean at TTU, Dr. Scott Ridley, while a faculty member and administrator at Arizona State University (ASU), began the first job-embedded, competency-based teacher preparation program using the TAP instructional rubric (i.e., iTeachAZ). At TTU, Dean Ridley has continued his collaboration with NIET in the complete reform of teacher preparation. The TTU program, Tech Teach, extends beyond the reforms begun at ASU with even greater use of video capture and sharing, explicit competency-based shaping of teaching skills around the TAP rubric, and formative use of K-12 student attitudinal and achievement data. Through a hybrid distance program, the Tech Teach program has now grown into a number of large K-12 districts serving high-need students in Texas' population centers (i.e., Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio, and Houston).

By blending the proven structures of TAP (e.g., the TAP instructional rubric, Field Testing, Cluster Groups, Distributed Leadership, Teacher Observation Cycle) with the innovative, technology-enabled and competency-based educator training of TTU, this national non-profit + university partnership will:

- Further refine a previously piloted, proven school based on the job model of principal training with explicit competency-based feedback and shaping using both face-to-face presence and video capture & sharing technology to coach TAP-TTU principal fellows during the intensive job-embedded program. Train these principal fellows to lead schools serving high-need students. (Absolute Priority 1; Absolute Priority 2; Absolute Priority 4 Competitive Priority 1; Competitive Priority 2; Competitive Priority 4).
- Work with partner districts to further articulate and faithfully implement the strategy of selectivity of admissions into the *LIFT Program* for the purpose of increasing the probability of truly exceptional leaders for schools serving high-need students (Absolute Priority 1; Absolute Priority 2; Competitive Priority 1; Competitive Priority 4).
- In Year One (2015-2016) and in collaboration with TTU, produce up to six PFP graduates for West Texas partner districts. (Absolute Priority 1; Absolute Priority 2; Absolute Priority 4; Competitive Priority 1; Competitive Priority 2; Competitive Priority 4)
- In Year Two (2016-2017) and in collaboration with TTU, implement and validate the effectiveness of a hybrid, distance delivered version of the *LIFT Program* in TAP districts across the state of Texas. Produce up to 14 PFP graduates for Texas partner

districts. (Absolute Priority 1; Absolute Priority 2; Absolute Priority 4; Competitive Priority 1; Competitive Priority 2; Competitive Priority 4)

- In Year Three (2017-2018) and in collaboration with TTU, validate the effectiveness of the hybrid, distance delivered *LIFT Program* in TAP districts across the United States. Produce up to twenty PFP graduates for U.S. partner districts. (Absolute Priority 1; Absolute Priority 2; Absolute Priority 4; Competitive Priority 1; Competitive Priority 2; Competitive Priority 4)

This NIET + TTU partnership will increase the measurable effectiveness of TAP school personnel and student achievement relative to comparison schools. The *LIFT Program* will also prove to be a model easily expanded through technology to TAP schools or schools implementing similar human capital reform systems across the nation.

Significance

National Significance

Most educational reform initiatives today reflect only a piece of the comprehensive and complex whole of American P-12 schooling. For example, alternative educator preparation programs address an important human capital variable but fail to consider the impact of the school environment in which they work.

America's schools are in dire need of leadership development that enables leaders to create, implement, and sustain school-based structures of distributed leadership, collaborative goal setting, and instructional coaching. Consistently, educational leadership research (Grissom & Loeb, 2011; Hallinger, 2011; McKibben, 2013; Papa, 2007; Papa, Lankford, & Wyckoff,

2002; Rampey, Gloria, & Donahue, 2009) documents that principals are second only to teachers as the most important school-based factor influencing student achievement. Unfortunately, similar to the teacher challenge, “less-experienced, less-qualified principals are more likely to manage low-achieving and high-poverty schools” (McKibben, 2013, p. 70). Simply put, America’s educational system needs preparation to practice reform that yields improvement on leadership competency, teacher development, and student achievement (Archer, 2004; Barkley, Bottoms, Feagin, & Clark, 2001; Burkhauser, Gates, Hamilton, & Ikemoto, 2012; Burkhauser, Gates, Hamilton, Li, Pierson, 2013; ; McKenzie, 2012; Olson, 2007).

In contrast to the aforementioned piecemeal reforms, the TAP System is different in that it considers the comprehensive and interrelated landscape of P-12 schooling. As a national leader in comprehensive school reform, the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) recognizes the importance of innovation in effective leadership development built upon preparation and practical application. The goals of the *LIFT Program* are significant on a national level. Through this partnership with Texas Tech University (TTU), NIET hopes to establish a nonprofit and university model that will be replicable at other colleges of education nationally to improve effective principal preparation. The program piloted here will be relevant and replicable in multiple university settings.

TAP is a system of interdependent school leadership processes (multiple career paths; ongoing applied professional development; instructionally focused accountability; performance-based compensation) that, when implemented with fidelity, lead to significant improvements in teaching and student learning results. Over the previous fifteen years, the TAP System has

expanded its reach to more than 600 schools across nineteen states, impacting over 20,000 teachers and 200,000 students. Beyond the TAP System, which includes all four program components, NIET also provides districts and schools access to the individual components of the program through the Best Practices Center, which reaches over 6,000 schools and 2,500,000 students. NIET's TAP System is in place on a national level and has been implemented in a wide variety of high-need districts and communities, including rural and urban areas, as well as with different student groups (e.g. economically disadvantaged, racial and ethnic groups, migrant populations, individuals with disabilities, and English learners). Furthermore, the TAP System has consistently shown to be effective in improving student achievement across these varied groups and communities (Barnett & Hudgens, 2014; Barnett, Wills, & Kirby, 2014; Daley & Kim 2010; Hudson, 2010; Mann, Leutscher, & Reardon, 2013; Schacter et al., 2002; Schacter et al., 2004; Schacter & Thum, 2005; Solmon et al. 2007).

The NIET + TTU partnership and the *LIFT Program* offers a 21st century technology-enabled, competency-based approach to training school leaders to implement performance-based human capital management systems, distributed leadership teams, and instructional coaching in high need schools. The partnership also facilitates certification and advanced certification for principals built on a competency-based model of performance mastery. While the *LIFT Program* will occur in high-need districts in the state of Texas, Louisiana, and Indiana, the technology within the model promises easy and affordable scaling across the nation. A further benefit is that the model is suited to implementation in settings across the urban/rural spectrum. Finally, the

LIFT Program can greatly inform all principal preparation programs across the nation and their corresponding institutions of higher education.

Contribution to Theory, Knowledge, and Practices

NIET is developing a new model for collaborating with colleges of education in this national pilot effort with TTU. Through this non-profit and university partnership, NIET will broaden the number of principals trained to successfully implement performance-based management systems. Currently the majority of the projects that NIET is engaged in with the implementation of the TAP System involve in-service principals in the field. Given the breakdown of principal training and preparation highlighted earlier in this proposal, a critical need for a new avenue of reform in education at the pre-service level exists.

This innovative collaboration with TTU will assist NIET in expanding from its established impact with practicing teachers and principals to enculturating pre-service principals into this comprehensive school reform model of educator evaluation, multiple career paths, ongoing applied professional development and performance-based compensation. Moreover, this project will provide a model for other colleges of education seeking to infuse the blended research-based best practices which support NIET's evaluation into their principal preparation programs. The evidence of the effectiveness of the TAP System is well documented (Barnett & Hudgens, 2014; Barnett, Wills, & Kirby, 2014; Hudson, 2010; Mann, Leutscher, & Reardon, 2013; Schacter et al., 2002; Schacter et al., 2004; Schacter & Thum, 2005; Solmon et al. 2007). The TAP System's evaluation ratings of educator skills in the classroom and leaders in the school are positively correlated to value-added scores showing the educator's impact on student

achievement gains (Daley & Kim, 2010). The success and experience of NIET's TAP System can be expanded to colleges of education to provide the same research-based best practices in educator evaluation to principal preparation programs.

