

San Francisco's Pathway to Leadership for Urban Schools (SFPLUS)

Developing Great Leaders for San Francisco Unified
School District

Proposal to the US Education Department's
Investing in Innovation (i3) Program

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San Francisco Unified School District and
TNTP

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A. Significance

1. Absolute priority 1(a). The San Francisco Pathway to Leadership in Urban Schools (**SFPLUS**) will prepare principals with the skills that have been demonstrated by research to significantly improve student achievement toward college- and career-ready standards. The proposed project will 1) build a pipeline of leaders to fill critical principal vacancies; 2) use proven adult learning strategies to develop principals' instructional leadership skills, only graduating those who have been passed rigorous evaluations; and 3) build the local capacity and national knowledge base to sustain and replicate the program. SFPLUS will aim to place leaders in the highest need K-12 schools serving the San Francisco Unified School District's (SFUSD's) diverse student population: 58 percent of students are low-income, 25 percent are English learners, and 13 percent have disabilities.ⁱ By developing effective leaders for these students' schools, including eight Title I Tier I schools performing in the lowest five percent across the entire state of California,ⁱⁱ SFPLUS will ensure the highest need schools are staffed by excellent leaders and will also address absolute priorities 1(a), 2(a), 3, and 4 of the i3 competition.

SFUSD will partner with TNTP—a national nonprofit with more than 15 years of experience training teachers and leaders to close the achievement gap—to develop and implement this innovative program. TNTP has previously developed such programs in Camden and Philadelphia. Initial results show that PhillyPLUS residents have successfully evaluated, supported, and developed teachers and made important instructional leadership decisions, reaching a significant number of students. For example, the first cohort of nine PLUS residents in Philadelphia managed 128 teachers: their coaching and smart retention strategies has had a sustained impact on 2,060 students taught by effective or highly effective teachers they supported during the residency year.

2. Novel Approach. *Residency models.* The vast majority of new principals are prepared by traditional programs that researchers characterize as often lacking rigorous selection or evaluation

criteria and that prioritize coursework over practical experience.ⁱⁱⁱ SFPLUS, however, builds upon the growing body of evidence that supports residency models for principal training. Several residency programs across the country have undergone robust evaluations that employ quasi-experimental designs, have high levels of internal and external validity, and meet the *What Works Clearinghouse* standards for evidence with reservations. The programs have demonstrated that their training models produce statistically significant program impacts that are independent of and larger than the effect of principal experience alone.^{iv} The common elements between these programs and SFPLUS include close collaborations between nonprofits and urban school districts, defined leadership competency models, robust recruitment, rigorous selection, intensive pre-service trainings, a year-long residency, principal certification, and post-residency support for new principals.

Innovations. Though it builds upon the evidence from other residency models, SFPLUS offers five innovations that have the potential to demonstrate even greater impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning and to change our national conversation about principal preparation:

1) Focused competency model. Principal training programs are all too often a mile wide and an inch deep. Many design their curricula around the 183 knowledge, disposition, and performance indicators included in the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards, which are used as the basis of principal evaluation across 40 states.^v SFUSD and TNTP believe that these indicators are far too broad and too numerous for new leaders to master them all. Therefore, SFPLUS focuses on just five discrete, high-impact skills that are essential for school leader success and a small number of associated leadership actions/behaviors, depicted in *Table 1* (page 3) and in *Appendix J*. By limiting its scope, SFPLUS is able to focus its learning experiences and ensure that residents master each of the core leadership skills prior to assuming principal roles.

Table 1—SFPLUS Leadership Skills and Actions/Behaviors

Purposeful Leadership	Instructional Leadership	Results-Driven Leadership	Strategic Operations	Communication
Culturally Responsive Leadership	Vision for Achievement	Has a Sense of Urgency	Aligns Resources to Support the Vision	Clear and Compelling
Reflective Leadership	Drives Teacher Growth	Establishes Data-Driven Teacher Practice	Utilizes Personal Systems	Respectful and Inclusive
Influential Leadership	Ensures Effective Implementation of Curriculum and Planning	Monitors and Responds to Data	Displays Critical Thinking and Prioritization	Honest and Direct
		Manages Talent for Growth and Impact	Establishes Systems for School Culture	

2) Management practice. SFPLUS residents are expected to not only prove their knowledge of the five core leadership skills (outlined above) during program coursework; they must also demonstrate the skills while managing a team of teachers throughout their residencies. Research has shown that managing and developing teachers is the single most important thing an effective principal does to drive results for students.^{vi} Most training programs, however, only address instructional leadership skills in theory. Even many residency programs lack the structures to allow principals-in-training to practice what will become their primary job responsibility—managing people. SFUSD and TNTP will place every resident in an assistant principal or equivalent position with direct management authority over a subgroup of at least seven teachers. While residents in other programs might get to practice leading professional development sessions, SFPLUS residents do that and more, including conducting formal teacher evaluations, providing performance feedback, and making high-stakes talent management decisions. They practice these key principal leadership actions while receiving feedback from their mentor principals, program coaches, and peers—significantly enhancing their abilities to manage teacher talent from their first days as principals.

3) *Graduating only effective leaders.* In addition to managing teacher talent, SFPLUS residents must also prove that their management has been *effective* and has positively contributed to *teacher growth* and *student outcomes* in order to receive the program’s recommendation for a principalship. This practice is unique in the principal preparation sector. Though it is true that nearly every other program, whether university- or residency-based, has some sort of final evaluation component, almost all admitted candidates also graduate and earn certification.^{vii} This occurs in part because programs that do not provide their candidates with full responsibility for managing a team of teachers cannot reliably measure whether they have had an impact on teacher development and student learning. In response to this challenge, some principal training programs invest heavily in their initial selection models to gauge leadership potential. The most extensive of these models typically include a full-day interview event, which is far more than the traditional paper application, but which is still a limited view of a candidate’s future effectiveness. Therefore, it is not surprising that little evidence exists to indicate that any teacher or principal training program has developed admissions criteria and processes that reliably correlate with future student achievement outcomes.^{viii}

For these reasons, SFPLUS extends its selectivity into the program experience, including measures of teacher management and student outcomes at the end of pre-service training and throughout the school year. SFPLUS builds each cohort with positive attrition in mind. Earning a principalship is wholly dependent upon actual leadership impact—not on interview performance. *Table 2* below depicts the multiple measures SFPLUS uses to assess school leader impact prior to certification:

