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Applicant Background

Leading Educators is a national 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization that partners with districts and other local education agencies, charter management organizations, and nonprofit organizations to help highly effective teachers develop the leadership skills they need to successfully transition from leading students to leading their peers. Leading Educators helps districts identify their best teachers and provides intensive job-embedded coaching, relevant professional development, and powerful cohort-based learning experiences. The organization's goal is to extend the reach and impact of highly effective teachers, transforming schools and dramatically improving student outcomes and believes that teacher leadership increases support for new teachers, retains the best teachers in the classroom, and relieves overburdened principals.

Leading Educators has a proven track record of success developing Teacher Leaders to work collaboratively with their teams to improve teacher capacity. This work has led to increased academic gains and accelerated teacher development in large urban districts across the country (Kansas City; New Orleans; Washington, D.C.; and others).

The highly experienced program team has trained and developed over 1,800 teacher leaders who led close to 16,000 additional teachers and have collectively impacted more than 377,000 students in Connecticut, Denver, Houston, Kansas City, Massachusetts, Memphis, Michigan, New Orleans, New York City, and Washington, DC. Please see Appendix J.2 for a timeline of Leading Educators' growth and impact.

A. Significance

(1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed

The Need to Prepare and Retain Great Teachers

For too many students, the United States public education system is failing. Students of

color trail their white peers by an average of two grade levels (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009, 2011), and upon entering fourth grade, children from low-income families are already two to three grade levels behind their higher-income peers (NCES, 2009). Meanwhile, **data show that the top 20% of teachers generate an additional five to six months of student learning each year than poorly performing teachers, yet the nation's 50 largest districts lose approximately 10,000 high-performing teachers each year** (The New Teacher Project, 2012). Moreover, it is estimated that in the next decade 40% of today's principals will retire. School leaders are leaving, in part, because they bear the majority of the leadership burden and are not distributing leadership across their teams, and those who are retiring are not being replaced by enough qualified candidates (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2002; Bierly, et. al, 2016.) Additionally, teachers regularly report that their professional learning is of variable quality, not suited to their development needs and not linked to their classroom teaching (OECD, 2014). While the ultimate measure of the effectiveness of professional learning is its impact on students, the first measure of effectiveness is how much it improves instruction in classrooms (Jensen, Sonnemann, Roberts-Hull, , and Hunter, 2016). There is a clear and urgent need, therefore, to train and retain great teachers so they can continue to have a positive impact on student achievement, not only in their own classrooms but also in their schools overall.

The Need to Teach to High Academic Standards

New K–12 college- and career-ready standards for mathematics and English language arts and literacy adopted recently in most states (such as the Common Core State Standards, or Common Core) are more rigorous and far-reaching than most previous state standards. Some evidence suggests that teachers are not prepared to help students meet those standards. (Kane,

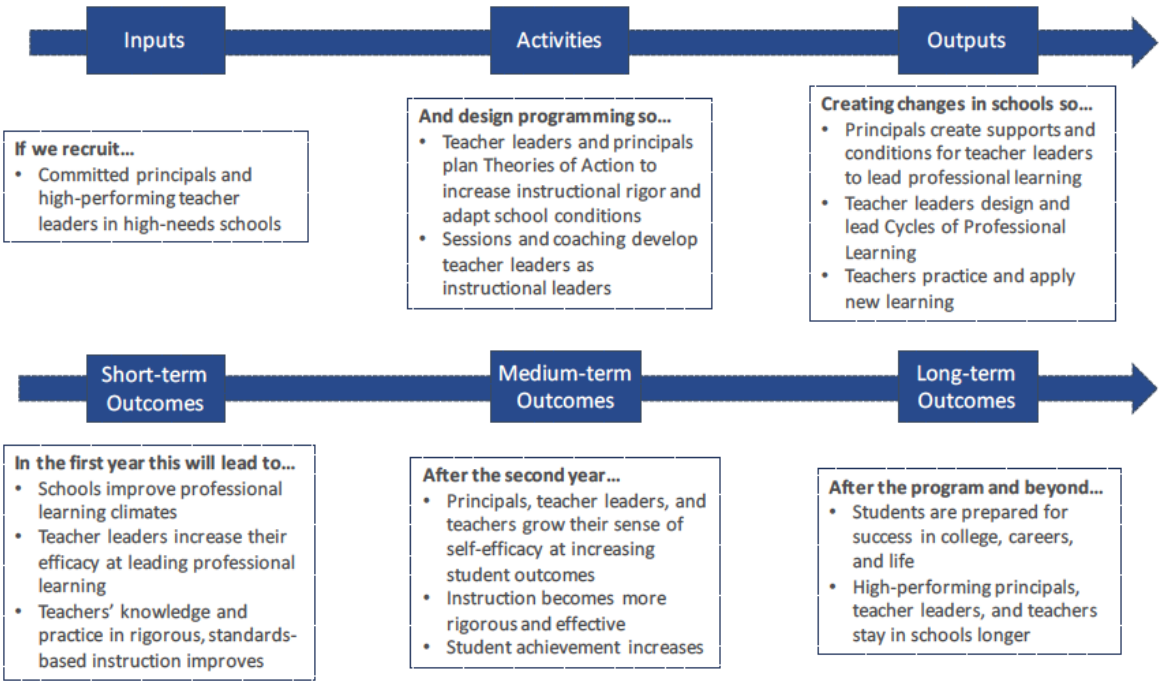
Owens, Marinell, Thal, and Staiger, 2016). However, we have very little concrete information about how state standards are connected to what teachers think and do in their classrooms (Opfer, Kauffman, and Thompson, 2016). RAND Corporation has studied teachers' implementation of state standards, including the instructional materials teachers are using to address state standards and how they are using them, their perceptions about the content and approaches most aligned with their standards, their pedagogical content knowledge, and the extent to which they are asking their students to engage in practices aligned with their standards. Survey data drawn from the American Teacher Panel—a randomly selected and nationally representative panel of U.S. K–12 public school teachers periodically surveyed about major education policies that could have an impact on teaching and learning—has yielded some actionable findings that have informed Leading Educators' core work. There is evidence that teachers lack an understanding of how instruction in R/LA and math has shifted. For example, three-quarters of literacy teachers believed that they should be planning from a set of skills as opposed to from the text (Kane, Owens, Marinell, Thal, and Staiger, 2016; and Opfer, Kaufman, and Thompson, 2016).

