

**Project Exc-EL
2013 i3 Development Grant**

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Project Narrative

Project Exc-EL (Excellence for English Learners) is an enhanced, comprehensive design that addresses the unique and urgent needs of low-incidence EL¹ population school districts – districts that are struggling to provide a comprehensive, rigorous education for the newest members of their communities. The project employs a data-driven, tiered approach to instruction that builds on community partnerships to create personalized, expanded learning opportunities for students. It will impact *all middle and high school students within the project districts who do not speak English as their first language* (738 students). **Project Exc-EL** will ensure all English language learners stay in school and graduate. The core philosophy is one of enriched activities and wrap around supports focused on success, college/career readiness and high school completion. Individualized, personalized learning plans and a tiered system of interventions ('RTI') will be used to track and adjust student activities.

UCLA Center X² will partner with two typical suburban districts in New York State – the *Union Free School District of the Tarrytowns* and the *Ossining Union Free School District* – and one urban district – the *White Plains City School District*. The sites are characterized as low-incidence, with approximately 10% of their student body identified as English Learners. These 'river-town' districts are contiguous, stretching along the east bank of the Hudson River in southern Westchester County, 20 miles north of New York City. Each district sees education as a key investment in stronger communities that build on diversity.

A. Significance

Novel approach

The number of English learners in schools in the United States continues to grow. Middle and high school-age English learners present particularly diverse and intensive challenges for educators - some students are recent arrivals with limited or formal interrupted schooling, others were born in the United

¹ The term English learner, or EL, is used throughout this application to denote a student eligible for English as a Second Language instruction and support in New York State public schools.

² UCLA Center X has an existing satellite office in the northeast near the project sites.

States but lack the academic language required for school success even after many years of ESL support. By the time they reach secondary school, many have complicated, interrelated difficulties with literacy in two (or more) languages.

Project Excel Demonstration Sites (2011-12 data)

		Enrollment		Graduation Rate		Prof or Better: ELA		Prof or Better: Math	
		All Students	EL Students	All Students	EL Students	All Students	EL Students	All Students	EL Students
Tarrytown	Sleepy Hollow HS	887	145	91%	77%	92%	65%	97%	85%
	Sleepy Hollow MS	577	80			93%	43%	92%	68%
Ossining	Ossining HS	1287	114	80%	46%	87%	50%	90%	73%
	Dorner MS	919	167			95%	56%	94%	74%
White Plains	White Plains HS	2149	175	88%	65%	93%	59%	94%	69%
	White Plains MS	1523	155			95%	63%	98%	84%

*Grade 8 used for middle schools

By any measure, EL students are not achieving on par with their English-speaking peers. On the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 76% of eighth-grade English speaking students scored at or above basic in reading; 73% scored at or above basic in mathematics. However, EL students scored considerably lower, with 29% in reading and 29% in mathematics at or above the basic level. A study by the Center on Education Policy found gaps between ELs and their English-speaking peers on high school exit examinations as high as 30 to 40 percentage points (CEP, 2007). These findings are echoed by the academic performance of EL students in the target population districts of White Plains (WPCSD), Tarrytown (TUFSD) and Ossining (OUFSD).

As the chart above demonstrates, each of the six project schools have *significant achievement gaps in all subject areas* despite relatively high performance by ‘all students’. Although located in a county known for its affluence, demographics and the needs of immigrant families set them apart from most of its suburban neighbors. 40% of the population is foreign-born and 50% of residents speak a language other than English (*Source: 2010 Census*). Many families are struggling due to low literacy

levels and limited education, as many immigrants have limited English proficiency and many have had little or interrupted schooling in their country of origin, limiting their ability to secure stable employment and navigate pathways out of poverty. Census data indicate that 9.7% of residents do not have a high school diploma, and 16.9% have less than a 9th grade education. Students come from 59 different countries, and speak 46 different languages. The intersection of urgent needs for a large segment of the community – housing, food, transportation, employment– combined with a high-cost location, place many families at risk.

Project Exc-EL is intended to *expand boundaries* for our students and their families. Project Exc-EL is a unique, innovative pathway to success with this challenging population. EL students will be part of a ‘small learning community’ where instruction is personalized and delivered by a small team of teachers and staff members though the teams will be ‘mainstream’ and include native English speakers as well. The approach is unique in working with a community-based team to develop and implement Tier 3 interventions, interventions that occur outside the usual classroom environment and extend learning opportunities. This community-based team will also provide outreach services to the *families of EL students*.

Lajuana is a quiet, shy girl who recently emigrated from Guatemala. She does not raise her hand or ever volunteer to speak in her Literature class, and her teacher is reluctant to single her out. Lajuana was the focus of discussion at an RTI meeting, where her Lit teacher discovered she has a passion for music from the ESL instructor. She now seeks out and share music files for Lajuana that are helping her build her English skills.

