

Expeditionary Learning
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Competitive Priority #2: Enabling Adoption of Effective Practices

Through a validation grant award, Expeditionary Learning (EL) will develop a suite of resources and professional development services for broad national adoption designed to support teachers, especially novice teachers, in implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) by developing their capacity to deliver higher rates of proficiency for high-need students.

- **EL’s English Language Arts curriculum**, for Grades K-8, is deeply aligned to the CCSS and its instructional shifts. Each of EL’s 36 modules, plus 12 new ones created with grant funds, spans 8 weeks of instruction, consisting of rigorous, standards-aligned content, aligned formative and summative assessments, performance tasks, curriculum maps, spaces for remediation and acceleration, and extensive lesson guidance for teachers. The curriculum is an open educational resource, available through EngageNY.org.
- **EL’s instructional “master practitioner” series of books and videos** are unique CCSS resources consisting of case studies, exemplar teacher tools, and instructional videos. They address the key instructional shifts required for CCSS implementation and are designed to give teachers the resources they need to create effective CCSS classrooms. Over the grant period, EL will produce three books for national distribution: *Leaders of Their Own Learning: Transforming Schools through Student-Engaged Assessment*; *Deep Instruction: Promoting Challenge, Thinking and Voice*; and *Enhancing, Customizing and Creating Compelling Curriculum*. Jossey/Bass will publish the first book in January 2014.
- **EL’s archive of exemplary student work** illuminates what quality implementation of the CCSS can look like. The one-of-a-kind online national archive is searchable by standards and shows teachers how to use models to improve teaching and learning. Validation funding would enable EL to expand the archive to include models of CCSS-aligned student writing, contributed by the teachers and students using the EL curriculum.

- **Evaluating impact and efficacy:** EL is partnering with Mathematica to conduct rigorous impact and implementation analyses that shed light on the effectiveness of the EL program. The Mathematica study will examine the conditions needed for successful replication of EL practices.

Product development and training: EL already has a robust content creation pipeline in place, deploying teams of EL teachers and writers to cull best practices from high-performing EL schools and develop teacher-generated curriculum and instructional resources. A staff videographer develops and produces instructional videos filmed in EL Mentor Schools. These materials, joined with our curriculum, form the backbone of EL's professional development services. EL is already using them in a two-year, turn-key training cycle with New York State in the implementation of EL's curriculum. This work yields critical feedback to improve EL's training and understand the factors affecting fidelity of implementation.

Replicability and adaptability: EL is committed to widespread adoption of our practices and adaptation of our materials. Over the grant period, EL plans to scale implementation of its model in diverse locales, including New York City, Newark, NJ; Hartford, CT; Greece, NY; as well as several rural districts in upstate New York. In addition, EL's online open source platform will make these materials nationally available to support teachers, administrators, and coaches in online professional learning and in adapting and contributing content. Strategic partnerships with entities like SAP, Jossey/Bass and Heineman ensure quality and enhance distribution.

Competitive priority #3: Novice i3 Applicants:

Expeditionary Learning has never received an i3 grant.

A. SIGNIFICANCE

(A)(1) Estimated impact and scale

Executive Summary: Expeditionary Learning (EL) plans to address a significant unmet national need – supporting the implementation of the Common Core State Standards with high-quality supports for novice teachers. EL’s proven model is uniquely positioned to meet this need, and demand from states and districts for the EL curricula and for associated supports is already very strong. EL is currently meeting this demand at a limited scale, and seeks the i3 validation award to overcome the remaining barriers to national expansion.

“This is how kids want to learn.”

—U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, visiting an Expeditionary Learning School in Portland, Maine

Expeditionary Learning (EL) plans to tackle the significant unmet national need for effective means of supporting novice teachers in the development of their professional capacity to deliver much higher rates of proficiency for high-needs students, particularly in the context of the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

The Common Core State Standards raise the bar for what it means to be college- and career-ready, aiming to prepare students to ultimately earn a living wage. The CCSS are not a list of standards for teachers to check off, but rather a whole new approach to teaching and learning that builds college- and career- readiness. As 45 states and the District of Columbia prepare to implement the CCSS, most teachers are not prepared to teach to the rigor of the standards. In particular, novice teachers face the dual challenge of becoming effective teachers and needing to teach to the level of the standards (as discussed more in section B1).

Teacher prep programs have not historically been effective in preparing teachers for the classroom and are not now providing teachers the training they need to be successful in teaching to the new Common Core; recent estimates are that fewer than one in nine elementary programs and just over one-third of high school programs are preparing candidates in content at the level

necessary.¹ There thus exists a staggering unmet need for effective ways to help novice teachers develop and prepare to teach to the rigor demanded by the CCSS.

Expeditionary Learning model and historical context

For the past 20 years in over 30 states, Expeditionary Learning has demonstrated that when students and teachers are engaged in work that is challenging, adventurous, and meaningful, learning and achievement flourish. In that context, the Expeditionary Learning model builds the capacity of novice teachers, and all teachers, to engage students in rich curricula in order to enable the deeper learning—defined as the competencies that students need to succeed in work and life—required by the new CCSS assessments. The EL approach works – the external evaluation firm Mathematica has found material and statistically significant achievement gains among students in EL schools.

“The What” of Common Core and Deeper Learning: Created by teachers for teachers, the EL model has been refined and honed over two decades of deep engagement with students and teachers through high-quality curricula and instructional supports. EL has leveraged that long track record of direct coaching and development of teachers, and aligned its curricula and supports to the high standards of the CCSS. Using EL’s curriculum, students get excited about learning through compelling topics and ownership of their learning; teachers get a vision of the instructional practices that support a Common Core-aligned classroom and the tools to create it.

“The How” of Common Core and Deeper Learning: Professional learning to build the capacity of novice teachers is core to EL’s model. EL’s approach, through its curriculum, professional institutes, and on-site coaching, respects teachers and school leaders as creative agents in their classroom, and builds their capacity to ignite student motivation, persistence, and

¹ National Council on Teacher Quality (2013). “A Review of the Nation’s Teacher Preparation Programs.”

compassion that propel their growth and success in school, college, career and life. The EL model puts novice and veteran teachers in the role of active learners and prioritizes collaboration.

Strong results to date: According to a study by Mathematica, the external evaluation firm, the EL model demonstrated statistically significant student results after just 2 years. Using a control group that meets the What Works Clearinghouse evidence standards, Mathematica's study found that schools implementing the EL model have student achievement that exceeds district averages, often by substantial margins. And after 3 years, EL's schools had significant, positive impacts of 0.16 standard deviations in reading and 0.29 standard deviations in math. Translated into "months of learning," these impacts are equivalent to about 7 months of additional learning growth in reading and roughly 10 months of additional learning growth in math accumulated over three years. These results reflect the linkage between the EL model for building teacher capacity and the features of the research literature on effective induction programs and high-quality job-embedded professional learning (described further in section B1).

Growth and current scale: EL began in 1993 as an initiative of Outward Bound with 10 demonstration schools in five cities, 9 of which showed marked improvement on standardized tests after two years. By 2000, EL was working in 96 schools across 28 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation granted Expeditionary Learning \$24 million in 2003 to help create 27 new secondary schools throughout the United States. In 2004, the Fund for Teachers selected EL as a partner and has provided \$1,500,000 in competitive fellowships to 430 teachers to improve their teaching practice. Today, the EL network includes more than 165 schools, 4,000 teachers, and 45,000 students in 30 states. Of the students served, 56% are low income, 26% are African-American, 26% are Hispanic, 13% have special education needs, and 12% are English language learners.

