

**NYC Leadership Academy: Targeted Intensive School Support (TISS) Program
Development Grant Application: Investing in Innovation Grant Program, FY2013**

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Summary

The NYC Leadership Academy (NYCLA) was founded in 2003 as one of the first major initiatives of the New York City Department of Education's (NYCDOE) multi-year *Children First* school reforms. NYCLA was launched as an independent nonprofit organization with significant philanthropic and business support, to address the critical demand for effective school leadership that measurably improves student academic outcomes in high-need schools, by identifying, training and supporting talented educators to transform schools through high-quality, student-centered leadership. We are the primary provider of school leadership services to the NYCDOE and a national leader in this critical work; we always seek to hone our methods and strategies to address the critical issues facing high-need students. In partnership with the NYCDOE, NYCLA seeks to address Absolute Priority 2: Improving Low-Performing Schools, Sub-priority A by developing **Targeted Intensive School Support (TISS)**, a comprehensive school leadership support model designed to sustain the successful turnaround of chronically low-performing New York City (NYC) public schools through the cultivation of effective leadership practices, the development of high-functioning school leadership teams, the data-informed analysis of school improvement needs, and the targeted coaching for 50 principals and their school leadership teams during their first three years on the job. This project will expand our nationally-recognized and externally validated Aspiring Principals Program (APP), which prepares highly qualified and committed educators to lead school turnaround efforts.

A. Significance

A.1. Project as a novel approach

Research clearly demonstrates the importance of school leadership in improving student achievement,ⁱ and underscores the need for high-quality systems of leadership development.

“Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school.”ⁱⁱ Effective leadership is the essential catalyst because school leaders are responsible for creating the conditions that enable teachers and students to succeed; they drive school transformation and are uniquely positioned to influence student academic outcomes over multiple years, including closure of persistent achievement gaps between racial and economic sub-populations. A national metaanalysis of 69 studies involving 2,800 schools found that 25% of the variation in student achievement could be explained by principal leadership skillsⁱⁱⁱ. This is particularly true in low-performing schools, where effective school leadership “can effect rapid, dramatic improvements.”^{iv} Not only must these leaders, like other principals, address heightened accountability coupled with major new instructional reforms such as Common Core implementation and teacher effectiveness; as a 2012 RAND Corporation observes, at the same time they must quickly assess a new school’s environment, assimilate its culture, and implement improvement strategies.^v While one year of support can be critical to giving a leader the confidence and feedback he or she needs to prepare the environment for change, it is not enough to ensure that a new school leader has the support and tools to turn around a chronically under-performing school, or develop the skills necessary to transform complex environments. Research shows it takes at least three years to turn around an elementary school, and six for a high school.^v

The RAND study suggests “that there is no single recipe of actions that all first-year principals should take to ensure success for their schools,” underscoring the need for differentiated training and support early in a principal’s career.^{vi} School leadership coaching is a powerful, cost-effective way to address this critical gap. Professions like law and medicine, as well as many multinational organizations^{vii}, recognize that coaching helps leaders accelerate their

acquisition of leadership skills and improves performance and retention.^{viii} School systems are increasingly turning to coaching as a school improvement strategy: currently, at least 12 states mandate or endorse some form of coaching/mentoring support for new school leaders.^{ix}

The TISS project's theory of change is that intensive coaching and support for new principals and their leadership teams during their first three years (a period that can make or break a school's chance of success) that is (1) is mapped to a rigorous diagnostic assessment of the school and leverages the power of data and systems thinking as problem-solving tools, (2) reaches beyond the principal to include the school's leadership team in building thought partners for designing, prioritizing, implementing and assessing school improvement efforts, (3) is provided by a team of specialist coaches with expertise in all aspects of school operations, instruction and pedagogy; (4) is fully aligned with the district's instructional vision, and (5) is modified over the three-year period in response to ongoing assessment, data analysis and district goals and priorities; will develop the principals' skills in implementing distributive leadership and will lead to measurable school improvements in student academic growth, school culture and climate, and principal retention.

Turnaround is not a one-person job; breaking a failing school's "cycle of failure" is highly dependent on not just the school leader, but on the strength and capacity of its school leadership teams. providing intensive coaching and support to principals assigned to lead high-need and chronically low-performing schools *and* their teams, will enable them to more effectively develop and implement school improvement plans that include the more rigorous Common Core Standards and focus on the processes to give teachers feedback about their teaching thus promoting district-wide teacher effectiveness efforts.

TISS builds on our Aspiring Principals Program (APP), which consists of five components: 1) a rigorous candidate recruitment and selection process; 2) a summer intensive training component exposing participants to the rigors of the principalship through a robust, highly interactive simulation drawing on authentic school data to drive the learning process; 3) a residency phase that combines a full-time 10-month school-based residency with an expert NYCLA-trained mentor principal, with twice-weekly classroom work to deepen learning from the field; 4) a planning summer prior to placement in a school, and 5) up to 72 hours of facilitative, 1:1 coaching support to all new principals, including our APP graduates. On average, this is only about two half-days of coaching per month. New principals who seek additional hours, and experienced principals can purchase coaching support using their school-based budgets. This is predicated on availability of funds, which excludes principals in many of the city's highest-need schools where the budget simply will not allow it; TISS takes these budgetary issues out of the equation, and provides enhanced and extended coaching to 50 principals based exclusively on *need*.