Exc-EL will build an effective RTI system for EL students in middle and high school ESL and mainstream content area classrooms to ensure they receive the instruction and supports needed to succeed. An effective RTI system relies on ongoing progress monitoring of students, with instructional responses and approaches at different levels of intensity provided to match their unique needs. **Tier 1** students receive research-based instruction, sometimes in small groups, sometimes as part of a class-wide intervention. Students who do not respond to the first level of

group-oriented instruction typically move to the **Tier 2** and the level of intensity of the interventions is greater. They may also be more closely targeted to the areas in which the child is having difficulty.

Tier 3 students have not responded adequately to the intervention(s) in Tier 2, and receive continued and more intensive intervention.

A considerable amount of evidence suggests that approaches involving early intervention, ongoing progress monitoring, and effective classroom instruction consistent with Response to Intervention (RTI) are associated with improved outcomes for developing readers, however far less is known about the effectiveness of these approaches with English language learners, particularly at the secondary level.

It is significant that the Project Exc-EL approach seeks to build capacity in the mainstream, content area classroom. New York State has a fairly typical policy structure that guides the placement and education of EL students. Students are tested for language dominance upon school entry, and those that are not fluent in English receive mandatory instruction in English language development (*ESL classes*) in addition to their regular academic schedule. This continues until a child demonstrates proficiency in the English language. While no child is ‘typical’ many develop this proficiency within five years.

Low-incidence schools are often challenged to hire, and retain, qualified ESL teachers. Even in schools well staffed with ESL instructors and supportive aides, the average student spends less than fifty minutes per day engaged in English language instruction. That means more than 80% of their time is spent in the mainstream classroom. Much of that 80% is spent with well-intentioned, hard-working teachers who know their subject area well, but who know little or nothing about how to scaffold their academic content so ELs can make sense of it. For students who are dually struggling with new concepts AND new language, this context often results in a cycle of lagging achievement, failure and remediation. By middle and high school, many of the EL students have been caught up in this downward spiral for 6, 8 or 10 years, most of their educational careers.

Project Exc-EL will generate new, cutting edge knowledge about the appropriate and effective use of RTI with secondary level English language learning students. Exc-EL schools will be characterized by small, supportive learning communities. Students will be grouped into heterogeneous teams where personalized learning approaches effectively engage all students. The adaptation of personalized learning pathways, digital portfolios, student advisory, community partnerships and college/career

planning services for EL students represents a novel approach that will generate new knowledge and useful tools for replication. The project will *expand boundaries* for students.

Contribution to theory, knowledge and practice

Project Exc-EL is supported by *strong theory* as defined in the Federal Register notice. The accompanying logic model (see Section B) clearly displays the conceptual framework underlying this work. Critical pathways and processes include: classroom-based instructional approaches for ELs; tiered intervention; and small, supportive learning communities. The emerging evidence basis is more fully reviewed in Appendix D.

Implementing RTI approaches with ELLs presents many significant challenges and requires deep knowledge and skill from all participants. A survey of teachers and administrators across selected sites in New York was conducted in February 2012 to identify the gaps and weaknesses in services, infrastructure and opportunity. Nearly 500 responses were collected, with 86% of all respondents indicating they are interested in participating in workshops and collaborative, on-site work groups to help them increase their skill in working with EL students. 72% of respondents did NOT feel adequately prepared to work with ELLs. The 100 administrators and instructional support personnel responding also indicated an urgent need for training and support: 73% do NOT feel prepared for their responsibility to support teachers of ELLs. For these reasons Project Exc-EL will provide the resources needed to support educators and community partners in this work.

Erick was been absent nearly 25 days during the first semester, and when he does attend school he skips classes or sleeps. School staff have discovered he has become the de facto head of household for his family. School staff suspect he may be undocumented does not see college as an possibility. After multiple attempts to engage him, he has been referred to the Project Exc-EL team. They have met with Erick and his family and understand the pressures facing them. Erick is now taking two courses online, and his younger siblings are signed up for an afterschool enrichment program. They are helping him search out college scholarships specifically for undocumented students. The team has pledged to help him finish high school with a plan for next year.

School-based teams will focus on the development of effective, research based Tier 1 and 2 interventions for use in the classroom. While there is a considerable body of knowledge around the use

of RTI, this will be the first systematic, documented approach to application with secondary level English learners. Project Exc-EL is further distinguished by a focus on *enrichment as intervention*. ELs will be expected to achieve success in rigorous, college and career preparatory work and not merely ‘keep up’ with non-EL peers.

Effective, affordable Tier 2 services will be developed and implemented. These are likely to include the use of student tutors provided by Westchester Community College (ELs and immigrants themselves) and online, individualized programs such as *Imagine Learning*. Imagine Learning is in limited use across the partner sites already and has established a successful track record as a targeted intervention for ELs at the secondary level.

