The Alaska Statewide Mentor Project

Urban Growth Opportunity

(ASMP UGO)

A Validation Grant Proposal under the
Investing In Innovation Grant Program (CFDA 84.369B)

Table of Contents

ABSOLUTE AND COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITIES

The ASMP UGO i3 Validation project addresses **Absolute Priority 1: Innovations that Support Effective Teachers** by providing early career teachers with high quality mentoring to increase their teaching skills and effectiveness to the level of experienced teachers more quickly. The project meets the requirements of two competitive preference priorities. The project meets the requirements of Competitive Preference Priority #8 by addressing the learning needs of LEP and SpEd students, and the requirements of Competitive Preference Priority #9 by improving new teacher retention through intensive mentoring.

Competitive Preference Priority 8— Innovations to Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students with Disabilities and Limited English Proficiency

All four of the partner LEAs for this proposal has high numbers of students with special needs and/or limited English proficiency. A specific focus of the project is to ensure that all Special Education and LEP-certified Early Career Teachers receive mentoring that addresses the specific challenges of their teaching assignment. In addition, professional development offered to all ECTs will include strategies and skill development for working with these two populations of students.

Competitive Preference Priority 9— Innovations That Improve Productivity

The ASMP UGO project, through systematic and sustained mentoring of early career teachers will increase teacher retention in Alaska schools. This will create efficiencies in the use of school district financial and time resources that must be expended annually to recruit, hire, and train new teachers. The ultimate improvement will be in student achievement with a more stable teacher work force.

A. Need for the Project

A. (1) The magnitude of the need for the services to be provided or the activities to be carried out by the proposed project

In Alaska there are two pervasive themes in education. First is the fact that Alaska Native students in aggregate perform lower than any other demographic group on standardized student achievement tests consistently in all academic areas, as reported in the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development Report Card to the Public. Second is shortages in the teacher workforce coupled with high turnover, especially in rural schools (M. Hill, Hill, Hirshberg, & White, 2009, 2010). In 2010 Alaska schools employed 9,047 public classroom teachers. Each year, Alaska's 53 school districts hire about 1,100 teachers; 80% of these are to fill positions attributed to teachers who exit teaching in Alaska. Alaska Native teachers make up less than 5% of the teaching workforce, yet Alaska Native students account for about 28% of the statewide student population. The highest rates of turnover and hardest K-12 teaching positions to fill are in special education, followed by mathematics and science. Fifty two percent of special education teachers recruited from outside of Alaska leave the system within three years. Such high turnover of teachers is disruptive to student achievement and is an impediment to school and district productivity.

Alaska school districts, Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), University of Alaska, policy makers, and employers share concern and interest in the recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers capable of making a positive impact on the achievement of student subpopulations (Alaska Native, Limited English Proficiency, and Special Education) in Alaska. Alaska's innovative early career teacher mentoring model has demonstrated some encouraging results related to both student achievement and teacher retention. Over the last five years, using federal School Improvement Grant funds, Alaska DEED

and the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project (ASMP) have paired mentors with special education certification to work with early career special education teachers, increasing the retention of special education teachers in the subsample to over 80% each year (Adams, 2010).

The official partners for this project represent the four largest school districts in Alaska: Anchorage School District, Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, and Matanuska-Susitna (Mat-Su) Borough School District. Together these partners serve 68% of Alaska's K-12 public school students and employ 70% of the teachers in Alaska's public education workforce. Figure 1 provides a demographic overview of the ASMP UGO LEA partners. Based on student population and number of schools, Anchorage School District is one of the largest school systems in the country. In all four districts, one third of students do not graduate with their cohort. In 2010-2011 Alaska had 122 schools categorized as Level 2 or higher for Title I School Improvement; 27 of those schools are in the largest four districts in the state. Three of the four urban LEAs are at Level 4 of District Improvement for Title I schools.

Figure 1. Partner District Demographics in 2010 - 2011

Partner District	2011 K-12 Population	# of Schools	# Title I Schools On NCLB Levels 2-5 2010	Title I Improvement Level	2010 Graduation Rate*
Anchorage	49,206	124	17	Level 4; for 4 years	69.45%
Fairbanks	14,285	33	4	Level 4; for 3 years	69.89%
Kenai	9,327	44	3	Level 2	72.79%
Mat–Su	17,079	43	7	Level 4; for 2 years	69.69%
State of Alaska	132,104	505	203	Level 4; for 5 years	67.7%

* Graduation Rate: The graduation rate calculation is the number of current-year graduates, including the previous year's summer graduates, divided by that number plus the number of unduplicated dropouts over the four-year cohort period and the number of seniors. In all four districts, the graduation rate for Alaska Native and Special Education students is far below the district average. In Anchorage and Mat-Su school districts, the graduation rate for Limited English Proficient students is also well below the district average.

The Mat-Su Borough School District is the fastest growing district in Alaska. In Anchorage, one half of the student population is of minority ethnicity (Figure 2). Combined, the four urban districts serve most of Alaska's Native students. These four LEAs also feature large Special Education and Limited English Proficient student populations (Figure 3). In Anchorage, LEP students represent over 90 different languages spoken at home!

Figure 2. District Ethnicity Counts 2011

Ethnicity	Anchorage	Fairbanks	Kenai	Mat–Su
White	23,250	9,072	7,308	**13,664**
Alaska Native	3,975	1,468	1,018	**1,585**
American Indian	357	101	113	**386**
Asian	5,128	335	126	**300**
Black	3,183	876	60	**264**
Hispanic	5,030	1,018	283	**389**
2 or More Races	6,231	1,294	371	**373**
Pacific Islander	**2,052**	**121**	**48**	**118**

Figure 3. Special Populations Student Count

	Anchorage	Fairbanks	Kenai	Mat–Su
Special Education	6,964	2,235	1,329	**2,569**
Limited English Proficiency	**5,107**	**297**	**198**	**518**

Figure 4 shows the disaggregated statewide student assessment results for Limited English Proficient, Special Education, and Alaska Native students in the four partner districts. Without exception, the achievement of these subgroups is lower than the district average achievement. It is an unfortunate and well-documented phenomenon that first year teachers are often assigned to classes with higher rates of students with behavior problems and lower rates of student achievement (Ingersoll & Gruber, 1996; Ingersoll, Han, Bobbitt, & National Center for Education Statistics, 1995). In 2008, ASMP researchers compared the beginning of the year standards based achievement data of students assigned to ECTs in the mentoring cohort with same achievement data from a control group assigned to veteran teachers. Results showed an average difference of .0375 standard deviations in Reading, Writing, and Math scale scores, confirming the hypothesis that many beginning teachers are given the low performing students or are assigned to more difficult teaching situations (Adams, 2010a).

Figure 4. Spring 2010 District Standards Based Assessment Results

Partner District		% Proficient/Above Proficient: Reading	% Proficient/Above Proficient: Writing	% Proficient/Above Proficient Math
Anchorage	**Limited English**	43.67	36.85	37.94
	SpEd	45.8	37.32	33.74
	Alaska Native	69.54	57.76	56.26
	District	83.23	76.54	69.98
Fairbanks	**Limited English**	51.40	38.33	47.54
	SpEd	48.21	36.69	41.29
	Alaska Native	71.43	58.87	63.34
	District	85.61	77.58	76.67
nai	**Limited English**	67.82	52.94	52.85

Figure 4. Spring 2010 District Standards Based Assessment Results				
Partner District		% Proficient/Above Proficient: Reading	% Proficient/Above Proficient: Writing	% Proficient/Above Proficient Math
	SpEd	59.34	51.51	45.68
	Alaska Native	85.12	70.71	70.39
	District	90.13	83.03	79.17
Mat–Su	Limited English	55.50	46.58	45.07
	SpEd	54.72	48.08	44.33
	Alaska Native	81.75	70.81	69.42
	District	88.94	81.58	77.97

A. (2) The extent to which the proposed project represents an **exceptional** approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition

In Alaska, the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project (ASMP) has been largely adopted as a statewide professional development initiative supporting early career teachers (ECTs) in their first two years in the profession. The model provides fully-released highly skilled teachers who serve as mentors. Prior to the ASMP there was inconsistency in teacher induction and support; both were highly dependent on the instructional leadership expertise of the building administrator to provide direction and feedback to newly hired teachers. The inconsistency in teacher induction and lack of support were major contributors to Alaska's teacher retention problem and major obstacles in closing the achievement gap for some student groups.

