NEED FOR THE PROJECT AND PROJECT DESIGN

Sustained and dramatic improvement in student outcomes cannot occur without an intense, strategic focus on teacher and leader effectiveness. IDEA Public Schools, a high-performing charter management organization, and **Pharr-San Juan-Alamo** (PSJA), a large, innovative public independent school district, will work in concert with **Teach For America** and Dr. Noel Tichy, who designed and helped launch the New York City Leadership Academy, to create an **end-to-end human capital pipeline** based on proven, yet innovative methods. IDEA is seeking a $5 million development grant through the Investing in Innovation Fund to drive bold improvement in the human capital practices and student growth and achievement of IDEA and PSJA.

LARGELY UNMET NEED

Chad Richardson, professor of sociology at the University of Texas Pan-American, describes the Rio Grande Valley (the Valley), where Texas meets Mexico, as a region where "rural meets urban, traditional confronts modern, enormous wealth grinds against abject poverty, and First World meets Third." The Rio Grande Valley is growing rapidly and is home to some of the poorest counties in the nation. A large number of students live in *colonias*—unincorporated communities located within 150 miles of the Texas-Mexico border...with a population of less than 10,000...that have a majority population composed of individuals and families of low and very low income, who lack safe, sanitary and sound housing, together with basic services such as potable water, adequate sewage systems, drainage, streets and utilities (TDHCA, 2008). This alone hinders many aspects of their lives, including their ability to study outside of the classroom.

In this place of contradictions, one thing is certain: **public education in the Valley is**

under undeniable pressure to serve an expanding high-need student population with an extremely limited educator pool. Consider the staggering needs of the student population in the Valley**:**

- Just over half (50.2%) of all households in Hidalgo County have an annual income of less than $25,000 as compared to 30.6% of households across the state. Only 9.4% of all households in Hidalgo County have annual incomes over $75,000 as compared to 21% at the state level. (Encore study, pg. 33)

- The median family income in Hidalgo County is $26,009 as compared to the state average of $39,927. (Encore, pg. 34)

- The proportion of the Hidalgo County population over the age of 25 with at least a high school degree is 50.5% as compared to 68.0% for the entire South Texas region and 75.7% for the state (THECB, 2007b). In 2000, one third (33.8%) of Hidalgo County adult residents had less than a 9th grade education, **nearly three times the state average** of 11.5%. Only 30.3% of Hidalgo County residents had attended some form of college or higher, while the state average is 50.8% (Encore study, pg. 33).

This current state of educational attainment in the Valley limits the pool of local teacher and school leader talent, which in turn, limits the extent to which local districts and Charter Management Organizations (CMOs) can identify, recruit, develop, and place an exceptional teacher in every classroom and an excellent leader in every school. Additional challenges include:

- By March of 2010, the waiting list to enter one of IDEA's high-performing charter schools was over 9,500 students, **nearly two students for every one spot that is available**. Yet IDEA's **capacity to expand is limited** by the number of teachers

and school leaders it can identify, recruit, develop, and place.

- Teach For America recruits, places, and supports a significant number of teachers in IDEA and PSJA each year. Other new teachers in these organizations do not receive support comparable to that provided to TFA teachers.

- High-caliber teachers enter IDEA and PSJA but often do not stay because there is **no defined career pathway** when they are ready to advance.

- Neither LEA has fully implemented a clearly defined, rigorous, transparent **system of teacher selection, evaluation, and support** based on identified teacher competencies, although IDEA has begun to develop a competency model.

- **Leadership development** is currently limited to a series of monthly workshops and coaching sessions for a handful of participants.

To break the cycle of low educational attainment in the Valley, IDEA and PSJA must study and implement best-in-class practices across the entire human capital pipeline— from new teacher through experienced school leader—and rigorously evaluate programs and practices to ensure that educators have the skills and support to be effective.

Snapshot of Partner LEAs

INDICATOR	IDEA Public Schools	Pharr-San Juan-Alamo
Current Enrollment	5,493	33,909
4-year Projected Enrollment	10,715	35,250
Hispanic, White, Other	94%, 4%, 2%	99%, 1%, <1%
At-Risk	23%	73%
Limited-English Proficient	37%	42%
Economically Disadvantaged	76%	89%

INDICATOR	IDEA Public Schools	Pharr-San Juan-Alamo
Poverty Rate (US Census)	33.53%	42.31%
Current Teacher Turnover	16%	12.8%

This i3 grant will establish the **Rio Grande Valley Center for Teaching and Leading Excellence**. This leading edge Center will develop a permanent and sustainable capacity to recruit, select, onboard, evaluate, reward, support, train, and retain teachers and school leaders across two LEAs in the highest-need area of Texas. This work will create **intentional support infrastructures and multiple pathways to teacher and school leadership,** thereby dramatically increasing the **number of highly effective teachers and school leaders (as measured by improved student achievement) serving high-need students. (Absolute Priority 1)**

Project Strategy and Actions

The core strategy for the program is for Center and LEA staff to work with innovative human capital experts to import proven human capital practices into both IDEA and PSJA. The Center will be developed as a semi-autonomous entity to promote its ability to focus on continuous improvement and demonstrated student achievement by dramatically improving and impacting 1) recruitment and selection; 2) new teacher onboarding, training and support; 3) experienced teacher skill advancement; 4) instructional coach/assistant principal training and support; 5) school leader training and support; and 6) a data-driven evaluation and reward process for teachers and school leaders.

