

**PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
DEMONSTRATION PROJECT**

U.S. Department of Education

School Leadership Demonstration Program – CFDA No. 84.363A

-Submitted by a Consortium of three West Virginia School Districts-
Raleigh County Schools, Fayette County Schools, and McDowell County Schools

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Introduction

West Virginia is experiencing a rapidly diminishing pool of qualified candidates for the growing number of administrative positions across the state. The problem is deemed to be critical in rural, high-need districts. There is a need for a coordinated and sustained school-leader training program that not only prepares candidates to be effective school leaders, but also provides on-going support and development for them as they progress through their career. This project, entitled *Building Leadership Capacity in Rural WV* will address *Invitational Priority 1 – Building Leadership Capacity* by implementing a school leadership development program in three high-need school districts in southern West Virginia (Raleigh, McDowell, and Fayette Counties) that will provide high-quality professional development for principals/assistant principals to increase their effectiveness. The document is organized as follows:

- A. Quality of the Project Design
- B. Quality of the Project Evaluation
- C. Significance of the Project
- D. Quality of the Management Plan

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Need for the Project

Three high-need, rural school districts in Fayette County, McDowell County, and Raleigh County, West Virginia, propose a comprehensive, research-based approach to improve the recruitment and development of principals and assistant principals in all schools within each of the districts. The goals of the program are (1) implementation of a high-quality Problem-Based Learning (PBL) training model for principals and assistant principals, (2) increasing the internal capacity of the districts to recruit, assess, and train its school leaders, (3) reducing the high turnover rate of principals and assistant principals, (4) increasing student academic outcomes, (5) ensuring the sustainability of the training program.

School leadership is a very challenging job. It's not something we want to leave to the luck of the draw. Yet the unfortunate truth is that when these inevitable vacancies occur, many school district leaders are caught gambling that several highly qualified applicants will step forward, and they will be lucky enough to fill the position with the best candidate who happens to apply. And like other games of chance, the odds are stacked against the gamblers. Too often school districts don't invest the requisite level of care, resources and hard work into the critical mission of recruiting and identifying school leaders. Most districts have neither the capacity nor data systems to infuse rigor into the principal selection process, and so they rely on their best judgment, and sometimes even pure inertia.

As far back as 1977, researchers were concerned about the quality and relevancy of school leadership programs. Bridges, (1977) asserted that typically, administrative candidates are inundated with theory but have few opportunities to apply educational theory to specific professional problems and challenges. Although many preparation programs are now attempting to address the issue by offering internships or mentorships, in many cases students are still

shortchanged because insufficient time is spent carefully planning, and then supervising, these experiences.

The need in West Virginia to recruit and more adequately train prospective principals not only mirrors the national need but is more acute. An immediate need exists to enhance the professional competency of current school leaders in West Virginia, particularly those who work in the highest-need school districts. It is in these school districts, where student standardized test scores show dismal results that schools are most in need of high quality leadership. Clearly, the documented shortage of qualified candidates to serve as school leaders, coupled with an inadequate professional development program for current school leaders, are leading contributors to poor student achievement in the state.

There is an average yearly administrative turnover rate of approximately 18% for the state. However, in the highest need schools and districts in West Virginia, the turnover rate spikes up and down from 25% to 60% annually. (WV DOE).

To combat this growing problem, the WV DOE initiated a state-mandated, year-long professional development experience (*Principal Leadership Academy*) for West Virginia's new principals and assistant principals. It consists of six days of sessions and ongoing access to team leaders and colleagues through an online wiki designed specifically for their use. The PLA served 114 school administrators during the 2012-2013 school-year. An *Educator Policy Fellowship Program* is in place but it primarily focuses on helping school leaders develop and refine their leadership voice and to help shape educational policy.

While these initiatives are a step in the right direction, they fall short of addressing the magnitude of the need in the state's most challenging districts and schools. There are also problems with the design and philosophical construct of those few existing programs. Current

principal staff development programs in West Virginia are essentially “hit or miss” efforts that consist of a series of unrelated activities, seminars, workshops, etc., and have no particular guiding principles to drive improvement efforts in the schools along a variety of fronts.

The problem is particularly acute in three of the most challenged, rural school districts in the southern part of the state: Raleigh County Schools, McDowell County Schools, and Fayette County Schools. Two of these counties have been, or are state take-over districts. McDowell County was just returned to local control after 12 years of intervention. Fayette County is in its second year of state intervention. As Table 1 indicates, each of these school districts has a significant number of low-performing schools with high administrator turnover rates. Furthermore, they face many challenges in the recruitment, retention, and on-going training and mentoring of administrators. The current state initiatives are not meeting the needs of these districts to provide highly qualified administrators who have the knowledge and capacity to turn around low performing schools. Table 1 documents local data pertaining to school leader turnover rates, anticipated need, and low academic performance in each collaborating district.

Table 1:

School District	# of Schools in District	% of Low Performing Schools	Administrator Turnover Rate	Anticipated # of Principals Needed for Next 5 Years
Fayette	19	37%	24%	22
McDowell	12	40%	60%	34
Raleigh	29	13.8%	40%	36
Total	57	30% (avg)	41% (avg)	92

Considering what is known through research and empirical knowledge regarding the relationship between effective school leadership and student achievement, there is a clear connection between the leadership capacity in the targeted districts and the academic achievement of their students. Table 2 validates the need for academic improvement in the targeted districts involved in the Consortium via the most recent WV DOE WESTTEST II results in English/Language Arts, and Math for grades 3,6,8,11. The data indicate the percentage of students who are proficient at the benchmark grade levels for English/Language Arts and Math.

**Table 2
(2011-2012 WESTEST II Results)**

English/Language Arts

District	Grade 3	Grade 6	Grade 8	Grade 11
Fayette	39.48	40.41	32.43	36.28
McDowell	36.8	32.8	32.8	26.8
Raleigh	52.17	53.83	48.84	49.04

Mathematics

District	Grade 3	Grade 6	Grade 8	Grade 11
Fayette	34.07	35.10	30.12	32.33
McDowell	31.6	41.2	35.2	26.3
Raleigh	54.28	54.21	45.54	53.97

Additional data indicating that each of the target districts is a high need district are shown in Table 3

Table 3

Additional Evidence of High Need

District	Attendance Rate	Graduation Rate	College Going Rate	HS Graduates Enrolled in College Developmental Classes	% of Schools Not Meeting AYP
McDowell	92.89%	74%	25%	38%	55%
Fayette	95.9%	74.3%	45.9%	38%	72%
Raleigh	96.3%	78.65%	46.6%	32%	61%

Sources: 2010/2013 OEPA Reports, 2011-2012 NCLB Report Cards, 2012 WV Higher Ed College Going Rates Report

Evidence of Eligibility

Table 3 shows data that documents the eligibility of the three school districts involved in the consortium to submit the School Leadership Proposal according to the ESEA definition of “high-need LEA” as mandated in the *Notice Inviting Applications*.