Although mentoring programs are common in some form or another across the United States (Strong, 2009), the ASMP is to be distinguished from most programs on three counts. First, it adopts the New Teacher Center model, commonly acclaimed as the best developed and most comprehensive approach to new teacher support, without modifying it in any of the ways that

may be observed at other sites across the nation (for example by increasing the caseload of teachers to mentors, by offering support for one year instead of two, or by not releasing mentors full time). Second, the ASMP is employed state wide, therefore enjoying the benefits of statewide policy-level support, central organization, mentor training, and logistical operation. Third, it is targeted to the particular needs of teachers in the Alaskan setting, most of whom are working with children from Native Alaskan families, and many are in rural settings that have unique challenges. In a setting where teacher mobility is high, particularly in the rural areas, a program that has demonstrated its benefit-to-cost advantage (Villar & Strong, 2007) has the potential not only to raise levels of teacher effectiveness, but also to provide economic and fiscal advantages.

This project will maintain the integrity of ASMP program goals as it expands to urban schools districts in order to assess the feasibility of expanding funding to serve all early career teachers within the state. ASMP UGO will provide additional mentors for Alaska's urban schools. ASMP will maintain the current funding level to rural schools, while the UGO project will expand services to the four largest urban school districts in Alaska. Historically AMSP has primarily served rural districts in Alaska where student achievement gaps are apparent even without disaggregation by subpopulations. ASMP has been able to ensure that ECTs in core subject areas working in school districts which are in NCLB intervention or correction status are afforded the opportunity to work with one of the statewide mentors. However, research tells us that many inner city schools as well as those with predominantly minority students, including Alaska Native/American Indian students, also have high rates of teacher turnover, thus recruiting more new teachers than their suburban counterparts proportionally (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006; Ingersoll, 2001). Sadly, many of the early career

teachers hired by urban Alaska school districts, while working in equally challenging conditions and serving high percentages of minority and high-needs students, do not receive formalized, intensive mentoring.

Each of the four urban LEAs participating in this project has some support systems for new teachers but with variations in breath, depth, and quality. The LEA consortium agreements for this project demonstrate the extensive pre-planning that has taken place to gain the successful buy-in from our partner LEAs to conduct a randomize study on the effects of mentoring on teacher quality with student achievement serving as a value added variable. Ideally in Alaska, every new teacher to the profession would have the benefit of being assigned a full-release trained mentor.

School norms often include an unwritten rite of passage based on beliefs of veteran teachers that since they had to undergo a difficult induction, new teachers ought to as well. School norms also frequently include a sense of entitlement to advanced classes by more experienced teachers regardless of their content expertise. One Early Career Teacher recently wrote,

"When I was re-assigned to teach first grader instead of fourth grade, I almost lost it. First of all I didn't know most of them couldn't read, and then I had all these behavior problems. I closed my door one day and said, 'I am done. This is it!' However, when I started working with my statewide mentor who provided me with the support and resources, and instructional strategies needed to support these kids, I realized I what I needed to do differently to organize my class and lessons to really help the kids learn."

Figure 5 depicts the reason ASMP UGO is so important to Alaska. Our urban teachers and students are not fully benefiting from the effects mentoring has on teacher retention, student achievement, and teacher effectiveness. Until ASMP UGO can validate the result of this

mentoring intervention and examine the return on investment, large urban LEAs are challenged by pressures to reallocate resources or implement new programs with limited resources and funding in a difficult economic environment. Yet the needs are still there: Teachers are in need of quality professional support, and students are in even greater need of highly effective teachers and instruction. Survey data collected annually indicates widespread support for ASMP from teachers, principals, administrations, superintendents, union leaders, and state legislators.

Figure 5: Evolution and Features of the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project

	Prior to ASMP Mentoring in AK	Launch of ASMP	ASMP UGO
Methods and Model	▪ In-service ▪ Buddy System ▪ Employee Orientation ▪ Training/PD on own ▪ Course work for Certification	▪ Formative assessment ▪ Onsite observations and model lessons ▪ Reflective in practice specific to the needs of the students and ECTs ▪ Ongoing (monthly) observations, weekly communication ▪ Funded by the State ▪ Two years of support	▪ Includes all the same components for research, yet provides funding for partner districts to hire, support, and supervise mentors.
Outcomes	▪ Disjointed support ▪ Not always aligned to needs ▪ Not well researched	▪ Accelerates teacher practice ▪ Increases teacher retention ▪ Closes the gap between student achievement ▪ Increases in teacher effectiveness	▪ Validates the effectiveness of the model ▪ Increases district ownership and buy-in ▪ Develops communities of practice ▪ Improves stewardship of resources ▪ Provides for an adequate sample size to study

A. (3) The importance and magnitude of the effect expected to be obtained by the proposed project

Of the many programs in the nation for mentoring new teachers, Alaska's is the only state funded, non-mandated, full–release mentoring program. Alaska policymakers have consistently invested in the success of ECTs, providing a solid basis for sustainability of the program over time. From the onset, the ASMP mission has been to increase teacher retention and increase student achievement in mentored teachers and their students. Our initial data on the project suggest that intensive mentoring improves teacher retention. ASMP UGO will implement, with fidelity, the mentoring approach that has been researched over the past seven years. The significant difference will be in the location of the ASMP mentoring. ASMP has served mostly rural areas of Alaska in the past. This new project will provide mentoring services to ECTs in urban schools, which serve more Alaska Native, Limited English Proficient, and Special Education students, but in a different context. ASMP offers high-quality training over a two year period to mentors. The ASMP program is clearly designed with procedures that ensure fidelity of implementation. Alaska has committed to the consistency and fidelity of the model, while other programs have modified the intervention to fit the needs of grants in the pursuit of funding.

From its inception, ASMP has embraced rigorous research to demonstrate accountability. During the first four years of ASMP (2004-08), research focused on ensuring the model was receptive to the needs of the early career teachers, the districts, and the mentors. Focus groups of mentors provided qualitative information to improve logistics, training, and communication for the project as a whole. Follow-up interviews were conducted with early career teachers during the summer to gather more detailed information on the benefits and challenges of the mentoring model and to better understand the effects of the induction. Online surveys have been conducted annually in March to gather logistical, intervention, and perception data from early career

teachers, mentors, and site administrators (Adams, 2010b; Parker Webster & Whiteley, 2005; Parker Webster, 2006). Teacher retention information is gathered each year and verified by districts as well as through a partnership with the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at the University of Alaska Anchorage, which accesses employment data from the Alaska Department of Labor and Alaska Department of Education (EED).

A number of studies have been conducted over the past 15 years to examine the effectiveness of mentoring and induction programs on various outcomes including teacher retention, teaching practice, and student achievement (for the latest critical review, see Strong & Ingersoll, 2011 and the summary table in Appendix D).