The APP model and each of its component parts are grounded in evidence-based practice, and the model's efficacy has been demonstrated through rigorous research. The NYCLA School Leadership Performance Matrix (the APP Matrix, see copy in Appendix J) identifies school leadership behaviors critical for success and guides all APP activities, from selection to assignments, and ultimately, participants must demonstrate that they meet all rigorous standards in order to graduate from the program.

As part of our expanding focus on the importance of school leadership teams, our Leadership Advancement Program (LAP) provides weekly training to select teachers (aspiring assistant principals) that culminates in pairing and shared residency placements with APP

trainees with the goal of launching pre-teamed, well-prepared principal and assistant principal teams in high-need schools at the same time. In developing this team-building concept, we have drawn on lessons learned from Charlotte-Mecklenberg's Strategic Staffing Initiative (SSI). Through SSI, the district assigns teams of highly-skilled principals and teachers to targeted low-performing schools and grants them additional resources and flexibility in several areas. The new teams are responsible for designing and implementing the turnaround plan that meets the specific needs of the school. To date, SSI has shown promising student achievement results.^{vii} Drawing on both our standards-based model and SSI's team approach, TISS is focused on helping principals and their teams accurately diagnose challenges and identify the systems and structures necessary to support effective instruction, and build strong and collaborative school cultures.

Our leadership development model builds on research-based theories of adult learning, and they drive all program design, improvement and feedback systems. Its key elements include:

- *Experiential Learning*: Drawing on adult learning theories, our programs engage participants in authentic school simulations or job-embedded learning.
- *Standards-Based Alignment*: Clear leadership performance standards guide program and curriculum design and participant selection and assessment.
- *Context-Specific Development*: We align our programs to the goals, policies and initiatives of the school systems in which principals serve.
- *Teaming*: Because team work is an essential element of school improvement, our programs use teaming to further participant learning and growth.
- *Accountable Practice*: We hold both program participants and our staff accountable for achieving standards and expectations of leadership performance.

- *Ongoing Improvement through Evaluation/Feedback* – With a commitment to organizational learning, we continually assess and improve our programs through summative and formative evaluations and external research studies.

A.2. Contribution to increased knowledge

The TISS Project is directly aligned with NYCLA’s strategic vision, to build on its role as thought leader and innovator, in the forefront of the movement to improve school and student outcomes through effective school leadership. This i3 grant provides an opportunity to enhance what has been a very successful model in NYC and to have the opportunity to conduct a rigorous evaluation of the project. Despite growing adoption of coaching and mentoring programs by school systems nationally, there is limited research regarding the impact of such programs on student achievement and school outcomes. TISS will fill this knowledge gap by measuring the impact of coaching and support that focuses on a school’s leadership *team*, not just the principal; on the specific, diagnosed needs of every school, and by identifying the specific leadership dimensions, behaviors and skills related to effective school leadership and associated with student academic improvements. The results from this study can be used to inform and enhance our programs, both in NYC and in other contexts throughout the country, and will help state and local school systems determine what type of investments in leadership development will likely lead to improved academic performance, particularly among high-need schools and students.

NYCLA’s key assets to support knowledge sharing include our expertise, a wide range of adaptable tools and training materials, a strong national reputation and access an existing national network (e.g., our project partners, the Wallace Foundation, the Bush Institute's AREL Network, Rainwater Leadership Alliance). We will apply these assets to help disseminate lessons learned and research results from the i3 experience.

A.3. Project will substantially improve on outcomes of previous work

TISS represents the opportunity to build on our decade of experience by shifting our focus to a new, robust team-building approach based specifically on individual schools *needs*: swiftly deployed interventions, specifically tailored support structures, and the shifting landscape of needs and policy addressed. This enormous shift for the field requires groundwork with the DOE in addressing how they work with principals: TISS supports school leaders across the city in their upward engagement with superintendents and network leaders to improve effectiveness. It allows us to act as translator of policy into practice, and vice versa.

As a USDOE School Leadership Program (SLP) Grant recipient, we've previously been able to provide up to three years of coaching support to some APP graduates. The program has shown promising results: when asked about the extent to which coaching has increased leadership capacity at their schools, participating principals reported an average rating of 3.8 (four-point scale with 4=significantly) and an average rating of 3.9 when asked about the extent to which they were satisfied with their coaching support. In addition, 93% of responding principals reported that their coaches significantly pushed their thinking and over 80% attributed their growth in leadership dimensions directly to coaching.^x

TISS will not only expand on lessons learned and build on successful results of that program, it is a truly new model of support that addresses the current educational landscape and new understanding in how to best guide school turnaround, that we are uniquely positioned to provide. UCLA Management Professor William Ouchi, author of *Making Schools Work: A Revolutionary Plan to Get Your Children the Education They Need*, has written that “the NYC Leadership Academy does the best job of any leadership training program in the U.S., bar none.” Every first-year NYC principal, over 1,500 to date, receives our coaching support—although

funding limits the number of hours--along with nearly 50% of early-career (2-5 years) NYC public school principals. 98% of our APP graduates are placed in NYCDOE leadership positions, and one out of every six current principals is an APP graduate. In total, our leadership programs impact over 316,000 NYC public school students every year.

