

**“The National Writing Project (NWP): Leveraging a National Improvement Infrastructure
for Professional Development to Improve Writing Instruction for *All* Students”**

Project Narrative

Table of Contents

Absolute and Competitive Priorities.....1

A. Significance.....3

B. Quality of the Project Design and Services.....15

C. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel.....27

D. Sustainability.....31

Competitive Priorities

**Competitive Preference 1: Supporting programs, practices, or strategies for which there is
strong evidence of effectiveness.....8**

Competitive Preference 2: Improving productivity.....24

References.....46

**The National Writing Project:
Leveraging a National Improvement Infrastructure for Professional Development to
Improve Writing Instruction for *All* Students**

In this Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) proposal, the National Writing Project (NWP) addresses *Absolute Priority 2: Professional development/enhancement of teachers of English language arts with a specific focus on writing*. NWP also directly addresses *Competitive Preference 1: Supporting programs, practices, or strategies for which there is strong evidence of effectiveness* and *Competitive Preference 2: Improving productivity*. These preferences are referred to in sections A and B of the proposal respectively.

Current education research highlights the pivotal importance of effective teachers in their students' lives (Carey, 2004; Ingersoll, 2008; Schacter & Thum, 2004). The NWP has been developing strong, effective teacher-leaders in the teaching of writing since it began in 1974 with 25 teachers at a single, local Writing Project site, the Bay Area Writing Project at the University of California, Berkeley. Today, NWP recruits and prepares 3,000 exemplary teacher-leaders each summer in an intensive program of leadership development in the teaching of writing across the NWP network of 197 sites, anchored at universities in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Since its inception, NWP has grown into a national improvement infrastructure to support student writing and learning in classrooms, schools, and districts across the country (St. John & Stokes, 2008). To improve student writing achievement, local NWP sites work with school and district leaders to design programs that provide teachers with training and support in research-based strategies for teaching writing. NWP teacher-leaders provide more than 7,000 professional development activities annually, reaching 120,000 educators and, through them, 1.4 million students. In 2009-10, these programs reached more than 3,000 school districts.

Many aspects of the Writing Project model are familiar constructs in education improvement programs today (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009), including examining teacher practice closely through public presentations and peer review; using teacher knowledge and expertise in coaching and mentoring of colleagues; building distributed leadership to support school improvement efforts (Spillane, 2006); and providing sustained opportunities for educators to engage in professional learning communities, both face-to-face and, increasingly, online. Further, a growing consensus among researchers suggests that effective professional development incorporates five elements: content focus, active learning, coherence with teachers' knowledge and beliefs as well as the policy environment, sufficient duration, and professional community or collective participation (Borko, 2004; Desimone, 2009). NWP's model of professional development embodies these elements.

NWP is the only literacy-focused professional development organization with the capacity to provide high-quality, locally defined and delivered professional development on a national scale. Today, NWP sites are located within 50 miles of 76% of America's teachers. Scaling up a program model to provide *reach* is a significant challenge in itself and continuing to provide high-quality programs *at scale* with a depth of implementation requires regular review of program objectives, measurement of program quality, and ongoing research and evaluation studies which address the program design and implementation. As an educational improvement infrastructure, NWP is committed to the ongoing use of evidence to guide program design and implementation (Lieberman, 2006; McDonald, Buchanan, & Sterling, 2004).

In this proposal, we outline NWP's approach to professional development to improve the teaching of writing and highlight the strong research evidence that supports this work. We propose a project design and goals that will allow NWP's network of sites to reach more teachers

and schools serving concentrations of high-need students. This proposed project provides teachers with the intensive professional and leadership development necessary for them to support students in reaching rigorous academic standards. The design builds on NWP's core model, as well as its latest efforts to create an online community of practice to provide teachers with anywhere, anytime learning opportunities linked to improving student achievement in writing. In order to sustain and innovate at scale, NWP seeks to leverage the power of online communities of practice, while supporting targeted opportunities for face-to-face professional development.

A. Significance

(1) *National Significance*

Improving the Teaching of Writing. Despite the central importance of writing in academic, civic, and professional life outside of school, inside of school writing has long been the neglected “R” (National Commission on Writing, 2003). Applebee’s (1981) seminal study of high-school writing instruction demonstrated that although writing activities, very broadly defined, took place during 44% of class time, only 3% of this time involved students writing at least a paragraph. Most writing activities focused on mechanical, or fill-in-the blank, uses of writing and note taking. Nearly 30 years later, Applebee and Langer (2011b) conducted a comprehensive study of writing instruction. What they found mirrors what we know from national assessment data (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003, 2008) and other research on writing (Graham & Perin, 2007). Writing has gained ground, but it is still not used consistently as a powerful learning tool and the demands of writing assessments often relegate writing to short paragraphs rather than thoughtful extended essays.

Thus the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts (ELA)—which include 10 anchor standards devoted to writing and establish rigorous new expectations for writing across subjects and grade levels—enter a landscape where thoughtful informative and argumentative writing are relegated to the margins of teaching. These standards are currently adopted by 45 states and the District of Columbia. Previous standards-based reform efforts teach us that effective professional development for teachers, K-12, will be key to successful implementation of these new and far-reaching standards (Cohen, 1990; Resnick, Stein, & Coon, 2008).

Teaching Writing in the Digital Age. In addition, specific anchor standards in the CCSS address the need to support students to develop facility with new technologies used for writing and point to an additional area of needed professional development: teaching writing with digital tools. Digital tools provide a range of robust new affordances to support young people's engagement in writing and creating content for a variety of audiences and purposes. Outside of the school day, students increasingly spend time online and write for their own purposes. However, students often do not make a connection between any writing they choose to do and “school” writing (Lenhart, Arafeh, Smith & Macgill, 2008). Yet the CCSS are clear in their delineation of expected skills in information literacy, digital citizenship, and digital composition. These new demands for English language arts teachers mean that even those educators who feel prepared to teach writing in more traditional ways may need professional development support to re-imagine their practice for the internet age (National Writing Project, DeVoss, Eidman-Aadahl, & Hicks, 2010).

(2) *Potential Contributions*

Developing New Knowledge and Practices for Improving the Teaching of Writing.

Developing and sustaining the human capital to provide sustained, high-quality classroom instruction in the nation's classrooms sits at the core of many current education reform strategies. The NWP contributes to this process through a well-articulated program design, developed and refined through ongoing feedback, evaluation, and research studies. Over the 37 years of its development, the NWP has created a signature a model of inquiry-driven professional development that includes examining best practices, engaging in the discipline under study, developing strategies to meet the literacy needs of individual students, and learning from research in the field. The strong national network of local Writing Project sites serves as a constant support that teachers can draw upon to enhance their ability to innovate and lead improvement efforts benefiting schools and the students they serve.

Indeed, well-known current Writing Project teacher-leaders are at the forefront of contributing new knowledge and practices to the field of writing and literacy: Donalyn Miller (*The Book Whisperer*, 2009); Kelly Gallagher (e.g., *Write Like This*, 2011; *Improving Adolescent Writers*, 2009); Bud Hunt (<http://www.budtheteacher.com>); and Meenoo Rami (<http://engchat.org>). They join the 70,000 NWP teacher-leaders who have participated in the intensive model of leadership development in the teaching of writing since the first 25 teachers were recruited in 1974.

Expanding Online Learning Opportunities for Teachers, Including Professional Development in Teaching Multi-Modal Writing. Across K-12 classrooms, teachers of writing see many possibilities for using digital tools to teach writing and to engage young people in using writing to learn across the disciplines. Here the NWP network has been on the forefront of providing

high-quality professional development in bridging the old world of paper and pencil technologies to the new world of digital writing (National Writing Project et al., 2010). NWP is also at the forefront in using digital technologies to support professional development.

NWP offers targeted learning networks and programs to bring together teacher-leaders from across the country to discuss the latest research, access important new classroom strategies, respond to critical educational issues, and collaborate on publishing and disseminating what they have learned. These networks and programs reach teacher-leaders in rural and urban communities, teachers of English language learners, and teachers across content areas, including science, math, and history. And now these communities of practice also have a presence online in NWP Connect, NWP's new networked community and learning management system. NWP Connect provides a platform for rapid deployment of online supports for social learning that are consistent with the NWP model and capable of delivering a range of learning experiences from ongoing networking activities to fully designed online courses.

NWP is also broadly recognized in the field as a leader in digital literacy. NWP has produced a growing bank of online and print resources related to digital literacy including the Digital Is website (<http://digitalis.nwp.org/>) and practical guides for administrators, teachers, and parents. In 2009-10 alone, more than 53,000 teachers participated in programs that included a focus on the uses of technology for writing.