Table 3: “High Need” LEA Documentation

Name of LEA	Poverty Rate		And	Percent of Teachers	
	A2	%		B2	%
Raleigh County Schools	✓	24		✓	13.7
Fayette County Schools	✓	28		✓	4.9%
McDowell County Schools	✓	42		✓	15.2
Data Source for B2	Raleigh & McDowell Counties: 2011-2012 NCLB District Report Card Fayette County: 2011-2012 Strategic Plan				

A. Quality of the Project Design (45 points)

Overview

The purpose of the Leadership Development Program in the school districts of Fayette, McDowell, and Raleigh is to provide a customized and innovative model that will immediately address the districts' critical need for highly qualified administrators, have a positive impact on student outcome data, and will be sustainable. The model proposed for this project will be the only school leadership training model in the state that will be based on the six model standards and assessments for school administrators developed by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC). The project curriculum is specifically designed to identify and develop new administrators in West Virginia's high-need school districts, decrease the turnover rate of current school leaders in those districts, and enhance the capacity of current school leaders to positively affect student achievement.

This project's school leader development model uses a comprehensive approach that is based on the following conceptual framework: (1) the expectations and demands place on principals in underperforming schools require the placement of high qualified school leaders with exceptional skills beyond state certification; (2) quality recruitment, preparation, and retention programs based on evidence-based best practices are needed to select and train candidates who will make effective school leaders and will meet the increased expectations of principals at today's schools; and (3) ongoing targeted professional development will improve the effectiveness of in-service school principals and will provide the support structures necessary to enable principals and assistant principals to meet their schools' challenges head-on.

On the basis of the conceptual framework, the proposed program of improvement will include the following components: (1) use of a thorough and comprehensive assessment tool to identify areas of strength and needed improvement by existing principals and assistant principals,

and to selectively hire the most qualified new principals and assistant principals; (2) based on the results of the needs assessment outcomes and pertinent research in the area of effective school leadership qualities, the implementation of a high-quality professional development program that is tailored to the needs of each principal and supports the school leaders throughout their careers. This will be accomplished through significant real-world, problem-based learning activities that will be combined with on-site performance monitoring and feedback and will make use of technology as a training medium, thereby allowing greater access to participants in the targeted rural, high-need school districts; (3) provision of one-to-one mentoring and a professional network of support; (4) the provision of financial incentives that will encourage program participation; and (5) the provision of stipends to principal mentors. The model is highly replicable and has a very strong research base to support its effectiveness.

Project Details:

Leadership Model Components:

The leadership development model to be implemented was designed by Edwards Educational Services (EES) in Alexandria, VA (www.edwardsedservices.com) and has been used successfully in school districts around the country and parts of Europe, Africa, and Asia. A major component and strength of the model is that it is based on a wide body of research that suggests an effective leadership development program should include Problem Based Learning (PBL), use of technology, intensive mentoring, and on-site support. It also includes components of the *National College for School Leaders* program in the United Kingdom, which experts consider to be the current premier principal training program in the world (Bush, 2013; Crow, 2004). More specifically, the leadership development model is an intensive yearlong “blueprint for continuous improvement” that includes the following elements:

- Assists each participant in developing a personal leadership growth plan
- Establishes the network to create a culture of ownership for all educational stakeholders within the leader's sphere of influence
- Maximizes individuals' leadership competencies while equipping them with the adaptive skills necessary to manage resources effectively
- Promotes a collaborative community in a changing environment so that all students can succeed in a global economy
- Strengthens the understanding of the multiple aspects of curriculum monitoring, while building an organized system for data-driven decision making
- Provides a global view of best practices in educational leadership from experts around the world

The *Continuous Improvement Blueprint* is organized around five strands of activities that have been proven to develop high quality principals and instructional leaders committed to creating a student-centered, high-achieving learning environment.

- **Strand 1**: Educational Leadership Inventory (ELI).

The ELI is a 360-degree leadership assessment tool that targets five essential domains of effective school leadership: (visionary leadership, instructional leadership, emotional intelligence, climate and culture, and management skills). Proficiency in these domains contributes to high performing and highly effective educational leaders. The ELI assesses a school leader's strengths in each of the domains through an on-line self-assessment process and through an anonymous on-line assessment of others who have observed the school leader in his/her professional setting. These "*responders*" could be from one of four categories: superiors,

subordinates, peers, outside others who are individuals who are associated with the school/district but are not within the participant's chain-of-command.

- **Strand 2:** Virtual and Face-to-Face Networking for a Changing Educational Community.

This includes multiple workshops, panel discussions, and seminars, plus wiki development with on-going professional networking. This strand is designed to help school leaders develop ownership in their educational community and become the nexus in creating a collaborative culture that values all members of the community. It embodies 21st Century strategies for incorporating innovative teaching models, empowering all community members, mapping social networks, and reaching out to stakeholders.

- **Strand 3:** Leading the Way Forward

This component includes three-five interactive webinars per year whereby participants gain strategies from acknowledged education experts for embedding 21st Century tools in their educational community, coaching to success, systems thinking to promote organizational communication, and consensus building. Additional seminars and panel discussions will be employed to drive the learning forward.

- **Strand 4:** Advancing the Ball: Entrepreneurial Leadership

Workshops designed to help school leaders understand that they must continually adapt to changes and challenge both themselves and their staff to raise student achievement. By constantly reflecting on current practices, the entrepreneurial leader is focused on taking calculated risks that creating opportunities for all students. This strand focuses on developing a systematic and comprehensive approach to purposeful school change that permeates all levels of student performance.

- **Strand 5: Data-Driven Success**

Seminars, panel discussion, workshops and professional development seminars, plus on-going virtual assessments and video conferences. This strand will help school leaders develop a cohesive system of data collection, analysis and decision-making that impacts practice at all levels. They will look at data gathered from four sources (perception, demographic, student assessment, and school progress) that will enable the leadership team to develop specific prevention and intervention strategies (Victoria Bernhardt Model). This strand emphasizes participant's understanding of the academic, social, and emotional development of the student.

Recruitment of Participants:

The target districts will have an aggressive recruitment process in-place to discover the most promising school leader candidates within their districts. The strategies will include: direct one-to-one recruitment, memos, email messages, discussion at district-wide principal meetings, etc. Additionally, a dedicated program web-site will be developed that includes a recruitment component, outreach to local college and university certification programs and to colleges and universities throughout the country, periodic PSA announcements, and a provision for financial incentives for both active school leaders and prospective candidates to participate in the program. Under the leadership and direction of the Project Director, the Training Coordinators will coordinate the recruitment effort in each school district and be actively engaged to seek and screen potential favorable program candidates. He/she will work closely with District Office leadership team to ensure the coordination of effort.

Assessment of Potential/Need:

After the screening process has been completed, selected participants will be brought together for an orientation to explain program goals and objectives, establish a communications

network, and develop a broad outline for scheduled activities for all participants. Specific areas of needed professional growth and development will be determined through interviews and an assessment process that includes an *Educational Leadership Inventory* © (ELI). The ELI is a research-based 360-degree assessment of five essential domains of effective school leadership: Visionary Leadership; Instructional Leadership; Emotional Intelligence; Climate and Culture; and Management Skills. These assessment areas are directly linked to the ISLLC standards. A problem-based individualized professional development plan will then be developed for each participant by Edwards Educational Services to provide direct training and instruction. The individualized professional development model will be based on a three-tiered approach similar to the Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) model that identifies the level of professional development need as being universal, targeted, or intensive. The level of professional development, guidance, supervision and support will increase with each level of intervention. **Universal** professional development will be provided to all participants. **Targeted** professional development will be provided to those participants who have a significant need in a particular leadership development area. **Intensive** professional development will be provided to those who are identified as novices in educational leadership experience, capacity, etc. Again, the level of intervention will be determined via the screening and assessment phase. Participants at all three levels will be supported by a mentor. However, participants identified with Universal professional development needs may choose to only be mentored in a particular area of leadership capacity. Those decisions will be made with input from the participant, Training Coordinator, Project Director, and Management Team members, as appropriate.