This is especially important in Chicago where students' academic attainment still lags and gaps in high-quality education options are scarce for so many high-needs, inner-city students. Therefore, for this project, the **Chicago Common Core Collaborative**, Leading Educators proposes to work with school leaders, teacher leaders, and teacher teams from across the city of Chicago to address, implement, and improve high-quality, standards-aligned teaching through research-based Cycles of Professional Learning and intensive support for school leaders. By leading these cycles, teacher leaders can raise the quality of instruction and culture on their teams and serve as a critical lever for creating equitable schools for all children.

The Need to Develop Teacher Leaders Who Can Drive Student Achievement Outcomes.

Traditional teacher preparation emphasizes leading students but does not acknowledge the skills required to lead adults. Teacher leaders--as team leaders and peer coaches--can help dramatically improve the teacher practice and student learning in their schools (Togneri and Anderson, 2009) but only if they are equipped with the adult leadership skills and rigorous development in college- and career-ready standards they need to succeed. Access to meaningful teacher leadership roles that go beyond the role of administrative department chair or committee member also keeps our best teachers in the classroom working with students.

Leading Educators' theory of change (see graphic below) is that by developing teacher leaders to lead job-embedded content-specific cycles of professional learning aligned to college- and career-ready standards, high performing teachers will be retained, all teachers will increase their pedagogical content knowledge, and high-needs schools will be able to close the opportunity gap.



This theory is supported by research demonstrating the impact of distributed leadership and teacher collaboration on raising student achievement. "Effective adult learning is active, where learners work toward learning goals and drive their own process of improvement. **Effective professional learning involves teachers collecting, evaluating and acting on feedback to modify their teaching practices.** Intensive observation and analysis, or 'microteaching', is most effective. In John Hattie's 2009 meta-analysis ranking the impact of different interventions, **professional learning activities such as formative assessment (ranked 3rd) and feedback (ranked 10th) had a strong effect on student learning**. An internationally renowned study by Timperley et al. (2007) found **the greatest effects for professional learning occurred when it challenged teachers' thinking and conceptions about student learning and engaged them sufficiently to develop their knowledge and skills in ways that improved student outcomes**. This generally took place over an extended time period and involved external expertise. Teachers will then be in a position to adapt their classroom behaviors to better meet student needs: this is, after all, the point of professional learning." (Jensen, et. al. 2016)

(2) The project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies

Thousands of schools throughout the country have adopted Common Core-aligned curricula and state assessments. Principals and teachers know they must implement these components, but they struggle with how to align teaching practices to these standards and assessments in a way that significantly raises student achievement. But Principals alone cannot adequately impact teacher practice in all content areas; they must leverage teacher leadership to realize the full promise of the Common Core. The novel solution is a cycle of teacher inquiry and knowledge-building to promote valued student outcomes (Timperley, et. al., 2007). This cycle of continuous

improvement is at the heart of collaborative learning (Crow and Hirsh, 2015).

Leading Educators works with Principals to develop Teacher Leaders who, in turn, lead strong Cycles of Professional Learning that increase capacity across their teams. In a series of six- to eight-week cycles, Teacher Leaders use these structured collaborative cycles to increase their team's ability to deliver rigorous content. These teams establish a culture of learning and build strong professional learning communities rooted in a research and best practice.