Tier 3 services have been the most difficult for the schools to address. The problems of students identified as Tier 3 are complex and involve entwined relationships between language, family and community. The active involvement of the community in a system of supports is an essential component of this model, creating personalized, extended learning opportunities and supports for students.

Project Exc-EL has been designed for English language learners. However the model itself could easily be adapted to meet the needs of any group of at-risk students.

Improved outcomes

Project Exc-EL has the potential to *significantly* impact outcomes for English learners across the nation. UCLA Center X has demonstrated success with a pilot program in low-incidence districts in Connecticut and New York – incorporating similar approaches under a multi-year project that has resulted in demonstrated increases in teacher skill and student achievement. An independent evaluator (WestEd) studied this pilot and reported results to project staff each year (2008-2012). Overall, the project was successful in meeting its major goals. (More detail on related work and success is included in Appendix D – Evidence Basis – and in Appendix C – Eligibility).

College and career readiness and high school completion are primary long-term intended outcomes of this work. In a 2010 study by AIR, practices that fostered college readiness for EL students

were identified. The study authors found personalization and an environment where the unique needs of each student are known to be key. In addition, they noted the involvement of families, communities and postsecondary institutions as important components for success.

A number of educational agencies nationwide have implemented a Response to Intervention model on a large scale in their schools and have demonstrated improvements in student outcomes. Of special note in this context are reported decreases in referral for special education and grade retention – two costly pathways that may result from educator frustration and lack of knowledge about the complex learning issues surrounding ELs.

Project Exc-EL will prove a cost-effective intervention as well. Full integration of the community services, across multiple districts, will eliminate costly duplication. As interventions are developed and tested a bank of effective approaches will be created, eliminating some of the ‘trial and error’ approaches that are so costly for the students in our schools today.

B. Project Design

Priority

Project Exc-EL meets **Absolute Priority 5 – Improving Academic Outcomes for English Learners**. As the project design will demonstrate, Exc-EL aligns and implements curriculum and instruction in six schools (grades 6-12) to ensure every EL student receives sufficient preparation and support to graduate college and career ready. This is accomplished through the implementation of a personalized system of tiered interventions combined with active community partnerships to extend complementary resources across the area.

Project Goals:

- Goal 1. Educators and partners will possess the knowledge and skills needed to effectively educate ELs within a framework of tiered interventions.
- Goal 2. Structural elements of each school will ensure EL students are part of a smaller learning community with a common team of teachers and personalization supports.
- Goal 3. An interagency, inter-district team will be formed to leverage and share resources and provide support for at-risk EL students and their families.
- Goal 4. An objective evaluation process will be integrated into project activities to document and improve process and outcomes.

Activities:

- 1. SIOP based training
- 2. RTI based training
- 3. Teacher teaming
- 4. Implementation of student advisory and PLPs
- 5. Interagency team developed
- 6. Process and Impact evaluations conducted.



Outputs:

- EL students will access and engage with academics in the classroom.
- EL students will receive differentiated supports and enrichment activities based on their demonstrated progress and goals.
- EL students will be well known by a team of teachers who meet regularly to explore their strengths and challenges and adjust their instructional approaches.
- EL students engage in ongoing and effective long term planning and access the resources needed to ensure they succeed.
- EL students with critical needs (Tiers 2 and 3) will receive needed intervention and support through collaborative community-wide efforts.
- Project activities and progress will be strengthened through the use of continuous improvement mechanisms.



Project Outcomes:

- EL students are engaged, self-directed learners.
- EL students demonstrate proficiency on state assessments in core content areas
- EL students progress in school and remain on track to graduate.
- EL students graduate prepared to successfully engage in postsecondary education and careers.

