

**New York City Department of Education
Investing in Innovation Fund Scale-up Grant**

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Investing in Innovation Fund (i3)

New York City Department of Education Scale-up Grant

Scaling and Advancing the New York City Portfolio Turnaround Model

Competitive Priorities

The New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) is requesting funds from the Investing in Innovation Education (i3) grant program to scale up its successful approach to school turnaround, and thereby address **Absolute Priority 4—Innovations that Turn Around Persistently Low-Performing Schools**. Over the 5-year grant period, NYCDOE proposes to develop and start 150 new district and charter middle and high schools, reaching approximately 60,000 students in Grades 6–12 when the schools are at full capacity.

This project will also address **Competitive Preference Priority 6—Innovations That Support College Access and Success**. The overarching goal of NYCDOE’s postsecondary readiness strategy is informed choice: ensuring that students and families have the knowledge they need to prepare for college from the earliest grades. Each of the schools developed through this scale-up project will support college access and success in three ways: enhance students’ academic preparedness for college through a focus on both academic rigor and personalization, help students and their parents/caregivers understand issues of affordability, and provide support to students and families through guidance counselors and informed-choice tools.

Greene and Forster (2004) found that only one third of high school students nationally graduate with the preparation necessary for college success. A focus on instructional rigor and personalization for every child is the linchpin of NYCDOE’s turnaround model. Some of the school models developed under this grant will directly improve student access to college-level coursework and expand students’ access to college courses through virtual instruction. Others, such as career and technical education models, will be designed in collaboration with higher education partners to ensure appropriate college preparation.

Second, it is important for students to understand issues of affordability pertaining to college. As part of a pilot program launched in 2010, NYCDOE was among the first 20 organizations

approved to receive FAFSA submission information for their students. A technological interface between the Federal Student Aid office and NYCDOE allows guidance counselors to access student information to identify those who may be in need of financial assistance and help them figure out how they can pay for postsecondary education.

Timely support from guidance counselors will ensure that students properly plan for college throughout their high school careers. Schools developed as a part of this project will all have strong college and career-ready advisement programs beginning in ninth grade – using postsecondary planning and benchmarks, personalized learning plans, and SAT and TOEFL preparation support. Counselors will engage with key community, industry and university partners to help raise student and family awareness and expectations of the college going process

Additionally, New York City is in a relatively unique position to undertake large-scale secondary-postsecondary institutional collaborations. Currently, about 70% of students enrolled at City University of New York (CUNY) post-secondary institutions are NYC public school graduates, so the two systems' successes and failures are inextricably linked. This situation created a strong need for a NYCDOE-CUNY collaboration focused on promoting college readiness and success. In fall 2008, CUNY and NYCDOE signed an historic two-way data sharing agreement, which enables both institutions to track students (forward and backward) from one public system to the other. This collaboration offers the great promise of allowing NYCDOE to better understand how well its schools are preparing their students for collegiate study. It can also inform the setting of admission standards at CUNY and provide both systems with metrics that can be used to measure progress toward improving college readiness and increasing the success rates of NYCDOE graduates once they have enrolled at CUNY.

Finally, NYCDOE will develop a rich range of college preparation tools aiming to engage all stakeholders – students, families, teachers, counselors, and community organizations – in the ongoing 'culture change' process of supporting and encouraging all students towards the goal of college readiness, access, and success. Stakeholders will be given opportunities to provide input into the strategy, and will ultimately be given new tools to better understand the necessary steps to

increase student achievement, college access, and college success.

Need for the Project and Quality of Project Design

- 1. The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priorities the applicant is seeking to meet (i.e., addresses a largely unmet need, particularly for high-need students, and is a practice, strategy, or program that has not already been widely adopted).***

a. Statement of Needs to Be Addressed

The benefits of a college education are undeniable. Research has shown that college graduates are more likely to land jobs (ACT, 2004) and have greater job security (Rowley & Hurtado, 2002) than non-college graduates. Furthermore, they earn twice as much money on average as those without a college diploma—the U.S. Department of Education (2008) reported that college graduates earn more than non-graduates and are better able to adapt to the inevitable changes that occur in the modern workplace (ACT, 2004). Yet, despite the indisputable benefits of a college degree, far too many students never make it through the pipeline to earn a college graduation. In fact, Harvey and Houseman (2004) reported that for every 100 ninth graders who start high school, only 67 earn a high school diploma, 38 go on to college, 26 continue in college for a second year, and 18 obtain a college degree within 6 years of their high school graduation.

In large part, this is due to the fact that secondary schools fail to prepare students for the rigors of college. Only 32% of students leave high school even minimally qualified for college¹, and when they are accepted into college, between 22% and 49% of them require remediation before they

¹ The authors used data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress High School Transcript study and defined “college readiness” as: 1) graduation from high school; 2) completion of 4 years of English, 3 years of math, and 2 years each of natural science, social science, and foreign language; and 3) possession of basic reading skills.

can take college-level coursework (Greene & Forster, 2004). This problem is even more pronounced for minority students: only 20% of Black students and 16% of Hispanic students leave high school ready for college-level work (Greene & Forster, 2004). In NYC, only 50% of students entering The City University of New York (CUNY) are ready to take college-level coursework. And nearly half of all students entering CUNY from NYCDOE need to complete remedial coursework before beginning college-level coursework.

In the nation's 50 largest school districts, which enroll a total of 1.7 million high school students, almost half (47%) of the Class of 2005—an astounding 279,000 students—did not graduate 4 years later (Swanson, 2009). This problem is particularly acute for Black and Hispanic students. While almost 30% of students nationwide fail to graduate from high school, almost half (45%) of Black students and 42% of Hispanic students failed to graduate in the Class of 2005.

In short, in this first decade of the 21st century, far too many students, particularly high-need students, are unprepared for the rigors of high school, college, and the world of work. And these students are concentrated in a small number of high schools. In fact, approximately 2,000 high schools produce over one-half of the nation's high school dropouts (Balfanz & Letgers, 2004). Secretary of Education Arne Duncan notes: "These schools fail because the challenges they face are substantial, because they themselves are dysfunctional, and because the system of which they are a part is not responsive to the needs of the high-poverty student populations they tend to serve" (Mass Insight, 2007). In large urban districts, teachers are not fully prepared to address the complex learning needs of their students, and both teachers and principals have not been held directly accountable for their students' academic progress. These challenges will only deepen as states, districts, and individual schools grapple with the need to meet Common Core standards and hit ambitious graduation and post-secondary readiness objectives.

Simply put, it is imperative to turn around these failing schools if children in New York City and large, urban districts across the nation are to succeed in high school and beyond. Duncan notes that "to turn around the lowest-performing schools, states and districts must be ready to institute far-reaching reforms, replace school staff, and change the school culture. We cannot continue to tinker in

high schools that are little more than ‘dropout factories’ where students fall further behind, year after year.” And yet such turnaround efforts have failed more often than not. Numerous studies show that large-scale state and district turnaround efforts since the advent of No Child Left Behind have by and large failed. Scholar Andrew Smarick, for example, describes one such effort in the nation’s largest state: “In the first year of California’s Academic Performance Index, the state targeted its lowest-performing 20 percent of schools for intervention. After three years, only 11 percent of the elementary schools in this category (109 of 968) were able to make ‘exemplary progress.’ Only 1 of the 394 middle and high schools in this category reached this mark. Just one-quarter of the schools were even able to accomplish a lesser goal: meeting schoolwide and subgroup growth targets each year” (Smarick, 2010).

Studies also reveal the lack of clearly defined principles of what makes for effective school turnaround. The Consortium on Chicago School Research, for example, studied the method formerly employed by Chicago Public Schools, whereby schools were closed and students placed in alternate schools. The study found that “most students who transferred out of closing schools reenrolled in schools that were academically weak” (de la Torre et al., 2009). The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) describes that studies “that look back at factors that may have contributed to [a] school’s success” are “particularly weak in determining causal validity for several reasons, including the fact that there is no way to be confident that the features common to successful turnaround schools are not also common to schools that fail” (Smarick, 2010). Much as we have a crisis of education, so too do we have a turnaround crisis. There are too few cases of successful turnaround, especially in secondary schools, and too little knowledge about what makes a successful effort in the first place. There is a significant need for demonstrated, studied, scaled effective turnaround efforts at the middle and high school levels.

b. Exceptional Approach to Meeting Needs

Since 2002, under the leadership of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Chancellor Joel I. Klein, the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) has pursued a single goal: create a

system of great schools capable of giving all children the skills and tools they need to graduate and become productive citizens. This strategy for innovation and reform was labeled *Children First*.

Children First introduced a comprehensive restructuring of the school system focused on three key levers of change: leadership, empowerment, and accountability. These principles focused on schools as the key unit of change and serve as the foundation for NYC's school turnaround process:

- **Leadership:** NYCDOE created a system that fosters and supports school leaders as Chief Executive Officers responsible for building a culture of high performance – one focused on outcomes over inputs, on surfacing and solving problems rather than hiding shortcomings. Through the NYC Leadership Academy, NYCDOE has built a sustainable pipeline to train world-class leaders for schools and students.
- **Empowerment:** NYCDOE has provided principals greater flexibility and independence to make critical instructional, management, and budget decisions in exchange for greater accountability for results. The NYCDOE also provided principals with a marketplace of school support resources via “networks” of self-affiliated schools, rather than accept centrally mandated services.
- **Accountability:** NYCDOE has created a culture in which every adult is accountable for student learning. Progress Reports, Quality Reviews, School Surveys, and a range of data tools enable school professionals and the public to better track student performance and growth and hold all schools accountable for improving student achievement. The City's Achievement Reporting and Information System (ARIS) is the backbone of this groundbreaking accountability platform.

It is within the context of the *Children First* reforms that NYCDOE successfully implemented its “Portfolio” strategy of school turnaround. This strategy creates more effective school options for all students, particularly high-need students, through a disciplined new school development process. These schools are placed in under-utilized buildings, in new facilities, and as replacements for low performing schools where an intransigent status quo does not serve students well. Launched with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other funders, the

Portfolio turnaround model has made New York City what Klein called the “Silicon Valley” of school management organizations: a district managing a large cadre of turnaround schools through an infusion of external partners. Since then, in partnership with a wide range of new school “intermediaries”², and as part of an effort to turn around nearly 100 failing schools, NYCDOE has opened 417 new schools, of which 336 are district schools, 81 are charter schools, and nearly all are supported or managed by a partner to NYCDOE. **Together, these schools comprise the largest single-district attempt at school turnaround in the nation. And their successes – documented later – lend credence to the New York City Portfolio model as a replicable, scalable strategy for secondary school turnaround.**

As noted, efforts similar in intent have met with great challenges and delivered limited results. Simply opening new schools – small district schools, charter schools, or turnaround schools of other varieties – is insufficient to ensure success. Five key principles clearly distinguish the NYC model from others and have contributed to its demonstrated effectiveness on such a large scale:

1. **External capacity:** NYCDOE acknowledged that the system did not have the capacity to develop quality school models at this scale on its own. To address the wide variations in student need, NYCDOE created a Portfolio model that recruited “intermediary” partners who possess the intellectual and human capital to build diverse school models to support the needs of all student populations, especially those most at-risk.
2. **Leadership:** NYCDOE understood that leadership capacity was a critical issue in the success of its new schools and set out both to build a pipeline of effective school leaders and to train them on the specifics of starting and operating a high-performing school.

² Intermediaries are defined as third-party organizations that assist school leaders with all aspects of design and operations, including curriculum development, staffing models, school culture, and instructional strategies.

3. **Collaboration:** The predominant new school model in the NYC schools portfolio is a small school, designed to serve four “sections” of students per grade level, allowing for teams of teachers to share and be accountable for small groups of students, facilitating intensive review of student progress and needs. Reductions in total student load (down to 80-100 per teacher) foster more effective teacher collaboration and greater differentiation of instruction to students.
4. **Portfolio planning:** NYCDOE institutionalized the “new schools” function, building a full analytics and communication organization dedicated to measuring school performance across the portfolio, assessing demand for specific new schools given specific populations and neighborhoods, and ensuring the appropriate enrollment and facilities conditions for schools to thrive.
5. **Personalization and rigor:** From the initial recruitment of school proposals, to selection, to new schools principal training, and through ongoing coaching, NYCDOE new schools pipeline demands a focus on instructional rigor and personalization for every child. The result is a portfolio of innovative school models organized around the needs of specific students: schools that provide intensive support for over-age and under-credited students, schools that serve recent arrivals to this country, schools that serve students interested in particular career paths. No matter the model, every school – even those serving a more general population – are organized so that students are scheduled for maximum credit accumulation

As described in Section B, there is much evidence to suggest that these new schools are succeeding where many of their predecessors have failed in promoting greater levels of student engagement and achievement. The Portfolio strategy has led to real results: after remaining nearly flat for 16 years, New York City’s graduation rate has increased by roughly three percent each year for the last four years (NYCDOE, 2009). More telling, the new, small schools created during this timeframe have posted average graduation rates that are 12% higher than the City average, in spite of serving a disproportionately high-poverty, minority population.