Recruit and select high-quality teachers

TFA will share proven tools and processes for effective teacher recruitment and selection, providing tailored advice to IDEA and PSJA. PSJA and IDEA will pilot

enhanced recruitment and selection processes in program year 1, with broad adoption and further refinement in years 2-4. Each district's recruitment and selection model will address its own specific needs but will also have common elements: the use of student performance data, high expectations for all students, and a proven record of success.

New teacher onboarding, *training and support*

Once recruited and selected, the Center will provide new teachers with a comprehensive onboarding process to support instructional skill building and to adapt to each organization's norms and culture. Based on TFA's well-regarded Summer Institute, the Center will identify essential elements to be replicated and modified to fit local context for the New Teacher Institute.

The TFA data-driven coaching model is a critical teacher support program that will be closely replicated and implemented by the Center. TFA coaches examine student-level data, work with new teachers to set specific student outcome goals, and support new teachers in implementation of strategies to meet these goals.

Experienced teacher skill advancement

The largest segment of the human capital pipeline, the experienced teacher (defined as having strong student performance and two years in the classroom), is where both districts have the greatest likelihood of identifying candidates for high-impact leadership roles that have a strong connection to teaching, learning, and student achievement. These experienced teachers are currently tapped for roles like grade-level or department head, but they currently receive little or no training and support in these capacities.

The Center will work with leading thinkers and practitioners in business and education to create the Teacher Leader Institute to meet the instructional and leadership needs of

this group, such as relationship building with adults, meeting facilitation, conflict resolution, analyzing data to drive instruction, and coaching and developing team members. The Center staff will support PSJA and IDEA in implementing strong selection processes that focus on the key skills and qualifications necessary to effectively take on teacher - leader roles. See Appendix H for more detail.

Assistant principal/instructional coach training and support

Assistant principals, deans of students/instruction, and instructional coaches currently serve in critical roles on campuses across IDEA and PSJA. However, individuals new to these positions have very little training or support from central office and are often the only person in this role on their campus, leaving them to transition through intuition and trial and error. TFA has a very effective "Outcome-Causes-Solutions" model (beginning with student achievement outcomes and prioritizing teacher knowledge, skills and mindsets for improvement) for teacher observation and feedback through their role of Regional Program Directors. The Center will work with TFA to adapt the Outcomes-Causes-Solutions training in preparation for the first Instructional Leader Institute. The Center will also provide coordinated support throughout the academic year for staff new to these roles as well as for existing staff depending on individual and campus needs.

The Center will support the development and implementation of strong selection processes for these roles based on a growing understanding of the skills and qualities needed for this critical pipeline to school leadership. Center staff will learn from nationally recognized principal training programs, such as the New York City Leadership Academy and New Leaders for New Schools, both how they approach leader selection and the critical elements of their curriculum. See Appendix H for more detail.

School leader training and support

Both current and new school leaders can benefit from individualized skill building and observation/feedback. Center staff will work with experts in effective research-based practices in leadership development to fuel its capacity to create individualized development plans focused on building a learning culture for up to 20 principals annually.

Noel Tichy, Professor of Management and Organizations at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business, has agreed to provide professional support to the development of a team-oriented leadership development process for principals. Dr. Tichy's experience and credentials are summarized in the Research section (pages 17-24). The purpose of the work with Dr. Tichy is to equip principals to be energetic change agents who elevate school standards and expectations, motivate teachers, implement curriculum changes, and make lasting improvements in student outcomes.

As members of a participating school team, principals will build their own capacity and that of their administrative team for leading effective change and improvement on their campus, including: communicating a vision, goal-setting and investment, creating strategy and designing processes, clarifying roles and expectations, and evaluating interpersonal team dynamics and effectiveness. Each experienced school and district leader participating in this pathway will create an individualized learning plan targeting one or two key areas for growth during the development year and will undertake action research to improve their effectiveness. See Appendix H for more detail.

Data-driven evaluation process

The Center will work with TFA and staff from both LEAs to finalize teacher evaluation and reward models and Teaching as Leadership rubrics for each LEA. These evaluation

and compensation models will include student growth and achievement as a significant

component, and will measure LEA-specific

competencies developed to address local context and

organizational values. HR leaders from IDEA and PSJA

will share existing evaluation systems and discuss

aspects that are in development, what is working well,

and what is not working. The Center will facilitate these

Clear evaluations of
educator effectiveness,
based on student growth,
inform decisions at each
step of the human capital
continuum

- Training
- Compensation
- Advancement
- Retention

conversations, capture areas of common need, and support the implementation of

collaborative efforts to improve and further align existing evaluation and reward systems.

The Center will also support strong and consistent implementation of teacher and

principal evaluation, as well as differentiated outcomes based on evaluation. Absolutely

critical to this program is that all human capital decisions will be based on evaluation data

that shows teacher and leader efficacy in terms of driving student achievement.

PROGRAM NOT WIDELY ADOPTED

Each i3 program partner brings unique and valuable assets to this program that make

it a powerful, cohesive program. Similar to other high performing CMOs, IDEA has built

its success on a strong investment in human capital practices, centered on recruitment,

selection, and empowerment. But the systems are not well designed to scale, nor are

there training and support mechanisms in place to enhance retention. PSJA understands

the challenges of working at scale but has not yet developed human capital practices to

drive ever-increasing educator quality. TFA, as a non-profit that focuses solely on the

recruitment, selection, placement and support of new teachers, brings a wealth of proven

practices they are willing to share. Dr. Tichy brings critical experience in leadership

development, honed over many years in both the private sector and in the field of education. Together these organizations will create an innovative, scalable human capital system.