NIET has chosen to partner with TTU because the university is a leader in innovation regarding the implementation of the TAP rubric with their education preparation program. Numerous state agencies that govern colleges of education, as well as the colleges of education themselves, have sought out NIET because they were directly seeking assistance and the opportunity to collaborate in an educator preparation sphere. These colleges and organizations serve communities and school districts that utilize the TAP instructional rubric, and they are seeking innovative partnerships and support for how to implement a rigorous principal preparation program that incorporates the TAP System. As an example, NIET and TTU are currently working with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in Massachusetts to assist colleges of education in that state with competency-based reform. Similar collaborations have recently been launched between TTU and the Louisiana Department of Education. TTU hosts site visits from colleges of education around the country and some institutions such as the University of Memphis have launched TTU's TAP-driven model of educator preparation.

The rapidly growing number of inquiries reflect a sense of urgency to inject skill-based competencies into educator preparation. The TAP System is a longstanding and proven model of skill-based professional development that greatly compliments educator preparation programs.

The primary objective of this project for the NIET + TTU partnership is to demonstrate the results that a college of education can achieve by building and preparing administrator candidates to be principals through a rigorous, job-embedded program. Through this project, NIET's TAP System will be a driving force for instructional and teacher development standards which will account for the majority of the program content while the remaining program focus will be on balance of school leadership standards (e.g., school culture, strategic planning).

TTU's innovative use of technology to shape educators' skill-based competencies will be a driving force in extending the *LIFT Program* to high-need school districts across America. TTU's piloting of the *LIFT Program* in Lubbock ISD during the 2014-15 school year and the creation of three phenomenal new school leaders forecasts a high probability of success for this SEED endeavor.

From this partnership, NIET will conduct a case study of the partnership and develop an NIET and TTU toolkit for other colleges of education to utilize when embarking on similar partnerships. This partnership toolkit will include items such as organizational and design structures, funding models, recruitment and selection models, sample evaluation and observation tools, and samples of web-based learning technology. NIET will also broadly disseminate the successes of this project to colleges of education nationally. This broad dissemination strategy has the opportunity to contribute to the theory and knowledge of leadership preparation as well as the practice of training leaders through job-embedded, competency-based programs.

Magnitude of the Results

Throughout NIET's tenure in education reform, thousands of teachers have demonstrated changes in practices that have improved the achievement level of over two million students. The NIET TAP System expands the traditional view of providing teachers with professional development, to providing them with ongoing, tailored and *skill-based* development. As noted previously, while the TAP System has made dramatic impacts in the K-12 environment through its comprehensive educator effectiveness model, the *LIFT Program* provides a unique opportunity to expand the scope of the TAP System to preservice principal preparation. In this national non-profit + university collaboration, we will develop TAP skill-based competencies in the candidates within the principal preparation program at TTU.

Given the tremendous national critique of university-based principal certification programs, the importance of the *LIFT Program* is substantial. The U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) has previously described conventional administrator preparation programs as "well intentioned, but insufficient," and "lacking vision, purpose, and coherence" (Orr, 2006, p. 493). According to Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, and Cohen (2007) and Levine (2005), principal preparation programs have not advanced far enough to meet the training demands of the new principal paradigm which is to redesign data-driven schools that prepare students to compete in the 21st century global context.

In contrast, the *LIFT Program* is grounded in proven TAP System practices and the expectation of principal fellows' demonstration of specific skill-based leadership competencies. Like the TAP System, the *LIFT Program* is about measured school leadership and student achievement. The outcomes related to the state of Texas (primary piloting state), Indiana, and

Louisiana are significant, in that the anticipated improvements in principal practices and associated improvements in student achievement will help high-need students. These outcomes include an increased percentage of measurably effective new principals and an increased percentage of measurably effective existing principals. Furthermore, the practices and strategies of the TAP System, which form the basis for the program of study, meet the evidence of effectiveness standards set forth within Absolute Priority 1 and Competitive Priority 1 of this grant application (Barnett & Hudgens, 2014; Barnett, Wills, & Kirby, 2014; Hudson, 2010; Mann, Leutscher, & Reardon, 2013; Schacter et al., 2002; Schacter et al., 2004; Schacter & Thum, 2005; Solmon et al. 2007). Additionally, evidence supporting the strategies of selectivity (Decker, Mayer, & Glazerman, 2004; Henry, Bastain, & Smith, 2012) and job-embedded, competency-based learning (Bowers & White, 2014; Braun, Gable, & Kite, 2008; Gates, et. al, 2014; Heck & Hallinger, 2009) also meet the threshold for Absolute Priority 1 and Competitive Priority 1. (Please see Appendix D for annotated bibliography of these studies).

Without question the continued research into understanding the effectiveness of the TAP System from the *LIFT Program* will provide a substantial impact on the local communities within the state of Texas; to the nineteen states and 348 schools using the TAP System; and to the 2,442 schools making use of the Best Practices Center materials. However, the proposed *LIFT Program* is likely unique among the SEED applications in that it can fundamentally help address the substantial and ongoing research question related to principal preparation improvements and student achievement (Corcoran, Schwartz, & Weinstein, 2012; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Fuller, Young, & Baker, 2011; Gates, Ringel, Santibanez, Guarino,

Ghosh-Dastidar, & Brown, 2006; Pounder, 2011). The results obtained from this project related to improvements in principal competencies and translated into student achievement outcomes can greatly inform the future direction of district and university partnerships; tailored, skill-based professional development to administrators; and the use of technology for professional development for administrators.

Quality of the Project Design and Services

Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes

The *LIFT Program* is a job-embedded, competency-based school leadership program built around the exemplary instructional leadership and data-driven decision-making processes within the TAP school reform model. Hallmark elements of this reform preparation program include: a) ultra-selectivity in the admission of principal fellow candidates, and b) the intensive, year-long, job-embedded learning experience that Principal Fellows enjoy during the program while serving as interim assistant principals and being developed by a strong mentor principal and experienced coaches from TTU and NIET.

Broadly, the *LIFT Program* will build on the piloted and already successful principal preparation program at TTU. The program, first implemented in Lubbock ISD during the 2014-15 School Year, is based on the Ritchie Program for School Leaders in Denver Public Schools. The Ritchie Program is a results-oriented reform model of principal preparation recognized by the Wallace Foundation and the Rainwater Leadership Alliance. The goals, objectives and measures for the project are described in detail in Appendix E.

Comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning

The *LIFT Program* is designed to prepare new school leaders with demonstrated, exemplary *skills* for leading school improvement and student achievement. The program addresses weaknesses in traditional principal preparation by:

- making the year-long, job-embedded, authentic clinical experience with strong scaffolding by a mentor principal and TTU coach the pinnacle of the program;
- creating close and authentic partnerships with TAP school districts on the preparation of their future school leaders;
- using technology-enabled video capture, sharing and feedback to provide shaping of specific leadership competencies; and,
- building on the exemplary data-driven instructional leadership and teacher coaching/development processes within the TAP System.