Despite the recent success, substantial numbers of students remain in middle and high schools where their prospects for success are dim unless the schools are turned around. Of the 235 high schools that have had graduation classes from 2006 to 2009, 110 (47%) have posted 4-year graduation rates of less than 66% every year, and 55 (23%) have posted a graduation rate of less than 50% every year. Across middle schools, the situation is similar, in 73 schools, less than two-thirds of students have met or exceeded proficiency in ELA and math every year since 2006.

Equally critical to address is the challenge of adequately preparing students for college success. Of the NYC high school graduates that entered any CUNY program from 2002 to 2008, over half (51%) were in need of taking remedial classes. Within associate degree programs, this figure was closer to 75%, which is why it is not surprising that almost one out of every two students enrolled in college leave between their first and second years. Roughly half (47%) of NYCDOE graduates who enter Baccalaureate programs earn a degree within 6 years, but only 15% earn their degree within 4 years. The work of turning around low-performing secondary schools in New York City, via the Portfolio model, has shown extraordinary success with regards to students' academic achievement and graduation rates. But there is still much to be done.

2. The extent to which the project has a clear set of goals and an explicit strategy, with actions that are (a) aligned with the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet, and (b) expected to result in achieving the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

NYCDOE is requesting funds from the Investing in Innovation Education (i3) grant program to scale up its successful approach to school turnaround, and thereby address Absolute Priority 4—Innovations that Turn Around Persistently Low-Performing Schools. In a November 2009 speech, Mayor Bloomberg stated that “our goal is to turn around the lowest performing 10 percent of schools over the next four years” by creating better options and in some cases directly replacing failing schools. Over the 5-year grant period, NYCDOE proposes to develop and start 150 new district and charter middle and high schools, reaching approximately 60,000 students in Grades 6–12 when the schools are at full capacity. The projected composition of these

new schools will be as follows: 120 high schools, 30 middle schools; of these, 110 will be district schools and 40 charters.

a. Project Goals and Objectives

With i3 funds, NYCDOE proposes to address the following overarching goals: (1) further enhance the underlying infrastructure required to fully sustain and scale a district Portfolio model that supports a growing pipeline of new schools that rigorously prepare students to graduate post-secondary ready; (2) replace persistently failing schools with new school models that accelerate outcomes for students; and (3) leverage the City's groundbreaking work in the area of school turnaround to become the case and source for replication in other large urban school districts.

These grant dollars will enable NYCDOE to scale its Portfolio model at a vastly accelerated pace, thereby addressing critical areas of unmet need in NYC. At the same time, the NYCDOE will further develop the core elements of the model, bringing unprecedented sophistication to new school development and portfolio district management. This will create a first-of-its-kind national model for effective school turnaround that encompasses the following critical elements for success:

- **Build external capacity to replicate and design new school models:** NYCDOE will use i3 funds to further invest in proven developers and managers of charter and district middle schools and high schools. Many of these New York City organizations have been featured as national examples of innovation and effectiveness, scaling their practices to cities nationwide (e.g., the Internationals Schools Network).
- **Deepen investments in leadership:** NYCDOE will use i3 funds to (1) strengthen and expand the system's capacity to identify and train high potential school leaders by way of the Leaders in Education Apprentice Program (LEAP); (2) provide new school leaders with intensive level of coaching supports at the network level so coaches can provide ongoing and ad-hoc support to multiple school leaders, and (3) develop new leadership training programs to support new and existing principals in implementing new school models and orienting their schools towards higher standards;

- **Enhance teacher inquiry and collaboration:** Building on the transformative role the ARIS student data platform played in driving greater teacher inquiry and collaboration, NYCDOE will expand the platform’s functionality to support teachers’ use of data in their day-to-day instructional decisions.
- **Create portfolio planning tools:** Building on the analytics that already drive facilities and enrollment decisions to create the conditions for new schools, NYCDOE will develop predictive portfolio management tools to assess future school success, to trace the cause of school performance, and to derive from those analyses key planning and operations decisions about the selection, location, size, and student population of new schools.
- **Strengthen the level of personalization and rigor across all school models:** NYCDOE will extend the work of the Innovation Zone (iZone) to further develop the varied school models that re-conceive the roles of adults, time, and the role of technology to create personalized learning experiences for every child beyond what has been done to date. NYCDOE will continue to partner with intermediaries to design and implement these iZone school models.

Below are detailed project plans for each of these components:

External Capacity to Develop and Support New Schools

Intermediary partners, selected carefully for their expertise, capacity, and proven success, are core to the theory of action that transformational change happens at the edges of any large social organization – through “entrepreneurs” or external partners operating outside the governing norms of the school district and are thus able to introduce new models that disrupt business as usual and open up unimagined new possibilities for student learning. Continuing to develop a portfolio of intermediary partners that provide us with the capacity to design and manage new schools is central to solidifying the New York City Portfolio strategy. We aim to create a portfolio that matches schools with the needs of local communities and offers an array of promising new school models, such as:

- Schools that increase personalization and rigor to prepare students for college and career success.
- Online and blended school models that reconfigure uses of time, staffing and technology to personalize learning.
- Career and technical education schools that offer a rigorous academic curriculum within the context of preparing students for 21st Century careers.
- “Transfer” high schools that prepare over-age/under-credited students for college and career readiness through differentiated and flexible pathways.
- Early college models that motivate students to accelerate their learning and earn credit for college courses while in high school.
- Innovative whole school and targeted models for meeting the needs of English language learners (ELLs) and students with special needs (SPEDs).

The intellectual, human, social, and financial capital that intermediaries and other partners bring to the New York City system is critical to the speed and pace of transformation within the City. More than 70% of the new secondary schools created over the course of *Children First* were created in partnership with an intermediary organization that serves as lead partner. Currently over 30 organizations serve as intermediaries, representing a wide range of expertise and areas of specialization, including New Visions for Public Schools, The College Board, CUNY, Internationals Network, and The Asia Society.³ (See Appendix H for full list of intermediary partners.)

For fall 2011, the recruitment of charter management organizations (CMOs) and school intermediary support organizations is already under way. A Request for Proposals for New Charter and District School Applications was issued by NYCDOE’s Office of Portfolio Planning in April 2010, with initial applications for charter schools due in early May and those for district schools due

³ For more detailed information around the role of intermediary organizations in the NYC small schools work, please refer to the report by Policy Study Associates, found at

<http://www.policystudies.com/studies/school/Gates.html>

at the end of July. In the case of both district and charter school models, proposals are expected to demonstrate high capacity to raise student achievement, particularly for the most underserved student populations (e.g., ELLs and SPEDs). All school applications must demonstrate 10 components inextricably linked with successful student outcomes, for example, strong school mission, high student expectations, and a culture of continuous improvement aimed at student success (see Appendix H for full list of the 10 components).

Within its i3 grant budget, NYCDOE has allocated funding for one year of start-up and four full years of operational support for each new or transformed school within its portfolio. The portfolio model is a living process, as NYCDOE will continuously monitor the performance of its portfolio of district and charter school models, replicating and scaling up high-performing school models and replacing the lowest performing schools.

Leadership Development

At the heart of NYCDOE's school turnaround strategy is recruiting, training, and supporting a pipeline of school leaders with the vision to open and sustain high-performing schools. Through the i3 grant, NYCDOE aims to build on the successful partnership with the NYC Leadership Academy (NYCLA) to (1) build both a pipeline of next generation school leaders and a bench of future leaders inside these new schools –through NYCDOE's Leaders in Education Apprentice Program (LEAP); (2) provide existing and new principals with dedicated leadership support at the network level to ensure sustainable success; and (3) create and enhance new leadership training curriculum to provide new school leaders so they are well-equipped to promote and accelerate student achievement;. Through i3 funds, NYCDOE will:

- Strengthen and expand the Leaders in Education Apprentice Program (LEAP) training program to support the unique needs these new school leaders will face to improve student learning. (See Appendix H for description of NYCLA programs.) LEAP builds on the leadership pipeline work of NYCLA's Aspiring Principals Program (APP) by becoming an additional source of school leadership talent via an in-school residency model. For the 150 new schools in the next five years, there needs to be both a pipeline of new leaders and a

“bench” of future leaders to support and sustain the visions of these schools over time. The i3 funds will help networks identify, train, and support up to 20 new LEAP participants each year, creating a pipeline of new school leaders and an intentional succession planning strategy for our new schools from the start.

- The City will also use i3 funds to intensify the level of coaching services offered to new and existing leaders. These coaches will be placed at the network level to ensure that (1) principals leading schools identified for closure are effectively supported through the phase-out process; and (2) principals in new schools started in these networks receive dedicated coaching support that is customized to the needs and culture of that network. These coaches will complement the New Schools Intensive (NSI) training new school leaders already receive when beginning to design and implement their school. These coaches are former principals who are well-versed in the unique challenges school leaders face and are equipped to support both new and existing principals with all facets of school design, implementation, and ongoing management. NYCDOE proposes to use i3 funds to augment the level of coaching new principals receive and embed these coaching services at the network level.
- Strengthen the LEAP curriculum by creating new training modules to support the unique needs of the next-generation school leaders. NYCDOE i3 funds will be used to build new training modules that may address emerging leadership needs such as the Common Core standards, increased accountability, and designing and supporting Innovation Zone school models. Funds will support curriculum development and live network and principal training sessions to implement the new training curriculum.

Collaboration and Inquiry: ARIS Local

Teacher collaboration and inquiry is the organizational and cultural foundation of NYCDOE new schools model. Team teaching is encouraged, and each school sets aside up to half a day a week for teachers to collaborate on planning lessons, developing assessments, and analyzing data on student performance. Weekly meetings of grade-level teams help ensure that different courses are reinforcing each other and that no student falls through the cracks.

When NYCDOE began developing an online platform for student data and educator collaboration, policymakers wondered if principals and teachers would embrace a data-informed model of instructional decision-making in the mode of the new school organizations. Today, just one year after launching ARIS, not only are educators adopting ARIS as part of their professional practice, they are also demanding more from NYCDOE: more student data, more resources, and more opportunities for customization and community-building. NYCDOE now faces a welcome challenge: finding a way to meet swelling educator demand.

Although this demand for data and resources covers a broad range of educator needs, the most consistent feedback from the field relates to *local data*, a broad term that encompasses the many forms of “homegrown” information that schools and teachers track in notebooks, Excel files, and, at some pioneering schools, in custom-built online systems. Local data, from pop quizzes to disciplinary interventions, merged with NYCDOE’s current warehouse of assessment data will accelerate the “inquiry cycle” and enable daily performance management on the part of principals and teachers.

Timely, actionable, student-level local data—the core value proposition of ARIS Local—is the key lever that empowers educators to continuously accelerate and refine the inquiry cycle over time. ARIS Local will be piloted across the portfolio of new schools, taking what enterprising teachers have been currently doing to the next level and fusing locally-captured data with centrally tracked information. The ultimate objective of ARIS Local is to increase student achievement through inquiry-based performance management.

Access to these kinds of data drives quicker and more meaningful instructional decisions, giving more time for teachers to collaborate and plan instruction. With funding from i3, NYCDOE proposes to accomplish the following objectives, using the new schools as a laboratory, building off the collaborative structures already embedded in the new schools model:

- Build tools to track, categorize, and link locally captured data and assessments with centrally-tracked historical student data.

- Develop enhanced reporting functionality to support teacher-driven needs/preferences, pushing resources to users based on their students' needs.
- Support new schools as they develop new modules onto the platform, such as capturing scanned student work for performance-based assessments, behavior incidence tracking, and developing an online marketplace to share such modules.

Portfolio Planning: Portfolio Management Tools

The concept of portfolio management implies a new role for the central office of a school system. Placing responsibility of school development and operation in the hands of those that are closest to the children, the central office then serves as “portfolio manager,” operating levers to create the conditions that best lead to school success. The role of the central portfolio manager is as a distributor of resources with demands for return on investment, fostering the proliferation of successful operators, models, and innovations.