PROJECT GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Project goals: During the grant period, we will accomplish the following goals:

> **GOAL 1: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF NEW AND EXPERIENCED TEACHERS AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS THAT RECEIVES HIGH QUALITY TRAINING AND SUPPORT**

During project years 2-4, the Center will coach, train, and support 600 new teachers in a two-year skill building program; 300 participants in the Teacher Leader Institute and subsequent skill based training and support system; 200 participants in the Instructional Leaders Institute and subsequent training sessions; 80 principals to develop an individualized skill based program; and will provide full-time, paid internships for 18 promising school leaders.

> **GOAL 2: INCREASE THE PERCENT OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS**

The outcome of the training described above will be an increase in effectiveness of LEA teachers and leaders due to the program. This will be measured primarily by student outcomes. The goal is that by the end of the grant, 90% of participating teachers and leaders receive "effective" or "highly effective" rating on their evaluations (student achievement is a primary component of the evaluation system, so student growth must be robust to achieve these ratings).

> **GOAL 3: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ASSIGNED TO TEACHERS AND/OR INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS WHO RECEIVE TRAINING AND SUPPORT**

As described in goal 1, during project years 2-4, the Center will coach, train, and support more than 1,100 educators. With support and development at each level of the human capital pipeline, every student in PSJA and IDEA will benefit from enhanced instruction (50,365 students by year 4).

GOAL 4: INCREASE STUDENT GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT

By project years 3-4 we expect to see statistically significant increases in overall student achievement; student achievement for at least three subpopulations (Hispanic, economically disadvantaged, at-risk, special education, or limited-English proficient); and commended levels of performance on the state criterion-referenced exam for students assigned to Center participants.

GOAL 5: RETAIN HIGH QUALITY TEACHERS AND LEADERS TO SUPPORT DISTRICT GROWTH

During each of program years 3-4, we expect to see statistically significant increases in new teacher retention[1] for each partnering LEA; unwanted teacher and leader attrition decreased to 10% or less; and 5-10% of lowest performing educators exited annually.

GOAL 6: EVALUATE OVERALL TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS AND DISSEMINATE RESULTS

During each of program years 2- 4, the program evaluation team establishes experimental and control groups, gathers qualitative and quantitative data on students and teachers, and determines program success by linking student achievement results to teachers in each group. IDEA only wants to operate this program if the results are good and getting better each year, so it must measure the outcomes with rigor.

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[1] Retention for teachers with 1-2 years of experience.

STRENGTH OF RESEARCH, SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT, MAGNITUDE OF EFFECT

It is typical in education research that when a given problem is addressed with multiple methods, conflicting conclusions are often produced. In addition, very little controlled experimentation exists. Although research on teacher and leader preparation and professional development is a long way from professional consensus, we found that teacher quality and effective leadership are the most important variables contributing to student achievement.

"Teacher quality, measured by value-added models, is the most important school-based factor when it comes to improving student achievement." (Goldhaber and Anthony, 2004). Two studies estimate that a one standard deviation increase in teacher quality raises student achievement in reading and math by 10 percent of standard deviation (Rivkin, et al, 2005, Rockoff, 2004). Furthermore, a good principal is the single most important determinant of whether a school can attract and retain high-quality teachers (Leithwood, et al, 2004).

However, teacher quality is difficult to measure, as are the variables that contribute to it. Factors that correlate with measures of teacher effectiveness include degree and experience levels (Aaronson, et al, 2007; Goldhaber, et al, 1999), teachers' verbal ability and subject matter preparation, (Ehrenberg and Brewer, 1995; Monk, 1994), as well as additional support, such as resources, administrative or instructional leadership, curriculum, or professional development (Boyd, et al, 2005), although effect sizes in some studies have been modest (Aaronson, et al, 2007; Goldhaber, et al, 1999). The Center will systematically address all these elements using proven or promising practices.

A 2003 research summary by Education Commission of the States (ECS) suggests

that a successful alternative program for teacher training and certification should include a robust participant screening and selection process, strong supervision and mentoring for participants, coursework in classroom basics and teaching methods, and training and coursework prior to full-time teaching. TFA, a major partner in the Center, has been recruiting, selecting, training and supporting new teachers for two decades.

TFA's **recruitment and selection process**, which recruits graduates from all academic majors at selective higher education institutions (35,000 applicants yielded an entering corps of 4,000 in 2009) to teach in high-need schools and districts, is supported by research that suggests a significant correlation between a teacher's pre-college SAT scores and teacher effectiveness (Harris and Sass, 2006, rev. 2008) as well as evidence of correlation between a teacher's own academic success and effective teaching (ECS, 2003). Studies that include a valid measure of teacher verbal or cognitive ability find that this factor explains more of the variance in student achievement than any other measured characteristic of teachers (e.g., Greenwald, et al, 1996; Ferguson and Ladd, 1996; Kain and Singleton, 1996; Ehrenberg and Brewer, 1994).