This combination of the program design with the exemplary instructional leadership processes within the TAP System make the *LIFT Program* a comprehensive and dynamic system for principal preparation. Further, the program is ultra-selective in its admissions process as it seeks out elite master and mentor teachers identified by partner districts because of their exemplary history in increasing student achievement as well as their professional characteristics. The program is based on a proven reform model recognized for results by the Wallace Foundation and the Rainwater Leadership Alliance. Finally, the *LIFT Program* has been piloted by TTU in partnership with Lubbock ISD with the exceptional new school leaders.

Over the years, the TAP System has proven to be a comprehensive and effective model for human capital development and schooling. When implemented with fidelity, teacher effectiveness and student achievement grow significantly over time (Barnett & Hudgens, 2014; Barnett, Wills, & Kirby, 2014; Daley & Kim 2010; Hudson, 2010; Mann, Leutscher, & Reardon, 2013; Schacter et al., 2002; Schacter et al., 2004; Schacter & Thum, 2005; Solmon et al. 2007). However, years of experience and research also indicate that fidelity of TAP School implementation varies. This concern as well as the desire to empirically test the effect of the presence or absence of a specifically trained “TAP school leader” on school achievement has contributed to this NIET + TTU partnership and the *Leadership Instruction for Teachers (LIFT) Program*.

Professional Development Services are Sufficient Quality, Intensity, and Duration to Lead to Improvements

As a broad overview response to this section, the *Leadership Instruction for Teachers (LIFT) Program* is competency-based. This means that “seat-time” completion is NOT sufficient for ensuring the principal fellow’s successful graduation from the *LIFT Program*. Instead, principal fellows must demonstrate proficiency on a number of targeted ***reasoning, observed skill, and product-outcome*** competencies. As an example, principal fellows must demonstrate effectiveness in leading teacher improvement through the “POP” cycle. The POP cycle stands for: Pre-Conference, Observation, Post-Conference. Through the POP Cycle, the principal fellow must demonstrate her/his ability to foster teachers’ engagement, reflection, and effort towards

improved instruction. The principal fellow must demonstrate mastery at leading teachers in the use of student work samples to help them objectively assess work quality and implement strategies for guiding student improvement. In the section below, we explain how each goal of the *LIFT Program* is designed to ensure the development services are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to outcomes stated in this proposal.

Goal 1: Further refine a previously piloted, proven reform model of principal preparation with explicit competency-based feedback and shaping using both face-to-face presence and video capture & sharing technology to coach TAP-TTU Principal Fellows during the intensive job-embedded program. Train these Principal Fellows to lead schools serving high need students.

The faculty in education leadership at TTU are strongly committed to improving educator effectiveness. This statement is supported by their previous adoption and piloting of the Ritchie Fellows program during the 2014-2015 School Year. TTU faculty in educational leadership closely collaborated with Lubbock ISD on this effort and shared significant levels of decision-making and implementation control with Lubbock ISD leadership partners.

The results of this effort produced three exceptional graduates. These graduates will begin in school leadership roles in Lubbock ISD in the 2015-16 School Year. While a very strong start, the TTU-Lubbock ISD team knows that program implementation can be further refined and improved during the next cohort of six in the *LIFT Program*. Perhaps most effectively demonstrating the power of this program, the Lubbock ISD has committed to another cohort of this reformed program with school and university funds/resources if not funded through the SEED competition. The bigger opportunity, however, is to further scale the proven Ritchie Program-inspired *LIFT Program* throughout Texas and nationally.

SEED funding will allow for additional highly-qualified principal coaches that are an essential element of the *LIFT Program* because they help support and train the principal fellow as she/he serves as an interim assistant principal during the year-long, authentic, job-embedded clinical experience. Because of the importance of the coaching role, the program will not be recommended for implementation unless a low ratio of TTU coach to principal fellows can be maintained in each partnering location.

Under the guided direction of the leadership facilitator, the TTU coaches provide weekly support to each principal fellow and conduct monthly site visits that support the both the principal fellow and the mentor principal. The coaches also help the principal fellows to connect to partner district central office resources and specialists that will help the target school achieve its school improvement goals.

In the upcoming refinement of the *LIFT Program*, TTU and partner districts will add a “dual development” dimension by helping mentor principals to understand and achieve on Texas’ new principal evaluation system, the TPES. Principals must create and implement a school improvement plan around five professional standards that are closely aligned with Marzano’s Principal Standards. With the support of the principal fellow serving as interim assistant principal and with the guidance and support of the TTU coach, the *LIFT Program* will support mentor principals’ creation and implementation of the TPES School Improvement Plan. This support will be continuous through the design of *LIFT Program* assignments and with the monthly site visits by the TTU coach. This work will create a dual benefit by helping to improve

the school with data-driven interventions and by supporting both existing and future school leaders in the mastery of the new evaluation process.

The *LIFT Program* lasts for fifteen months and the principal fellow's clinical internship as an interim assistant principal lasts for one complete school year. This period of time has proven to be appropriate to meet project goals as outlined in the evaluation plan and management plan in Appendix E. Specifically, the proposal provides appropriate time to recruit and select candidates, to establish the program from revised courses including nationally leading practices and strategies, and to graduate effective principals for turnaround schools.

The *LIFT Program* includes strategies/practices supported by strong evidence of effectiveness including the recruitment/selection process, the redesigned, application-oriented principal preparation courses (Decker, Mayer, & Glazerman, 2004; Henry, Bastain, & Smith, 2012), and tracking of graduates' value-added school achievement in their first year of school leadership (Chetty, et. al., 2011). In addition, the program is supported by the work of leading researchers in the field of educator preparation, including the Professional Development School Model (Levine, 2005).

The *LIFT Program* dramatically increases the amount of time principal candidates spend in a clinical internship (i.e., three times more than traditional programs). As a rationale for the intensity of the clinical experiences in the *LIFT Program*, a 2007 study investigating the impact of teacher preparation on special education teachers indicated that higher amounts of preparation corresponded to greater feelings of preparation in the areas of general and special education. Specifically, graduates with extensive preparation felt better prepared to teach their assigned

subject matter, select curricular materials, plan lessons effectively, use a variety of instructional methods, assess students, handle classroom management, and use computers in instruction (Boe, Shin, & Cook, 2007).

The *LIFT Program* also includes intensive summer preparation and coursework. Table 2 elaborates on program specifics.

Table 2	
<i>Program Components of LIFT Program Cycle</i>	
<u>Month</u>	<u>LIFT Program Element</u>
March-April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · TTU/NIET/Partner District collaborate to identify, recruit, screen, and jointly select principal fellows
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · TTU instructors and coaches meet with the new principal fellows. · TTU coaches begin weekly meetings to help principal fellows begin to transition from mentor/master teacher to the interim assistant principal role · Orient the principal fellows to summer coursework and readings · TTU meets with mentor principals · TTU meets with partner district data specialist to ensure principal fellow and mentor principal access to school data on student achievement and teacher effectiveness
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Two-week <i>LIFT Program Kick-Off</i> intensive in Lubbock · Program orientation and begin creation of the TPES School Improvement Plan with mentor principal and principal fellow · TTU coach assists principal fellow and mentor principal with interpretation of data as needed to plan targeted school improvement interventions
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · TTU coach and mentor principal schedule meetings with partner district central office specialists (e.g., Special Education, Bilingual, Title I) to help the mentor principal and principal fellows access resources/support for the implementation of the school improvement plan
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · TAP Leadership training for principal fellows (POP Cycle, Field Testing, Cluster Groups, TAP Leadership Team Meetings) · Orientation to the fall courses and instructors · Principal fellow is assigned two-three teachers to coach through the instructional processes (POP Cycle) over the school year · TTU coach begins monthly site visits to the target school