To date, much of the work regarding enrollment planning, facilities planning, new school location, and turnaround model selection has been done using static data. NYCDOE uses a vast array of cross-functional data to plan the portfolio, assessing where change is needed, designing new schools appropriate for a given situation, sizing the school, and planning the school's enrollment and facilities distributions. Indeed, NYCDOE has pioneered the development of an office dedicated to this kind of complex decision-making, bringing together school closure, enrollment planning, facilities planning, and new school development into one comprehensive organization. However, using regression analysis, managers would have greater ability to weight the importance of factors that predict school performance. With these tools, portfolio managers would have greater capacity to tailor turnaround strategies – the type and size of new schools, for example, or the mix of student needs to be served – specific to a turnaround circumstance. While such quantitative modeling can never replace the hundreds of community conversations NYCDOE has each year with community members regarding school turnaround, it has, can, and will sharpen decision-making regarding the nature of each intervention.

NYCDOE proposes to use i3 funds to develop predictive “portfolio tools” that estimate the impact new schools, specific intermediaries, surrounding schools, and peer groups have on student performance, allowing for highly nuanced decision making in planning turnaround efforts and planning the school portfolio. Key activities to be conducted include planning, data collection, and pre-analysis; model development; evaluation of proposed changes; and the development of recommendations and documentation.

Personalization and Rigor: The Innovation Zone

Although the current NYC small school model has achieved substantial gains in student achievement results, the status quo model of instruction – one teacher, one room, a standard class size, relatively fixed schedules – remains challenging for teachers trying to achieve significant levels of differentiation and rigor. Given forthcoming, rigorous standards, schools will need to focus their resources (time, staff, and budgets) on student learning in innovative ways to achieve personalized learning experiences for all students.

To achieve this, the NYCDOE has launched the Innovation Zone (iZone) to develop a pipeline of innovative new school models that accelerate student achievement by personalizing instruction. As a research and development (R&D) incubator, the iZone attracts national and international partners with proven success in school turnaround and improvement strategies, matches them to local needs, pilots selected programs, puts them through a rigorous evaluation, and prepares successful models to enter the new school development pipeline. This R&D is focused on the difficult challenge of how to personalize instruction at scale, to support what we believe is a more effective learning model for students, one in which students are empowered and expected to take responsibility for their learning and are provided multiple pathways and assessment models to demonstrate competencies required for post-secondary success. The iZone researches effective uses of technology to enable schools to provide these student-centered, personalized approaches to learning, and identifies the school- and network-level structures required to support them.

To expand personalization in the next generation of new schools, the iZone will take an active role in introducing innovative new models into the new school development process, including the following:

- Recruit intermediary partners with explicit experience designing schools to support greater personalization through scheduling and staffing models and use of technology. Pilot and refine these models and prepare them for scale through the new school pipeline.
- Develop online learning platforms and resources that enable new schools to personalize instruction by developing individual learning plans for each student; selecting high-quality online learning opportunities and teachers from a wider array of resources than is available within the individual school; using portfolios and common rubrics and performance tasks to enable students to demonstrate a broader set of rigorous competencies required for college and career success.
- Support professional development and capacity building to enable new school leaders, teachers, students, and families to successfully adopt these innovative student-centered school models.
- Drive efforts to clear policy and regulatory constraints that restrict new schools from effectively employing innovative practices.

In the next two years, iZone will design, test, develop, and implement new models and applications across approximately 80 schools that will demonstrate how to restructure and rethink the current model of schools in order to support greater personalization of learning. The i3 funds will be used to expand the team's capacity for strategic sourcing of new innovative school models and to strengthen the mechanisms by which innovative models and practices are effectively adopted into school practice (e.g., school support structures, capacities for leading transformational change, community engagement).

b. Project Outcomes

NYCDOE's objectives for the Portfolio scale-up project are all geared towards a sustained and improved impact on student engagement and achievement.

In the short term, NYCDOE will see an increase of 5 percentage points of overall 9th grade students in new high schools receiving at least 10 credits (7 percentage point increase for ELLs and SPEDs); an increase of 4 percentage point of students in new middle schools scoring proficient or higher on both NYS ELA and math assessments (6 percentage point increase for ELLs and SPEDs). In addition, there is an expectation of higher student attendance rates, increased parent satisfaction, and increased teacher satisfaction.

In the long term, NYCDOE fully expects to see dropout rates decrease by an additional 6 percentage points, and Regents graduation rates to increase by 10-12 percentage points, as well as higher Regents scores, increasing college enrollment and completion rates, and decreasing rates of remediation across the board.

B. Strength of the Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect

As mentioned in the previous section, there has been a dearth of research studies with causal validity demonstrating the positive effects of turnaround efforts at the high school level. In addition, few studies have addressed the issue of the external validity – the generalizability – of those effects. Fortunately, a number of these critical studies have been conducted in New York City over the last decade, as NYCDOE has undertaken the systematic research and evaluation of its school reform models. Guided by empirical research findings, NYCDOE has adopted reform models that provide significance and magnitude of effect and has rejected other models where the research evidence has been weak.

This section summarizes those studies that have focused on the core element of the NYC Portfolio Strategy – new small schools – as well as on key specific components of the Portfolio Strategy – diverse schools such as charter schools and small learning communities (SLCs), school accountability, and school leadership. Together, the weight of the evidence from these studies demonstrates that there is strong evidence to suggest that implementation of the specific New York City Portfolio strategy will have a “statistically significant, substantial, and important effect” on improving students’ academic achievement, closing achievement gaps, decreasing dropout rates,

increasing high school graduation rates, and increasing college enrollment and completion rates. In addition, the findings from these studies suggest that the importance and magnitude of the expected effect will be substantial. As a result, the present project is expected to impact a very large number of students in NYC and, in addition, to influence the turnaround efforts of other urban school districts throughout the United States.

This section lists specific components of the New York City Portfolio and provides a summary of the research findings, followed by a more detailed description of the more rigorous study designs, the study samples, and the research findings.

Small schools of choice (SSC) – New small schools of choice represent the core element of the NYC turnaround Portfolio Strategy. In a groundbreaking MDRC study, four cohorts of eighth grade students were followed over a five-year period, through the twelfth grade. Ninth- grade outcomes for a combined sample of 29,811 students indicated that new, small schools had significant positive effects on various achievement measures. The effect size for the number of credits attained by the end of their first year in high school was both large in size (thus, policy relevant) and highly statistically significant. Ninth-grade on-track for graduation was positive for various study subgroups and statistically significant for all but two small subgroups. For the first cohort of students studied throughout their first four years of high school, the evidence indicates that SSC improvements in students’ academic progress and school engagement during early years of high school translate into higher rates of on-time graduation (forthcoming Bloom, Thompson, & Unterman, 2010). These findings represent definitive evidence of success for the specific New York City Portfolio model of turnaround.

Additional study details. Creating small schools (and downsizing large ones by dividing them into “academies” or small learning communities) has become a central high school reform strategy for districts across the country, but one for which there has been little in the way of rigorous evidence. In this forthcoming report, slated for release in June 2010, MDRC will present the findings from a well-designed and well-implemented experimental study of the effects of the implementation of New York City Small Schools of Choice (SSC) – new small high schools that were established by

NYCDOE to replace large failing schools in many of the city's poorest neighborhoods. This study used the lottery-like features of NYC's high school choice process and the abundance of small schools to mount the first large-scale experimental study of small high schools and its impact on student learning over several years (forthcoming, Bloom, Thompson & Unterman, 2010). It is anticipated that the publication will be posted to the MDRC website in June 2010: <http://www.mdrc.org/publications.html>).

This study is important and path-breaking in several ways. First, while New York leads the nation in the scale and pace of its small school development efforts, many other urban districts have made the establishment of new small schools (or of small learning communities and career academies within large schools) a central part of their high school improvement strategy. (Hill et. al., 2009). Hence the lessons that emerge from the city's experience with small schools are likely to be heeded by policymakers and practitioners across the country. Given the diversity of New York City's population, the results of its evaluation are highly generalizable to other urban school districts.

Second, MDRC's study speaks to issues that have not previously been rigorously addressed. There has been some non-experimental evidence that students in the new small schools have experienced more favorable outcomes than students in the large schools that were closed. This study, however, asks a different question, one that is much more germane to NYCDOE's current policies and practices: How do outcomes of students enrolled through the lottery in the new small Limited Unscreened schools (see Appendix H for description of the high school selection methods) compare with outcomes of similar students who, by virtue of the lottery, attend the other options that are *currently* available to New York City high school students — a mix of options that represents a substantial improvement over schools students would have attended in the past?

Third, the MDRC analysis answers this question in a particularly rigorous way. Previous studies of small schools have been unable to control for the potential effects of unmeasured student and family characteristics that may lead some students to enroll in small schools while others do not. The MDRC team, in contrast, was able to capitalize on NYCDOE's school placement "lottery" to

locate groups of students whose assignment or non-assignment to a particular small school was purely a matter of chance.

Finally, many school districts now use lotteries to determine how students get assigned to schools that are in demand. MDRC's analysis shows how such lotteries can be used to yield answers to important questions about school effectiveness. The MDRC study, most likely the largest and most rigorous study of this type, will make a substantial contribution to the methodological toolkit available to educational researchers.

During the time period that New York City was creating a series of new small high schools, it also radically changed the process by which eighth graders were assigned to a high school. This new assignment process, High School Application Processing System (HSAPS), was designed to provide students and their families with greater ability to make informed high school decisions and to greatly increase the numbers of choices, providing a wide range of schools from which to choose. In the past, such choice had been largely limited to students who were high-performing, and/or whose parents were knowledgeable about the availability of alternatives to zoned schools and were able to navigate the high school process. Under the new procedures, all eighth graders submit a list of up to 12 schools (ranked in order of preference) that they would like to attend. HSAPS, the computerized processing system, is then used to assign each student a place in the queue, determined at random, and then, in that order HSAPS assigns each student to the highest-ranked school whose admissions criteria they meet, and where spaces remain available. When a Limited Unscreened school has more applicants than spaces, students who fall in the same category with respect to geographical preference and expressed interest in the school participate in a lottery to determine who is offered a seat (Quint et al., 2010).

The MDRC impact study was designed to answer the following question: What effects do small schools of choice have on students' attendance, academic performance, and progress toward graduation above what students would have achieved if they had not enrolled in these schools?

As described above, the impact study's design capitalized on naturally occurring experiments (or lotteries) that were identified within the high school assignment data. Researchers were able to

find at least one lottery for 105 of 123 Small Schools of Choice (SSCs) that were in operation during the study period. Once these lotteries were identified, the impact study used school records data to determine the effect of enrolling in a SSC on first year, second year, third year and fourth year outcomes. First year outcomes were designed to capture students' transition into high school, second and third year outcomes were designed to track students' progress through high school and fourth year outcomes reported on students' graduation rates.

Average Effects during the First Year of High School

The first year analysis sample included 29,811 students. Strong internal validity was shown since baseline characteristics of treatment and control group members exhibited almost no differences. Researchers also found strong external validity as characteristics of enrolled treatment group students were very similar to those of all students enrolled in SSCs. Significant positive effects were found on five measures: the ninth grade on-track indicator and its two components – whether students earned 10 or more credits and whether they failed more than 1 semester of a core subject – as well as total credits earned toward graduation and regular attendance rate (90% or higher). Findings indicated that by the end of the first year, target SSC enrollees had earned an average of 11.3 credits as compared to the 10.4 credits earned by their control group counterparts. This 0.9 credit difference (p -value=0.000, effect size=0.21) is both large in size (and thus policy-relevant) and highly statistically significant (and thus unlikely to represent a chance result due to random error).

Effects for Student Subgroups during the First Year of High School

Findings indicate that positive SSC enrollment effects are experienced by students from many different subgroups during the first year of high school. Researchers analyzed the effect of SSC enrollment on the “ninth-grade on-track for graduation” measure for different student subgroups defined by such indicators as: eighth grade reading and math proficiency level (for students at levels 1, 2, and 3); low-income status; race/ethnicity by gender; choice level (i.e., which of a student's 12 rank order choices corresponded to their chosen SSC); and cohort (i.e., which of 4 annual incoming cohorts a student was a member).

Results were positive for all subgroups and statistically significant for all but the two smallest (non-Black or Hispanic females and non-Black or Hispanic males). For example, the estimated effects for students with eighth grade ELA proficiency levels of 1, 2 and 3 were 10.3 (p-value = 0.05), 12.0 (p-value 0.01) and 11.9 (p-value = 0.05) respectively. Estimated effects for black females and Hispanic females were 13.5 (p-value = 0.01) and 12.0 (p-value = 0.01), and for black males and Hispanic males were 8.5 (p-value = 0.01) and 7.7 (p-value = 0.01).