Table 2—SFPLUS School Leader Evaluation Components

	Performance Indicators	Measures
Student Outcomes	Student Learning Objectives (SLO) implementation	SFPLUS Rubric: Results Driven
	Student Learning Objectives (SLO) outcomes	Student learning data

	Increase in student growth (where data are available)	California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP)
Teacher Effectiveness	Teacher development	Teacher evaluation data (common rubric)
	Teacher coaching	SFPLUS teacher coaching feedback tracker
	Teachers' upward feedback	TNTP school-wide teacher <i>Insight</i> survey
	Teacher differential retention	SFPLUS differential retention goals tracker
	Teacher professional development	PD rubric from Paul Bambrick's <i>Leverage Leadership</i>
School-Wide Impact	Sustaining impact resident project	TNTP <i>Insight</i> instructional culture survey
	Coaching observations	SFPLUS Rubric: Strategic Operations

4) Transforming district leadership. Principals do not operate in a vacuum. To be successful, program graduates will need multiple layers of support, including effective coaching, aligned management, and robust data to guide decision-making. Therefore, SFPLUS graduates receive program coaching throughout their first year as principals. They will also benefit from the joint efforts between SFUSD and TNTP to build capacity and transform school leadership practices at all levels throughout the district. There are three primary components to this capacity-building work.

First, TNTP will work with SFUSD's emerging Talent Acquisition & Assignment, Talent Management, and Professional Learning & Leadership Development teams to improve the recruitment, selection, training, and support of district leaders during and beyond the grant period. This cross-departmental collaboration will provide professional development (PD) to principal managers, establishing a shared vision for effective school leadership and for effective principal management and coaching. This vision will align with the SFPLUS competency model, ensuring alignment of expectations and a seamless transition for program graduates between the program and district. The collaboration will also focus on ensuring fidelity to the evaluation and observation frameworks against which all district principals are assessed and supported. Second, TNTP will provide PD to all SFPLUS mentor principals (existing school leaders). Mentor PD will bolster SFPLUS resident learning. It will also improve the practices of existing school leaders (which in

future years will include SFPLUS graduates) and enhance SFUSD principals' ability to participate effectively in peer learning. Third, TNTP will help residents monitor and positively influence school environment through biannual administration and analysis of its *Insight* instructional culture survey. TNTP will survey all SFUSD teachers for all five years of the grant to synthesize critical feedback for residents and principals and to allow for comparisons between SFPLUS and non-SFPLUS schools. *Insight* gathers timely information on school leadership and the instructional environment directly from the people who know it best—teachers. TNTP built *Insight* based on data collected from more than 11,000 teachers nationwide and from studying successful school environments to understand the conditions that attract and retain effective teachers. *Insight*'s scoring system has been independently validated as a leading indicator of student performance on state tests. The results will provide school and district leaders (including SFPLUS residents and graduates) with concrete data about their schools' learning and teaching environments and targeted recommendations for improvement. TNTP will provide targeted trainings to assist leaders in the process of acting on *Insight* data. *Insight* results will also be used to evaluate and improve the SFPLUS project throughout implementation. Additional information about *Insight* is available in *Appendix J*.

Combined, first year principal coaching, aligned principal management, mentor principal PD, and a measure of instructional culture will provide SFUSD school leaders with the cohesive leadership supports that researchers have identified as essential but rare among efforts to transform school systems.^{ix}

5) Building on local exemplars. SFUSD and TNTP believe that districts need to develop the capacity to produce their own leaders. There are simply not enough national programs to meet the need, and many graduates of traditional preparation programs are not adequately prepared.^x We believe that aspiring leaders who have been trained and who rise through the ranks in local schools

offer the most promising solution to the long-term issue of leadership capacity. The program's curriculum will build upon specialized local knowledge and will be customized to encompass the work and methods of the exemplary school leaders in SFUSD who routinely produce the district's future master teachers, instructional coaches, principals, and other leaders.

3. Advancing the Field. *National knowledge base.* The research is clear: leadership actions account for up to 25 percent of a school's impact on student achievement, largely due to leaders' actions to establish school culture and to manage teacher talent.^{xi} Yet despite overwhelming consensus that leadership matters, there is relatively little research indicating that any particular approaches to training school leaders are more effective than others. Significant program effects have been identified for principal residencies sponsored by charter networks, New Leaders, and the NYC Leadership Academy.^{xiii} These contribute to the evidence base for SFPLUS. However, these studies have little to say about each of the five major innovations described above, providing SFPLUS with significant opportunity to contribute to the knowledge base and shift practices in the field:

- i. A finding of significant program effects from the SFPLUS external evaluation will support the theory that a streamlined principal competency model can improve leadership preparation.
- ii. Findings of program effects, combined with survey data from principals, will advance the SFPLUS assumption that the best leadership preparation is the direct management of teachers—knowledge which will have far-reaching implications for programs, districts, and policymakers alike.
- iii. The SFPLUS external evaluation will analyze whether candidate performance against individual SFPLUS competencies and performance metrics is linked to future performance as school leaders. This contribution to the knowledge base is critical, as other teacher and

principal prep programs have not found strong correlations. If such correlations are found for SFPLUS at the admissions stage, it will help the field to improve principal prep program admissions criteria and processes. If, as expected, correlations are found to be stronger for performance evaluations conducted throughout the program, these findings would support the argument that programs should shift their focus and resources away from admissions and toward in-program evaluation.

- iv. Finally, findings of program effects, combined with survey data from principals, will advance the existing knowledge base that comprehensive leadership systems support principal effectiveness. The SFPLUS evaluation will provide an additional case study for this line of research, and it will do so within the unique context of a prep program provider as the primary developer of the leadership systems and management practices.

Bridging knowledge and practice. The new knowledge generated by the implementation and evaluation of SFPLUS will be significant, not only for researchers but also for practitioners.