As NYCLA's flagship program, APP is noteworthy as the largest district-based alternative certification program for principals in the country. According to an independent evaluation conducted by the Institute for Education and Social Policy at New York University, schools led by APP graduates have demonstrated significant improvements in student achievement under their new leadership. In a 2011 update to the initial 2009 study, which assessed the impact of APP-trained principals on school achievement relative to that of new principals ascending through other routes, the researchers found that APP-led schools cut the initial English language Arts performance gap between their schools and comparison schools in half. In math, the performance gap initially widened, but was virtually eliminated in years three and beyond. These findings were particularly noteworthy as APP graduates were more likely to lead high-need schools serving more low-income (65.9% free lunch eligible) Black and Hispanic (85.4%) students, with more inexperienced teachers (52.9% with <2 years), and had lower pre-existing levels of achievement relative to schools led by other new principals.^{xi} (see Appendices D and J)

In 2011, The Wallace Foundation selected us to facilitate the creation of a multi-district learning community among the six urban districts selected for Wallace's \$75 million "principal pipeline" initiative. APP has also been recognized as a national exemplar by the Bush Institute Alliance to Reform Education Leadership (AREL) Network and as a national model by the USDOE's Doing What Works online library. Nationally, NYCLA has assisted districts, universities, non-profit organizations and state-wide school leadership initiatives in 24 states in

adapting its leadership development model and tools for their specific school system contexts; we've trained and supported close to 450 school leadership professionals, impacting the achievement of approximately 877,000 students across the country. We were selected to support Race to the Top Leadership Academy development work by four states: Delaware, Rhode Island, North Carolina, and Massachusetts.

B. Quality of the Project Design

B.1. Extent to which project addresses the Absolute Priority

This Project will test the theory that comprehensive, data-driven coaching, provided over a period of three years will in fact result in increased leadership capacity among principals and their school staffs, which will ultimately increase student achievement. A total of 50 newly placed principals in NYC high-need schools will be directly served through the i3-funded TISS project, along with their assistant principals and members of their school-based leadership teams. Participants will be teams assigned to schools on either New York State's Priority or Focus lists, which currently includes over 350 of NYC's highest-need schools (the criteria for these schools is included in Appendix C.) These leadership teams will directly impact approximately 30,000 of the school system's students each year.

As a result of its partnership in this initiative, NYCDOE will have an opportunity to better understand the specific challenges associated with leadership of high-need elementary, middle and high schools. The issues that surface through the rigorous diagnostic assessment that will form the platform for school-based coaching in the chosen schools may illuminate common training and coaching needs and themes that could influence professional development for all NYC principals as well as impact other aspects of the principal development pipeline, and may serve to shape future policies and programs.

Our coaching staff is largely comprised of former principals and superintendents trained in our leadership development method and knowledgeable about current district initiatives and accountability tools. Their combination of experience and expertise enables them to act as confidential sounding boards, and active listeners skilled at asking questions that facilitate reflection, deeper thinking and growth. Coaches and principals use NYCLA’s [REDACTED] [REDACTED] see Appendix J) [REDACTED]

NYCLA provides coaches with ongoing training in school system policies and initiatives so they can support principals as they respond to district priorities and requirements while implementing their schools’ education plans. In addition to a focus on supporting the implementation of the Common Core standards and Teacher Effectiveness, NYCLA coaching is aligned with the Principal’s Performance Review (PPR), a district-based tool which includes five areas—Quality Review, Progress Report, Goals and Objectives, Compliance, and ELL and Special Education—to evaluate a principal’s performance. Coaches use a principal’s work-based circumstances to craft learning opportunities; TISS will expand the set of tools we use to include the School Improvement Diagnostic Assessment, which will serve to increase the rigor and depth

of school- and student-level data analysis and ensure that the coaching is laser-focused on the principal's most pressing leadership challenges and the school's key leverage points.