The cycles are grounded in data about student learning and research based, pedagogical content knowledge aligned to the standards and are designed to achieve ambitious goals in these areas. They include iterative opportunities to apply new learning, to plan collaboratively, and to practice and receive feedback.

With the support and feedback of Student Achievement Partners--the organization founded by lead writers of the Common Core Standards--Leading Educators has developed a suite of tools, resources, and coaching and has developed a series of exemplars: content-specific, in-person sessions, together with coaching and online learning experiences that support Teacher Leaders in facilitating Cycles of Professional Learning. In collaboration with DC Public Schools (noted by former Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, to be one of the fastest-improving school districts in the country as measured by student achievement improvement on NAEP), Leading Educators has been a lead partner to DCPS as they work to increase distributive leadership and lead content specific Cycles of Professional Learning through the LEAP initiative. This system-wide work across all 115 schools in DCPS, which includes enabling conditions--systems, structures, and revenue-neutral planning

time--leads to school-wide change and distributed leadership that is more sustainable over the long term. Leading Educators has led the delivery of all of the adult development for this work, which supports collegial teams in an aligned analysis of student data; the internalization, planning, and practice of rigorous curriculum; and the continuous improvement of teacher practice through monitoring and feedback.

RAND has been conducting a rigorous, multi-year evaluation of Leading Educators' impact on the development of teacher leadership, student achievement, and teacher retention. Data analysis from Leading Educators Fellowships in Kansas City and New Orleans uses quasi-experimental methods to compare the performance of Teacher Leader Fellows and the teachers they mentor to comparable teachers in the state.

Key findings include:

- Teacher Leaders across all cohorts and both regions showed **statistically significant leadership skill growth**;
- Fellows who taught mathematics in New Orleans had a **statistically significant, positive effect on student achievement**, and the **effect size was nearly three times** that of attending a highly effective urban charter school;
- Teachers mentored by Teacher Leaders had a **positive impact on student mathematics and social studies achievement**; and
- Leading Educators **Fellows have remained in high-poverty schools** at rates that were higher than or comparable to that of other teachers in the district. (Please see Appendix C for more detail on RAND's findings.)

Leadership Growth. RAND found that Leading Educators' Teacher Leaders grew in their leadership skills over the two years of the program. This was measured by a 360° evaluation

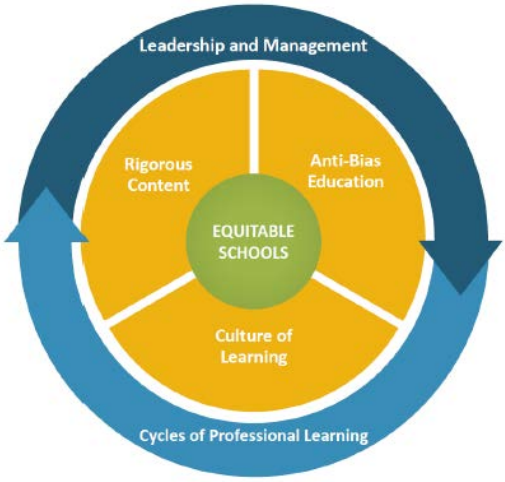
completed three times during the Fellowship by Principals and colleagues of Teacher Leaders as well as the Teacher Leaders themselves. The competencies assessed fall within four strands: 1) Core Beliefs and Mindsets; 2) Management of Self and Others; 3) Cultural Leadership; and 4) Instructional Leadership. RAND also found substantial and statistically significant improvement in leadership skills that were consistent across all cohorts and regions analyzed.

The Promise of Future Study. The RAND report substantiates that Leading Educators' programming increases the leadership capacity of Teacher Leaders to make a positive and significant impact on their colleagues as well as on the students of their colleagues. We took this a step further by infusing the research-based Cycles of Professional Learning[1] and a content-specific standards-based approach to our Teacher Leader development programs, and we are now ready to test the impact of this work.

Leading Educators believes that helping school teams implement systems of job-embedded teacher team learning cycles focused on content will maximize the early impact we have begun to see. i3 Development grant funding will allow us to assess the impact of working directly with Principals to support the work of creating Teacher Leader roles and capacities. The **Chicago Common Core Collaborative**, therefore, is designed as a cohort-based experiential training program that is aligned to rigorous learning standards of the Common Core. This intensive project will deepen participating educators' pedagogical content knowledge; develop their identities as leaders who can powerfully communicate the connection between rigorous standards and equity; familiarize them with cycles of professional learning; teach them

[1] Inspired by *Learning Team Cycle of Continuous Improvement*, Tools for Learning Schools, Learning Forward, Fall 2015

to adopt, adapt, and create these cycles for their own teams; and support them in the direct application of this learning in their own school contexts. Participating educators will also deepen their knowledge of best practices in adult learning facilitation and immediately apply these practices to their own cycles of professional learning. Over two years of cohort-based work, they will have ongoing opportunities to practice delivering these cycles within their cohort, and the depth of treatment in this i3 Development-funded project will support them in leading their own teams as they drive toward collaboratively identified school-specific goals, objectives, and outcomes. Through the clear tools and structures we provide, they will lead teachers on their teams to ensure students are college and career ready.