TNTP plans to replicate the SFPLUS model in other districts and states across the country. The organization has a strong track record of bringing promising new practices to scale. For example, the organization's work to build new teacher career pathways and compensation systems affected more than 110,000 teachers this year, and its efforts to pioneer next generation teacher evaluation systems affected 145,000 teachers in 5,000 schools this year, influencing the quality of instruction received by an estimated 2.6 million students. In addition to program replication efforts from TNTP, knowledge generated through the grant activities will be distributed publicly and may affect the practices of educators and policymakers nationwide. TNTP has previously achieved such broad impact through publishing groundbreaking reports like *The Widget Effect* (2009), which catalyzed a national conversation on teacher effectiveness and was prominently featured in many states' Race to the Top plans, and *The Irreplaceables* (2012), which inspired editorials in 7

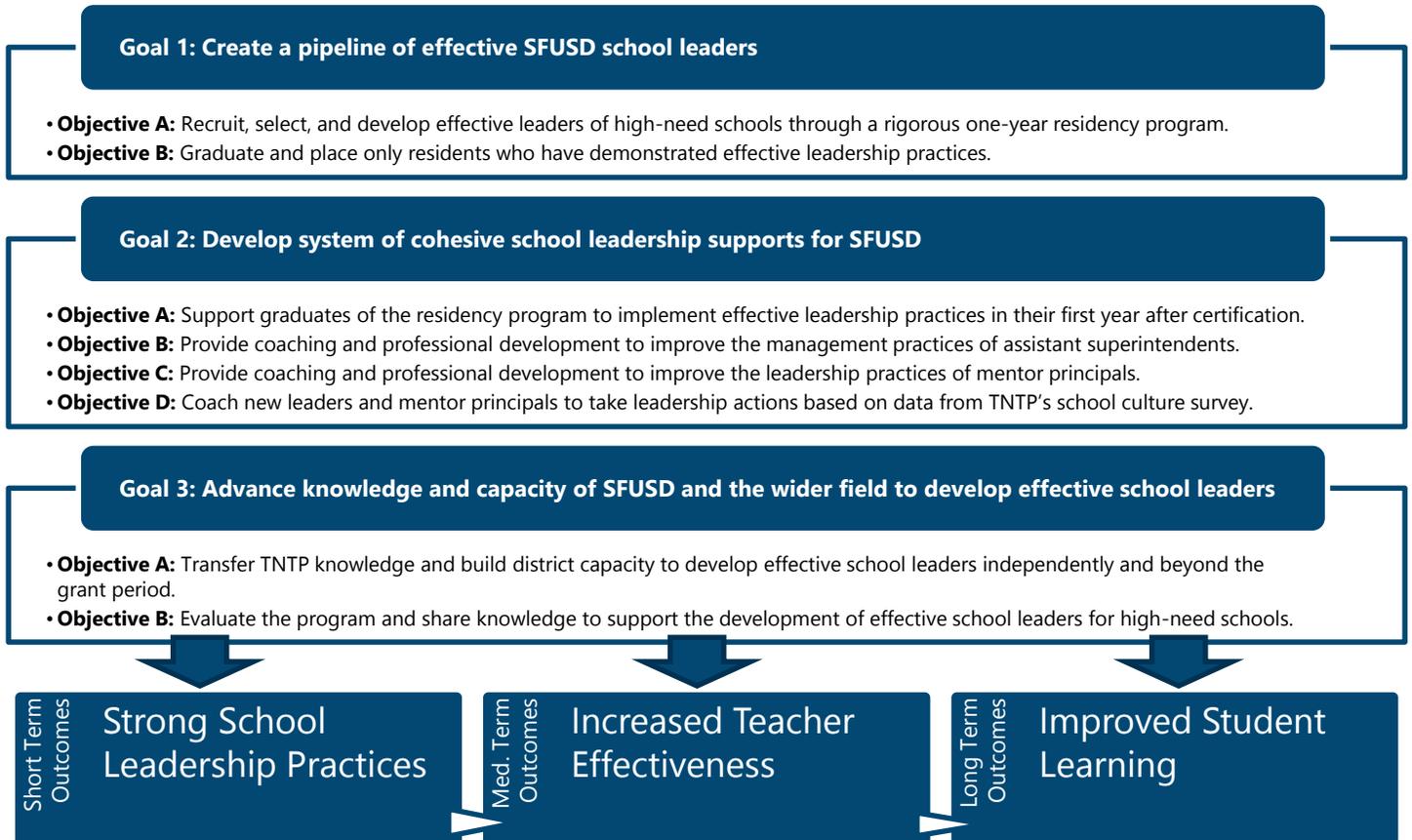
of the top 10 newspapers in the country and “smart retention” initiatives by several of the largest school districts in the country.

Local replication. In addition to developing the systems of comprehensive leadership supports for SFUSD, an explicit goal of SFPLUS is to transfer program implementation knowledge from TNTP to the district over the course of the grant period. TNTP will work to build the capacity of district leaders to continue developing and supporting effective principals independently and beyond the grant period. 150 current and aspiring school leaders across the district every year stand to benefit from this capacity-building effort. SFUSD will have rights to all of the content and methods developed by TNTP post-grant.

B. Project Design

1. Project Goals.

Figure 3— SFPLUS Logic Model



Goal 1. At its core, SFPLUS aims to implement a high-quality principal residency program consisting of the following components designed to ensure school leader effectiveness:

- **Competency model** focused on the most essential behaviors of effective school leaders, described in Section A(2) of this proposal and reproduced in full in *Appendix J*.
- **Recruitment** through online and district-wide communication channels, appealing to effective educators who aspire to leadership positions. TNTP has significant expertise in this area, having successfully recruited more than 330,000 teachers and having begun principal recruitment work in Camden and Philadelphia.
- **Selection** is rigorous and grounded in the SFPLUS competency model. To earn admission, candidates must present an application including essays and feedback on a teaching sample, pass a phone interview and interview day with group and individual role plays and performance tasks, and earn steering committee approval. Unlike most other programs, selection does not end at admission: it also encompasses high-stakes performance evaluations participants will complete at the end of pre-service training and during the residency year. A description of SFPLUS selectivity at multiple points throughout the program is available in Section A(2), and additional details about the selection model are available in *Appendix J*.
- **Pre-Service Training, Residency, and Post-Residency Training coursework** has been developed by TNTP in alignment with the SFPLUS competency model. The course themes are consistent across each of the three training periods: 1) Instructional Leadership & Management, 2) Data Driven Instruction, 3) Orchestrating a Culture of Learning, and 4) Leadership, Equity, and Diversity. Full course descriptions are available in *Appendix J*. The Pre-Service and Post-Service Training coursework last for 4-6 weeks each. During Pre-Service Training, residents also lead summer school instruction and teacher development. During Post-Service Training, they work in their SFUSD school leadership positions.