(3) Importance of Results and Outcomes

NWP has been shown to assist teachers in adopting practices demonstrated to improve student achievement in writing. In addition, NWP expands the impact of these teachers by enhancing their leadership development, engaging them in educating their colleagues, and supporting their continued involvement within the profession. Additionally, NWP's sustained

professional development programs have been shown to have a positive impact on student achievement in writing, including in schools that serve concentrations of high-need students.

NWP Provides High Quality Leadership Development to Improve the Teaching of Writing.

Since its inception, NWP has provided intensive leadership development for teachers through its 120-hour Invitational Institutes. To participate in an Invitational Institute, teachers must be nominated and go through a rigorous interview and peer selection process (described in Section B). Inverness Research reported that 96% of the 2009 Invitational Institute participants, who represent more than 2,500 schools, stated “that the institutes contribute to or reinforce their understanding of how to teach writing effectively, and that they are able to use and apply what they learned at the institute to their own classrooms and students” (Stokes, Hirabayashi, Murray, & Senauke, 2011, p. 4).

NWP Retains Teachers in Teaching and Has a Lasting Impact. Data collected through NWP’s Legacy Study¹, which surveyed 5,512 individuals who participated in Invitational Institutes between 1974 and 2006, demonstrates that 77% of teachers remain in the classroom for at least two years following the Invitational Institute and 97% remain in the field of education. On average, teachers who participate in the Invitational Institute teach for 22.7 years.

Additional evidence to support NWP’s role in retaining teachers comes from an independent, quasi-experimental study comparing teachers participating in Courage to Teach (CTT) with National Writing Project teachers, in which NWP teachers served as the counterfactual. This study found that NWP teachers had slightly higher levels of professional engagement on two indicators of the Malasch Burnout Inventory than CTT teachers ($d=.12$). Further, descriptive

¹ The Legacy Study professional history survey was conducted in two stages. The first round, fielded in 2004, surveyed teachers who participated between 1974 and 1994. The second round, fielded in 2007, surveyed teachers who participated between 1995 and 2005. Thus, final positions reported on the survey were held for at least two years after teachers’ participation in an Invitational Institute.

analyses showed that NWP teachers planned to remain in teaching, with not a single respondent planning to leave the profession as soon as possible and only 3.3% of the sample saying they would leave if a better opportunity emerged (Geil, 2011).

The Legacy Study revealed that teachers view the NWP as having an enduring impact on their teaching and work in education. Across all reported positions (n= 4,841), 88.3% reported being influenced by their Writing Project experience, 89.2% reported drawing on Writing Project knowledge and skills, and 90.6% indicated that the Writing Project attitudes and values continued to influence their work.

NWP Prepares and Engages Teachers in Leadership Roles. Writing Project participants who leave the classroom go on to play a variety of leadership roles in education with 3.2% becoming school administrators, 3.1% playing district leadership roles, and 11% working higher education, often in teacher education. Qualitative analysis of interviews with a random sample of 18 Legacy survey, principal respondents demonstrates that the Writing Project influenced three components of respondents' instructional leadership: bringing a focus on and vision for the teaching of writing, emphasizing and creating opportunities for professional development that reflect Writing Project values, and supervising teachers (Friedrich, 2009). Investment in the development of teacher-leaders through the Writing Project can therefore come to serve schools and districts more broadly over time.

Competitive Preference 1

NWP Programs Contribute to Growth in Student Writing Achievement. Over the past 8 years, the National Writing Project has conducted a coordinated program of research to examine the impact of its work on teachers' classroom practice and student writing performance. NWP worked closely with local Writing Project sites to frame a series of 19 quasi-experimental

studies, 17 of which examine inservice programs provided by NWP teacher-leaders. Independent evaluation consultants, who played no role in leading the programs, conducted the analyses of all student outcome data. In addition, NWP has contracted with SRI International to conduct a longitudinal, multi-site cluster randomized trial to be completed in March 2012. Proposed new research (section D) will investigate the magnitude of results of the proposed SEED program.

Evidence of Effectiveness in Secondary Programs. At the high school level, one experimental and four quasi-experimental studies support the effectiveness of teacher-led inservice for teachers and schools serving substantial proportions of high-need students. All five studies show statistically significant differences in growth in student writing performance, with effect sizes ranging from .32 to .81. These small to moderate effect sizes are comparable to those reported in *Writing Next* (Graham & Perin, 2007), a meta-analysis of experimental and quasi-experimental studies on elements of writing instruction, such as collaborative writing ($d=.75$), pre-writing ($d=.32$), process writing approach ($d=.32$), and study of models ($d=.25$). These elements of writing instruction are often the focus of NWP's professional development efforts.

Santa Ana Unified School District, California. A multisite cluster randomized controlled trial of a cognitive strategies approach to teaching text-based analytical writing for mainstreamed Latino English language learners (ELLs) took place in the Santa Ana Unified School district, where 78% of students are low-income (Kim, Olson, Scarcella, Kramer, Pearson, van Dyk, Collins, & Land, 2011). The study involved 9 middle and 6 high schools; 103 English teachers stratified by school and grade were randomly assigned to the Pathway Project professional development intervention or control group. The Pathway Project, conducted by the University of California Irvine Writing Project site, draws on well-documented instructional frameworks that emphasize a cognitive strategies approach to support students' English language development.

Pathway teachers participated in 46 hours of training and learned how to apply cognitive strategies by using an on-demand writing assessment to help students understand, interpret, and write analytical essays about literature. Multilevel models revealed significant effects on an on-demand writing assessment ($d=.35$) and the California Standards Test in English language arts ($d=.07$).²

California Statewide Program. The effectiveness of the California Writing Project's Improving Students' Academic Writing (ISAW) program (Marlink & Wahleithner, 2011) was examined in a 2-year study with high school teachers from Los Angeles, greater Sacramento, and rural northern California. The program seeks to improve the achievement of traditionally non-college bound students through teacher professional development focused on instructional approaches to teaching analytical writing and critical reading. The six high schools in the first year of the study served student populations in which 61 to 100% were eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) and 3% to 44% were designated as English Language Learners (ELL). Teachers participated in 60 hours of professional development; between pre- and post-professional development, program students' holistic scores increased by .57, while comparison students' holistic scores increased by .24³; the difference was statistically significant ($p < .05$), with an effect size of .48.⁴

² The description of this study is drawn from the abstract in Kim, et al., 2011.

³ Student writing samples for all studies except Kim, et al., 2011, were scored independently at national scoring events using NWP's Analytic Writing Continuum (AWC) Assessment System. AWC scoring provides a holistic score, representing a single summary judgment, along with scores of six attributes (Content, Structure, Stance, Sentence Fluency, Diction, and Conventions). All identifying information including students' name, time of year, program or comparison condition, and geographic location are removed from the writing samples prior to scoring in order to reduce the possibility of scorer bias. Scorers are all expert teachers of writing, who have participated in NWP Invitational Institutes, but have no role in the programs being evaluated.

⁴ Effect sizes, except for Kim, et al., 2011, are calculated based on analyses reported by the studies' authors using Hedge's g as advised by the What Works Clearinghouse (What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook, version 2.1. Retrieved from

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/reference_resources/wwc_procedures_v2_1_standards_handbook.pdf).

In the study's second year, participation in the program and the study narrowed to 11th and 12th grade teachers in two Greater Sacramento area high schools serving student populations in which 69 to 100% were eligible for FRPL and 30 to 44% of students were designated as ELLs. In the second year, teachers participated in 11 full day and 4 afternoon professional development sessions. Differences between pre and post holistic scores for the program students equaled .16, while differences between pre and post holistic scores for comparison students scores dropped by a similar amount (- .15), resulting in a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level in favor of the Writing Project students and an effect size of .32.

New York City. Three studies of the New York City Writing Project (NYCWP) focused on inservice partnerships with high schools, in which the NYCWP works intensively with schools for at least 2 years, offering on-site consultation with teachers 1-4 days per week and 45 hours of afterschool, graduate seminars. The work engages teachers in the study of the theory and practice of writing, exploration of aspects of the writing process, and enactment of practices and ideas with students. The first two studies examined NYCWP's work with 6 high schools at which 64 to 95% of the students were FRPL eligible and between 12 to 91% of students were classified as ELLs. In the first study program students' holistic scores increased by .5, while comparison students' holistic scores decreased by .3; the difference was statistically significant ($p < .01$) with an effect size of 0.51 (Campos & Peach, 2006). In the second study, conducted at the same schools, differences in holistic scores were non-significant, although trends favored program students (Campos & Peach, 2007).