TFA has extensive experience in **pre-induction training and "onboarding"** of new alternative certified teachers. While some studies have found no evidence that either pre-service training or scholastic aptitude have an impact of student achievement (Harris and Sass, 2006, rev. 2008), several studies *have* found that students of TFA corps members attained greater gains in math and equivalent gains in reading versus students of non-TFA teachers, including veteran and certified teachers (Decker, et al, 2004; Noell and Gansle, 2009).

Ongoing support and structured professional development are central to training and retaining teachers. TFA's outcomes from its integrated system are a teacher corps that is "more effective, as measured by student exam performance, than traditional teachers …..The TFA effect, at least in the grades and subjects investigated, exceeds the impact of additional years of experience, implying that TFA teachers are more effective than experienced secondary school teacher." (Xu, et al, 2007)

"The best way to get more leaders is to have leaders develop leaders by creating a teaching culture," according to Noel Tichy. Dr. Noel Tichy designed and helped launch the New York City Leadership Academy and the transformation of General Electric's famed Leadership Development Center in Crotonville, New York. A key component of this program is the recognition that adults learn best by working on real problems, not case studies or hypothetical scenarios. Action learning enables leaders to work on problems that are context based—of utmost importance to them—while being simultaneous supported through the learning and use of new tools, concepts, and skills. A 2009 study of the outcomes shows that schools led by Academy-trained principals had better English/Language Arts performance than their comparison group counterparts and these gains were sustained over a three-year period. (Corcoran, et al, 2009)

The more that teachers and leaders focus their work and learning on the core business of teaching and learning, the greater their influence will be on student outcomes. Individual differences in teachers and leaders will never go away, but powerful school organization structures and strategies that support effective forms of recruitment, selection, evaluation, and instructional systems should reduce those differences to the point that every teacher and leader is armed with a high-quality repertoire of skills.

EXPERIENCE OF THE ELIGIBLE APPLICANT

IDEA Public Schools: History, Growth, and Expansion

The IDEA Academy was conceived by Tom Torkelson and JoAnn Gama at the end of the first year of their TFA assignment. Immersed in a school that was poorly organized, lacked a focus on student achievement, and provided too few students an academic path that was leading them to college, Tom and JoAnn began to search for solutions.

Together they crafted a school design model to rapidly accelerate student learning and close the achievement gap. All the stakeholders in the IDEA Academy were unified by the belief that there were no quick, easy methods to enhance student achievement; high quality instruction from teachers and intense effort from students were the only ways to achieve sustained improvement. With the motto of "No Excuses!" the program saw student gains that helped put students on a dramatically different path, and the state granted a charter to IDEA in 2000. Since that time, IDEA has experienced rapid growth and currently enrolls almost 5,500 students on campuses in six communities throughout the Rio Grande Valley, spanning Cameron and Hidalgo counties. When all IDEA schools are fully enrolled, IDEA will serve 15,000 students in the Valley.

Each year, the desire to register into an IDEA school grows exponentially. By March 2010, the waitlist exceeded 9,500. The demand for excellent public schools is clear, and IDEA leaders intend to do everything in their power to provide them.

Mission, Model, and Focus

IDEA Public Schools prepares students from underserved communities for success in college and citizenship and is committed to developing students with the academic, social, and leadership characteristics to apply, matriculate, and succeed in a four-year

college or university.

IDEA does this through a high-quality, focused approach to teaching and learning that is derived from the rigorous International Baccalaureate model, a unique and powerful school culture of high expectations for all, small school size, and partnership with parents. A key component of success is the extended school day and year, allowing an uncommon depth and breadth of academic and extra-curricular offerings. With more time on task, an intentional, data driven approach to student learning, and a campus culture that rewards academic achievement through a strong focus on students' individualized performance goals, IDEA students continue to outperform their peers on numerous measures of student achievement.

Student Success and Achievement

The flagship IDEA campus in Donna, Texas has graduated three classes of seniors, 100% of whom enrolled in a four-year college or university. Three-fourths of all IDEA graduates are first-generation college students. To date, 97% of all IDEA students who entered college are still enrolled, dramatically outpacing national averages for college attendance and retention in low-income, Hispanic, and first-generation demographics. In 2015, IDEA will send its 1,000th student to college. In 2018, IDEA will send 1,000 students to college *every year*.

Academic Success, Awards, Recognition

One measure of success, student achievement on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAKS) test, the state's criterion-referenced multiple-choice exam, is illustrated in the following graphics:

Recent Student Achievement on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

(TAKS) Exam Relative to Surrounding Public School Districts

2008-2009 TAKS RESULTS
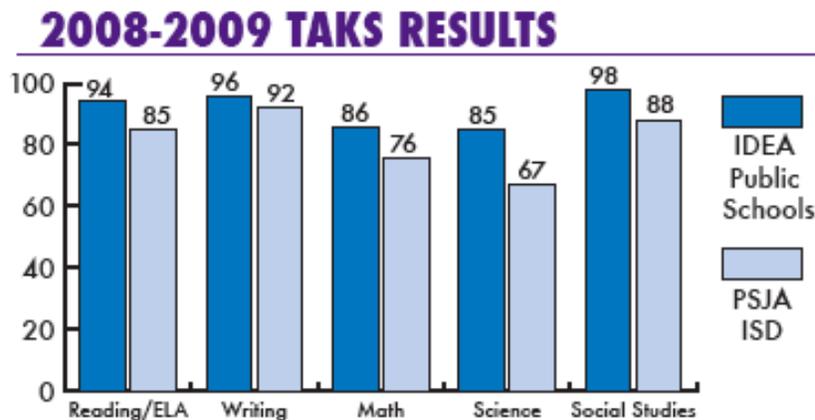
Additional awards of note are listed here:

- IDEA College Preparatory Donna was named top high school in the Rio Grande Valley, #3 high school in Texas, #3 charter school in the nation and #13 high school in the nation ("Best High Schools 2010," US News and World Report);

- IDEA Public Schools was rated "Recognized" by the Texas Education Agency (2009), with three "Exemplary" Schools: IDEA Frontier Academy, IDEA Quest Academy, and IDEA Donna College Prep.

Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District: Project Partner

Pharr-San Juan-Alamo (PSJA) Independent School District educates over 30,000 students, making PSJA the largest school district in Hidalgo County and the second-largest in the Valley. The student body is 98.7% Hispanic, 85.11% economically disadvantaged, and 77.74% at risk. Over 41% of the students are considered Limited English Proficient with Spanish as the primary language spoken at home.

Student Success and Achievement

For the 2009-2010 school year the Texas Education Agency (TEA) labeled 11 PSJA

campuses with an "Exemplary" status and 15 as "Recognized", doubling the number of Exemplary campuses in one year alone. Most recently, nine PSJA schools were named the "Best in the State" by Texas Monthly Magazine based on a study done by the National Center for Educational Accountability.

PROJECT EVALUATION

Research Design

SRI and Copia Consulting will conduct a rigorous research study to evaluate the effect of the proposed joint teacher development pipeline between IDEA and PSJA. This study will examine (1) whether new teachers participating under the proposed New Teacher Induction Institute (NTI) component have higher student outcomes than existing teachers; (2) whether these new teachers have lower levels of turnover and higher job satisfaction and efficacy than existing teachers; (3) the effect of the Instructional Leader Institute (ILI) on student outcomes; (4) the implementation of the joint teacher development pipeline, its facilitating factors, and challenges; and (5) the relationship between NTI implementation and teacher and student outcomes.

Study Design

The proposed research uses quantitative and qualitative methods to study the implementation of the teacher development pipeline and uses a randomized control treatment (RCT) design to examine the effects of (1) the NTI and (2) the ILI. This RCT design meets the standards for rigorous research required to provide solid evidence for interventions in the What Works Clearinghouse Standards (2008) and those of scientific associations such as the Society of Prevention Research (Flay et al, 2005). The methods of evaluation are appropriate to the size and scope of the proposed project and will

provide high-quality implementation data and performance feedback, and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

Study of the New Teacher Institute. Before the beginning of each school year (2011-12, 2012-13, and 2013-14), researchers will randomly assign students to classrooms ██

████████████████████████████████████ Treatment teachers will participate in the NTI, including the proposed new selection, recruiting, and hiring processes, training, and induction support. Control teachers will not have gone through those experiences.

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Study of the Instructional Leader Institute. ████████████████████████

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Measures

The research will rely on data from multiple sources, including Texas Education Agency (TEA) archived data system, district and school records, and teacher surveys. In

this section, we describe the measures that will be used in the studies analyzing the effects of NTI and ILI. Qualitative data collection on implementation will supplement the studies of effects and is described later.

Student outcomes and characteristics. Student achievement measures are reading/English and math (grades 3 through 11), science (grades 5, 8, 10, and 11) and social studies (grades 8, 10, and 11) scores on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), the statewide vertically aligned (beginning with 2009-10 data), standardized, high-stakes test. Other outcomes include student attendance, grade retention, and graduation, which will be extracted from the state data system and district records. In addition, we will obtain student demographic and program (e.g., special education, Title I variables from district databases.

Teacher outcomes and characteristics. Teacher outcomes include teacher retention in district, job satisfaction, teacher-reported efficacy and need for support, and principal-rated teacher performance scores. The retention data and teacher performance scores will be obtained from IDEA and PSJA human resources (HR) departments, whereas the other variables will be obtained through yearly teacher surveys with reliable and valid items established in prior studies (Blazeman, McKie, & Carey, 2009; Wechsler, Caspary, Humphrey, & Matsko, 2009). Teacher characteristics variables, including demographics, certification, and teaching experience will also be obtained from the two HR departments.

School characteristics. Data archived by TEA include a wide range of school characteristics variables, such as percent minority students, percent bilingual/English as a Second Language, percent economically disadvantaged, percent new teachers,

accountability ratings, school size, and so on.

Data Collection on Implementation

Qualitative and quantitative data collection on the implementation of the NTI and ILI will supplement the studies on their effectiveness. Tools used will include surveys, training observations, interviews, site visits, and document reviews, and case studies.

NTI Data Analysis

The analytic approach takes into account that students are nested within teachers, and schools and therefore may share common characteristics. SRI will use hierarchical linear models (HLM) (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002; Singer & Willett, 2003) to test program effects and the association between key implementation factors and teacher or student outcomes.

Differences between treatment and control teachers in student outcomes

Survival analysis of teacher turnover/retention. Survival analysis is a popular and powerful statistical method analyzing the timing of events (Hosmer & Lemeshow, 1999). SRI will use this approach to explore the differences in turnover between treatment and control teachers ███

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Differences between treatment and control teachers in teacher outcomes. Both descriptive statistics and multiple regressions will be used to explore the differences between treatment and control teachers on teacher outcomes such as job satisfaction, self-efficacy, and principal-rated teacher performance.