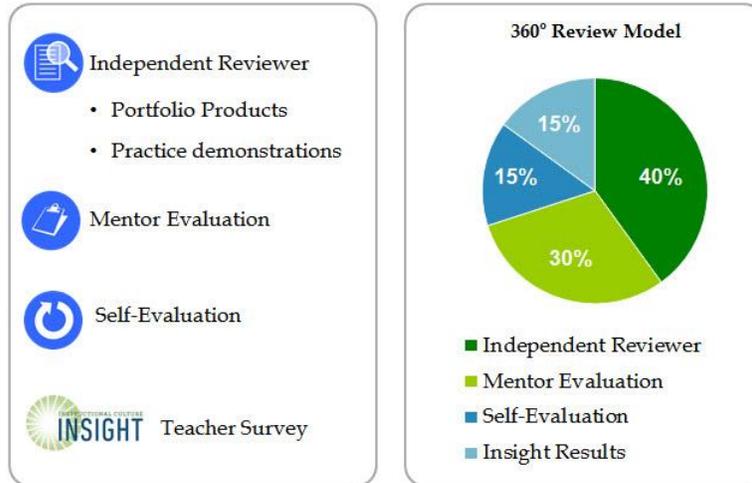
Throughout the entire program experience, residents participate in professional learning communities known as “critical friends groups,” professional book clubs, independent learning experiences, and assessment and data reflection sessions designed to customize and track each candidate’s professional growth plan for the year. A sample calendar illustrating how residents spend their time in Pre-Service Training follows:

Figure 4—SFPLUS Sample Pre-Service Training Calendar

Week 5 Focus: Self Assess & Reflect					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Block 1: 8:00-10:15	Instructional Leadership & Management	Data Driven Leadership	Instructional Leadership & Management	Data Driven Leadership	Orchestrating a Culture for Learning
Break: 10:15-10:30	Break				
Block 2: 10:30-12:30	Instructional Leadership & Management	Data Driven Leadership	Instructional Leadership & Management	Data Driven Leadership	Orchestrating a Culture for Learning
Lunch: 12:30-1:30	Lunch				
Block 3: 1:30-3:30	Operational Management: Special Education Compliance	Critical Friends Groups	Independent Learning	Critical Friends Groups	Independent Learning
Block 4: 3:30-5:00	Operational Management: Special Education Compliance	Professional Book Clubs	Assessment	Professional Book Clubs	Assessment Data Review

- School-year residency under a mentor principal and program coach** will provide SFPLUS participants with the opportunity to formally manage a team of teachers in their schools and assume responsibility for those teachers’ evaluation, development, differential retention, and student learning, as detailed in Section A(2). Residents will receive weekly job-embedded coaching from an SFPLUS coach and participate in monthly professional development with their cohorts. A sample professional development schedule is available in *Appendix J*.
- Rigorous 360° evaluation** of SFPLUS residents ensures that only those who demonstrate effectiveness and produce results for students will earn their certification and be placed as principals in SFUSD, as detailed in Section A(2) and illustrated in *Table 2* (page 4) & *Figure 5* (page 12):

Figure 5—SFPLUS 360° Resident Evaluation System



Goal 2. SFPLUS also includes a goal to develop a cohesive leadership system to surround and support district principals to reach higher and more consistent levels of effectiveness. That system will include a) leadership coaching for SFPLUS graduates in their first year as principals, b) PD for principals’ managers, c) training of mentor principals, and d) targeted TNTP support for principals in specific areas for school improvement, as identified by the *Insight* teacher survey results. All of these project elements represent significant innovations for the field and are described in detail in Section A(2).

Goal 3. Finally, SFPLUS aims to build the knowledge and capacity necessary to replicate the program and advance school leadership locally and nationally. Capacity building efforts will include recruiting and hiring qualified talent, strategic planning and goal setting, new staff induction and training, transferring new knowledge and tools, and the development of accountability measures to ensure ongoing quality of implementation. In the final year of the grant period, TNTP will provide one year of continued support through quarterly program check-ins and data analysis. TNTP has previously executed a number of capacity-building initiatives with large urban districts such as the restructuring of the Human Resources departments in the San Francisco Unified School District and Denver Public Schools, and managing the initial

implementation of teacher evaluation systems in the Houston Independent School District and New York City Department of Education.

Likewise, TNTP has extensive experience evaluating its programs and disseminating knowledge to advance policy and practice. Internal and external evaluation activities are described in detail in Sections C(3) and D, respectively. In the past, results of TNTP research have helped shape the federal Race to the Top competition, which adopted many of TNTP’s recommendations from *The Widget Effect*; subsequently, a majority of states across the country have moved to adopt next generation teacher evaluation systems that incorporate multiple measures of performance, including student growth as a significant component. *The Irreplaceables* has received widespread media coverage, including editorials in 7 of the top 10 newspapers in the country by distribution, and has jumpstarted a national conversation about the real teacher retention crisis—too many schools lose top teachers while retaining ineffective ones. Some of the country’s largest districts have cited the report in announcements of new “smart retention” initiatives. In the coming years, TNTP will share learnings from SFPLUS to contribute to the national conversation about leadership development.

2. Project Activities and Risks. *Tables 6* (below) and *7* (page 15) demonstrate the alignment of project activities to goals, objectives, outcomes, and i3 performance measures, and identify timelines when specific activities occur.

Table 6— SFPLUS Goals, Objectives, Outcomes, and i3 Priorities and GPRAs

Goal 1: Create a pipeline of effective SFUSD school leaders	
We used Absolute Priority 1, subpart a and all i3 performance measures to guide our project design and goals. In addition to addressing AP 1 and performance measures around cost per student, this goal in particular also addresses equitable access to effective teachers or principals for low-income and high-need students (i3 AP 1, subpart b).	
Objectives	Outcomes / Metrics
A) Recruit, select, and develop effective leaders of high-need schools through a rigorous 1-year residency program.	Only candidates who meet rigorous performance standards complete the program, improving the overall effectiveness of SFUSD principals.

<p>B) Graduate and place only residents who have demonstrated effective leadership practices.</p>	<p>On average, 12 candidates participate in the residency program per year, or 32 - 38 over all three years of program implementation under the grant. (The last cohort will not have finished the residency before the end of the grant period.)</p> <p>At least 90% of graduates hired for leadership roles in high-need SFUSD schools.</p>
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Goal 2: Develop system of cohesive school leadership supports for SFUSD

We used Absolute Priority 1, subpart a and all i3 performance measures to guide our project design and goals. This goal in particular addresses AP 1 and subpart a.

