

I. ABSOLUTE and COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITIES

A. Absolute Priority 1: Partnership Grants for the Preparation of Teachers

The *Rethinking Rural Education Preparation Programs Initiative (REP)* proposes a five-year Teacher Quality Partnership project that includes a collaborative effort of The University of West Alabama’s College of Education (UWA-COE) along with UWA’s College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, College of Business and Technology, and College of Liberal Arts and high-need rural LEAs (Demopolis City Schools [DCS] and Sumter County Schools [SCS]) to create an educator preparation program (EPP) focused on authentic internships, place based learning, and induction support that better prepares teacher candidates for the multiple and diverse needs of 21st century schooling in rural schools. **The partnership eligibility is defined in detail in Appendices A, D, and J.**

The ultimate goal of the *REP Initiative* is to prepare and retain quality teachers for teaching in high-need rural schools and to improve academic achievement of students in high-need rural schools. *REP* will reform the EPP (PK-6) and develop a comprehensive reform of the system for rural teacher recruitment, preparation, clinical experience, and induction/mentoring to improve student achievement by improving the quality of new teachers. This initiative will recruit and prepare approximately 400 high-quality teachers for high-need rural LEA schools where a high percentage of teachers do not meet the required certification criteria, teacher attrition is prevalent, and student achievement remains persistently low. This initiative will include authentic classroom-based action research and full-time rigorous clinical experience whereby pre-service teachers will work intensively with carefully selected mentor teachers trained to use a co-planning/co-teaching model. *REP* will emphasize using college- and career-ready academic standards through its emphasis on preparing pre-service and in-service

teachers to teach using state and national standards, including professional development opportunities to improve the academic content knowledge of teachers and to promote use of evidence-based practices for developing content-specific literacy skills and for supporting English learners (ELL) and students with special needs.

B. Competitive Preference Priority: Supporting High-Need Students

The rural environment in Alabama is overburdened by extremes...insidious levels of poverty, low standards of living, high unemployment rates, low levels of funding, and low student achievement. These circumstances form the roots that hobble the education of the children living in rural West Alabama. According to the annual *2016 Kids Count® Data Book* produced by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Alabama ranked 46th nationwide in overall child well-being. This report analyzed 16 indicators in four domains, including Economic Well-Being, Education, Health, and Family and Community, to ascertain how well children are doing in each state and our nation using national and state level data between approximately 2008 and 2014. The 2016 report indicated that Alabama's children fared the worst in the economic domain; however, every domain showed no change or worsening results. This is the second consecutive year that Alabama's overall national ranking has dropped. Other significant data gleaned from this report which establishes high-need includes:

- Since 2008, the percentage of children in poverty has increased by 27 percent.
- Since 2008, the percentage of children whose parents lack secure employment has increased by 13 percent.
- Since 2008, the percentage of children living in households with a high housing cost burden (more than 30 percent of pretax income on housing) has increased by 3 percent.

- Since 2008, the percentage of children living in single-parent families increased by 11 percent.
- The percentage of children living in high-poverty areas grew by 31 percent compared to 2006-2010.
- Alabama's children performed poorly in the review of education indicators, including no improvement in fourth-grade reading proficiency and the percentage of eighth graders not proficient in math remains the worst in the nation.

REP focuses on high-need students enrolled in two rural districts in west Alabama, DCS (Marengo County, AL) and SCS (Sumter County, AL). Both districts are located in the Black Belt Region of the Southeastern United States, an area stretching from Texas to Virginia which includes the poorest counties in the United States and in Alabama, specifically. **The 2016 Kids Count® Data Book reports that of 67 Alabama Counties, Marengo ranks 44 and Sumter ranks 52 in the well-being of children, thus both are in the bottom half of a state that ranks 46th nationwide. The data indicate in Sumter County 46.9% of children live in poverty with 24.3% living in extreme poverty while in Marengo County 34.3% of children live in poverty with 16.3% living in extreme poverty. These data also indicate that 96.5% in Sumter County are eligible for Free/Reduced Cost Lunch and 70.5% are eligible in Marengo County which places them both above the state average of 59.2%. US Census Data (2010-2014) reveals that 50.3% of individuals in Sumter County live below the poverty level, and 29.2% of Marengo County residents live below the poverty level. The LEAs of the two counties targeted parallel the aforementioned data points. They are characterized by a high percentage of students receiving free or reduced price school lunches (FRPSL) with DCS reporting 63.4% and SCS operating under the Community**

Eligibility Provision of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast

Program; therefore, all (100%) enrolled students in SCS are eligible to receive breakfast and lunch without having to pay a fee or submitting an application. Both districts have a high minority enrollment with DCS and SCS at 56% and 100%, respectively (ALSDE).