September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · TTU coaches continue with weekly communication and support – counsel principal fellows on projects and dynamics in the target school – teachers, campus administration, students, parents, key stakeholders
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · TTU coaches continue with weekly communication and monthly site visits · Based on data analysis, principal fellow proposes target teacher PD (master teacher field testing as the basis for Cluster Groups) · On monthly visits, the TTU coach continues to meet with both mentor principal and principal fellow on the progress of the TPES School Improvement Plan
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · TTU coaches helps principal fellow prepare for a major presentation to TTU/ NIET/Partner District Leaders in December on TPES School Improvement Plan implementation progress data · TTU coach continues with weekly communication and monthly site visits
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Principal fellows give major end-of-semester presentation on TPES School Improvement Plan progress · TTU coach continues with weekly communication and monthly site visits
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Principal fellows oriented to Spring courses and instructors · TTU coach continues with weekly communication and monthly site visits · TTU coach revisits Standards & Objectives, interpretation of verb statements within learning objectives, unpacking level of student performance expectations within academic standards
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · TTU coach begins to help principal fellows to prepare for mock interviews with TTU/NIET/Partner district leaders – prepare resume and letters · TTU coach, principal fellow and mentor principal submit professional conference research paper, attend and present at conference
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Conduct mock interviews with TTU/NIET/Partner District Leader Team · TTU coach, principal fellow and mentor principal present program achievements at the National TAP Conference · <i>LIFT Program Cycle</i> begins again

Goal 2: Work with partner districts to further articulate and faithfully implement the strategy of ultra-selectivity of admissions into the LIFT Program for the purpose of increasing the probability of truly exceptional leaders for schools serving high needs students.

Each prospective Principal Fellow will go through a six-tiered selection process modeled after Teach For America’s and the Denver Ritchie Program’s rigorous selection processes. Under normal circumstances, a completed application to a university and the college of education

would be the only eligibility criteria to enter the principal education program. In the *LIFT Program*, the screening and selection process is much more rigorous. The process is represented in Table 3.

Table 3	
<i>Six-Tiered Selection Process for Principal Fellows</i>	
<u>Tier</u>	<u>Description</u>
Tier 1	TTU/NIET collaborate with partner district leaders to identify potential candidates from a pool of mentor/master teachers based on a track-record exemplary achievement.
Tier 2	TTU/NIET/Partner district leaders provide recruitment orientation events for the identified potential candidates with the goal of ensuring their understanding the support, commitments and expectations within the <i>LIFT Program</i> .
Tier 3	TTU/NIET/Partner district leaders screen interested, potential candidates on the Haberman Assessment (Haberman, 2008). The Haberman assesses educators’ beliefs about the potential for high-level learning among students of poverty and the educator’s tenacity and creativity for achieving that goal.
Tier 4	Successfully screened candidates provide a letter of intent, resume, and an essay that addresses the applicant’s motivation to become a principal and his/her desire to work with students in high needs populations.
Tier 5	TTU/NIET/Partner district team interview: The successfully screened and vetted candidates attend a formal interview.
Tier 6	Texas Tech University and College of Education applications

If a previously screened candidate is selected by the team interview committee, she/he will be offered a seat in the program. Selected principal fellows are supported with a full salary, benefits, and the cost of tuition, books, video capture equipment, and license during the program. The principal fellow immediately enters the role of interim assistant principal in a school different from where they served as mentor/master teacher. In return for the support, principal

fellow graduates are obligated to serve in the partner district for a period of three years. It is expected that all principal fellows will immediately serve as at least assistant principals, if not principals, in high-need schools in the school year following graduation.

Goal 3: In Year One (2015-2016) and in collaboration with TTU, produce up to six PFP graduates for West Texas partner districts.

Year One of the SEED project will predominantly focus on further refinement of the previously piloted *LIFT Program*. For that reason, TTU will only work with partner districts near the TTU-Lubbock campus. Lubbock ISD has already committed to support three more principal fellows regardless of the outcome of SEED grant funding. TTU has talked with TAP partner districts about the potential for SEED funding and Slaton and Roosevelt ISDs will join the proposal. Given the program refinements to be undertaken, the *LIFT Program* will enroll no more than six principal fellows for cohort one during Year One of the SEED project.

Key refinements on the previously piloted *LIFT Program* include a sharpening of the curriculum around the five professional standards of the Texas Principal Evaluation Standards. We are making sure that every course is applied and highly relevant, contributing to the success of each principal fellow. Also new in the program is the early June Principal Fellow Program Kick-Off Intensive at TTU-Lubbock where both principal fellows and mentor principals will receive a program orientation and be supported in their initial creation of the Texas Principal Evaluation System (T-PES) School Improvement Plan using targeted school achievement data obtained from the partner district central office.

Goal 4: In Year Two (2016-2017) and in collaboration with TTU, implement and validate the effectiveness of a hybrid, distance delivered version of the LIFT Program Partnership program in TAP districts across the state of Texas. Produce up to 14 PFP graduates for Texas partner districts.

TTU has a long and rich history of quality distance learning. The U.S. News & World Report annual ranking service places the College in the top 100 nationally for quality online programs. Within the College are faculty members of Instructional Technology in Education (EDIT). These faculty members prepare state-of-the-art technology practitioners and university professors at the masters and doctoral levels. The College of Education employs EDIT faculty members and their graduate students to work with program faculty in other disciplines (e.g., Special Education) to design online programming and to help ensure that the College's distance delivery is exemplary.

EDIT faculty are also working with faculty in education leadership to ensure that the distance delivery in the *LIFT Program* is also state-of-the-art. This system includes synchronous (live) course delivery using desktop conferencing and/or mobile devices. It also includes using iPads to video capture and share principal fellows' practice at the target school sites. TTU has a strong track-record for using such technology to capture, share, and shape specific skill-based competencies in its teacher preparation program and in other graduate programs for teachers and administrators. TTU is known for educator preparation that goes far beyond the typical higher education focus of fostering only conceptual understanding. TTU faculty in the College are deeply engaged in identifying and shaping specific skill-based competencies (e.g., the TAP instructional rubric) that positively correlate with K-12 student learning.

In the second cohort of principal fellows in Year Two of the SEED project, we project that eight of the fourteen principal fellows will come for TAP School Districts in Dallas-Fort Worth, San Antonio and the Valley of South Texas. We project that six principal fellows will come from the Lubbock-area partner districts. TTU's state-of-the-art distance delivery and video capture will fully and equally support principal fellows across Texas. TTU coaches will continue to communicate weekly with each principal fellow and will visit their school sites monthly. With the growth in the number of principal fellows, there will also be growth in the number of experienced TTU coaches. The ratio of principal fellows to TTU coaches will remain low, ensuring that TTU coaches deeply understand and support the context of principal fellows' work.

Goal 5: In Year Three (2017-2018) and in collaboration with TTU, validate the effectiveness of the hybrid, distance delivered LIFT Program in TAP districts across the United States. Produce up to 20 PFP graduates for U.S. partner districts.

In Year Three, the *LIFT Program* will be offered to TAP partner districts in Louisiana and Indiana. This collaboration will allow the NIET-TTU partnership to test the viability of the hybrid distance model as a national intervention for exemplary principal preparation. TTU has communicated with the respective state departments of education to learn about any differences in preparation rules and eligibility for principal candidacy. There are no known barriers to NIET/TTU principal preparation in these states. Being SACS and CAEP accredited, TTU qualifies as a regional provider for the Masters in Educational Leadership and principal certification. Guidelines on who may qualify to become a principal are similar to Texas. One easily addressed difference is the nature of the principal certification exam. Louisiana requires

the Praxis exam. This test is similar to the exam in Texas and will facilitate easy programmatic accommodations that help principal fellows prepare for the each state's certification test.