The third study was a mixed-methods, single case design to examine how the NYCWP worked in partnership with a high poverty school (54% of students were FRPL eligible) (Campos & Peach, 2008). Here the researchers compared writing growth among students who experienced

low, medium, and high exposure to teachers with varying levels of participation in NYCWP professional development. Relative to their peers in low and moderate exposure groups combined, high exposure group students' scores increased by 1.29 points; these differences were statistically significant ($p = .01$) with an effect size of .81.

Mississippi Statewide Program. This study examined the effects of 36 hours of professional development provided to 9th grade teachers in two high schools, one in a rural area and one near a small population center (Swain, Graves, & Morse, 2006). These schools, with 64% and 95% FRPL-eligible populations comprised of 81% and 99% African American youth, were each matched with two comparison schools on economic, ethnic, school expenditure, and prior performance factors. Teachers participated in interactive workshops, study groups, coaching, and classroom demonstrations focused on improving writing. Differences between pre and post holistic scores for the program students' holistic scores increased by .5 point between pre and post intervention, while comparison students' holistic scores increased by .1 point; this difference was highly significant ($p < .001$), with an effect size of .59.

Additional secondary studies. Four additional studies showed primarily positive, yet non-significant differences on holistic scores (Lannin & Franklin, 2008; Singer & Scollay, 2009; Wickstrom, Patterson, & Araujo, 2010).⁵ Across 10 studies focused on high-need secondary students, including one randomized experiment, evidence points to the positive effects of teachers' participation in Writing Project professional development on students' growth in writing achievement. These results point to the potential for NWP's inservice programs in high-need secondary schools to make a difference in students' writing performance.

⁵ Wickstrom, Patterson, & Araujo (2010) found that middle school students in comparison classrooms demonstrated higher gains than their peers in program classrooms, with gains in two attributes being statistically significant. These are the only contrasts across 19 studies in which the comparison group outperformed the program group.

Evidence of Effectiveness in Elementary and Middle School Programs. Like the studies of NWP's work at the secondary level, quasi-experimental studies of NWP's work in elementary schools show positive effects. Three studies in diverse regions of the country demonstrated moderate effects of .36 to .40, which are in line with meta-analyses of classroom practices and formative assessment practices that are shown to have moderate to large impacts (Graham, Harris, & Hebert, 2011; Graham & Perin, 2007).

St. Louis County, Missouri. This study examined the effects of an intensive 45 hour teacher-inquiry program that sought to build a core group of teacher-leaders who could develop and sustain a literacy improvement model for grades 3-5 (Singer & Scollay, 2006). The study focused on predominately African American students (82 program and 78 comparison, of whom 54% and 37% were FRPL-eligible respectively), with similar baseline Gates McGinite reading test scores. Program students' holistic scores increased by .48, while comparison students' holistic scores dropped slightly (-.03); this difference was statistically significant ($p < .05$), with an effect size of .40. In addition, the Writing Project students' reading ability over the year grew at a significantly faster rate than that of the comparison students.

Mississippi Suburban/Rural. This study involved 3rd-5th grade teachers (Swain, Graves & Morse, 2007) working in two schools with similar accreditation levels, prior test scores, and demographics (including at least 50% FRPL-eligible students), but located in different areas of the state. The 34-hour professional development program focused on strategies for teaching a variety of positive features in writing, augmented by model responses to student writing. Between pre and post intervention, program students' writing improved on all 6 analytic attributes as well as on the holistic score, which increased by .7 point. In contrast, comparison

students experienced no change in their holistic scores. The difference was significant ($p < .001$), with an effect size of .48.

Greenville, South Carolina. This study involved a quasi-experimental design for studying a 3rd–5th grade writing program (Kaminski, Hunt-Barron, Hawkins & Williams, 2010). Pre and post qualitative indicators, including classroom video data, were collected to determine the influence of a 30-hour professional development program on teachers' philosophies and practices for teaching writing. Student writing performance was determined by pre and post on-demand writing samples and augmented by pre and post samples of portfolio pieces written by program students. Program students' holistic scores increased by 1 point, while comparison students' scores increased by .58; this difference was significant ($p < .001$), with effect size of .36.

Additional Elementary and Middle Grades Studies. Two studies showed positive, but non-significant results, suggesting that Writing Project students outperformed their peers in the comparison groups (Blau, Cabe, & Whitney, 2006, 2007). Only one elementary level quasi-experimental study in South Carolina (Kaminski & Hunt-Barron, 2010) showed mixed, but non-significant results. Overall, in 6 elementary studies, the trend is overwhelmingly in favor of Writing Project teachers' students. Together these studies demonstrate the National Writing Project's exceptional potential to promote growth in writing ability among younger students of all backgrounds in multiple, geographical locations.

Summary of NWP Impact on Student Writing Results. Of NWP's 18 experimental and quasi-experimental studies of intensive inservice professional development, 17 focus on NWP's work with teachers and schools serving concentrations of high-need students. Across these studies student results are consistent, strong, and favorable in those aspects of writing that the NWP is

best known for, such as development of ideas and organization. And, students in Writing Project classrooms gained more often than their peers in the area of conventions, suggesting that basic skills also benefit from the NWP approach to teaching writing (NWP, 2010). In studies with statistically significant results, effect sizes on gains in a holistic measure student writing performance ranged from .32 to .81. These effect sizes are commensurate with those reported in Graham and Perin's (2007) well-regarded meta-analysis. Collectively, these experimental and quasi-experimental studies, which were designed to support causal inferences, address Competitive Preference 1. They demonstrate the positive impact of NWP's programs on student writing achievement in high-need schools from different geographic regions, at different grade levels, and in urban, rural, and suburban areas. The effect sizes related to direct measures of student writing achievement lead us to anticipate effect sizes of .25 – .30 in the similar intensive inservice programs proposed below.

These studies show that NWP, with its national scale and network of long-serving teacher-leaders, is well positioned to offer high-quality professional development that will increase the quality of student writing.

B. Quality of the Project Design and Services

The proposed SEED project will contribute to the ongoing work of NWP's national improvement infrastructure in the teaching of writing. NWP will provide high-quality professional development for K-12 teachers in the teaching of writing to help students meet rigorous academic standards through the NWP national network of 197 university-based sites working in partnership with local schools and districts in all 50 states. NWP proposes three goals:

- (1) Increase the number of K-12 teacher-leaders prepared to improve the teaching of writing.
- (2) Increase sustained professional development services in the teaching of writing, focused on helping students meet challenging standards in writing for college- and career- readiness, for K-12 teachers serving concentrations of high-need students.
- (3) Develop and pilot new online professional development modules to improve the teaching of writing.

Program Goal 1. Increase the number of teacher-leaders prepared to improve the teaching of writing.

Program Objective and Expected Outcome. NWP will support the development of 3,000 locally-based expert K-12 teacher-leaders in the teaching of writing by fall 2012. These teacher-leaders also have access to ongoing Writing Project learning opportunities beyond the initial 120 hours of the Invitational Institute. They will teach an estimated 120,000 students during the 2012-13 academic year alone. These teacher-leaders will also contribute to the work of local Writing Project sites in 2012-13 and beyond to provide high-quality professional development programs in the teaching of writing.

NWP brings a unique combination of experience, capacity, and leadership development in the teaching of writing and literacy. Because the reform of writing instruction necessarily involves K-12 schools and higher education institutions, NWP was founded as and remains a school-university partnership (McDonald et al., 2004). Further, NWP is the only national professional development model for improving the teaching of writing with a focused, aligned program that works at the level of a local capacity-building enterprise, the local Writing Project site.

NWP Model and Approach. The NWP model at each local Writing Project site includes three basic components: developing local teacher leadership to address the teaching of writing in all its

complexity, and then using that leadership to conduct professional development programs and providing leadership in local schools and districts. In addition, all local Writing Project sites provide extensive continuing education programs to teacher-leaders to enable them to address emerging needs and important innovations in their practice and professional development work. Through face-to-face and online programs, local Writing Project sites develop teacher-leaders' capacity to provide high-quality professional development in a time of changing standards and technological innovation.

