

**The Northeast Leadership Academy 2.0:
Developing and Sustaining Effective Leaders for High-Need Rural Schools**

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The Northeast Leadership Academy 2.0:

Developing and Sustaining Effective Leaders For High-Need Rural Schools

The goal of the Northeast Leadership Academy 2.0 (NELA 2.0) is to increase student achievement by preparing and retaining principals and assistant principals to serve as instructional leaders in rural high-poverty, hard-to-staff, historically low-performing schools. NELA 2.0 creates a comprehensive leadership development and succession plan for the consortium of 13 high-need school districts. Each component of NELA 2.0 is anchored in research-based best practices in leadership preparation and is designed to meet the specific leadership needs of schools in rural northeast North Carolina.

Introduction and Background to the Partnership and Its Work

NELA 2.0 brings together a land-grant university and a consortium of 13 rural, high-need school districts to increase student achievement by preparing and retaining assistant principals and principals to serve as instructional leaders in the consortium's high-need schools. The proposed project is called NELA 2.0 because it **builds upon the successes** of other funded projects among the partners and is part of a comprehensive initiative to increase student achievement in northeast North Carolina (NC). NELA 2.0 builds on, refines, and expands the work of an aspiring leaders academy called NELA. The new NELA 2.0 program will include professional development for current principals and creates a succession plan for the Northeast North Carolina region with the ultimate outcome of increasing student achievement by achieving the following objectives:

1. Develop and provide a high-quality continuing professional development and individual executive coaching program focused on instructional leadership and management for digital learning (aligned to career and college ready standards). The Principal Academy will help

principals who serve in rural, geographically isolated, high-need schools become instructional leaders for digital learning environments and master the essential leadership skill of providing targeted, corrective feedback to teachers that enables them to improve their teaching practice. A preference for participation will be given to those who have recently been appointed principals or assistant principals in schools under NCLB mandated sanctions. (This component of the comprehensive project meets *Invitational Priority 1: Building Leadership Capacity* by implementing professional development for current principals to help them master essential school leadership skills – all within newly mandated digital learning environments).

2. Recruit and rigorously select exemplary teachers with high leadership potential for participation in a context specific field-based preparation program (Innovative Leaders Academy) designed to prepare new 21st Century school leaders for rural, high-need, hard-to-staff schools in northeastern NC. At the end of the two-year program, participants will earn a school principal license (certification) and a Masters degree in School Administration. Graduates make a three-year post degree commitment to lead high-need schools in Northeast NC.

3. Develop and provide an induction and early career support program that includes individual executive coaching focused on instructional leadership strategies and the development of leadership Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

4. Develop processes that allow project designed training methods and materials to be incorporated into both university leadership preparation programs and leadership professional development nationally.

Investing in Human Capital

Investing in human capital is a strategy successful organizations employ to build their leadership “bench strength.” While a common practice in successful corporations, leadership

succession planning is virtually non-existent in U.S. public education systems, despite decades of research indicating that quality leadership is essential to high performing schools (Davis, Darling-Hammond, Meyerson & LePointe, 2005; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Lezotte, 1991; USDOE, 2004; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Our top international competitors in education including Singapore, Finland, and Japan have well-established systems to identify and train school leaders. To be globally competitive we must invest in educational human capital.

Quality leadership matters and is second only to teaching in its impact on student learning (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Research indicates that *principals have more of an impact on student achievement in the most challenging schools* – specifically, high-poverty, high-minority, low-performing schools (like those in NELA districts) -- than principals in less challenging schools. The impact of principals, as measured by the value-added scores based on student test scores, is nearly twice as large in high-poverty schools as in low-poverty schools (Branch, Hanushek & Rivkin, 2012). Investment in school leadership quality and stability is one of the most neglected policy levers in addressing the educational challenges of the 21st century (Hess & Kelly, 2005; Murphy, 2006). High-poverty, low-achieving school districts, which need the very best principals, often have great difficulty attracting high quality applicants (Winter & Morgenthal, 2002). Therefore, a targeted investment in building leadership capacity is a strategy that promises to yield significant returns in improved student outcomes. In this proposal, we provide a description of a research-based strategy to recruit, prepare, and retain individuals capable of leading school improvement efforts that significantly improve student achievement in North Carolina’s neediest schools.

History Between North Carolina State University and the NELA Districts

North Carolina State University (NCSU) and the consortium of 13 rural, high-need districts have a well-established history of working together to improve outcomes for students. NCSU is a research-extensive, comprehensive, land-grant university known for its leadership in education and research. NCSU is consistently ranked among the nation's top 50 public universities and ranked by *Princeton Review* as a best value for students. Land-grant universities have a unique mission to serve the educational needs of residents by providing access to continuing education and professional development opportunities to underserved populations. NCSU has committed to providing a 28% reduction in tuition and fees for NELA 2.0's degree program and agreed to allow NELA 2.0 to deliver coursework off campus in northeast North Carolina – thus increasing accessibility to underserved populations and fulfilling its land-grant mission.

A planning grant from The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and NC's Department of Public Instruction supported the original design of the pre-service preparation component of NELA. NELA became the pilot leadership preparation program for North Carolina's proposal for the U.S. Department of Education's Race to the Top (RttT) program. NELA is designed to tap into and building on local strengths to bolster both human capital and systemic capacity. By doing so, NELA has re-conceptualized leadership preparation – taking it from focusing on deficits to focusing on assets; from “I” to “we”; from on-campus to on-site; from school leadership to community leadership; from superhero to servant leaders; from solely “course” focus to “just-in-time, needs-based” topical preparation; and from a lone wolf to a “Wolfpack.”

As we developed NELA and refined it for NELA 2.0, we utilized research on best-practices in leadership development (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; Cheney, Davis, Garrett, & Holleran, 2010; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 2004); however, we rejected deficit models of leadership preparation. Instead we utilize appreciative

inquiry to dig deeply into the causes of poverty and low student achievement. As such, our preparation is anchored in liberation—first by understanding the root causes of poverty and low academic achievement and then by harnessing community assets to begin a new narrative of high expectations and hope (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004; Militello, Rallis, & Goldring, 2009; Theoharis, 2010; Valencia, 2010).

In 2010, North Carolina was awarded RttT and NELA received new funding to prepare aspiring rural school leaders (this funding will end in 2014). Three cohorts of students (62 students total by 2014) have gone through a rigorous selection process and made a three-year, post-degree commitment to work in high-need schools in northeastern North Carolina, thus, reducing leadership turnover.

Through our work, we have come to realize that to sustain this much needed change in leadership perspective and practice requires ongoing and intensive ***high-quality continuing professional development***. This proposal (NELA 2.0) seeks to address the need for high quality preservice and inservice professional development through the creation of a research-based, replicable, comprehensive preparation and continuing professional development model for rural schools which includes: 1. ***Development of a Principal Academy***; 2. ***Refinement and expansion of NELA's aspiring leader preparation program***; 3. Providing ***early career support*** through seminars and ***targeted executive coaching*** to both current and aspiring leaders to help them implement and live their learning and drive school improvement efforts; and 4. Documenting and making accessible on the project website program resources for ***replication*** and continuing refinement. NELA 2.0 will leverage the partnerships between NCSU and NELA districts to build a sufficiently large professional network of leaders who will continue to lead high-need schools and continue to drive significant improvements in student achievement well after the grant

funding ends.

Need for NELA 2.0: Great Schools Have Great Leaders

As you read this proposal, it may be helpful to picture in your mind's eye, a child who you love – your son, daughter, niece, or nephew. Picture this child as an 8 year-old third grader, walking into their aging school building. It is a rural school, where 98% of the students are eligible for free or reduced lunch, 1 in 6 teachers are not fully licensed, and two-thirds (63%) of their 3rd grade classmates are below grade level in reading. This describes a typical school in northeast North Carolina. The children in this region deserve better schools - schools capable of helping them reach their full potential. Ask yourself: What type of leader would you want for your child in this school? How would you want them prepared? What dispositions and orientations would you want the leader to have? What continuing professional learning would you want for the principal? Addressing these questions and preparing the right kind of leader for this context is the work of the NELA 2.0 leadership preparation and continuing professional development model.

Northeast North Carolina: The National Center for Education Statistics (2012) notes that nearly one-third (32.3 %) of schools in the U.S. are located in rural areas. North Carolina ranks second in the nation in both the absolute number (685,409) and highest percentage (47.2%) of rural students. Over half of NC's schools serve rural communities. Northeast North Carolina is a geographically isolated rural region with low-density population. The 13 districts that comprise Northeast NC (Bertie, Edgecombe, Franklin, Halifax, Hertford, Martin, Nash-Rocky Mount, Northampton, Roanoke Rapids, Vance, Warren, Washington & Weldon City) suffer from issues related to abject, inter-generational poverty, and racial segregation. North Carolina's lowest performing schools are disproportionately clustered in this region.

Taken together, these 13 counties rank number one in the state for the highest teen pregnancy, infant mortality, and other deficit metrics. Additionally, the vestiges of racial segregation remain distinctive in these communities and their institutions and students experience stark racial and socioeconomic isolation. For example, Halifax County is only 39% White overall, however the Halifax County Public Schools are 95% non-White. The school districts' free and reduced lunch (FRL) percentages are over 92%. As part of the North Carolina Supreme Court's ruling in *Leandro v. State*, the court described the schools in northeast North Carolina as "failing to provide the children with the equal opportunity to receive a sound basic education," and declared them guilty of "*academic genocide*."