We project half of the twenty principal fellows in third cohort will come from partner districts in Louisiana and Indiana. Again, TTU's state-of-the-art distance delivery and video capture will fully and equally support principal fellows across the states. NIET's exemplary coach will provide guidance and oversight and TTU coaches will continue to communicate weekly with each principal fellow and will visit their school sites monthly. Again, with the growth in the number of principal fellows, there will also be growth in the number of experienced TTU coaches. The ratio of principal fellows to TTU coaches will remain low ensuring that TTU coaches deeply understand and support the context of principal fellows' work regardless of state, district or school.

What will TAP schools receive in the LIFT Program?

TAP Schools with a principal fellow will get an interim assistant principal that will assist the school in faithfully implementing the TAP System. She/he will not be the disciplinarian but will be a skillful leader in instructional and data-driven interventions. The principal fellow will be charged with working with teachers to improve instruction and student learning outcomes.

The principals in the TAP school will also receive support from TTU coaches and a leadership facilitator from NIET. This support will be designed to assist her/him in implementing the TAP System and successfully implementing, with the principal fellow's assistance, a school improvement plan created during the launch of the *LIFT Program*.

Project will Prepare Personnel for Fields in which Shortages are Demonstrated

There is currently a severe shortage of quality principals, particularly for high-need, “turnaround” schools (DeVita, Colvin, Darling-Hammond, & Haycock, 2007; Gates et al., 2014). As discussed previously through the literature surrounding principals, they have a large-impact on the quality of the teachers and students. Similarly, the literature is replete with calls for improvements in the preparation of skilled leaders (Archer, 2004; Barkley et al., 2001; Burkhauser et al., 2012; Burkhauser et al, 2013; Gates et al., 2014; McKenzie, 2012; Olson, 2007).

Project Will Focus on Serving the Needs of Disadvantaged Individuals

The *LIFT Program* will serve school districts and schools that serve historically underserved students of color living in poverty. Over 95 percent of TAP schools serve high-need students and these schools will be the target for the *LIFT Program*.

Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel

Qualifications of Project Personnel

The *LIFT Program* includes two experienced project directors and key personnel in order to carry out the management and evaluation plans (see complete project personnel professional vitas and resumes in Appendix F).

Table 4	
<i>Personnel and Qualifications</i>	
<u>Key Personnel</u>	<u>Qualifications, Duties</u>
National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET)	

<p><i>Joshua Barnett, Ph.D., will serve as the Principal Investigator for the LIFT Program (.5 days per week).</i></p>	<p>Joshua is the vice president of research and evaluation for the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET). Over the previous fifteen years, Dr. Barnett has served as a PI, Co-PI, and/or external evaluator for nineteen government funded grants. He has extensive experience working with federally funded projects specifically, having led projects with the U.S. Department of Education; U.S. Department of Defense; and U.S. Department of Labor. Throughout his career as an academic and researcher, his primary research interest has focused on improving educator quality in all schools for all students by examining how educators are developed and how resources are distributed to and used within schools.</p>
<p><i>Teddy Broussard will serve as the interim NIET National Leadership Facilitator for the LIFT Program (5 days per week)</i></p>	<p>Teddy is the director of training with NIET. In this role, Mr. Broussard supports all aspects of NIET training including content development, preparation and delivery. In his forty plus years of experience in the educational arena, Mr. Broussard has served as a teacher, assistant principal, school turnaround agent with the Louisiana Department of Education, state director for TAP in Louisiana, senior program specialist, and assistant director of school services with NIET. Mr. Broussard has been very active in the creation, delivery and follow up support for administrator / leadership training across the country through his work with NIET. Mr. Broussard will provide support for the TAP Principal Fellows Program with content development, online and face-to-face meetings, contributing to training, and supporting the PFP program overall. He will also coordinate with TTU instructors on program curriculum and major projects.</p>
<p><i>Ann Shaw, Ed.D., will serve as the NIET Project Director for the LIFT Program (2.5 days per week)</i></p>	<p>Ann is the director of higher education services at NIET. In this role, Dr. Shaw has developed partnerships between higher education institutions and local school districts helping to build a bridge from pre-service education programs to local school districts. As the project director for the Tennessee Teacher Incentive Fund Grant, Dr. Shaw collaborated with several universities to embed key components of the state teacher evaluation system into pre-service education course content. She has over 25 years teaching experience and is a National Board Certified Teacher. In 2000, Shaw was awarded the prestigious Milken Educator’s Award while serving as a first grade teacher. Dr. Shaw will provide project direction and oversight for the TAP Principal Fellows Program.</p>
<p><i>Anissa Rodriguez, Ph.D., will serve as the</i></p>	<p>Anissa is director of learning technology with NIET. In this role, Dr. Rodriguez supports all aspects of NIET’s web-based applications and</p>

<p><i>NIET Project Manager for the LIFT Program (2.5 days per week).</i></p>	<p>technology support for TAP and the Best Practices Center including the TAP System Training Portal, the NIET Best Practices Center Portals, CODE and the TAP Observer, MyEvaluator, and OTES Observer iPad applications. Dr. Rodriguez also supports the implementation and management of the TAP System, including TAP trainings, partnership support, evaluation and other projects.</p>
<p><i>Kellie Wills, Ph.D., will serve as the Project Evaluator for the LIFT Program (2.5 days per week).</i></p>	<p>Dr. Kellie Wills is a senior research associate at NIET. Before joining NIET, she worked as a statistician at the U.S. Census Bureau and in the private sector. Her dissertation research investigated statistical aspects of value-added modeling. Dr. Wills earned her Ph.D. in educational measurement, statistics and research design from the University of Washington.</p>
<p><i>Allison Ellison will serve as the Business Manager for NIET for the LIFT Program (.5 days per week)</i></p>	<p>Allison Ellison is the director of support services for NIET. Ms. Ellison has extensive experience managing budgets, tracking invoices, and with various accounting systems for NIET.</p>
<p><i>Payton Parker will serve as the Grant Manager for NIET for the LIFT Program (.5 days per week)</i></p>	<p>Payton Parker is the director of grant management for NIET. Mr. Parker currently oversees all of NIET's grant related activities including expense reimbursement and annual reporting.</p>
<p><i>Jason Culbertson will serve as the EVP, Services and Partnerships for NIET for the LIFT Program (.5 days per week)</i></p>	<p>As executive vice president of services and partnerships, Jason Culbertson oversees all of NIET's programmatic efforts by managing all training efforts, overseeing conference logistics and ensuring the success of all NIET initiatives.</p>
<p><i>Kristan Van Hook will serve as the SVP, Public Policy for NIET for the LIFT Program (.5 days per week)</i></p>	<p>Kristan Van Hook is the senior vice president of public policy for NIET. In this role she is responsible for communicating changes in public policy to NIET's leadership team and external partners.</p>
<p><i>Rebecca Lange will serve as the Director of Communications for NIET for the LIFT Program (.5 days per week)</i></p>	<p>Rebecca Lange is the Director of Communications for NIET. Ms. Lange has experience working with internal and external partners to increase awareness of NIET projects to stakeholders at all levels.</p>