REP seeks to improve academic outcomes for the students served by the rural LEAs within the partnership. This initiative will facilitate the academic growth so desperately needed to transform them into high-performing schools that ensure the advancement of students by establishing a stable learning environment in which children can thrive and that is enhanced by highly-qualified teachers, the cycle of poverty and ill-preparedness can be overturned, producing higher scores on standardized tests and providing students the opportunity for achieving a higher level of education.

C. Invitational Priority: Enhancing Cultural Competencies to Support High-Need Students

The *REP Initiative* is a very bold concept focused on the importance of understanding and addressing the culture of the rural school as a basic component of teacher preparation. *REP* will provide participants with specific coursework, clinical experiences, professional development, and induction experiences to enable them to gain cultural competencies and content knowledge, and related pedagogical skills, to support the learning needs of rural students in DCS and SCS.

With an average of 81.7% of the students served now eligible for FRPSL and 78% representing minority groups, both school districts are plagued with challenges faced by rural communities.

According to a study conducted by *The Rural School and Community Trust*, a national nonprofit organization, Alabama ranks number two in the nation for the highest need for attention to rural education (Montgomery Advertiser, 2014). Therefore, this rural education initiative recognizes the extreme need to address cultural competencies in the continuum of teacher preparation from

undergraduate early field experiences through the credential program and into teacher induction. UWA-COE, three supporting College units, two district offices of education, and six school partners across the districts will reform teacher education by building coherence and consistency from one level of teacher preparation to the next through the selection of a set of effective teaching practices aligned to the place-bound, low-income, minority, rural, students with disabilities, and ELL students that characterize our shared service region. Reformed practices will include classroom culture, instructional planning for state and national standards, effective teaching strategies, assessment, and reading and literacy instruction. Coursework, clinical experiences, induction programs and professional development that build both cultural competency and content knowledge to effectively teach rural students will be grounded in research-based practices. These practices will be aligned with Alabama's licensure standards with instructional strategies being infused into coursework, clinical practice, induction, and school reform. UWA-COE's approach will be to ensure that teacher preparation program candidates are prepared to teach rural students using methods that engage candidates actively and collaboratively in problem solving and through making appropriate cultural connections. *REP* teacher education candidates will regularly engage in culturally based problems which pose culturally rich tasks appropriate to the needs and contexts of their future students, consistent with teacher certification standards in Alabama. Moreover, the study of how to teach with respect to cultural competencies will be incorporated into hands-on and inquiry-based experiences, including dedicated research experiences, specific pedagogical instruction, and explicit instruction in the connections between school culture, school climate, and instructional practice in rural classrooms. The *REP Initiative* will work collaboratively with UWA-COE Center for Rural Education (CRE) and UWA-COE Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

(CETL). This initiative will serve as a model for other Alabama universities and rural Alabama school districts. Therefore, the establishment of professional development opportunities and other culturally responsive developments in teacher preparation will be made available to promote collaboration with other institutions of higher education and rural school districts to further the understanding and responsibility of cultural competence within educator preparation programs and rural school delivery of culturally competent instructional practices. Furthermore, the CRE also has recently joined forces with the Rural Schools Collaborative which is committed to pursuing pathways that are purposeful and collaborative and are focused on strengthening rural education (see **Appendix I**) in their totality is critical to how we will approach preparing teachers to teach rural students and ultimately how we will approach the education of the children of rural Alabama.