Of particular relevance here is the proportion of studies that have examined the induction model addressed in the present proposal (originally developed by the New Teacher Center of Santa Cruz and adapted for the specific conditions in Alaska). The most recent study of the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project compared standardized scores of students in mentored new teachers' classes with results from those in matching veteran teachers' classes (Adams, 2010). Using a hierarchical linear modeling approach (HLM), student standardized test scores were analyzed to determine the impact of mentoring first- and second-year teachers on their students' achievement in reading, writing, math, and science. The contrasting group consisted of experienced teachers in matched schools, grade level, and content area. The study contained data from 300 teachers in grades 4-10 (196 treatment and 104 contrasting) serving over 6,900 Alaska students. The dataset was split into the three assessed content areas, and students with only one teacher per content area were included. Due to multiple comparisons conducted on the same dataset, the Benjamini-Hochberg adjustment was employed to the significance levels at the end of the analysis.

Results showed no statistically significant difference in Mathematics scores and statistically significant differences but with very small effect sizes in Reading, Writing, and Science (ES = 0.06, 0.07, 0.11 respectively) once adjustments were made for multiple comparisons and controlling for student demographics, teacher demographics, and student scaled scores from the previous year. With the majority of teachers from rural Alaska in difficult situations and consistently low-performing schools, these results suggested that mentoring conducted through ASMP is starting to close the student achievement gap between new and experienced teachers.

Internal validity is strong due to standardized assessments, little missing data, and effective matching of teachers within districts. Statistically, the two groups were equivalently matched on all factors except years of experience and average previous year standardized score of students, as expected. All assumptions were required to move forward with the HLM procedure sans random assignment, thus moderate external validity. The full study, with charts and statistical analysis, is included in Appendix D.

Presented here are nine prior studies related to mentoring using the New Teacher Center model. Since the ASMP model has a strong foundation based in the NTC model, these studies lend efficacy to our proposed research. All nine studies fall into the moderate evidence category with moderate to high external validity and a wide range of internal validity (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Matrix of Prior Related Research Studies Specific to ASMP/NTC Models

Validity	***High Internal***	***Moderate Internal***	***Low Internal***
High External	Glazerman, et al (2010)		
Moderate External	Strong (2006) Adams (2010a) Isenberg, et al (2009)	Fletcher, Strong, & Villar (2008) Fletcher & Strong (2009)	Strong (2005) Adams (2008) Adams (2010)

The only study of comprehensive mentoring using a randomized controlled trial (RCT) was conducted by Mathematica Policy Research (MPR) (Glazerman, Dolfin, Bleeker, et.al., 2008; Isenberg, et.al., 2009; Glazerman et al., 2010).The study compared comprehensive induction support (represented by a treatment derived from programs developed by NTC and ETS) with business-as-usual mentoring across 17 large school districts. The method included random assignment at the school level and controlled for a number of demographic variables for both students and teachers. The study's findings were mixed. For classroom practices, there were no significant differences between teachers in the treatment and control groups at mid-point in their first year on the job – the study did not assess impacts on practices past teachers' first year. For teacher retention, there were no significant differences between those in the treatment and control groups after each of the three years of follow-up. For student achievement, there were no differences between teachers in the treatment and control groups after either of the first two years. However, the study did find significant differences in the achievement of students of the teachers in the treatment and control groups in the 3rd year, based on the sample of teachers whose students had both pre-test and post-test scores. These impacts were equivalent to moving the average student from the 50th percentile to the 54th percentile in reading and to the 58th percentile in math. In other words, the study found that after two years of receiving comprehensive induction, the scores of students taught by such teachers significantly improved.

Some of the possible explanations for the mixed findings (in particular the lack of differences in retention, teacher practice, or early student achievement between experimental and control groups) are explained in detail by Ingersoll and Strong (2011), and include the small differences in characteristics of the treatment and control groups, the timing and method of measuring teacher practice, the implementation of the treatment, and the selection of the initial

sample. In spite of methodological limitations (many of which the authors acknowledge), some significant differences in student outcomes were recorded.

Some of the early studies on teacher induction used nonscientific research (low level) on the underlying constructs, such as teacher retention calculations. These admittedly have low internal validity but do demonstrate moderate external validity because of the large number and consistent findings using various approaches. Retention for NTC supported teachers in California was examined in two studies. Retrospective data were collected on teachers six years after they had entered the NTC program. In both studies, 88% of the teachers were still in the classroom after six years and a further 6% were still in education. This compares with 76% for California teachers (all of whom receive some level of induction support) and 56% for the nation (Strong, 2005). The retention study for ASMP teachers above also falls into this category (Adams, 2008; Adams, 2010b).

The second level of research includes several separate studies using quasi-experimental methods with various strategies to control for effects other than treatment. These in general represent findings with moderate internal validity and moderate generalizability. A strategy that falls into this category is to test the individual core components of the model. One study of this nature examined the NTC model in the Boston school system (Fletcher & Strong, 2009) by allowing for the comparison of the effectiveness of new teachers who received the support of a full-release NTC mentor with those who received less intensive support from an in-house mentor. Mentors all received the same training, although the selection criteria for full-time mentors were probably more rigorous. Results showed significantly higher achievement gains in both 4th and 5th grade students for teachers receiving the full-time mentoring, suggesting that this is a critical component of the model. Internal validity is moderate, because, although

teachers were not randomly assigned to conditions, we know that no other supports were offered that may have accounted for differences, curriculum was the same, and working conditions, where different, were probably worse for the full-mentored group. Effect sizes are in the medium range (Cohen's d = 0.73 for the 4th grade comparison and 0.55 for the 5th grade). Although teachers were not randomly assigned to conditions, those who faced more challenging settings were assigned to the full-time group, a factor that works against the research hypothesis and thus strengthens the finding.

Another strategy that falls into this second level is comparing student results of beginning teachers who receive NTC induction support with those of new teachers who receive other types of support. One study of this kind relied on achievement data over two years (i.e., one year of gains) from teachers in three school districts who had been associated with NTC (Fletcher, Strong & Villar, 2008). Two districts adopted the full NTC model for one year only. The third district continued to use the model over the full two years. In the second year, one district moved to a high caseload of 1:35 for mentors, severely reducing contact time, and the second district moved to a buddy system, where new teachers were mentored by a colleague with a full teaching load in the same school. HLM analyses of the gain scores, controlling for student poverty, ethnicity, and English learner status showed the two-year district to have significantly higher student gains for their new teachers, suggesting that two-year support from a full-time mentor with a reasonable caseload as required by the NTC model is critical. Internal validity was addressed to the extent possible by confirming that all teachers were working with the same curriculum. While none of the districts were involved with other reforms, different professional development options may have contributed to the outcomes. Internal validity is therefore

moderate. External validity would have been stronger if the teachers had been randomly assigned to conditions.

One study, conducted in California, has used robust quasi-scientific controls and represents findings with strong internal validity. The findings can best be described as very promising on the variable of retention and somewhat promising on the variable of cumulative teacher work force effectiveness, typically measured using student achievement. This study compares the student achievement gains of beginning teachers who receive the target support with those of veteran teachers. Researchers were given access to five years of historical student achievement data for all elementary teachers in a medium-sized school district that was a long-term adopter of NTC induction support (Strong, 2006). Regression analyses showed no record of significantly higher gains for more experienced teachers, suggesting that NTC support was bringing beginning teachers up to the effectiveness levels of veteran teachers. Since there was no control for the quality of the veteran teachers it is difficult to generalize from these findings. Internal validity is strong, however, because all teachers in the district for those grade levels were included in the sample (no selection bias), and all received the same kinds of professional development, used the same curriculum, and taught students from the same demographics. Effect sizes were small, further emphasizing the similarities between groups. The student achievement study in Alaska above also fits in this category.