Texas Tech University (TTU)	
<i>Scott Ridley, Ph.D., will serve as the TTU Principal Investigator for the LIFT Program (.5 day per week).</i>	<i>Dr. Scott Ridley is the dean of the College of Education at Texas Tech University. He has served as the principal investigator and project director of nearly \$150 million in grant funding during his career and is exceptionally well qualified to lead a team to accomplish the tasks set forth in this project. Dr. Ridley will establish relations with TAP partner district leaders and participate in leadership oversight and reporting to partner districts, NIET and the USDOE.</i>
<i>Fernando Valle, PhD., will serve as the Executive Director for the LIFT Program (4 days per week).</i>	<i>Dr. Fernando Valle is an associate professor of educational leadership at Texas Tech University. He has served as the lead faculty member and director in a number of reform initiatives in educational leadership including the Competency-based School Intervention Project and the TAP CONNECT School Leadership Graduate Certificate Program. Dr. Valle has extensive experience as a principal and teacher leader in schools in South Texas. He will lead the LIFT Program at TTU.</i>
<i>Irma Almager, PhD, will serve as a TTU Coach for the LIFT Program (3 days per week).</i>	<i>Dr. Irma Almager is a faculty member in educational leadership at Texas Tech University. She has served as the lead faculty member and director in a number of reform initiatives in educational leadership including the Competency-based School Intervention Project and the TAP CONNECT School Leadership Graduate Certificate Program. Dr. Almager has extensive experience as a principal and teacher leader in schools in West Texas. She will serve as the lead TTU coach providing training and guidance to other TTU coaches to be added in Years 2 and 3. Dr. Almager will closely coordinate with Teddy Broussard of NIET around TAP leadership processes.</i>
<i>Kelly Trlica, PhD, will serve as a TTU Coach for the LIFT Program (3 days per week).</i>	<i>Dr. Kelly Trlica is a professor of practice in educational leadership at Texas Tech University. She has extensive experience as a principal and central administrator in several school districts include Houston ISD. Dr. Trlica has a recognized track-record as a turnaround principal in inner-city Houston and as a coach for turnaround principals. She will work closely with Irma to provide training and guidance to other TTU coaches to be added in Years 2 and 3.</i>
<i>TBA in YR 2-3</i>	<i>Additional TTU coaches will be added in Years 2 and 3. TTU will select coaches with a strong track-record of success as a school principal, especially at TAP schools.</i>

Management Plan Responsibilities, Timelines, and Milestones

The Management Plan has been developed alongside the goals, objectives, and measures table (Appendix E). This table also includes when each measure will be collected (serving as our milestones) and which organization is responsible for collecting the measure. The remainder of this section details the personnel and oversight responsible for these timelines and milestones. Dr. Joshua Barnett will serve as the principal investigator for the project and will provide oversight and direction for NIET. Dr. Scott Ridley will serve as the principal investigator for TTU. Co-project directors Shaw (NIET) and Valle (TTU) will use Microsoft Project as the project management platform and will communicate *weekly* along with key TTU faculty, coaches and NIET personnel to ensure effective and proactive management of the *LIFT Program*. Teddy Broussard will serve as the full-time interim NIET national leadership facilitator and will be responsible for collaborating with the TTU coaches, assisting with the development of the content for face-to-face meetings and online meetings, contributing to training, and supporting the PFP program. Along with the TTU coach, the NIET national leadership facilitator coordinates with TTU PFP instructors on program curriculum and major projects. Teddy Broussard will serve as the interim NIET national leadership facilitator to begin the project and ensure that no time is lost. NIET will seek out a leadership expert in order to fill this role upon receipt of funding. The districts have all agreed to participate and support the program (Appendix G).

Because the *LIFT Program* is built on the infrastructure of NIET's TAP System and the competency-based, TAP-driven programs at Texas Tech University, many of the costs for administration, program design, program implementation, and data services are already current

functions within these organizations. This infrastructure allows the *LIFT Program* to allocate maximum support quickly to participating schools.

Sufficient and Reasonable Resources

The co-PIs have years of extensive and successful experience leading large funded projects. Like many other projects, personnel costs in the *LIFT Program* reflect the majority of costs. SEED funds are sufficient to cover required personnel and materials including a portion of candidate salaries, funding for advanced certification courses, funding for video capture rigs and licenses, funding for the project director, and the leadership facilitator and TTU coaches. Sufficient funds from the SEED budget are allocated to program evaluation research which will allow a rigorous and objective test of our research questions regarding the effects of this technology-enabled, competency-based shaping program on the effectiveness of principals.

Sustainability

Build Capacity and Yield Results

The ultimate goal of this project is to positively impact student achievement in schools across Texas, Louisiana and Indiana. NIET and TTU recognize that this can be accomplished only when partners come together to implement innovative practices while building local capacity. The project builds local capacity by responding to an expressed need from district partners—preparing principals and assistant principals who will positively impact student outcomes. The plan for scaling the project from West Texas partner districts around Lubbock in Year 1, to partner districts in all of Texas in Year 2, to Texas and TAP school partner districts in

other states in Year 3 will build capacity locally, in the state of Texas and nationally. This Project is designed to both build local capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the federal funding period. The Project is a nonprofit and school–university partnership model that builds the local capacity within the school district and has the potential to impact statewide student achievement.

The school–university model is meant to build local capacity and to make a long-term impact on student achievement. Specifically, the principal preparation program includes training, mentorship and support for administrators to improve their leadership. In addition, the principal fellows model is utilized to positively impact student achievement while candidates are completing the residency.

The Project will yield results that will extend beyond the grant period by collecting, analyzing, and reporting data to address a gap in the literature.

Yield Findings and Products for Other Agencies and Organizations.

It is imperative that the *LIFT Program* produce findings and products that may be used by other organizations (including nonprofit agencies, state departments of education, and colleges of education). In 2014 alone, NIET and TTU received numerous requests from agencies seeking information, materials, processes, and techniques to reform teacher and principal preparation. These agencies included colleges of education, school districts, nonprofits, and government agencies (including state departments of education) from across the nation. The project will yield the types of findings and products that will be needed by agencies that intend to make drastic changes to the way they train administrators.

The project will generate materials that can be used by other agencies to implement reform models of principal preparation and high-quality professional development. These materials include the following: a summary of key features; training materials; training modules; and handbooks. The processes and techniques utilized throughout the project will be documented and organized in such a way that they can be replicated by other agencies and institutions. At project end, the project will provide a summary of effective processes and techniques in the following areas: principal recruitment, selection, preparation, mentoring, and training.

Disseminate Information about Results and Outcomes

Other universities across the nation will be drawn to this job-embedded, professional development model which makes assessment of impact easy to measure. TAP schools and school districts across the nation will be drawn to a model that develops teachers from entry to retirement. The *LIFT Program* will disseminate information about results and outcomes through the following:

- **National Conferences.** The outcomes of the project will be presented at the National TAP Conference and two other professional research conferences. Key project personnel will participate in the TAP Conference and professional research national conferences that will bring together organizations from across the nation to showcase the project, and offer a venue for sharing results, information, and ideas (e.g. AERA; AACTE). Finally,

key project personnel will present key outcomes at the American Association of Colleges of Education Day on the Hill in Washington, DC.

- **Texas Tech University Presentations.** The information about the grant's implementation and data – as appropriate – will be shared with the public by presentations at TTU for the partnering districts and other interested agencies.
- **Print and Online.** Findings will also be disseminated via NIET and TTU College of Education web-sites, plus publication in professional journals and presentations at conferences and workshops. As previously mentioned, a TAP School Leadership Resource Library will provide best practice video and materials to TAP schools all over the nation.