As shown in Table 1, these districts are challenged to recruit and retain high-quality teachers. High teacher turnover (in some schools, turnover rates more than 3 times the state average), low teacher quality, and poor teacher-reported working conditions (on North Carolina's Teacher Working Conditions Survey) all contribute to low student performance and will require a highly skilled principal to make significant school improvement. The superintendents in these districts have committed to utilizing a comprehensive approach to improving the quality of school leadership and improving student educational outcomes (See Appendix A).

Over the next 5 years, in the participating districts an estimated **50% of the principals will be eligible for retirement** – making a succession plan for quality school leadership all the more pressing. The anticipated turnover in leadership will also create a unique window of opportunity to place a critical mass of highly prepared, passionate, instructional leaders into the schools that most need them. It is within this context that NELA 2.0 will develop highly effective school leaders for these high-need, hard-to-staff schools.

Table 1: Partner Districts

Partner District & Total # of Students	Student Ethnicity	Student Poverty Rate	% Not Fully Licensed Teachers	Avg. Teacher Turnover Rate	Principal Turnover Rate	# Schools in Improvement/# of Schools	% Proficient on End of Grade Test	
							Reading	Math
Bertie 2,768	15% White; 82% Black; 2% Hispanic; 1% American Indian	87%	15.4%	21%	25%	3/9	57.3	75.75
Edgecombe 6,561	33% White; 57% Black; 8% Hispanic; 2% Other	81%	4.3%	19%	20%	9/15	49.4	67.4
Franklin 8,551	51% White; 31% Black; 14% Hispanic; 4% Other	61%	4.3%	14%	14%	3/16	71.4	82.7
Halifax 3,410	5% White; 86% Black; 3% Hispanic; 6% Native American	92%	12.3%	32%	36%	9/11	38.6	51.8
Hertford 3,302	16% White; 80% Black; 2% Hispanic; 1% American Indian; 1% Asian	24%	5.6%	12%	14%	2/7	51.3	71
Martin 3,441	44% White; 49% Black; 5% Hispanic; 1% Asian; 1% Other	70%	2.3%	15%	9%	5/11	69	76.4
Nash-Rocky Mt. 16,152	35% White; 49% Black; 10% Hispanic; 1% American Indian; 1% Asian; 4% Other	68%	2.6%	15%	33%	11/27	65.0	75.8
Northampton 2,255	16% White; 80% Black; 3% Hispanic; 1% Other	86%	11.7%	23%	0%	2/8	51.7	71.2
Roanoke Rapids 3,059	69% White; 23% Black; 4% Hispanic; 1% American Indian; 2% Asian; 1% Other	59%	1.3%	11%	0%	1/4	65	80.1
Vance 6,979	22% White; 62% Black; 13% Hispanic; 1% Asian; 2% Other	28%	8.4%	21%	13%	3/16	57	73.4
Warren 2,374	18% White; 66% Black; 6% Hispanic; 7% American Indian; 3% Other	84%	13.6%	0%	14%	2/8	56.2	68.3
Washington	21% White; 71% Black; 7% Hispanic; 1% Other	90%	6.3%	28%	25%	1/5	48.6	62.2

1,809								
Weldon City 1,088	3% White; 94% Black; 1% Asian; 2% Other	79%	23%	28%	0%	2/4	46.2	64.5

In preparation for this submission, we met with NCDPI’s District and School Transformation Division leadership and held a series of three meetings with the consortium districts’ Superintendents, Associate Superintendents, and Human Resources Directors to identify and discuss the school leadership needs for the region. We discussed the strengths and weaknesses of recently hired NELA graduates as well as current principals. The superintendents and NCDPI leaders were overwhelmingly positive about the quality and skill sets of NELA graduates. They offered no suggestions for improvement. (See Appendix B for the External Evaluator’s memo on current project and Appendix C on Key Stakeholder Comments). Noting that more than 50% of the current principals will be eligible to retire over the next 5 years, they anticipate leadership vacancies and encouraged us to seek additional funding to continue the aspiring leaders preparation program.

However, waiting for low-skill principals to retire is an insufficient strategy to improve student achievement. NCDPI’s, the superintendents’ and HR directors’ concerns about the lack of instructional leadership skills of their current principals are reflected in Table 1. They agreed that a pressing need is to build the instructional leadership skills of current principals, especially in anticipation of the NC mandated transition to digital learning environments. Hence, NELA 2.0 will support both the refinement and expansion of an aspiring leaders academy and the development and delivery of a principal’s academy focused on instructional leadership for school improvement in digital learning environments. The measurable goals and objectives to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified in the sections below.

1. QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN

1.1. The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (Please see the more detailed table overview that includes goals, objectives and measures in Appendix D and the descriptions below).

Overarching Goal: The goal of NELA 2.0 is to increase student achievement by preparing and retaining AP’s and principals to serve as instructional leaders in historically low performing, rural, high-need, hard-to-staff schools. NELA 2.0 will create a comprehensive leadership development and succession plan for the consortium of 13 high poverty districts by achieving the four objectives previewed in Table 2 below and then described in more detail.

Table 2: NELA 2.0 Goal & Objectives

<p>NELA 2.0 Goal: Increase student achievement by preparing and retaining AP’s and principals to serve as instructional leaders in historically low performing, rural, high-need, hard-to-staff schools.</p>	
<p>Objective 1: Principal Academy</p>	<p>Objective 2: Innovative Leaders Academy (ILA)</p>
<p>100 leaders of high-need schools will complete a summer intensive, PD program on instructional leadership for digital learning and management and receive executive coaching to apply their learning. (Performance measures are described in following sections).</p>	<p>30 new leaders prepared (Masters Degree and License), hired, supported and retained through an induction program and executive coaching. (Performance measures are described in following sections).</p>
<p>Objective 3: Executive Coaching</p>	
<p>Provide individualized, executive coaching for both Principal Academy and ILA participants. (Performance measures are described in following sections).</p>	
<p>Objective 4: Disseminate and Replicate</p>	
<p>Take lessons-learned from Objectives 1-3 and develop processes that allow project designed training methods and materials to be replicated and incorporated into leadership preparation programs. (Performance measures are described in following sections).</p>	

Objective 1: Principal Academy: Develop and provide a high-quality continuing professional development and individual executive coaching program to help principals who serve in rural, geographically isolated, high-need schools become instructional leaders for digital learning environments, which are aligned to career and college ready standards. Further, the principals will master the essential leadership skill of providing targeted, corrective feedback to teachers that enables them to improve their teaching practice. Preference for participation will be given to recently appointed principals and assistant principals in schools under NCLB mandated sanctions.

Needs Identified in Objective 1: In the participating districts, ***existing school leaders are not making sufficient improvement in student achievement*** in their schools. Currently available professional development options do not meet the need for contextualized professional learning for the consortium’s current principals and assistant principals. The ***job of principal has changed dramatically*** in recent years. Principals are now more than ever focused on student achievement while still retaining their traditional administrative and building manager duties. Because of this, NELA will provide continuing professional development to current principals and assistant principals to help reorient them as instructional leaders (Usdan, McCloud, & Podmostko, 2000) – with a specific focus on instructional leadership in digital learning environments.

To Address These Needs: NELA will develop and deliver a rigorous context-specific year-long ***summer intensive program for current principals*** customized to address current problems of practice around issues of instructional leadership and management– with a specific focus on instructional leadership in digital learning environments. Participants will be assigned an executive coach who will work with them across the academic year to help them implement their learning at their school site.

Outcomes for Objective 1:

- (1) Over the life of the grant, 100 leaders of rural, high-need schools will complete a summer intensive, professional development program focused on instructional leadership and management.
- (2) Within a year of completing the program, at least 90% of the participating principals will document an increase in teacher infusion of technology into teaching and learning.
- (3) Within a year of completing the program, at least 80% of the participating principals will have documented improvements in self-efficacy and time management and in other related school performance measures including school culture and climate (as measured by the NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey), teacher effectiveness, teacher attendance, student attendance, and/or student achievement.
- (4) Within a year of completing the program, at least 90% of the participating principals' teachers will report an improvement in the principal's coaching support to teachers creating digital learning environments.

Objective 2: Innovative Leaders Academy to Prepare Aspiring Leaders: Recruit and rigorously select exemplary teachers with high leadership potential for participation in a context specific field-based preparation program designed to develop 21st Century school leaders for rural, high-need, hard-to-staff schools in northeastern North Carolina. At the end of the two-year program, participants will earn a school principal license (certification) and a Masters degree in School Administration. Graduates make a three-year post degree commitment to lead high-need schools in Northeast North Carolina. Graduates sign a promissory note for the amount of the tuition fellowship with the proviso that one-third of the obligation will be forgiven at the end of each year of subsequent employment in the partner districts. If the graduate fails to obtain a leadership

position (because of lack of openings or other considerations), a tuition forgiveness deferment will be enacted.