Mentoring

Another key component of the Leadership Development Program will be the selection of highly effective mentors to support professional growth and development of participants throughout the duration of the project who have been identified with “targeted” or “intense” professional development needs. Those participants with identified “universal-level” needs will have access to on-site support and consultation services, but they will not be assigned a mentor unless specifically requested. For the first cohort, highly effective principals will be secured from the local WV area per local and state DOE recommendations, and/or from Edwards Educational Services consultants who have an exceptional cadre of consultants in the area to call upon as needed. It is anticipated that at least four mentor principals will be selected from the first cohort to begin mentoring the second year, and an additional four mentor principals will be selected from the succeeding cohorts. These mentors will lead the professional support network and will work individually with the other principals and assistant principals to help identify and solve real-world problems that occur at the schools. Stipends will be provided to the mentor principals as an incentive to participate and to help build capacity within the targeted school districts. By the end of the grant period, there will be sufficient mentor principals for the districts to continue with the implementation of the Leadership Development Program.

Seminars & Panel Discussions:

As noted in the discussion of the multiple strands of the *Continuous Improvement Blueprint*, the project will include multiple seminars/panel discussions for the cohort group each year. These meetings will be designed for participant interaction and informal discovery and discussion. Among the myriad of opportunities to learn about effective strategies for working with high at-risk populations will be an assortment of opportunities to engage recognized high-profile business leaders in the areas of executive decision-making and systems management.

Throughout the project, participants will be encouraged to partner with a local business leader to gain their perspective on managing a large organization.

In addition, each cohort group will be provided a scholarship to attend the National Principals Academy Summer Institute held in Alexandria, VA, beginning with cohorts 1 and 2 in the summer of 2014. The NPA is highly engaging, intense, and offers a wide menu of options to enhance leadership capacity. The week's activities are built around the needs of each participant. The curriculum is grounded in hands-on learning experiences that are both relevant and thought provoking.

On-site Monitoring and Supervision:

To ensure on-site monitoring and supervision of expected professional experiences, project staff will provide on-site supervision to monitor the trainees' progress, and provide feedback as appropriate. This will include concentrated monitoring and supervision by the Training Coordinator in each district and supported by the Management Team, mentors, and Professional Support Network. Periodic feedback will be provided to participants pertaining to their skill development and progress toward his/her understanding and application of the ISLLC Standards as a process for school improvement and increased academic achievement. The total training program will be designed for participants to complete in one year, with continued follow-up, as needed and/or requested. After successful completion of the training program, trainees will be expected to successfully complete the Educational Testing Service (ETS) School Leaders Licensure Assessment and to be rated as "effective" or "highly effective" on the DOE approved local principal evaluation instrument.

Dedicated Web Site:

A web site will be developed for the program, with additional password-only login capability for participants. Training and professional development sessions will be recorded and posted on the website for participants who may have a valid reason for missing one of the training sessions. The web site will serve to keep participants and other stakeholders informed about major components of the program and will be used to provide ongoing PBL activities and exercises. It will also be a wonderful way to inform a larger audience about the program, to recruit new cohorts of participants, and to disseminate pertinent information about the project.

Table 4 is a summary of the project’s recruitment, assessment, and professional development activities:

Table 4. Summary of Professional Development Activities

Activity	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Recruitment of program candidates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Administer Educational Leadership Inventory (ELI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Develop and implement <i>Continuous Improvement Blueprint</i> for all participants	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Seminars/panel discussions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
National Principals Academy Summer Institute	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community and business leader participation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
On-site monitoring and supervision	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
One-on-one coaching and mentoring	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Implementation of dedicated project website	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ISLLC Examination/Locally approved eval	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

(1) The extent to which the project goals, objectives, and outcomes are clearly specified and

measurable:

- **Project Goal #1:** Providing leadership development training in 3 high-need school districts in West Virginia, over a five-year period, using a 5 phase Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model that provides leadership experiences designed to place the most talented school leaders in challenging leadership positions within the school districts.
- **Project Goal #2:** The successful completion of the program for at least 100 principals/assistant principals who will demonstrate their knowledge of highly effective strategies for school leadership through successfully passing the ISLLC Standards and an approved Principal Assessment Instrument.
- **Project Goal #3:** Schools with principals/assistant principals who complete the leadership program will have at least a 5% gain per year on the WESTEST II scores in math and reading/language arts as reflected in the annual assessment results for grades 3,6,8, 11.
- **Project Goal #4:** The school leader turnover rate will be reduced by 25% and 100% of the principals/assistant principals trained in the program will be retained in their district and/or schools for two years or more.
- **Project Goal #5:** To build capacity and sustainability for the program so that it remains fully operational after the federal grant cycle ends. The program will be 100% sustained in the targeted districts after program funding ends.

Table 3

Program Goals, Objectives, and Benchmarks

Goal	Objective	Benchmark for Success
<p>Goal 1. Implement a viable, sustained Problem-based learning model for principals and assistant principals in 3 high-need districts in rural West Virginia</p>	<p>1.1 To train 100 principals/assistant principals in 3 high-need WV school districts over a five-year period.</p> <p>1.2 To recruit 100 participants (20 each year) to participate in the leadership development program</p> <p>1.3 To ensure training is accessible to all 100 participants in the rural high-need school districts.</p>	<p>1.1.1 School leadership development curriculum will be implemented in Jan, 2014.</p> <p>1.2.1 Participants will apply and/or be referred by the participating school district leaders. Screening will be completed for up to 20 participants by Jan. 2014.</p> <p>1.2.2 A stipend will be provided for all program participants.</p> <p>1.3.1 The training will be provided at designated sites in each school district and via a virtual platform that all participants will have access to.</p> <p>1.3.2 Reimbursement will be provided for those having to travel more than 25 miles to attend training sessions.</p> <p>1.3.3 Training sessions will be recorded and available via the Internet for those who miss them.</p>
<p>Goal 2. The successful completion of 100 participants in Leadership Development Program</p>	<p>2.1 To develop school leadership competency for principals in the areas of visionary leadership, instructional leadership, emotional intelligence, climate and culture, and systems management skills</p>	<p>2.1.1 100% of participants will successfully complete the School Leaders Licensure Assessment conducted by ETS.</p> <p>2.1.2 Performance indicators will be developed for each</p>

		individual participant based on their identified needs
Goal 3. Improved academic growth for the focus schools in the targeted high-need districts.	3.1 To improve WESTEST scores for the focus schools whose leaders attended the Leadership Development program	3.1.1 WESTEST scores will improve at least 5% per year in math and language arts in the targeted schools during the project implementation.
Goal 4. Improved administrator retention	4.1 To ensure that school leaders trained in the program will be retained in their district 3 or more years.	4.1.1 All (100%) of school leaders trained in the program will be retained in their district 2 or more years. 4.1.2 School leader turnover rate will be reduced by 25%.
Goal 5. Program sustainability	5.1 To ensure the program is sustained after federal funding has ended. 5.2 Lessons learned from the implementation process and program evaluation will help inform and drive the educational leadership reform initiative forward.	5.1.1 District capacity will be built into the Leadership Development Program so that training will continue in each target district with zero funding required from outside sources. 5.2.1 Coalitions and alliances will be developed with at least two key stakeholders such as the West Virginia DOE Department of Educational Leadership, the West Virginia Association of School Administrators (WVASA), and the West Virginia School Boards Association.