B.2. Clarity and coherence of project goals

NYCLA has developed clear measurable goals for the TISS project: (1) increase student achievement in the schools led by TISS principals; (2) increase the retention rates of principals and assistant principals in the schools led by TISS participants; (3) support principals in the implementation of Common Core Standards and a Teacher Evaluation System, and (4) develop a scalable and sustainable TISS model available to new principals and their school leadership teams. The project aims to achieve the following measurable outcomes:

- Starting in year 1, at least 95% of coaches will report that training activities have positively impacted their ability to effectively support new principals and their leadership teams.
- At the end of years 1-4, at least 90% of participating principals will report that the support provided by their coaches has improved their instructional leadership capabilities.
- By the end of years 2-4, at least 90% of participating principals will demonstrate growth on those leadership dimensions identified for improvement by coaches, as evidenced by pre- and post-scores on the Individualized Growth Plan and their PPRs.
- By the end of years 3-4, teacher engagement, teacher perceptions of school leadership, and teacher report of school culture in schools led by TISS principals will have improved more than those of teachers in schools led by a comparison group of principals of comparable experience assigned to similar schools who are not TISS participants.
- In year 4-5, the rates of academic progress of students in the schools led by TISS principals will exceed those of students in schools led by those principals in the comparison group.

The TISS logic model articulates the steps in achieving these goals (see Appendix J)

B.3. Project activity plan and identification of potential risks

The risks to the success of the TISS initiative are outgrowths of the same challenges our existing programs are designed to address. Today, reform policies intended to accelerate student outcomes have placed considerable pressure on the principalship as a key lever for school improvement, just as the move toward decentralization and school-based management have created new demands on the principals. Educators must master a wide range of skills to succeed in the highly complex and demanding job of school leader,^{xii} such as analyzing school data to guide school improvement, providing effective curriculum and instructional support; feedback to and supervision of teachers, and developing effective engagement strategies with parents and members of the community. Both new and experienced school leaders need these skills. Moreover, educators selected to lead persistently low-performing schools must demonstrate and accelerate measurable school improvement within short timeframes—typically two years—to meet federal, state and local school improvement mandates.

Our roadmap for bringing the TISS theory of change to fruition follows.

Objective 1: To build the capacity of NYCLA to help newly-placed principals of high-need schools and their leadership teams achieve their school improvement goals

Activities to Accomplish Objective 1 – NYCLA Capacity Building

During the i3 start-up phase (start date January 2014), we will carry out a number of activities designed to set the stage for the coaching intervention in the treatment schools.

Formation of Project Advisory Committee: we will establish and convene the Project Advisory Committee comprised of NYCLA senior staff, national experts in the field of school leadership and NYCDOE leaders to advise project planning, diagnostic tool development and coaching activities. The Committee will meet on a quarterly basis over the life of the grant.

Articulation Between Development and Support Elements: We will coordinate the curricular connection between APP and LAP facilitation staffs and our coaching teams to ensure that TISS coaching and support addresses participants' specific leadership development needs. Specific team-building training and coaching for aspiring principals and aspiring assistant principals, starting as soon as the team is paired during APP's residency phase, will support the pair's development as a team when they begin school diagnostic work.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment: We will carry out a rigorous and broad-based needs assessment process in order to identify the leadership needs of new principals serving high-need schools. We will conduct focus groups with principals, principal supervisors, NYCDOE leaders and content experts to identify areas presenting the greatest challenge that early-career principals face; specific leadership dimensions that are most critical for early-career principals; and the school structures, systems and human capital necessary for school improvement and promising practices, with particular attention to identifying the interdependence of different school system structures (e.g., relationship between credit accumulation and graduation rates) and the leverage points that maximize these interdependencies.

Development of School Improvement Diagnostic Assessment: Based on this robust data gathering and our significant knowledge base, NYCLA will develop the School Improvement Diagnostic Assessment (SIDA) and an implementation process for the treatment schools. Other NYCLA coaching protocols and tools (e.g., the IGP) may need to be modified to ensure full alignment with the new assessment.

Identification and Training of Specialist Coaches: NYCLA will identify and train a team of specialist coaches from its current cohort of coaches with different areas of expertise (budget, school data analysis, instruction, English language learners and special education, teacher

evaluation, scheduling/programming) to conduct the SIDA and subsequently, to use the results to design and deliver targeted coaching and support to the cohort of treatment principals and their school leadership teams over the course of the three-year intervention.

Training for Project Coaches: NYCLA will design and implement professional development for coaches who will be working with all Project principals and their leadership teams. The training will focus on: implementation of SIDA to identify school strategic priorities, using the online database, 1:1 school improvement coaching for principals and assistant principals, coaching for school teams, systems thinking, team dynamics, etc. Training will be interactive and present multiple opportunities for coaches to receive feedback about their coaching practice to strengthen their knowledge, influence and potential impact. Some of the ways in which NYCLA will support the coaches include 1:1 and small group conference call check-ins, team meetings, field observations, whole group and targeted professional development, and peer-to-peer assistance.

Coach/Principal Matching Rubric: Currently, coaches are matched to principals using a program-driven decision-tree that takes principal preference, principal learning needs and school formation and student population into consideration. We will create an instrument that formalizes and documents this approach to matching that will serve as an instrument for other coaching programs nationally and serve as an aid to replication.

Objective 2: To provide three cohorts totaling 50 new principals of high-need elementary, middle and high schools and their leadership teams with three years of coaching and support.