Needs Identified in Objective 2: NELA districts *struggle to recruit and retain high quality leaders*. Creating great leaders starts by rigorously selecting the very best people. However, in this era of high-stakes accountability, rural, historically low-performing, hard-to-staff schools struggle to identify individuals willing to take on the challenge of leading school turnaround. Potential principal and assistant principal candidates know that the geographic isolation, low pay, and poor general working environment will make it difficult to staff the school with high quality teachers. (Participating districts have teacher openings that have remained unfilled for the entire academic year).

To Address These Needs: NELA 2.0 will establish processes to *tap into new pools of talent* to identify and focus resources on energized, committed, passionate individuals who want to make a difference by helping students achieve academic success. To recruit a large pool of potential candidates for the aspiring leaders academy, we will use two strategies: 1. Ask principals and superintendents to identify excellent teachers who have leadership potential; and 2. Partner with Teach for America (TFA) to create a pipeline for their alumni who have remained in education beyond their commitment period and who want to become school leaders. (See Appendix E for TFA letter of support). This structured process will create a mix of long-time teachers, lateral entry teachers (individuals from other fields), and Teach for America alumni committed to becoming leaders of high-need schools.

Another barrier to placing high-quality leaders in low performing schools is that many of the teachers in the northeast are the first in their families to graduate from college. Most are burdened by undergraduate student loans and do not have the financial means to fund a graduate

degree – especially for a position with less job security than they already have as a tenured teacher. By providing a *fully-funded degree and licensure program*, we create opportunities for such individuals to become *home-grown leaders*. Research clearly demonstrates that home-grown leaders with ties to the community are far less likely to “take the degree and run” than others (Darling-Hammond, Mayerson, LaPointe, & Orr, 2009). The fellowships also continue to open possibilities for a different pool – TFA alumni who want the opportunity to be part of a program that delivers contextualized training in the region they hope to continue their careers

Outcomes for Objective 2:

- (1) Over the life of this grant, no less than 30 exemplary new principal candidates (who earned a North Carolina principal’s license and a Masters degree in School Administration) will be prepared for the partner school districts.
- (2) All program graduates (100%) will earn North Carolina principal licensure.
- (3) Within one year of program completion, at least 80% of graduates will be hired into leadership positions in the LEAs.
- (4) At least 95% of graduates will serve for at least 3 years in high-poverty partner district schools (5% is to allot for unforeseen circumstances beyond our control).
- (5) 90% of program graduates will be perceived as effective by teachers, staff, students, and parents and will be rated as “accomplished/effective” or “distinguished/highly effective” on the NC Standards for School Executives evaluation instrument.
- (6) School culture and climate (as measured by the NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey), teacher effectiveness, student attendance, and/or student achievement will measurably improve by 5% per year in schools where program graduates are principals.

Objective 3: Executive Coaching for Principals, Early Career Leaders and Principal

Interns: Current principals and early career principals, assistant principals, and principal interns benefit from a sustained program of support that includes executive coaching and the development of leadership PLCs.

Needs Identified in Objective 3: School leaders often experience professional isolation and may not have experiences or resources to draw from to *navigate the challenges* of turning around low performing rural schools. Excellent principals have crucial conversations with their teachers about their performance and what they need to do to improve student learning. In these close-knit, insular districts, the lowest performing teacher could be the preacher's wife or the school board member's husband, and having crucial conversations about performance expectations can be personally challenging and take an emotional toll. Through role-playing and case studies, NELA participants are trained to handle such situations, but having a coach to call on to support the leader (especially novice leaders) when navigating politically delicate situations will help *prevent leader burnout* (which research identifies turnaround leaders as highly at-risk for. See: Doyle & Iyengar, 2013; Maslach, 1982) and bolster their continuing commitment to do whatever it takes to improve student performance.

To Address These Needs:

To navigate the challenges of turning around low performing rural schools our program participants (in both the Principal Academy and the Innovative Leaders Academy) will receive *individual executive coaching* (Principal Academy participants during their first year post program and Innovative Leaders Academy interns will have a coach and graduates will retain their internship coach for their first year as a leader and also participate in *induction support seminars*). NELA 2.0 coaches will be highly successful former school leaders who will be

vettted and trained. (A latter section of the proposal describes the selection and training process in more detail. See Appendix F for a description of NELA’s current coaches. These are the types of individuals who will be selected as NELA 2.0 coaches).

Outcomes for Objective 3:

- (1) At least 95% of program participants will report that the executive coaches helped them improve their leadership skills and practices.
- (2) At least 95% of Innovative Leaders graduates will serve for at least 3 years in high-poverty partner district schools (5% is to allot for unforeseen circumstances beyond our control).

Objective 4: Replication: Take lessons-learned from Objectives 1-3 and develop processes that allow project designed training methods and materials to be replicated and incorporated into leadership preparation programs.

Needs Identified in Objective 4: The most cited and respected research on improving how principals are prepared and experience career-spanning professional development focus on leadership in urban or suburban school settings (Briggs, Cheney, Davis, & Moll, 2013; Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, & Orr, & Cohen, 2007; Orr, King, & LaPointe, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 2005). However, nearly a third (32.3%) of schools in the United States are located in rural areas. Resources to help preparation programs better prepare leaders for rural schools are virtually non-existent. The resources we will make available on the project website will help meet this identified need.

To Address These Needs:

We will present the NELA 2.0 program, its key features, and early results at national conferences and webinars to increase access for interested parties. We will also make resources, replicable materials, and process guides readily accessible on our project website.

Outcomes for Objective 4:

- (1) Program components and resources and annual reports will be posted and described on the project website and presented at one or more conferences and/or webinars each year.
- (2) To assist with replication, utilization guides will accompany key program features when posted to the project website. Visits to project website will increase 10% each year.
- (3) By the end of the project period, all key features of the program will be described in detail and will include utilization guides for other programs which want to replicate the feature(s) of the program.
- (4) Over the course of the grant, we will publish our program results in at least 1 scholarly and 2 practitioner journals.

1.2 The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.

Project Design: Appropriate to Meet the Needs of Rural, High-Need Schools: The NELA 2.0 model is derived from research-based best practices and was developed by a planning team composed of experienced educational researchers, innovative leadership educators, and administrative practitioners including stakeholders from all levels of North Carolina's educational system. The key components of the model have been vetted to panels of current and retired principals, university professors, superintendents, innovative leadership educators, and professional development organizations. NELA 2.0 has 3 main components that utilize appropriate, innovative strategies to successfully address the needs of the target population. In the following sections, we describe the appropriateness of NELA's design for the Principal Academy, Innovative Leaders Academy, and the Executive Coaching that supports both academies.

Appropriate Design for Career-Spanning Professional Development for Principals of Rural, High-Need Schools: NELA 2.0 Principal Academy

The Principal Academy is a summer-intensive program that will focus on building instructional leadership capacity for current principals. Based on the recommendations of the partner superintendents and from a North Carolina Legislative Research Commission Study Committee on Digital Learning Environments in Public Schools, we will develop and deliver a program focused on *instructional leadership for digital learning*.

The Research Committee on Digital Learning Environments in Public Schools found that using multiple digital learning resources is critical to equip students with 21st Century skills so they are prepared for success in both career and college. The Commission noted that high-quality, ongoing professional development and support is a key factor in developing successful digital learning environments that, when used effectively, can improve student academic performance.

On March 15, 2013, the Digital Learning Competencies for School Employees (NC House Bill 23) was enacted into law. North Carolina will transition from funding for textbooks to funding for digital materials by 2017. Under this statute, the State Board of Education will mandate continuing education in high-quality, integrated digital teaching and learning as a requirement of principal licensure renewal and will require students in school administrator preparation programs to demonstrate competencies in using digital and other instructional technologies and supporting teachers and other school personnel to use digital and other instructional technologies.

Principals also need to understand how to coach teachers to increase rigor in accordance with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and North Carolina's Essential Standards. Principals

must be able to guide their teachers as they prepare for North Carolina's transition to using Home Base (an electronic instructional improvement system and student information system – part of the NC Education Cloud), and computer adaptive testing - Smarter Balanced.

To help the principals meet these digital competency requirements, NELA 2.0 will develop and deliver a summer-intensive, yearlong program with accompanying year-spanning executive coaching. The program design will take into consideration the rural, high-need schools context.

The Principal Academy will utilize the following research-based strategies:

Individualized Leader Development Plans/Personalized Learning: We will personalize the program by using a comprehensive assessment of each participant's knowledge, skills, and practices around instructional leadership in a digital environment. The executive coach will work with the principal to create comprehensive action plans for targeted improvement.

Cohorts and Adult Learning Theory: The Principal Academy will utilize cohorts as a strategy to expand collegial networks, and develop PLCs for leaders. We will also tap the wealth of adult experience and knowledge and scaffold learning experiences to build readiness and provide a gracious space to expose areas of needed growth and foster deep learning. Therefore, instruction will be based on adult learning theory, authentic learning experiences, and personal sense-making/reflection.

Embedded, Interactive Technologies and Authentic, Reflective Learning Experiences: The principalship is action-based; therefore, participants will practice and live the lessons by experiencing facilitative, experiential teaching and delving into authentic scenarios using technology and with video cameras recording the sessions for reflective practice. Participants will be prepared to utilize a number of electronic instructional strategies (See Appendix G) and Home Base (a statewide, instructional improvement and student information system for teachers,

students, parents, and administrators. See Appendix H).