Broadening the EL model to meet demand from districts and states to support scale

Prior to 2012, EL focused primarily on implementing its model in a whole-school approach, directly and deeply with teachers and school leaders. In 2012, based on demand from districts and states, EL was asked to move from this successful school-by-school approach to more system-wide interventions. Specifically, EL won the prestigious contract from the state of NY to author its CCSS-aligned English Language Arts curriculum for grades 3-8 and train leadership teams from every district in the state. This approach immediately began “at scale” as an open-source resource that is fully available online nationwide (through EngageNY.org). By August 2013, the

The New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) named EL’s curricula as a “preferred curricula” for selection by principals across the city. Only two grade 3-8 programs were given this honor as representing “the highest-quality Common Core-aligned curriculum materials currently available.” These resources are easily accessible to any school and free of charge.

curriculum will boast 36 fully developed modules complete with 160 days of lesson plans, aligned formative and summative module assessments, learning targets and performance tasks, curriculum maps, spaces for remediation and acceleration, and extensive lesson guidance for teachers. To support novice teachers in adopting this curricula and in learning the instructional practices needed to implement it, EL honed an accelerated model of extensive professional learning supports based on decades of experience coaching and developing teachers in schools.

These EL curricula and professional learning supports are specifically designed for broad adoption. The extensive, high-quality, freely-available 3-8 ELA curricula and instructional supports represent a significant opportunity for states and districts to leverage the adoption of the CCSS to transform teaching and learning by building the capacity of teachers. These resources have created an inflection point, shifting demand for EL from a school-by-school basis to district-by-district and state-by-state, laying the groundwork for national scale.

Meeting the strong unmet demand and proposal to meet this demand

Rapid spread of EL’s open-source CCSS curriculum described above is creating strong demand for scaling the associated technical assistance and teacher supports that EL provides.

Within the first two months of online access, the curriculum downloads numbered over 60,000. Many school districts, including large urban districts serving high-needs populations, are reaching out to EL. Teachers and districts are recognizing that the EL approach is truly unique – it provides the rigor needed to teach to the CCSS, but is not “kill-and-drill.” It reflects how teachers love to teach and how students love to learn.

“We’re leaving the workshop seeing the possibility of brilliance in every student in every school, every day.”
Participant in EL’s training of NYS professional development teams

EL views this strong demand as an extremely positive sign of a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform teaching practice at scale across the nation. EL is meeting a portion of this demand today, with work in 165 schools across 30 states. EL has achieved stellar results with its whole-school model in the middle-school grades and seeks to validate these results with its honed, blended, nationally-scalable approach. The intervention that EL is proposing features the most impactful aspects of the whole-school model, is less human capital-intensive, works at a district-by-district level rather than a school-by-school level, and will achieve material and statistically significant impact in just two years. EL seeks an i3 validation grant to demonstrate a model of professional learning for novice teachers that is scalable across the country.

High-level summary of proposal and likelihood of impact

EL proposes to engage two cohorts of 30 middle schools each, in four high-need LEA’s in three states in an intensive two-year intervention. With EL’s literacy curriculum as the entry point and the common course of study, novice teachers will work alongside experienced

colleagues from each school to build expertise across several targeted dimensions of pedagogy including inquiry-based learning, student engaged assessment, and continuous cycles of data-informed self-improvement and reflection. EL’s blended learning model, which combines face-to-face training and onsite coaching with facilitated online learning opportunities, puts novice and veteran teachers in the role of active learners and prioritizes teacher collaboration.

“This kind of innovative school...is an example of how all our schools should be.”

- President Barack Obama at Capital City Public Charter School, an EL school in Washington, DC

EL expects strong outcomes from its engagement of the first two cohorts of 30 schools each. The model is drawn from almost two decades of experience and success, and has been carefully honed for maximum impact. While past evaluations have shown meaningful, step-changes in student achievement in 4 years, the most recent Mathematica evaluation of EL’s model for professional learning shows statistically-significant impact after just 2 years, strengthening every year afterward. If these outcomes are indeed validated, then the potential for scale (as described below in section A2) and for project impact is immense.

(A)(2) National expansion:

Executive Summary: If favorable outcomes are achieved, national expansion is highly feasible. Expeditionary Learning has the programmatic and organizational building blocks needed to expand, and high levels of demand combined with widespread implementation of CCSS have created a natural path to growth.

Expeditionary Learning is poised for national expansion

EL’s evidence- and inquiry-based model is built for scale—in fact, it is already scaling state-wide in New York State and is poised to scale nationally. The CCSS-aligned curriculum is open-source, as will be the EL online professional learning platform and dedicated website for teachers. During the period of the i3 grant, all pieces of the intervention will be honed to be further enabled for scale. EL’s validated results in the middle school grades, long track record of

achievement in elementary schools, comprehensive elementary and middle school ELA curricula and tools, and blended offerings will combine to make a comprehensive K-8 intervention.

Additionally, this model is situated within an organization that is positioned to grow. EL can respond to this demand with a national staff already deployed to do work in 30 states. Additionally, EL has a proven track record of scaling, having twice in its history successfully leveraged large awards (from New American Schools in 1993 and from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in 2003) to exponentially increase the size of its network. With a track record of success scaling its whole-school model, and the innovations EL has made to enable even wider scale, prospects for national expansion are strong.

Pathway to national expansion

EL's path to expansion will be district-to-district growth. In addition to districts and states reaching out directly to EL, EL is seeing new market demand that is driven both from both the top-down by Common Core implementation and from the bottom-up by teachers. EL's open source curriculum and associated supports offer states new procurement options. As 45 states and the District of Columbia implement the CCSS, EL is emerging as the provider of choice and is gaining recognition as a high-quality CCSS-aligned curriculum. These state-level decisions will be one lever that drives additional district-by-district growth. At the grassroots level, teachers en masse – as evidenced by the 60,000 downloads of EL's curriculum in a two-month period – are seeking out supports for teaching the Common Core. This extraordinary demand from teachers allows EL to identify additional districts to target for support.

Over the course of the grant period, we estimate that this project will directly impact over 48,000 students from the 60 schools engaged in the implementation and evaluation activities.² However, these 48,000 students are only a subset of the significantly larger number of students

² Based on an average middle school size of 600 students

estimated to be impacted by this work over the life of the grant. We estimate that at least 600 schools nationwide will be implementing EL's literacy curriculum by 2014-15. This includes the 240 schools in New York City and Newark plus 200 schools in the rest of New York State, already known to be using the curriculum, and a very conservative estimate of another 160 schools outside New York State that will adopt the curriculum as more districts make recommendations for best-in-breed Common Core-aligned supports. Assuming that each of these schools serves a minimum of 300 students in grades 3-8 and uses the curriculum for at least two years, our work will impact an additional 240,000 students.

B. PROJECT DESIGN

(B)(1) Addressing National Need and Absolute Priority 1

Executive Summary: Expeditionary Learning will provide an evidence-based approach to novice teacher development that will boost new teacher satisfaction, effective teacher retention, and student achievement.

Expeditionary Learning proposes a Common Core-aligned intervention which helps novice teachers to become more effective through a combination of evidence-based supports. Research shows that few novice teachers receive adequate resources and support. Many are employed in economically disadvantaged districts and leave teaching within five years.

- Districts in the highest quartile of poverty have an average of 11% beginning teachers, compared with an average of 8.4% for districts in the lowest quartile of poverty.³
- Only 1 percent of beginning teachers currently receive the ongoing support that constitutes comprehensive induction when they enter the profession.⁴
- Few teachers began teaching with a clear, operational curriculum in hand and even fewer received curricula that aligned with state standards.⁵

³ Gagnon & Mattingly (2012).