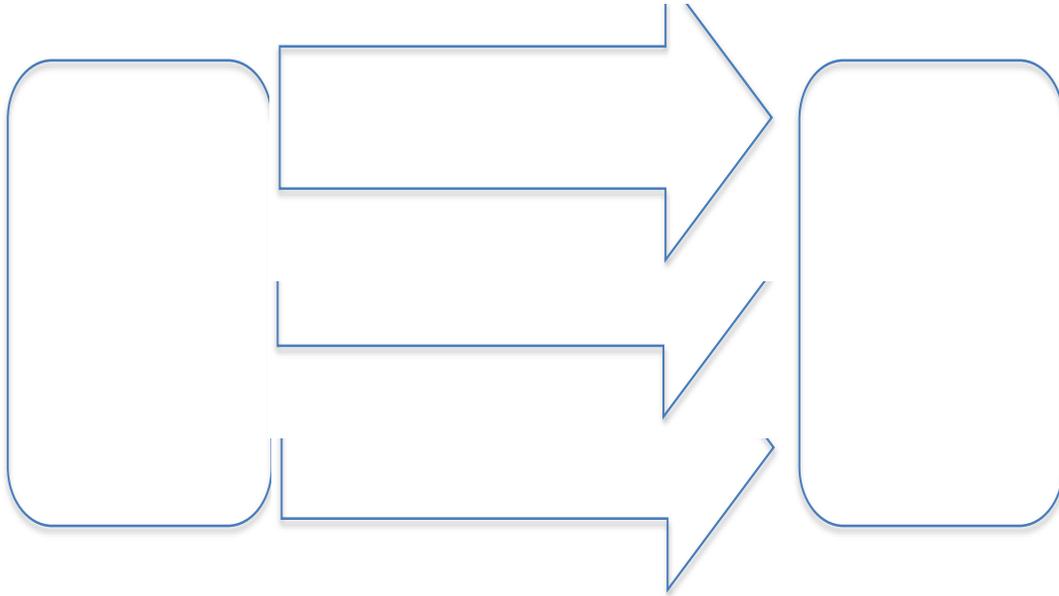


Long Term Outcome:

- EL students are successful in postsecondary education and careers.

Logic Model and Project Goals

The project Logic Model and goals are described more fully in this section. Overall, Exc-EL creates a *student pathway to success*:



UCLA Center X is proposing a capacity-building system for partner districts and community agencies – a system designed as a short-term scaffold in a ‘train the trainers’ approach. Participants actively design and document vetted structures and activities that become part of a shareable resource bank for use by colleagues and peers, building a wide knowledge base for dissemination. We envision this intervention as a year long process at each school, with changes being self-sustaining as existing collaborative teams continue to meet and employ the protocols and processes introduced and practiced during the project year.

Capacity building activities rest solidly on the creation of student-centered learning teams in each participating school coordinated with an area wide Project Exc-EL (learning) team. These teams may be grade-level, content-focused, or simply built around mutual interests or groups of students. School teams (up to 10 members) will commit to working and learning together over the course of a full school year. Paraprofessionals, school support staff and administrators will actively participate in teams. The Project Exc-EL team will include district and school representatives, along with community and higher education partners.

Goal 1. Educators and partners will possess the knowledge and skills needed to effectively educate ELs within a framework of tiered interventions.

The foundation of Project Exc-EL rests on developing a cadre of educators and community partners who develop expertise in instructional approaches that engage English learners and build academic confidence and success. This happens through a coordinated program of intensive professional development and on-site support.

Training will be introduced on a rolling basis with teams from the three middle schools during project years 1-2, and from the three high schools during project years 2-3. Teams will be drawn from core content area teachers (ELA, math, science, and social studies), ‘special’ teachers (arts, health, technology), support staff (guidance, social work), an ESL teacher or specialist, paraprofessional staff, and an administrator. In addition, the districts and core interagency team partners will select Project Exc-EL representatives to attend the training. Teams will participate in a week long summer institute focused on:

- Developing expertise in using classroom based instructional strategies that make content accessible for ELs and engage culturally and linguistically diverse learners in thought-provoking, standards-based learning (based on the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol);
- Developing expertise in using a tiered system of intervention to monitor student progress and create modifications or interventions in the classroom (based on RTI);
- Developing an understanding of potential interventions and modifications for Tier 2 and 3 students with a particular focus on effectively using community resources; and
- Developing effective team skills and protocols.

The summer institute will be structured and facilitated by Center X staff, building on and including the expertise of partners in this work.

School-based teams will implement new approaches when they return to school, and continue to meet as an RTI team every six to eight weeks. Ongoing, embedded professional development and

support for teams will be provided by Center X assigned coaches for each site. At the team meeting, protocols will be employed that allow each participant to share their student data and portfolio evidence, tier students and receive feedback designed to improve or redirect their instruction. Plans for targeted interventions and supports will be developed.

Project Year 1 (2013-14)	Cohort 1 (middle schools): summer training
Project Year 2 (2014-15)	Cohort 1: implementation; Cohort 2 (high schools): training
Project Year 3 (2015-16)	Cohort 2: implementation; Cohorts 1 and 2: ongoing training
Project Year 4 (2016-17)	Cohorts 1 and 2: ongoing training
Project Year 5 (2017-18)	Cohorts 1 and 2: ongoing training

This staggered implementation approach and ongoing training and support will allow for inclusion of new staff members and new participants to the interagency team.

Goal 2. Structural elements of each school will ensure EL students are part of a smaller learning community with a common team of teachers and personalization supports.

A supportive, aligned school and district context is critical to the success of these teams, and ultimately to the success of the students in their care.

The benefits of small learning communities and personalized, guided planning for students are well documented. However, even in schools where students routinely engage in college and career planning and goal setting activities, EL students are often marginalized because they (and/or their families) lack the language ability to understand and engage in the activities. The teamed approach described in Goal 1 complements the goal of matching students to a common set of teachers as a way of ensuring every child is known well and their progress is understood in a holistic way. We do *not* suggest that EL students be placed on an isolated team, but instead are integrated into mainstream teams – even in low incidence population schools EL students are likely to be found on more than one student team. That implies that multiple teacher teams should be engaged in the process and be supported to meet the differentiated needs of this unique group of students.