Writing Project site directors, who are university or college faculty, have a broad range of expertise in the fields of writing and composition, language and literacy development, and teacher education. The K-12 teachers who are selected for the Invitational Institutes similarly exhibit a range of expertise and include elementary teachers, reading specialists, teachers of English language learners, middle and high school English teachers, and subject-matter specialists in other disciplines. The NWP model expects all these participants to both contribute their professional expertise to the overall capacity of the Writing Project and to develop new skills and knowledge that will enable them to work effectively as teacher-leaders to support improved instruction and student writing achievement.

NWP sites recruit and prepare additional teachers every year in order to continue to expand access to high-quality professional development for districts in their service areas. These local Writing Project sites typically recruit 14-18 exemplary K-12 teachers for intensive (120 hour) Invitational Institutes held on university campuses every summer. Each institute convenes teachers to: (a) study the theory and research that is foundational to effective practices in the teaching of writing, including strategies for using writing as a tool for learning in all subject areas; (b) demonstrate and examine their approaches to teaching writing; (c) learn about teaching

writing by further developing their own writing skills; and (d) prepare to lead professional development programs in local schools.

Every participant must give a demonstration of a successful approach to teaching writing, writing and reading, or writing to learn in a specific subject area. Demonstrations must include the classroom practice, the supporting research, and the student writing that resulted. Every participant reads and discusses research in the teaching of composition, including research on specific processes (e.g., drafting and revision), on specific populations (e.g., teaching writing to English language learners), on writing conventions, on writing assessment, and on uses of writing to improve student achievement across the disciplines. All participants write in multiple genres for multiple purposes to gain firsthand experience in the kinds of writing they teach their students and in the kinds of interventions students might need.

In addition, local Writing Project sites conduct an extensive range of intensive advanced institutes for teacher-leaders in order to maintain and expand their knowledge base and leadership capacities. These advanced institutes provide focused attention to new research and practices with the potential to improve the teaching of writing; they may also equip teacher-leaders to help colleagues address new standards for writing and technology or to better meet the needs of specific student populations.

Table 1 shows the numbers of educators who were recruited and selected to participate in 2009 and 2010 and the percentage who served at each school level. Participation figures are projected for 2012.

Table 1. Invitational Summer Institute Participants by School Level, 2009, 2010, Projected 2012

Year	NWP Sites n	Participants n	Elementary	Middle	High School	College / Other
2009	202	3,002	35%	24%	32%	9%
2010	201	2,908	36%	22%	30%	12%
2012	197	3,000	36%	22%	32%	10%

SOURCE: Invitational Summer Institute Survey conducted by Inverness Research. Figures represent a slight undercount of participants because the response rate is not 100%.

In 2009 and 2010, 63% of these participants were recruited from schools serving concentrations of high-need students. Developing teacher-leaders who work in these schools is critical for preparing high-need students to attain college- and career-ready writing standards. In addition, more than 20% of ISI participants hold a primary teaching position in a discipline other than ELA. The Common Core State Standards articulate ELA standards in history, science, and technical subjects; the teaching of reading, writing, speaking and listening will no longer be the sole province of ELA teachers. The fact that 20% or more of these teacher-leaders are drawn from other disciplines positions NWP to play a leading role around implementation of the full range of ELA Standards.

Maintaining the High Quality of the Invitational Institute. To maintain high standards for all local Writing Project work, including the Invitational Institute, NWP conducts an annual peer review process.⁶ Each NWP site provides detailed information about the design, intent and goals of its Invitational Institute; a week-by-week schedule; and an extensive narrative that includes a discussion of all aspects of the institute, including efforts to recruit a diverse group of participants, pre-institute preparation, and an analysis of strengths and challenges. Local Writing Project sites receive detailed feedback about what is working well and areas for growth, as well as suggestions for resources, from their peer site leaders. Sites also receive an overall site

⁶ NWP has focused its previous federal, annual performance indicators on building and sustaining a national network of Writing Project sites that are able to serve as local improvement communities for the teaching of writing. The review of site quality includes a review of the Invitational Institute, and the performance measure was developed in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Education and is reported on annually. (See Appendix E for methodology of review and the rubric used to measure overall site quality).

designation (Standard, Severely Challenged, or Ineligible for Review); the percentage of sites receiving the standard designation remained constant between 2010 (98.5%) and 2011 (95.9%).

Program Goal 2. Increase sustained professional development services in the teaching of writing.

Program Objective and Expected Outcome. NWP will increase sustained professional development services in the teaching of writing for K-12 teachers to 100 schools and small districts serving concentrations of high-need students as defined by free-and-reduced lunch and Title I eligibility. Local Writing Project sites will offer at least 30 hours of professional development per school during the 2012-13 academic year. These services will focus on helping students meet challenging standards in writing for college- and career- readiness. Expected outcomes for participating teachers are:

- a broadly shared understanding and implementation of curriculum and instruction in writing aligned to challenging standards such as the Common Core State Standards for ELA;
- improved teacher practice in the teaching of writing;
- improved student writing achievement in informational and argumentative writing.

Historically, schools and districts in the geographic area surrounding the university have requested professional development programs from local Writing Project sites aimed at improving student achievement in writing. Writing Project sites work with school leaders to design programs that provide research-based strategies for teaching writing, utilizing the expertise of K-12 teacher-leaders in the local community. In 2009-10, for example, teachers from nearly 2,700 schools participated in professional development activities led by NWP teacher-leaders and offered by local Writing Project sites. Of these schools, local Writing Project sites offered professional development programs lasting 30 or more hours during the academic year at 655 schools.

The policy press for raising academic standards in general, and the widespread adoption of the Common Core State Standards in particular, creates a significant need for continued and expanded professional development in the teaching of writing. There is broad agreement that the CCSS will require significant changes in teacher practice and curriculum-in-use at the classroom level if we are to support higher achievement and enable more young people to make successful transitions to college. This is particularly true in schools serving a high proportion of high-need students, where No Child Left Behind focused attention on reading and mathematics, leading in many cases to a diminished emphasis on writing. Further, especially at a time when district and state budgets are being cut, schools serving concentrations of high-need students often have competing needs for scarce resources, including those for professional development.

Duration and Focus. To address this need, local Writing Project sites will use SEED funds to “jump start” intensive professional development programs in writing for high-need schools and small districts. Consistent with a growing research consensus (Desimone, 2009), NWP maintains that professional development must have sufficient duration and focus to help teachers make substantial changes in their practice and have a measurable impact on writing achievement. In all of the NWP quasi-experimental studies that showed statistically significant differences in student writing achievement in schools serving high-need students, teachers participated in a minimum of 30 hours of professional development, with most participating in 45 or more hours. Thus local Writing Project sites will provide customized professional development lasting a minimum of 30 hours during the school year to support teachers, schools, and districts in addressing these rigorous academic standards for all students.

Table 2, shows the number of total number of schools that received 30 hours of Writing Project inservice in 2008-09 and 2009-10, which demonstrates that NWP has the capacity to lead

such work at scale. Of these schools, between 62% and 66% were Title I schools and Writing Project sites offer 30 to 60 hours of professional development per school. SEED funds will support intensive professional development of 30 or more hours in 100 high-need schools. Just over half of these schools will have limited prior participation in Writing Project professional development, while the remaining number will be drawn from schools that want to continue or renew intensive work with their local Writing Project sites but lack the funds to do so. We anticipate that Writing Project sites will also contract directly with 360 additional high-need schools and districts, for a total of 460 high-need schools served.

Table 2. NWP-Provided Inservice to Schools, > 30 Hours per School

Year	All Schools (n)	Title I Schools		
		Schools n (%)	Hours/ School Median	Educator Attendance/School Mean (sd)
2008-09	508	337 (66%)	45	10.0 (20.5)
2009-10	655	406 (62%)	45	8.9 (15.2)
2011-12	700	460 (66%)	45	9 (18)

NOTE: All data are drawn from NWP's Site Profile System. Data related to schools' Title I status are drawn from NCES Common Core of Data.

Alignment and Content-Focus. For professional development to have impact, it must also engage teachers in the study of content and be aligned with teachers' beliefs and local standards (Desimone, 2009). To achieve Goal 2, local Writing Project sites will design customized professional development aligned with the college- and career-ready standards. Such professional development, like that studied in NWP's research, will engage teachers in activities such as studying the latest research on teaching writing and using digital tools; examining student work samples (formative assessment); participating in classroom demonstration lessons and debriefing; developing and refining teaching modules; and testing out new strategies and approaches to teaching. Specific content will be determined based on the specific strengths and needs of participating schools.