⁴ Alliance for Excellent Education (2004a)

- 14 percent of new teachers leave by the end of their first year; 33 percent leave within three years; and almost 50 percent leave in five years.⁶

There are several reasons why existing approaches to teacher induction do not seem to meet the needs of novice teachers. First, they include little time for novice teachers to be observed consistently or observe others, isolating them rather than giving them the exposure to the models of effective practice that they need to improve. Second, existing approaches to teacher inductions seem to over-rely on mentoring as the one-size-fits-all solution which tends to focus more on day-to-day survival skills than on student learning. Third, there is little opportunity for collaboration, despite strong research showing that it is important for novice teachers (and teachers of all levels of experience) to be part of a network that shares common learning goals and collectively works to improve practice. Finally, many teacher induction programs are stand-alone, short-term solutions, disconnected from the school or district's long-term priorities for student learning.⁷

To drive broad, deep and sustainable improvements in teaching and learning, a new approach is needed that provides a pathway to powerful classroom practice for novice teachers fully integrated into school-wide goals and structures for professional learning. It must combine the structures and supports that research shows are effective for beginning teachers – which may increase teacher satisfaction and retention – with the characteristics of high-quality professional learning – which research suggests can improve teacher practice and student achievement. EL's model focuses on Common Core-aligned professional learning and incorporates the evidence-

⁵ Kauffman , Johnson, Kardos, Liu, & Peske (2002)

⁶ Ingersoll (2003)

⁷ Goodwin (2012); Alliance for Excellent Education (2004a); Feiman-Nemser, (2003).

based features of an effective induction program with the elements of high-quality professional learning. These evidence-based features are:⁸

Effective induction and high-quality professional learning are marked by the following specific characteristics:

The image shows a vertical stack of six colored boxes, each containing a characteristic of effective induction programs. The colors transition from dark blue at the top to olive green at the bottom.

- Aligned** to the school and district’s philosophy and instructional goals
- Structured, comprehensive, and professional learning-focused supports** to new teachers, rather than merely survival supports
- Opportunities for **new teachers to learn from experienced teachers** by watching experienced teachers teach, and having access to master practitioner knowledge and feedback
- Collaborative**, with opportunities for new teachers to collaborate with one another as well as with experienced teachers in professional networks and communities of practice; lessens new teachers’ feelings of isolation
- Sustained and significant time**, including both significant time within the school day and over a sustained length of time (e.g., at least a full year)
- Seamlessly **connected to a broad, school-wide program of job-embedded professional learning** which outlasts specific induction supports and which is supported by school and district leadership

Expeditionary Learning’s model of professional learning, honed over 20 years in hundreds of schools across the country, embodies all of the features that the evidence-base tells us can lead to improved teacher practice – for beginning as well as for experienced teachers – and higher student achievement:

⁸ Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos (2009); Miller, Goddard, Goddard, Larsen, & Jacob (2010); Saunders, Goldenberg, & Gallimore (2009); Blank & de las Alas (2009); Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon (2001); Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon & Birman (2002); Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley (2007); King & Newmann (2000). Thompson, Windschitl, & Braaten (2013); Moir (2009); Feiman-Nemser (2010); Alliance for Excellent Education (2004); Smith & Ingersoll (2004).

Characteristics of high-quality professional learning	How the Expeditionary Learning model delivers professional learning aligned with these characteristics
Aligned to shared goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anchors professional learning for novices in both a rigorous, Common Core-aligned, school-wide curriculum and the core principles of the EL model
Structured, comprehensive professional learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combines a blended program of supports (on-site coaching, off-site institutes, online resources) over two years focused on pedagogical knowledge (e.g., inquiry-based learning, student-engaged assessment) and content knowledge (e.g., CCSS)
Opportunities to learn from experienced teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides opportunities for new teachers to watch model teaching in demonstration classrooms; provides new teachers with access to "master practitioner" resources and tools through online platform
Collaborative with both new and experienced teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EL supports schools to build sustainable professional learning communities among new and experienced teachers; new teachers can connect via the online platform in an online community of practice
Sustained and significant time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EL's approach is high-touch, with 18 days of on-site coaching as well as off-site institutes and online resources, collectively providing enough time for significant learning over the two-year period
Connected to broader culture of professional learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focused on building the structures and routines for effective job-embedded professional learning among new and experienced teachers; EL's core principles are school-wide and not simply for new teachers

(B)(2) Clarity of goals and strategies:

Executive Summary: Expeditionary Learning’s intervention will measurably increase effectiveness of novice teachers, increase student achievement, increase retention of novice teachers and increase the model’s own ability to scale. EL will be able to meet these goals through delivering and honing a model of professional learning for novice teachers that blends concrete Common Core-aligned curricular resources with a sequence of hands-on coaching and online professional learning.

With support from an i3 validation level grant, EL proposes (1) to work intensively with the middle school grades in 60 schools in districts in NY, NJ and CT; (2) evaluate the impact of our resources and professional services on teachers and students; (3) refine our model accordingly; and (4) develop a plan for scaling this work beyond the grant period. Our goals and objectives for this work are:

GOAL	OBJECTIVE
Goal 1: Measurably increase the effectiveness of all novice teachers’ implementation of EL Core Practices by the end of the grant period.	Objective of Goal 1: Each year ratings of novice teachers’ classroom practices ⁹ will rise 0.5 on the five-point scale. ¹⁰ Average ratings for novice teachers receiving EL support will exceed that of the control group at a level of statistical significance.
Goal 2: Measurably increase the achievement of students of all participating teachers by the end of the grant period	Objective of Goal 2: Based on randomized control trial results, there are material and statistically significant positive impacts on ELA test scores. From the start to the end of the grant period, average rankings of EL schools in their district will improve in terms of ELA proficiency rates.
Goal 3: Measurably increase the retention of effective participating novice teachers by the end of the grant period	Objective of Goal 3: After two years of intervention, retention of participating novice teachers within their high-need LEAs will increase by 10-15% (after accounting for possible reductions in force that disproportionately affect new hires) and randomized control trial results will indicate there are statistically significant positive impacts on teacher retention after each year of support.

EL’s proposed project is aimed at four outcomes: (1) increased student achievement in high-need school populations, effectively narrowing the achievement gap; (2) a new pool of effective teachers and teacher leaders residing in the LEA past the end of the grant period; (3) student populations that are better prepared for post-secondary education and rewarding careers; and (4) a lower cost per outcome model that will allow for even more rapid scale nationally, bringing a high quality model of Common Core aligned professional development to more classrooms across the country.

⁹ Ratings of novice teachers’ classroom practices are drawn from EL’s 26 core practices, called “Power Practices.” These practices have been identified as having a direct or indirect impact on student achievement, based on EL’s 20 years of experience. See Section E for additional detail, and Appendix J for the list of Power Practices.

¹⁰ The classroom observation measure will employ a scale that articulates quality of performance across five levels. While a specific, separate scale will be developed for each core practice, the five levels of practices may defined as: (0) practice not implemented; (1) attempt to implement practice; (2) practice implemented at a basic level; (3) practice implemented at a proficient level; and (4) practice implemented at an advanced level.

Strategies and program to achieve these goals

EL proposes to engage two cohorts of 30 schools each in an intensive two-year intervention. With EL’s literacy curriculum as the entry point and the common course of study, novice teachers will work alongside experienced colleagues from each school to build expertise across several targeted dimensions of pedagogy including inquiry-based learning, student engaged assessment, and continuous cycles of data-informed self-improvement and reflection.

A unique mix of resources supports EL’s professional learning for novice teachers:

- **EL’s English Language Arts curriculum**, currently for Grades 3-8 and eventually for K-8, is deeply aligned to the CCSS and the instructional shifts required by the standards. Each of EL’s 36 (eventually 48) Common Core Literacy modules spans 8 weeks of instruction, consisting of rigorous, standards-aligned content descriptive to the level of daily lesson plans, aligned formative and summative assessments, learning targets and performance tasks, curriculum maps, spaces for remediation and acceleration, and extensive lesson guidance for teachers.
- **Instructional “master practitioner” books and videos** are unique in the landscape of Common Core resources. EL’s books, *Deep Instruction: Promoting Challenge, Thinking and Voice* and *Leaders of Their Own Learning: Transforming Schools through Student-Engaged Assessment*, translate the highest leverage “Power Practices” from EL’s whole school intervention into case studies, exemplar teacher tools, and instructional videos. These books have been created in collaboration with the practicing teachers and school coaches who are on the leading edge of Common Core implementation.
- **Models of teacher work** will be shared online through videos of teaching experiences with EL curriculum drawn from classrooms of EL’s exemplary schools. **Models of**

student work generated through lessons from the curriculum will be made available on EL's online platform.