B. Quality of the Project Design

B. (1) The extent to which the proposed project has a clear set of goals and an explicit strategy

The mentoring model we will validate in our research study addresses an unmet need for supporting all new teachers in urban and rural Alaska. The project Logic Model shown on the next page outlines the goals, strategies, and expected outcomes of the ASMP UGO Validation project.

The ASMP strategies and processes that are included in this UGO project are:

- direct on-site support to ECTs;
- mentors who are fully-released from all other teaching duties;
- extensive mentor training, according to the New Teacher Center professional development model, modified to fit the needs of Alaska's teachers;
- use of a formative assessment system that provides tools to guide the mentoring conversation and provide documentation and data for the teacher, mentor, and the project;
- research findings and action research used as means to strengthen the program and teacher practice;
- use of materials that are standards–based materials and grounded work in observable practices, reducing subjectivity;
- focus on sustainability and stewardship of resources; and
- fostering communities of practice.

ASMP UGO i3 Validation Proposal Logic Model

Goal To increase the number and retention of highly effective Early Career teachers and mentors in urban Alaska school districts using the ASMP full-release mentoring model.

Strategy:
Implementation of the ASMP Full-Release mentoring model in urban LEAs

The Problem

- High teacher turnover, especially among Early Career Teachers (ECTs)
- Least–experienced teachers in challenging job assignments
- Lower academic achievement among students of ECTs
- Little or no on–the–job support for novice teachers
- Lack of objective measures or methods for showing ECT growth in teaching ability
- Lack of rigorous research on effectiveness of ASMP full–release mentoring in increasing student achievement in urban settings

Research Questions	Project Plan		Outcomes	
	Methodology	Actions	Process Outcomes	Results
1. What are the types and intensity of mentoring services teachers receive from ASMP UGO compared to those received by teachers in districts' existing mentoring programs? 2. Does two years of ASMP UGO mentoring reduce the probability that new teachers will (a) leave the teaching profession or (b) leave Alaska? 3. Among teachers retained after two years, how effective are those who remain in Alaska? 4. What is the relationship between mentor ratings and value added ratings of teacher effectiveness?	• Control and Treatment Groups via random assignment • New teachers of math in grades 3–9, reading grades 3–6, writing grades 3–6 • Urban schools • Cross–section of students: special needs, limited English Proficient, Alaska Native, etc • Concurrent implementation, without cross–contamination, of other mentor models for comparison purposes	• Full–Release mentoring. • Each mentor works with limited # of new teachers (1:15). • 24 Days of mentor training over two years using New Teacher Center approach/materials. • "Formative Assessment" materials; objective structure for mentoring. • Delivery of mentoring content including use of standards and GLEs, use of data to drive instruction, analysis of student work, learning styles, etc. • "Communities of Practice" to connect new teachers. • Over five years, two ASMP cohorts of two-year duration.	1. Sustained mentoring for ETCs as a formally adopted practice in the 4 large urban school districts in Alaska. 2. Fidelity in implementation of ASMP mentoring model. 3. Reallocation of resources in the partner school districts to support mentoring of ETCs.	1. Students of ASMP–mentored new teachers score better in math, writing and reading than students of new teachers who have received no mentoring. 2. Students of ASMP–mentored new teachers score better in math, writing and reading than students of new teachers who have other types of mentoring 3. Students of ASMP–mentored teachers score as high, or higher than, students of teachers with 8+ years of experience in math, writing and reading 4. Retention rates for ASMP–mentored new teachers are higher than retention rates for non–mentored, or differently–mentored, new teachers 5. ASMP-mentored new teachers are more effective in producing achievement gains in students with disabilities, LEP, economically disadvantaged, and by racial/ethnic classification.

Evaluation: Validation of the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project as an effective practice to increase the ability of new teachers to raise student achievement, and to retain them as teachers.

B. (2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project

The Alaska Statewide Mentor Project began in the 2004-2005 academic year with 22 full-time, full-release mentors serving 334 early career teachers from around the state of Alaska. ASMP projections for FY12 include 320 rural ECTs and 21.5 FTE rural Mentors. This project will add 220 urban ECTs and 15 urban Mentors. The ASMP UGO project will impact 63,750 Alaska students over the course of this project by training 850+ Early Career Teachers in urban and rural schools during the five-year project period, allowing that each teacher is assigned an average of 25 students each year. Eighty one percent of the project budget costs will directly support the training of early career teachers. The ASMP UGO project will span five years, with year one planned for project start up: staffing, contract negotiation per the terms of the MOU and project support personnel preparation in the LEAs. The project budget is concentrated in years two through four when two overlapping cohorts of ECTs will be trained over a two-year period. In year five of the project the LEAs will assume the financial responsibility for their local mentoring coordinator and project resources will be focused on the evaluation analysis and reporting.

ASMP experience gained from previous years will be used in calculating the number of mentors needed and making mentor/ECT matches. In matching ECTs and mentors, ASMP makes every effort to maximize time and financial resources (e.g. contiguous travel, use of distance technology) while making the matches effective. ASMP considers the geographic location of ECTs, the subject(s) in the ECT teaching assignment, mentor certification and training, and the mentor's home location when pairing ECTs and mentors.

B. (3) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

The ASMP mentoring model employs the best attributes for teacher induction identified by research. For example, ECT training is job-embedded and ongoing. Both ECT and mentor training are standards-based. Importantly, mentors are *fully released* from their teaching duties while participating in the project – teaching ECTs IS their focus. Mentors have deliberate, regular contact with each ECT on a weekly basis. The project incorporates best practice use of technology to surmount challenges imposed by distance.

The ASMP model is data-driven. ASMP employs a full-time internal researcher with responsibility for gathering, analyzing, and presenting both outcome and implementation data to the project director for continuous improvement of the project. The project director has a responsibility to report the implementation and outcome results on an annual basis to the Alaska Legislature. Additionally, ASMP employs a full suite of formative assessments to gauge to growth and effectiveness of both ECTs and mentors.

ASMP Implementation begins with recruiting experienced, expert teachers from Alaska to become mentors. Mentors live in their own communities around the state and come together for New Teacher Center (NTC) mentor training during eight academies. Each academy lasts three days, staggered throughout the mentors' first two years with the project and includes two days of dedicated time during the training to review state initiatives, explore computer applications and technology, share research updates, and gather program data needed for evaluation. Academies 1-4 focus on learning how to use the NTC formative assessment tools, used for guiding ECT teacher conversations and documenting work. Second-year academies deepen mentors' understanding of using data to drive instruction and how to better facilitate learning on the new teacher's part.

Each ASMP mentor communicates weekly with their ECTs through email, phone, or Skype and visits them face to face once each month for at least half a day. This is the equivalent face-to-face time of one hour a week, four weeks a month. Mentors carry a caseload of roughly 15 ECTs who may be located at anywhere from 3 to 7 different schools. In between academies, mentors attend ongoing professional development three hours every two weeks through *Elluminate Live!*, an online classroom environment that allows mentors to speak, chat, and collaborate on a shared whiteboard. These forums are structured and facilitated by a veteran mentor. They often include reviewing artifacts of practice as well as time for mentors to network professionally in small groups to develop strategies to enhance their work in the field. Further, ASMP includes "master mentors" who are certified NTC trainers who shadow and provide guidance and support to the other mentors. In spring 2011 a group of ten experienced ASMP mentors did an extensive review of nine professional development modules on the U.S. Department of Education Doing What Works (DWW) web site, looking specifically at applicability to ASMP and the work of mentors with ECTs. Mentors concluded that the resources could support a wide variety of topics that surface while they are working with individual ECTs. The research-based DWW resources will be included in mentor training sessions in fall 2012, and implemented during mentor contact with ECTs.