No subgroup differences across subgroups were statistically significant, indicating that SSCs are not just effective for certain types of students, but rather are effective for a broad range of students.

Average Effects on High School Graduation During Year Four of High School

At this point in time, MDRC has been able to follow one complete cohort (5,363 2004-2005 eighth graders) through four years of high school. Positive effects of SSC enrollment (as measured by attendance, total Regents exams passed toward graduation and total credits earned toward graduation) are sustained through students' second and third years of high school and culminate in the fourth year with high school graduation.

Fourth year findings indicate that SSCs increase overall graduation rates by 6.8 percentage points, from 61.9 percent for control-group counterparts to 68.7 percent for target SSC enrollees. Thus, for the first cohort of students studied and their first four years of high school, the evidence indicates that SSC improvements in students' academic progress and school engagement during early years of high school translate into higher rates of on-time graduation. Furthermore, fourth year findings indicate that a majority of the SSC effect on graduation rates reflects an increase in receipt of New York State Regents diplomas. For this type of diploma students must pass a series of Regents examinations with a score of 65 points or above and pass all of their required courses. A minority of the SSC effect on graduation rates reflects an increase in receipt of local diplomas, which has less stringent standards for scores on Regents examinations.

In addition to the MDRC impact study on small schools of choice, the studies described below present compelling evidence in support of components of NYCDOE Portfolio Strategy.

Diverse school models developed via external capacity and portfolio planning – An important component of the Portfolio Strategy is the provision of diverse school models developed via external capacity. Studies on Charter Schools (Hoxby, Kang, & Murarka, 2009), Career Academies (Kemple & Snipes, 2000), and Talent Development High Schools (Kemple, Herlihy, & Smith, 2005) studies lend support to one of the central components of the New York City Portfolio Strategy, namely that through careful portfolio planning, different small schools models can be provided to different subgroups of students in order to meet their academic and personal needs and increase their chances of success. A randomized control trial (RCT) design study involving 43 New York City charter schools and 37,454 primarily minority and low-income students found that charter school students in grades 3 through 8 had higher standardized achievement test scores than students attending non-charter schools. Charter schools also significantly decreased the achievement gap for its students. These positive achievement test results for charter school students are supported by another study of New York City charter schools that matched charter schools to traditional public schools serving as the feeder pool to charters (CREDO, 2010). Support for another small schools model comes from the Career Academies study, a large-scale multi-site RCT design study involving 1,764 students. Results indicated that the Career Academies significantly improved high school outcomes for high-risk students, a subgroup in the study. Results from the Talent Development High School evaluation, conducted in Philadelphia, also support the small schools model. Using a quasi-experimental design, researchers matched six Talent Development High Schools (other types of SLCs) to five traditional high schools. They found statistically significant differences in credit accumulation and likelihood of being promoted to 10th grade for Talent Development High School students.

Additional study details. The Charter Schools study is a multi-year study involving 43 – the majority – of New York City’s charter schools. The evaluation report analyzes achievement and other data from the 2000-01 school year up through the 2007-08 school year. It analyzes achievement of 93% of all NYC charter school students enrolled in test-taking grades (grades 3 through 12). The study uses a random assignment design, possible because of the use of a lottery to

admit students into charter schools. All study participants had an equal chance of being selected for charter school enrollment.

A total of 37,454 students applied for the charter school lottery from 1999-2000 through 2005-06 and are included in the study. Overall, charter school applicants were more likely to be Black and much less likely to be Asian or white than the average student in New York City's traditional public schools. In addition, charter school applicants were more likely to be poor than the average student in New York City's traditional public schools. Of this total, 54% were "lotteried-in" and 46% were "lotteried-out." An analysis of race, ethnicity, gender, prior test scores, free and reduced-price lunch, special education, and English learner status revealed no significant differences between the two groups. This analysis confirmed the notion that the lottery had, indeed, been random and that the two groups of students were comparable.

When examining standardized achievement test scores, the study found that third grade charter school students attained significantly higher Math scores ($p < 0.04$) than traditional school students. In addition, students attending fourth through eighth grade in charter schools attained higher Math scores ($p < 0.01$) and English scores ($p < 0.01$) than traditional school students attending the same grades. It should be noted that the results refer to cumulative effects. That is, scores for third grade students reflect the fact that the students have been attending a charter school for four years, K through third grade. Cumulative effects were also obtained for other grades. Additional analyses were conducted to determine if the achievement effects for charter school students depended on a student's race, ethnicity, gender, or incoming academic achievement. No significant differences were found for those analyses.

Further analyses examined the extent to which students in both groups closed the achievement gap that has been well-documented between white and minority students. For this study, the achievement gap was defined as the difference in test scores between the average student in Scarsdale – an affluent New York City suburb – and Harlem – a New York City neighborhood with a large number of students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. This so-called "Scarsdale-Harlem achievement gap" is equivalent to about 35 points in standardized state tests. On

average, a charter schools student who attended the school for grades K through 8 would close that achievement gap by 86% in Math and 66% in English. By contrast, lotteried-out students attending traditional schools for the same grades would increase academic performance but would not close the “Scarsdale-Harlem” achievement gap by much.

The CREDO (2010) study matched 20,640 New York City charter school students from 49 charter schools for a six year period (2003-04 school year through 2008-09 school year) with an identical number of comparison students attending traditional public schools (these schools were the charter schools’ feeder pool). Demographic profiles for both groups of schools were comparable – students were largely black and Hispanic and economically disadvantaged. Findings indicated that charter school students had higher achievement test scores in reading (p-value < 0.05) and math (p-value = 0.01) than the students from the comparison schools.

The Career Academies study was conducted over a six-year period, 1993-99 and involved nine high schools and their Career Academies. A large-scale multi-site random assignment research design involving 1,764 NYC students was used in this study in order to examine the impact of Career Academies on student outcomes. Students in the study sample were 56% female and 44% male. The race and ethnicity distribution was the following: 56% Hispanic, 30% black, 7% Asian and 6% white. In terms of socioeconomic background, 38% of the students lived in a single-parent household and 24% came from families receiving welfare or Food Stamps. Of the students in the study sample, 54% were randomly selected to enroll in an Academy (Academy group) and 46% were not selected to enroll in an Academy (non-Academy group). Statistical analyses showed that there were no significant differences between the background characteristics and prior school experiences of students in the two groups.

When comparing results for both groups – Academy and non-Academy – along anticipated outcomes, the Academy group exhibited only slight reductions in dropout rates and modest increases in other measures of school engagement. However, when differences among subgroups of students were taken into account, a different pattern emerged. In an effort to examine subgroup differences, researchers defined three student subgroups – high-risk, middle risk, and low-risk.

These subgroups were defined using six characteristics found to be strong predictors of dropping out among the non-Academy group. After applying those criteria to sort out students in both groups, researchers found that about 25% in both groups were identified as high-risk, about 50% were identified as middle-risk, and about 25% were identified as low-risk. Results were then analyzed between Academy and non-Academy students for each of these three subgroups.

Study results indicated that the Career Academies significantly improved high school outcomes in the high-risk subgroup. These students exhibited substantially reduced dropout rates, 21.3% vs. 32.2% ($p < .01$) and chronic absenteeism, 41.9% vs. 53.4% ($p < .01$) when compared to non-Academy students. The high-risk Academy students also exhibited improved attendance, credits earned, course-taking patterns, and preparation for post-secondary education and employment opportunities. In general, differences between the Academy and non-Academy groups were less dramatic for the middle-risk and low-risk subgroups.

Talent Development High Schools are set up as small learning communities in order to build personalized relationships among and between students and teachers. Ninth grade is structured as a self-contained school-within-a-school and tenth to twelfth grades are structured as Career Academies. The impact evaluation showed that for first-time ninth grade students, talent Development produced substantial and statistically significant gains in attendance, academic course credits earned, and promotion rates during the students' first year of high school. Furthermore, the impacts on credits earned and promotion rates were sustained as this group of students moved through high school.

Accountability, collaboration, and use of data - The accountability for students' academic progress and achievement is another key component of the Portfolio Strategy. The accountability system identifies schools that are performing below expectations and requires that progress be made following the development of an improvement plan. Evidence for the importance of school accountability comes from a number of recent studies. In one study, achievement test results were examined for 985 schools serving grades 3 through 8 immediately after NYCDOE started its accountability initiative in 2007. Using a regression discontinuity approach, the study found that

giving a school a D or an F grade resulted in significant student achievement in Math. Furthermore, an F grade for a school also resulted in increased student achievement in English (Rockoff & Turner, 2008). Another study using the regression discontinuity methodology examined the effects of accountability using student-level data. This study found that students in schools earning an F grade made overall improvements in math the following year (Winters, 2008). Both of these studies, then, support the notion that school accountability impacts on students' academic progress.

Additional study details. Since this citywide accountability strategy was first adopted in 2007 by NYCDOE, through the issue of school Progress Reports, there have been a few local studies that have focused on the possible impacts of school accountability on student achievement. One study has examined the short-term impacts of that particular strategy immediately after it was instituted in New York City (Rockoff. & Turner, 2008).

The DOE's accountability system consists of an evaluation of each school according to a set of metrics that results in the assignment of a grade from A to F, with the grades linked to rewards and consequences. Schools receiving A or B grades are eligible for increased per pupil funding and bonuses for principals. Schools receiving D or F grades face a series of corrective actions, the possibility of losing students and funding, and the potential threat of school closure or principal dismissal if the school performance does not improve.

The Rockoff & Turner study examined achievement test results data from 2006 to 2008 for 985 schools in NYCDOE serving grades 3 through 8. Even though the accountability scores were released a few months into the school year (fall of 2007), thus limiting the measures that principals, students, and parents could take if a school had received a poor grade, the study found that the strategy led to notable outcomes in student achievement. Using a regression discontinuity approach, the study found that giving a school a D or an F grade resulted in significant student achievement in Math ($p < .01$). Furthermore, an F grade for a school also resulted in increased student achievement in English ($p < .05$). Although more research is needed to fully assess the long-term impacts of New York City's accountability system, the results from the present study present encouraging evidence for such impacts.

The Winters (2008) study also used a regression discontinuity methodology to examine the effects of school accountability on student outcomes. Using student-level data from 2006-07 and 2007-08, the study found that students in F-graded schools made significant and substantial improvements in standardized math test scores, with most of the progress attributable to 5th grade students.

Leadership – New and strong leadership is crucial to the DOE’s school reform agenda and leadership development is a critical piece of its Portfolio Strategy. The primary research evidence for this component comes from a recent study examining the contribution of the Aspiring Principals Program (APP) of the New York City Leadership Academy to student outcomes (Corcoran, Schwartz, & Weinstein, 2009). Eighty-six APP principals were matched with 334 non-APP principals of comparable schools. Results of the study showed that, by the third year, after controlling for pre-existing differences in student demographics and achievement, students in elementary and middle schools led by APP principals attained higher English achievement test scores than students in same types of schools led by non-APP principals.

Additional study details. For this study, 147 APP graduates from 2004 and 2005 were considered for inclusion. Of these, only 86 met the criteria established for the study: had remained with the same school for three or more consecutive years and continued as principals in 2007-08. For a comparison group, the researchers identified 334 non-APP principals who met the same study criteria and led schools with grade configurations comparable to those led by APP principals. Principals from both groups were then matched to school-level data. A few non-APP principals could not be matched to school-level data and were eliminated from the study.

Comparisons of personal and professional characteristics revealed some differences between the two groups of principals. APP principals were more likely to be younger and black. They were also found to have had fewer years working as a teacher and less likely to have served as an assistant principal. APP principals also were more likely to be assigned to schools having a significantly larger share of black students and fewer Asian and white students. Finally, APP principals were

more likely to be placed in schools with lower levels of performance than schools headed by non-APP principals.

Results of the study showed that, by the third year, after controlling for pre-existing differences in student demographics and achievement, students in elementary and middle schools led by APP principals attained higher ELA achievement test scores than students in same types of schools led by non-APP principals ($p < 0.01$). No significant differences were found for math achievement test scores between APP and non-APP schools. In addition, there were no significant differences between the two groups at the high school level. Although this study lacks the internal validity of a randomized controlled experiment, it provides a promising research approach and methodology that should inform future studies examining the contribution of leadership training to student outcomes.

In summary, findings from a number of well-designed, well-implemented experimental and quasi-experimental studies recently conducted in New York City examining student-level impacts for small schools, charter schools, Career Academies, accountability measures, and leadership training indicate that the Portfolio Strategy has had consistent and significant positive outcomes and lend substantial support to the proposal for a scale-up Portfolio Strategy which will serve many more NYC students and influence school reform strategies for other urban school districts throughout the United States. References can be found in Appendix H: List of Proposal References.