- **EL's dedicated professional learning website** houses EL's curriculum and associated resources, giving teachers anytime, anywhere access to discrete components of the curriculum in formats that they can adapt and customize to suit their classroom needs. The searchable, user-friendly platform includes rich tools for collaboration and content contributed by practitioners, and supports facilitated communities of practice.

EL's blended learning model combines a sequence of face-to-face training and onsite coaching with facilitated online learning opportunities:

- **Leadership Support for Novice Teachers' professional learning:** Through a one-day intensive and monthly on-site check-in's, EL will work with school planning teams of 3-4 representatives to ensure coherence of novice teachers' professional learning activities and alignment with the school's Common Core literacy goals and activities.
- **Institutes that deepen novice teachers' content knowledge and instructional expertise:** A *three-day introductory institute* immerses novice and veteran teachers in deep study of the Common Core Standards, instructional shifts and EL curriculum modules at the start of the school year. *Four one-day institutes* spread throughout the school year support novice teachers in implementing the instructional shifts in their classrooms. Purposefully scaffolded to track the scope and pace of the EL literacy curriculum they are teaching, these one-day institutes will actively engage participants in close reading of complex texts; strengthening writing through student engaged assessment; examining module assessments to develop action plans based on student strengths and needs; and flexing module tasks to help all learners succeed.

- **18 days of on-site coaching** will support novice teachers with common planning in their grade level and department teams, modeling effective classroom instruction, observing classrooms with school leadership, providing feedback, and troubleshooting implementation. *Monthly Lesson Study with novice teachers* will build capacity for delivering instruction consistent with the instructional shifts of the Common Core literacy classroom. Drawing on EL master practice books and videos, Lesson Study will focus on planning and delivering lessons; making good use of informational texts; reading and writing from evidence; grappling with complex texts; and checking for understanding. *Monthly Professional Learning Communities (PLC)* for novice and veteran teachers will focus on writing across the curriculum that will engage all teachers, regardless of content area. EL coaches will facilitate the first PLC and observe PLCs at work monthly, offer feedback, and build teacher leadership to sustain them.
- **On-line professional learning networks** will support novice teachers in directing their own learning towards the goal of effective deeper learning in their classrooms. EL will create online Professional Learning Networks for educators who want to ask advice and engage in deep discussions with colleagues. Drawing on the foundational work covered in Institutes and onsite coaching, EL facilitators will convene conversations and online professional development based on EL's unique mix of teacher resources, described above, and a growing collection of practitioner-generated content uploaded to EL's website: lessons teachers have adapted from the EL curriculum, videos of teaching experiences with the EL curriculum, and samples of student work generated through lessons from the curriculum. EL's online communities will allow for the sharing of

lesson plans, teaching strategies, and student work, as well as collaboration across grade levels and subjects.

(B)(3) Addressing Barriers to Scale:

Executive Summary: Expeditionary Learning is poised for scale but faces four internal barriers: validation, online platform completion, curriculum completion, and staff capacity.

Expeditionary Learning is meeting a portion of the market demand today and has already created CCSS-aligned curriculum for grades 3-8. In addition, EL has a set of programmatic and organizational building blocks in place that will be refined over the course of the grant period and enable EL to scale even more rapidly. However, four internal barriers limit EL’s ability to meet the existing and growing demand for high-quality, job-embedded, Common Core-aligned professional development for novice teachers. Specifically, the barriers to scale that the award will help EL to overcome are:

BARRIER	USE OF AWARD FUNDS TO OVERCOME THIS BARRIER
1. Validation of the results of its whole school model as applied to its honed, blended and scalable approach	Funds will support EL’s program activity over the next five years, including enabling EL to hire external validators to examine the impact of the accelerated intervention on middle school teachers and students. (Complete evaluation plan and logic model described in Section E.)
2. Increased functionality of its online platform to increase access to materials, and support online professional learning and communities of practice	Funds will support EL to complete the infrastructure and content investments to create a complete online learning platform, including: a revamped website with additional interactive functionality, the ability to host online professional learning communities and networks, a full suite of curricular materials, toolkits and videos
3. Comprehensive curriculum for literacy in Grades K-8	EL will have, by the end of the grant period, completed writing literacy curriculum for grades K-8. Curricular modules already exist for grades 3-8.
4. Human capital hired and trained ahead of need	By the end of the grant period, EL will have hired and trained more staff able to deliver the EL program with reliable quality, and will have adequate staff to take on additional district contracts

These barriers are all addressable with the grant funds, and detailed budget estimates are included in the budget form and narrative.

C. QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT PLAN

Executive Summary: Expeditionary Learning has the financial resources, national staffing and experience in scaling large initiatives to achieve the objectives of our proposed project on time and within budget.

Expeditionary Learning’s current state level work with urban, rural and suburban districts in New York; the rapidly expanding regional and national adoption of the EL Common Core literacy curriculum; and its mature national infrastructure of staff and school partners in 30 states offer EL a solid path to scale regionally during the grant period and, by the end of the grant period, to emerge ready for national scale. Expeditionary Learning has a 20-year track record of successfully managing projects of similar magnitude. Highlights of relevant experience include:

- \$9m grant from New American Schools (NAS) in 1992 to scale model nationally. EL is the only one of the 11 NAS “transformation models” still in existence.
- \$24m grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation in 2003 to open 27 new secondary schools.
- Recently named one of 5 “best bets for scale” by the Social Impact Exchange based on a rigorous review of leadership, financials, and strategic business plan to identify organizations that are ready for scale investments.

EL has selected LEA partners – New York City; Newark, NJ; Greece, NY; and Hartford, CT – that vary in size and reflect a highly diverse student population (including high numbers of economically disadvantaged, Special Education, and English Language Learner students); high numbers of novice teachers; and high degree of program readiness. All partners are adopting the EL literacy curriculum either district-wide or in all treatment schools. Additionally, if awarded

the grant, EL will identify at least one rural LEA partner in New York State selected from the districts already using EL’s curriculum.

(C)(1) Responsibilities, objectives, timeline, milestones, metrics

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Project Director	Oversees the strategic implementation of the work; monitors progress toward all program objectives and annual performance targets; works with Senior Leadership Team to ensure organizational resources are fully deployed toward meeting project goals; and meets regularly with leaders from LEA partners. EL’s Chief Product and Professional Services Officer will be the project’s director.
Senior Leadership Team	7-person team ensures that resources and capacity from across the organization support the successful implementation of the project.
Research Team	Research Director and Research Data Analyst lead EL’s annual internal implementation review and provide data for monitoring annual project objectives and mid-point adjustments; ensures that all permissions and data agreements proceed as planned; and is the liaison with the Mathematica evaluation team.
Program Development Team	6-person team leads the creation and feedback and revision cycles for all program resources for the project. The Program Team is responsible for curriculum, professional learning, staff development, online learning and publications.
School Partnership Team	Northeast Regional Director and 12 current Professional Development Specialists serve NY, NJ, CT, and the rest of New England, working at the local level to deliver all program activities to LEAs; manage day-to-day relationships with all schools; ensure that the project is implemented with fidelity; and manage the timeline and deliverables.
i3 Grant Oversight Team	Provides senior project management and financial oversight support to ensure that the goals and objectives of the grant are met in a timely and fiscally responsive manner; and, that the project is managed with fidelity to the aims and requirements of the USDOE and those of our LEA partners.

Objectives, Metrics, and Annual Performance Targets

EL has a strong culture and track record of data-informed decision making and monitoring the implementation quality of our programs. The metrics we will use to monitor progress toward our objectives and our annual performance targets will provide supplemental information that

complements the rigorous evaluation plan (Section E), that applies a randomized control trial (RCT) study design. Additionally, program data instruments designed by Mathematica will provide on-going sources of information to inform and adjust program implementation (See Table E.2, Section E). The Program and Implementation Teams will review this data regularly and make program adjustments.