Objectives	Outcomes / Metrics
<p>A) Support graduates of the residency program to implement effective leadership practices in their first year after certification.</p>	<p>At least 85% of program graduates who become administrators in partner schools are retained for two or more years.</p>
<p>B) Provide coaching and professional development to improve the management practices of assistant superintendents.</p>	<p>At least 75% of schools led by program graduates demonstrate positive changes in school outcomes by their second year post-residency, based on measures such as TNTP's instructional culture survey, number and accuracy of teacher observations, differential retention of effective and ineffective teachers, teacher perception of quality of feedback, and where available, student achievement data.</p>
<p>C) Provide coaching and professional development to improve the leadership practices of mentor principals.</p>	<p>By the end of their second year post-residency, program graduates are rated in top categories on the on district evaluation at higher rates than comparable leaders in the district.</p>
<p>D) Coach new leaders and mentor principals to take leadership actions based on data from TNTP's school culture survey.</p>	<p>At least 50% of schools led by mentor principals who complete the PD series will demonstrate positive changes in leadership practice and/or school outcomes in SY2016-17, and at least 65% will demonstrate positive changes in leadership practice and/or school outcomes in SY2017-18, based on multiple measures.</p>

Goal 3: Advance knowledge and capacity of SFUSD and the wider field to develop effective school leaders

We used Absolute Priority 1, subpart a and all i3 performance measures to guide our project design and goals. This goal in particular addresses AP 1, and short- and long-term performance measures around fidelity to implementation and program evaluation.

Objectives	Outcomes / Metrics
<p>A) Transfer TNTP knowledge and build district capacity to develop effective school leaders independently and beyond the grant period.</p>	<p>SFUSD will have qualified staff in well-designed roles. They will have the expertise to sustain the residency program without TNTP or i3 funds, as demonstrated by program implementation data collected on a quarterly basis in the last year of the grant and for one year after the grant period.</p>
<p>B) Evaluate the program and share knowledge to support the development of effective school leaders for high-need schools.</p>	<p>TNTP will publish and present project findings through outlets such as the TNTP Blog, professional conferences, and at least one white paper.</p> <p>Practitioners and policymakers will have access to new knowledge about the effectiveness of TNTP and the partner district's approach to developing school leaders for high-need schools.</p>

Table 7—SFPLUS Project Activity Timeline

Year 1 10/1/14 – 9/30/15	Year 2 10/1/15 – 9/30/16	Year 3 10/1/16 – 9/30/17	Year 4 10/1/17 – 9/30/18	Year 5 10/1/18 – 9/30/19
Residency program planning	Cohort 1 Residency year continues with school year (SY) placement	Cohort 2 Residency year continues with SY placement	Cohort 3 Residency year continues with SY placement	Cohort 4 Residency year continues with SY placement
	TNTP coaches mentor principals	TNTP coaches mentor principals	SFUSD coaches mentor principals	SFUSD coaches mentor principals
TNTP launches recruitment & selection, Cohort 1	TNTP launches recruitment & selection, Cohort 2	TNTP launches recruitment & selection, Cohort 3	SFUSD launches recruitment & selection, Cohort 4	SFUSD launches recruitment & selection, Cohort 5
Cohort 1 Residency starts with TNTP-led pre-service training	Cohort 2 Residency starts with TNTP-led pre-service training	Cohort 3 Residency starts with TNTP-led pre-service training	Cohort 4 Residency starts with SFUSD-led pre-service training	Cohort 5 Residency starts with SFUSD-led pre-service training
	Qualifying Cohort 1 graduates hired for Principal and AP roles	Qualifying Cohort 2 graduates hired for Principal and AP roles	Qualifying Cohort 3 graduates hired for Principal and AP roles	Qualifying Cohort 4 graduates hired for Principal and AP roles
	TNTP-led post residency summer training for Cohort 1 followed by school year coaching	TNTP-led post residency summer training for Cohort 2 followed by school year coaching	SFUSD-led post residency summer training for Cohort 3 followed by school year coaching	SFUSD-led post residency summer training for Cohort 4 followed by school year coaching
	Launch program evaluation efforts	Ongoing evaluation of program outcomes	Ongoing evaluation of program outcomes	Complete program evaluation efforts
			Cohort 1 principals become mentors to new Residents in SFUSD-run program	Cohort 2 principals become mentors to new Residents in SFUSD-run program
Capacity building: <i>Insight</i> school culture survey, coaching district leadership	Capacity building: <i>Insight</i> school culture survey, coaching district leadership	Capacity building: <i>Insight</i> school culture survey, coaching district leadership, program knowledge transfer	Capacity building: <i>Insight</i> school culture survey, program knowledge transfer, TNTP consultation support	Capacity building: <i>Insight</i> school culture survey, program knowledge transfer, TNTP consultation support

Risks to project success. Based on the research and TNTP’s experience implementing similar programs, the partners anticipate four primary risks to successful project implementation, each of which has been mitigated to the greatest extent possible:

- i. It is often a challenge to recruit the high-level, experienced staff required to run a successful leadership development program. TNTP has mitigated this risk by actively cultivating its talent pool, offering extremely competitive salaries, and by creating a sought-after workplace culture. In the past two years, TNTP’s leadership development initiatives in Bridgeport, Camden, and Philadelphia—cities with generally weaker talent pools than San Francisco—have exceeded their goals of staffing open positions on their program teams within 60 days.

These site-based TNTP staff have a combined 25 years of school leadership experience, and 35 percent of new hires are people of color.

- ii. Recruiting enough participants can also be a risk to leadership development programs; by launching the program in collaboration with SFUSD, the partners have immediate access to the deep educator talent pools in the district and in the wider Bay Area.
- iii. Other leadership residency programs may intend to provide their residents with the experience managing a team of teachers, but they often face structural challenges at the school level that prevent them from placing residents in such positions. Instead, many end up supervising lunch or homerooms. SFUSD is committed to giving residents management responsibilities over teachers and placing residents in existing assistant principal budget lines, as indicated by the MOU in *Appendix G*. TNTP will communicate these expectations early and often with residency site principals.
- iv. Finally, evaluations of other residency programs have noted the wide variation in resident experience based on the quality of their mentor principals.^{xiii} SFPLUS will mitigate this risk by providing structured training and coaching by program staff who wrap around the resident to control for variations in placement settings. TNTP will also train and coach mentor principals throughout the grant period, improving resident experiences and enhancing mentors' own leadership capacity.

C. Management Plan and Personnel

1. Management Responsibilities, Milestones, and Metrics

Expert project management. This project will be a joint initiative between several entities: SFUSD, TNTP, the U.S. Education Department and an external research team from RAND. TNTP’s designated i3 Project Director **Kate Sobel**, with the support of a grant management team, will keep stakeholder teams connected, aligning each group’s efforts with evidence, managing the lead staff member on site, and efficiently working toward successful completion of project goals. More information on project roles can be found in *Appendix J*.