B. (4) The eligible applicant's estimate of the cost of the proposed project

The total grant budget is $16,484,345 over five years, inclusive of the required 15% match. The ASMP UGO project will impact 46,000 Alaska students over the course of this project by training 850+ Early Career Teachers in urban and rural schools during the five-year project period (320 rural in y1, 320 rural + 60 urban in y2, 320 rural + 120 urban in y3, 320 rural + 60 urban in y4, and 320 rural in y5. Each ECT is trained over a two-year period.) and allowing that

each teacher is assigned 25 students each year. ASMP experience gained from previous years will be used in calculating the number of mentors needed and making mentor/ECT matches in each participating school and district. The typical mentor to ECT ratio is 1:15. The cost per student over the life of the project is $356 ($16,389,942/46,000 students).

The cost to scale this effort to 100,000, 250,000, and 500,000 students was computed by multiplying the annual cost per student ($356) by the target number of students. These numbers, while useful hypothetically, are unrealistic in Alaska. They exceed the total number of students in Alaska and almost eclipse the entire state population (Alaska's statewide population is about 750,000).

100,000 students = $35,600,000

250,000 students = $89,000,000

500,000 students = $178,000,000

B (5) The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, and benefits into the ongoing work of the eligible applicant and any other partners at the end of the validation grant

ASMP has experience in working state wide to disseminate information, as well as facilitating processes that build communities of practice. Working with Education Northwest, Education Commission of the States, Institute of Education Sciences, the American Education Research Association and State organizations, ASMP plans to fully engage and share information about ASMP UGO and the findings.

The ASMP program receives financial support from state and federal grants. A State of Alaska Legislature appropriation is by far the largest contributor to the ASMP annual budget, averaging over $2,000,000 a year for the past seven years. The annual appropriation comes from the Alaska State Legislature's Joint (House and Senate) Education Committee based on a

recommendation and request by the State Board of Education, the University of Alaska Board of Regents and Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. The fact that the Legislative request has been funded each year at the level submitted, is a testament not only the effect ASMP has had on teachers, superintendents, EED and the University of Alaska, but also speaks to the ability to sustain mentoring. In Alaska, ASMP stands out as an initiative that garners Legislative funding based on results rather than political agenda or untried methods. Based on past history this funding stream is expected to continue and the efforts in the future are expected to affect policy change related to Alaska LEAs.

ASMP UGO is a systematic effort to validate the efficacy of a primarily rural program for use in urban schools. By tying the project matching funds to LEA subawards, local donors with a vested interest in the success of students (e.g. regional Alaska Native foundations) are more likely to continue their support beyond the grant period, institutionalizing their investment in teacher quality and student achievement. LEA partners will hire the project mentors via their subaward, with ASMP assistance and guidance based on experience. In this way, the mentors are more likely to be retained as district employees beyond the grant period. The results of ASMP UGO will demonstrate that full-release mentoring of early career teachers is scalable and a worthwhile initiative for statewide funding in other states with very diverse communities and schools. If we are successful in this effort we will greatly expand the number of low–performing students we can positively affect.

C. Quality of Project Evaluation

C. (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well-designed experimental study or a well-designed quasi-experimental study

The evaluation plan includes an implementation and impact evaluation of urban early career teachers in the ASMP UGO project. Also, an exploratory analysis will be conducted to investigate the relationship between (a) mentor ratings of ECTs in rural and urban schools and (b) mentor ratings and value added ratings of urban ECTs. The implementation evaluation will provide a detailed description of the key components of the ASMP UGO project by comparing and contrasting it with the mentoring currently provided in the Anchorage, Fairbanks, Kenai, and Mat-Su school districts. The implementation evaluation will also determine the extent to which the ASMP UGO project has been executed with fidelity to the NTC model. The impact evaluation addresses teacher retention and teacher effectiveness by comparing scores for ECTs randomly assigned to either the AMSP UGO mentoring program or to existing district mentoring programs. The exploratory analysis will investigate the relationship between two measures of teacher effectiveness. The evaluation will address four research questions:

Research Question 1. What are the types and intensity of mentoring services teachers receive from ASMP UGO compared to those received by teachers in districts' existing mentoring programs?

Research Question 2. Does two years of ASMP UGO mentoring reduce the probability that new teachers will (a) leave the teaching profession or (b) leave Alaska?

Research Question 3. Among teachers retained after two years, how effective are those who remain in Alaska?

Research Question 4. What is the relationship between mentor ratings and value added ratings of teacher effectiveness?

Figure 7: Research Questions and Evaluation Summary

Research Question and Type of Evaluation	Variables	Data Sources	Analysis
1. What are the types and intensity of mentoring services teachers receive from ASMP UGO compared to those received by teachers in districts' existing mentoring programs? *Type: Implementation*	Mentoring services (a)Full release (treatment) (b)Business as usual (control)	-Classroom observations -Teacher surveys -Mentor interviews -District and school personnel interviews -Teacher and mentor demographic data -ASMP Formative Assessment System (a) Continuum of Teacher Dev. (b) Teacher follow-up survey	The ASMP UGO project will be compared to the model on which it is based to determine if the program was executed accordingly. Additionally, a descriptive analysis of ASMP UGO as compared to other district mentoring program (including no mentoring) will be prepared.
2. Does ASMP UGO mentoring reduce the probability of teacher dropouts	Teacher retention	-ASMP Formative Assessment System -Teacher follow-up survey -Mentor demographic	A block-randomized design will be used with randomization at the teacher level. A multi-level regression analysis

Research Question and Type of Evaluation	Variables	Data Sources	Analysis
after two years from (a) the teaching profession and (b) Alaska? *Type: Impact*		information	involving teacher and school effects will be applied to determine if fewer treatment teachers leave the profession compared to control teachers.
3. Among teachers retained after two years, how effective are those who remain in Alaska? *Type: Impact*	Teacher effectiveness	-Student demographic and achievement data from state required examinations: (a) in reading, writing, and mathematics at grades 4 to 6 for elementary teachers; (b) in mathematics only for mathematics teachers in grades 7 through 10. -Ratings of teacher effectiveness	Teachers in the treatment group who remain in the profession in Alaska after two years will be compared to their counterparts in the control group. Multi-level regression will be performed to compare average student achievement scores and average classroom ratings for treatment and control teachers.
4. What is the	Teacher	-Ratings of mentor	Conduct correlational

Research Question and Type of Evaluation	Variables	Data Sources	Analysis
relationship between mentor ratings and value added ratings of teacher effectiveness? *Type: Exploratory*	effectiveness	teacher effectiveness : (a) a rating by an ASMP mentor (b) a value-added rating based on student growth in achievement and classroom observations of teaching skills.	analyses of (1) the mentor ratings of rural vs. urban ECTs, and (2) mentor ratings vs. value-added ratings of urban ECTs.

Year 1 of the study will be devoted to planning, data collection, and instrument development. To ensure a sufficient sample size the study will employ two cohorts, the first beginning in Year 2 and the second in Year 3. ECTs in Cohorts I and II who are classroom teachers will be randomly assigned to a treatment or control group and followed for two years. The implementation and impact evaluations will take place during these two-year periods.