- **Objective of Goal 1:** Each year ratings of novice teachers’ classroom practices¹¹ will rise 0.5 on the five point scale. Average ratings for novice teachers receiving EL support will exceed that of the control group at a level of statistical significance.
- **Objective of Goal 2:** Based on randomized control trial results, there are statistically significant positive impacts on ELA test scores. From the start to the end of the grant period, average rankings of EL schools in their district will improve in terms of ELA proficiency rates.
- **Objective of Goal 3:** After two years of intervention, retention of participating novice teachers within their high-need LEAs will increase by 10-15% (after accounting for possible reductions in force that disproportionately affect new hires) and randomized control trial results will indicate there are statistically significant positive impacts on teacher retention after each year of support.

Metrics and annual performance targets

Metric	Year 1 Gain (2014-15)	Year 2 Gain (2015-16)	Year 3 Gain (2016-17)	Year 4 Gain (2017-18)	Cumulative Gain
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¹¹ Ratings of novice teachers’ classroom practices are drawn from EL’s 26 core practices (Appendix J) called “Power Practices” identified as having direct or indirect impact on student achievement. See Section E for detail.

Rating of participating novice teacher classroom practices <i>(1- 5 point scale)</i>	Cohort 1: + 0.5 point	Cohort 1: + 0.5 point	Cohort 1: continued growth	Cohort 1: continued growth	+1 point & exceed progress of control group at a level of statistical significance
		Cohort 2: + 0.5 point	Cohort 2: + 0.5 point	Cohort 2: continued growth	
% of participating students proficient or above on state-mandated standardized tests	Cohort 1: ≥ 0.11 standard deviations from control group	Cohort 1: ≥ 0.16	Cohort 1: Continued growth	Cohort 1: Continued growth	≥ 0.16 standard deviation above control group
		Cohort 2: ≥ 0.11	Cohort 2: ≥ 0.16	Cohort 2: Continued growth	
% retention of effective participating novice teachers	Cohort 1: 10% increase from baseline	Cohort 1: 15% increase from baseline	Cohort 1: Continued improvement	Cohort 1: Continued improvement	15% improvement from baseline & statistically significant positive impact compared to control group
		Cohort 2: 10% increase	Cohort 2: 15% increase from baseline	Cohort 2: Continued improvement	
Online downloads of ELA curricula and support tools	50% above baseline	2 times baseline	3 times baseline	4 times baseline	4 times baseline

Timeline and Milestones:

Activities	Staff	Planning		Program Delivery			Evaluation		
		Winter 2014	Spr/Sum 2014	Fall 2014-16	Winter 2015-17	Spr/Sum 2015-17	Fall 2017	Winter 2017-18	Spring 2018

LEA Capacity Building									
Partner School Selection	Project Director	→							
Teacher & Leader PD: Cohort 1	School Partnership Team, LEAs		→						
Teacher & Leader PD: Cohort 2	School Partnership Team, LEAs			→					
Novice Teacher Tool Development/ Alignment									
K-8 CCSS curriculum completed	Program Team	→							
Master Practice books completed	Program Team	→							
Instructional Video completed	Program Team	→							
On-line Professional Learning Platform Development and Alignment									
Teacher tools deployed on on-line platform	Program Team	→							
Program Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability									
Program Data Collection	Mathematica		→						
Program Reporting	Mathematica				→			→	
Annual targets & Metrics review	Research Team, Mathematica		→				→		
Grant Oversight, Coordination and Leadership									
i3 implementation and data-review meetings	Project Director, LEAs, Senior Leadership Team		→						

(C)(2) Multi-year financial and operating model and plan to operate at regional scale:

Over 20 years, Expeditionary Learning has grown from 10 staff supporting an innovative and adventurous group of ten schools to 77 staff supporting not only a national school network that is now the size of a substantial urban school district, but also a burgeoning professional services business, a publishing division, and an online collection of teacher resources. This growth has been strategic and disciplined, and has laid the foundation for national scale.

Financial model and sustainability

The growth and scale supported by a Validation grant would be sustained through our mature financial model. In its Four-Year Strategic Plan, launched in FY2012, EL set a goal to reach 75% of annual operating revenue from earned fees by FY2015. EL is already close to meeting this goal in FY2013, with 70% of operating revenue anticipated from earned fees. This accelerated growth is the result of several factors: revising our pricing structure to reflect the increased value of EL's intellectual property and support; launching a professional services business with pricing commensurate to competitors; and selectively pursuing state and district RFPs that fuel future mission-driven revenue opportunities.

Our Strategic Plan pairs our goal to grow earned fees with a goal to reduce dependence on philanthropic revenue, so that it represents 25% of the annual operating budget. Current philanthropic revenue, equally split between foundations and individuals, comprises approximately 30% of our operating budget. Anchored by partners such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation and the Nellie Mae Educational Trust, our foundation support not only funds innovation and growth strategies for scaling our work, but also provides valuable thought partnership and technical assistance that has helped ready EL for national leadership. EL has

secured 50% of the validation grant matching requirement through grants from the Hewlett and Schwab Foundations.

Operating Model

Expeditionary Learning's national service delivery model is organized around six regions – the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Southeast, Midwest, Mountain and West. Six Regional Directors provide local oversight of contracts with schools and districts, ensure quality of services, and provide staff development. Our regional structure is evolving into a clustered model of schools and districts that are geographically proximate and anchored by a stable number of high performing EL schools, so that we can provide services more efficiently and develop greater linkages among schools. EL has two main offices, a national office based in New York City, that houses national support functions of finance, development, HR, publications and communications, and an office in Amherst, MA that is the home base of the Northeast region.

This dispersed model of service delivery is supported by well-developed systems and processes to ensure coherence, consistency and quality control. These include:

- An implementation review that assesses annually the fidelity of implementation
- A national database that manages school contracts and individualized school work plans
- Cross- regional teams tasked with program improvement and IP development
- Online collaborative tools and an online resource library

The organization is currently expanding, adding both staff and infrastructure to support the growing professional services line of business. Under the supervision of the Chief Product Officer, EL is adding new staff positions in its New York office: a Director of Market Development, two project managers and 10-12 professional development specialists who will serve the existing contract with New York State and New York City and pending contracts with

Newark, NJ and Hartford, CT. These new staff supplement professional development specialists located in Rochester, NY who serve contractual obligations in western New York. The validation award will allow EL to hire PD specialists ahead of need and provide them with six months of specialized immersive training ahead of work with treatment schools. Additionally, PD specialists working with treatment schools will observe EL classrooms outside treatment districts, shadow veteran EL coaches, and attend annual 5-day intensive trainings offered in the program's first three years. As EL expands its professional services business beyond the Tri-State area, it will add "clusters" of professional services staff to the regional model described above. These new clusters will offer districts a mix of services from professional development for teachers across the system to whole school services that develop demonstration sites.

D. PERSONNEL

(D)(1) Staffing Plan

Expeditionary Learning is a mature and high performing non-profit organization with an experienced staff, mature systems, and well-developed relationships with our LEA partners. EL's capacity to implement this project successfully is shaped by two decades of implementing other large and complex projects.

Prior experience and organizational readiness

In 2012, EL was contracted by State of New York to create the state's Common Core Literacy curriculum for both grades 6 through 8 and grades 3 through 5, and to train school teams from every district across New York State in its use. This distinction builds on a 20-year track record of managing school and classroom transformation at scale (See Section (C)(1). EL's whole-school model is being implemented in 165 schools in 30 states, reaching over 45,000 students and 4,000 teachers. Most EL schools are in high need urban or rural communities, and as a network, EL is the size of a large urban school district. EL staff has experience working in

all school settings: elementary, middle, and high schools; in district schools and public charters; and in all models of school change: new schools, break-apart, transformation, and turnaround.

(D)(2) Qualifications and experience of the project director and other project personnel

Stephanie Lawkins, Chief Product and Professional Services Officer (M.B.A. Columbia University) will be the **Project Director**. Ms. Lawkins has served as EL’s Chief Financial Officer and now heads EL’s professional services business line. Before joining EL, Ms. Lawkins was a senior administrator at the New York City Department of Education where she helped develop and implement the district’s “Fair Student Funding”, a weighted student budgeting methodology launched in 2007-2008 for all 1,400+ NYC schools. The methodology was recently found by the city’s Independent Budget Office to have successfully “moved the distribution of funding for basic instruction to more closely correspond to student need.”