Learning Exchanges: Participants will experience virtual visits to technology rich, digital learning schools. For example, participants will make a virtual visit to Mooresville Graded School District which has been recognized as a national leader in digital learning. (See: Appendix I).

Instructional Leadership Skills/Building a Teacher Coaching Toolkit: Teachers in NELA districts generally lack a deep understanding of quality teaching and learning. To counteract this, throughout the summer institute, the principals will experience, learn, and apply context specific, research-based digital teaching strategies (pedagogy) and processes which are documented to be effective in improving academic achievement in rural, poor, high-minority schools.

Executive Coaching: Research indicates that with coaching, learners are able to better apply their learning (from 5-10% able to apply without coaching to 80-90% with coaching) (Joyce & Shower, 1995). Therefore, each participant will be paired with an executive coach who will work with the principal over the academic year to better implement and apply their learning.

Appropriate Design in Principal Preparation for Rural, High-Need Schools:

NELA 2.0 Innovative Leaders Academy

Scholars who study leadership preparation programs note their weakness: a lack of alignment to strong, established standards; a lack of robust authentic experiential learning; and a lack of meaningful internship and field experiences (Levine, 2005; Hess & Kelly, 2005). In the original version of NELA we sought to address these criticism and create a program that is a dramatic change in how school leaders have traditionally been prepared. We achieved this, but in NELA 2.0 we further refined our program based on the lessons we learned (See Appendix J).

Integration of Research and Professional Knowledge: Research suggests that certain practices

in leadership preparation should produce higher quality school leaders. Programs yield more highly effective leadership graduates when they utilize: (a) research-based content that clearly focuses on instruction, change management, and organizational practice, (b) coherent curriculum that links all aspects of the preparation experience around a set of shared values, beliefs, and knowledge about effective organizational practice, (c) rigorous selection process that gives priority to under-served groups, particularly racial/ethnic minorities, (d) cohort structures that foster collaborative learning and support, (e) school-university collaborations that create a seamless and coherent program for students, (f) field-based internships that allow individuals to apply their new knowledge and skills while under the guidance of expert leaders, (g) supportive organizational structures that support student retention, engagement, and placement, (h) systematic process for evaluating and improving programs and coursework, (i) low student-faculty ratio (i.e., 15-1) and active, student-centered instruction, (j) faculty members who make significant efforts to identify, develop, and promote relevant knowledge focused on the essential problems of schooling, leadership and administrative practice, and (k) on-going professional growth opportunities (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2007; Levine, 2006; Orr, 2007). NELA 2.0's Innovative Leaders program exemplifies research-based best practices in leadership preparation and continuing professional development (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, & Orr, & Cohen, 2007; Orr, King, & LaPointe, 2010; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; USDOE, 2005; Young, Crow, Murphy, & Ogawa, 2009).

NELA 2.0's design also reflects the director's own experiences with highly-effective leader development programs. The project director, was a Co-PI (along with Tricia Brown-Ferrigno (PI) and Keith Gurley (Co-PI) on a federally funded, innovative leadership preparation project in rural Kentucky. Drawing from her experiences as an educator in rural Texas, she helped craft a

specialized program, the Principals Excellence Program (PEP) that addressed the unique challenges of school leadership in poor, rural, Appalachian schools. The grant funded a new model of leadership preparation: one infused with authentic experiences in which participants solved real school problems. USDOE research identified and recognized PEP in its publication, *Innovative Pathways to School Leadership*. Out of 60 potential models, PEP was identified as one of six (6) that offered "promising practices for others who aim to develop innovative solutions to our schools' urgent demand for greater numbers of effective school leaders." (See: <http://www2.ed.gov/admins/recruit/prep/alternative/report.pdf>). NELA 2.0's design was informed by the work of PEP and the empirical research on best practices in leadership development. Further, a set of nationally recognized leadership standards anchor NELA 2.0.

North Carolina created the NC Standards for School Executives after researching "the practices of leadership that impact student achievement." The Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium and work by the Wallace Foundation, the Mid-continental Regional Education Laboratory, the Southern Regional Education Board, the National Staff Development Council, NASSP, and NAESP influenced the creation of these NC standards. The standards are: Strategic Leadership, Instructional Leadership, Cultural Leadership, Human Resource Leadership, Managerial Leadership, External Development Leadership, and Micropolitical Leadership. An 8th element, Inclusion of Student Growth, was recently added. North Carolina also has 21 Competencies (knowledge, experience, and skills) for School Executives. A rubric created by McREL rates a principal's performance as either: Developing, Proficient, Accomplished, Distinguished, or Not Demonstrated. A more detailed description of the standards and competencies is provided in Appendix K and the Evaluation Rubric can be found in Appendix L.

NELA 2.0 Anchoring Beliefs

In addition to these standards and competencies, NELA 2.0 grounds its work in the following research-based principles. Effective principals: a) lead by modeling exemplar values and behavior; b) help make possible what they require others to do; c) establish agreement on the school's purpose and goals and then create processes that help employees learn what they need to meet these goals; d) select, reward, and retain teachers/staff who are willing to work to achieve school goals; e) are leaders of learning in the school (there is a laser-like focus on academic achievement and all decisions and resources are aligned to the goal of improving student outcomes) and establishes a sense of urgency; f) develop the staff and cultivate a culture of continuous, reflective professional learning (by both individuals and groups/PLCs) that is transparent and a collective good; g) cultivate shared leadership so that authority and accountability are linked; h) are systems-thinkers and are able to frame problems and potential problems by being reflective practitioners; i) utilize a systems level understanding of the interconnectedness of barriers to student achievement and are able to identify leverage points within the system to push change efforts that improve school outcomes; j) understand, read, predict, and prevent challenges to a positive school climate; k) use multiple forms of data to inform all decisions; and l) understand that a central aim of their work is creation of a socially just school organization and student learning process so that all students can be academically successful.

Developing effective educational leaders is fundamentally and irrevocably an interpersonal, relational process – one that requires face-to-face human contact, deep thought, deliberation, reflection, engagement, and interaction. Every significant leadership theory of the past 60 years has emphasized that effective, transformative leadership is a relational process between leaders and followers. If education is to be a transformative experience, it must be just that – a set of

contemplative, rigorous interactive experiences that enhances personal growth and development. Effective educational leadership requires cultivation of the habits of heart, mind, and soul and is a “people” process that requires preparation through sustained interactions not only with course instructors – but also with peers, colleagues, and other stakeholders.

NELA 2.0 Innovative Leaders Academy Framework & Theory of Action

The NELA 2.0’s theory of action and framework is a result of years of study and experience and is built on research-based best practices and is contextualized for rural, Northeast North Carolina. This theory of action has incorporated elements of design and evaluation (formative and summative), along with reflection. What results is a fluid praxis that all preparation programs should incorporate. It is grounded in standards and a research-based vision of what an effective principal does to lead instructional improvement. The aspiring leaders preparation model includes:

Strategic Recruitment and Rigorous Selection: Potential candidates engage in a multi-phase assessment of selection. The process is highlighted by a full-day Candidate Assessment Day that helps us select candidates who reflect the vision of the program. (See Appendix M).

Individualized Leader Development Plans: We personalize the program by using a comprehensive 360-degree on-going, real-time assessment of each Fellow’s knowledge, skills, and practices. Multiple diagnostic tools are used to identify areas for improvement and create comprehensive action plans for targeted improvement and measurable growth.

Cohorts and Adult Learning Theory: NELA 2.0 utilizes closed cohorts as a strategy to build trusting relationships, expand collegial networks, and develop high-performing school leadership teams. Cohorts are brought together for cross-cohort experiences each year.

NELA 2.0 taps the wealth of adult experience and knowledge and scaffolds learning experiences to build readiness and provide a gracious space to make mistakes and thus foster deep learning. Therefore, instruction is based on adult learning theory, authentic learning experiences, and personal sense-making/reflection.

Instructional Leadership Skills/Building a Teacher Coaching Toolkit: Teachers in

NELA districts generally lack a deep understanding of quality teaching and learning. Even the best of their best teachers benefit from learning new skills and strategies. Through a series of interactive, seminars, and field-based applications, Fellows learn and apply context specific, research-based teaching strategies (pedagogy) and processes which are documented as effective in improving academic achievement of rural, poor, high-minority schools.

Participants will apply and practice these skills in their own classrooms during the first year of the program and share them with other teachers during their internship year.

On-Site, Daytime Courses/Learning Experiences: Beginning in the second semester, Fellows are released for full day sessions so they can experience and apply their leadership learning during the daily flow and action of a school that is in session.

Authentic, Reflective Learning Experiences: NELA 2.0 courses are grounded in theory but we also recognize that the principalship is action-based. Fellows practice and live the lessons by experiencing facilitative, experiential teaching, delving into case studies, and role playing authentic scenarios with video cameras recording the session for reflective practice (We call these “Operation NELAs”). All course assignments are relevant, linked to our theory of action and the NC Standards, and are focused on solving real school issues.

Full-Year School Internship: Fellows are released from teaching duties for a full time, yearlong

internship. Interns are accountable for instructional leadership responsibilities and must document these in a detailed weekly log and reflection exercise. Interns complete an authentic problem of practice project to address an issue identified from an analysis of school data (See Appendix N).