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Power analysis. ██

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Formative Feedback and Reporting

The implementation data collection is designed to facilitate timely formative feedback for IDEA, PSJA, and Center leaders. Each year, Copia and SRI provide feedback based on data from participants on the usefulness of the summer institutes and ongoing supports during the school year. Because the studies of effects follow cohorts of teacher and teacher leader participants, the formative feedback will not affect the results of the RCTs. The study reports will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project to facilitate further development, replication, or testing in other settings. Each report will follow the guidance provided in Reporting the Results of Your Study made available from the What Works Clearinghouse.

Organizational Qualifications and Key Personnel

For the proposed research, Dr. Viki Young and Dr. Xin Wei will lead the research

team. Dr. Young will be the Principal Investigator, overseeing the design phase of the study and ensuring the overall quality of the work. She specializes in research on teachers' use of data for instructional improvement. Dr. Wei specializes in experimental and quasi-experimental research design and will conduct the RCT studies and oversee the survey analysis. Rachel Howell and Angela Luck, founding partners in Copia Consulting LLC, will be lead all aspects of the qualitative research. Copia Consulting will bring substantial expertise and regional knowledge to the research team.

Budget Justification

SRI brings to this project a deep commitment to educational equity, substantive knowledge in teacher development and credentialing and charter school organizations, strong methodological skills, and an understanding of the Texas educational policy context. Across all of its studies, SRI uses rigorous, mixed-methods research designs to understand policy, its implementation, and its effects. In particular, SRI integrates qualitative and quantitative approaches such as case study and survey work grounded in explicit theories of action to investigate the nature of program implementation, facilitating factors, and ongoing challenges faced by practitioners, schools, and districts. Implementation analyses are then paired with experimental or quasi-experimental designs to analyze the impact of programs on relevant teacher and student outcomes.

SRI uses a bottom-up, activity-based budgeting process for each proposal. Budgets are created using SRI's centralized costing system housing accurate labor and indirect rates monitored by U.S. government audit. The level of effort is budgeted based on experience in conducting similar tasks on similar projects and informed by data from SRI's Performance Status Reporting system, which records project-specific actual labor

hours by task. Approximately 13% of the i3 budget, or $1,076,749, has been set aside for

Project Evaluation, thus ensuring that this project has sufficient resources for research.

STRATEGY AND CAPACITY TO BRING TO SCALE

Number of students to be reached and capacity to reach them

Over four years, this program reaches 600 of the approximately 1,500 new teachers

hired by the two organizations, 400 instructional leaders, 24 of the approximately 35 new

principals, and 160 of the aspiring leaders across the two organizations combined.

Because IDEA and PSJA are training significant portions of their educators at so many

critical points in the human capital pipeline, all students in both organizations will benefit

from teachers, instructional leaders, principals, or all three who have been trained through

this program.

The following table summarizes past and future growth in student enrollment over the

lifetime of the project as well as the estimated cost to reach them.

PAST	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
IDEA Enrollment	896	2,073	2,714	3,945	5,493
Growth	+36%	+131%	+31%	+45%	+39%
PSJA Enrollment	28,061	28,883	29,966	30,537	33,909
Growth	+3%	+3%	+4%	+2%	+4%
FUTURE	**Year 0**	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Year 4**
IDEA Projected Enrollment	5,493	7,139	8,602	9,910	10,715
PSJA Projected Enrollment	33,909	35,250	36,660	38,130	39,650
Total Enrollment by Year	39,402	42,389	45,262	48,040	50,365
Program Cost Per Year	--	$1.356M	$2.020M	$2.372M	$2.496M

Per-pupil Cost Per year	--	$31.99	$44.62	$49.37	$49.56
Total Per-pupil Program Cost = $164					

IDEA currently enrolls 5,493 students, and its expansion plans project a 95% increase in enrollment to 10,715 students by the 2013-14 school year. PSJA currently enrolls 33,909 students, and its enrollment is projected to rise by 17% to 39,650 students in four years.

The Center will directly impact 1,198 teachers and promising leaders over the project period. With a program cost of $8,243,331, the per-participant cost for 1,198 teachers, instructional leaders, and school leaders translates to a cost-effective $6,881 over the life of the program. The impact of the program will reach all 50,365 students in the partner CMO and district, at a cost of $164 per student.

IDEA is a fiscally sound and responsible LEA with sufficient management capability—including a senior leadership team to support the rapid growth of its highly successful charter school model while steadily and simultaneously increasing student achievement. IDEA's established partnerships with PSJA and TFA's Rio Grande Valley Regional staff give this grant initiative a solid foundation to implement the project and achieve the intended results and outcomes in four years.

As detailed in the Management Plan (pages 30-34), both organizations will invest significant senior leadership capacity into the development and implementation of this program. Because this work is so critical, the leaders of both organizations will dedicate significant time each to ensuring this program is a success. Both Tom Torkelson of IDEA and Dr. Daniel King of PSJA have track records of implementing complex projects successfully, and their visions and commitments will be the foundation of this work.