RAND's prior findings will help us to prioritize the subject-specific skills aligned to quality instructional materials and regionally specific skills to further develop and strengthen our programming (see subsection 3, below). **At this time, there are no studies on the impact of teacher leadership on student achievement in the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) database**—an omission Leading Educators intends to address with a RAND-led evaluation of this i3 Development project that meets WWC standards with reservations. Thus, the significance of this study on professional learning driven by teacher leaders will be transformative.

(3) Absolute priority addressed

The Chicago Common Core Collaborative addresses Absolute Priority 2: Implementing Internationally Benchmarked College- and Career-ready Standards and Assessments. By working with RAND Corporation as the external Project Evaluator on this

project, we will be able to mutually deepen and extend each other's work in this arena. In their 2016 report, RAND identified key areas particularly ripe for district and state work to provide clear messages and to support teachers to engage in instruction that will most help students meet state standards. **For ELA teachers,** these areas include: selection and development of high-quality instructional materials aligned with standards across grade levels, with particular guidance on use of leveled readers for instruction; and additional guidance on practices that consider repertoires of close reading and skills-based reading instruction for different texts, purposes, and contexts. **For mathematics teachers,** these areas include: selection and development of high-quality instructional materials aligned with standards at the secondary level; and further clarity on key content at each grade level guidance about how to address aspects of rigor with equal time and intensity educators working in a state that has adopted the Common Core State Standards. (Opfer, et. al. 2016)

During the i3 Development period, Leading Educators will deploy a two-year program of focused inquiry, training, coaching, and intensive support. **Teacher Leaders will focus on analyzing student data and teacher practice data to identify gaps in teachers pedagogical content knowledge as aligned to the standards**. They will then plan Cycles of Professional Learning that allow them to build teacher content knowledge and practice skills thus improving student achievement. For example, through the adoption or improved use of high-quality instructional materials. **By the end of each cohort period, leadership teams will have been trained and empowered to build school-wide, standards-aligned instructional capacity that increases student achievement and prepares them for college and career.**

B. High-quality Project Design and Management Plan

(1) Goals, objectives, and outcomes are clearly specified and measurable

Based on our proven success in our more intensive Teacher Leader Fellowship program as well as a system-wide initiative that has shown early promise in 115 DC Public Schools, the Chicago Common Core Collaborative will increase the reach and impact of Teacher Leadership across the city of Chicago in a more cost-effective and sustainable way. Please refer to the graphic on page 4 that illustrates the key components of the Theory of Change for this i3 project.

Through Leading Educators' work with Student Achievement Partners, it is now clear what high-quality, standards-aligned teaching should look like. As a result, Leading Educators has improved the alignments of its teacher and leader development and has created a detailed Scope and Sequence document of outcomes and activities that develops culture-shifting teacher teams over a two-year structured program (see Appendix J.3 for the detailed document that will be adapted for this Chicago project.)

During the project period, Leading Educators will partner with schools from traditional district schools and charter management organizations that are invested in raising the quality of standards-based instruction. The partnering districts (North Chicago Community Unit School District 187 and KIPP Chicago Public Schools--Leading Educators is also in conversations with Schools That Can, Oak Park Schools, and the Noble Network of Charter Schools) will form a collaborative network, for the exchange of best practices across the city, recognize and reward the power of exemplary teachers (contributing to the retention of highly effective educators), and ultimately increase the level of distributed leadership across each participating school.

Objectives and outcomes of this proposed i3 Development project are as follows:

1. At least 85% of Teacher Leaders will agree or strongly agree that the activities of the Chicago Common Core Collaborative (support, knowledge, professional development, coaching, etc.) allowed them to **increase the Common Core State Standards-aligned instructional capacity of teacher teams** in their school;
2. By the end of the project, students affected by Teacher Leaders and mentee teachers will demonstrate a statistically significant **increase in math achievement**;
3. By the end of the project, students affected by Teacher Leaders and mentee teachers will demonstrate a statistically significant **increase in R/LA achievement**;
4. By the end of the project, Teacher Leaders and mentees will have **increased their pedagogical content knowledge** as measured by benchmarked surveys; and
5. By the end of the project, at least 75% of Teacher Leaders will still be **working in a Chicago Common Core Collaborative school**.

Leading Educators' combines five key actions that will create a culture of shared leadership and influence that improves school wide student achievement in high-needs urban schools.