A key component of the impact evaluation will be establishing teacher effectiveness such that when teacher retention rates are calculated, a determination can be made of the quality of those teachers. Teacher effectiveness will be determined from (1) classroom observations and (2) an average score for each teacher based on a value-added analysis of student achievement over two years. The test used will be the state-required Standards Based Assessments (SBA) administered each spring. The value-added score will be student growth in the second year of teachers' participation in the study calculated by using the previous year's SBA test results to

establish an achievement expectation. A student's value-added score will be the difference between the predicted and obtained SBA scores and the effectiveness indicator for each teacher will be average student growth. To rate effectiveness based on teaching skills, a classroom observation tool will be developed and field tested in Year 1. The observation tool will be constructed using the Alaska Teaching Standards, the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools, and the ASMP Continuum of Teacher Development.

Sampling Plan. In the implementation evaluation the pool of teachers to be randomly assigned to the treatment or control groups will be all urban ECTs in Cohort I and II who are classroom teachers. The impact evaluation will use a subset of the implementation sample because the SBAs are administered only in grades 3 to 10. Therefore, only ECTs in grades 4 to 10 will be included in the impact study. Grade 3 is excluded because there is no 2nd grade SBA that can be used to predict the results of the 3rd grade SBA. For grades 4 to 6 all ECTs assigned to a classroom will be included in the analysis. However, in grades 7 through 10, only teachers of math will be included in the impact study to ensure that the student test scores for each teacher used to determine effectiveness reflect the actual subjects taught. Because the exploratory analysis includes an investigation of the relationship between mentor ratings of rural ECTs and mentor ratings of urban ECTs (urban ECTs being those involved in the RCT) the sampling plan also includes all rural ECTs served in Years 3 and 4.

Data Collection. Data collection will occur in Years 1 through 4. The data collected will include students, teachers, mentors, ASMP staff, school, and district level information obtained through interviews, surveys, record reviews, and classroom observations. Two years of student level data including test scores and demographic information that is linked to teachers will be collected as well as selected ECT and mentor data from the ASMP Formative Assessment System.

Classroom observations will be conducted during the second year of involvement for all ECTs in the impact study. Included in the data collection during Years 3 and 4 will be the mentor ratings of all rural Alaska teachers served by the ASMP (i.e. those teachers not in the Anchorage, Fairbanks, Kenai, and Mat-Su school districts).

Analysis. For Research Question 1 the analysis will produce a narrative description of the ASMP UGO project that accurately describes the program as implemented according the NTC model on which it is based. The analysis will include descriptions of mentoring services received, frequencies of teacher-mentor encounters, demographic data on teachers and mentors, and types and frequency of staff development workshops for teachers and mentors.

The dependent variable for Research Question 2 is the dropout status of teachers after two years. The variable is binary; a teacher has either dropped out or remained in the teaching profession. Teacher dropout will be defined in two ways: (a) dropping out from the teaching profession or (b) dropping out from teaching in Alaska (leaving Alaska but teaching elsewhere).

The study will utilize a block-randomized design with randomization occurring at the teacher level in each school in the four participating districts. The following multilevel regression model is proposed for the analysis of teacher dropout.

Since teacher dropout is a binary outcome, the appropriate sampling model is the Bernoulli distribution. It is also necessary to "transform" this outcome using the logit link function, so as to analyze it with a multilevel regression model. Let H_{ij} stand for the transformed outcome for teacher i at school j; then the model will be:

[Teacher Level]

$$H_{ij} = B_{0j} + B_{1j}(\text{Treatment})_{ij} + \{\text{Teacher Covariates}\} + e_{ij}$$

[School Level]

$B_{0j} = G_{00} + U_{0j}$

$B_{1j} = G_{10}$

All teacher covariates have fixed slopes.

This model will allow for the estimation of the treatment effect on teacher dropout, while properly accounting for the nesting of teachers within schools, by including the random intercept of schools. Since the main interest is estimating the average treatment effect, the model will be constrained by adopting a fixed slope model, although the random slope model will be used for a sensitivity analysis. Teacher variables measured at the baseline will be included as covariates, to improve the precision of the estimate.

The dependent variable for Research Question 3, teacher effectiveness, is scalar, as it consists of student achievement measures and ratings of classroom skills. These variables will be calculated for those remaining in the teaching profession in Alaska at the grade levels assessed. Since this analysis will exclude teacher dropouts, the estimate of treatment impact for this research question will not be an Intent-to-Treat (ITT) estimate. The analysis model for Research Question 3 is essentially the same as for Research Question 2, except that the appropriate sampling model is Normal, and the identity link function will be used.

Two power analyses were performed to estimate a range of minimum detectable effect sizes (MDES). At one end of the range the estimate was based on: 120 schools, no variance accounted by the blocking variable, and no variance accounted by the teacher level covariate. For this analysis of scalar outcomes, the MDES was estimated at 0.26. At the other range the estimate was based on an assumption of: 120 schools, 4 teachers per school, the blocking variable accounting for 20 percent of the variance, and the teacher level covariate accounting for 25 percent of the variance. For this analysis of scalar outcomes, the MDES was estimated at

0.20. These estimates show that there is sufficient reason to believe the impact evaluation will have a sufficient power to detect the treatment effect.

The method for conducting the exploratory study (Research Question 4) will consist of correlational analyses of mentor ratings of rural and urban ECTs. Additionally, for urban ECTs only, a correlational analysis of mentor ratings and value added ratings of the same teachers will be conducted. A Pearson's *r* correlation coefficient will be calculated and scatter plots will be prepared to graphically portray the degree of relationship between the two ECT rating variables. As is the case for any evaluation, there are potential threats to the integrity of the study. These are identified in the following sections with plans for addressing the threats.

Contamination. Contamination must be considered a threat because random assignment takes place at the teacher level within schools. This raises the possibility of treatment teachers sharing project materials with teachers in the control group in their same school. However, this is considered a small threat in those schools where both treatment and control group teachers receive some form of mentoring. However, in the Fairbanks and Kenai school districts no formal mentoring is provided for new teachers. Consequently, the possibility that project materials may be shared is somewhat greater in these districts. To address this issue, all school principals and study teachers will be asked to sign an Agreement of Participation, one component of which will be an agreement not to share materials. Evaluators will monitor and report possible contamination.

Attrition or missing data. Unlike typical evaluation studies, teacher attrition constitutes one of the dependent measures rather than a nuisance that compromises the integrity of the study. However, the evaluation team will monitor the pattern of attrition. If attrition differs among treatment or control group ECTs or if the final sample differs significantly from the original

sample on key factors, additional inquiry will be made to attempt to understand the reasons why individuals dropped out of the study and for what reasons.