Project Exc-EL schools will work with a school change coach from the Center for Secondary School Redesign (CSSR), the acknowledged national experts in transforming traditional school structures into small, personalized communities. Existing barriers to EL will be identified and may be addressed in ways as diverse as hand scheduling students, by promoting student voice, by introducing or redesigning advisory activities – school change coaches will build on the existing strengths of the school community and help them identify transformational pathways to improved student success.

School change coaches with particular expertise in improving outcomes for EL students will be assigned to each school. They will work with administrators on a monthly basis to ensure policies, procedures and structures ensure every EL student successfully participates in:

- a structured, planned series of college and career planning activities;
- a structured career exploration experience that includes a community based, extended learning opportunity for all during the high school years; and
- a dual credit experience.

School coaching will begin immediately and continue throughout the life of the grant with coaches meeting monthly with administrators.

Goal 3. An interagency, inter-district team will be formed to leverage and share resources and provide support for at-risk EL students and their families.

The active involvement of the community in a system of supports for students is essential for success. Project Exc-EL will establish an interagency, inter-district team with representatives from each school and district, *Westchester Community College, the Pace University Center for Literacy Enrichment, and the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary (RSHM) Life Center*. The *Pace Center* is a full-service educational enhancement provider specializing in reading, writing and literacy; and is fully staffed by certified reading and ESL teachers. *Pace* will provide a comfortable setting in a familiar neighborhood to help remove barriers to success for all students. Services offered will include enrichment, tutorials, college and career counseling, and intergenerational ESL programs. *RSHM Life Center* will offer similar services and activities. The *RSHM Life Center* has a whole family orientation

in all of their programs from toddlers to senior citizens, focusing on the learning needs of the entire family and provide free childcare for adults taking programs. *Westchester Community College* will offer dual enrollment college credit opportunities for English learners, and partner in the development of new courses as needs arise.

English learners, and their families, are often dealing with life issues beyond the influence of the traditional school day, and we recognize that academic success is possible only when multiple supports are available for the whole family. As a way of broadening the impact of this team and Project Exc-EL, each team meeting will also incorporate an afternoon or evening open community event focused on a topic of interest to families. These forums may focus on the college financial aid application process, immigration law, or many others. This approach will ensure the families of EL students are involved and engaged and create bridges to families who traditionally may not interact with the school. The interagency team is committed to preventing students from dropping out of school, enhancing a student's successful completion of school, and assisting students in managing challenging issues that might otherwise inhibit success. They will offer extended learning opportunities, internship and mentoring connections, tutoring, and comprehensive family services.

This team will be convened quarterly, with the initial meeting (PY1) designed to establish protocols and defined outcomes. Team meetings will be facilitated by Center X staff, who will serve as resources for both the content and process. Each team meeting will specifically address Tier 3 student referrals, explore ways to make enrichment activities available to all, and create mechanisms to share resources across schools and agencies.

The key to the success of the Project Exc-EL team will be the active participation of partners seeking success for *actual students* – laying the groundwork for a comprehensive discussion and development of approaches to support that extend well into the community.

Goal 4. An objective evaluation process will be integrated into project activities to document and improve process and outcomes.

A core project management team will be assembled to oversee and direct all project activities.

This team, with representation from all partners, will meet quarterly to review and discuss developing evaluation findings and plan for dissemination activities.

Evaluation activities will span PY 1-5, and will be conducted by *Plus Alpha Research and Consulting* (see Section E for an in-depth discussion of the evaluation plan and activities). Evaluators will collect and analyze data, with reports and findings shared with core management team and project sites on a frequent basis and used for project improvement as well as documentation. Evaluators will package developing findings for appropriate audiences and dissemination vehicles throughout the project period.

A year-end data fair will be convened in June to bring all the cohort participants together in an event structured to promote reflection, sharing and consolidation of lessons learned. These presentations will form the basis for an online resource bank of instructional strategies and interventions available for wider use.

Potential risks

Student schedules and school resources sometimes make it difficult for EL students to complete all the academic courses required for graduation and college admission along with a sequence of ESL courses. This is compounded by policies that encourage or require ‘double blocking’ of core courses, or the time devoted to repeating past failed courses. Offering extended day options will enable more students to complete the coursework to become both college- and career-ready through inherent flexibility in the time, place and pace of learning. Advanced, AP and dual credit courses will be available for all students.

A second obstacle to replication is the collaboration required for teams of teachers to meet routinely and develop and sustain cross-disciplinary lessons, assignments, projects, and assessments of student learning. These integrating activities are essential to making learning relevant and engaging for students. This obstacle is addressed through the specific inclusion of a school change coach who can identify barriers and suggest workable models for addressing them while working with administrators on establishing structures that allow teams of teachers to work together effectively.