EL’s senior leadership team will support the Project Director throughout implementation, with expertise in managing complex projects, supporting growth, and delivering results.

Scott Hartl, President and CEO (M.A.T, Union University) has been involved in EL’s success and growth for nearly two decades, as EL’s first School Coach, then Northeast Regional Director, Director of Research and Evaluation, Director of Strategic Planning and Partnerships, and now as President and CEO. Mr. Hartl founded and led the Harbor School, a Boston Pilot Middle School and one of the earliest urban schools to successfully implement the EL model. In 2012, Mr. Hartl was selected as an Ashoka Fellow, working to advance global social entrepreneurship. He is an advisor to numerous state and national groups on issues related to teacher capacity building and Common Core implementation.

Kemi Akinsanya Rose, Chief Operating Officer (M.B.A. Wharton School of Business) will provide project management, budget, operations and grant oversight of the project. Prior to

joining EL, Ms. Rose served as Chief Information Officer for the NYC Department of Education (DOE), where she set the strategic direction for all district-wide technology, product development and data initiatives, serving 1,700+ schools, 150,000 employees and 1.1 million students with an annual operating budget of ~\$85 million. Prior to her CIO role, Ms. Rose served as Deputy Chief Operating Officer, where she was responsible for implementation of the DOE's central office performance and talent management strategy, including managing the \$269 million Race to the Top grant. Before joining the DOE, Ms. Rose spent 14 years at American Express in global marketing and communications.

Ron Berger, Chief Academic Officer (M.Ed., Harvard University) is EL's resident expert on the CCSS. He will be responsible for developing professional learning opportunities and materials aligned with the Common Core, as well as documenting best practices. Mr. Berger has served in multiple roles at EL, including school coach, Northeast Regional Director, and designer of over 20 EL Institutes. He has authored several books, *An Ethic of Excellence* and *A Culture of Quality*, as well as the teacher resource books anchoring this project. Mr. Berger is a lecturer at Harvard's Graduate School of Education, an educational consultant, and has over 30 years' experience as a teacher and professional development designer.

Lili Brown, Chief Advancement Officer (B.A. Dartmouth College) will oversee the development and dissemination of materials and online supports that will help facilitate effective project implementation and scale. Prior to EL, she served as Vice President of External Affairs at New Visions for Public Schools where she helped lead the implementation of the New Century High School Initiative, a \$100 million program to create 99 new public high schools in New York City.

Mark Conrad, Chief Schools Officer (M.S. Education, Miami University OH) leads

EL's national Whole School portfolio, promoting exemplary patterns of school performance and student achievement, with a focus on leadership development, data-driven school improvement, and effective coaching of teachers. Prior to joining EL, Mr. Conrad was founding principal of The Crossroads School, an EL public charter school in Baltimore and the city's highest performing middle school.

Tom Van Winkle, Chief Program Officer (PhD in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, University of Wisconsin-Madison) will oversee EL's partnership with the external evaluation team and the collection of internal data, and also provide operational program oversight. He has served in multiple roles at EL, including School Coach and Director of Professional Development, and COO, along with 23 years of experience as a teacher, principal, and professional development coach.

Roberto Agodini (Ph.D., Economics and Education, Columbia University), a senior economist and director of the Center for Improving Research Evidence at Mathematica, will be the project director of the independent evaluation. Dr. Agodini has designed and used diverse methods to conduct rigorous evaluations that generate policy-relevant findings. He served as project director and principal investigator of the U.S. Department of Education's (ED's) Evaluation of Mathematics Curricula (Math Curricula), which included the use of hierarchical linear models to estimate the effects of the curricula on student achievement and teacher practices. He also developed and executed correlational analyses using survey and classroom observation data to examine factors that may account for the curriculum effects on achievement. Dr. Agodini serves as principal investigator for ED's What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) reviews of elementary, middle, and high school math interventions, and oversees quality assurance review of all WWC products.

Claudia Gentile (Ph.D., Education, Syracuse University), a Mathematica senior survey researcher, will serve as survey director and will help design the implementation analysis. Dr. Gentile brings expertise in developing and implementing teacher surveys and classroom observation measures that meet high quality standards. As the project director for the Title I Early Childhood Language Development study funded by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) at ED, Gentile has overseen the development and use of teacher surveys and a classroom observation measure to collect data about instructional practices from approximately 1,000 Pre-K - grade 3 teachers, in 83 schools across the country. Gentile also brings expertise in aligning standards with curriculum and assessments. She is the project director of a standards alignment project for Pittsburgh Public Schools, which involves reviewing teacher-developed assessments for item quality and alignment with Common Core Standards for grades 3-12.

E. PROJECT EVALUATION

(E)(1) Key Questions and Methods

Developing students' capacity to meet the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English language arts (ELA) and literacy achievement is critical to ensuring that they will be prepared for college and careers after high school. Expeditionary Learning (EL) aims to meet this challenge by enhancing teacher practice through a program of curriculum and professional support. Previous small scale studies indicate this support can boost student achievement. Through the i3 grant, EL will develop and implement its approach to enhancing the capacity of novice teachers. The independent evaluation of this effort will align with the goals of the Department of Education (ED) for i3 validation grants meeting Subpart (a) of Absolute Priority 1, improving the effectiveness of novice teachers, by (1) evaluating the program at scale as EL extends its reach throughout the Northeast and (2) integrating impact and implementation

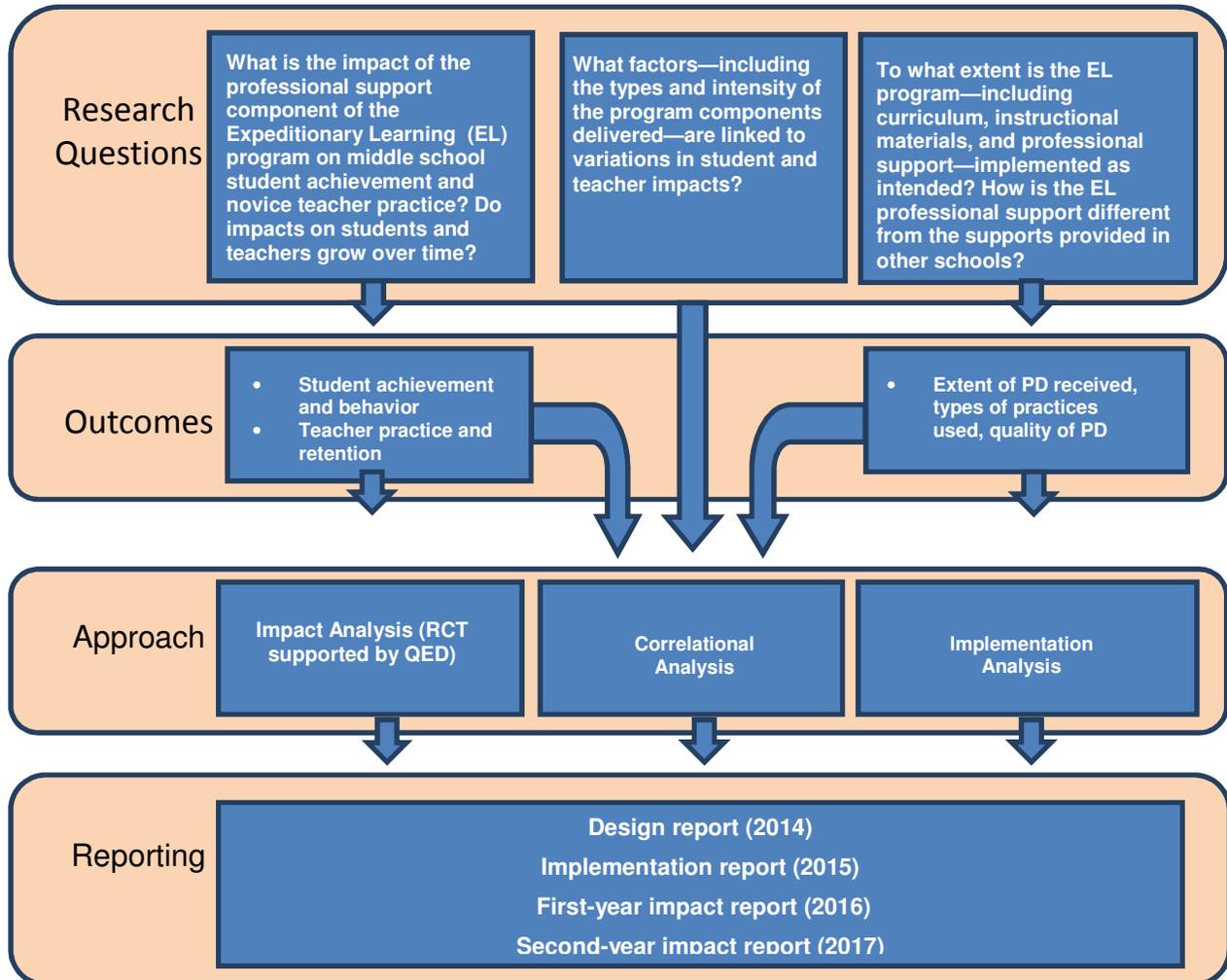
analyses to examine factors that may drive program impacts. Specifically, the evaluation will have three major components (see Figure E.1):