To illustrate what this type of sustained professional development can look like, we offer an example of recently completed work at Southside Middle School in Manchester, New Hampshire, which serves 918 students, 45.4% of whom are FRPL eligible. The principal credits the work of the local Writing Project site at Plymouth State University with helping improve the school's test scores in writing. Southside Middle School was designated as a school "in need of improvement" when it began a three-year partnership with the Plymouth State Writing Project. The Writing Project site offered sustained professional development opportunities, including onsite courses, classroom consultations, and demonstrations of classroom practice at the school.

According to the principal, the Writing Project site helped make "writing an important part of our curriculum." A spirit of collaboration was created among the teaching staff through the customized professional development program at the school. "As a result of our school's participation in the NWP, our test scores on the NECAP— New England Common Assessment Program—rose from 31% proficient in 2008-09 to 55% proficient in 2010-11. We are scoring higher than the other middle schools in our district and closing in on the state average" (Peterson, 2011).

Drawing on National Network Infrastructure. NWP will work with local Writing Project sites to support the design of high-quality professional development aligned with the Common Core State Standards, through a range of learning opportunities that focus on writing pedagogy, assignment design, and formative writing assessment. Through online seminars, face-to-face national meetings, and regular check-ins with senior leaders in the NWP network, Writing Project sites will strengthen their local work by building on and adapting successful approaches used elsewhere, sharing resources and ideas, and engaging in collective problem solving around the challenging issues that arise when conducting intensive professional development. Local

Writing Project sites are already creating a rich repertoire of strategies for offering effective professional development related to the Common Core State Standards (e.g., Writing Project teacher-leaders in Kentucky are designing and facilitating much of the state’s professional development related to the roll out of the CCSS); SEED funding will facilitate sharing of knowledge among sites.

Competitive Preference 2

Program Goal 3. Develop and pilot new online professional development resources to improve the teaching of writing.

Program Objective and Expected Outcome. NWP will assist teachers and schools in strengthening curricula and practice related to challenging standards for college-and-career readiness through the development of 20 learning modules to be accessed by teachers more broadly through NWP’s open-access online community of practice, NWP Connect. These teacher-developed learning modules will combine access to resources with a social learning infrastructure to support teachers in learning about new demands and effective practices related to college- and career-ready standards. With this objective, NWP will develop additional open educational resources to add to the extensive repository including an extensive historical collection of resources focused on the teaching of writing at www.nwp.org and Digital Is (<http://digitalis.nwp.org/>), its cutting edge collection of OERs focused on the use of digital tools. These new learning modules will also become part of NWP’s web-based professional development infrastructure, NWP Connect, which will allow NWP and its local sites to reach additional teachers more efficiently through online learning environments.

Capacity for Developing High-Quality, OER Professional Development Modules. NWP online learning modules provide wide distribution of resources, teaching exemplars, and facilitated learning opportunities to the nation’s teachers as part of NWP’s commitment to open

educational resources. In supporting local Writing Project sites to create professional development modules based on effective professional development practices, NWP will build on strong leadership in this area. For example, in fall 2011, Bud Hunt, a Writing Project teacher-leader based in Colorado, piloted an on-line course entitled, “Writing and the Common Core: Deeper Learning for All” (<http://p2pu.org/en/groups/writing-common-core-deeper-learning-for-all/>), that is similar to what NWP proposes to develop with its SEED project. This module supports secondary teachers in an examination of the Common Core ELA expectations for science and social studies. Currently this course has 62 enrollees, and after piloting and refinement it will be openly licensed for adaptation and reuse.

Local Writing Project sites and teacher-leaders will develop and pilot 20 new modules with a view toward their ongoing dissemination and use. These modules will be designed so that they can then be remixed into local offerings as well as powering more ‘massive’ online learning opportunities such as those NWP is offering through Peer to Peer University’s School of Education (<http://p2pu.org/en/>).

Capacity to Engage Teachers in Online Communities of Practice. Forming teacher professional learning communities, in-person and online, creates opportunities for teachers to learn with and from each other (Horn, 2010; Little, 2003). The core practices of building and sustaining professional learning communities and integrating the involvement of national experts through our network of university-based sites are well-refined in the NWP (Lieberman & Wood, 2003). Locally and nationally, the National Writing Project has engaged in extensive cross-site innovation. Traditionally, sharing of practices across sites has happened through brief interactions at national meetings, through print and online publications, or through sites sharing ideas as part of focused programs often funded in part through private investments (e.g., the New

Teacher Initiative, National Reading Initiative; Building Digital Is; Project Outreach; Urban Sites Network; Rural Challenge). NWP's deep experience in building professional communities locally and nationally provides a solid foundation for the transition to online social learning platforms. This shift affords the potential to expand access to professional learning efficiently and at scale.

A current project is to build local, face-to-face leadership development opportunities for teachers and to leverage the power of NWP's new online community of practice, NWP Connect, which opened in August 2011 and currently has more than 1,500 participants. NWP Connect is an online network of topical learning communities built on a social learning model. Teachers can access learning opportunities directly in NWP Connect, and online learning can be built into other, more traditional face-to-face opportunities. NWP Connect provides online resources and participatory learning opportunities as well as access to mentors across the country. NWP Connect's enthusiastic early adopters are assisting with refinement of the platform and piloting of early learning modules on elements of the Common Core State Standards related to writing. Over the course of the 2011-12 school year, we will continue to refine the platform and assess our pilot learning experiences.

Combining face-to-face NWP professional development with additional "just-in-time" learning opportunities facilitated by NWP's network of exemplary educators will enhance and extend participatory learning opportunities and resource development for teachers and districts. We will use NWP Connect to share promising practices, to intentionally scale up practices with promising evidence for student impact or that advance leading edge work in the use of digital tools for writing. These areas include: supporting academic writing for English language learners

using formative writing assessment; and learning to use digital tools to enhance the teaching of writing.

C. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel

(1) Management Plan and Personnel

The proposed SEED project will be managed by the senior leadership team at the National Writing Project, which has long experience in innovating with, providing technical assistance to, and monitoring the network of NWP sites to improve the teaching of writing in a wide range of school settings and communities. The team has extensive experience with ongoing program evaluation and the dissemination of resources and strategies to enhance teacher knowledge and expertise. The team works collaboratively and meets bi-weekly to review and monitor overall progress and effectiveness, discuss critical needs or challenges, and plan for the future. Each member of the senior team also works with additional staff to conduct and support the proposed program of work. Each local Writing Project site also has a leadership team which functions to guide the work on the ground. (See Appendix A for full resumes and Appendix E.3 for list of NWP Board of Directors.) Our qualifications and roles are:

Dr. Sharon J. Washington is the Executive Director of the National Writing Project. She provides overall direction and leadership to the NWP senior leadership team. Under her leadership, NWP is in the midst of strategic planning so that the national improvement infrastructure built over the past 37 years can continue to serve as a force to improve the teaching of writing for all students. She has more than two decades of professional experience and scholarly work in higher education administration, teacher preparation, social justice education,

and nonprofit leadership. She holds a Ph.D. from The Ohio State University School of Education.

Judy Buchanan is the Deputy Director of the National Writing Project. She has more than three decades of work in education centered on urban schools with an emphasis on literacy and language development for all students. Her experience includes 20 years of teaching in urban schools and leadership positions in urban school reform organizations. She holds a M.A. from Temple University School of Education. She will be responsible for coordination and monitoring of the overall SEED project and providing reports to the U.S. Department of Education.

Dr. Elyse Eidman-Aadahl is Director of National Programs and Site Development for the National Writing Project. In that capacity she has worked to develop NWP's technology and digital media programs, as well as other national programs. She has three decades of leadership positions in education at both the high school and university level and holds a Ph.D. from the University of Maryland, College Park in Curriculum Theory. Working with the directors of national programs and site development, she will hold primary responsibility for oversight of NWP local site partnerships and our online community of practice.

Dr. Linda Friedrich is Director of Research and Evaluation for the National Writing Project. In this role, she sets direction for and guides the implementation of NWP's research and evaluation agenda; engages external scholars as advisors and collaborators; and coordinates and integrates research and evaluation with NWP's mission and strategic plan. She has two decades of work in education in school-reform organizations, including NWP for nearly a decade. She holds a Ph. D. from the Stanford University School of Education in Administration and Policy Analysis. Working with the senior management team and NWP's Research Advisory Board (see Appendix E.4), she will lead the development of new measures for NWP teacher leadership

outcomes and other SEED research efforts, and serve as the main link to the independent evaluator for the SEED project.

Patrick Sweeney is Director of Finance for the National Writing Project. He has worked in nonprofit financial management for more than two decades. He holds a B.A. in Economics from the University of California, San Diego. Working with the senior leadership team, he will provide overall budgetary oversight and monitor expenditures as well as provide all required financial reports to the U.S. Department of Education.