(2) The extent to which the design of the project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population.

The proposed Leadership Development Program will clearly address the needs of the target districts to attract and retain highly qualified school leaders who will have a positive impact on student achievement outcomes. It will do so by immediately impacting the dearth of

school leaders within the targeted districts who have the ability to be turnaround agents for low-performing schools. Perhaps just as importantly, the project is likely to attract candidates from outside the target districts but within the state of WV, as well as neighboring states, who seek employment with a school district that is involved in a comprehensive effort to support and validate the improvement of teaching and learning via the development of leadership capacity at the school level.

The Leadership Development Program has a research base that has previously been shown to be highly effective and to produce positive outcomes for students. The targeted districts are considered to be perfect candidates for the implementation of the model and are very enthusiastic about the potential for academic growth.

More specifically, the *Continuous Improvement Blueprint* will provide the necessary knowledge and tools for principals to become “highly effective” under challenging conditions and lead their schools to success. It will provide an “Action Plan” for individualized professional development based on identified focus area needs. The workshops and seminars will provide strategies to identify, recruit, and develop a data-driven school Leadership Team. One-on-one coaching and mentoring will be employed, as well as weekly on-site supervision and monitoring of progress by the district the District Training Coordinator, Project Director, local District Office staff, and the external evaluation team. The year’s progress will be reviewed and assessed according to attainment of objectives and benchmarks for each participant.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project will improve teaching, learning, student outcomes.

As the undergirding framework for the proposed Leadership Development Program, each of the 5 components of the *Blueprint for Continuous Improvement* has as its core the

development of a school administrator as an educational leader who promotes the academic success of all students through a broad knowledge and understanding of effective teaching and learning, data-driven decision making, a systems-wide approach, and broad scale collaborative community involvement.

The training curriculum and activities to be implemented for the Leadership Development Program has been validated as a successful model in varying locations around the nation, particularly those considered to be the most challenged in terms of student demographics and academic performance outcomes. Reliable data and available references have documented the model's power to bring about continuous improvement and to develop capacity from within. Furthermore, the model inculcates the ISLLC Standards as a philosophical construct and framework into every component design so as to "hammer home" the linkage between educational leadership and student achievement levels.

The proposed Leadership Development Model is designed to capture what is essential about the role of school leaders and what makes a difference in whether a school community can provide experiences that ensure all students succeed. *The Blueprint for Continuous Improvement* has at its core what research and practitioners have shown are critical components of effective leadership. By focusing on the essential aspects of leadership and defining them in relation to student success, the standards-based curriculum used in this model will help develop school leaders who have the demonstrated skills, experience, and knowledge to transform poorly performing schools into schools of merit.

Participating principals will be trained to track relevant subject class achievement data gathered from a variety of sources using the *Framing Your Success*© (FYS) model of school improvement (www.edwardsedservices.com). The resulting competencies will result in

WESTEST II standardized test outcomes to improve at least 5% annually for participating principals.

(4) The extent to which the design for implementing and evaluating the project will result in information to guide replication.

Project replicability will be enhanced by several key factors. The project design is based on solid research and proven practical application, it is not complicated with theoretical hyperbole as its driving force, and it is cost effective. Project components were selected to fill gaps in traditional educational leadership programs that are currently being offered within the target area. As a result, there is an increased likelihood of post-grant survival for the leadership development model.

Through effective implementation and achievement of desired results, it is anticipated that the outlined Leadership Development Program will be used as a model for the development of West Virginia School Leader Competencies, and the school leader licensure process will become institutionalized over time. The ETS School Leaders Licensure Assessment will provide important feedback to stakeholders regarding the ability of the program to instill the model ISLLC Standards in school leader staff development programs such that participants can meet the dual goals of individual licensure and improved academic achievement in their school. The ELI assessment (pre-post data) will provide additional information.

Project evaluation data, both process and outcome, will be highly disseminated throughout the state and nation. It is anticipated that the project team will publish a peer-reviewed journal article about the project, will conduct several nationally broadcast webinars, will conduct a state-wide conference on educational leadership development, and make

presentations at one or more national school leadership conferences. Moreover, the Project Director will work closely with the WV Dept. of Education's *Principal Leadership Academy* staff to complement elements of the program's curriculum and/or strategy for leadership development.

Considering the immediate and strong need of demonstrated effective professional development strategies for current and aspiring principals, school district leaders across the state will be interested in replicating the program in their district. The probability of replication or testing in other settings will be particularly high if the stated goals of reducing administrative turnover rates and increasing standardized test scores are achieved.

B. Quality of the Project Evaluation (15 points)

An independent evaluator will conduct a thorough and comprehensive project evaluation during the five years of the project.

(1) Use of Objective Performance Measures

The implementation of the proposed leadership development model will achieve the stated purpose of the School Leadership Program (SLP) to assist high-need LEAs in recruiting, training, and supporting principals and assistant principals. Through the expertise of an experienced and highly qualified external evaluator, the districts involved in the project will assess the effectiveness of the designed approach by using both qualitative and quantitative techniques to examine project progress in reaching the following goals: are (1) implementation of a high-quality Problem-Based Learning (PBL) training model for principals and assistant principals, (2) increasing the internal capacity of the districts to recruit, assess, and train its school leaders, (3) reducing the high turnover rate of principals and assistant principals, (4) increasing student academic outcomes, (5) ensuring the sustainability of the training program.

The specific goals associated with these objectives include the following *School Leadership Performance Measures* that fit the PLP project design:

1. The percentage of program graduates who are certified and hired as a principal or assistant principal in a high-need LEA.
2. The percentage of program graduates certified through the program who are hired as a principal or assistant principal in a high-need LEA and who remain in that position for at least two years.
3. The percentage of principals and assistant principals who complete the SLP-funded professional development program whose schools demonstrate positive change based on pre- and post-school site measures, to include student academic growth.
4. The percentage of program graduates who are rated “effective” or “highly effective” as measured by a US DOE approved principal evaluation system.

Qualitative and/or quantitative data will be obtained for each of these measures. Implicit within the data collected will be measures that meet the Secretary’s request for annual reporting of: (1) the grantee’s progress in meeting the application’s objectives; (2) the project’s effectiveness in meeting the purposes of the SLP; and (3) the project’s effect on the specific LEAs served.

All outcome/performance measures will be compared with pre-and post-data to provide the Project Director and other key participants and stakeholders with valuable information to implement program improvement strategies. The outcome measures will include the number of participants starting and completing the program; actual performance of participants on a wide variety of qualitative variables including confidence level as an administrator, leadership style, leadership capacity, sphere of influence, understanding of the teaching and learning process,

stress tolerance, communication skills, decisiveness, organizational ability, and problem analysis; number of participants passing the ISLLC; number of participants retained by the targeted districts for at least two years; and student test score data for participant's schools, as well as other school climate measures such as: student and teacher attendance rates, discipline referrals, suspensions/expulsions, graduation rate, family and community engagement, and assessment of the school culture.