Full-Time Summer Community Internship: Focused experience in the community that surrounds the Fellow's internship school. Fellows write grants proposals to receive funding to connect a community agency to their yearlong internship school. Experience is co-constructed with The Rural School and Community Trust and NCSU's 4H Extension office.

Specialized Training: Fellows experience a variety of specialized trainings that are beyond a set of anchor courses yet enhance their coursework (e.g., Common Core, crucial conversations, data boot camp, curriculum design, digital learning, local and federal educational policy). (See Appendix O for Scope and Sequence including Specialized Trainings).

Rural Context and Turnaround Principles: Program courses and experiences are customized to the context - rural, low performing, high-poverty schools and communities.

Spiraling Curriculum: We utilize a spiraling curriculum to facilitate continuous improvement of essential skills and knowledge sets (Bruner, 1960). Fellows revisit and repeatedly practice essential skills of effective leaders (teacher coaching and evaluation, crucial conversations, conflict resolution).

Developmental and Cognitive Psychology: Each semester Fellows engage in a grade spanning developmental project. For instance, in the first semester groups focus on early childhood to early elementary age students. Fellows participate in school visits, conduct interviews with teachers and children, and gather data to learn about developmentally appropriate teaching and learning practices. Similar developmental projects are completed for middle school and

high school. (See Appendix P for a description of key ILA learning experiences).

Learning Exchanges: Fellows visit high-poverty, high-performing schools in and out of state.

Principal Mentors: Fellows are paired with an internship principal mentor who is carefully *vett*ed and trained. Mentors provide advisement in the daily functions of the internship.

Executive Coaching: Each Fellow is paired with a carefully *vett*ed and trained executive coach (retired expert principals and superintendents) who works with them over the internship year and during their first year as a school leader. The coach utilizes the Fellow's Individual Leader Development Plan (based on NC Standards for School Executives) to address areas of needed growth. (See Appendix F).

Embedded, Interactive Technologies: Fellows learn multiple technologies to prepare them to be instructional leaders in digital learning environments. (See Appendices G & P).

Digital Storytelling: We work closely with the Llano Grande Center for Research and Development who pioneered digital storytelling as a pedagogy. NELA Fellows use digital stories to craft artifacts about self, community, and their leadership development. (See Appendix Q and www.llanogrande.org).

Social Justice Advocacy: We have purposefully woven social justice advocacy into our preparation through both readings and case studies and is a main tenant of our induction program.

Transitional and Early Career Support: Graduates come together in a seminar setting post-job placement. Additional support from the coaches is provided to first year school leaders to address immediate problems of practice. (See Appendix R).

Electronic Portfolio: Assessment & Learning in Public: Each course has an accompanying artifact that is linked to the NC Standards of School Executives. Fellows create and post

digital artifacts on a webpage (shared publically) to demonstrate and articulate their competencies on the NC Standards.

Frequent and Varied Feedback Loops: Each Fellow’s performance is closely monitored and they receive formal and informal, formative and summative feedback across the program and during the induction program. Fellows participate in a daylong ***formative assessment*** experience (modeled after Candidate Assessment Day) toward the end of each semester. Instructors, coaches, and mentor principals also provide specific feedback about each Fellow. Fellows then have individual meetings with NELA’s Project Director where they receive targeted feedback, review and revise their Individual Leadership Learning Plans, and co-construct with their coach a comprehensive action plan for targeted improvement and measurable growth. (See Appendix S).

Learning with Principal Mentor: Distinguished Leadership in Practice (DLP):

In the original NELA we partnered with North Carolina’s Principal and Assistant Principals Association (NCPAPA) to have Fellows ***and their principal mentors*** go through a modified version of the Distinguished Leadership in Practice Program. We will continue this practice in NELA 2.0. By delivering the training to both mentor and mentee, this program strengthens the skills of practicing school leaders simultaneously with aspiring leaders to leverage strategic school improvements. (See Letter of Support from NCPAPA).

Appropriate Design in Executive Coaching for Rural, High-Need Schools Leaders

Developing effective principals must continue beyond completion of pre-service preparation programs, placement as school leaders, and support during novice practice years (Browne-Ferrigno, 2004; 2005; Browne-Ferrigno & Fusarelli, 2005; Daresh, 2002). School leaders often experience professional isolation and may not have experiences or resources to draw from to

navigate the challenges of turning around low performing rural schools. Having a coach to call on to support the leader (especially novice leaders) when navigating politically delicate situations will help *prevent leader burnout* (which research identifies turnaround leaders as highly at-risk for (Doyle & Iyengar, 2013; Maslach, 1982) and bolster their continuing commitment to do whatever it takes to improve student performance.

Researchers have begun to recognize that leaders cannot fully develop the capacity to lead anywhere but in the "action" of the school (Donaldson, 2001; Joyce & Showers, 1995). University courses, leadership academies, and professional conferences are necessary and helpful, but administrators can only master the interpersonal and intrapersonal lessons of leadership by leading in a highly supportive and reflective environment. Research indicates that the transfer of learning from training programs into *leadership practice dramatically increases with individualized coaching* - from 5 to 10 percent when presented or modeled in training to 80-90 percent when coaching is provided (Colling, 1997; Joyce & Showers, 1995). In order to create a community of practice and provide appropriate levels of support to current and aspiring principals in high-need schools, NELA 2.0 will utilize executive coaches. We have learned from the business model that effective executive coaching helps leaders retain key subordinates (in education this would be effective teachers) but it must be both strategic and individualized.

The executive coaching model resolves some of the long-standing problems with typical principal mentor programs. For example, in a traditional mentor program the mentors are senior organizational insiders, often in job-alike positions. The supervisory nature of the relationship means that it may be difficult for mentees to share confidences – especially when they are struggling. Further, informal mentors have their own demanding jobs, and though they may have the best of intentions, they are usually not fully available to their protégés.

In designing the coaching program, we created a new model of coaching built around the particular needs of school leaders and meant to move from single to *double-loop learning* - moving from the what to the why – the reasoning behind the behavior (Argyris, 1976 - See Appendix U). Drawing from research by Bloom, Castagna, and Warren (2003), NELA’s coaching program is designed around the following precepts: (a) The coach’s fundamental commitment is to student success, and the coach will appropriately direct the coachee to that end; (b) The coaching relationship is based upon trust; (c) The coach moves between instructional and facilitative coaching strategies based upon assessment of the coachee’s needs and in pursuit of agreed-upon goals; and (d) Professional standards (North Carolina’ Standards for School Executives) are the framework for goal-setting and ongoing formative assessment.

Because NELA 2.0 is directed at impacting student achievement and is aligned with leadership standards, *coaches will be vetted and trained* for their work. This coaching training program will be developed early in year one of the grant and delivered to the coaches as soon as all are hired for the first iteration of the Principal Academy. The coaching training will be essential to establishing clear expectations. To enhance the work of the coaches and reduce isolation, we will work to build a community of practice for the coaches. They will be able to share tools and resources during periodic meetings and through an electronic network.

NELA Principal Academy participants will be assigned a coach upon entering the summer-intensive program. Participants will meet (face-to-face or by Skype) individually with their coaches at least once each month to discuss how they have applied that month’s topic/focus from their Individual Leadership Learning Plan and/or how they will utilize a digital learning strategy in their practice as instructional leaders in a high-needs school. Services will be differentiated

based upon participants' needs. The coaches will continually assess and respond to participants' needs relating to improved learning for students.

NELA Innovative Leaders Academy Fellows will be assigned a coach for their yearlong internship during the second year of the program. The coach will: (a) Participate in joint observations of teaching and debrief with the Fellow on how they can improve; (b) Conduct role-playing of crucial and critical conversations with Fellows to inform them of ways to ensure that students and teachers are meeting the highest of standards; (c) Improve the Fellow's leadership ability by encouraging individuals to believe in themselves and develop the efficacy to find their own answers; (d) Help aspiring and novice leaders diagnose and solve the "Problems of Practice" themselves and thus build leadership capacity; (e) Review with the Fellow their Individual Leadership Plan (ILP). Direct the revision of the ILP as needed and at least once per semester; (f) Weekly contact with their assigned Fellow (virtual, Skype, email, phone, or in-person); (g) Contact with the Mentor Principal every other week (twice a month); (h) Two extended site visits (face-to-face) per month to shadow the intern. One of these visits should include a joint observation of teaching and/or the post-observation conference; (i) Detailed evaluation of the Fellow's progress (monthly report); (j) Participate in Coaches' Feedback Meetings (2 per semester); and (k) Provide feedback and advice to both the Fellow and the Mentor Principal as they experience the Distinguished Leaders in Practice activities. It is important to clarify that NELA 2.0 Fellows have both a principal mentor and a coach. The principal mentor will be a source of advice and information regarding district matters and help guide the internship action research projects. The coach will serve as an external coach and a source of confidential and expert support.

The coaches will continue to work with Fellows as they are hired into leadership positions. New principals/assistant principals will participate in monthly sessions facilitated by their coaches during their first year in leadership. Sessions will focus on leadership skills, managerial issues, relationship building, and instructional leadership. (See Appendix R). By providing coaching, mentorship, and reflective practice groups for principals, we can give current and emerging leaders new ways to practice and reflect. In the process, they enrich the leadership mix in their buildings in ways that have an immediate impact on teaching practices and student learning.