1. **Co-create and customize enabling conditions** so that content-focused teacher teams can collaboratively learn, analyze data, co-plan, and practice standards-based instruction in cycles. Leading Educators assesses the opportunities and potential challenges teachers are likely to encounter as they work to improve student learning and helps school leaders and teams think through what success looks like, how Teacher Leader roles will work, and how Teacher Leaders will be selected and supported prior to cohort formation. (See Appendix J.4 for the unique tool developed in collaboration with DC Public Schools.)
2. **Train Principals and Teacher Leaders *together*** to implement systemic Cycles of Professional Learning focused on standards-based instruction. This happens in an intensive

summer session that precedes two years of job-embedded coaching support for cohorts of Teacher Leaders who will engage in Cycles of Professional Learning with their teams. See page 14 for the schedule and additional detail.

3. **Create a city-wide and national learning community** to share best practices, tools, and resources aligned to standards-based learning and to interact with other Teacher Leaders.
4. **Measure the impact of shared leadership on achieving results with students** in Common Core State Standards. Evaluation will gather student achievement data and compare it to a school's baseline data as well as to control group data to determine impact on learning.
5. Provide a gradual-release framework that **builds district and school capacity to self-manage** this innovative program. After two years of intensive summer support and school-year coaching, schools will have the tools they need to continue this process under their own power with the support of Leading Educators' resources as needed.

Leading Educators will use the University of Chicago's **5Essentials (5E),** an evidence-based system designed to drive improvement in schools nationwide[2]. The 5E system reliably measures changes in a school organization through its survey, predicts school success through scoring, and provides individualized actionable reports to schools, districts, parents, and community partners and training to school leaders and teachers.

5E is based on more than 20 years of research by the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research on schools and what makes them successful. Specifically, researchers

[2] The 5E system is based on findings described in *Organizing Schools for Improvements: Lessons from Chicago,* written by UEI researchers and selected by Education Next as one of the best education books of the decade.

determined the five essential components for school success to be Effective Leaders, Collaborative Teachers, Involved Families, Supportive Environment, and Ambitious Instruction. Please see Appendix J.5 for a detailed sample 5E report and a description of all measures.

Project Participants. There will be 10 schools in each of two 2-year cohorts. For each participating school, this project will involve **1 Principal, 5 Teacher Leaders, 22 additional teachers** (a team of 4-5 per Teacher Leader), and **540 students** (20 per teacher x 27) as follows:

Participants by School Year	Per School	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	DUPLIC TOTAL
Principals/Schools—Cohort A	1	10	10	--	**20**
Principals/Schools—Cohort B		--	10	10	
Teacher Leaders	5	50	100	50	**200**
Additional Teachers	22	220	440	220	**880**
Students	540	5,400	10,800	5,400	**21,600**
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS		***5,680***	***11,360***	***5,680***	***22,700***

Project Plan. Each cohort will participate in program training and support as follows:

- **Induction:** one-day regional meeting to begin the formation of an identity as a regional cohort; includes team-building and establishing a safe culture;
- **Institute I (5 days total):** intensive teacher leadership training in pedagogical content knowledge, Cycles of Professional Learning, equity and anti-bias education;
- **Institute II (3 days total):** 3 days for school teams to collaborate and create powerful plans for the upcoming school year to launch or strengthen teacher leadership based on data analysis and refined Cycles of Professional Learning;
- **Weekend Workshops (4 days total):** Year 1--4 weekend workshops in content learning teams; focused on deepening Teacher Leaders' skills to lead for equity and continue to build

on cycles of professional learning; Again citing Jensen, et. al. (2016), "Three aspects of leadership development have been critical to making professional learning effective in the high-performing systems considered in this report. These include: 1) Professional learning leaders at the school; 2) System leaders of professional learning; and 3) School principals developing school improvement plans around professional learning. All three are components of, and deliver on, a strategy that places professional learning at the center of school improvement. **Teachers who assume roles of professional learning leaders in schools have a greater impact on teaching and learning. Teachers are more likely to change their practices when they see colleagues they admire—not just official leaders—championing desired improvements."**

(2) The plan to achieve project objectives on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones

Leading Educators will assume all responsibility for project management, compliance and reporting, budget management, and project efficacy. **Local district partners** will ensure access to school, principal, teacher, and student data (in accordance with FERPA guidelines) as appropriate to gauge project effectiveness. Contracted **Project Evaluation firm, the RAND Corporation** will be responsible for collecting data and conducting the impact and implementation evaluation and will construct annual project reports in the format and on the timeline requested by the US Department of Education. The following key personnel from Leading Educators will have significant roles in the overall implementation and ultimate success of this project:

Chong-Hao Fu, Chief Program Officer. Under Chong-Hao's leadership, Leading Educators trained over 1,600 teacher leaders last year in Washington D.C., New Orleans,

Houston, Kansas City, Denver, and Memphis with the program soon to expand to Chicago and New York. Chong-Hao has presented to the Gates Foundation, American Federation of Teachers, and the Aspen Institute and is the lead author of an Aspen Institute White Paper entitled "Leading from the Front of the Classroom." Before his time at Leading Educators, Chong-Hao was the founding principal at KIPP Sharpstown in Houston, one of the highest performing schools in the city and one of the few fine arts schools dedicated to serving lower income students. Chong-Hao reports to the CEO and oversees the following two positions.