- **Impact component.** Validate and expand the evidence base by estimating meaningful impacts on both student outcomes and teacher practices using a rigorous, appropriately powered randomized controlled trial (RCT) designed to meet the highest standard of evidence—Meets Standards Without Reservations, as defined by the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)—supplemented by a quasi-experimental design (QED) analysis to reach the Meet Standards With Reservations level.
- **Implementation component.** Support replication and scaling of the EL program with an implementation analysis that will identify the core elements of the program, codify the practices delivered to and used by teachers, and define a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.
- **Exploration of factors related to program success.** Investigate populations and contexts in which EL is most effective, including novice teachers, low-achieving students, and schools with low-intensity professional development (PD), through correlational analyses that are supported by the evaluation’s experimental design. Measures of EL implementation fidelity, as well as teacher practices that can be measured in both EL and non-EL schools, will be correlated with student achievement to identify approaches that may account for EL’s impact on students.

These three components of the study will define the key research questions, outcomes measured, technical approach, and evaluation reports (Figure E.1). Primary data collection efforts and external sources will provide the detailed information needed to understand the

program’s components and effects (Table E.1). The rest of this section describes how the evaluation will address each research question.

Figure E.1. Overview of Study Components and Logic Model



(E)2 & E(3) Evaluation Evidence of Effectiveness and Proposed Level of Scale

Two key components comprise the full EL program: (1) a curriculum that is aligned with the Common Core State Standards and (2) a professional development support system that includes professional institutes, on-site coaching, leadership support, on-line professional learning, and instructional “master practitioner” books and videos. The study will measure both

the incremental effect of the PD support system and the effect of the full EL program, using the following two-pronged approach:

- An experimental RCT analysis will identify schools that have recently adopted the EL curriculum and estimate the impact of the PD support system by randomly assigning schools to begin receiving these intensive supports either in school year (SY) 2014–2015 (the “treatment schools”) or SY 2015–2016 (“control schools”). The RCT will estimate impacts of one year of supports on teacher and student outcomes in SY 2014–2015, by comparing these outcomes in the treatment and control schools. In addition, the RCT will compare the effects of two years versus one year of supports in SY 2015–2016.
- A quasi-experimental design (QED) will identify the impact of the full EL program (the EL curriculum and PD support system) by comparing the students in schools that are implementing the curriculum and receiving PD support services with a group of similar students in district schools that are not using any of the EL components.

Table E.1. Data Sources and Measures

Type of Data	Data Collection Period	Treatment or Control Sample (T, C)	Measures	Analyses		
				Impact	Implementation	Correlational
Primary Data						
Classroom observations	Fall and spring 2014–2015 and 2015–2016	T and C	Degree to which teacher practice aligns with the CCSS	X		X
			Extent to which teachers are using PD tools		X	X
Teacher web survey	Fall and spring 2014–2015 and 2015–2016	T and C	Types of instructional practices used; frequency and minutes of usage	X		X
			Teacher retention	X		
Teacher PD exit web survey	Summer and winter 2014–2015 and 2015–2016	T and C only when receiving EL	Usefulness of PD		X	

Usage reports from EL website	Spring 2015 and 2016	T and C only when receiving EL	Extent to which teachers are using EL web-based resources		X	X
External Data Sources						
Pre- and post-test student achievement and behavior from district records	Spring 2014–2015 and 2015–2016	T and C	Scores on state literacy assessments; behavioral indicators	X		
School characteristics from Common Core	Fall 2014	T and C	Test scores and student demographic data			X
Teacher characteristics from district records	Fall 2014	T and C	Professional and demographic characteristics			X
Student characteristics from district school records	Fall 2014	T and C	Demographic characteristics			X

1. The RCT impact evaluation will produce rigorous evidence of the effectiveness of the program’s PD component, which meets WWC’s standards without reservations.

Schools from New York City, New Jersey, New York State and Connecticut will be included in the experimental part of the study. For the RCT, we plan to recruit 60 low-achieving middle schools in these districts from the many schools that are implementing the EL curriculum with minimal developer support in SY 2013–2014. (If we are unable to meet this target, we will consider recruiting some middle schools that are not low achieving and/or elementary schools to make up the balance of 60.) Within districts, we will create matched pairs of schools based on average school and student characteristics, and randomly assign one school to the treatment group and the other to the control group. This will allow us to both rigorously estimate impacts and examine the relationship between implementation and impacts with correlational analysis. The analysis is designed to align with the i3 grant objectives, as explained below.

a. Randomization procedure and samples will ensure that the main impact analysis meets WWC standards without reservations. We will conduct random assignment at the school level (as opposed to lower levels, such as randomly assigning teachers within schools), to avoid contamination and to build a professional learning community, which is important to the EL

model. The school-matching procedure and 60-school sample size should ensure the study achieves equivalence on baseline characteristics.

Within schools, the study will include novice ELA, science, social studies, special education, and English language learner (ELL) teachers, consistent with the subject areas covered by the Common Core literacy standards. Novice teachers will be defined as those in their first or second year in the profession. A focus on middle schools will take advantage of annual state assessments to reduce the study's minimum detectable effects (MDEs). Across the 60 study schools, we expect 240 novice teachers and 100 students per teacher, for a total student sample of 24,000 (see MDE assumptions).

b. Outcome measures are relevant to i3 priorities, proposed level of scale and program goals. The RCT will examine how the EL support system affects student achievement and engagement as well as teacher practices in SY 2014–2015 and SY 2015–2016. Drawing on school records, the student outcome measures will include ELA test scores on state assessments, attendance, and suspensions. Random assignment will take place within districts, so the analysis can pool test data (transformed into a common metric) across states.¹²

The RCT will also examine how EL affects three sets of teacher outcomes: (1) the degree to which teachers are employing CCSS-aligned practices (such as balancing informational and literary text, building content knowledge, writing from sources, and use of academic vocabulary), which will be based on teacher observations; (2) the degree to which observed teachers succeed in engaging students in learning; and (3) teacher retention as measured by both teacher surveys and school records.

¹² It is not yet clear whether the new New York State test tied to the CCSS will be used in 2014–2015, but that test would best align with the focus of the intervention.