SRI International's Center for Education Policy will serve as the independent evaluation contractor with **H. Alix Gallagher, Ph.D.**, and **Katrina Woodworth, Ed.D.**, serving as co-principal investigators. Dr. Gallagher's leadership experience includes major studies on teacher professional development that use experimental and quasi-experimental designs to estimate the effects of interventions on teacher and student outcomes, including the National Evaluation of Writing Project Professional Development and the Evaluation of the Teacher Incentive Fund. Dr. Woodworth has a long record of research on K–12 school reform efforts and experience leading large, mixed-methods research studies, including directing a four-year evaluation of Bay Area KIPP schools that described how the KIPP model works on the ground and to understand KIPP's impact on student achievement. **Haiwen Wang, Ph.D.** has experience in quantitative research design and statistical modeling, and is especially interested in applying rigorous research methodology in evaluation studies. Her research focuses on disentangling the effects of educational interventions on student achievement from confounding factors.

(2) Project Objectives and Timeline

Timeline	Objective	Milestone
February – March 2012	Review NWP Site Quality	Report on NWP Site Quality
	Local Writing Project sites prepare proposals; recruit teachers for leadership institutes; identify high-need schools	Proposals submitted
	Quasi-experimental study of teacher and student impact	Develop and refine instruments
April – May 2012	Writing assessment anchor study	Identify 5 state writing assessments
	Identify successful grant proposals	Complete list of participating high-need schools
	Quasi-experimental study of teacher and student impact	Identify program and comparison schools
June – August 2012	Develop new evaluation tool for teacher leadership activities	Draft teacher survey
	Conduct intensive invitational and advanced leadership institutes	Prepare 3,000 new locally-based expert K-12 teacher-leaders
	Local Writing Project sites develop plans for customized professional development	Review available plans
	Provide technical assistance	Conduct meetings and webinars
	Support design teams developing learning modules	Conduct meetings and webinars
	Survey participants in summer 2012 leadership institutes (Inverness Research)	Complete data analysis
	Quasi-experimental study of teacher and student impact	Finalize school recruitment
Writing assessment anchor study	Score writing samples from 5 states	
Develop new evaluation tool for teacher leadership activities	Pilot new teacher survey	

Timeline	Objective	Milestone
September – December 2012	Offer customized PD programs (local Writing Project sites)	Deliver professional development in 100 high-need schools
	Develop and pilot online learning modules	Learning modules available as OER resources
	Quasi-experimental study of teacher and student impact	Baseline student writing prompts and teacher surveys administered; in-person visits
	Writing assessment anchor study	Complete equating report
January – June 2013	Customized PD programs	Deliver professional development in 100 high-need schools
	Quasi-experimental study of teacher and student impact	Final student writing prompts and teacher surveys administered; in-person visits
July – December 2013	Quasi-experimental study of teacher and student impact	Score student writing samples; Complete final report

D. Sustainability

(1) Build Capacity and Yield Results Beyond the Period of Federal Assistance

The NWP model is a university-school partnership model. Historically, local Writing Project sites have matched the federal investment one-to-one with other locally-secured funds from state, local, and university sources. Beyond the term of this one-year Supporting Effective Educator Development project, NWP will continue to build a broad base of public and private support, generating additional revenues based on our demonstrated ability to develop and deploy teacher-leaders in service of improving the teaching of writing.

The NWP Legacy Study demonstrates the staying power of Writing Project teacher-leaders: 77% stay in the classroom and 97% remain in the field of education following the Invitational Institute. On average, NWP teacher-leaders teach for nearly 23 years.

At the end of the 2012-13 academic year, 3,000 additional NWP teacher-leaders will be

directly reaching 120,000 students across all 50 states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. They will also join other NWP teacher-leaders in providing 7,000 high-quality professional development programs in the teaching of writing, both face-to-face and online. Investing in the development of teacher-leaders through the NWP will continue to provide critical leadership and professional development program offerings in the teaching of writing as the new Common Core State Standards are implemented in classrooms and schools across the country.

In addition to the continuing work of these teacher-leaders in their local districts, we anticipate their contributions through a range of educational support efforts. In particular, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has awarded a significant grant to NWP for work with the Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC). LDC is a network of organizations with strong literacy instruction capability that has developed an authoring tool that allows teachers and others to develop innovative curricula, training modules, assessment threads, and other instructional tools. For the past two years, NWP has partnered with LDC and will continue this work with funding of \$2 million through at least June 2013. The LDC provides a continuing platform for the work of teacher-leaders supported through this proposal.

In addition, NWP will continue to develop, evaluate and disseminate new resources and modules for improving writing instruction. NWP materials are and will continue to be OER resources, available on the NWP website (www.nwp.org), in NWP Connect, and through Digital Is (<http://digitalis.nwp.org>). The NWP website already provides one of the largest open collections of resources related to the teaching of writing, including articles, teaching resources, and video and audio content produced by scholars in the field. In addition, our website Digital Is, which is focused on digital writing, has been fully licensed under Creative Commons to serve as

a companion resource for personal and group learning and participation. Similarly, our proposed 20 learning modules will be available for open use, adaptation, and re-mixing both through the NWP network of sites and to teachers directly.

(2) Findings and Results Used By Others

Sustained Professional Development in Schools. The proposed approach to expanding sustained professional development opportunities focused on teaching writing in high-need schools will build on findings from previous NWP evaluations. Overall this work will yield important working tools, processes, and insights for enacting the CCSS. First, participating teachers and teacher-leaders will generate teaching tools, processes, and assignments that can be readily shared with other teachers. Second, local Writing Project sites will develop professional development materials such as seminar designs, professional readings, demonstration lessons, and consulting approaches that will illustrate productive ways of supporting teachers to work toward meeting high standards in writing. Third, at a national level, the NWP will create and document ways of supporting a distributed network to create high-quality, intensive professional development that can support changes in teaching practices.

NWP will make all of these materials available through its extensive web-based delivery system including: NWP Connect, NWP Radio (a weekly web-based radio show that features topics related to the teaching of writing and the work of the NWP network and can be downloaded as a podcast), webinars, and on its website. In addition, with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, NWP is working with local Writing Project sites in seven states to develop high-quality learning modules aligned with CCSS. These modules, along with the process for creating, testing, and reviewing these, will become part of the resources made accessible through SEED funding.

Digital Tools for Teaching Writing and Online Community. NWP is already a recognized leader in the use of digital learning tools and online communities of learners. SEED funding will allow us to develop 20 additional online learning modules which will provide access to high-quality professional development content beyond the NWP community. We will work with our partners, including the MacArthur Digital Media and Learning Initiative (DML), Peer to Peer University (<http://p2pu.org/en/>), and Edutopia, to expand access to these new resources. This effort builds on NWP's prior successful efforts with creating open educational resources such as the Digital Is website and community of practice.

New Products.

Writing Assessment Tools. As states, districts, schools, and teachers implement the Common Core State Standards and renew their focus on writing instruction, they will seek relevant tools for raising students' writing performance. Formative writing assessment has been identified as a key approach for raising student achievement in this area (Graham, Harris, & Hebert, 2011). Over the past 8 years, NWP has developed and used its Analytic Writing Continuum (AWC) Assessment System to directly measure the growth of writing performance in an objective, unbiased manner, scoring over 40,000 student writing samples. Originally based on the Six+1 Trait Writing Model (Culham, 2003), the AWC applies both holistic and analytic scoring procedures, using a 6-point scale for the holistic score and each analytic attribute (Swain & LeMahieu, in press). In addition to using the AWC for research, teachers who have participated in NWP scorings have adapted it for use in their classrooms and schools. NWP has conducted a series of analyses to examine the technical properties of the AWC. The AWC has demonstrated high inter-rater reliability (overall 90% agreement across attributes), test-retest reliability, and internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .97$). We will prepare an edited volume

describing the AWC that will make public a high-quality system for formative writing assessment. Developers of the system, along with teachers who have used it as a formative assessment, will contribute chapters to the volume that offer the detailed description and practical advice sought by teachers seeking new tools and approaches.

Results of NWP's Legacy Study. NWP's Legacy Study addresses two timeless and pressing questions facing American education today: How do we foster educational leaders focused on improving teaching and learning? and How do we scale up and sustain powerful instructional innovations? NWP will produce two manuscripts based on its Legacy Study research. The first will demonstrate how participation in intensive, content-focused professional development contributes to teachers' development as leaders. The second will use NWP's early history as a case study of the processes, resources, contexts, and issues involved in scaling up an innovation from a single locale to a national infrastructure.