II. PROJECT SIGNIFICANCE

The need for high quality teachers to serve rural schools within the service area is paramount. As one of the largest educator preparation institutions in rural Alabama, UWA-COE is well-positioned to pioneer a project of this scope and magnitude, particularly as it is geographically located in the rural Black Belt region of the Southern United States. This region includes the poorest counties in Alabama and the United States. Although the name originally referred to the thin layer of exceptionally fertile black soil which encouraged cotton farming in the pioneer period of Alabama history, the descriptive title is now mistakenly taken as a reference to the exceptionally high proportion of Black residents in these counties. The Black Belt region of Alabama is burdened with an environment that is conducive to a wide range of social, economic, cultural, health, political and physical ills. The average family in this poverty stricken area is comprised of a single, female head-of-household with three children cared for by a grandparent

or another elderly relative. The 2014 *Voices for Alabama’s Children* data reports 47% of the children in the area live in single parent families and many children under 18 live with their grandparents. In 2013, both Marengo and Sumter counties were well above the national poverty rate of 15% (see **Appendix J**).

Needs Assessment

A comprehensive needs assessment was undertaken including a compilation of teacher and student needs data from DCS and SCS and a review of the current EPP as well as a series of meetings with representatives from LEAs. The demographics of the high-need region, high levels of teacher attrition, and low student achievement pose a challenging situation. It is in these high-need rural LEAs where children are coming from families living in poverty that we must ensure that our teachers are highly qualified. The demographics reported by the most recent US Census Bureau Reports (2014) validate that the area is poor, rural, underdeveloped, and comprised of low-achieving schools. **Table 1** depicts the demographics of the targeted areas in which the rural LEAs are located.

Table 1: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 Census

Category	Marengo County (DCS)	Sumter County (SCS)
% African American	51.1%	73.5%
% below poverty	24.0%	38.0%
Median Income	\$35,079	\$22,186
% high school graduates	83.7%	75.5%
% college graduates	17.4%	14.9%

DCS and SCS students are faced with significant gaps in services and opportunities resulting in low achievement and high enrollment of economically disadvantaged students. The 2014-2015 ACT Aspire data for Reading, Math, and Science (Grades 3-6) indicate high percentages of students performing below grade level as shown in **Table 2. Students performing at Level I or Level II performance have not met academic content standards or have only partially met**

academic content standards (ALSDE). These data illustrate the low student achievement areas that can be addressed in the scope of this project by bringing high-quality teachers in the most pressing content areas resulting in higher student achievement.

Table 2 Student Academic Performance (2015-2016)

Grade	Subject Area	Combined % of students at Level I and Level II Performance	
		DCS	SCS
3	Math	33.43	84.42
4	Math	51.91	80.68
5	Math	47.90	82.54
6	Math	45.57	79.69
3	Reading	57.15	90.16
4	Reading	66.41	93.10
5	Reading	61.31	91.27
6	Reading	56.69	89.84
5	Science	63.47	94.45

All partners have realized that educational issues such as high teacher turnover, teaching outside of highly qualified teaching content areas, and low student achievement are challenges *REP* can address. This assessment also revealed the need for stronger partnerships. *REP* refines the model of how a university located within a rural community can effectively work with rural LEAs to develop quality teacher preparation programs that will immerse pre-service teachers into the rural settings in which they will ultimately serve. Additionally, the initiative will provide continuous support through an induction program that carries pre-service teachers through their critical first years of teaching and provides support for new and veteran teachers. *REP* will create an integrated, comprehensive system of rural teacher recruitment, preparation, induction/mentoring, and retention to fortify a concrete model that will recruit and prepare high-quality teachers for schools in high-need districts in rural Alabama where teacher attrition is endemic and student achievement remains persistently low as compared to state and national averages.

(i) Extent to which the project will build capacity to provide, improve, or expand services.

REP will build capacity to provide, improve or expand services that address the needs of the target population that seeks to improve student achievement by improving the quality of new teachers in the following ways:

- ✓ Institutionalization of the program through reforms in the EPP and through the support of partnerships; ongoing planning and support for program sustenance through appropriated and reallocated funds
- ✓ Collaborative teams, guided by the *REP* Leadership Council (LC), focused on: Educator Preparation Curriculum Development, Professional Development, Induction, Mentoring, Clinical Programming, Student Achievement Data Teams, Recruitment, and Program Assessment/Evaluation
- ✓ Intensive training modules focused on how to positively affect student achievement in rural schools; understanding rural communities; cultural competencies to support rural high-need students
- ✓ Implementation of a co-teaching model to improve student performance
- ✓ A coherent teacher preparation continuum that develops a set of high-leverage effective teaching practices with clear operational definitions and increasing expectations for performance in the successive stages of the continuum
- ✓ Serve as a model for other universities preparing pre-service and supporting current teachers to teach in rural schools
- ✓ Prepare personnel for fields in which shortages are prevalent in rural schools by preparing its pre-service candidates to become highly-qualified in four areas (4N1 Track), including Early Childhood (EC), Elementary (ELE), Collaborative Special Education (SPED), and Early

Childhood Special Education (EC/SPED) aligned with state and national standards and reforms (e.g. ESEA, IDEA, etc.)