Findings of program effectiveness and recommendations for changes in policies, practices, uses of resources, and replication capacity will be used in the development of several products to be disseminated to interested parties and stakeholders:

- A “manual of lessons learned” and a guide to the implementation of the Leadership Development Model will be developed.
- Several national/international webcasts will be conducted to advocate the merits of the project design and anticipated outcomes associated with the Leadership Development Model.
- Presentation of evaluation findings at one or more national conferences.
- Presentation at a state-wide Leadership Development Conference.
- The results of the official evaluation report will be widely disseminated, including the development of articles for publication in professional journals.

In summary, the outcomes of the external evaluation will add significantly to the body of knowledge surrounding school leader development programs. The information will prove useful as a tool for reshaping traditional educational leadership preparation programs.

(2) Methods of Evaluation

Cash Educational Consulting Services, LLL (CECS) will gather and monitor data monthly to quickly identify the need for any project adjustments, and will prepare quarterly formative reports for review by the district staff and other stakeholders. The evaluation team will perform bi-monthly site visits to the Project Director's office and service sites to check for appropriate process documentation, appropriate data collection techniques, proper fiscal handling and reporting techniques, and fidelity of program implementation. CECS will develop and forward a list of findings and recommendations for improvement after every site visit that will be immediately addressed by project staff to ensure compliance with the grant contract and for continuous improvement.

The project evaluation will be conducted through formative and summative evaluations that will measure both the process of program activities and management, as well as the outcomes of stated goals and objectives. Quantitative and qualitative baseline data will be determined from current database resources and various survey forms developed by the evaluator. The external evaluator will organize and manage the development of evaluation procedures, provide technical support to the Project Director, and will coordinate the collection of data needed to determine program effectiveness.

Formative data will be determined for the following quantitative areas: annual administrative turnover rate for each targeted district; the number of administrators expected to leave their position within the next five years; the number of qualified candidates in each school district who are recognized as potential principals; the number of candidates who apply to participate in the program; the number of candidates rejected; data on the number and/or percentage of current principals rated as "effective" or "highly effective"; and annual

WESTEST II scores for math and language arts in grades 3,6,8,11. Additional data pertaining to attendance, suspensions/expulsions, graduation rate, teacher turnover rates, and other available quantifiable data elements will also be used to measure the impact of the program.

Qualitative data collection will include results from surveys and other data collection instruments designed to assess the perceptions of participants on overall program effectiveness, program management, the professional development curriculum, strategies designed for the improvement of professional competency, and perceptions of participants' immediate supervisor about effectiveness as a current school leader. Additional quantifiable data such as the annual school culture survey administered by the WV DOE, and WV Office of Education Performance Reports (OEPA) will be gleaned and analyzed for pertinent findings that can be attributed to the scope, activities, and goals of the project.

Types of Data Collected: Data for recruiting qualified principals will include: evaluation of recruitment materials; logs indicating recruitment contact; surveys of contacts to measure interest in the project; reviews conducted during meetings; annual tabulations of the number of recruits who enroll in the program; program selection interview results; any available evidence of previous administrator performance data.

Data pertaining to the effectiveness of the professional development program and improving student achievement will include: the number of participants who complete the program; the quality of the participant training program as reported by EES assessments and mentoring reports; surveys of administrators and teachers; and the impact on student achievement as measured by the WESTEST II data.

Data pertaining to principal turnover rates will include: the number of principals hired/retained by the target districts and the length of time they remain in their position. The

tracking of retention is anticipated to continue beyond the fifth year of the grant period for those principals/assistant principals hired after year three.

When Data Will Be Collected: As noted previously, data will be collected as an on-going activity by the Project Director and Training Coordinator. The External Evaluator will be on-site bi-weekly for direct observation and compilation of all available data and program activities conducted by the Management Team. Each month the Training Coordinators and Project Director will fill out a process evaluation report detailing activities completed, unanticipated issues/problems encountered, solutions of issues/problems encountered, and plans for the upcoming month. Monthly reports will allow for swift adjustments as needs become evident and refinement necessary. The External Evaluator will use the monthly reports to compile quarterly and annual data summaries.

Data Collection Methodology: As previously noted, qualitative and quantitative methods will be used to examine the project's implementation and overall project success. All data will be organized into a database for continuous and easy reference throughout the project. The data will be integrated into both process and summative evaluation components. Focus group meetings will be conducted annually with project participants and Management Team personnel. The findings of the focus group meetings will serve as a direct means for participants to inform ongoing policy and practice as it relates to the project.

How Data Will Be Analyzed: Data analysis will be performed in multiple ways. First, the Training Coordinator and Project Director will compile and analyze monthly data in the form of an informal report to the external evaluator (Cash Educational Consulting Services). Secondly, CECS staff will make bi-monthly site visits to the target districts to meet with project staff and participating principals/assistant principals in order to monitor project implementation and

conduct interviews and focus groups. The external evaluator will also meet with the Project Director & Training Coordinators to conduct an analysis of current activities and determine any needed programming changes. The external evaluator's quarterly report will follow, including further recommendations for the next quarter. Third, at the end of each project year, CECS will meet with the project Management Team to report the year's assessment and review all current data. The annual summative report, that includes findings and recommendations, will then be provided to all pertinent stakeholders. The project Management Team will conduct a review meeting to discuss and integrate the CECS recommendations determined to be appropriate and feasible for project development.

(3) Ongoing Performance Feedback and Periodic Progress Assessment

The external evaluator will oversee all data collection activities on an ongoing basis to develop progress reports. The reports will be developed using a mixed method research approach. Quantitative and qualitative data will be included, and a case study approach used to document individual participant development. The reports will also include assessments of the quality and completeness of services. As the reports are developed, notable data points and findings will be shared at Project Director Meetings. These findings will include interpretations of the data, recommendations for program/service revisions, modifications or new capacity-building strategies as necessary. In addition to the quarterly reports, ongoing generation of data-driven monthly feedback communications will allow stakeholders to individually and collectively make program/service modifications as necessary. Ad-hoc reports on special topics will also be developed as needed. Annual reports will be generated using the quarterly reports, to summarize grant activities, impacts and results each year. A final report will be generated at the completion of the project.

Ultimately, the tools and reports developed to document the success of the leadership development model will result in a project model that is efficient, easily managed, monitored, and

highly replicable. The final report will be an essential component of the statewide and national dissemination effort at the end of the project.

The Evaluation Logic Model for the project (found in the Appendix) provides a conceptual blueprint for the evaluation design. A Framework for the external evaluation that includes a more specific discussion to include a project evaluation timeline, activities, benchmarks, and indicators of data collection methodology is also included in the Appendix.

C. Significance of the Project (25 points)

(1) Contribution to increased knowledge/understanding of problems, issues, and strategies

Services provided by this project will have a major impact on the quality of school leaders in high-need school districts across the state of West Virginia and potentially across the US, specifically in rural communities. Given that current principal leadership programs in the State of WV have broad philosophical differences in curriculum content and training approaches, none of which specifically address the problems associated with at-risk children in high-need school districts, this training model will provide the standardization needed to provide a common core of knowledge and performances that will help link leadership more forcefully to productive schools and enhanced educational outcomes.