C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant

1. The past performance of the eligible applicant in implementing large, complex and rapidly growing projects.

Under the leadership of Mayor Michael Bloomberg and NYC Schools Chancellor Joel Klein, in 2003, the NYCDOE began a bold transformation of New York City's public schools, *Children First*. Now entering the third phase of reform, this system-wide effort has been focusing on the only outcome that really matters: student success. Achieving this goal means putting children ahead of the special interest politics and bureaucratic inertia that too often drove decisions and got in the way of quality learning.

The first phase of reform (2003-06) focused on de-politicization and stabilization. In this phase the mayor's office took control of the city schools and began to set the stage for later reforms. Key initiatives in this first phase included a streamlined organizational structure, the mandating of a core curriculum in ELA and mathematics, the establishment of the NYCLA to increase the recruitment and placement of high quality principals, and the creation of an Autonomy Zone, which allowed high performing schools to secure waivers from curriculum mandates. New school development, including charters, became an area of focus.

Phase two (2006-09) solidified the three hallmarks of the *Children First* reform agenda – leadership, empowerment and accountability. NYCDOE transformed the central staffing and management structure to create a nimble, entrepreneurial organization. Establishing a system of rewards and consequences based on student achievement and progress, NYCDOE launched an educator training program in parallel with a new set of accountability tools, including Progress Reports (in which a school's progress is compared to that of "peer schools" and all schools Citywide) and its Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS). And, the City instituted Fair Student Funding, based on the principles that school budgeting should fund students fairly and adequately (based on their educational needs), that schools leaders, not central offices, are best positioned to decide how to improve student achievement, and school budgets should be as transparent as possible so funding decisions are visible for all to see and evaluate..

In August 2009, Chancellor Joel Klein launched phase three of *Children's First*, retaining the foundation of leadership, empowerment and accountability. The term started with a mandate to raise the bar, working with the State of New York to set higher standards and to design the curriculum and assessments to support higher-order learning. Schools are also now served by Children First Networks, which will be responsible for providing schools with full operational and instructional supports. And the third term will see the deepening of the empowerment/accountability pairing to all levels of the system: classroom, school, and school support – with improved accountability and developmental mechanisms for teachers and networks both.

Operating the largest school district in the nation, NYCDOE has seen significant improvements through the development of large-scale reforms. When it was awarded the Broad Prize for Urban Education in 2007, NYCDOE was confirmed as an urban education leader, honored for its record in driving change across such a large enterprise. The i3 scale-up grant provides an opportunity for NYCDOE to dramatically expand its portfolio of successful schools, supported by an enterprise level accountability system, a full-choice high school model and a cutting-edge leadership management program, which can serve as a model for other urban schools systems around the country.

2. ***The extent to which an eligible applicant provides information and data demonstrating that, in the case of an applicant that is an LEA, the LEA has***
 - (i) ***significantly closed the achievement gaps between groups of students described in section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA, or significantly increased student achievement for all groups of students described in such section; and made significant improvements in other areas, such as graduation rates or increased recruitment and placement of high-quality teachers and principals, as demonstrated with meaningful data.***

NYCDOE's *Children First* reforms have led to dramatic results across New York City public schools at all school levels, including significantly closing the achievement gaps between White and Asian students and their Black and Hispanic peers and increasing graduation rates for all students. Highlights of these accomplishments are described in the following paragraphs.

To begin, the percentage of NYC students in grades 3-8 meeting or exceeding state standards jumped from 51% in 2006 to 69% in ELA in 2009 and from 57% to 82% in math. The gap between students in grades 3-8 meeting or exceeding state standards in NYC compared to the rest of New York State (a significantly more affluent comparison set) has decreased from 16 percentage points in 2006 to 13 in 2009 in ELA and 14 percentage points in 2006 to 7 in 2009 in math.

Among ELLs and SPEDs, the gains have been dramatic. The percentage of ELLs meeting or exceeding standards has increased from 11% in ELA and 36% in math in 2006 to 35% in ELA and 68% in math in 2009. The percentage of special education students meeting or exceeding standards

has more than doubled since 2006, from 15% in ELA and 25% in math to 35% and 55%, respectively, in 2009. NYCDOE has made considerable progress in closing the shameful achievement gap on state assessments that exists between our Black and Hispanic elementary and middle school students and their White and Asian peers in both math and ELA. Since 2006, the Black-White gap in ELA has narrowed by 8.6 percentage points from 30.5% to 21.9%, while the Hispanic-White gap has narrowed by 6.6 percentage points from 29.4% to 22.8%. In math, the achievement gaps have narrowed even more strikingly. The Black-White gap in math now stands at 17.2 percentage points, down from 30.7 in 2006. The Hispanic-White gap in math is currently 13.7 percentage points, down from 27.5 in 2006.

NYC has also made considerable gains in math and reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). As a participant in NAEP's Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA), the average scale score in mathematics for NYC fourth graders has increased by 11 points from 2003 to 2009. Eighth grade students' average scale score on the NAEP math exam has also increased, by 7 points from 2003 to 2009. In reading, the average scale score for NYC fourth grade students increased by 7 points from 2002 to 2007. The City is awaiting the release of the 2009 NAEP TUDA results in reading in the coming weeks.

At the high school level, from 2005 to 2009, the graduation rate for Black students increased by 18 percentage points, while the rate for Hispanic students increased by 19 percentage points. NYC has also worked to increase the graduation rates of students with disabilities and ELLs. In 2009, the graduation rate for students with disabilities was 27%, up from 17% in 2005. ELLs made an even more substantial increase from 27% in 2005 to 44% in 2009. The overall graduation rate of 63% is up by 15 points over this period of time.

As the graduation rate has risen, the dropout rate has fallen. The overall dropout rate has been cut nearly in half since 2005, falling to a new low of 12%, a decline of 10 percentage points. Notably, during this time period, dropout rates among Hispanic and Black students declined 12 percentage points and 11 percentage points, respectively.

Finally, as the four-year graduation rate has steadily climbed, so too has the percent of students earning New York State Regents and Advanced Regents high school diplomas.. For the Class of 2009 (2005 Cohort), 45% of students, the largest percentage ever, earned these types of diplomas within four years, up from 30% among the Class of 2005 (2001 Cohort).

NYC public schools are also sending significantly more students on to college. Fifty eight percent of the graduates in the Class of 2009 enrolled in college in the first fall semester after graduation. Additionally, 64% of graduates from the Class of 2008 enrolled in college within the first 15 months after graduation and 74% of graduates since 2005 have enrolled in college at any point after graduation.

D. Quality of the Project Evaluation

The New York City Department of Education NYCDOE proposes to engage the Research Alliance for New York City Schools at New York University to oversee the independent evaluation of the i3 scale-up project of the Portfolio model for secondary school turnaround. The evaluation will assess the implementation and impact of the scale-up process within NYC and it will examine the factors necessary to sustain the core principles of the Portfolio model that might be needed to export the strategy to other districts.

Overview

The evaluation will examine the process by which the Portfolio model creates and supports new small secondary schools and assess the impact that these schools have on outcomes that are measured at the school, student and system levels. The evaluation will also measure the quality of the model components and assess changes in school organization and management, teaching and learning environment, academic rigor and relationships with communities that are intended goals of the components. The Research Alliance will conduct analyses aimed at understanding the association between implementation quality and impacts on student outcomes across the new schools that will be developed under the Portfolio model. Because the model encompasses both middle and high schools and a variety of new small school models (theme-based schools, charters, blended schools, and

transfer schools), the evaluation will be designed to examine the variation in impacts and implementation efficacy across these dimensions. Finally, the evaluation will also produce its own portfolio of evidence that can be used by other states and districts to adapt a portfolio turnaround strategy to their own local needs and circumstances. The Research Alliance will embark on a five year study that will be organized around three sets of research questions:

1. What impact does the scaled-up version of DOE's Portfolio model and the new small schools it is designed to create and support have on school-level indicators of capacity and leadership, personalization, collaboration, academic rigor and community partnership; student-level measures academic performance, engagement, and college and career-readiness; and Citywide achievement and performance gaps by demographic characteristics, English language learning and special education needs, and entering performance levels.
2. How do the key components of the Portfolio model support the creation and development of new small secondary schools and how do they contribute to the impact that new small schools have on school- and student-level outcomes?
3. What are the essential supports needed to sustain the Portfolio model approach and export its core principles and components to other urban districts?

The impact study will utilize a combination of regression discontinuity, randomized controlled trial, and propensity score matching designs to estimate impacts at the school, student, and system levels, respectively. Both the impact and implementation studies will draw upon a combination of existing NYCDOE data and supplemental data collection efforts. The Research Alliance already has access to NYCDOE's administrative records archive, high school assignment and placement database, personnel assignment and licensing data, and annual teacher, student, parent, and principal surveys. New data collection efforts will include new survey modules on the City's school survey, supplemental surveys of students, school staff, and parents, on-site field interviews and focus groups, observations, and document analysis.

The Research Alliance is uniquely positioned to conduct this evaluation given its commitment to research rigor and independence, its collaborative working relationship with the

NYCDOE and other education stakeholders across NYC, its capacity to form and manage partnerships with researchers and research organizations, and its direct access to NYCDOE data.

Below we provide a brief overview of the research designs, measures and data sources we propose for each set of research questions.

Research Question 1: Impact on School, Individual and System-Level Outcomes

The impact study for this evaluation will involve three levels of analysis: the school level, the student level and the system level. These designs will form the heart of the overall evaluation strategy by establishing a rigorous foundation of main effect impacts from which we can then explore sources of these effects that may stem from the core components of the PTS. This section of the proposal first outlines the research design for each level of analysis and then discusses the measures and data sources that would be utilized at each level.

Impact Study Design

In framing the design for the impact study, it is important to begin by distinguishing between outcomes and impacts. For the purposes of this project, an *outcome* is a measure of engagement, attendance, behavior, achievement, on-track for graduation, graduation status, and other malleable attributes of individuals, institutions, and even systems. By contrast, an impact is the influence on or change in an outcome that is caused by an intervention or reform strategy. In this case, the centerpieces of the intervention or reform strategy are the new small secondary schools which will be created and supported through the Portfolio model. We will estimate impacts by comparing outcomes for the new small schools and their students with outcomes for schools that are not small schools and were not supported by the model. These non-small schools and non-model conditions are known as *counterfactuals* and should validly reflect outcomes that would have occurred without the PTS and the resulting small schools. Because of the three levels at which we propose to assess impacts, it will be necessary for the design to develop three tiers of counterfactuals. These are discussed briefly below.

School-level impacts: To construct a valid counterfactual for estimating school-level impacts, the evaluation will build on a naturally occurring *regression discontinuity design (RDD)* that

arises from the NYCDOE's accountability system.⁴ This system rates each of the city's schools using the multi-dimensional school progress reports whose scores range from 0 to 105 and accounts for differences across schools in student demographic characteristics and prior attendance and performance. The schools that consistently rank in the bottom of the distribution of progress report scores are considered for intensive intervention and turnaround strategies. Because not all chronically low-performing can be incorporated into the turnaround process at one time, the ranking of schools by their progress report scores provides the opportunity to construct a regression discontinuity design by comparing the ten lowest performing schools in the list in a given year, for example, with the next ten schools in the list. We may refer to these as turnaround and non-turnaround schools, respectively.

There are several operational and analytic challenges that must be addressed in constructing a reasonably valid and reliable RDD approach from the DOE accountability system. First, the evaluation team will work with the DOE to develop strategies for phasing in the non-turnaround schools for a given year in such a way as to maximize the potential contrast with schools receiving the full suite of Portfolio components for as long as possible. For example, the evaluation team may propose that the non-turnaround schools receive a two-year waiver from full reconstitution before being re-entered in the rating and ranking process for the purposes of turnaround selection.

Second, the evaluation team will need to develop more precise projections of minimum detectable effects as the NYCDOE develops a more specific estimate of the number and timing with which current secondary schools would be part of the Portfolio process and eventually replaced by the 100 new small schools that are being planned. With a sample of 60 current schools, serving an average of approximately 2,000 students per school that may be considered for turnaround during the scale-up period (40 turnaround schools and 20 non-turnaround schools), minimum detectable effect

⁴ For background and applications of regression discontinuity designs, see, for example, Shadish, Cook & Campbell, 2002; Hahn, Todd, & VaDer Klaauw, 2001, and Gamse, Bloom, Kemple, & Jacob, 2008.

sizes (MDES) are likely to be quite large, perhaps in the .5 or .6 standard deviation range. The evaluation team will need to examine the assumptions underlying a set of MDES estimates that accounts for the measurement properties of school size, personalization, academic rigor, and community partnerships, the key school-level outcomes that would be the target of these analyses.