(3) Evaluation Plan

In order to determine the reach and cost of the NWP network's services to teachers and schools and to evaluate the quality of services offered, NWP maintains data systems linked with NCES data, facilitates a peer-review process of site quality (see section B for a description of the Annual Site Review), and fields rigorous research studies to evaluate the impact of the network's efforts. To evaluate the goal of increasing teacher leadership capacity, NWP will use extant systems to measure participation in summer 2012 and develop new tools for measuring teacher and student impact in summer 2013 and beyond. To evaluate the impact of sustained professional development for high-need schools, we propose a one-year multi-site, quasi-experimental design.

Goal 1. Build teacher leadership capacity.

Analysis of Leadership Development Participation, Summer 2012. For summer 2012, NWP will rely on extant data systems to determine the number and general characteristics of participants in NWP's teacher leadership capacity-building programs, the number and percentage of those individuals who serve high-need students, and participant costs. Specifically, NWP will use its site profile and budget systems. In addition, Inverness Research, which has conducted the Invitational Institute survey since 1999, will report on participants' characteristics, level of satisfaction, and perceptions of immediate impact. These data will allow NWP to determine whether it has met its participation targets.

Create New Measures for Determining Teacher Impact. NWP proposes to create refined measures and procedures for analyzing the impact of participating in Writing Project teacher leadership development activity over time. Specifically, we will develop a new teacher survey. In addition to collecting data on participants' demographics and current employment information (which will be linked to NCES data), survey questions will invite teachers to report on their use of practices and strategies for teaching writing and using writing as a learning tool; ongoing professional development participation; and participation in leadership activities. Survey questions that ask for descriptive information such as frequencies, trends, and specific features of programs have been shown to have good validity and reliability (Mayer, 1999). Surveys can, therefore, measure specific features of instruction and professional development well (Desimone, 2009). We will draw items from and build upon scales from robust survey instruments that measure classroom practices associated with student gains in writing achievement (e.g., Applebee & Langer, 2011a).

In addition, we will establish a new schedule for survey administration. Beginning in summer 2013, we will collect baseline measures from teachers prior to their participation in the Invitational Institute. We will collect follow-up surveys each spring in the two school years following a teacher's initial participation in an Invitational Institute. For NWP nationally, this web-based survey, along with the site profile system, will become the primary means of determining the percentage of participants who continue to serve high-need students for at least two years and who play expanded leadership roles. The development and piloting process planned for January–December 2012 will include: collecting existing surveys of writing instruction and descriptions of their technical properties; establishing a work group comprised of NWP staff and site leaders to prioritize survey items and conduct initial piloting; beginning the development of the web-based platform for fielding the survey; launching a pilot of the survey process with 5 Writing Project sites; and developing a data collection and sampling plan.

Determine Teacher-Leaders' Impact on Student Writing Outcomes. NWP is committed to examining the impact of teachers who participate in its intensive leadership professional development efforts on their students' writing achievement. Writing research and evaluation efforts face a serious data challenge: a dearth of valid and reliable assessment data (as well as instrumentation that can produce it) with which to assess policies, programs, and practices. Currently few states maintain a writing assessment program. Even when states do offer writing assessments, technical and other limitations reduce their utility in a number of ways: a) lack of instructionally relevant data; b) lack of reliable discriminatory power that might reveal change over time or differences between groups of interest; and c) inability to develop widespread capacities that support consistent judgments about writing quality or the feedback and instruction that produce it.

To address this challenge, NWP will conduct an anchor study that equates the writing assessments from five states to NWP’s Analytic Writing Continuum. State assessment systems will be selected for the anchor study based on the following criteria: types of writing prompt (e.g., response to text v. respondent based); type of scoring procedure (e.g., holistic or analytic); grade levels represented; and number of Writing Project sites in the state. As part of the anchor study, scores from the state writing assessment systems and the AWC will be examined to determine the extent to which they measure the same or similar constructs. By anchoring state writing assessment systems to the AWC, NWP will establish a more coherent measurement system against which results from multiple state writing assessments can be compared. This will allow NWP to realize the efficiencies of employing extant data systems in analyzing the effects that Writing Project teacher-leaders have on student writing achievement—across both place and time. This anchor study, along with the development of the teacher survey described above, will lay the foundation for a future longitudinal, quasi-experimental study of NWP’s intensive multi-year approach to teacher leadership development, for which NWP will seek separate funding.

Goal 2. Provide sustained professional development to high-need schools.

NWP’s second goal is to increase sustained professional development services in writing instruction designed to support students in high-need schools in attaining the Common Core State Standards for writing. To evaluate whether this goal is met, we will engage in two strands of evaluation activity, tracking the number of teachers and students served in schools targeted and conducting a multi-site, quasi-experimental study focused on a subset of elementary schools served and a matched comparison group of schools.

Tracking the Number of Schools, Teachers, and Students Served. To determine the numbers of teachers and students working with high-need students served under this project goal, NWP

will collect professional development activity data related to the 100 high-need schools and small districts served through this goal. Local Writing Project sites submit data through NWP's site profile system including: information about the site's service area, its leadership and teacher-consultant pool, and its programs and activities. Site profile data are compiled with financial and Invitational Institute participant survey data to prepare individual site profiles, which are available to sites for internal review and strategic planning. Because professional development activities will take place between August 2012 and June 2013, analysis of final participation data will be completed by January 2014.

Quasi-experimental Study of Teacher and Student Impact at the Elementary Level. We propose a quasi-experimental study among a subset of participating elementary schools to evaluate the impact of this work on student writing performance, to be conducted by SRI International, an external research organization. The proposed evaluation is designed to provide guidance about effective professional development strategies suitable for replication and testing in other settings. While local Writing Project sites may elect to work with schools at any level, the evaluation will focus only on elementary schools that include grades 3, 4, and 5.

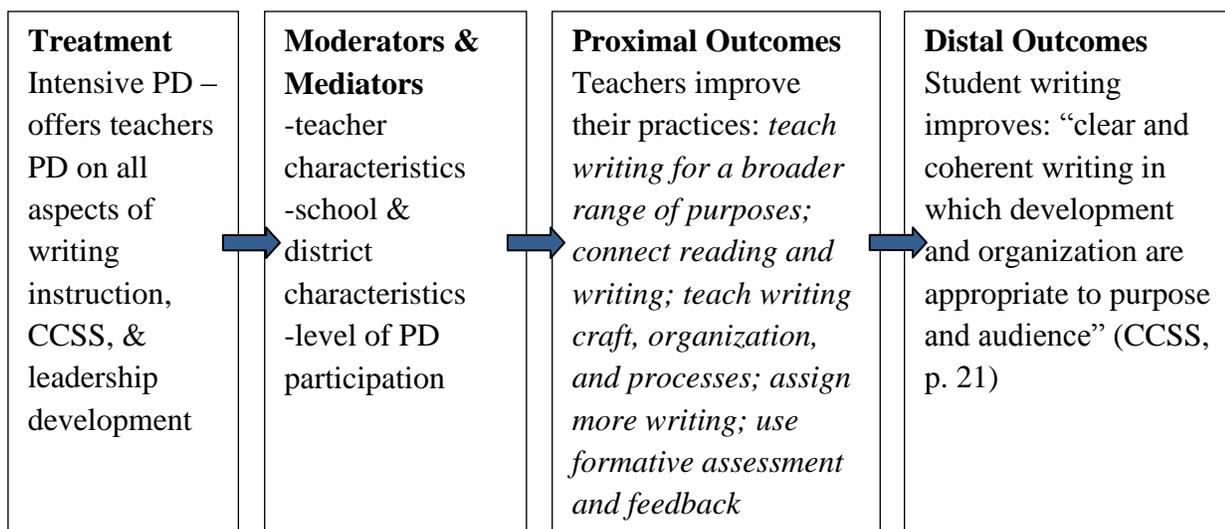
The conceptual framework that guides the evaluation assumes that local Writing Project sites will provide sustained professional development to elementary schools that serve high-need students. It further assumes that participating schools will have a track record with their local Writing Project sites; specifically, the Writing Project site will have provided leadership development either to 1 or 2 individual teachers at the school or less intensive professional development at the school site prior to the beginning of evaluation activities. Local Writing Project sites will determine the specific content, format, duration, and timing of professional development within specified definitional criteria: a) offering at least 30 hours of professional

development, both face-to-face and online, in participating schools over a one year period; b) participation in professional development by at least 75% of teachers in grades 3, 4, and 5; c) a focus on supporting teachers in offering instruction that will enable students to develop and demonstrate competency in the CCSS in writing; and d) ongoing review of professional development implementation between school and Writing Project site.