Amy Rome, Vice President of Design. Amy joined Leading Educators from The Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL), where she served as a principal and director of principals for a network of Chicago Public Schools, focusing on teacher development programming and turnaround schools. While at AUSL, Amy designed and implemented leadership development opportunities for teams at 32 schools. Prior to this, she was a faculty member at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), where she founded and directed a graduate program preparing teachers specifically for high need school transformation. She also was an elementary teacher and teacher leader in Chicago Public Schools.

Tom Krebs, Vice President of Program Delivery. Tom is responsible for Leading Educators' program delivery and impact on student achievement. As a founding academic dean and teacher at a charter high school in Newark, NJ, Tom led colleagues and students to average ACT score growths of 30 national percentile points and the highest charter school Language Arts scores in NJ. Previously, he taught in two other high schools in Newark, NJ, and the Bronx, NY, while serving as the founder of a college access program.

Phong Dinh, Chief Financial Officer. Phong is responsible for overseeing the organization's financial and operational resources and ensuring their alignment with the

organization's core mission and long-term strategy. He previously spent 15 years as a leader and advisor to government, nonprofit, and commercial organizations in the areas of financial and operational improvement, strategic planning, systems integration, performance management, and organizational change. He has held senior management positions with IBM Global Business Services and PricewaterhouseCoopers, and his prior consulting work covered a range of sectors including education, healthcare, social services, housing, research and development, homeland security, and emergency management. Please see Appendix F for complete resumes and an internal org chart showing lines of reporting.

Grant Project Staff

In addition to the key personnel noted above, i3 funds will support the following project staff (please see the attached Budget Narrative for details by project year):

- **Managing Director of Delivery (existing position):** The Managing Director project manages and oversees this operation. This role ensures that teacher leadership programmatic offerings achieve high-impact objectives for school system leaders, principals, teacher leaders, teachers, and students in the Chicago Common Core Collaborative.
- **Director of Strategic Consulting (existing position):** The Director of Strategic Consulting manages the team that supports district clients in establishing strong school-level and district-level enabling conditions (e.g. scheduling, role design, etc) prior to launching teacher-leader-driven Cycles of Professional Learning.
- **Program Director (new position):** This role ensures that programmatic offerings achieve high-impact objectives for school system leaders, principals, teacher leaders, teachers, and students. This position leverages partnerships with principals and principal

managers to develop, deliver, and evaluate programming that directly addresses school teams' highest-priority needs.

- **Program Coordinator (new position):** This role, in conjunction with other members of the team, manages logistics and ensures a seamless program experience for all participants.
- **Associate Director (new position)**: Associate Directors support the development of charter and district partnerships, as well as school outreach and recruitment.
- **Full-time Coach (new position):** This role coaches 25 to 30 participants in the areas of Leadership and Management, as well as developing and executing Cycles of Professional Learning in their schools. This position reports to the Program Director.
- **Director of Design (existing position)**: This role adapts existing content for the Chicago educational context and builds the capacity of our internal staff to support Fellows and participant learning related to Common Core State Standards.

Project Management Timeline

The following table summarizes key project activities by year, position, and project quarter:

Major Project Management Activities & Milestones	Position(s)	Timeline
Announce notice of i3 grant award to project partners; meet with partners to review goals, objectives, activities, and budget	CEO, Chief Program Officer (CPO)	Q1 Year 1
Identify/designate/hire Project Director (PD) to be responsible for compliance and reporting	Managing Director (MD)	Q1 Year 1
Hire project staff (see list, previous page; and budget narrative for additional detail)	MD with support of VP of Design (VPDes), and VP of Delivery (VPDel)	Q1-Q2 Year 1
Contract with external service providers (consultants for	MD	Q1-Q2