- ✓ Provide support training for instructional leaders to lead high functioning rural schools with the goal of improving student academic achievement

(ii) The importance of the results likely to be attained by the proposed project. *REP* aims to be a data-driven initiative that will offer resources to address the needs of our partners and learners by preparing high-quality, new teachers and bolstering the existing workforce through targeted professional development. This initiative is designed to provide our partners with an expert teacher who is well prepared in content, concepts, pedagogy, instructional practices, and clinical experiences to support rural students' achievement. Through a variety of *REP* induction and professional development opportunities, expansion of school-based professional learning, collaboration and engagement in inquiry and research activities, partner LEAs will build local capacity to enhance their in-service teachers' knowledge and skills, integrating content, supporting struggling students, including ELLs and those with special needs. UWA's-COE will also have capacity-building benefits through the improved quality of clinical placements available to support teacher preparation programs. Increased teacher quality is expected, thereby providing benefits for the university, the region, and the students themselves. As we expand and permanently establish the co-teaching model of clinical practice, educator preparation at our university will become a proven service contribution to our high-need schools that will also contribute to K-12 student success.

III. PROJECT DESIGN

(i) The extent to which the proposed project is supported by strong theory. The *REP Initiative* provides a rationale for the proposed process, product, strategies, and practices, within

its logic model (see **Appendix G**). The logic model is supported by strong theories, supported by moderate to strong research evidence with “evidence of promise” and “theory of change” linkages between its inputs, short-term outcomes, and long-term outcomes, aligned with the project’s objectives. This project maintains that teachers can best improve their teaching skills through on-going, sustained collaboration within a specialized professional learning community embedded in the schools). All elements of the project design have been strategically chosen to enhance teacher preparation at the PK-6 and university levels. The most current research and theory to practice has been used to develop the project’s framework.

O1. Establishing a system of collaboration: *REP* has been collaboratively designed to function with governance and leadership by individuals representing key partnerships including UWA-COE and other colleges, the partner LEAs, and their schools. This objective is based on research that demonstrates that collaborative systems of reform are effective when implementing partnerships between school and university programs. Bryk et. Al, 2010, found in their longitudinal research of Chicago schools, for student achievement to improve, collaboration needs to occur among teachers, school administrators, and other community partners. *REP* will demonstrate how universities can effectively prepare high-quality teachers for high-need schools through a process of community immersion.

O2: Preparing teacher candidates to be high-quality teachers: *REP* is grounded in the belief that the preparation of high-quality teachers for high-need rural LEA schools requires teacher candidates to participate in real-life experiences that allow them to be participant-observers, engage them in reflection on how other cultures function and how the histories of those cultures can have a deep impact on students’ views of learning and attitudes towards their futures. In its design, this initiative was based on teacher education research (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman,

2012) that will effectively address how teachers can become highly qualified through their commitment to and immersion in the community culture of their schools, while at the same time focusing on the acquisition of high-quality professional skills in EC, ELE, and SPED. As candidates complete their clinical and induction experience, teacher candidates will acquire an in-depth understanding of what challenges their students face on a daily basis, and further acquire the psychological motivation and commitment to teach students from diverse socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds.

O3: Effectively placing, supporting, and retaining new teachers: Perhaps one of the strongest supports in the *REP Initiative*'s design is in the strategic placement and follow-up support plans through quality induction that will ensure teacher retention in the high-need partnership schools. Project graduates will have continuous supports embedded throughout their clinical experiences into their two-year induction/mentoring program and embedded professional development.

O4: Improving the academic achievement of high-need rural public school students: The improvement of academic achievement of high-need rural public school students is the heart of the *REP Initiative*. As referenced in O1, Bryk et. al, 2010, found in their longitudinal research of Chicago schools, for student achievement to improve, collaboration needs to occur among teachers, school administrators, and other community partners. We believe that this collaboration coupled with the project's design that views instruction from the perspective of the authentic construction of knowledge through disciplined inquiry significant improvements will be shown in academic achievement of the high-need rural public school students served through *REP*.