Quality of the Project Evaluation

Thorough, Feasible, and Appropriate Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes

The NIET Research and Evaluation team and Texas Tech University's Office of Program Evaluation and Research Support will oversee the project evaluation under the direction of NIET's Dr. Joshua Barnett and Dr. Kellie Wills and TTU's Dr. Fernando Valle. The *LIFT Program* consist of thorough, feasible, and appropriate goals, which are further articulated by measurable objectives and outcomes. All program evaluation elements are feasible and appropriate within the structure of the *LIFT Program*. The evaluation model is built on the idea that data is used to make programmatic decisions, improve services, and to evaluate program effectiveness.

Provide Performance Feedback and Permit Periodic Assessment

The evaluation plan outlines how the evaluation will be used to monitor progress toward achieving outcomes, provide performance feedback, and provide accountability information.

- **Monitor progress toward achieving outcomes:** The evaluation plan is organized by Goal and Project Objective and includes specified timelines, tools used to collect data, methodology, reporting timeline, and how the data will be used. The evaluation plan will serve as a working document to ensure the project is on track to meet all objectives.
- **Performance feedback:** As referenced in the evaluation table, there are consistent opportunities to obtain and review performance feedback. Performance feedback includes the following: participant instructional performance based on walkthrough and performance assessment data, participant professional dispositions based on professionalism rubric data, participant GPA, participant completion rate, and graduate impact on student achievement in first year of principalship.
- **Provide accountability information:** The plan provides a framework to hold project personnel accountable for meeting the objectives. Each objective within the evaluation plan includes specific outcomes and timelines along with the personnel who are responsible for those outcomes. Additionally, the three overall outcome measures are included to provide clear accountability information on the impact of the project to NIET, TTU, and partnering districts.

Evaluation Produces Evidence to meet WWC Standards

This program evaluation is designed to meet WWC Standards and will be conducted in collaboration by NIET and TTU. The evaluation consists of process measures as well as proximal and distal impact measures. For the process measures, descriptive data will be used to understand and evaluate the degree of program implementation fidelity. For the impact measures, a quasi-experimental design with matched comparison schools will be employed. To ensure the impact evaluation meets standards, researchers expect to conduct all comparisons using statistical adjustments to ensure minimal baseline equivalence differences in accordance with WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook 3.0 (Institute of Education Sciences, 2014). Further, the evaluation will utilize within and between comparisons. The within comparison will consist of tracking the variables of interest (e.g. candidate application materials, school-level student achievement, school-level teacher effectiveness, and school-level retention) longitudinally across the life of the grant for each partnering school and a matched comparison school. We will work with the partnering and comparison schools to collect baseline data for 2012-2015 to have three years of trajectory data prior to the implementation of the *LIFT Program*. This baseline collection will allow us to examine directly the impact of the program and SEED resources in the schools selected to participate and compare those changes to schools without those resources (i.e. matched comparisons). The matched comparison schools will be selected based on their comparable school-level demographics and performance scores. Table 5 below reflects the information previously discussed in Appendix E with regard to goals, objectives, and measures within the design description; however, the information below is focused on only the evaluation questions and measures, which consists of both process and outcome questions. Beyond the

questions for each of the five goals and corresponding objectives, the evaluation contains three overall research questions examining the impact of the project on student achievement, educator satisfaction, and educator retention in partnering schools.

Table 5 <i>Evaluation Research Questions</i>	
<u>Research Question</u>	<u>Sub-Questions</u>
1. What is the impact of the TAP-TTU principal preparation model on creating a pipeline of TAP-ready principals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) How have joint TTU and TAP site level recruitment and enrollment practices impacted the quality and number of incoming principal candidates compared to traditional recruitment numbers? b) How has the Principal Fellows impacted the performance of principal candidates during their program of study compared to TTU’s traditional leadership program? c) How have the Principal Fellows clinical experiences in TAP Schools impacted principal candidates? d) What is the impact of the <i>LIFT Program</i> on principal candidates’ beginning instructional and leadership proficiency?
2. What is the impact of the <i>LIFT Program</i> component of providing job-embedded training with competency-based feedback and instructional shaping?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To what degree have TAP-TTU leaders prepared selected participants to transition into the <i>LIFT Program</i>? b) As measured by meeting logs, how have TTU Facilitators provided feedback and shaping to Fellows? c) How have the targeted services provided to Fellows deepened their instructional knowledge as measured by competency assessments? d) How have the targeted services provided to Fellows improved their leadership skills as measured by the job-embedded assessments?
3. To what extent has the <i>LIFT Program</i> developed six “TAP ready” exemplary principals and current sitting principals for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Have all Fellows obtained clarity on their roles and responsibilities within the program and their site? b) How has the program curriculum and instruction adapted to the needs of the Principal Fellows? c) How many contact points and in what format did each Fellow receive from Facilitators?

<p>West Texas partner districts?</p>	<p>d) To what extent have the sitting principal mentors increased their leadership skills as a result of the partnership? e) What positions have exemplary Principal Fellows obtained within partner districts (i.e. instructional leads, director of curriculum, assistant principals, principals)?</p>
<p>4. To what extent has the <i>LIFT Program</i> successfully expanded to develop fourteen “TAP ready” exemplary principals and current sitting principals for Texas-based TAP-district partners?</p>	<p>a) Have all Fellows obtained clarity on their roles and responsibilities within the program and their site? b) How has the program curriculum and instruction adapted to the needs of the Principal Fellows, specifically utilizing Blackboard Collaborate and hybrid delivery formats? c) How many contact points and in what format did each Fellow receive from Facilitators? d) To what extent have the sitting principal mentors increased their leadership skills as a result of the partnership? e) What positions have exemplary Principal Fellows obtained within partner districts (i.e. instructional leads, director of curriculum, assistant principals, principals)?</p>
<p>5. To what extent has the <i>LIFT Program</i> successfully expanded to develop twenty “TAP ready” exemplary principals and current sitting principals for National Pilot TAP-district partners in Texas, Indiana, and Louisiana?</p>	<p>a) Have all Fellows obtained clarity on their roles and responsibilities within the program and their site? b) How has the program curriculum and instruction adapted to the needs of the Principal Fellows, specifically utilizing Blackboard Collaborate and hybrid delivery formats? c) How many contact points and in what format did each Fellow receive from Facilitators? d) To what extent have the sitting principal mentors increased their leadership skills as a result of the partnership? e) What positions have exemplary Principal Fellows obtained within partner districts (i.e. instructional leads, director of curriculum, assistant principals, principals)?</p>
<p>6. What is the academic impact of the <i>LIFT Program</i>?</p>	<p>a) How do leaders trained in the Fellows program compare to leaders not from the Fellows program as measured by the principal evaluation measure in each location (i.e. TAP leadership team rubric; T-PESS; Marzano School Leader Model; Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education)?</p>

	<p>b) How does student achievement in schools with leaders from the Fellows program compare to schools with leaders not from the Fellows program as measured by state and/or district assessments?</p>
<p>7. How have Principal Fellows affected the attitudes of teachers in their schools?</p>	<p>a) How have graduating leaders from the <i>LIFT Program</i> affected the reported attitudes of the participating teachers as measured by the TAP Teacher Attitudinal Survey?</p> <p>b) How do these reported teacher attitudes from schools with graduates compare to the attitudes of matched schools without graduates?</p> <p>c) How have graduating leaders from the <i>LIFT Program</i> affected the reported attitudes of the participating administrators as measured by the TAP Principal Attitudinal Survey?</p> <p>d) How do these reported administrator attitudes from schools with graduates compare to the attitudes of matched schools without graduates?</p>
<p>8. How has the TAP <i>LIFT Program</i> affected educator retention rates?</p>	<p>a) How has <i>LIFT Program</i> participation affected teacher retention rates over time?</p> <p>b) How do teacher retention rates in the participating schools compare to those in the comparison schools over time?</p> <p>c) How has <i>LIFT Program</i> participation affected principal retention rates over time?</p> <p>d) How do principal retention rates in the participating schools compare to those in the comparison schools over time?</p>

Study design

Data for this study will be collected from TTU, partner district schools, and NIET. The study relies on a mixed methods approach (Greene, 2007; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) that includes process and outcome measures, which when combined together in a single evaluation maximize the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of either approach. The details behind this

study design are outlined below related to each research question. The analytic strategy for the study is also articulated below.