Activities to Accomplish Objective 2 – School Leader Capacity Building

NYCLA and NYCDOE will identify the initial cohort of new principals of high-need elementary, middle and high schools from the graduates of APP cohort 10. Principals accepting positions in Focus and Priority schools will be offered the opportunity to opt-in to the program,

and from those who agree the final group of 10 schools in the pilot Cohort 1 will be selected (Cohort 2 will be selected before year two, Cohort 3 before year three). The selection process will be finalized during the planning stage of the project in consultation with RAND to ensure the best evaluation model. The next step will be to match each new principal who opts into the Project with a dedicated coach who they will work with for the duration of the intervention.

They will receive the following coaching and school support interventions over three years:

School Strategic Priorities: The team of coaching specialists will conduct a SIDA with each new principal, which will include the school's systems and climate; review of student achievement data, School Quality Review, teacher evaluations and the school's education plan (including plans for the implementation of the Common Core State Standards); and interviews with parents and staff. Using the SIDA, the coaching team and principal will develop school improvement priorities. Together, they will meet with the NYCDOE superintendent and network support representative to discuss these priorities and elicit their feedback and commitment about how they will help the principal address them. This group will convene two to three times a year to assure that expectations for school and principal performance are clear and agreed upon by all parties, an important step to ensuring the success of the school and the principal.

Assessment of Leadership Development Needs: Each year the principals will, in consultation with their coaches, assess and rate their leadership practices using [REDACTED] and their PPR to identify coaching goals that are aligned to the school's strategic priorities and the principal's leadership development needs.

Individual and School Team Coaching: On average, principals will receive 2 days of coaching per month in their first year (144 hours total, a significant expansion on their DOE-funded 72 hours), 1.5 days in their second year (108 hours), and .5 days in their third year (36 hours).

Team Capacity Building: To further build leadership capacity, during the first 2 years of the new principal's tenure, assistant principals will receive on average, 10 hours (collectively, if more than one in the school) of 1:1 support. Principals, with the support of their coaches, will design and facilitate annual off-site retreats with their school teams to address strategic priorities. These hours are in addition to the individual and school team coaching described above.

Specialist Coaching: NYCLA will provide up to 20 hours of specialized coaching for the principal and/or members of the school team during the principal's first two years on the job to support ongoing and/or emerging areas of improvement.

Inter-visitations: At least twice per year, coaches and school leadership teams will conduct inter-visitations to see exemplary school leadership practices in operation at other schools.

Cohort Engagement: After their 1st and 2nd years, all participants will convene to review what they have accomplished and as a result refine their school priorities for the following year and consider patterns and themes in their work. We will design additional cohort sessions to address their shared challenges. After each cohort's first year in their new schools, NYCLA will convene principals and representatives of their school teams for a 2-day planning session to revisit their SIDA and share lessons learned. To support the principals' capacity to turnkey this kind of coaching with their own teams, principals will be engaged in the design and delivery of the session. Before they begin their 3rd year, coaches will support Project principals in designing a 2-day session that they themselves will lead for their school teams.

Objective 3: To conduct a rigorous implementation and impact evaluation of the enhanced school leadership coaching model.

With i3 support, NYCLA will engage RAND, an independent and national research and evaluation firm, to (1) assess the program's effectiveness in meeting targets for coaching,

support, and participant retention, and (2) measure its direct school impacts of three cohorts of principals paired with assistant principals (pilot cohort=10, cohort two=20, cohort three=20), its impact on teacher satisfaction, school climate and principal/assistant principal retention. Our internal research and evaluation team will conduct implementation analyses to provide data that can drive program improvement on a monthly and quarterly basis. (See **Quality of Evaluation**).

C. Quality of Management Plan

C.1. Key responsibilities and objectives, timeline and performance metrics

The timeline below outlines the major activity milestones in each project year; a detailed work plan is provided in Appendix J.

Milestones	Partners Involved	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Objective One						
Convene Advisory Committee	NYCLA, NYCDOE	Jan-Feb	Quarterly	Quarterly	Quarterly	Quarterly
Identify and gather data on leadership needs	NYCLA, Adv. Comm.	Jan-Mar				
Gather data for, and design diagnostic needs assessment	NYCLA, Adv. Comm.	Jan-Feb				
Identify and train specialist coaches	NYCLA	May-Jun				
Design and implement professional development for all TISS coaches	NYCLA	May-Jun; Sep-Dec	May-Jun; Aug-Dec	May-Jun; Aug-Dec	Jan-Jun	
Objective Two						
Identify principals	NYCDOE, NYCLA, Rand	July-Sep (C1)	July-Sep (C2)	July-Sep (C3)		
Match coach and principal pairs	NYCLA, NYCDOE	July-Sep (C1)	July-Sep (C2)	July-Sep (C3)		
Conduct school diagnostics	NYCLA	Sep-Nov (C1)	Sep-Nov (C2)	Sep-Nov (C3)		
Deliver 1:1 coaching	NYCLA	Sep-Nov (C1)	Sep-Nov (C1-2)	Sep-Nov (C1-2-3)	Sep-Nov (C2-3)	Sep-Nov (C3)
Coach-led 2-day summer planning & analysis session for principals	NYCLA		Aug (C1)	Aug (C2)	Aug (C3)	
Principal-led 2-day session for school teams	NYCLA			Aug (C1)	Aug (C2)	Aug (C3)
Specialized coaching team addresses diagnosed school needs	NYCLA		Jan-Jun (C1)	Jan-Jun (C2)	Jan-Jun (C3)	
Coaching support for assistant principals & leadership teams	NYCLA	Sep-Nov (C1)	Sep-Nov (C1-2)	Sep-Nov (C1-2-3)	Sep-Nov (C2-3)	Sep-Nov (C3)
Off-site school team retreat	NYCLA		Btn. Dec-	Btn. Dec-	Btn. Dec-	