In addition to strong leadership from the top, IDEA will dedicate one of its most talented senior leaders fully to this project. Martin Winchester is currently the Chief Schools Officer and will take on the new role as Director of the Center to focus on this project. Becky Garza, a long-time teacher and principal for PSJA who now leads the human resources work for the district, be responsible for ensuring the implementation within PSJA is high quality. Robert Carreon, Executive Director of the TFA regional office in the Rio Grande Valley will manage the work for TFA. In addition to the experienced leadership team, this project will add three fully dedicated FTEs to ensure strong design and implementation of the program as well as some additional back office capacity to manage the business functions of the Center.

Estimated cost to reach 100,000, 250,000, and 500,000 students

The following table shows per student estimates for this proposed program at scale:

	Proposed project (50,365 students)	100,000 students	250,000 students	500,000 students
Cost per Student	$164	$148	$137	$133
Total cost (millions)	$8.24	$13.09	$31.97	$63.44

Capacity to further develop and mechanisms for scaling and dissemination

IDEA has managed to dramatically scale its work over a very short period of time, while raising student achievement. This track record proves that it has the capacity to bring complex projects to scale with quality. Once this program is developed and implemented, the partnership will carefully assess the most effective mechanism to scale this work beyond the initial participating organizations.

The Center will initially reside within IDEA. Everything will be documented in detail so

that replication will be possible. Although IDEA cannot be sure prior to launch what will

be the most effective way to further develop and scale this work, there are three potential

scaling mechanisms that will be assessed once the program has launched.

1. <u>Dissemination of documentation via the Internet and education reform conferences</u>:

   The process and content of these training programs will be captured and disseminated

   to other CMOs and districts. District leaders, Center staff, program participants, and

   program evaluators will collaborate to publish blog posts, case studies, and journal

   articles; create workshops, trainings, and speeches; and share results with others to

   contribute to knowledge and research in the field.

2. <u>Nurture of new regional partners</u>: The Center will assess the value of nurturing

   relationships with other districts in the Valley and offering to support the

   implementation of this program within partner districts. In doing so, the Center will

   negotiate relationships with each district and deliver the training and capacity-building

   program to them. The Center will seek to build internal capacity with each district

   partner over time. TFA, with strong existing relationships with many of these districts,

   will be a valuable partner in identifying district partners and nurturing those

   relationships.

3. <u>Spin out the Center as a non-profit service provider</u>: Many high-quality human capital

   services are provided to districts and CMOs by non-profit, fee-for-service providers

   who offer a limited suite of services of extremely high quality. Examples include TFA,

   The New Teacher Project, and New Leaders for New Schools. IDEA will consider

   spinning out the Center as a new non-profit organization that could provide the training

   and capacity-building services to districts and CMOs on a fee-for-service basis.

Feasibility to be replicated across a variety of settings and student populations

IDEA and PSJA are similar to many other school districts in the Valley and across the nation that are struggling to improve student outcomes and similar to many CMOs and districts in areas with population growth who are grappling with the challenges of scaling-up while increasing student achievement or teacher effectiveness.

While financial resources are always a challenge, CMOs and districts everywhere are allocating a portion of their existing budgets to teacher and leader training, often without obtaining the results they are seeking. At a cost of $164 or less per student, financial resources will not be a significant constraint replicating this program, if proven successful.

The bigger challenge with scaling human capital work is obtaining enough high-quality coaches and trainers to effectively deliver the training content *and* customize the messages for each adult learner based on observations of real behaviors.

This issue is addressed in our own program by engaging organizations with national reputations for excellence to provide significant assistance with both the design and the delivery of the training programs and recruitment and selection processes. TFA draws from a national pool of the highest quality talent and has captured best practices within the organization. Dr. Noel Tichy leads a small but elite consultancy based on his leadership training work and also draws the best of the best from the nation to his work.

It is very difficult for individual schools and districts to recruit and retain significant numbers of talented trainers and coaches, particularly districts located in areas that are not widely considered attractive places to live (like the Valley). Because the design of this program relies on the help of national experts, it will be relatively easier to scale than if it required building extensive sophisticated training capacity in every individual district.

In summary, the replication and scaling of this work will not be straightforward, but it is designed to facilitate scaling through the use of national partners. It is not overly resource intensive. And if it can be done in the Valley, it can be done anywhere in the country.

SUSTAINABILITY

Resources and support of stakeholders to operate beyond the grant period

Over the past ten years, IDEA has consistently outperformed state and district averages on objective measures of student achievement, drawing regional, state, and national attention and awards. These honors have afforded IDEA the ability to enlist strong stakeholder support from individuals, corporations, and foundations locally, regionally and nationally. To date, IDEA has raised $27 million from the following investors and has a number of proposals pending to finish off the campaign.

- Charter School Growth Fund $7,100,000
- Texas High School Project $5,200,000
- Texas Education Agency, Cycle 5 T-STEM $ 782,353
- Walton Family Foundation $4,920,000
- The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation $3,500,000
- The Meadows Foundation $ 417,000
- The Michael & Susan Dell Foundation $4,800,000
- The Brown Foundation $ 500,000
- **Total Pledged Support (approximate) $27,000,000**

Potential and planning for the incorporation of the project purposes, activities, or benefits in the ongoing work of the applicant and other partners

Many of the proposed activities are an expanded and augmented version of work that

IDEA or PSJA has already launched because it is of such strategic importance. However, neither LEA has ever had the focused staff and resources to look at every human capital investment strategically, learn from those who are doing the work the best in the country, and create a cohesive human capital system of support. All of these activities are carried out through funding streams that could be reallocated to support this work once it proves effective. IDEA has funding from the Gates Foundation, Title 2, Part A, and Title 1 that currently supports leadership and teacher training. While these decisions are never easy, IDEA and PSJA will not hesitate to re-allocate resources to a program that is generating significant student gains.