Student-level impacts: To construct a valid counterfactual for estimating student-level impacts, the evaluation will build on a naturally occurring *randomized controlled trial* that arises from DOE’s High School Application and Placement System (HSAPS).⁵ Each year HSAPS creates randomized lotteries for all small schools that have more students who want to attend them than they can serve. Students who are assigned by HSAPS to a small school through this lottery would comprise the treatment group for the student-level impact analysis. Students who selected that school but were not assigned to it by HSAPS comprise the control group for the analysis. Estimates of effects on future student outcomes are obtained by measuring average differences in these outcomes for the treatment group and control group. This is the same methodology that MDRC used in its impact evaluation of the NYCDOE’s initial group of small schools. In fact, the Research Alliance proposes to engage the MDRC team that conducted this earlier evaluation to lead the student-level impact analysis for the evaluation of the scale-up initiative.

As with the MDRC study, the evaluation team will need to develop analytic strategies to address a number of operational complications that arise when using the HSAPS process for a naturally occurring RCT. For example, given the HSAPS open choice process, we will need to account for the fact that some students in the “control group” may enroll in another small school, including a new small school created under the turnaround process. Also, the MDRC study was able to focus only on students who were assigned to the small schools through the random element of the HSAPS process. This accounted for approximately half of the students who were assigned and enrolled in those schools. The remaining students were not assigned through the randomization

⁵ For a description of how HSAPS has been used to construct a randomized controlled trial see (MDRC, forthcoming).

process because the school was not oversubscribed with students from their eligibility and geographic zoning priorities. Thus, the evaluation of the Portfolio scale-up process will extend the MDRC analysis by using quasi-experimental propensity score matching techniques to replicate the RCT results and then, if the results are sufficiently replicated, apply those techniques to students who were not assigned through the HSAPS lottery element.

Finally, because the HSAPS process results in a series of school-by-school student placement and assignment decisions, and thus, school-by-school lotteries, the evaluation will be able to estimate impacts on student outcomes for each the 100 or more schools in the sample. As in most multi-site evaluations, we expect that there will be variation in impacts across schools. This variation will provide the opportunity to examine associations between impacts and various dimensions of implementation that are aligned with the Portfolio model. As discussed below, an important goal of the implementation study will be to develop systematic measures of these school functioning and quality indicators and then explore their relationship to the variation in impacts.

System-level trends and performance gaps: The system-level analysis will examine city-wide trends in key outcomes such as student attendance, credit accumulation, progress toward graduation, and college readiness as well as changes in the gaps that exist between students with different racial/ethnic characteristics, English language and special education needs, and prior educational performance levels. To assess these types of system-wide impacts, we will use a “beat-the-odds” approach to comparing outcomes for current cohorts of students in the system with counterfactuals constructed from matched comparison cohorts using historical data from HSAPS and other administrative records. We will match the outcomes of the students in the new Portfolio schools to “similar” students who (historically) had gone through their high school career in the schools they had replaced. Using propensity score matching we will be able to match current high schools students with their likely historical counter parts. This method will allow us to build “beat the odds” models to measure the degree to which the new small schools are adding extra value at shifting the trajectories of at risk students in a positive way across the system, compared to their historical counterparts.

Impact Study Data and Measures

Because they focus on different targets of intervention and different levels of aggregation, each of the three tiers for the impact analysis will draw upon different data sources and different measures. Table 1 in Appendix H lists the key measures and their data sources for each level of the impact analysis. Given the time frame for this project, the impact evaluation will focus on student engagement, performance, achievement, and progress toward graduation during their first two or three years during high school. As noted below, we will attempt to include graduation rates for the early cohorts of students entering the new small schools that are being created through the PTS. To ensure that the NYCDOE has evidence of longer term effectiveness, the evaluation team will also build the capacity to continue the impact study with subsequent waves of outcome data that would extend beyond the period covered by this project.

Research Question 2: PTS Components: Their Implementation and Contribution to Small School Impacts

This part of the study will focus on the implementation of the key components of the NYCDOE's school turnaround strategy. For the purposes of this discussion, we frame the key components of the PTS under four broad functions: planning and placement of new small schools using a portfolio management tool; development of and supports for reform models and continuous improvement provided by intermediaries and school networks; leadership development through training, coaching and mentoring; and data-informed decision making and instruction at the school and classroom level through systems like ARIS Local.

The design for the implementation study will entail two strands of analysis. One line will be primarily descriptive and will document the use of the PTS tools and supports at the system and school levels and to track their development and usage over the five years of the project. The other strand of analysis will be comparative and will examine variation both in PTS implementation and in school practices and functioning that the PTS are intended to promote and support. We propose to compare schools both within the PTS initiative and between existing schools and those that are being developed through the PTS.

As noted earlier, our goal will be to integrate the impact and implementation studies by exploring associations between impacts on student outcomes across schools and variation in planning activities, leadership practices, data-informed decision making, and supports for learning are intended to evolve from the PTS. We recognize that this type of analysis draws largely from “naturally” occurring variation and that it will not be possible to draw definitive inferences about the causal mechanisms that may be driving impacts on student outcomes. As discussed under our third research question, our goal will be to accumulate a longitudinal record of compelling evidence about the essential supports for helping secondary schools organize for improvement that the Consortium on Chicago School Research was able to compile for elementary school in Chicago (Bryk, Seabring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010)

The implementation study will draw upon both extant data, enhancements to the NYCDOE school surveys (where possible), and new data collection efforts. We will utilize the Research Alliance’s archive of NYCDOE data including the School Survey data (formerly the Learning Environment Surveys), the School Quality Reviews, the Principal Satisfaction Surveys, and human resource records. We will also work with the NYCDOE to develop a limited number of additional survey modules for students, teachers and parents. These Supplemental Survey Modules would focus on general school climate, supports for teaching and learning, community relationships, parent involvement, and leadership practices and provide a significant enhancement to the existing NYCDOE survey instruments. We also propose to construct new, brief survey instruments for students, teachers, administrators and parents (we’ll call these the PTS Surveys) and to administer these on an annual basis. The PTS Surveys would be used to develop a limited number of individual measures of self-efficacy, engagement, peer relationships, and perceptions of support from other individuals in the school. They would also be used to develop measures of the school environment that may be more specific to new school start-up and supports that are intended to evolve from the PTS, which are discussed below.

Finally, the implementation study will draw upon several sources of qualitative data collected through interviews with teachers and principals, focus groups with students, and school observations

or checklist walkthroughs. We will create a number of instruments to collect these data, including a PTS Principal Interview Protocol, a PTS Teacher Focus Group Protocol, and a PTS School Walk-through Protocol. To collect these data, we plan to conduct a minimum of two school visits per year to at least 25 schools. In addition, we will conduct interviews with central level personnel in various offices of the NYCDOE, including Enrollment, Portfolio Planning and Family Engagement to get a picture of the planning and policy process for closing old schools and rolling out new turnaround schools. Finally, because the portfolio strategy in NYC involves considerable input from the community, we will attend Panel for Education Policy (the governing Board of Education) meetings and other community meetings where the portfolio issues are discussed.

Below is a list of the key foci of our research on the implementation of the turnaround strategy. As the components of the strategy are extensive and varied, we may elect to change our focus if we find that a particular issue(s) emerges that needs further attention. Table 2 in Appendix H summarizes the measures associated with each foci.

Planning and placement of new schools with portfolio management tools and processes.

The NYCDOE is developing a number of new portfolio tools and processes to ensure that the closing and opening of new schools is aligned with the needs of the local communities affected. A central aspect of this reform is a portfolio management tool that is being developed to provide information that will support the planning and placement for new schools that will be opened to enhance the quality of education in communities that are current being served by chronically low-performing schools.

The evaluation will describe this process and the extent to which the actual development and support for the new small schools align with the needs assessments and projections. Although the portfolio management tool will have its own process for revisions and modification, the goal of these analyses from the evaluation would be to help refine the tool and provide independent information about the potential consequences of misalignment between needs and implementation. The evaluation will also measure the effectiveness of the process to meet community needs using the results of the parent reactions in the PTS Parent Survey. The survey will query parents about their

perceptions of the capacity of the new schools to meet their children's needs. We will then analyze the degree to which schools with stronger measures of perceived effectiveness are correlated with the measures of student impact.

Implementing and supporting reform models and continuous improvement strategies with intermediaries and networks. A key aspect of building new schools involves the support system that surrounds it, especially the role of the intermediaries. The evaluation will describe different intermediaries that are engaged to support the new schools as part of the PTS initiative, as well as the support they provide to the school leadership, teachers and other staff, and their role in the community. The evaluation will further describe and categorize the different intermediaries according to their various guiding principles and the degree to which they are more community focuses versus school-management focused. Finally, we will describe their interaction with other sources of support, including School Support Organizations (SSOs) and School Networks.

The evaluation will in addition measure the amount, variety and relevance of the support and training or professional development that the intermediaries provide to school leaders and staff. We will similarly measure the amount and quality of the communication between the intermediaries and the new schools. Finally, we will measure the degree to which the intermediaries use data to make important instructional or programmatic decisions and the degree to which they have qualified staff to use and interpret the data. We will then analyze the degree to which variations in intermediary practices – as measured in terms of providing support and training, communication and data use – are correlated with variations in the measures of student impacts across schools.

Training and coaching for school leadership development. The evaluation will examine the process for training and coaching new leaders in the new schools, as well as how these practices are related to measures of school and student outcomes. First, we will describe the three main aspects of leadership training for this initiative: 1) the training and development of new leaders through the Leadership Academy; 2) the New School Intensive training which focuses exclusively on principals or new leaders who plan to take assignments in the new small schools, and finally 3) the Leaders in Education Apprentice Program (LEAP), which is an on-the-job training and coaching for assistant

principals to groom them for future leadership roles. In addition, we will describe the experience of new principals in the new schools, including the challenges they face, their interactions with staff, community and intermediaries, and their leadership styles.

Second, we will create a number of measures of effective leadership as a way to gauge the relationship of this component to student and school outcomes. Our measures will be based on existing standards of effective leadership, including the 6 ISLLC standards, the NASSP standards for secondary school principals and the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education and include such critical factors as: planning, communication, support (through professional development and modeling best practices); a focus on college readiness; and community engagement. Our measures will further be based on a variety of sources, including self-reported information from surveys, school walk-throughs and structured interviews, and will enable us to analyze the relationship between degree of effective leadership and student and school outcomes.

Promoting data informed decision-making and instruction through ARIS Local and accountability tools. A central focus of this analysis will be the use of ARIS Local (described earlier). The evaluation will describe the training for and use of ARIS Local and other data tools in the new schools and the degree to which there a “culture of data use” is being inculcated in these schools. In addition, we want to understand not just the amount of data use, but also the degree to which schools are making sense of data and using them effectively to change their instructional practices in the classroom.

We will also create measures of data use to determine the degree to which schools are high, medium or low users of data to inform their practices. These measures will be drawn from current, published guides on best practices in using data to inform education practice, in particular the IES Practice Guide on “Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making,” and will focus on four key aspects of data use in schools: training, culture, expectations, and supports. Specifically, we will measure the degree to which school provide support and training to teachers and the quality of this training to make sense of available data; the culture around data use in a schools (how pervasively are data used in meetings and discussions); and the expectations that the school sets

for using data, such as a written plan for articulating activities, roles and responsibilities for school staff.

Research Question 3: Sustaining and Exporting the PTS Approach to Urban Districts

In addition to assessing the implementation and impact of scaling up the portfolio turnaround strategy for creating and supporting new small schools in New York City, a central objective of this study will be to document the process for sustaining the core principles of the reforms and exporting them to other urban contexts. At the end of the day, we want to be able to provide a “blueprint” for urban districts that must take dramatic measures to turn around their lowest performing secondary schools. The blueprint and accompanying tools would evolve directly from the NYCDOE portfolio and would be aimed at helping other districts target their efforts, leverage the most important resources, and have the greatest impact on the students in their district. While we may already have evidence of the success of the small school model for improving student achievement, we need to have a better understanding of the particular elements that have had the most impact. We also need to understand the best way to implement these components if this strategy were to be exported to another urban district.