(ii) Services to be provided involve the collaboration of appropriate partners. The structure of the project is designed to enhance collaboration and communication among all partners to address Educator Preparation Curriculum Development, Professional Development, Induction,

Mentoring, Clinical Programming, Student Achievement Data Teams, Recruitment, and Program Assessment/Evaluation. Collaborative Focus Teams (FT) will address the specific program elements and clarify the instructional issues, refine current practice, and monitor the impact on candidates, new teachers, and students (PK-6). As a result, improved student achievement for all students will be realized. At each level of the initiative, appropriate partners will collaborate to maximize the quality of the services to be received by new and prospective teachers and PK-6 students. For instance, content faculty will collaborate with education faculty to develop rich experiences in specific content areas, clinical faculty will work collaboratively with mentor teachers and education faculty to share supervision responsibilities to ensure coherence between the campus and the field, etc. Collaborative partnerships will include (a) intern and field-based course experiences for prospective teachers, (b) collaborative induction for beginning teachers, (c) professional development for experienced, practicing teachers, (d) ongoing opportunities for improved PK-6 student learning, and school-based inquiry for student equity and achievement. This collaborative work will help UWA faculty to bridge the research to practice gap and integrate work with PK-6 students as part of coursework through field-based, clinical opportunities. While the initiative may take a number of forms (depending upon the articulated need of the rural LEA partners), all of the project initiatives will focus on supporting the development of teachers on behalf of the holistic development and support of learners.

(iii) Capacity building beyond the project period. A significant objective of this project is to improve student achievement. *REP* is specifically designed to provide our partners with a highly-qualified teacher well prepared in content, concepts, pedagogy and clinical experience to support high-need rural students. Through the collaborative selection of effective reformations to guide

the restructured EPP at UWA, candidates will have a comprehensive experience grounded in research-based effective teaching practices from early undergraduate field experiences, to pre-service clinical training to induction. Most importantly, this shared body of knowledge and instructional practice will be applied coherently from one level of preparation to the next by mentors, co-teachers, and clinical faculty as they work across different cohorts and populations of educators. Moreover, focused training that will increase the understanding of cultural competencies relative to the rural high-need student will better prepare new teachers for service in our high-need partnership LEAs. Focused training that prepares future teachers and strengthens current teachers regarding the cultural needs of rural students will build sustained capacity for teacher retention. The institutionalization of this project is likely to be successfully undertaken because funds received from the USDE to launch *REP* will function as seed monies. These seed monies will initiate a cultural shift moving LEAs from functioning as isolated rural districts to entities with collective impact through strategically-planned collaboration with partners, with outcomes that positively impact student achievement. Hired personnel will no longer be needed once federal support ends, as new organizational structures will have been established to continue the project. Upon completion of the project, UWA-COE faculty and staff, along with LEA partners will continue their participation as part of their regular professional assignments. It is also anticipated that some variation of the project's structures will become permanent parts of the way that UWA-COE functions with its LEA partners, with additional cohorts of new teachers being recruited, prepared, and supported after federal funding has ended. UWA has an established reputation for receiving funds from local foundations, corporations, and grant funding sources that support UWA-COE initiatives. As lead partner in the *REP Initiative*, UWA-COE will continue to apply to such foundations as well as others locally and nationally to

continuously improve and replicate this project's model, addressing the extreme needs for rural schools regarding teacher recruitment, preparation, induction, retention, and student achievement. Additionally, each partner is committed to the success of this initiative as noted in the provided letters of support and Memorandum of Understanding (see **Appendix I**). Each partner is committed to the design as outlined in this proposal and is dedicated to providing resources (e.g., funding, personnel time, space, equipment, and other supports as needed) to ensure full participation and overall sustainability after grant funding.