Transportation costs and availability are barriers to student participation in extended day activities and community based experiences, as well as to broader family participation. This third barrier is addressed through the inclusion of funds to support transportation and by scheduling family events on a rotating basis in areas throughout the region.

A final barrier, and perhaps the most challenging, is engaging and building trust with families who struggle with language and economic barriers. Reaching out through known community agencies, as well as the schools, and specifically addressing the needs of each family will build this engagement. Community meetings will be scheduled at times and locations that allow widespread participation. Funds have been budgeted to cover the costs of refreshments as we value the time participants devote to this effort.

C. Quality of Management Plan

Timelines and milestones

Center X has carefully thought through the requirements to conduct this work in a way that will achieve positive and lasting results. Center X will be responsible for all fiscal matters and day to day operations with a core management team assisting with overall management of the grant. The charts on the following pages summarize the specific action steps needed to accomplish the work on time and within budget.

Commitment from Partners

The commitment from district and community based partners is discussed throughout this proposal, and reflects this grass-roots effort that has been developed and planned by all the parties involved. MOUs and letters of commitment from each partner are included in Appendix G.

Goal 1. Educators and partners will possess the knowledge and skills needed to effectively educate ELs within a framework of tiered intervention.

Objective 1.1. Teams will participate in professional development devoted to developing instructional strategies for use with ELs in the content area classroom (SIOP).

Objective 1.2. Teams will participate in professional development devoted to tiered interventions (RTI).

Objective 1.3 School teams will meet four times during the school year to continuously improve their practice.

Objective 1.4 School teams will participate in a year-end data fair to highlight and share lessons learned from the school year.

Outcome 1.1. Teachers will demonstrate increased proficiency in the use of scaffolding and intervention techniques in the classroom.

Outcome 1.2 EL students will receive differentiated supports and enrichment activities based on their demonstrated progress and goals.

Outcome 1.3 EL students will demonstrate proficiency on state assessments in core content areas.

Supporting Action Step	By Who?	By When?	Milestones
Implement professional development series for teachers. Implement on-site coaching sessions at each school.	Center X staff in consultation with core management group. Center X coaches in consultation with school teams.	Summer workshop completed in July each year. Onsite coaching between October and April each year. Year-end data fair conducted in June each year.	School teams participate in professional development, on-site coaching, and the year-end data fair. Increased proficiency on state assessments for ELs.

Goal 2. Structural elements of each school will ensure EL students are part of a smaller learning community with a common team of teachers and personalization supports.

Objective 2.1. Teachers will be teamed.			
Objective 2.2. Schools will implement appropriate personalization supports to meet their specific needs including the development of personalized learning plans and digital student portfolios.			
Outcome 2.1. EL students will be known well by a team of teachers who meet regularly to explore their strengths and challenges and adjust their instructional approaches.			
Outcome 2.2. EL students engage in ongoing and effective long term planning and access the resources needed to ensure they succeed.			
Supporting Action Step	By Who?	By When?	Milestones
Personalization supports (such as promoting student voice, student advisories, hand scheduling students, etc.) are implemented. Each school will adopt an approach that meets their specific needs.	CSSR coaches in consultation with core management team.	Monthly coaching delivered between October and April each year.	EL students indicate they are known well by teachers in their school. EL students have an individualized plan for high school and post-secondary success.

Goal 3. An interagency, inter-district team will be formed to leverage and share resources and provide support for at-risk EL students and their families.			
Objective 3.1. Development of an interagency, inter-district team to provide additional, outside supports to EL students and their families.			
Outcome 3.1. EL students with critical needs (Tiers 2 and 3) will receive needed intervention and support through collaborative community-wide efforts.			

Supporting Action Step	By Who?	By When?	Milestones
<p>Interagency partners will coordinate and deliver intervention/enrichment services to ELs.</p> <p>Interagency partners will host community meetings to engage families (topics may include: immigration law, assistance with FAFSA, college applications, etc.)</p>	<p>The core project management team (made up of representation of all partners) will oversee this work.</p>	<p>Team will be convened quarterly every year. Initial meeting will be designed to establish protocols and define outcomes.</p> <p>Community meetings will be held once each quarter. Each community partner will host at least 2 community meetings over the grant period.</p>	<p>EL students receive needed supports.</p> <p>Community members are aware of the project and receive additional support to assist their children.</p>

Goal 4. An objective evaluation process will be integrated into project activities to document and improve process and outcome.			
Objective 4.1. Evaluation findings will be used to improve Exc-EL implementation.			
Objective 4.2 Evaluation findings will be widely disseminated across all project partners.			
Outcome 4.1. Project activities and progress will be strengthened through the use of continuous improvement mechanisms.			
Supporting Action Step	By Who?	By When?	Milestones
An outside, objective evaluator	Outside evaluator will share	Partnership agreement secured	Adjustments to the program to