Using the evidenced-based “*Blueprints for Continuous Improvement*” model and the six Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium standards as a curriculum framework, it is anticipated that this model will add to what we know about preparing principals for the increased demands of the job, particularly in schools that have low test scores, high dropout rates, and a significant at-risk population. The strategies proposed, extend beyond the current research-based methodologies that include the use of a broad-based assessment as a starting point and then move to a somewhat narrow focus on the improvement of student instruction.

What sets this model apart, and will add to the body of knowledge pertaining to effective leadership development strategies, is a rigorous problem-based learning component that specifically focuses on high-need schools and is based on real-world situations that are “actually” encountered today and will likely be encountered in the next few years. These experiences will most likely be different for each participant. The model builds individual competency by addressing “actual” identified need rather than perceived need that research attributes to a wide-range of leadership development needs. It relies on a systematic three-tiered approach to training (universal, targeted, intense) that drives the overall curriculum, but more importantly addresses individualized transfer of knowledge and a customized support and monitoring system that moves beyond a wide-spread mentoring strategy, and generalized on-site observation with scripted feedback.

The model will also address a wide spectrum of leadership components that are typically not part of a school leadership development curriculum. Some examples include: Building knowledge and capacity for meaningful community involvement, including the local business community, and how to engage them in a proactive manner. This is an area most school leaders are not trained in or feel comfortable addressing. This will be accomplished through a process called *Planning Effectively for Resource Collaboration* (P.E.R.C.)—a mapping process that links, across programs and agency lines, services which closely complement each other. Other areas typically not addressed specifically are dropout prevention, and how to establish meaningful relationships with at-risk students and their parents/guardians. The *Blueprint for Continuous Improvement* model espoused in this proposal includes those components as well as others that principals traditionally have had to learn through on-the-job training. Yet they are

often key skills and knowledge areas that separate a high-quality principal from a building manager.

In summary, the results of this project will substantiate the growing body of research that shows a prerequisite to high-performing schools is educational leadership that focuses not only on student instruction, but on a wider spectrum of organizational leadership capacity to include school and community relations, student leadership development, parent engagement, and the connection to school and work.

(2) Likelihood the project will result in system change

It is well documented that the training received by principals from university programs and their school districts is inadequate to prepare them for the demands and challenges encountered in high-need schools. This is especially true in the school districts involved in this project which are located in one of America's most economically impoverished areas and have a sustained record of poor student achievement. The districts' simply do not have the capacity to recruit, train, and retain the number of highly-qualified school leaders required to make a significant impact on school culture and associated student achievement. Indeed, there is a behind-the-scenes process in place that propels the districts' to "steal" qualified staff and school leaders from neighboring school districts that this project will directly impact. Moreover, there is not a program in place in any of the districts that builds an infrastructure of school leadership capacity development and sustainability.

The proposed leadership development model is specifically designed to address the problems associated with the recruitment, retention and development of school leadership capacity in predominantly rural, low-performing school districts such as those involved in this project. The distance-learning delivery model, combined with a systematic selection and

screening process, will have a significant impact on the ability of high-need school districts to recruit principals from within their own ranks, and more importantly, enhance the skills of current administrators, resulting in a decrease in administrator turnover and increased academic achievement. At the end of this project, each of the school districts will have a solid foundation in place to address their need for highly-effective school leaders from within and will not rely on past practices of securing them from neighboring school districts and states.

Most importantly, there is a solid body of evidence that the *Blueprint for Continuous Improvement* model advocated through this project is likely to succeed. The model has been used successfully in school districts around the country to include: Jefferson County Public Schools, Birmingham, AL; Savannah Public Schools, Savannah, GA; Newport News Public Schools, Newport News, VA; Evergreen Public Schools, Kalispell, MT. One hundred percent (100%) of school districts involved in the leadership development framework and curriculum developed by *Edwards Educational Services* had documented student growth that was directly attributed to the impact of improved leadership capacity at the school level. The project's external evaluation will provide the measurable impact and validate the effectiveness of this model.

(3) Magnitude of the results and outcomes

The strength of the proposed school leadership development model is the use of a tried and proven system that has documented results behind it wherever it has been implemented. The southern region of rural West Virginia desperately needs a program that will infuse its high-need schools with more qualified principals and assistant principals. The resulting increase in leadership capacity will produce tangible results with the first cohort of participants, and over the course of the five-year project, a solid infrastructure will be in place. Previous implementations of the leadership development model have been proven to positively impact principal and

assistant principal turnover rates, improved teamwork for implementing other improvements, and created increased buy-in from teachers, students, parents, and the community at-large. A highly qualified, stable leader is critical to the school reform effort and that is exactly what this leadership development model is designed to do.

The current principal and assistant principal development process in place in WV is simply not adequate to address the magnitude of need in the high-need areas of the state. Talent is constantly being drained to other areas or states that appear to offer fewer challenges, often with higher salaries and resources from which to build a professional reputation. The *Blueprint for Continuous Improvement* model will identify areas for improvement and will provide the needed training and support to make an immediate impact, but more importantly to provide sustainability to the effort as the most effective principals will become mentors to assist other principals as they come on board. The professional support network will provide district-wide support and collaborative problem solving to many of the issues that principals and assistant principals deal with on a daily basis.

The *Blueprint for Continuous Improvement* model has been successful as a result of coupling high-quality instructors with intensive, high-quality problem-based staff development opportunities that are specifically tailored to the individual participant. Available evidence has shown that schools with principals who have gone through the training have outcome data significantly higher than schools that did not have a principal trained with the *Blueprint for Continuous Improvement* model. The outcomes were directly related to the increased leadership capacity of the building principal combined with an intensive modeling, monitoring, mentoring, and support system being employed. After a two-year program implementation in a historically failing school in Kanawha County, WV, the school made AYP for the first time ever. Principal

and assistant principal turnover rates were reduced by more than 60%, teacher turnover rates were reduced by 50%, discipline problems reduced by 30%, attendance increased by 5%, and the dropout rate reduced by 3%. In another WV school district that had been under intensive state intervention for over 10 years, the leadership development program was implemented for three years and resulted in the district being released from state control. The Edwards Educational Services leadership development model is highly respected wherever it has been implemented, especially within the State of WV. It has been the driving force that produced significant school improvement outcomes. Similar outcomes can be expected in the targeted districts of this proposal.

D. Quality of Management Plan (15 points)

(1) Adequacy of the management plan

The WV leadership development program is designed as a five-year project. The major goals of our project are: The goals of the program are: (1) implementation of a high-quality Problem-Based Learning (PBL) training model for principals and assistant principals, (2) increasing the internal capacity of the districts to recruit, assess, and train its school leaders, (3) reducing the high turnover rate of principals and assistant principals, (4) increasing student academic outcomes, (5) ensuring the sustainability of the training program.

The design of the project ensures that appropriate staff and resources are applied in order to carry out all goals and objectives as expected. A quality project Management Team has been assembled to achieve the outcomes listed in our Timeline. Below is a description of key project personnel and their contributions to accomplishing the project goals. Resumes for named positions are included in the Appendix.