Beyond these criteria for implementing intensive professional development with integrity, local Writing Project sites have the flexibility to design professional development based on the needs of the schools; they customize format and teacher selection to work within a school’s needs, interests, and constraints. Participants may hold any teaching assignment in the school, as long as 75% of teachers in grades 3, 4, and 5 participate. In addition, local Writing Project sites may offer direct services to students and families in participating schools, such as after-school writing programs or youth writing camps.

The conceptual framework (Figure 1) shows how intensive professional development (PD) programs designed by local Writing Project sites (the treatment) would influence teacher practices (proximal outcomes), which in turn would impact student writing (distal outcomes). This causal chain would be mediated by the level of professional development participation and moderated by teacher and school characteristics.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



The evaluation will investigate five questions:

1. To what extent does the program increase the access of teachers in high-need schools to high-quality professional development in writing aligned with the CCSS?
2. Which features of the program appear related to changes in teacher practice?
3. What is the impact of the program on teachers' practices in writing instruction that are aligned with the CCSS?
4. Which teacher practices are related to students' ability to produce writing aligned with the CCSS?
5. What is the impact of the program on students' ability to produce clear and coherent writing aligned with the CCSS?

Sample. With SEED funding, local Writing Project sites will provide intensive professional development to a total of 100 schools eligible for Title I funding or that serve high proportions of students eligible for Free and Reduced Price lunch and special education services. The evaluation will focus on 25 matched pairs of elementary schools, half of which are participating in the program. We have selected an elementary focus for three reasons. First, we have fielded fewer single-site studies of elementary professional development than of similarly intense programming at the secondary level. Second, we anticipate that effects are more likely to be realized after one year of programming in elementary schools than after a single year of work in secondary schools. Finally, over the past two years, 50% of Title I schools that have received 30 or more hours of NWP professional development have been elementary schools. We anticipate that this pattern would hold, and would yield a pool of 50 eligible program schools from which to recruit a sample.

Local Writing Project sites will work with schools with which they have some prior experience. The study will include only those elementary program schools that have received fewer than 10 hours of Writing Project professional development per year in the past two years and have no more than two teachers who have participated in the Invitational Institute prior to summer 2012. Selecting program schools with some prior knowledge of the local Writing Project site is important for external validity because these conditions are typical for partnership formation (Gallagher et al., 2011).

Design Overview. SRI will work with local Writing Project sites to recruit a comparison group of schools that are comparable on the following dimensions: prior achievement on student writing assessments and standardized English language arts tests; percentage of FRPL eligible students; teacher experience level; in the same or similar district; and demonstrated interest in receiving intensive professional development related to the teaching of writing. SRI will establish acceptable thresholds for comparability on each dimension, orient Writing Project sites to these selection guidelines, provide ongoing guidance and technical assistance to Writing Project sites related to recruitment, and analyze the comparability of school-level baseline data. In instances where it is not possible to find a comparison school matched on all criteria, the priority of criteria will be in the order listed and the comparison school should have the advantage in all criteria (e.g., higher mean scores on the state writing assessment). Schools recruited into the program group will receive sustained professional development, and possibly, additional professional development in writing if mandated by their districts or states. Schools recruited into the comparison condition will pursue “business as usual;” namely teachers will only participate in district- or state-mandated writing professional development. Comparison schools will also be offered an incentive award of \$3,000 to refrain from seeking or offering

additional professional development in writing; in addition they will receive reports on the outcomes of the pre- and post-writing assessments following the conclusion of the study. If funding is available, the comparison schools will receive NWP professional development similar to that offered to the program group. (See Appendix E.5 for additional information on measures.)

Table 3: Research Constructs Measured by Data Sources

	Student Writing	Teacher Practices and Beliefs	Program/ Comparison Contrast	PD Implementation
AWC	X		X	
Teacher Survey		X	X	X
PD Monitoring				X
Interviews		X		X

Measures. SRI will collect four types of measures summarized in Table 3. *Assessment of student writing* will involve all students in grades 3, 4, and 5 completing an on-demand writing sample in fall 2012 and spring 2013. The sample will be written in response to a prompt selected based on the text types and purposes articulated in the CCSS. A sample of students’ writing will be scored using the AWC. A fall 2012 and spring 2013 *teacher survey* will provide data about: a) program implementation in program schools and program/comparison contrast; and b) baseline equivalence and proximal outcomes. The *professional development monitoring protocol (PDMP)* will provide information on teachers’ participation, duration, and content of sustained professional development. *Interviews*, employing a semi-structured protocol, will be used to gather data to triangulate survey and PDMP data on program implementation and to better understand the context in which the schools are operating.

Analysis.

Impact on Students’ Ability to Produce Writing Aligned with CCSS. To address the impact of the program on student writing, we will investigate whether student performance

improves to a greater extent than student performance in the comparison group. The outcomes will be student performance on writing prompts. We will use a three-level hierarchical linear model (HLM) with student, ELA teacher, and school levels to apportion variance appropriately. To improve the precision of the estimation of impact, we will include covariates for students (e.g., student grade), teachers (e.g., years of experience, teaching assignment), and schools (e.g., school size, whether the school made adequate yearly progress and other achievement indicators), that are expected to be related to writing skill improvement.

Analyses of student outcomes will be conducted once, at the conclusion of the study, using both pre- and post-test data. This will enable us to score student writing prompts at the same time, eliminating the possibility of scale drift or variation attributable to scoring sessions. We will use baseline data to check for equivalence between treatment and control groups.

Impact on Teachers' Practices in Writing Instruction. To address the program impact on teacher outcomes, we will compare the general attitude and practice about writing instruction between teachers in the program schools and those in comparison schools. The teacher outcomes will come from the teacher survey. Using pre- and post-data, we will be able to further compare the changes in attitude and practice over time for teachers in program schools and those in comparison schools. SRI will apply a two-level HLM with teacher and school level data. To improve the precision of the estimation of impact, we will include teacher background and experience as covariates.

Extent to Which the SEED Program Improves Teachers' Access to High-quality Writing Professional Development. Using annual survey data collected from all teachers in program and comparison schools, we will be able to assess the extent to which the program provides teachers in treatment schools with more professional development in writing that has features of high-

quality professional development (Garet, et. al., 1999) than is available to their counterparts in comparison schools. This analysis assesses the contrast between program and comparison schools. Measures proposed have been validated (Gallagher et al. 2011) and found to be reliable. The measures include the duration of professional development received, content of professional development, and the extent to which professional development is aligned with teachers' instructional context. Additionally, this analysis will use data from the Intensive Inservice Monitoring Protocol to assess the extent to which content/strategies acquired through the professional development are implemented in each program school. These data will be triangulated with data from interviews, which will be transcribed and coded, to provide information on contextual factors related to implementation, contamination and crossover.

Relationship Between Teacher Practices and Students' Writing Achievement. We will examine whether the teacher outcomes affected by Writing Project participation are significantly related to student outcomes. The overall form of the analyses is similar to those described for the student outcome analysis. The measures of 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade teacher outcomes will serve as predictor variables in the HLM models where the dependant variables are student outcomes. This analysis will enable us to examine the effect of mediating factors (i.e., the change in teacher outcomes) on student outcomes.

Relationship Between Participation in Intensive Inservice and Changes in Student Practice. For teachers in NWP districts only, we will further extend this analysis to include variables that describe the essential dimensions of teachers' participation in the NWP, such as the amount of participation (as gathered from PDMP) and form of professional development. This extension will help us determine which of the features of Writing Project professional development lead to changes in teacher outcomes and ultimately to changes in student outcomes.

Conclusion

Strong writing and literacy skills are essential for success in the digital age. In order to support young people's growth as writers, teachers need high-quality professional development opportunities to strengthen their practice and hone their leadership skills. NWP has unparalleled capacity to address this challenge, with a network of 197 university-based sites located within reach of 75% of the nation's teachers, leading edge professional development and OER resources in digital literacy, and strong evidence of programs that lead to improved student writing achievement. The proposed SEED project will: develop 3,000 new NWP teacher-leaders in all 50 states, engage 100 high-need schools in intensive professional development focused on rigorous standards in writing, and create 20 new on-line professional development modules. The SEED investments will be sustained through NWP's network of sites and teacher-leaders, who will lead improvement efforts benefitting the schools and students they serve over time.

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