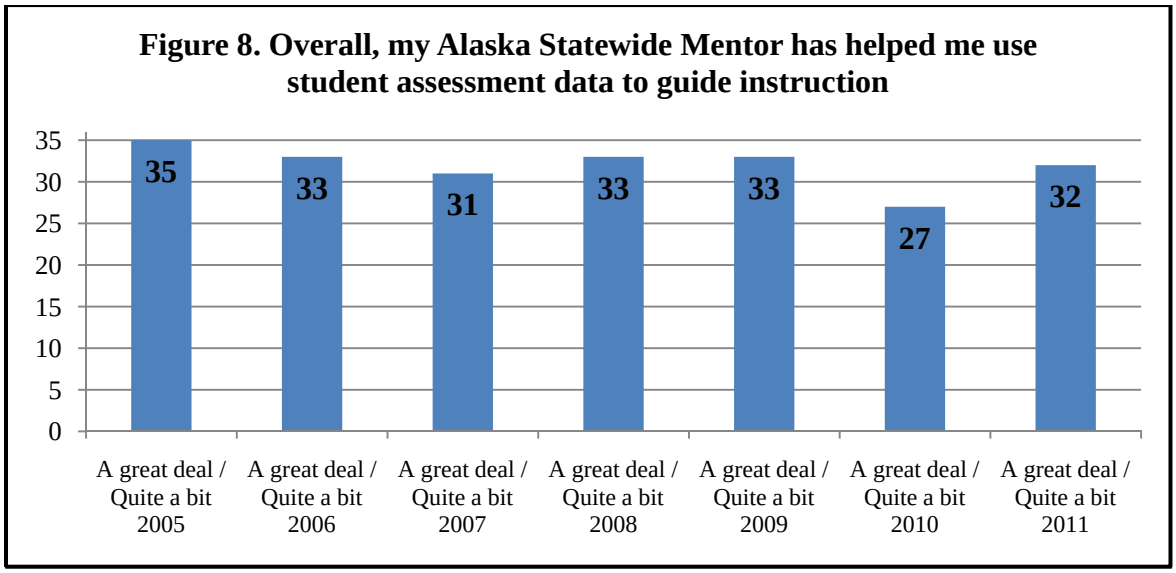
Attrition of mentors is expected to be minimal, though not zero. This type of attrition will be dealt with by replacing the departed ASMP UGO mentor with another ASMP UGO mentor or replacing the control group mentor with another mentor (unless the district offers no mentoring). Since a change of mentor during the experimental period is expected to have some impact on the result of mentoring, the frequency of this will be monitored and reported.

Missing Data. Missing data is not anticipated to be a significant issue in this study because teacher attrition is the dependent variable for Research Question 2. For Research Question 3, the data for analysis is comprised only of teachers who remain. A minor missing data problem might emerge in the form of unanswered items on the teacher survey. Data analysis will deal with unanswered items using a listwise deletion of cases unless the number of missing items is substantial (more than 20%), in which case multiple imputation (MI) will be used.

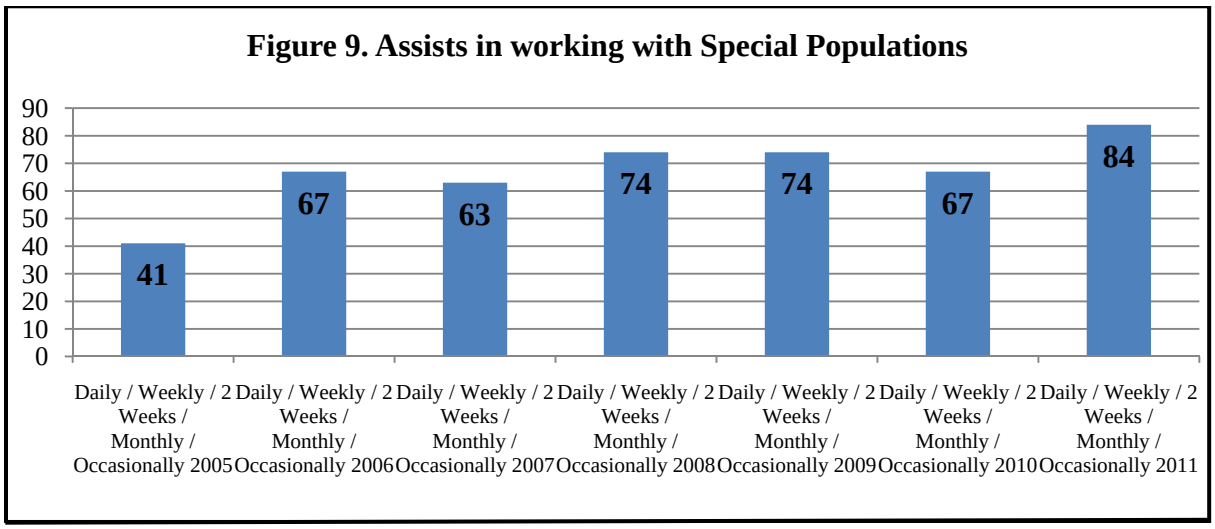
Crossovers. Teacher crossovers will be monitored. Teachers who cross over from the treatment group to the control group or vice versa will be included in the treatment sample for the main analysis. To discourage crossovers, the Agreement of Participation will contain language to discourage crossovers.

C. (2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide high quality implementation data and performance feedback

Annually, ASMP mentors and ECTs respond to a survey about the processes and outcomes of the program related to student achievement. Specifically, in response to the survey item “Overall my Alaska Statewide Mentor has helped me use student assessment data to guide my instruction”, teachers over the last seven years consistently said their mentor did this on a frequent basis (Figure 8).



Another question asked whether ECTs were getting the help they needed to meet the instructional needs of special populations of students. This response has increased from 41% in 2005 to 84% in 2011 (Figure 9).



C. (3) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project so as to facilitate replication or testing in other settings

The evaluation plan contains an implementation evaluation which includes a detailed documentation of the key elements of the ASMP and the "business as usual" mentoring that will occur in the control group classrooms. This documentation activity includes assessing the fidelity

of the ASMP UGO implementation with the NTC model as well as comparing and contrasting ASMP UGO with the mentoring occurring in the control group classrooms. Additionally, the sequence and timeline for implementing ASMP UGO will be recorded. This detailed documentation will provide the information future implementers of the model will need to replicate or test the program in other settings. The implementation evaluation data will include classroom observations, teacher and mentor survey results, mentor and ECT interviews, and value-added teacher and mentor effectiveness data.

C. (4) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively

Education Northwest has collaborated with the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project (ASMP) to prepare an independent project evaluation. Several meetings were held to ensure that the ASMP UGO program was amenable to rigorous scientific investigation. As a result of this collaboration ASMP staff made several programmatic changes to the design of the project including acceptance of a randomized control trial and a sampling plan to support the evaluation. Education Northwest has carefully planned their evaluation subcontract bid to provide adequate resources for data collection, analysis, evaluation, and reporting. They are confident that the project budget provides adequate resources to effectively complete a rigorous, high quality evaluation of the impact and results of the ASMP UGO project.

The number of mentors required for the project evaluation study was calculated using power analyses, described earlier. The project design includes two lead mentors who will ensure ongoing, consistent training for mentors. The project budget plans for stipends as an incentive for teachers to participate in the project control group. In addition, the mentor travel was carefully calculated to maintain fidelity to the ASMP model and desired level of ECT/mentor contact across all research participants.

D. Quality of the Management Plan

D. (1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget

Three teams have been formed to guide and inform the ASMP UGO Validation project – the Policy Design Team, Evaluation Team, and District Leadership Team. Each team will elect members to serve as the overarching ASMP UGO Advisory Committee.

The **Policy Design Team** will be led by the Project Director. This team is responsible for scheduling all ASMP implementation activities associated with the Validation project in the four partner districts. A representative of the independent evaluator organization (Education Northwest) will observe this team, but will not take an active role as their responsibility is to evaluate, not implement, the proposed intervention.

The **Evaluation Team** will be chaired by Education Northwest staff and made up of their evaluators. This team is charged with implementing the evaluation design described in this application. The Project Director will be a liaison between the Evaluation Team and the project LEAs. Such a role will help with consistent and clear communications and expectations on the parts of the three types of organizations involved: ASMP, Education Northwest and the four LEAs.

The **District Leadership Team** will be co–chaired by the Project Coordinator and an administrator from one of the four school districts. This team will be composed of key ASMP staff and two representatives from each LEA, with majority representation coming from the LEAs. The team will communicate information about the project to senior school leaders and seek feedback on project expectations and operations from LEA participants. Again, a representative of the independent evaluator (Education Northwest) will observe this team, but without an active role.