Project Manager: *Carolyn Falin, Assistant Superintendent, McDowell County Schools(.10 FTE)*

The Project Manager will be responsible for the management and integrity of the project design, conduct, reporting of the project outcomes, and for managing, monitoring, and ensuring the integrity of the collaborative relationship between Raleigh Co. Schools, Fayette Co. Schools, and McDowell Co. Schools. Additionally, the Project Manager will be responsible for the direction and oversight of issues pertaining to compliance, financial, personnel, and other related aspects of the leadership development project. The Project Manager will report to the Superintendent of McDowell County Schools, which is serving as the Lead Agency for the project.

Project Director: *TBD.(1.0 FTE)*

The Project Director will manage the day-to-day operational aspects of the grant project and scope of work. He/she will have an advanced degree in Educational Leadership and have the relevant experience and knowledge to effectively manage the project as defined in the proposal.

The Project Director will be the leader of the School Leadership Development process and effort. The position will have overall operational and management responsibility in completing the project scope of work and will serve as its primary spokesperson.

The Project Director will consult regularly with the Project Management Team, and report directly to the Project Manager. The Project Director will manage the activities of the Training Coordinators in each of the collaborating districts to include all accounting, communications, and administrative staff assigned to the project.

The Project Director will oversee all consultants and sub-contractors who might be engaged in the project to ensure contracts and agreements are executed and implemented as appropriate.

In addition, the Project Director will work closely with stakeholders from across the region to develop consensus around the Leadership Development Project and its implementation. A primary component of this grant is to build local capacity by ensuring the fidelity of implementation of the leadership development model, and to also leverage the skills, expertise and assets of any existing

local institutions and individual stakeholders, such as local business leaders who will support the growth and development of participants' business acumen.

The resulting institutionalized Leadership Development Program that is expected to be the outcome of this process must be the product of the joint effort and engagement of all stakeholders and the Project Director who will have the charge of helping to create an environment of trust and collaboration so that these institutions and stakeholders see the Leadership Development Program as their own.

Training Coordinator(s): (3 TBD: 1.0 FTE)

The Training Coordinators will work directly with the program participants from each district. The Training Coordinator will assist with participant recruitment, screening, Educational Leadership Inventory (ELI) assessment, and will assist Edwards Educational Services (EES) with the development of the individualized professional development plans. He/she will assist with the development and coordination of project schedules, the logistics of training event delivery and operations at the local level. He/she will help select and secure high-quality mentors for the participants' per the level of need determined by the ELI and provide direct supervision and support as appropriate.

The Training Coordinator will help ensure fidelity of implementation of the Leadership Development Program at the local level. He/she will assist the External Evaluator to secure and analyze data for the performance evaluation component, to include the design and distribution of surveys, interviews, and questionnaires for conducting training needs assessment. The Training Coordinator will report directly to the Project Director.

External Evaluator: *Cash Educational Consulting Services, LLC (.50 FTE)*

The external evaluation will be conducted by *Cash Educational Consulting Services, LLC*. The CECS staff is composed of Doctorate and Master's level educators with experience in educational leadership at the school and district levels, experience in program development and project evaluation at the district and school levels, and research at the university level.

Dr. Terry Cash will lead the external evaluation effort for the project. Dr. Cash recently retired as the Associate Director of the National Dropout Prevention Center where he served for over 13 years. He has significant experience as a Principal Investigator and program evaluator for numerous federal, state, and locally funded programs around the nation. He also taught graduate level classes at Clemson University in the Educational Leadership Program and thus has a strong depth of knowledge regarding the components of an effective leadership development program. Dr. Cash's role as external evaluator is enhanced by his previous and current evaluation and technical assistance activities within the state of West Virginia, which strengthens his awareness and knowledge base regarding the target population, and by his involvement as an advisor to the project design team.

CECS will work with the Project Director and Training Coordinators to gather and report both qualitative and quantitative data. The evaluation plan is both formative and summative and will provide on-going feedback for continuous program improvement (formative), and an assessment of the project's effectiveness in meeting the project's goals and objectives (summative).

Senior Subject Matter Expert and TA Advisor: *Dr. Steve Edwards*

Dr. Steven Edwards will serve as a Subject Matter Expert and Technical Assistance Advisor to the project. He is an award-winning administrator, speaker, trainer, and professor. He

is the creator of an Educational Leadership methodology that has transformed schools throughout the nation.

A leader nationally recognized by USA Today for his innovative approach to education, Dr. Edwards successfully implemented numerous programs to improve student performance during his sixteen-year tenure as a school administrator. Dr. Edwards also has been instrumental in helping countless school districts tailor similar programs with positive, far-reaching results. In addition, Dr. Edwards is regularly featured as a content expert on television and radio with appearances on CNN on topics such as school safety, school climate and school reform. He has worked in 49 states and 39 countries.

As a planner he has assisted groups and individuals in identifying and achieving individual and organizational goals. Throughout his thirty-seven year professional career, Dr. Edwards has published numerous articles on school reform and leadership, and has co-authored five books, which address school reform initiatives and leadership development. He has also served as a Professor of Educational Leadership for both the University of Connecticut and The George Washington University, teaching prospective administrators in the Graduate School of Education. Currently Dr. Edwards serves as a visiting lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University in the United Kingdom.

Staffing Plan:

In addition to the Project Management Team shown above, an Administrative Assistant (1.0 FTE) will support the Project Director, and three part-time Administrative Assistants (.50 FTE) will support the Training Coordinators. A Data Technician (.25) will collect and manage project data, including student achievement data, will assist the Project Director, Training Coordinators, and External Evaluator in data analysis, and manage the dedicated project website.

Project staff will conduct weekly staff meetings electronically, and will meet face-to-face monthly with the training provider staff (EES) and external evaluator (CECS) to assess the project’s progress, and to implement recommendations for program improvement. Fiscal management of the grant will be performed by the McDowell Co. School District’s Business and Accounting Office, in coordination with the Project Manager and Project Director. An ad-hoc Professional Support Network comprised of regional administrator volunteers and business leaders will be available for individual or group discussions and support as needed and appropriate. A staffing plan chart that shows roles, responsibilities, and time commitment follows:

Position/Person	Roles and Responsibilities	Time Commitment
Project Manager	Program oversight	.10 FTE
Project Director	Oversight, training schedule, consultants, data reporting, report development & dissemination	1.0 FTE
Training Coordinators (3)	Participant recruitment, screening, assessment, training logistics	1.0 FTE
Data Technician	Collect & manage project data, data analysis, website management	.50 FTE
Administrative Assistant to Project Director	Project communications, meeting planning,	1.0 FTE

	correspondence, manage office files and documents	
Administrative Assistant to Training Coordinators (3)	Project communications, meeting planning, correspondence, manage office files and documents	.50 FTE
External Evaluator	Data collection, analysis, on-site observation, reports	Contracted
Subject Matter Expert/TA Advisor	Provide advice and technical assistance as needed	Contracted
Training Providers (EES)	Provide direct training, assist with ELI assessment, monitoring and supervision of participant progress	Contracted
Principal Mentors	Provide individualized TA and support to participants as needed and appropriate	Contracted
Professional Support Network	Provide general advice and guidance to participants	As needed

Qualifications of the Providers: *Edwards Educational Services (EES)* was selected to provide the curriculum content and training development plan based on their proven formula for continuous improvement to effectively build capacity for sustained change. Edwards Educational

Services has developed a systematic and comprehensive approach to school change that permeates all levels of student performance. EES's cadre of experienced and highly-qualified School Improvement specialists have worked with a wide range of schools to develop internal capacity through ongoing, individualized, site-based professional development that has directly impacted administrator and staff competency which resulted in improved student learning outcomes.