Data measures

To respond to research question 1 (RQ1), TTU and NIET leaders will document conversations with partner schools to demonstrate the selection process for fellows. TTU's admissions office will collect performance data on applicants, including transcripts, dispositional assessment scores (i.e. Haberman Screener), and content-area pretest scores. This information will be collected for all applicants whether they are selected to participate in the *LIFT Program* or not. Additionally, NIET researchers will select fellows to participate in focus group (May of each year) regarding their perceptions of how the program is shaping their leadership skills.

To respond to RQ2, TTU faculty will document attendance at an initial meeting aimed at transitioning fellows into the principalship program. TTU faculty will document the distribution of materials and collect the developing transition plans from each candidate. TTU and NIET facilitators will also collect agendas/documentation of weekly meetings and the topic area focus of each meeting. NIET will conduct a focus group (December of each year) to collect data on the process by which fellows are being trained and their perceptions/attitudes about the process.

To respond to RQ3, TTU faculty will create a matrix of Fellow's and each Fellow's role and responsibility within the program and his/her school. TTU faculty will provide a curriculum calendar, major job-embedded assignments and scoring rubrics, and coaching logs to NIET to synthesize demonstrating program application to fellows. TTU and NIET facilitators will provide monthly summaries of interactions with fellows and sitting principals mentors. TTU and NIET

will obtain scores from sitting principals and fellows on the state or local administrator evaluation system (i.e. Texas Principal Evaluation System). TTU will document the completion of the program and awarding of credentials to program graduates.

To respond to RQ4 (follows the pattern of investigation for RQ3, applied to the expanded participants across Texas), TTU faculty will create a matrix of fellow's and each fellow's role and responsibility within the program and his/her school. TTU faculty will provide a curriculum calendar, major job-embedded assignments and scoring rubrics, and coaching logs to NIET to synthesize demonstrating program application to fellows. TTU and NIET facilitators will provide monthly summaries of interactions with Fellows and sitting principals mentors. TTU and NIET will obtain scores from sitting principals and fellows on the state or local administrator evaluation system (i.e. Texas Principal Evaluation System). TTU will document the completion of the program and awarding of credentials to program graduates.

To respond to RQ5 (which follows the pattern of investigation for RQ3 and RQ4, applied to the expanded participants nationally), TTU faculty will create a matrix of fellow's and each fellow's role and responsibility within the program and his/her school. TTU faculty will provide a curriculum calendar, major job-embedded assignments and scoring rubrics, and coaching logs to NIET to synthesize demonstrating program application to fellows. TTU and NIET facilitators will provide monthly summaries of interactions with fellows and sitting principals mentors. TTU and NIET will obtain scores from sitting principals and fellows on the state or local administrator evaluation system. TTU will document the completion of the program and awarding of credentials to program graduates.

To respond to RQ6, data will be collected from the partnering state Department of Education. Specifically for the Texas partners, NIET will use the Texas Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) while NIET will use the Indiana Department of Education Office of Student Assessment database and the Louisiana Department of Education Assessment and Accountability database. Each system is nuanced in the information available; however, between the state level database and the cooperating school partners, NIET will obtain school level performance indicators, including: state assessment test performance (i.e. TAKS, STAAR, iLEAP), dropout rates, completion rates, college readiness indicators, participation and performance on Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) Examinations, as well as participation and performance on college admission exams (i.e. ACT, SAT). Additionally, these academic performance indicators are disaggregated by ethnicity, special education, low income status, limited English proficient status, at-risk status, and bilingual/ESL. NIET will also obtain leadership effectiveness scores (i.e. TAP leadership team rubric scores, T-PES scores, VAL-Ed scores, Marzano Model Assessment scores).

To address RQ7, NIET's TAP Teacher and Principal Attitudinal Survey will be used. This survey is administered annually to all TAP scores across the nation, which will allow scores for the TAP principal fellow partnering TAP schools to be compared to other TAP schools. Additionally, observational data will be collected from site visits from the project director, NIET exemplary facilitator, and TTU coaches.

To address RQ8, researchers will collect school level data from each state's database (articulated above) for each of the participating schools with regard to teacher and principal

characteristics – highly qualified status, out of field teaching status, emergency certification status, honors (National Board Certification), and turnover rates.

Analytic strategy

Student applicant data will be compared to previous application (RQ1) information collected by TTU through an interrupted time-series comparison. Reviewing these data on a by cohort basis will allow for comparisons between incoming students' performance at each phase of preparation. ANOVAs will be used to determine if the differences between the groups are significant, as will effect sizes to determine practical significance. Focus group data will be analyzed using a data utilization and application framework (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009; Stufflebeam, 2001).

The attendance, material distribution, and weekly meeting reports will be analyzed descriptively to gauge program implementation and fidelity. Focus groups data will be analyzed using a data utilization and application framework (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009; Stufflebeam, 2001), and these results will be organized and discussed with TTU and NIET leadership to determine the level of successful implementation.

To analyze the information collected for RQ3, RQ4, and RQ5, a qualitative case study approach (Creswell, 2003; Ritchie & Spencer, 1994) will be employed to analyze the clarity of roles, adaptation of the program to the needs of participants, and monthly summary reports from facilitators. Descriptive analysis (i.e. measures of central tendency; distributions; frequency) will be used to measure the contact points with fellows locally in West Texas, extended statewide in

Texas, and beyond Texas with partners in Indiana and Louisiana. Descriptive analysis will also be used to measure program completion and placements.

The analytic strategy to measure the impact on student achievement (RQ6) will be a quasi-experimental design with a statistically matched comparison group. We expect to use a propensity score matching algorithm (Rosenbaum & Rubin, 1983; 1985) with one-to-one nearest neighbor participant to non-participant schools on prior year student achievement, school configuration (grades taught), and observable demographic characteristics. Since schools are compared to themselves across time, as well as to the schools scoring at the same performance level, the possibility that unobserved variables are accounting for potential findings is minimized (Angrist & Krueger, 1991). Effect sizes (Cohen's *d*) will be used to determine practical significance. Exploratory subgroup analyses will be used to compare students by demographic variables.

For RQ7, descriptive and inferential statistics (i.e. t-tests, ANOVAs) will be used to explore differences in teachers' and principals' attitudes over time and between TAP principal fellow-partnering and other TAP schools. Additionally, a qualitative case study approach (Creswell, 2003; Ritchie & Spencer, 1994) will be used to review observational data from the Project Director, NIET Exemplary Facilitator, and TTU Coaches.

Using the selection of propensity matched schools described above for RQ6, RQ8 will be measured by t-tests and effect sizes to determine if significant and/or substantive differences exist among and between the Principal Fellow and matched comparison sites.