			May	May	May	
Objective Three						
Co-design evaluation process	RAND, NYCLA	Jan-Jun				
Outside evaluator collects and analyzes data	RAND, NYCLA	Sep-Dec	Jan-Dec	Jan-Dec	Jan-Dec	Jan-Sep
Identify and capture best practices and lessons learned	NYCLA, NYCDOE		Jun-Dec	Jun-Dec	Jun-Dec	Jun-Dec

C.2. Commitment of partners and stakeholders

Now in our tenth year partnered with the NYCDOE, we are at the forefront of the movement to develop visionary and passionate school leaders committed to accelerating student achievement. While we have grown into a national organization, NYC, the nation’s largest and most complex school system, serves as our learning laboratory. This decade of comprehensive, collaborative work reflects the NYCDOE’s commitment to providing support to principals via coaching, it’s deep investment in a leadership pipeline and its recognition that school leadership is key to its reform efforts—as well as our commitment to ongoing improvement.

Based on historical trends, the NYCDOE expects to hire approximately 200 principals during each of the next four years. These openings are associated with principal separations, school closures and new school openings. Using NYCDOE data from 2006 to 2012 on the number of first-year principal hires, on average, 16% leave their school within the first 3 years, and 27% leave after 4 years. Research shows that principal turnover adversely impacts schools, and that this impact is felt more at the most challenged schools.^{xiii} A core element of NYCDOE’s reform efforts has been attracting and preparing the most talented principals to lead the schools, equipping them and their teachers with the decision-making authority, funding, and resources to excel in their jobs, and building systems to ensure that student academic achievement improves.

C.3. Procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement

As noted in the Quality of Project Design section above, ongoing assessments and improvements of our programs to address the constantly shifting landscape of the educational leadership field, is a cornerstone of NYCLA practices. The elements of our leadership development model translate into concrete action points: as TISS reflects a step-up in services, the ongoing feedback and program improvement systems are stepped up as well. The system of surveys and analysis around key implementation issues by NYCLA's Department of Research and Evaluation are the levers for systemized course correction during the implementation of the project. Surveys and data analysis provide the markers for improvement: program participants provide program satisfaction and quantifiable patterns of growth; coaches offer higher level, objective feedback, and district stakeholders provide input on satisfaction with the project's progress toward stated outcomes. These results are the "real time" inputs into the project's system of ongoing improvement: the Advisory Committee meets quarterly to guide course correction; the coaches meet for professional development check-ins every six weeks, and these meetings, in turn, set the curricula and themes for the team retreats built into the project timeline.

D. Personnel

We have assembled an exceptionally well-qualified team of senior staff to lead this Project. The roles, time commitments and relevant qualifications of the core project management team are described below; resumes for key personnel are provided in Appendix F.

Senior Advisor (an in-kind contribution to the project) Irma Zardoya, NYCLA's President and CEO, will provide strategic guidance and focus on helping achieve project scale and sustainability. Prior to joining NYCLA, she served in the role of Executive Director of the Office of Achievement Resources for the NYCDOE, and served as Superintendent of the former Region One in the Bronx, where she oversaw a portfolio of 134 schools. Prior to leading Region

One, she served as Superintendent of Community School District 10 in the Bronx, where she earned the district a five-year grant from The Wallace Foundation and two federally-funded School Leadership Program grants. In spring 2012, she was named to the NY State Education Reform Commission established by Governor Cuomo.

Project Director Kathy Nadurak is our Executive Vice President of Programs. With over 35 years of experience in the field of education as both an educator and an administrator, Ms. Nadurak has been with NYCLA for 10 years and oversees APP, Leadership Support Services and many National Initiatives projects. Before joining NYCLA, Kathleen spent 20 years at the New York City Department of Education where she held a number of key roles, including Executive Director for the Office of Financial and Management Reporting, Chief of Staff to the Chancellor, and Special Assistant to the Deputy Chancellor of Operations. **Project Manager** Michelle Jarney joined NYCLA in 2004 and is now Associate Vice President of Leadership Support Programs. She oversees the day-to-day management of curriculum and session development, professional development for coaching staff, systems and processes for program administration, data collection, and communication with the field. Katie Drucker, NYCLA's **Senior Director for Research and Evaluation** will serve as the liaison to the external evaluator, and will support their instrument development, data collection and reporting activities as well as lead the implementation and internal formative analysis and reporting activities.