EES has multiple years of experience working with high-need schools with large numbers of underperforming students and high poverty rates. All of the EES Senior staff and consultants have been recruited from leadership positions in similarly challenged schools and districts.

The services of EES are broad-based and address all facets of research related to school improvement theory and practice: *21st Century Learning Skills* that enable educators to close the expectations gap between school standards and workplace requirements; *Dropout Prevention* interventions that examine existing school policies and provides the platform for modification to existing policies and procedures that enable all students to succeed; *Leadership Development* model that strengthens the understanding of the multiple aspects of curriculum monitoring, data driven decision-making and assists each participant in developing a personal leadership growth plan; *Strategic Planning* model that is customized to best meet the specific needs of a school or school district, and to provide them a process that allows them to modify their strategic plan as new information becomes available and data sources warrant; *Student Leadership Development* model entitled *iLead 21©* , which is a three-tiered, progressive student leadership development program that focuses on 5 key leadership principles.

Ongoing assessments are integral to the professional development strategy to be employed in this project. The EES services include an on-site analysis of individual school-level situations and the collaborative development of individualized staff development plans for every project participant based on the results of the research-based ELI. This individualized and highly monitored approach is critical to ensuring the project will be successful. EES will provide professional development services that are built upon a Problem-Based Learning (PBL) paradigm. Training and coaching will occur side-by-side, bringing real-world field based experiences into play. The EES staff understands how to coach educators and educational leaders effectively, and they develop a collaborative, supportive coaching and mentoring environment that produces successful results. EES annually conducts a rigorous Principal Leadership Summer Institute that brings together some of the most respected researchers and practitioners in the field of educational leadership to lecture and present engaging, hands-on workshops. Each of the participants in this project will be provided scholarships to attend the Principal Leadership Summer Institutes.

Finally, one of the most compelling reasons EES was selected as the Leadership Development Program content provider is their previous and current successful work in the State of WV with high-need schools. The company is highly recognized and respected throughout the state. Several of the staff and consultants are local residents of the State of WV and have a unique understanding of the issues and challenges school administrators face on a daily basis.

Project Timelines and Activities

Date	Activity	Person(s) Responsible
October 2013	Final grant paperwork to US DOE	Project Manager Project Director

Oct 2013	Hire staff	Project Manager Project Director Training Coordinators
Oct – Dec 2013	Recruiting activities	Project Director Training Coordinators
Oct – Dec 2013	Screening and selection of year one cohort	Project Director Training Coordinators
Oct- Dec 2013	Selection of Principal Mentors	Project Director Training Coordinators
Dec 2013	Administer ELI	Project Director, Training Coordinators EES
Dec 2013	Design individualized PD Plans	EES Training Staff, Project Director, Training Coordinators
Jan 2014	Stipends provided	Project Director
Ongoing Jan 2014 to Sep 2018	Leadership development training	EES
1 x month all years	Management Team and staff meet to discuss project goals and activities	Project Director

Ongoing Jan 2014 to Sep 2018	Onsite one-to-one mentoring/coaching	Project Director, Training Coordinators Mentors
4 x month all years	Project staff meeting	Project Director
Ongoing all years	On-site observations, data collection, data analysis activities	CECS Evaluator Project Director Training Coordinators Data Technician
2 x month all years	Evaluator makes site visits to collect data and monitor project implementation	CECS Evaluator
1 x month all years	Evaluator prepares monthly report and presents at monthly Management Team meetings	CECS Evaluator
Quarterly	Evaluator prepares quarterly report and presents to all stakeholders	CECS Evaluator
Jan 2014	Professional support network formed	Project Director Training Coordinators
June each year	Participants undergo ISLLC Assessment	Program Participants
Dec – Jun each year	Next cohort selected	Project Director Training Coordinators
Summer 2014-2018	Principal Leadership Summer Institute	EES Project Director

October of each year	Annual Report and presentation of Project goals, activities, and outcomes to stakeholders	CECS Evaluator in conjunction with Project Manager and Project Director
No later than 30 days from project end (Sep 2018)	Development of Final Report findings and recommendations	CECS Evaluator in conjunction with Project Manager and Project Director
During 2018 and post grant period as appropriate and feasible	Dissemination of project findings and recommendations to include a state-wide conference, national conference, webcasts, journal articles	Project Director, CECS External Evaluator, Project Management Team

(2) Ensuring feedback and continuous improvement

The rural WV collaborative will use multiple procedures to ensure feedback and continuous improvement of the leadership development project. Concerns about the quality and ability of the project to meet stated goals and objectives will be reviewed during weekly and monthly staff meetings. Data collection procedures will be implemented to strengthen the project and to manage the process of applying ongoing data feedback to project improvement strategies.

The training curriculum and professional development plan will be continually reviewed to ensure it meets the current needs of the participants. In addition to the External Evaluator assessment process, EES will utilize their own assessment tools in conjunction with feedback from all stakeholders to ensure that the Individualized Staff Development Plans are on target and

adjusted according to the performance of the EES training staff. These plans will be updated based on various assessments of mentors, coaches, and personal feedback.

As outlined in the *Quality of the Project Evaluation*, the evaluation process will assess the effectiveness of the project using qualitative and quantitative techniques to examine progress toward achieving project goals and objectives. The evaluation plan includes a formative component which will provide on-going feedback for continuous improvement. The External Evaluator, who will gather and monitor data monthly to quickly identify the need for any project adjustments, and will prepare timely formative evaluations for review by the project Management Team and other stakeholders. The External Evaluator will develop and forward a list of recommendations for improvement after every site visit that will be immediately addressed by project staff to ensure compliance with the grant contract and for continuous improvement.

The monthly reports will be used to ensure each component of implementation is succeeding as planned and that all steps meet the expectations of the project timeline. Monthly meetings of the Management Team will ensure that any weaknesses or barriers to program implementation will be identified and overcome as quickly as possible. Quarterly reports will document the fidelity of implementation of the *Blueprint for Continuous Improvement* model, and to identify strengths of the program and/or challenges the Management Team has encountered. The Final Report will include findings and recommendations that will inform the effectiveness of the leadership development model and provide useful information for the US DOE to consider replicating it in other high-need rural areas across the nation.

Project dissemination efforts via the state-wide conference during the final year of the project, as well as subsequent presentations at a National School Leadership Conference, journal

articles, webcasts, etc., will be particularly useful to a wide-range of educational stakeholders across the nation.

Equitable Access and Participation

It is the practice of McDowell County Schools and its partners (Raleigh County Schools, Fayette County Schools) to promote equitable access to all services and to promote equitable employment practices. McDowell County Schools commits to provide equitable access to all program participants to project programs and services without regard to race, color, sex, religion, or national origin. McDowell County Schools commits to equitable employment practices of all persons employed in direct or indirect conduct of the proposed project.

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