Our blueprint will be modeled on the Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) synthesis book *Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago* (Bryk, Seabring, & Easton, 2006), which is a culmination of a decade’s worth of research in the city’s schools. Using their research findings, the book is able to clearly argue that the key elements of support for successful schools in Chicago were: leadership, parent-community ties, professional capacity, student-centered learning climate, and ambitious instruction. A closer examination of these five elements also shows, according to CCSR, that the community context was a central feature in the success or failure of schools, and that factors such as the amount of social capital or the crime rates had an intervening impact on the capacity of the district and the community to provide those key supports.

CCSR’s *Organizing School for Improvement* book focuses almost exclusively on elementary schools. To date, nothing comparable is available for secondary schools. The research and evaluation

activities for this scale-up project will begin to fill this gap. We will aim to determine the key elements of success in the strategies that have been undertaken in NYC in an effort to sustain high quality schooling in the city and bring these ideas to other cities. The extensive data collection and analysis of this project will allow us to analyze which practices, institutional arrangements, professional development activities and strategies for school support have been the most effective at turning around schools and sustaining the reforms. We will analyze all of the results of the research to identify the essential factors that are crucial to the process of turning around low performing secondary schools.

Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale

- 1. The number of students proposed to be reached by the proposed project and the capacity of the eligible applicant and any other partners to reach the proposed number of students during the course of the grant period.***

With support from an i3 scale-up grant, NYCDOE will transform the lives of 40,000 students over the next five years by opening 150 new middle and high schools (40, 40, 35, and 35 in years 2-5). These schools—a mix of district and charter schools designed on a variety of school models—will be sited strategically across the five boroughs in order to maximize their beneficial impact on targeted student populations, specifically the highest need students..

NYC has the capacity to open this number of schools and reach this number of students because it has invested in the key functions that make its theory of action as a portfolio school district possible: a robust new school development process; an \$11 billion capital fund for building new schools; new principal and teacher recruitment and development programs supported through partnerships with the NYCLA, Teach for America, The New Teacher Project, and others; and a secondary school choice and enrollment system (and a world-class public transportation infrastructure) that empowers NYC families to choose the right school for their child anywhere in the city. Together, these factors enable NYC to maintain a dynamic portfolio of ever-improving schools, with the lowest performing schools replaced annually by a fresh infusion of new schools managed by the most effective teams and based on the most effective new school models.

Critical to this portfolio model are the intermediary partners that extend the system's capacity to design, plan, and manage new schools. Over the last seven years the City has established strong partnerships with innovative charter and school management organizations that have excelled in this environment in New York City. Following are two key examples:

The NYC DOE has partnered with **Good Shepherd Services** (GSS) in operating school-based programs for almost 40 years. Currently, GSS serves over 23,000 youth and their families throughout NYC. Their leadership, staff and students themselves have continually been innovators in providing at-risk and non-traditional students with a path to success. GSS has helped NYCDOE and individual schools develop and implement back-on-track models for vulnerable, over-aged and under-credited youth, including those who have formerly dropped out, and those who are at high risk of dropping out and/or academic failure. GSS builds relationships with family, youth, community stakeholders and the youth with whom they work. They also are continuously developing, implementing, and building quality programs that result in positive outcomes. GSS is fully engaged in the implementation of all of the multiple pathways to graduation strategies that NYCDOE provides including Transfer Schools, Young Adult Borough Centers (YABCs), General Equivalent Diplomas (GED), and Learning to Work efforts. The GSS partnership with NYC schools has resulted in a graduation rate that is 2 to 3 times higher than that of traditional high schools.

Since 1989, **New Visions for Public Schools** (New Visions) has worked with NYCDOE to establish 117 small schools in the highest need neighborhoods and trained over 700 new, first-year principals, provided professional learning opportunities to teachers and assisted 18 school campuses in transforming their facilities. Specifically, New Visions provides support to schools in the following areas: data-driven, customized supports to continually improve teaching and learning, navigation and advocacy around the day-to-day organizational challenges and issues that surround, and can block, teaching and learning; and assistance with engaging communities and families to align their efforts around meaningful student learning. In the first 14 New Visions' schools that opened in 2002, the average graduation rate for their first student cohort was 79%. This is striking progress when compared to the city's 2005 graduation rate of 58%, as well as compared to the graduation

rates, ranging from 31% to 51% of the large, failing high schools that these new small schools replaced. The promotion rate of special education students (73% from 9th to 10th grade in 2005-06) and ELLs (85% from ninth to tenth grade in 2005-06) in New Vision's schools were also higher than their peers in other NYC schools (52%, 64%, respectively from ninth to tenth grade in 2004-05).

In addition to the intermediaries, NYCDOE works effectively with a number of **Charter Management Organizations (CMOs)** to facilitate the development of new charter schools that reflect the key principles and effective characteristics of our small schools of choice. Among these CMOs, NYCDOE has contracted with **Achievement First, Democracy Prep, the Harlem Children's Zone, KIPP, and Uncommon Schools**. All of these CMO's have demonstrated significant success in educating our high-needs students.

Also key to our capacity as a portfolio district is our investment in leadership development for new schools. Since its launch in 2003, the **NYC Leadership Academy**, which will provide leadership training to support the principals of the new schools to be brought on line through scale-up (described in Section A), has prepared six cohorts of aspiring principals, graduating 392 participants to date. The seventh cohort of 35 participants began their school-based residencies in fall 2009 (each year's cohort size is determined by principal vacancy projections). In the 2008-09 school year, 90 percent of graduates served in NYCDOE leadership positions, including principals, program directors, assistant principals, and district administrators.

2. The eligible applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national, regional or State level working directly, or through other partners, either during or following the end of the grant period.

Encouraged by the outsized gains achieved in NYC through the portfolio school district model, NYCDOE plans to scale the model nationally to other large districts through three mechanisms, described in the paragraphs that follow.

The primary vehicle for scaling up the turnaround strategy will be the national network of school districts organized by the Center on Reinventing Public Education (CPRE). CPRE, an

affiliate of the University of Washington, is a nationally known and respected source of objective and nonpartisan information and analysis. Founded in 1993, CPRE has studied district reform for nearly two decades; through their applied research, CPRE has developed comprehensive strategies for transforming school districts to empower effective schools. CPRE staff include national experts and researchers with diverse backgrounds and skills—economics, statistics, law and political science, as well as curriculum and school administration.

NYCDOE will work with CPRE's director, Paul Hill, and its national network of leaders to promulgate the portfolio strategies being developed in New York City. Through the network, local leaders pursuing or interested in portfolio strategies teach and support one other in planning, implementing, and evaluating the effectiveness of portfolio strategies in a variety of district contexts across the country. Network members include local district leaders, mayors' office staffers, foundation and business coalition heads, heads of teacher associations and nonprofits from 15 urban school districts, collectively serving more than four million at risk students. Members contribute their time to CPRE meetings and to one another. They borrow one another's data systems, analytic routines, and management methods. The hard work and commitment of network members is a critical resource for this effective scale up strategy.

With the support of the scale-up grant, CPRE will bring in new cities to the network and sustain commitments from districts experiencing leadership turnover. They will provide substantial services to strengthen the network and the capacity of network-member districts, including building out the portfolio district website and handbook, providing direct support to districts adopting the portfolio strategy, assessing the limitations of districts' own versions of the strategy, designing district-wide evaluations, and conducting original data analyses per the request of network members.

Finally, many of our intermediary and charter management partners are already operating in other large districts in New York and nationally. As these organizations have helped design and support the portfolio approach and experienced its success, they are well positioned to advocate for similar approaches in the other districts where they intend to operate, specifically expecting to participate with district leaders in setting an overall portfolio strategy of complementary school

models toward which their specific new schools are a contributing factor. They will also bring to these new districts an expectation for autonomy and empowerment within rigorous local accountability goals.

3. *The feasibility of the proposed project to be replicated successfully, if positive results are obtained, in a variety of settings and with a variety of student populations. Evidence of this ability includes the proposed project's demonstrated success in multiple settings and with different types of students, availability of resources and expertise required for implementing the project with fidelity, and the proposed project's evidence of relative ease of use or user satisfaction.*

As the largest school district in the nation, the New York City public school system embodies more cultural, socio-economic, linguistic and ethnic diversity than many states. More than one million students in Pre-K through grade 12 attend 1,600 different schools. Over 160,000 of New York City's students are ELLs, who collectively speak over 170 languages, and over 110,000 students receive Special Education services. The "laboratory" in which NYCDOE's turnaround approach has been seeded is, by all counts, highly representative of the nation's largest school systems, many of which continue to grapple with the same school performance and student achievement issues and challenges that set us down the portfolio path seven years ago.

To support replication at scale, the NYCDOE will partner with CPRE and the Leadership Academy to develop portfolio district toolkits and training models that will be published and incorporated into these organizations' leadership development curricula for portfolio district leaders. In particular, CPRE is building an online professional learning community where leaders from established and developing portfolio districts across the country can collaborate on common problems, share promising solutions, and generate knowledge specific to implementing a portfolio district model. This resource, which will be built around the needs of members but will be available to anyone interested in developing a portfolio district, will be organized into five main sections: 1) What is a portfolio district strategy? 2) In light of New York's experience, how can city leaders elsewhere assess their own districts' readiness to adopt a portfolio strategy? 3) Using materials and

exemplars from New York in developing a portfolio strategy for your district; 4) Operating, refining, and expanding a portfolio strategy; and 5) Assessing short- and long-term results. The online resource, which will be developed in 2011, will allow for the introduction of new topics and continual enrichment of the materials available on any topic. Other work products from CPRE will include evaluation designs for participating districts, and analysis of data conducted at the request of participating districts. CPRE's work will also encompass and address various issues critical to successful replication, such as oversight/quality assurance, funding, and marketing plans.

3. *The eligible applicant's estimate of the cost of the proposed project, which includes the start-up and operating costs per student per year (including indirect costs) for reaching the total number of students proposed to be served by the project. The eligible applicant must include an estimate of the costs for the eligible applicant or others (including other partners) to reach 100,000, 500,000, and 1,000,000 students.*

NYCDOE is requesting a five-year grant in the amount of \$39,724,882 from the i3 program to support a robust set of development, implementation, evaluation and dissemination activities over the course of the five-year project period. In addition to the project's staffing infrastructure, which currently accounts for approximately 11% of the funds requested, the majority of the funds (54%) are earmarked for intermediary, charter, and leadership support for the 150 new schools that will be coming on line (one year of planning plus four years of operational support). Other contractual services will address the build out of the system's accountability and data driven decision making tools (ARIS Local and Portfolio Management Tools), dissemination and scale-up activities (CPRE, Broad), and the rigorous evaluation to be carried out by the Research Alliance at NYU. Nominal amounts are being requested for such line items as staff travel (to attend mandated conferences) and supplies. With the private cost sharing match estimated at 20%, the total cost of NYCDOE's scale-up project is estimated to be **\$49,819,540**. See budget for details.

Given the total numbers of students to be served by this project (by the final year, this number is estimated to be 60,000), the return on the i3 investment is significant. Initially, NYCDOE estimates that the cost per student served is approximately \$1,294, which decreases to \$830 per

student when the 150 schools reach their full capacity. Many of the tools funded by the i3 grant are up-front product development expenses, which yields economies of scale at higher student figures. The NYCDOE estimates that start-up and operational costs associated with serving the first 100,000 students are \$70,914,327; \$281,862,193 for 500,000 students and \$545,547,027 for 1,000,000 students, with per student costs estimated at \$709.14, \$563.72, and \$545.55 respectively.

4. The mechanisms the eligible applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further replication.

NYCDOE will use ARIS Connect to share project strategies and lessons learned within NYCDOE. ARIS Connect is an online collaboration and knowledge sharing tool developed by NYCDOE to foster dissemination of effective practices and resources across the City's 1,600 schools. The Knowledge Sharing team within the Division of Performance and Accountability will facilitate these online communities of practice and their sharing of knowledge and resources.

The CPRE network of school leaders will hold conferences where portfolio district superintendents, mayors' staff members, district deputies, and others will discuss issues of common concern with subject matter experts and one another. Beyond these conferences, network members will collaborate in regularly scheduled working group sessions and online discussions of questions that have become urgent in one city or another using CPRE's social networking website (portfolionetwork.ning.com). And CPRE will further publicize our efforts through press releases that make findings accessible to an informed lay audience, targeted mailings, a website, an electronic newsletter which reaches a wide audience of education leaders and scholars, presentations at national conferences, and publication in both academic and non-technical journals.

In addition to these dissemination activities, NYCDOE will participate in "Communities of Practice" with other i3 grantees, including but not limited to participation in the project directors' meetings and any other meetings convened by the USDOE of i3 grantees.

E. Sustainability (10 points)

1. The extent to which the eligible applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the Scale-up grant, including a multi-year

financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any other partners; and evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success.