TNTP’s PLUS Staff. As shown in *Figure 8*, the i3 Project Director will lead the site-based team. The i3 Project Director keeps the team connected to i3 and other stakeholders. Individual resumes for these and other personnel named in the proposal are included in *Appendix F*, and staff descriptions are included in *Appendix J*.

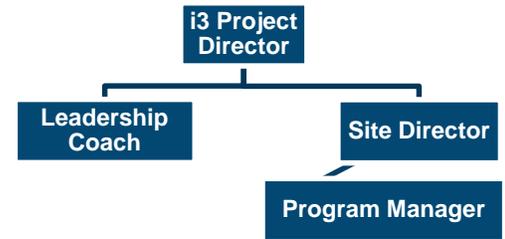


Figure 8—TNTP’s PLUS Staff

Project Milestones. *Table 9* below shows shared responsibility for achieving each program objective, and the milestones that will demonstrate progress along the way.

Table 9—Project Goals, Staff Roles and Responsibilities, Milestones, and Timelines

Goal 1: Create a pipeline of effective SFUSD school leaders			
Objectives	Staff Roles and Responsibilities	Milestones	Timelines
A) Recruit, select, and develop effective leaders of high-need schools through a rigorous 1-year residency program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TNTP Partner sets goals with SFUSD, ensures a consistent high bar for selection, and ensures that recruitment targets are met • Site Director and Program Manager run recruitment campaigns, interview candidates, and coordinate applicant review and data analysis • SFUSD Coordinator sets resident placement goals with TNTP Partner and coordinates internal district referrals 	Conduct recruitment campaigns	Annually; Jan-Jun
		Screen and select cohort	Annually; Apr-Jul
		Set goals and refine models based on evaluation outcomes	Annually; Jan-Mar
B) Graduate and place residents who have demonstrated effective leadership practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner ensures that all candidates have demonstrated effective leadership practices prior to graduation • Coach conducts assessments of leaders • Partner, Coach, and SFUSD Coordinator collaborate to determine best-fit placements for graduates 	Evaluate candidate data; ensure that only those assessed as effective are matriculated	Annually; May
		Process administrative certifications	Annually; June
		Place graduates in best-fit schools and principal/AP roles	Annually; Jun-Jul

Goal 2: Develop system of cohesive school leadership supports for SFUSD

Objectives	Staff Roles and Responsibilities	Milestones	Timelines
A) Support graduates of the residency program to implement effective leadership practices in their first year after graduation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner and Coach ensure the quality and ongoing improvement of the coaching model • Partner and Coach observe and coach groups of approximately 12 new principals and assistant principals each year 	Coach new principals/APs in their first year	Annually; Sep-May
		Refine coaching model based on evaluation outcomes	Annually; July
B) Provide coaching and professional development to improve the management practices of assistant superintendents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TNTP Partner and Site Director develop content and ensure the quality and ongoing improvement of the first year professional development • Coach executes first year coursework for principals managers and, along with Partner, provides one-one-one support through school-based observation and coaching • Program Manager coordinates logistics and data analysis 	Develop curricular materials for assistant superintendent PD	Sep 2014
		Implement PD for assistant superintendents	Oct 2014 – Jun 2015
		Evaluate lessons learned from PD year and incorporate in pipeline program	July 2015
C) Provide coaching and professional development to improve the leadership practices of mentor principals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TNTP Partner and Site Director develop content and ensure the quality and ongoing improvement of the first year professional development • Coach executes first year coursework for mentor principals and, along with Partner, provides one-one-one support through school-based observation and coaching • Program Manager coordinates logistics and data analysis 	Develop curricular materials for mentor principal PD	Sep 2014
		Implement PD for mentor principals	Oct 2014 – Jun 2015
		Evaluate lessons learned from PD year and incorporate in pipeline program	July 2015
D) Coach new leaders and mentor principals to take leadership actions based on data from TNTP's school culture survey.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Director troubleshoots Insight implementation challenges, coordinates with SFUSD, and shares data and recommendations with district • Coach and Partner guide principals to understand and take action based on Insight data • Program Manager monitors teacher survey completion rates and conducts follow-up • TNTP's <i>Insight</i> Team analyzes responses, develops school and district recommendations, and maintains necessary survey infrastructure 	Administer fall Insight survey	Annually; October
		Analyze data, provide recommendations and training	Annually; Nov-Dec
		Administer spring Insight survey	Annually; March
		Analyze data, provide recommendations and training	Annually; Apr-May

Goal 3: Advance knowledge and capacity of SFUSD and the wider field to develop effective school leaders

Objectives	Staff Roles and Responsibilities	Milestones	Timelines
A) Transfer TNTP knowledge and build		Codify program learning, finalize capacity building plan	Oct–Nov 2017

district capacity to develop effective school leaders independently and beyond the grant period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TNTP Partner and Site Director design and implement all elements of capacity building initiative, with logistical and tool development assistance from the Program Manager and Coach as needed • SFUSD Coordinator manages new district staff, collaborates with TNTP, and liaises with senior district leadership to ensure success of capacity building initiative 	Hire SFUSD staff to sustain program	Oct 2017 – Sept 2018
		Train SFUSD staff, transfer knowledge	Oct 2017 – Sept 2018
		Follow-up data analysis and technical support	SY 2018-19; Quarterly
B) Evaluate the program and share knowledge to support the development of effective school leaders for high-need schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Director and Partner oversee program improvements • Site Director oversees all evaluation activities • Program Manager analyzes TNTP and SFUSD evaluation data, with assistance from TNTP’s Research and Evaluation and Insight teams • SFUSD Coordinator provides timely access to district data sources • RAND researchers conduct external evaluation of program • TNTP Project Director and Partner share knowledge through blog posts, conferences, and district case study 	Analyze and act on program implementation data	Ongoing
		Summarize data and progress to goals in program status reports	Weekly
		Collect and analyze performance measure data	Annually; Spring
		Conduct external evaluation (RAND)	Ongoing in years 2-5; Annual reports to TNTP
		Publish blog posts	Annually
		Publish TNTP district case study and RAND working papers	Fall 2019

Metrics. Quantitative metrics for the SFPLUS project are available in the “Outcomes/Metrics”

columns of the goals charts in the Project Design Sections B(1-2). In the Evaluation section, the implementation threshold and acceptable minimum effect sizes are identified.