1.3 The extent to which the proposed project is a part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students

The proposed project is a part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students. NCSU's programs to support improved teaching and learning in all 13 northeastern NC partner districts include: 1:1 Learning Collaborative (1:1 laptop initiatives); 4-H and Family and Consumer Sciences (afterschool programs/curriculum enrichments; nutrition programs; robotics); Gateway Technology Center (high-tech facility is where NELA programs are delivered); District Leaders Academy (cross-functional teams are trained in innovation, leading organizational change, and sustainability. NELA's Program Director previously worked on this continuing initiative and we infused its elements into NELA 2.0); Math and Science Network Pre-College Program (MSEN) (enrichment for first generation, low-income students of color, to prepare them for college and a career in STEM); ITEST*: STEM (Prepares underserved students in grades 6-12 for careers in STEM); Kenan Fellows (Fellowships for teachers for training in STEM); The Science House (partners with teachers to promote hands-on, inquiry-based learning); Smart Project (Professional

development for teachers in technology use in teaching); Upper Coastal Plain Learning Council (NCSU and community organizations collaborate to support K-12 education. Based at Gateway Technology Center in Rocky Mount).

The NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) also partners with NELA (the original NELA and now NELA 2.0) in a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning in northeastern NC and to support rigorous academic standards for students. Since 2010, the NCDPI District and School Transformation division oversees efforts to increase student achievement, to develop the capacity of district and school leaders to sustain and continue achievement gains, and to use a cost-effective model that maximizes impact (Ashley, 2013). The goal is to improve academic achievement in the lowest performing schools and districts as defined by the lowest 5% of schools, schools with 4-year graduation rates below 60%, and districts with aggregate performance below 65%. NELA/NELA 2.0 partners with 7 of the 12 lowest performing school districts based on proficiency. NELA 2.0 will also partner with NCDPI's District and School Transformation Division. This team will continue to invite Fellows to all their training institutes for existing leaders. The Transformation teams will also continue to work with NELA 2.0 to help match program graduates to leadership openings in the districts. (See the Letter of Support from NCDPI's Director of District and School Transformation, Dr. Pat Ashley). As demonstrated, a comprehensive effort exists between NCSU, NCDPI, and NELA/NELA 2.0 to improve student teaching and learning in northeastern NC.

1.4. The extent to which the design for implementing and evaluating the proposed project will result in information to guide and possible replication of project activities or strategies, including information about effectiveness of the approach or strategies employed by the project.

Research on improving how principals are prepared and experience career-spanning professional development focuses primarily on leadership for urban or suburban school settings (McCarthy & Forsyth, 2009). However, almost 1/3 of schools in the United States are located in rural areas. As stated in Objective 4, the work of NELA 2.0 will help identify promising practices in leadership development for rural high-need schools and that information will be publicly accessible so other preparation programs can utilize and replicate it.

One tenet of NELA 2.0 is that learning should be public and best practices should be shared. We model that by making available on our website all the resources, processes, and strategies we utilize in the Innovative Leaders Academy. We will also do that with the Principal Academy. We will present NELA 2.0, its key features, and results at national conferences and on webinars.

The current NELA has incorporated into our program a continuous improvement design with multiple feedback loops about design and delivery which have helped us not only make just-in-time improvements to NELA but have also had an impact on NCSU's campus-based program as well as new programs with other LEA partners. In a number of significant ways, NELA has begun to transform the form and function of our campus-based MSA program. Both NELA and the campus MSA program have implemented an artifact-based approach to demonstrating proficiency on the North Carolina School Executive Standards and Competencies. Our campus MSA has incorporated a number of the NELA-designed artifacts. For example, the campus MSA now requires the "Self-as-Leader" digital story assignment. We have also replicated some of the cohort bonding experiences such as a new student orientation that is based on NELA's program. NCSU's clinical faculty members are receiving certification in several of the specialized trainings (Crucial Conversations, Facilitative Leadership, etc.) so that these trainings can be offered to all educational leadership students at no charge. We will continue such replication and

infusion efforts in NELA 2.0.

NCSU has also replicated many of the elements of NELA in a new Master of School Administration cohort with Johnston County (NC) Schools. We presented an overview of NELA to the Superintendent and Human Resources Director, and they committed to having the district fund many of NELA's key elements. Johnston County worked with NCSU to co-design a customized Johnston County Candidate Assessment Day to select participants. The Candidate Assessment Day was on a Saturday, and the review panel consisted of assistant superintendents, principals, assistant principals, teachers, and NCSU faculty. Johnston County also committed to fund release days for cohort members, provide a number of the specialized trainings, provide panels of exemplar principals for various seminars, fund a summer community internship experience, and support a modified school-year internship. The district is so pleased with the quality of the program that by the end of year one of the two-year program Johnston County Schools has already placed 20% of the cohort as acting assistant principals. Further, the NELA Aspiring Leaders selection model was adopted and replicated in the Sandhills Leadership Academy (a Race-to-the-Top funded program).

To date, we have published 4 papers and made 23 presentations to disseminate best practices. In sum, NELA's current aspiring leaders program is doing exactly what innovation grants are designed to do: Utilize funds to create new sustainable improvements in preparation programs. We have a solid track record in disseminating replicable resources. However, our current funding ends in 2014, and we are seeking funds to further develop and refine replicable practices for rural principal preparation. This proposal has a new, additional key component, the career-spanning professional development of current school leaders. It is important to note that currently, no resources are available to guide the design and delivery of professional development programs

that utilize research-based best practices in professional development for current principals of rural, high needs schools. Funding NELA 2.0 will fill this essential need and make such resources readily available.

2 QUALITY OF PROJECT EVALUATION

2.1 The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible; 2.2. The extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies; and 2.3. The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress towards achieving intended outcomes.

Evaluation of NELA 2.0 is aligned with the four objectives of the proposed project, all of which support the overarching goal of improved student achievement. The evaluation will utilize quantitative and qualitative data to determine the extent to which the four project objectives have been achieved. Statistical models will be employed to uncover relationships between empirical project data and student test scores. Qualitative data will be used to gain important insights into why such relationships and patterns emerge and will be used to rethink and re-specify the statistical models as necessary. The types of qualitative data to be collected in the project evaluation include focus groups and surveys (perceptual and attitudinal).

The use of multiple sources of data (different types, with different properties) and different data analysis techniques (statistical models, content analysis, etc.) increases both the validity and reliability of the project evaluation, leading to a much greater likelihood that project components will be replicated by others in the field. A detailed overview of the evaluation plan is included as Appendix T.

With respect to Objective 1: Principal Academy, we plan several data collection efforts to understand how effective the summer institute is in helping principals with three major issues that principals face: teacher evaluation, time management, and teacher coaching – all within digital learning environments. First, we will conduct a teacher evaluation exercise at the beginning and end of the institute, with each teacher evaluation blindly rated. If the institute is effective, we should see improved evaluations of teachers at the end of the institute, as compared to the beginning. Second, we will use a scale that measures self-efficacy for time management at entry and exit to gauge how well principals believe they can manage their time during the workday, as well as at the end of their first semester after institute participation. As with teacher evaluations, we should see growth over time compared to their self-efficacy at entry. Third, to evaluate how well principals engage in teacher coaching, we will survey teachers at participating principal schools at the end of the year before their principal begins the institute. They will be asked to confidentially evaluate their principal, and they will be surveyed again in January after their principal has participated in the institute. The teachers themselves offer the best measure of whether principals have improved their ability to coach teachers (especially on digital learning), and we should also see growth here over time. Finally, we will have access to student test scores over time for all principals across the state. This will allow us to conduct a difference-in-difference estimate of the effect of institute participation, by comparing growth over time between schools with treated and control principals, taking into account differences in student achievement before treated principals participate in the intervention. The main drawback with this approach is that the intervention should be at its strongest during the final year of implementation, after several iterations of development. But given the nature of the intervention, it may take more than one year after principal participation in the intervention to see an

appreciable change in student test scores. Thus, we can estimate the effect of the intervention on student achievement in the first years of the grant, but not its final (and logically strongest) intervention impact which should occur after the grant period.

Besides providing evidence of the intervention's promise near the end of the grant, these data will also help us with the development of the intervention in earlier years. For example, if we see gains during the summer institute in principal ability to evaluate teachers, but not their self-efficacy in time management, then we will know that the time management section of the institute will need to be reappraised and redesigned. This is critically important formative assessment data that is built into the evaluation design.

We will also conduct focus groups of principal participants at the end of the summer institute and in November of their first year after summer institute participation. The questions will focus on principals' experiences during the institute and several months of school experiences and coaching afterwards, collecting information as to what principals believe worked well and did not work well with the intervention. The second set of focus groups is important, because principals may not realize what was effective/ineffective in the summer institute until they are back in their schools working with teachers and students.