coaching, recruitment, and content customization; external facilitators for summer intensives and leadership institute; temporary event planning support; and project evaluator)		Year 1 Ongoing as needed
Conduct grant kick-off call/meeting to begin implementation planning with LE team and district partner representatives	CPO, VPDes, MD, PD	Q1 Year 1
MILESTONE: Project Staffing Complete		
Establish reporting procedures, timelines, and methods	PD and Project Evaluator (PE)	Q1-Q2 Year 1
Update baseline demographics and other data for all partner LEAs/schools	PD	Q1 each year
Begin data gathering for project evaluation	PD, PE	Q2-Q4 each year
Meet with LEA representatives to discuss i3 plan and targets for project period	VPDes, MD, PD, Dir. of Strategic Consulting	Ongoing
Begin monthly project leadership team meetings	PD	Monthly
MILESTONE: Project Systems, Baselines, and Targets Established		
Purchase/receive/store/distribute/install training supplies and materials to support project implementation	PD	Q1-Q4 each year
Identify and orient Cohort A participants (repeats with Cohort B, Year 2)	LE Staff, PD	Q3-Q4 Year 1
Launch training program for Cohort A (repeats with Cohort B, Years 3-4)	LE Staff, PD	Years 2-3
Collect school leader, teacher leader, teacher team, and student achievement data for Cohort A participants to monitor project success (repeats with Cohort B, years 3-4)	PD, PE	Years 2-4
Complete annual interim financial and management reports; share with stakeholders via board meetings	PD, Chief Financial Officer (CFO)	Q2, Q4 or as required each year
Disseminate results of i3 project to US Dept. of Education, local stakeholders, partners, and others via white papers, conference presentations, hosted site visits, etc.	PD, LE Business Office	Year 2, Q4 – Year 4, Q4
MILESTONE: Project Successfully Completed; all goals, objectives, outcomes achieved		

(3) Procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement

The following schedule of internal communications, coordination, and reporting illustrates the multiplicity of channels for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement throughout the Chicago Common Core Collaborative funding period. **Daily: Project Director (PD)** will oversee implementation of project activities; PD will document all aspects of program implementation to assist in project evaluation. **Weekly:** PD will coordinate transfer of school, staff, and student academic data (qualitative and quantitative, as available) in accordance with privacy policies and laws to facilitate progress monitoring of project implementation. **Monthly:** PD and key staff will communicate as needed with **partner school staff** regarding program activities, improvements, and adjustments and provide updates on project implementation and coordination as appropriate. Project staff supporting the districts and schools will meet to discuss the progress of program participants and to address concerns. PD will direct and manage professional development activities in collaboration with other project staff and partnering districts/schools. **Quarterly:** Face-to-face meetings of the Project Management Team (**PD, district liaisons, key staff, Leading Educators' staff, and selected principals and teacher leaders**) will provide a diversity of feedback on project implementation, thus ensuring continuous improvement throughout the project period. PM will provide written updates regarding project implementation to designated **district personnel, principals, and teacher leaders**; PD or designee will attend district- and/or campus-based staff meetings as appropriate. Project Coordinator (PC) will synthesize updates to produce semi-annual progress reports. **Semi-Annually:** PD will co-facilitate meetings, calls, and/or webinars among **project staff, district staff, other project partners, and RAND as the Project Evaluator** to facilitate data collection and synthesis into project reports for the districts and the USDOE as required. **Annually:** PD

will meet with district staff to conduct extended project reviews and prepare for the next phase of implementation.

(4) Broad dissemination of information to support further development/replication

In order to support other traditional or charter school districts wishing to develop or replicate a similar Common Core Collaborative, Leading Educators will broadly disseminate information on this i3 Development project through the following channels:

1) **National and state-level teacher and school leadership conferences** such as those hosted by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), Teach to Lead, Carnegie Foundation, Aspen Institute, and AFT/NEA;
2) **National and state-level public and charter school association conferences**, such as those hosted by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools and the Council of the Great City schools;
3) **White papers and/or journal articles** written by Leading Educators senior leaders, the project management team, or collaboratively co-authored by senior staff, consultants, the project evaluator, and/or project partners (LEAs); 4) **i3 Project Director meetings** hosted by the US Department of Education; and
4) **The Impact page of Leading Educators' website**.

C. High-quality Project Evaluation

Leading Educators has engaged RAND Corporation to conduct an independent evaluation of Chicago Common Core Collaborative with an experimental design. RAND is a non-partisan, non-profit public policy research organization with an Education Unit that for three decades has helped identify and analyze the complex problems facing the nation's education system and has

conducted complex, large-scale projects. The evaluation team includes experts in experimental and quasi-experimental design. (See resumes in Appendix F.)

The impact evaluation will be led by Dr. Kata Mihaly, who currently leads an evaluation of Leading Educator's two-year teacher fellowship program in Missouri, Louisiana, and Washington DC using a quasi- experimental design. She led the random assignment of teachers to schools and participated in the statistical analysis of multiple measures of teacher effectiveness, including student growth, in the Bill & Melinda Gates-funded Measures of Effective Teaching project. She is currently PI on an IES grant to evaluate the impact of mandatory professional growth plans on student and teacher outcomes, and co-PI on a RELSW project that uses a randomized control trial to evaluate the impact of a guide to help principals provide feedback to teachers.

Dr. Mihaly will be helped in the analysis by Dr. Isaac Opper, who recently received his Ph.D. from Stanford University. He is currently conducting studies on how the gains to students from having a high-quality teacher spill over to positively affect the school system as a whole, how changes in teacher tenure policy affects teachers' incentive, and how to estimate teacher value added using the optimal control vector.