As stated above, NYC has invested in the key functions that make its theory of action as a portfolio school district possible: a robust new school development process; an \$11 billion capital fund for building new school facilities; partnerships with external charter and school management organizations to expand our capacity to effectively manage new schools; new principal and teacher recruitment and development programs supported through partnerships with Leadership Academy, Teach for America, The New Teacher Project, and others; and a secondary school choice and enrollment system (and a world-class public transportation infrastructure) that empowers New York City families to choose the right school for their child anywhere in the city. The portfolio approach to closing and opening new schools to achieve dramatic turnaround of our lowest performing schools is part of our core operational model as an LEA and will continue to be throughout and beyond the term of the grant.

This Portfolio work will be sustainable because the entire NYCDOE is organizationally aligned to this work. School turnaround is not the work of one division within the district – it will require true cross-functional alignment among multiple constituencies. As described throughout this narrative, NYCDOE is harnessing significant human, technological and fiscal resources – including both those in hand and those committed by our private funding partners – in order to accelerate the pace and speed with which it implements its successful portfolio district turnaround strategy. NYCDOE's Division of Talent, Labor, and Innovation – under the direction of Deputy Chancellor John White – will coordinate with and manage the key institutional resources to ensure the success of the i3 scale-up initiative.

Stakeholder support for the proposed i3 scale-up grant is another key factor in why this work will be sustainable both during and beyond the term of the scale-up grant. The City's engagement in this work over the last seven years has established strong working partnerships with intermediary and charter school management organizations, which are aligned to and committed to sustaining a

dynamic and effective portfolio district model in New York City. NYCDOE has engaged these partner organizations in extensive discussions of how it will scale up this work through i3 investments and have received numerous letters of support from organizations that are ready to support this work (see letters of support in Appendix D and complete list of intermediary and charter school management organizations in Appendix H).

To further ensure the sustainability of this work beyond the term of the scale-up grant, NYCDOE will develop a set of portfolio management tools to support the complex data-driven decision making that is required to optimize the outcomes of a portfolio of diverse schools. Longitudinal data on student performance, school performance, and teacher effectiveness are critical to evaluating which school models, intermediary partners, talent pipelines, and support structures are most effective in turning around school performance. Models based on these longitudinal data will inform school model selection and siting decisions. NYCDOE will disseminate these data analytics and decision support tools to other large districts and to sustain portfolio practices beyond the term of the grant.

2. The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the eligible applicant and any other partners at the end of the Scale-up grant.

The portfolio approach to closing and opening new schools to achieve dramatic turnaround of our lowest performing schools is part of our core operational model as an LEA and will continue to be throughout and beyond the term of the grant.

It is also core to the theory of action and operating models of our intermediary partners. The additional investments to be made with i3 funds in the key functions and partners that support our portfolio work, and in our planned dissemination activities, will help sustain this work both in New York City and in other districts beyond the end of the Scale-up grant.

Specifically, the planned evaluation will provide the necessary data for us to evaluate the relative efficacy of specific school models and partners in producing incremental student achievement gains over predicted outcomes had students continued to attend schools closed for low

performance. By comparing relative incremental gains per dollar invested across the portfolio of school models and partner organizations, we will develop useful academic return-on-investment analyses that will guide the reconfiguration of the portfolio beyond the term of the grant. Academic ROI analyses will also inform the portfolio selections of other districts adopting the portfolio model, as well as the school improvement models of our partners. The data and analyses generated through the term of the Scale-up grant will thus produce a next-generation portfolio school district model and supporting analytical tools that will improve the efficacy and facilitate adoption of the model at scale beyond the term of the grant.

F. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (10 points)

- 1. The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks, as well as tasks related to the sustainability and scalability of the proposed project.***

Project Management

Should an award from i3 be forthcoming, Deputy Chancellor John White, who will serve as the in-kind Project Director, will convene an i3 grant Steering Committee which will include key members of NYCDOE's leadership team and key external partners. The i3 Steering Committee will meet quarterly to review implementation milestones of the turnaround strategy, surface issues and opportunities, and ensure effective cross-functional alignment. John White will chair the Steering Committee and will be responsible for providing quarterly progress reports to the committee and to Chancellor Joel Klein. The committee will consist of:

- Eric Nadelstern, Deputy Chancellor of Schools
- Marc Sternberg, Deputy Chancellor of Portfolio Planning
- Shael Suransky, Deputy Chancellor Performance and Accountability
- Sharon Greenberger, Chief Operating Officer
- Stephanie Dua, CEO of The Fund for Public Schools

- Sandra Stein, CEO of the NYC Leadership Academy
- Heads of intermediary and charter management organizations
- Jim Kemple, NYC Research Alliance
- Paul Hill, Center for Reinventing Public Education
- Santiago Taveras, Deputy Chancellor for Community Engagement

In addition to the i3 Steering Committee, Mr. White will also form four cross-functional working groups that will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation work of the grant. These working groups will include:

- **New school model development and support** – this working group will coordinate the work of the intermediary partners, address needs/issues surfaced by clusters/networks/schools, and ensure new school models receive the relevant set of training and resources they require to support student success at their schools.
- **Enterprise-wide systems and tools group** – this working group will oversee the design, development, and rollout of the key “enabling tools” that are critical to our school turnaround work. This includes the design/development of portfolio management tools, the enhancements to ARIS Local, and the expansion of our leadership training resources.
- **Innovation Zone** – this working group will be responsible for identifying high-potential new school models and intermediaries, attracting them to open schools in NYC, and assisting them with designing models that will be successful in NYC.
- **Portfolio management** – this working group will coordinate all the parties involved in closing and opening schools, ensuring cross-departmental collaboration on the new schools decision, including what data goes into the decision, where to open the schools, and the impact on other schools.

Each working group will meet bi-monthly and report to the i3 Steering Committee on a quarterly basis. The Steering Committee will identify/designate working group members based on their relevant expertise and role. All i3 working groups will be in place by November 1, 2010.

Other groups within the DOE will also play a pivotal role in the implementation of the proposal:

- Division of School Support – coordinates the activities of approximately 80 Children’s First Networks that manages schools and school leaders, and disseminates promising practices across the schools.
- Division of Performance and Accountability – creates the data tools that measure school performance and tools that collect local data, supports the work of inquiry teams that helps teachers make data-driven decisions, and supports Knowledge Sharing through ARIS Connect.
- Division of Portfolio Planning – leverages information from the Division of Performance and Accountability to make new school decisions, including selecting the school leaders, coordinating with the intermediaries, and siting where the new schools will go.
- Research, Policy and Strategy Group – creates the “beat the odds” and the “teacher value-added” reports that help teams identify schools and teachers that are over and under-performing. This work will be used to support the identification of possible schools for turnaround as well as provide the foundational data and resource capacity of the Portfolio Management Tool. This group will also work closely with our external research partners, particularly, the Research Alliance, ensuring that the evaluation of the i3 initiative adheres to all NYCDOE protocols and practices for external research and provides the longitudinal data for students, teachers and schools to the external research partners over the term of the grant.
- Another key partner that will be pivotal to the success of the scale-up effort is **The Fund for Public Schools**. A 501(c) nonprofit organization that cultivates public-private partnerships to support NYC public schools, the Fund works to attract private investment in school reform. This includes working to secure critical funding for system-wide education reform initiatives, facilitating strategic public-private partnerships, managing a targeted set of programs to support city schools, and building citywide public awareness. In 2002, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Chancellor Joel I. Klein established public-private partnerships as a critical means of supporting public education reform. The Fund is the primary vehicle for advancing this effort. Since 2002, The Fund has secured investment from private business, individuals,

and foundations, raising more than \$250 million for system-wide reforms and initiatives that support individual schools. These private partners will continue to be instrumental to the forward progress that the NYCDOE has been making over the past seven years, all in the service of promoting better schools, services and outcomes for our 1.1 million students.

Project Staffing

Supporting and helping to guide the efforts of the Steering Committee, the four working groups and the Project Director are a team of project-funded staff members, including a grant manager (1 FTE), a director of partner relations (1 FTE), a director of new school development (1 FTE), a portfolio management tool analyst (1 FTE), a community liaison (1 FTE), a director of new school models (1 FTE), an iZone portfolio manager (1 FTE), an iZone assistant portfolio manager (1 FTE), iZone implementation managers (2 FTEs), and iZone technicians (1 new FTEs per year for a total of 5 in year 5), and a research manager (1 FTE). Detailed job descriptions for each of these staff members are provided in Appendix C. For the implementation plan and timeline, see Appendix H: Project Management Timeline.

2. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director and key project personnel, especially in managing large, complex and rapidly growing projects.

The i3 scale-up initiative will fall under the purview of **John White, Deputy Chancellor for Strategy at NYCDOE**. Among White's responsibilities are human capital development and management of the Innovation Zone. Previously, he served as chief executive officer for portfolio, where he was responsible for developing new schools, closing failing schools, and adjusting grade levels, enrollments and locations of existing schools. White has also served as deputy chief operating officer for NYCDOE. Prior to joining the Department, White served as executive director for Teach For America Chicago and Teach For America New Jersey, serving on the organization's national Strategy Committee. He holds a bachelor's degree in English with distinction from the University of Virginia. White is a member of the 2010 class of The Broad Superintendents Academy.

Three other senior level NYCDOE staff members will provide their expertise and the expertise of their staffs to the i3 scale-up effort. A summary of these staff members' qualifications bios can be found in Appendix C: Key staff bios/resumes.

Supporting the scale up work will be **Paul Hill, the John and Marguerite Corbally Professor at the University of Washington**. He is Director of the Center on Reinventing Public Education, which studies alternative governance and finance systems for public K-12 education. Dr. Hill's current work on public elementary and secondary education reform focuses on school choice plans, school accountability, and charter schools. He chaired the National Working Commission on Choice in K-12 Education and works closely with city and state leaders to define district strategies. Dr. Hill has written a series of books designed as resources for mayors and community leaders facing the need to transform their urban public school systems, including: *Making School Reform Work: New Partnerships for Real Change*, *Charter Schools and Accountability in Public Education*, *It Takes A City: Getting Serious About Urban School Reform*, and *Fixing Urban Schools*.

3. The qualifications, including relevant expertise and experience, of the project director and key personnel of the independent evaluator, especially in designing and conducting experimental and quasi-experimental studies of educational initiatives.

Key personnel for the evaluation include Dr. James Kemple, Executive Director of the Research Alliance, and Dr. Thomas Gold, Director of Strategic Initiatives and External Affairs. **Dr. James Kemple** will serve as the evaluation's Principal Investigator. Dr. Kemple is a leader in the field of education research with a specialty in the design and management of rigorous evaluations, including randomized controlled trials of educational and other social policy reforms. Dr. Kemple is the Executive Director of the Research Alliance for New York City Schools, a non-partisan research center that is committed to producing solid evidence about the challenges of ensuring that all students have access to a high quality education in New York City and about the effectiveness of programs and policies aimed at addressing those challenges. Prior to coming to the Research Alliance, Dr. Kemple worked at MDRC, a non-profit social policy research organization committed to improving the well being of low income populations across the United States, where he was the Director of their

K-12 Education Policy Area. Dr. Kemple served as Principal Investigator of MDRC's studies of high school interventions including the Career Academies Evaluation, the Evaluation of the Talent Development Middle and High School Models, the Enhanced Reading Opportunities Study, and the Study of the Content Literacy Continuum. Dr. Kemple also served as Co-Director of the National Reading First Impact Study, which MDRC conducted with Abt Associates.

Dr. Thomas Gold will serve as the evaluation's Project Manager. Dr. Gold brings to this project considerable experience with New York City public schools and managing complex education research projects and evaluations. He is the Director of Strategic Initiatives and External Affairs for the Research Alliance for New York City Schools at New York University. Prior to joining the Research Alliance, Dr. Gold was the Director of External Research, Reporting and Evaluation at the New York City Department of Education, where he co-managed a team of education analysts and researchers to provide high quality reports and analytics for senior policy makers at the DOE and others on student achievement and other key indicators. During that period, Dr. Gold also managed for the DOE a number of large-scale evaluations of DOE programs and policies by external research firms, including the RAND study of the city's 5th grade promotion policy and an evaluation of the ARIS data system. He was also a principal investigator on an early childhood literacy study. In addition, he has extensive knowledge of the administrative data of the NYCDOE and has worked closely with the accountability teams that have designed and maintained the numerous accountability tools in NYC.

Additional information on the Research Alliance can be found in Appendix H: Research Alliance Mission and Description of Organizational Capacity.