2. Stakeholder Commitment. The project partners are fully committed to each of the activities outlined in the Project Design and Management Plan, as evidenced by the MOU available in *Appendix G*. TNTP’s commitment to leadership development and high-fidelity program implementation is also evidenced by its track record implementing its Teaching Fellows programs, which have trained more than 330,000 teachers nationally in the past 14 years and which continue to evolve, and by its commitment to PLUS programs in Camden and Philadelphia. Likewise, SFUSD’s commitment to district systemic change is evidenced by its short-term strategic plan, *Impact Learning, Impact Lives*, its long-term *Vision 2025* plan, and the significant progress the district has made to date, including the adoption of a Common Core curriculum and teacher PD

series, creating a comprehensive district-wide talent strategy, developing family engagement standards, and requiring all students to complete a college- and career-ready course of study in order to earn an SFUSD diploma.^{xiv}

3. Continuous Improvement. *Rigorous program evaluation.* The evaluation of SFPLUS will include the collection and analysis of robust program implementation and impact data throughout the grant period. TNTP and SFUSD will review this performance feedback data as it becomes available, including annual reports from external evaluators at RAND and internal TNTP weekly program status reports, and make iterative mid-course improvements as needed. Each winter, SFPLUS staff will collaborate with SFUSD to set goals and make improvements to the recruitment and selection model for the residency program. Training components of the program will be revised each July. The TNTP Partner and senior leadership will contribute lessons learned from other TNTP projects, such as the Teaching Fellows programs and PhillyPLUS, to further improve the design of SFPLUS.

Record of program innovation. Adaptability is among the six elements of TNTP’s staff culture. TNTP believes that if its work is not meeting its goals, then the work must change. For example, early indicators showed that Teaching Fellows programs were producing an overall positive impact, but it was nowhere near large enough to close the achievement gap. In response, TNTP developed the Assessment of Classroom Effectiveness to ensure that every teacher recommended for certification had demonstrated growth in student outcomes in their first year. TNTP also fully revamped its teacher training curriculum, evaluated the impact of these changes, and published *Leap Year* (2013)—a report detailing its findings. By partnering with TNTP, SFUSD has committed to this same level of rigorous, ongoing program evaluation and improvement for SFPLUS.

Cornerstone for SFUSD. Throughout the grant period, TNTP will develop SFUSD’s capacity to internalize and sustain SFPLUS. This objective will provide SFUSD with the opportunity to further improve the program as its needs evolve in the years after the grant period. Both TNTP and SFUSD believe that the long-term sustainability and continuous improvement of SFPLUS are essential for the success of the district’s comprehensive effort to improve learning outcomes for students.

4. Project Director. Kate Sobel, Partner at TNTP, will serve as i3 Project Director for SFPLUS. Ms. Sobel designed and continues to oversee TNTP’s PhillyPLUS program and launched CamdenPLUS, which earned a \$5,000,000, five-year School Leadership Program grant. Together, the programs train approximately 75 school leaders per year. Ms. Sobel will liaise with SFUSD, TNTP, and RAND staff; manage the SFPLUS Site Director, who will oversee day-to-day program implementation and for whom a job description is provided in *Appendix J*; and serve as a content expert for the development of curricula and assessments. Previously, Ms. Sobel managed a 14-person team coaching 500 principals in New York City. Prior to joining TNTP, she served as a principal of an award-winning school in Los Angeles serving predominantly low-income students. She has also supervised the training of hundreds of Teach For America Los Angeles corps members as Managing Director of Institute, and spent five years teaching in Compton, CA. She holds a MEd in Administration, Planning and Social Policy from Harvard University. Resumes for Ms. Sobel and other project personnel are available in *Appendix F*.

D. Project Evaluation

Section C(3) describes the robust data collection and program evaluation measures that will be used by SFUSD and TNTP to continuously improve SFPLUS. This section describes an independent external evaluation by the RAND Corporation, which will determine the utility of the SFPLUS intervention in developing and placing effective school leaders in SFUSD.

1. Key Questions. Broadly, the RAND evaluation will ask: *How is the program being implemented? Do program evaluations predict future school leader success? Are SFPLUS leaders entering the SFUSD pipeline? And what impact do they have in their schools?* The evaluation will focus on the specific questions listed in *Table 10* below.

Table 10—External Evaluation Research Questions (RQs)

	Research Question	i3 Project Goals
RQ1	What are participants’ experiences of the SFPLUS program?	Goal 1, Objective A Goal 3, Objective B
RQ2	To what extent do screening evaluations of applicants predict their performance during the SFPLUS residency? To what extent do the admissions or residency performance evaluations predict improvement in school outcomes after they graduate and become school leaders?	Goal 1, Objective A Goal 3, Objective B
RQ3	What are the rates of SFUSD hiring and persistence into the second year among SFPLUS graduates? How do persistence rates compare to that of school leaders in similar schools in the city?	Goal 1, Objective B Goal 3, Objective B
RQ4	To what extent does school culture change in the year(s) after a SFPLUS graduate becomes a leader, as measured by surveys of teachers and students? How does this improvement trajectory compare to similar schools in the city?	Goal 1, Objective A Goal 3, Objective B
RQ5	To what extent does student performance change in mathematics and reading, grade promotion, and graduation rates relative to similar schools in the city after an SFPLUS graduate becomes leader or co-leader of the school?	Goal 1, Objective A Goal 3, Objective B

2. Analysis Plan. RAND will investigate these research questions for the three resident cohorts who are trained during the grant period (i.e. 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18).

RQ1. To evaluate participants’ experiences of the program, RAND will randomly sample approximately 45 percent of the residents in each cohort and interview them by phone during spring of their residency year. RAND will also conduct follow-up interviews in the spring of their first post-residency employment year. Interviews will focus on participants’ experiences during (and after) their training, strengths and weaknesses of SFPLUS, and suggestions for improving the program. Interview transcripts will be analyzed for key themes with regard to residents’ experiences of the program and of their school-based placements. Data will be coded for key themes using NVivo qualitative coding software. Feedback about residents’ experiences and suggestions will be synthesized and shared annually with TNTP.

RQ2. To address whether early indicators about candidates predict future performance, RAND will examine whether initial screening ratings of applicants are correlated with their evaluation

ratings while in the program, and whether the magnitude of the correlation changes over the course of residents' training as individuals' acquire new competencies. RAND will also evaluate whether initial screening ratings or subsequent residency program evaluation ratings predict variation in the persistence, school culture, or student performance outcomes detailed under RQs 3-5 below.