With respect to Objective 2, Innovative Leaders Academy, we plan several data collection efforts to understand how effective the training program is in helping teacher leaders become highly effective principals. Descriptive statistics will be used to analyze licensure and graduation data, employment records, and survey data (including data from the NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey and the USDOE's Schools and Staffing Survey). Such data will be collected for the purpose of tracking the career progression of program participants and perceptions of their effectiveness from teachers, staff, students, and parents. Access to student test scores over

time for all principals across the state will allow us to conduct a difference-in-difference estimate of the effect of the ILA, by comparing growth over time between schools with treated and control principals, taking into account differences in student achievement before treated principals participate in the academy. We will also conduct focus groups of participants upon completion of the program and in June of their first year after program completion. The questions will focus on the graduates' experiences during the program and several months of school experiences afterwards, collecting information as to what principals believe worked well and did not work well with the intervention. The second set of focus groups is important, because new leaders may not realize what was effective/ineffective in the academy until they are back in their schools working with teachers and students. This is critically important formative assessment data that is built into the evaluation design so that any improvements or adjustments can be made to the training program before the second cohort begins the academy.

With respect to Objective 3, Executive Coaching for Principals and Early Career Leaders, surveys of program participants will be conducted to assess the impact of executive coaching on participants' leadership skills and practices. Data will also be collected from employment records to track the career progression of participants who received executive coaching.

With respect to Objective 4, Dissemination and Replication, data will be collected from hits to the project website (NC State has an office which tracks hits and reports them by month, quarter, semester, or annually), publication of utilization guides, conference presentations at state, regional, and national leadership conferences, and publications of project findings in scholarly, and more importantly, in practitioner journals, which have widespread readership and will greatly increase the likelihood of dissemination and replication by school leaders and policy makers. It is the expectation that if the project is successful, then there will be marked

improvement on a number of indicators including: school culture and climate (as measured by the NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey), teacher evaluation and effectiveness, teacher attendance, student attendance, and student achievement as measured by standardized test results. Research indicates that principals' impact on school achievement takes time with anticipated significant results within three years. We anticipate that improvements will be observable each year, but lasting and significant impact should occur once a principal has led a school for three years.

Description of the Evaluator: Dr. Stephen Porter is a professor of research methods and higher education at North Carolina State University. His areas of research expertise include causal effects modeling, measurement of student learning, survey methodology, and regression discontinuity (used for estimating the effects of interventions and treatments). His doctorate is in political science with a concentration in econometric modeling. He is a visiting scholar at the Center for Complex Data Analysis at RTI International and is a former director of institutional research. Dr. Porter has had a distinguished career in program evaluation and has extensive experience with program evaluation on a number of federal grants. He has received funding from the National Science Foundation and has served as chair of the Education Systems and Broad Reform grant review panel of the Institute for Education Sciences. In addition, he has served as a proposal reviewer for the Measurement, Methodology, and Statistics Program, Directorate of Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences at NSF. Dr. Porter will be assisted in conducting the evaluation by a full-time evaluation and program coordinator, Dianne Griffiths, and a graduate research assistant.

3 SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the proposed project is described in Section 1: Quality of Project Design, but is also briefly summarized in the following sections.

3.1 The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.

NELA 2.0 has high potential to increase knowledge and understanding of the educational problem of how to best prepare and provide high-quality continuing professional development to leaders for rural, high-need schools. Further, the program director has extensive experience in the development and dissemination of effective strategies for rural leader development. Please refer to Section 1.2 for more details.

3.2 The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement.

The proposed project should result in systems change and improvements. A major criticism of traditional programs is that students seek administrative degrees solely for raises and promotions (most states provide a pay increase for a Masters degree). Resources are wasted on individuals with no intention of becoming school administrators (Levine, 2005). One component of this project is the refinement and expansion of an aspiring leaders preparation program, NELA. The graduates of the current program are already landing key leadership positions in the partner districts. The superintendents are very pleased with the quality of NELA graduates. For example, Nash/Rocky Mount Schools had 14 assistant principal openings for 2013-2014. They hired all 9 of the NELA Fellows from the district as assistant principals - a 100% job placement rate.

When compared to traditional programs, NELA's high placement rates indicate that we are selecting and preparing individuals committed to leadership in high-need schools. As outlined in Section 1.4, the existing program is creating changes in how districts build their leadership pipeline. With funding for further refinement and expansion, the proposed project (NELA 2.0)

will likely yield even greater system improvement.

3.3 The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project, especially improvements in teaching and student achievement; 3.4. What are the potential Contributions to the field?; and 3.5 What is the likelihood that this project will result in change or improvement within the partner organizations, the LEAs, the school conditions?

Items 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5 are addressed in Section 1: Quality of Project Design. In summary, the proposed project is highly likely to make significant contributions to the field that result in change and improvement within the LEAs and school conditions. The importance and magnitude of the results is documented in an annual report from the external evaluator on the current aspiring leaders program and its key stakeholders (See Appendices A & B). The external evaluator report notes the impact the program is making. Funding of the proposed, expanded project that includes professional development for current leaders is highly likely to make a significant and sustained impact. From the report:

“...NELA was created independently to meet the school leadership needs of a very distinct region of North Carolina (i.e., poor, rural, northeast counties of the state). As such, NELA is a unique program with its own partnerships, program philosophy, curriculum, coursework, and fieldwork. According to UCEA [University Council for Educational Administration] (2012), the three most essential features of effective leadership preparation programs are: (1) having a program philosophy that clearly articulates a theory of action, (2) having a strong curriculum focused on instruction and school improvement, and (3) having well-designed and integrated coursework and field work.

Observational data and document analyses provide converging, consistent evidence that NELA has utilized these central program features as organizing principles in designing, delivering, and deliberating its individual principal preparation program, and that the fidelity of the implementation of its program design has been strong. Data also indicate that NELA has been designed so that its content (i.e., core concepts to be taught), pedagogy (i.e., the means by which learning is facilitated), and experiences (i.e., the nature of coursework and fieldwork) reflect best practices for developing candidates into leaders who can facilitate high-quality teaching and learning for all children.

Even though data on the long-term and distal outcomes of NELA are not yet available,

findings indicate that NELA has been deliberate, effective, and successful in developing and incorporating critical, research-based features into its program

(rigorous recruitment and selection; cohort-based experiences; an action-research, case-study curriculum focus; full-time, year-long clinical residency experience; weekly full-cohort, continued learning during the residency year; multifaceted support structure; job placement and induction support; and dynamic feedback and improvement loops).

Recent Cohort 1 graduates describe NELA as a life-changing journey. They've learned to "think quickly and strategically," use "data in every decision we make," have "crucial conversations with teachers," "pay it forward," and move their schools from "PLCs in name to PLCs in action!" They also recognize and appreciate NELA's Directors, Mentors, and Coaches as invaluable resources of information and support.

"NELA affected our hearts and our minds. We are applying what we learned. We are removing the blinders, one kid at a time ... giving voice, impacting and changing the way kids see and interact with the world." (NELA graduate).

“Our NELA Directors have consistently given me constructive feedback and extended all possible support that they can offer to help me. From top to bottom, everyone expects to establish a culture of high academic expectations. Everyone involved inculcated us to the very important role and responsibility that is placed on our shoulders when we were chosen to be NELA Fellows” (NELA graduate).

As the report from an independent, external evaluator notes, NELA is making a significant and sustained impact. Funding of the proposed NELA 2.0, which expands the project and includes professional development for current leaders is highly likely to make a significant and sustained impact. NELA and its LEA and NCDPI partners concur that with 5 years of funding for NELA 2.0, we will reach an unprecedented tipping point. Our NELA graduates will be well-established in leadership positions and as we prepare new leaders they will have excellent places to intern and learn. Principal Academy graduates will have the instructional leadership skills they need to lead successful digital learning environments. We will achieve a critical mass of well-prepared leaders who make significant school improvements and help students achieve the academic success that will expand their life opportunities.

3.6 If the project is successful what improvements should we expect to see in teaching and student achievement?

A successful NELA 2.0 project will result in marked improvements on a number of indicators including: school culture and climate (as measured by the NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey), teacher effectiveness, teacher attendance, student attendance, and student achievement as measure by standardized test results. Research indicates that principal impact on school achievement takes time with anticipated significant results within three years. We anticipate that

improvements will be observable each year, but lasting and significant impact should occur once a principal has led a school for three years. This is one reason we ask for the Innovative Leader Academy graduates to make a 3-year post-degree commitment to serve in high-need schools.

4 QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT PLAN (Addressing items 4.1-4.7)

4.1. The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks; 4.2 The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project; 4.3. How will the project be managed?; 4.4. Who will manage the various components of the grant?; 4.5 What is the timeline for the project?; 4.6. How will you ensure that the project is on time with respect to meeting the goals and objectives of the project?; and 4.7. What is your plan for the implementation of this project and all its activities?

The NELA 2.0 management plan and timeline of activities represent a thorough and thoughtful plan to achieve the project goals and objectives (as described in previous sections) and clearly communicates the adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives on time, and within budget as well as providing clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones. Any modifications to this plan will be based on formative evaluation feedback and input from partners. Based on our successful management of NELA, NELA 2.0 will replicate a highly effective management strategy of holding regularly scheduled meetings with all project stakeholders. These convenings include: 1. Weekly Leadership Team Meetings - a regularly scheduled meeting from 9-noon each Monday; 2. Monthly Project Meetings (first Thursday morning of each month with project personnel and appropriate stakeholders including instructors, coaches, evaluators, and NCDPI representatives); 3. NELA 2.0 Superintendent Council Meetings (three times a year -at the end of

each semester: First Thursday in May, August & December) to solicit feedback, make just-in-time adjustments to the program, and inform about the next quarter’s planned activities. In addition to the regularly scheduled meetings, each major project milestone and the person(s) responsible is outlined in the following section. (Please also see the timeline for major milestones, a detailed project timeline, and a detail evaluation timeline are included in Appendices V, W, and T).