<p>is engaged in partnership with program staff, providing on-going data collection and feedback.</p>	<p>findings with the core management team. Core management team will be charged with further disseminating information to entire project members and outside organizations.</p>	<p>by January 1 of each project year. Annual reports on process indicators and progress towards outcomes in December of each project year.</p>	<p>increase effectiveness will be made based on data collected during the preceding year.</p>
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D. Personnel

A team of quality key personnel have been assembled to lead and manage the work of Exc-EL. These unique and dynamic team members bring a variety of background and experiences, the blending of these talents will result in an organization that exceeds the highest expectations. The project will be overseen by Principal Investigator, Dr. Tyrone Howard, with day to day operational support provided by Dr. Juan López as the Project Director. The project will be implemented and managed by a core management team comprised of representatives of all partners. Partner organizations have been selected based on their experience in the field and their expertise with the participating communities and populations.

Dr. Tyrone Howard, Principal Investigator (PI) is responsible for ensuring the project is carried out as proposed and certifying that funding is appropriately allocated. Dr. Howard, Professor of Urban Schooling at the UCLA Graduate School of Education studies, is the Faculty Director of Center X. Howard is also the Founder and Director of the Black Male Institute and Faculty Associate Director for the Academic Advancement Program at UCLA, the nation's premier retention program for underrepresented students. Dr. Howard is the author of the newly released book, "Why Race and Culture Matters in Schools: Closing the Achievement Gap in America's Classrooms" published by Teachers College Press. He has authored more than 50 peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and other academic publications and reports.

Dr. Juan López, Associate Director, Northeast Region, Center X, will serve as the Project Director. López provides consultation, coaching and training to schools across the nation facing the challenges of reforming and restructuring to meet the needs of language minority students. He has been instrumental in the design and introduction of numerous professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators in the northeast. Born in Cuba, Dr. López experienced the challenges of being an EL in public schools, and serves as mentor and role model to many educators and students

across the nation. As Project Director, López will be responsible for the overall management of Exc-EL, ensuring it meets all milestones and benchmarks in a manner that ensures the successful attainment of outcomes. López will also serve as a trainer and coach for all three districts.

Additional support from Center X will include Laureen Avery (Director, Northeast Region), Jason Cervone (Program Specialist, Northeast Region), and Lisa DiMartino (Program Specialist, Northeast Region). The four key team members cited above (Cervone, Avery, DiMartino and Lopez) will each allocate .25 FTE to this work, and PI Howard will allocate .1 FTE. This team has worked together for nearly ten years and functions effectively and efficiently. All have been trainers for professional development institutes and have extensive experience providing on-site coaching in schools. Additional technical, secretarial, administrative, financial and other general support will be provided by Center X administrative staff as needed.

Project Exc-EL has been greatly strengthened through the planning phase by the active involvement of partner districts. Key district staff who will serve on the core management team include:

Dr. Chris Clouet, Superintendent, Union Free School District of the Tarrytowns. has been a superintendent of schools for the past 12 years, most recently in the White Plains City School District, where he led a redesign of the city's two middle schools to better serve the social and emotional needs of students.

Raymond Sanchez, Superintendent, Ossining Union Free School District. Sanchez has served at all levels of the educational system, including working as an English as a Second Language teacher in Ossining. He recently received the New York Schools Data Analysis Technical Assistance Group Excellence in Education Award.

Suzanne Lasser, Director of ELL programs, White Plains City School District. Lasser directs all EL programs in White Plains, plus oversees the K-12 Family Information Center. She has taught and directed the Newcomer Center in White Plains public schools.

Community partners have likewise been instrumental in the formation of this collaborative effort. Partner organizations include:

Center for Secondary School Redesign (CSSR), the acknowledged national experts in transforming traditional school structures into small, personalized communities. Founder and President *Joe DiMartino* will serve as a member of the core management team and direct the CSSR involvement.

The *Pace Center* is a full-service educational enhancement provider specializing in reading, writing and literacy; and is fully staffed by certified reading and ESL teachers. *Sr. St. John Delaney* will serve as a member of the core management team and direct the PACE involvement.

Westchester Community College’s Gateway Center was conceived as an educational venue that would have a positive impact on Westchester County’s community and businesses. *Associate Dean Tere Wisell* will serve as a member of the core management team and direct the PACE involvement.

RSHM Life Center has a whole family orientation in all of their programs from toddlers to senior citizens, focusing on meeting the learning needs of the entire family in a variety of ways. *Sr. Susan Gardella* will serve as a member of the core management team and direct the RSHM involvement.

Resumes for all key personnel and partners are included in Appendix F, and MOUs from each partner and district are included in Appendix G.