RQ3. RAND will use SFUSD-provided employment data to assess whether the program has met an *acceptable implementation threshold* for SFPLUS graduate hiring and persistence rates across cohorts (see below). To examine the relative persistence of SFPLUS graduates in their schools and in the city, RAND will use data provided by the district about district principals to estimate the probability that a SFPLUS-trained leader returns to the same school the following year, as compared to other leaders in similar schools. The estimation model will include controls for school level, school demographics, and year fixed effects.^{xv}

RQs 4-5. The fourth and fifth research questions focus on changes in school culture and student performance outcomes after a SFPLUS graduate assumes leadership or co-leadership of a school, relative to similar district schools in the same year. For the school culture analyses, RAND will use TNTP Insight survey data and SFUSD data from existing annual satisfaction surveys of teachers, students, and families. The analysis of student performance data will focus on students' scale scores in mathematics and reading, on-time promotion rates to the next grade, and graduation rates (for high schools). For the analyses, RAND will regress a measure of school culture or student performance on an indicator of SFPLUS leadership, with statistical controls for school level, school demographics, pre-treatment data for school culture and performance measures (e.g., achievement test scores and school-wide survey scores), and year fixed effects.^{xvi}

Table 11—Model Specifications and Variables provides additional analysis detail.

	Model Specification	Variable Key (across models)
RQ3	$(1) \ln \frac{p}{1-p} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{st} + \beta_2 PLUS_{st} + \gamma_t + \varepsilon_t$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • p is the probability that a school’s principal will return to the same school in the following year. • X is a vector of school characteristics that includes level (elementary, middle, high), racial/ethnic composition, and the proportion of students eligible for lunch subsidies. • $PLUS$ is an indicator for SF+ program graduates • γ represents a series of year fixed effects. • Y represents a particular school-wide culture (RQ #4) or performance (RQ #5) measure of interest.
RQ4-5	$(2) Y_{st} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Y_{s(t-1)} + \beta_2 X_{st} + \beta_3 PLUS_{st} + \gamma_t + \varepsilon_{st}$	

Sample and minimum detectable effect sizes. Comparing performance in schools led or co-led by 36 SFPLUS graduates to those in 120 other schools in the district would yield a minimum detectable effect (MDE) of 0.48 school-level standard deviation units with 80 percent power at the five-percent level under a very conservative approach with no controls for school characteristics or baseline performance. If one instead assumes that baseline performance and other school characteristics together explain half of the variance in school performance, which is a reasonable assumption based on prior literature,^{xvii} the MDE drops to 0.34. Due to the small number of schools in the sample, this minimum detectable effect is fairly large, and the evaluation will not be able to rule out the possibility of smaller true treatment effects on principal persistence, school culture, or student performance that are educationally meaningful. As a result, the analysis will also consider the magnitude, direction, and substantive interpretation of the effect estimates in the sample, in addition to the hypothesis tests of generalizability beyond the sample.

3. Key Components, Outcomes, and Implementation Threshold

Evaluation Components. The RAND evaluation team will meet bimonthly with the SFUSD and TNTP staff who comprise the SFPLUS program team. These meetings will focus on informal reporting of research progress and any logistical challenges. RAND will formally brief the SFPLUS program team each September on progress and research findings from the previous year,

providing formative feedback on SFPLUS implementation that can guide programmatic decisions. At the end of the grant period, in December 2019, RAND will publish on its website a final report and a policy brief summarizing the study findings for all five research questions.

Outcomes and implementation threshold. SFPLUS allows only highly skilled residents to successfully graduate from the program. Of these graduates, the program aims for 90 percent to obtain school leadership positions in SFUSD schools in the post-residency year. Of the 45 residents enrolled in the first three cohorts, the program aims to fill at least 36 school leadership positions with highly skilled graduates. The threshold for *acceptable* implementation would be if at least 80 percent of graduates, representing at least 32 leaders, are hired in their post-residency year.

4. Evaluation Resources. *RAND resources.* The external evaluation will be led by Dr. Laura S. Hamilton at a five percent average annual level of effort and Dr. Benjamin Master at ten percent, with the bulk of the analyses conducted in the last two years of the five-year project. Dr. Hamilton currently leads a federally funded evaluation of CamdenPLUS, a similar TNTP program, and previously co-led the multi-year evaluation of New Leaders. Twelve and a half percent or \$497,932, of the project budget, will be dedicated to the external evaluation. Professional bios for the two researchers are included in *Appendix J*, and budget details are available in the budget narrative.

SFUSD and TNTP resources. In addition to the external evaluation, SFUSD and TNTP have allocated portions of their internal research teams to collect, analyze, and act on program data in real-time, as described in the Management Plan. TNTP staff will also disseminate program learnings at relevant education sector conferences and periodically publish them on TNTP's widely-read blog.^{xviii} Resumes for lead research staff are available in *Appendix F*.

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Endnotes

ⁱ SFUSD (2013a).

ⁱⁱ California Department of Education (2014).

ⁱⁱⁱ Hess (2007); Levine (2005).

^{iv} Gates et al. (2014); Martorell et al. (2010); Corcoran et al. (2009).

^v CCSSO (2008).

^{vi} Bryk et al. (2010); Knapp et al. (2010); Louis et al. (2010); Marzano (2005); Leithwood et al. (2004).

^{vii} Hess (2007); Levine (2005).

^{viii} Adam (2013); Koedel et al. (2012); and Dobbie (2011) address the lack of predictive power in selection criteria for teacher preparation programs, and this topic is noticeably absent from the Gates et al. (2014) and Corcoran et al. (2009) evaluations of New Leaders and New York City Leadership Academy or from any other leadership program literature reviewed by TNTP.

^{ix} Augustine et al. (2009).

^x Hess (2007); Levine (2005)

^{xi} Bryk et al. (2010); Knapp et al. (2010); Louis et al. (2010); Marzano (2005); Leithwood et al. (2004).

^{xii} Gates et al. (2014); Martorell et al. (2010); Corcoran et al. (2009).

^{xiii} Gates et al. (2014).

^{xiv} SFUSD (2013b); SFUSD (2013c).

^{xv} Some model specifications will control for first-time appearance in the district and for principalship versus other leadership roles.

^{xvi} In later years, some model specifications will interact the overall PLUS effect with years of experience, providing different estimates of PLUS graduates' effects in their first and second years.

^{xvii} Bloom et al. (2007).

^{xviii} Available at <http://www.tntp.org/blog>.