Several other senior level NYCLA staff will lend their expertise to the Project at no cost to the grant (see organizational chart and résumés in Other Attachments). Claire McIntee, Vice President of Leadership Support Programs, who oversees all of NYCLA's work with current NYCDOE principals and brings an extensive background in the NYC school system, will serve as the lead subject matter expert to the Project and member of the Advisory Group. Subject

matter experts include George Foley, NYCLA's Vice President of Systems, Data and Accountability and Irene Rogan, head of NYCLA's Teacher Leader program and Senior Director of the Wallace Pipeline Project. Brett Rollins, NCYLA's Associate Director of Foundation Relations, will oversee grant reporting and serve as the liaison between NYCLA and the USDOE. Karim Parchment, NYCLA's Vice President of Finance, will manage NYCLA's role as the Project's fiscal agent, including grant disbursement and financial reporting.

The Project's **external evaluator** is the **RAND Corporation**, an internationally recognized evaluation firm with over three decades of experience in designing and conducting independent evaluations in almost every aspect of the education system. Susan Gates and Lindsay Daugherty will serve as the co-principal investigators and will oversee all aspects of the evaluation including data collection, analysis, and reporting. Ms. Gates (PhD. Economics, Stanford Graduate School of Business) is a senior economist who specializes in the economics of organizations, labor economics and the application of economic management principles to public sector organizations. She is currently co-leading a multi-year evaluation of New Leaders' recent i3 grant. Lindsay Daugherty (Ph.D., Policy Analysis, RAND Graduate School) has more than seven years of experience working with longitudinal data from large urban districts to study education policies and programs.

As highlighted in the Quality of Project Design, the Advisory Committee will serve a key role in providing strategic direction, oversight and support for the i3 initiative; it will include NYCDOE staff designated by the District's Deputy Chief Academic Officer Marina Cofield. NYCLA's Administrative Cabinet, which includes the Senior Advisor, Program Director and Lead Subject Matter Expert, meets weekly and will ensure that TISS is proceeding on schedule and to troubleshoot any implementation issues that might impede progress or outcomes.

E. Quality of the Project Evaluation

E.1. Clarity and importance of the key questions, and appropriateness of methods

RAND researchers will conduct an independent evaluation of the implementation and impact of TISS. NYCLA will conduct internal analysis of program data to ensure “just-in-time” analysis around key implementation issues, and be engaged in some data collection. The evaluation will be driven by the following research questions:

- 1) What is the impact of the intervention on student achievement?
- 2) What is the impact of the intervention on intermediate outcomes:
 - a. In the areas of school climate and student engagement?
 - b. In the areas of principal growth and retention?
- 3) To what extent is the intervention being implemented with fidelity? What are the key barriers to and facilitators of implementation?
- 4) Are there particular implementation practices that are associated with outcomes?

Research Design: A randomized control trial (RCTs) is infeasible for this study because the program requires intentional selection of treatment principals from a small population of APP graduates. To measure the impacts of the TISS program (questions 1 and 2) RAND will use a quasi-experimental analytic strategy. RAND and NYCLA will also conduct a range of implementation analyses to address questions 3 and 4.

RAND will use school and student-level data to estimate "value-added" models that control for the influence of these factors on student achievement. These models strive to isolate the incremental contribution of some intervention, in this case TISS, on student outcomes (McCaffrey et al., 2004). The analysis will use student-level data and principal tenure data from SY 2012-13 through SY 2017-18, covering the time period two years prior to the initial

intervention and three years after the intervention with the first cohort. Analysis will use data from students exposed to both treatment (TISS) and control (non-TISS) principals. The method is characterized as interrupted time-series, exploiting the change in a student's exposure to a TISS principal to measure the impact on student achievement on state standardized assessments.

The models will control for prior student achievement, a range of student-level characteristics (e.g. free/reduced lunch status, grade), principal background (e.g. principal experience, pre-service training), and a number of school level characteristics (e.g. principal experience). Indicator variables will be used to capture the exposure of the student to a TISS principal, and the coefficients estimated for these indicators will provide the estimated impact of TISS on student achievement. The primary outcomes for the study will be measured after year one and two of TISS participation. For Cohorts 2 and 1 we will have outcomes that extend one and two years beyond treatment; ideally we would like to examine these longer-term impacts, but limited power will prevent us from measuring statistically significant effect sizes. We will conduct exploratory analysis of these post-intervention test scores.

Measures and Measurement Timeline: To address research questions three and four regarding the program's implementation, RAND will collect implementation data to be linked with student achievement and other outcome data. Data collection will begin in January 2014 and conclude in August 2018. RAND researchers will meet with key NYCLA staff within six weeks of award announcement to finalize the evaluation plan. RAND will lead the implementation and outcomes analysis with support from NYCLA in securing data, designing instruments, and collecting survey data. Data sources include:

- *Coaching Time Records:* NYCLA keeps regular records of the amount of time coaches spend in schools for payroll purposes and include number of hours spent with the coach.