To capture evidence of CCSS-aligned practices, the classroom observation tool will be developed by adapting EL’s Implementation Review rubric, which focuses on CCSS-aligned practices and the ways teachers engage students in learning. We will achieve the high levels of reliability by (1) recruiting experienced teachers to be observers, (2) providing training with ample time for practice, and (3) only certifying observers who meet the standard of 80 percent agreement. During the observation period, 20 percent of the teachers will be rated by two observers (to confirm inter-rater reliability). In addition, raters will regularly code calibration samples to ensure consistency with expert trainers’ ratings.

c. Rigorous estimation procedure will generate precise one- and two-year impacts. We will use spring 2015 outcomes data to estimate the impact of one year of the EL support system and spring 2016 outcomes data to estimate the impact of two years of the EL support system relative to one year. To fully capture the effects of the second year of EL, novice teachers who reach their third year of teaching during the study and their students will be included in the analyses of student outcomes and teacher retention. The benchmark estimation model will be a regression that compares the mean outcomes of the treatment and control groups, allowing the impact estimates to vary for each school pair. We will use the following regression to estimate the impact of EL on student test scores (a similar regression will be used to estimate impacts on teacher practices and other outcomes):

$$y_{ij} = \alpha + \beta X_{ij} + \sum_{k=2}^K \gamma_k Pair_{ik} + \sum_{k=1}^K \delta_k (Pair_{ik} * T_{ij}) + u_j + e_{ij}$$

where y represents outcome for student i in school j ; X is a vector of student and teacher covariates included to improve the precision of the estimates (including race/ethnicity, gender, special education status, free or reduced-price lunch eligibility, and baseline test scores in reading and math); $Pair$ is an indicator for each of the k random assignment blocks (each block

contains a pair of schools matched prior to random assignment, and one school in each pair is assigned to treatment status and the other to control); T is an indicator for treatment schools; u is a school-level random effect; e is a student-level error term; and α , β , γ_k , and δ_k are parameters to be estimated. Robust standard errors will be clustered at the school level. The pair-specific impact estimates will be averaged to estimate the overall impact of EL as $\hat{\delta} = \frac{1}{K} \sum_k \hat{\delta}_k$.

d. MDEs are meaningful and align with expected impacts. The study is powered to detect a policy-relevant impact of 0.14 standard deviations (SDs) on student achievement.¹³ This MDE is comparable to those of several other ED-funded experiments, particularly those designed to evaluate the impact of fairly intensive interventions, where substantial impacts are needed to justify the cost of the intervention. The study should be able to detect an impact close to those found for EL's whole-school model in previous studies.¹⁴

¹³ We assume a two-tailed test with 80 percent power; a sample of low-achievement schools and an intraclass correlation of 0.07; no teacher attrition during the first implementation year; an average of four novice teachers per school, and 100 students per teacher (spread across four classes per teacher); a 10 percent within-school-year attrition rate among students because of within-school-year mobility; and an R-square of 0.50 at both school and student levels. If the sample included 40 middle schools and 20 elementary schools, the MDE for the pooled impact would be unchanged, but the separate MDEs would be 0.17 SD for the middle school sample and 0.25 SD for the elementary school sample.

¹⁴ For example, Mathematica's recent small-scale QED study of the EL program found an impact of 0.11 SD on middle school reading scores after two years and 0.16 SD after three years (see Appendix D). In addition to this rigorous study, prior descriptive studies of student achievement at EL schools have also reported positive potential effects on reading test scores ranging from 0.19 SD (Borman et al. 2001) to 0.49 SD (University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute 2011).

2. A well-designed QED impact analysis will supplement the RCT impact analysis by examining the effectiveness of the full EL program

Using propensity score matching to identify a comparison group, the QED impact analysis will assess the effect of the full EL program. This analysis, which will be designed to meet WWC standards with reservations, will (1) move beyond the RCT to identify the combined impact of both the curriculum and the EL support system (instead of just the supports) and (2) have more external validity than the RCT by including a larger sample of schools and students.

This analysis will include students enrolled in all the RCT schools after they receive supports as well as students in other schools implementing the full EL program that are not included in the RCT; these additional schools will also include other districts in the Northeast, including Hartford, Connecticut, and other districts in New York State. For each EL school, we will conduct nearest-neighbor propensity score matching to identify a comparison group of students who are in the same district, enrolled in schools that are not implementing the EL curriculum, and have baseline characteristics (that is, attributes measured in the year before the relevant treatment school adopted EL) that are similar to those of the EL group. The outcome analysis will include EL elementary schools (focusing on ELA test scores in grades 4 and 5) and EL middle schools (focusing on grades 6 through 8).¹⁵ Including school characteristics among the baseline variables will help to account for potential differences between the schools that have and have not begun implementing the EL curriculum. A “difference in differences” estimation design will use at least four years of student data to compare outcomes of treatment group students before and after implementation of EL to corresponding outcomes for matched

¹⁵ Administrative test score data are not available prior to grade 3. Thus, the QED analysis will be limited to the student cohorts that were enrolled in grades 3 or higher in the relevant baseline year (the year before EL adoption).

comparison students. This approach will allow us to control for idiosyncratic variations in average achievement growth across schools.¹⁶

Implementation analysis will document actual program components and challenges, informing replication

The study will document and analyze implementation to achieve two main objectives:

- Document the extent to which the program is implemented as intended, which will provide context for interpreting impacts
- Examine implementation challenges, reasons why any schools do not implement with fidelity, how long it takes for schools to implement the EL model, and strategies for overcoming implementation challenges, all of which can inform replication efforts

To examine the extent to which program components are implemented as intended, we will measure participation of teachers in support activities and the extent to which teachers implement specific EL-prescribed practices (see Table E.2). Data sources will include classroom observations by trained observers, teacher web surveys, teacher exit surveys following PD and coaching sessions, and administrative reports of usage of the EL website in SY 2014–2015 and SY 2015–2016.

¹⁶ We will conduct supplemental analyses to further test whether the QED impact estimates are biased by non-EL differences between treatment and schools that are not available in the data and, therefore, could not be included in the matching process. For example, we can select a comparison group for students in EL schools *before* the EL program was implemented. If the matching process is accurate, achievement of students in EL schools *before* the program was implemented should be similar to achievement of the comparison group for these students.

Table E.2 Measuring Degrees of Implementation

EL Component	Metric of Degree of Implementation	Source of Evidence
Professional institutes	Percentage of teachers who attended	Teacher surveys
Coaching and lesson study	Frequency of sessions	Teacher surveys
Web-based support	Number of hits for each section	Website usage reports
EL's 26 power practices	Rating on observation rubric	Classroom observations

To further help interpret the RCT impact estimates, the study will examine how the professional support provided by EL differs from the supports provided in control schools, using the teacher survey data. In addition, surveys will capture teachers' perspectives on program components, their experience participating in or using components, and their views of the effectiveness of components. This will enable us to identify implementation challenges and barriers to full implementation (including issues related to effort, time, and other resources) and allow the study team to identify potential strategies for overcoming implementation challenges.

Correlational analyses will explore factors related to program success

With an eye to future implementation, the evaluation seeks to deepen our understanding of how EL can be effective by identifying the contexts, populations, and program components associated with meaningful impacts. Although this part of the study will by necessity employ a less-rigorous correlational method, it will shed light on important replication issues through three analyses:

- Subgroup analyses will investigate **contexts and populations** in which EL is most effective. The study will define subgroups by baseline measures of school context (size, urban/rural status, demographic profile), types of teachers (experience, subject, gender, race/ethnicity), and types of students (free or reduced-price lunch eligibility, baseline achievement, race/ethnicity). These subgroup results could shed light on the conditions needed for successful replication.

- To further support successful replication of EL, school-level outcomes will be correlated with a composite measure of **fidelity of implementation** to identify which levels/types of EL implementation may be critical for program success.
- Finally, impact estimates will be correlated with differences in the **program components** and practices implemented in each EL and non-EL school (including the supports provided and received by schools) to inform hypotheses about which aspects of EL are beneficial.

In addition to examining the bivariate correlation of impacts and each of these factors, the analysis will include regressions of impacts on multiple factors. By combining these findings with information on the cost of various EL components, the results could inform future replication efforts and cost-effectiveness analyses. The study team will be cautious in interpreting the results of these regressions, noting that an association between impacts and a specific factor may be spurious if that factor is associated with some other school-level characteristic that is driving the impacts.