(1) Key questions to be addressed by the project evaluation

The evaluation will focus on measuring the impact of Chicago Common Core Collaborative on three separate, but related, outcomes. First, it will measure the program's effect on student achievement for three groups of students: **1)** students of teacher leaders; **2)** students of mentee teachers; and **3)** students of non-mentee teachers (to measure spillover effects). Second, it will estimate the impact of the program on intermediate outcomes, such as shared leadership, improved learning climate, and Common Core State Standards-aligned

instructional capacity. Lastly, an implementation evaluation will examine the extent to which Chicago Common Core Collaborative is being executed with fidelity and document any barriers that stood in the way of its implementation.

Impact Evaluation Research Questions
1. Do students of Chicago Common Core Collaborative teacher-leaders, mentee teachers, and non-mentee teachers experience greater growth on state standardized assessments than students of comparable teachers that have not participated in the program? 2. Does Chicago Common Core Collaborative impact intermediate outcomes that mediate the relationship between leadership and student achievement, such as shared leadership among teachers, improved learning climate in the school, and Common Core State Standards-aligned instructional capacity?
Implementation Evaluation Research Question
3. Is Chicago Common Core Collaborative implemented with fidelity? a. Do teacher-leaders attend summer training (Induction and Summer Intensive), and participate in school visits throughout the school year? b. Are the mentoring sessions attended with fidelity, and are they found to be useful by mentee teachers? 4. What, if any, are the barriers to implementation?

(2) The methods of evaluation will produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that will meet WWC Evidence Standards with reservations

The evaluation team proposes to collect extensive primary data and secondary data to conduct the impact and implementation evaluations. The analysis will be done using an experimental design, which is made possible because Leading Educators plans to stagger the implementation of the program. Namely, as shown in the table on page 14, Leading Educators has recruited Chicago Common Core schools to participate in the collaborative. Within the pool of eligible and committed schools, RAND will randomly select ten schools to enter the

first cohort of the program (whose teacher-leaders will enter the one-year fellowship in summer 2017), while the remaining schools in the district will comprise the comparison group. For the next year, RAND will randomly add an additional ten to participate in the program. By comparing the schools randomized into the program to those randomized out of the program, we can consistently estimate the effect of the program on student achievement.

Before the random assignment takes place, principals in all schools will be asked to designate teacher-leaders and mentee teachers in the school. Teacher-leaders, mentee teachers, and students of teachers who are in tested grades and subjects and are in schools randomized to receive the program will comprise the treatment group, while those teachers who were designated teacher-leaders and mentee teachers (along with their students) in tested grades and subjects in schools that were randomized not to receive the program will comprise the comparison group. By pre-selecting program participants this design takes additional steps to account for selection bias and allow us to separately estimate the effect of the program on teacher-leaders, mentee teachers, and other teachers in schools that implemented the program. If necessary, we will use covariate controls and propensity score matching methods to reweight treatment and comparison observations to help bring them into closer alignment in the baseline covariates (Hirano, Imbens and Ridder, 2003).

Data Collection. As a condition of working with Leading Educators, and after receiving approval for the district, Chicago Common Core districts in the study will share with RAND student-level achievement data on scale scores for standardized exams for all tested grade levels, as well as student-teacher linkages for all schools within the district for a period of four school years: 2017-2018 through 2020-2021. The districts [KM3] will also provide a teacher-level file for each of the schools in the district that indicates teachers' dates of initial hire at that

school, date of separation from the school and district (to measure retention), certification status, email address, gender, educational degrees, and score for each teacher evaluation metrics, such as observation rubric score (where applicable). Leading Educators will identify based on teacher names and email addresses in the teacher-level data each teacher-leader and mentee teacher and the cohort to which they belong. Finally, this data will be supplemented with 30 minute surveys fielded to teachers in the study once annually. The surveys will include questions from the 5Essentials (5E) surveys on intermediate outcomes described in the Logic Model and measures of other mediators in the relationship between this initiative and student achievement if the evaluation team is not able to access the survey results from the district.

(3) Sufficiency of resources for effective project evaluation

The Chicago Common Core Collaborative budget allocates 15% of the total project cost to project evaluation, which is sufficient for a project of this size, scope, and import. In addition, the scale of the intervention will be enough to detect whether or not the program was effective. Based on calculations that assume 80% power and a 5% type 1 error rate, and under reasonable assumptions for participation, attrition, and baseline correlation, the table below displays the minimum effect size RAND evaluators will be able to detect in each year of the program for teacher outcomes (using a two-level model) and student outcomes (using a three-level model.

	Year 1	Years 2 and 3
Teacher outcomes	0.289	0.239
Student outcomes	0.238	0.196