Program Plans for Absolute Priority 1

(a) Program Accountability. Teaching students in high-need rural schools requires not only a deep understanding of content knowledge but also rich pedagogical knowledge and cultural understanding of students in high-need populations. Many times new teachers are woefully underprepared for this challenge. *REP* provides a solution to the growing problem of teacher shortages and teacher turnover in rural school districts and the lack of preparedness of those working towards teacher certification by providing an innovative EPP which gives prospective teachers both a preparation program with a rich understanding of the unique needs of teaching in rural schools while preparing them with strong content and pedagogical knowledge. The new EPP will be an innovative combination of redesigned courses, clinical experiences, professional development, and induction that meets State certification/licensure requirements including any requirements for certification obtained through alternative routes to certification, or with regard to SPED teachers, including teachers in rural school districts and teachers of students who are ELL. The redesigned certification 4N1 program track will provide certification in EC, ELE, SPED, and EC/SPED and will prepare highly qualified teachers by providing a rigorous course of study designed to prepare teachers to teach all students, including students with special needs,

ELL, and students who are gifted and talented. This new degree will be created by modifying the existing program options in the baccalaureate program by modifying and adding courses that require more experience-based learning that is grounded in strong pedagogical practices. The degree program coursework will emphasize discourse-based instruction, cross-cultural education, technology in the classroom, and knowledge of and experience with state and national standards based teaching and learning. It will also include a focus on SPED challenges, along with research-based instructional strategies and assistive and adaptive technologies that can be used to accommodate those disabilities. Candidates will be prepared to understand empirically based research and its application to modify and improve classroom instruction, which includes a basic understanding of experimental and quasi-experimental research, and concepts that will enable them to properly digest research, e.g. internal and external validity, the differences between analysis, regression, and correlations, coefficients, tests of significance, effect sizes, and standard deviation. All pedagogy and academic content courses will include a review of scientifically-based research in such areas as ELL, SPED, mathematics, science, literacy, inquiry-based learning, teaching of academic content, standards-based instruction in areas of academic content, cultural competency, Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS), and school improvement strategies and the application of such to rural classrooms to improve classroom instruction and student achievement. Teacher candidates will also research how technology can best be integrated into the instruction in the rural classroom to support student achievement, including the use of technology with children with disabilities using principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). The 4N1 Track is a comprehensive educator preparation track that promotes holistically strong teaching skills that prepare EC educators to become highly competent in applying techniques in EC instructional practice to improve children's cognitive, social,

emotional, and physical development. UWA-COE and the partnership LEAs are part of *Alabama's Office of School Readiness First Class Pre-K Program* which provides effective, high quality EC sites that prepare Alabama's children for school success and lifelong learning. Each location fosters opportunities to promote child exploration, sociability, curiosity, creativity, decision making, independence, and responsibility, in combination with partnership among families, teachers, local, and state communities. The UWA-COE hosts a site at the UWA Campus School and the partnership LEAs also host sites. These sites will provide site-based opportunities for teacher candidates to engage in clinical and induction experiences that give them first hand opportunities to develop the skills needed to be effective EC educators.

(b) Required Reforms. At the core of the *REP* are innovative reforms that improve the EPP, require the use of research-based practices, meet the needs of all student populations, provide differentiated and individualized instruction, ensure collaboration across colleges and rural LEAs, provide a quality induction program, and that strive to meet the hiring objectives of the high-need LEAs. As we work with our partners in building coherence in the teacher education continuum, student success in rural partnership schools will guide our reform efforts. Program Advisory Teams (PATs) will meet each semester with university faculty to review program curriculum, research and discuss effective trends in education, and to conduct a review of program data. Through input from the PATs and support from our Focus Teams organized to collect program data from various data points, we will examine the success of pre-service teacher candidates and the students in partnership schools during undergraduate early field experience, in our co-taught clinical placements, during new teacher induction, and during professional development. We will use PK-6 student success measures and data from performance assessments in clinical settings to assess how well all prospective and new teachers are

developing teaching skills, to further develop our EPP, and to improve campus coursework and future clinical experiences/induction/professional development. UWA-COE will solicit strong faculty resources across its institution and other institutions as needed to train and update colleagues in math, science, SPED, literacy, rural education, EC, ELEM, multiple subjects (with special emphasis on STEAM and standards-based instruction) and other teacher education programs to understand and convey to teacher candidates empirically based practice and scientifically valid research and its applicability to teaching in rural schools in classrooms with ELL, low-income/high-need, and rural students. Faculty will learn the latest research on student learning methods to include within their curricula. Clinical experiences for teacher candidates will include opportunities for candidates to demonstrate that they understand and can apply empirically and research-based teaching practices in classroom instruction; have knowledge of student learning methods; possess skills to analyze student academic achievement data and other measures of student learning and use such data and measures to improve classroom instruction; possess teaching skills and an understanding of effective instructional strategies across all applicable content areas to meet the specific learning needs of all students. Particular attention will be given to emerging formative and summative assessment practices for monitoring standards-based instruction with an additional focus on ELL language literacy assessment and diagnosis of reading challenges. University faculty will remain steadfast in updating syllabi and adopting curriculum resources that assist in conveying skills to analyze student data to improve classroom instruction. The 4N1 Track will prepare candidates to become highly qualified in multiple areas, including general education, SPED, and EC. Therefore, this program track will prepare candidates with teaching skills and an understanding of effective instructional strategies across all applicable content areas that enable general education and SPED teachers to