Objective 1: Principal Academy		
Activities	Timeline	Person(s) Responsible
Convene Principal Academy Advisory Team & Develop and distribute promotional materials and hold informational meetings	Jan./February 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; update as necessary	PI, B. Fusarelli Coordinator, Wirt
Vett, select and train coaches for Principal Academy	April 2014 – select May 2014 – train (repeat as necessary for new coaches)	PI, B. Fusarelli Co-PI, Bass; Co-PI, Faircloth; Coordinator, Wirt
Select participants; Develop and collect data from pre-program/baseline measures for Principal Academy evaluation	Prior to program delivery f for each iteration: June 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018	PI, B. Fusarelli; Co-PI, Bass; Coordinator, Wirt Evaluator, Porter; GRA; Eval/Prg. Coord, Griffiths;
Develop Principal Academy Curriculum and e-manual and post to website.	February - May 2014; revised annually in April/May.	PI, B. Fusarelli; Co-PI, Bass; Co-PI, Faircloth; Co-PI, L. Fusarelli; Technology Instr., Militello Technology Instr., Brady Coordinator, Wirt; Rep. from NCDPI
Develop website to house Principal Academy materials/resources.	June 2014 Update as necessary	Eval/Prg Coord., Griffiths Coordinator, Wirt
Deliver summer intensive portion of Principal Academy	July 2014; 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018	PI, B. Fusarelli; Co-PI, Bass; Co-PI, Faircloth; Co-PI, L. Fusarelli; Technology Instr., Militello

		Technology Instr., Brady
Provide Executive Coaching	August-May for each cadre (A-D) and August-December for cadre E	Executive Coaches; Oversight by PI, B. Fusarelli
Evaluation Tasks	May 2015 – Dec. 2018 (Detailed in Appendix T)	Evaluator, Porter; GRA Eval/Prg Coord., Griffiths
Objective 2: Innovative Leaders Academy (ILA)		
Activities	Timeline	Person(s) Responsible
Hold informational meetings for ILA to recruit candidates; Superintendents identify potential candidates	February 2014 & 2016	PI, B. Fusarelli; Coordinator, Wirt; Co-PI, L. Fusarelli; Superintendents and Principals
Review applications to ILA, select finalist and hold Candidate Assessment Day; select Fellows	April/May 2014 April/May 2016	PI, B. Fusarelli; NCSU Educational Leadership Faculty; Coordinator, Wirt; GRA
Vett, select and train Coaches for ILA Fellows	June 2015 and retain in May 2017	PI, B. Fusarelli; Co-PI, Bass; Co-PI, Faircloth Co-PI, L. Fusarelli; Coordinator, Wirt; GRA
Develop website for ILA and hold Orientation for ILA Fellows	July 2014, update regularly	PI, B. Fusarelli; Co-PI, Bass; Co-PI, L. Fusarelli Eval/Prg Coord., Griffiths Coordinator, Wirt; GRA
Collect baseline data on Fellows	July 2014; July 2016	Evaluator, Porter; GRA Eval/Prg Coord., Griffiths
Train Mentor Principals	July 2014; July 2016	PI, B. Fusarelli; Co-PI, Bass; Coordinator, Wirt; GRA
ILA Instructional Leadership Workshops	August 2014 August 2016	NCSU Educational Leadership Faculty
Deliver ILA curriculum and experiences for all cohorts	August 2014 through May 2018	NCSU Educational Leadership Faculty and

		Specialized trainers; PI, B. Fusarelli to oversee
ILA Fellows Formative Assessment Days; Individual feedback meetings with ILA Fellows to set growth targets and refine Individual Leadership Learning Plan	Assessments each November 2014-2017, & each April 2015-2018. Indiv. meetings end of each semester (Dec & May).	All ILA instructors and project personnel; Organized by Coordinator, Wirt; Oversight by PI, B. Fusarelli; Coaches
Identify Community Internship sites for Summer Internship for ILA Fellows	May 2015 (Cohort I) May 2017 (Cohort II)	Summer Experience Instructors (Benhke and D. Williams)
Fellows placed in carefully vetted full-time internship sites	August 2015 August 2017	PI, B. Fusarelli; Coordinator, Wirt; GRA; Eval/Prg Coord., Griffiths
Fellows poster presentations on problems of practice and e-portfolios Cohort Graduation	May 2016 May 2018	NCSU Educational Leadership Faculty and Specialized trainers, all Superintendents, & NCDPI Representatives PI, B. Fusarelli to oversee
Provide Early Career Support Seminars	September 2016 – December 2018	Coaches PI, B. Fusarelli to oversee
Solicit feedback and refine the curriculum and experiences in ILA program	June 2016 June 2018	PI, B. Fusarelli; Co-PI, Bass; Co-PI, L. Fusarelli; Coordinator, Wirt; NCSU Educational Leadership Faculty; GRA
Evaluation Tasks	March 2015 – Dec. 2018 (Detailed in Appendix T)	Evaluator, Porter; GRA; Eval/Prg Coord., Griffiths

Objective 3: Executive Coaching		
Activities	Timeline	Person(s) Responsible
Vett, select and train coaches for Principal Academy	April 2014 – select May 2014 – train (repeat as necessary for new coaches)	PI, B. Fusarelli; Co-PI, Bass; Co-PI, Faircloth; Coordinator, Wirt
Principal Academy Coaches	September 2014 – June 2015	Executive Coaches

work with their coachees	August 2015 – June 2016 August 2016 – June 2017 August 2017 – June 2018 June 2018 – December 2018	Oversight by PI. B. Fusarelli
Vett, select and train Coaches for ILA Fellows	June 2015 and retain in May 2017	PI, B. Fusarelli; Co-PI, Bass; Co-PI, Faircloth; Co-PI, L. Fusarelli; Coordinator, Wirt; GRA
ILA Coaches work with their interns	August 2015 – June 2016 August 2017 – June 2018	Executive Coaches Oversight by PI. B. Fusarelli
ILA graduates induction seminars and support	Monthly July 2016 – Dec. 2018	Executive Coaches Oversight by PI. B. Fusarelli
Convene periodic meetings with coaches to obtain feedback and to assess progress	End of each academic semester (December, May, August). December 2014-December 2018	PI, B. Fusarelli Co-PI, Bass Coordinator, Wirt GRA
Evaluation Tasks	March 2015 – Dec. 2018 (Detailed in Appendix T)	Evaluator, Porter; GRA; Eval/Prg Coord., Griffiths

Objective 4: Dissemination & Replication		
Activities	Timeline	Person(s) Responsible
Presentations of papers at conferences such as AERA & UCEA	April 2015, November 2015	PI, B. Fusarelli
	April 2016, November 2016	Co-PI's as appropriate
	April 2017, November 2017	
	April 2018, November 2018	
Provide replicable sources on website	Update as necessary	Coordinator, Wirt; Eval/Prg Coord., Griffiths; GRA
Convene NCSU faculty for retreat to infuse lessons learned from the ILA experience into university program	June 2016	PI, B. Fusarelli
	June 2018	
Evaluation Tasks	March 2015 – Dec. 2018 (Detailed in Appendix T)	Evaluator, Porter; GRA; Eval/Prg Coord., Griffiths

A description of the multiple continuous feedback loops that insure continual project improvement are described throughout the narrative and an overview is also provided in Appendix Q. The Management Table describes the tasks to be completed. The individuals who will complete those tasks are briefly described below. Resumes of key project personnel are provided in Appendix W. Dr. Bonnie Fusarelli, Associate Professor of Educational Leadership and PI/Project Director for NELA will serve as the Principal Investigator (PI) for NELA 2.0. She will coordinate the courses, professional development and oversee all aspects of NELA 2.0. She will devote 20% of her time in the academic year and 2.75 summer months. Dr. Lesley Wirt is currently the Project Coordinator for NELA, she will serve in a similar capacity for NELA 2.0 devoting 100% of her effort to NELA 2.0. Dr. Lisa Bass, Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership will serve as Co-Principal Investigator. She will devote 10% of her time in the academic year and 1 summer month. Dr. Susan Faircloth, Associate Professor of Educational Leadership will serve as Co-Principal Investigator and will devote 1 summer month to the project. Dr. Lance Fusarelli, Professor of Educational Leadership, will serve as Co-Principal Investigator and devote 1 summer month to the project. Dr. Steve Porter, Professor of Higher Education Administration will serve as the Project Evaluator. He will devote 10% of his time to the evaluation of NELA 2.0. Ms. Dianne Griffiths will serve as the Program and Evaluation Coordinator. She currently works for NELA in a similar capacity. She will devote 100% of her time to NELA 2.0. The project will also utilize a part-time graduate research assistant.

Additional faculty will deliver the courses required for ILA (See Appendix X).

NELA 2.0's innovative design (including its detailed evaluation and management plans) will make a significant impact on improving student achievement in rural northeast NC and will provide a model to improve preparation and professional development programs nationally.