Figure 10: ASMP UGO Project Management Plan: Responsibilities, timeline, and benchmarks

Benchmark	Year 1			Years 2 -5			Responsible Personnel
	Fall	Spr	Sum	Fall	Spr	Sum	
UGO Program organization	X						Project Director
Years tasks identified	X			X			Management Team, Evaluation Team
Develop, design and update: website, electronic learning network, webinars	X					X	ASMP Staff
I. Project Implementation:							
Update & revise district MOUs, if necessary	X			X			Project Director
Hire and train mentors, initial and on–going		X		X		X	Project Coordinator, New Teacher Center
Obtain lists of control and treatment teachers and assign mentors to treatment teachers		X			X		Project Coordinator
Mentor for two years according to ASMP model				X	X		(Treatment Cohort 1: 2012–2014; Cohort 2: 2013–2015) Project Coordinator
District Leadership Team: Videoconference Quarterly			X	X	X	X	Project Director
Develop UGO Dissemination materials (CDs, etc)				X			Years 4 and 5. Project Coordinator, ASMP Staff
Secure 20% Match	X	X	X				Project Director
II. Independent Evaluation							
EdNW hires project staff	X						Lead Evaluator
Schedule evaluation actions and requirements		X		X			Evaluation Team
Communicate evaluation actions and schedules to ASMP Staff & District project contact people		X		X			Education Northwest Staff
Update district school boards about evaluation progress				X			Lead Evaluator and Project Director
Meet federal DOE staff to discuss evaluation progress			X			X	Evaluation Team
Evaluation Team meets Quarterly			X	X	X	X	Lead Evaluator

Benchmark	Year 1			Years 2 -5			Responsible Personnel
	Fall	Spr	Sum	Fall	Spr	Sum	
Disseminate project findings				X	X	X	Years 4 &5. Education Northwest and ASMP Project Director
Develop Scale–Up proposal					X	X	Year 5. Education Northwest and ASMP

D. (2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director and key project personnel, especially in managing complex projects

(Note: See Appendix F for vitas and resumes)

Project Director: .5 FTE, Michael Dunleavy Mr. Dunleavy is Director of K-12 Outreach Operations. He has a long and well-established record of experience with institutions and personnel across UA and K-12 in Alaska in addition to specific understanding of both K-12 and UA regulations and requirements. Mr. Dunleavy has a working knowledge of the UA system administration, policies, and leadership as well as a background in educational partnership design and collaboration that will be beneficial to his responsibility as liaison among the project partners. He is well-known and respected across the state; his responsibilities as Project Director will include facilitation of meetings with stakeholders, project management teams, and other vested partners. Mr. Dunleavy has experience developing publications to market programs and valuable experience in procuring funding with both public and private agencies. Mr. Dunleavy has a background in education, teacher recruitment, and teacher mentoring. He will provide the overall budget management for the project, including the management of invoicing, generation of the matching revenues through face-to-face solicitations, review of expense reports, and programmatic decision making based on funding and resources. Mr. Dunleavy will negotiate contracts with service providers, and draft memorandums of agreement and sub-award contracts.

Project Coordinator: 1.0 FTE, To be hired This individual will provide the day-to-day management of the ASMP UGO project. The Project Coordinator will be selected with input from the project partners and will be hired as a university employee. The Project Coordinator must have a strong background in education leadership and an understanding of mentoring and professional development best practices. The Project Coordinator will have responsibility for the facilitation of mentor training and the smooth operation of mentoring functions in the partner LEAs. This individual will be required to understand the evaluation design framework of the project in order to respond to requests from the project evaluation team. The Coordinator will report regularly to the Project Director about the daily operations of the project.

Project Internal Researcher: 1.0 FTE, Barbara Adams Dr. Barbara Adams has a long history in development of quantitative research design studies that use student achievement gains as measurements. She understand the unique context of rural Alaska and will assist the research team with all internal research protocols such as IRB processes, review of the consent forms, and oversight of the data collection processes and development as they relate to work under the University of Alaska.

Consultant: Michael Strong Dr. Strong will serve as the lead consultant for the network of research analysts to give guidance on the ASMP model, as well as look at qualitative data collected from the online survey to better understand what the teacher needs are, and what the program can provide. This project will not modify the full-release mentoring model in any way, but will look critically at the data to ensure the alignment of needs, perceptions, and services. Dr. Strong will guide us toward making sure that goal is achieved.

Project External Evaluator: Terri Akey. Dr. Akey is co-director of the Center for Research, Evaluation, and Assessment at Education Northwest and will provide methodological

consultation for the study. She has extensive experience in the areas of teacher effectiveness, performance evaluation, data systems and quality, and school reform. She has served as principal investigator for a statewide assessment of teacher evaluation policies in Indiana, and has conducted evaluations of several large-scale professional development and preservice training initiatives. Her work in school reform includes serving as principal investigator for several large-scale urban school reform efforts, including First Things First, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Small Schools Initiative, and New Tech High.

Project External Evaluator: Richard Smiley Dr. Smiley is Senior Research Associate in the Research Unit at Education Northwest's Center for Research, Evaluation, and Assessment. His experience includes six years conducting research studies. Dr. Smiley has experience managing Alaska's statewide assessment system, Alaska's statewide Special Education system, and continuous improvement monitoring of Special Education in Alaska. His areas of expertise related to this project are in applied research, program evaluation, and technical writing.

D. (3) The eligible applicant's capacity to bring the proposed project to scale on a state or regional level

The strength of the ASMP ability to build to scale rests in a philosophy that embraces research, evaluation, and accountability to stakeholders. This philosophy provides the framework for the ASMP UGO grant application. The Alaska Statewide Mentor Project enjoys a high level of policy support in Alaska. Alaska Commissioner of Education Hanley referenced an April 2011 Alaska Advisory Task Force on Higher Education and Career Readiness report in his letter of support for this project. The Task Force was created by the Alaska State Senate and charged with making recommendations to improve educational attainment and outcomes in Alaska. One of the key recommendations shows the current level of support for ASMP among policy makers: "*(3.E) The Legislature should fully fund and encourage the continuing work of the Alaska*

Statewide Mentor Project, and any similar program(s) in the state, for teachers seeking professional development to improve their classroom instructional skills." Each fall ASMP makes a formal written report to the Alaska Legislature related to the two program goals of increased student achievement and improved teacher retention. The report consistently shows positive results. ASMP has maintained fidelity to the full-release mentoring model and embraced the research findings. ASMP is not a magic solution – the issues are very complex and the model can always be improved – however, a strong program evaluation component has led to continuous process improvements and annual Legislative appropriations for teacher mentoring.

Interestingly, prior to ASMP and a partnership between EED and UA, the State of Alaska House and Senate did not have standing committees on education. Now they do, and ASMP is one of the programs mostly widely supported by state officials, school administrators, teachers, and even parents. ASMP history and ability to demonstrate stewardship, as well as program implementation are evidence that the University of Alaska, backed by partners and policy makers will have no problem ramping up services and infrastructure.

The ASMP program is actually replicable right now in other states with resources for implementation. ASMP has created a full suite of operational tools such as mentor handbooks and training resources for implementation fidelity. To gauge effectiveness of implementation strategies and practices, ASMP measures any drastic variations via online survey data collected at the end of each year from mentors and ECTs. During the five years of the ASMP UGO project other resources will be developed to aide in replication of the model, namely an assessment tool to gauge district readiness to adopt full-release mentoring as a district practice. Throughout the project, ASMP will provide guidance and assistance to the partner LEAs to prepare their systems to support sustained implementation.

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