- *Coaches' and Principals' Survey*: NYCLA will design surveys with input from RAND, to be administered to coaches and principals by NYCLA in the Spring of Years 2 and 3.
- *Focus Groups with Coaches and Principals*: RAND will lead focus groups and conduct analysis of focus group data in Year 2 of the study.
- *Semi-Structured Interviews with NYCLA Staff and NYCDOE Administrators*: RAND will conduct semi-structured interviews with key NYCLA staff and 4 to 6 administrators in NYCDOE in Years 2 and 4 of the study.

Power and Minimum Detectable Effects: Student achievement is the outcome of primary focus in our summative analysis, so power and minimum detectable effect calculations are based on student test score assumptions. RAND's estimate of the minimum detectable effect size assumes the following: 1) equal numbers of students in the treatment and comparisons conditions, with an average of 421 students per school (assumes half middle school and half elementary, students in tested grades only); 2) Type-1 (α) error rates of 0.05 (two-tailed); and 3) statistical power levels of 0.80; and 4) an average inter-class correlation coefficient (ICC) of 0.10.^{xiv} Given the study design and assumptions about ICC, and 50 TISS principals over three cohorts, the minimal detectable effect size in this study is approximately 0.125 if all principals remain in the district for the length of the study. However, we are likely to see some attrition among principals. Our power calculations indicate that even with 20% attrition, we will still have the power to estimate an effect of 0.15 under the assumptions listed above.

Impacts:

- *School Culture*: RAND will use publicly available school-level results from an annual NYCDOE survey to measure perceptions and trends about schools and general satisfaction among teachers and students.

- *Student Engagement and Achievement:* In addition to student-level test score data, we will collect student-level attendance and discipline data as measures of student engagement. NYCLA will work with NYCDOE to access student achievement data and de-identified student-level test scores. RAND will use scores on state standardized assessments in grades 3-8 to measure growth in student achievement in ELA and mathematics.

E.2. Clear and credible analysis plan

As described above, RAND and NYCLA will use both quantitative and qualitative analysis to identify aspects of implementation that are related to the effectiveness of the TISS program. Responses from principal and coach surveys and data from coaching logs can be integrated into the outcomes analysis to identify statistically significant relationships between fidelity and outcomes. Survey data will also be useful in determining which aspects of TISS are viewed as most important among program participants. Data from interviews and focus groups can be used to provide additional information on barriers to and facilitators of implementation.

E.3. Key components and outcomes of the project

RAND will work with NYCLA to provide timely feedback on the quality of implementation and progress toward intended outcomes. In Years 2 through 4 of the study, RAND and NYCLA will convene web meetings to share findings and discuss potential implications for the program. In Year 5, RAND researchers will provide an in-person briefing on the full study findings. In addition to the web briefing in Year 3, RAND will provide an internal project memo discussing findings from the implementation study and giving a preview of the outcomes analysis. In Year 5, RAND will publish a technical report, with a clear description of the program, full implementation findings, and results from the outcomes analysis.

ENDNOTES

- ⁱ Spiro J., Mattis, M. & Mitgang, L. A Wallace Perspective: Getting Principal Mentoring Right: Perspectives from the Field (2007); Reeves, D.B., & Ellison, E. (2009). *Renewal coaching: Sustainable change for individuals and organizations*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- ⁱⁱ Spiro et al, 2007
- ⁱⁱⁱ Marzano, R., Waters, T. & McNulty, B. (2005) *School Leadership that Works: From Research to Results*. Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- ^{iv} *School Turnarounds: A Review of the Cross-Sector Evidence on Dramatic Organization Improvement*, by Public Impact for the Center on Innovation and Improvement (2007) and *Turnarounds with New Leaders and Staff* by Kowal and Hassel of Public Impact for the Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (2006).
- ^v Burkhauser, S., Gates, S. et al. (2012) *First-year Principals in Urban School Districts: How Actions and Working Conditions Relate to Outcomes*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Education.
- ^{vi} Burkhauser, et al (2012)
- ^{vii} Goldsmith, M/, Lyons, L. & Freas, A.: (2000) *Coaching for Leadership*. Wiley & Sons, Incorporated,
- ^{viii} Spiro et al, 2007; Reeves & Ellison, 2009
- ^{ix} National Conference of State Legislatures (unpublished document)
- ^x NYC Leadership Academy, Internal Survey Data (2010-2011)
- ^{xi} The IESP's full published results of its independent evaluation of the APP program, titled *The New York City Aspiring Principals Program: A School-Level Analysis* is available at <http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/uploads/003/852/APP.pdf>.
- ^{xii} The Wallace Foundation, *The School Principal as Leader: Guiding Schools to Better Teaching and Learning* (January 2012).
- ^{xiii} Center for Public Education study
- ^{xiv} Data indicates that the average elementary school/middle school has 595 students. In elementary schools RAND will only look at students in 3rd through 5th, so assumes an average of 247 students per elementary school and 595 students per middle school, for an average of 421 assuming a balanced sample of middle and elementary schools.