E. Project Evaluation

Plus Alpha Research & Consulting, LLC (PARC) is a minority- and woman-owned small business with a strong background in research methodology and evaluation, experience evaluating i3 development grants, and content expertise in college and career readiness. PARC will serve as the external evaluator. The evaluation is a mixed-methods study with two components: 1) implementation study; and 2) efficacy study. The implementation study includes Tarrytown, Ossining, and White Plains school districts (3 middle schools and 3 high schools). The efficacy study will extend to comparison middle/high schools in neighboring school districts matched closely on key school-level variables.

Key evaluation questions, methods and analysis

Proposed Research Questions, Instruments, and Analysis

Data Source	Measures	Analysis Method
Implementation Evaluation Questions		
1. To what extent has Project Exc-EL provided EL students with access to academics in the		

Data Source	Measures	Analysis Method
classroom, access to resources, and differentiated supports and enrichment activities to support their learning?		
EL teacher interviews Focus groups of team of educators and community partners	EL students accessing and engaging with academics in the classroom EL students receiving differentiated supports and enrichment activities	Qualitative analysis (theme analysis) of teacher interviews, and triangulation with student survey results
Student surveys of Project Exc-EL students	EL students accessing resources identified Tiers 2 and 3 EL receiving needed intervention and support	Descriptive statistics of student survey data
2. To what extent has Project Exc-EL improved teacher’s use of data to adjust their instructional approaches and strengthened their continuous improvement mechanisms?		
EL teacher interviews Focus groups of team educators and community partners	Team of teachers meet regularly to explore their strengths and challenges Team of teachers adjust their instructional approaches Use of continuous improvement mechanisms	Qualitative analysis (theme analysis) of teacher interviews Observation
3. To what extent has Project Exc-EL increased EL students’ engagement, self-regulated learning, and attitudes toward college?		
Student surveys of Project Exc-EL students	EL students sense of school engagement EL students self-regulated learning	Qualitative analysis (theme analysis) of student interviews
Focus groups of students	EL students attitudes and motivation to attend college	Descriptive statistics of student survey data
Efficacy Evaluation Questions		
4. To what extent does the implementation of Project Exc-EL increase student achievement and school progress?		
Administrative data (district and state)	New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) Regents Competency Tests (RCT) and State Assessments: English, Mathematics	Propensity score matching to create comparison group of EL students. Regression analysis, controlling for school- and student-level covariates.

To answer the questions regarding implementation of Project Exc-EL, and student and teacher

outputs (Evaluation questions #1-3), we are proposing a multi-method longitudinal design focused on collecting data from the treatment group. Because Project Exc-EL uses an RTI-approach, and focuses on EL students, it is important to understand the fidelity of implementation for the team of teachers, as well as with the EL students. Therefore we will conduct focus groups with the team, as well as individual interviews of the teachers and EL students. For students, we will create an on-line student survey, using Qualtrics, to measure Project Exc-EL outputs and outcomes such as student engagement and regulation. Implementation findings will be summarized, analyzed and reported using a *Fidelity of Implementation Index* methodology.

To answer the question regarding efficacy of Project Exc-EL, and student outcomes (Evaluation question #4), the evaluation design for this study is a multi-site quasi-experimental matched comparison design. A rigorously matched-comparison group of EL students will allow student performance outcomes to be compared between schools that use Project Exc-EL and similar students from the surrounding districts that do not. Matching will involve a two-step procedure of first matching on school characteristics. Schools from surrounding districts will be carefully matched on racial/ethnic composition, percentage of free or reduced price lunch, school enrollment size, and school performance. Once schools are matched, EL students from the comparison schools will be matched to the treatment group, with variables such as prior achievement. To ensure face validity, we will ask the UCLA Center X team to provide input on our matches of schools and students.

We conducted a power analysis, using Optimal Design software (version 3.01), to determine the minimum detectable effect size (MDES). The intervention sample will be approximately 700 EL students across six middle and high schools. The analysis shows a similar group of comparison schools and students for a total sample size of 12 schools and 1400 students (see expanded analysis details in Appendix J).

Implementation of Key Components and Outcomes

Collecting and sharing implementation data with project partners in a timely manner is essential to the continual improvement cycle aiding all project members to meet project benchmarks, refine

development, and improve delivery of service. Further, it is essential to providing the context for understanding outcomes and for successful replication. As stated earlier, PARC will conduct both student surveys and teacher interviews on a bi-annual basis (pre-intervention and post-intervention). For student-level performance measures, we will use readily available student-level data including, attendance, grades, and state achievement test data (Regents Competency and State Assessment Tests in English and Mathematics, and the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test). Other student record data including course enrollment and graduation will be utilized to understand other types of performance outcomes (i.e. college readiness and increased graduation). These data will be collected for treatment and comparison students during the course of the study.

A more detailed description of the Evaluation Plan is included in Appendix J.