MANAGEMENT PLAN AND PERSONNEL

IDEA and PSJA have created a project management plan to ensure the activities are completed with a high level of quality and in a timely fashion. The foundation of the management plan is the Center, which will be comprised of four full-time staff members dedicated to creating, delivering, and continuously improving the training and support programs that make up this project. Because the Center Director will be a senior executive from IDEA and former teacher from PSJA, the Center will be immediately positioned to know the needs of the organizations deeply and to build the right relationships inside both organizations to ensure that this initiative succeed.

Qualifications of Key Personnel

This project is critical to both organizations and has the strong commitment of the organizations' leaders.

Dr. Daniel King is the Superintendent of PSJA. He will be a key advisor to the project, provide overall direction and support from PSJA, and ensure sufficient resources and commitment from the organization as a whole. Dr. King has a strong reputation for

innovation. He joined PSJA in 2007 and rapidly implemented key initiatives that dramatically lowered the dropout rate and increased the number of high school graduates. Prior to leading PSJA, Dr. King was Superintendent of Hidalgo ISD, where he implemented a highly successful early college high school that all Hidalgo students attend. Dr. King was a leader in the transformation of Hidalgo from a low-performing to a high-achieving district that has been rated Exemplary or Recognized for student achievement for nine consecutive years (the only non-magnet, large district serving primarily low-income and Hispanic students to accomplish this).

Tom Torkelson is the Founder and CEO of IDEA Public Schools and will also be a key advisor to the project. Because IDEA will be the fiscal agent, Mr. Torkelson will also ensure that the fiscal management of the project meets very high standards. The history of IDEA and its growth is described on pages 14-15. Managing this rapid growth while increasing quality is an extraordinarily difficult task. Because scaling human capital is the top issue constraining IDEA's growth, Mr. Torkelson will work diligently to ensure the success of this program. Mr. Torkelson has successfully executed on several multi-million dollar grants, delivering on time and with strong student outcomes.

Robert Carreon leads TFA - Rio Grande Valley and its 190-plus corps members who collectively reach more than 16,000 students per year. Robert joined TFA's regional staff in 2006 as manager of teacher development and district strategy. Robert will ensure that the program has access to the curriculum and training materials needed from TFA and will facilitate the advisory activities by TFA.

IDEA's current Chief Schools Officer, Martin Winchester, will be the **Center and** formal **Project Director** for this grant. Mr. Winchester is a former Executive Director of

TFA in the Valley and former teacher in IDEA and in PSJA. His depth and breadth of experience includes 11 years of teaching experience (beginning in 1995 in Pharr) and eight years with IDEA as a grade-level team leader, English content team leader, mentor coordinator, and most recently, Chief Schools Officer. This base of experience perfectly positions him to develop and lead Center activities.

Becky Garza will be the day-to-day lead for this project from PSJA. Ms. Garza is the Human Resource Director within PSJA, and brings to this role ten years of experience as a principal. Ms. Garza will partner with the Center to ensure that teacher and principal selection is conducted well, provide input on program design, and assist Mr. Winchester in navigating the PSJA organization and building buy-in and support for the program.

Three additional full time employees (FTEs) will be dedicated to this project. The Teacher Development Coordinator will drive the design and implementation of the teacher-focused training and support programs with the support of TFA and the input of IDEA and PSJA staff. The Leadership Development Coordinator will drive the design and implementation of the leader-focused training and support programs, in many cases based on strong existing training programs. The final FTE will be a clerical support staff position to assist with scheduling and logistics.

The following table illustrates the key program activities, timelines, and milestones for year 1 of the project:

Major Year 1 Project Management Activities	Positions	Timeline
Martin Winchester assumes role of Center Director (CD)	IDEA	Q1
Matching funds secured	CD, Supts.	Q1
Hire project staff	CD	Q1

Major Year 1 Project Management Activities	Positions	Timeline
MILESTONE: Center staffing complete		
Office space and technology secured	CD	Q1
Establish financial systems and tracking mechanisms within IDEA	Business office	Q1
Contract with Project Evaluation team; update baseline demographics and other data on partner districts, schools, and participants	CD, Project Evaluator	Q1
Contract with consultants and other service providers	CD	Q1
Establish reporting procedures, timelines, and methods	CD, Bus Ofc	Q1-Q2
MILESTONE: Support contracts, and baseline systems complete		
Direct matching funds to project activities; continue to identify additional private matches for sustainability	CD, Supts.	Q2-Q4
Implement teaching and leading excellence programming; document project activities; monitor and adjust project activities	CD, staff	Q2-Q4
MILESTONE: Program elements in full operation with full funding		
Support Project Evaluator in collecting project data and participant feedback to gauge implementation and adjust project activities	CD, staff	Q2-Q4
Complete interim financial and management reports; share with stakeholders via board meetings	CD	Q2, Q4
Disseminate results of project to US Dept. of Education,	CD, Supts, staff	Q4, ongoing semi-annually

Major Year 1 Project Management Activities	Positions	Timeline
national and local stakeholders, education/ business/ community partners, and others		
MILESTONE: Reporting and dissemination systems operational		