differentiate instruction for students, including those with disabilities, students who are ELL, student who are gifted and talented, and student with low literacy levels. Every effort will be made to provide empirically based and research valid strategies and methods appropriate for these students in the context of high-need schools in our rural area. Candidates will have place based experiences which prepare prospective and new teachers to understand and use research and data to modify and improve classroom instruction that results in improved student success. Teacher candidates will be provided with numerous opportunities to demonstrate their teaching skills to meet a broad array of student needs, particularly with those students found in the high needs schools of the high need rural LEAs of the project. To serve students with special needs, candidates will learn how pedagogy infused with academic content knowledge and cultural competencies have an impact on the cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development growth of all students, particularly those from diverse backgrounds and those with individualized education programs (IEP). In this regard, teacher candidates (learning how to serve on IEP teams under the IDEA) will acquire the ability to use differentiated instructional strategies to encourage the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, performance skills, and create learning experiences that make content meaningful to all students based upon their developmental levels or disabilities. Candidates will also learn how to implement IEPs and how to use this knowledge to foster supportive interaction among professionals, parents, students, and community members. Faculty specialists with expertise in the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act (IDEA) and the role and function of IEP teams will work in collaboration with partnership LEA specialists to teach all faculty of the EPP the knowledge and skills prospective and new teachers will need to convey participation skills for IEP teams to teacher candidates. Continued collaboration between faculty specialists and LEA specialists will be conducted to ensure

legislative updates are communicated and program adjustments are made accordingly. Formative and summative assessments will be developed to measure candidate acquisition of participation skills and how to develop these skills within practical training experiences. Pre-service and new teachers will have specific experiences in which they will employ effective strategies for reading instruction using the essential components of reading instruction through an interdisciplinary approach. Such strategies will include implementing essential components of reading instruction, including: activating relevant prior knowledge, determining importance, visualizing or imaging, drawing inferences, predicting, and retelling or synthesizing as well as oral language, phonemic awareness, phonics, and word identification; fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension; assessing all aspects of literacy learning; and managing literacy instruction across grade levels. Under this approach, pre-service teachers will learn how to engage their students in becoming active readers who reflect on and process the multiple meanings across content areas. Content area faculty outside of teacher education will collaborate on the development of curriculum to ensure candidates are highly qualified, including subject matter course development and student advisement with regard to subject matter competency. The work plan will include subject matter faculty taking a strong role in curriculum development, both in content and relevant pedagogy. This collaborative work will ensure teacher candidates receive training in both teaching and relevant content areas to meet applicable State certification and licensure requirements, including any requirements for certification obtained through alternative routes to certification, or, with regard to SPED teachers, the qualifications which may include training in multiple subjects to teach multiple grade levels as may be needed for individuals preparing to teach in rural communities and for individuals preparing to teach students with disabilities. Collaboration between the UWA-COE and other colleges will enable a strong content focus while also

developing deep pedagogical knowledge. *REP* will work closely with LEA partners to support new teachers through the implementation of a highly effective induction program developed collaboratively between partner school personnel and university faculty. The CRE and CETL will work in collaboration with the *REP Initiative* to further strengthen and better connect the university pre-service experience of teacher candidates with induction in a coherent model of new teacher development. University faculty will also serve as content experts, providing needed assistance to new teachers and trained mentors in the induction programs in partner LEAs. Professional learning activities will be designed based on state and national reforms that promote teacher quality and student academic achievement (e.g. National Science Foundation; AL Reading Initiative; AL Math, Science, and Technology Initiative; AL Blues Project, AL Institute for Arts in Ed, etc.). The LC will develop admissions goals and priorities aligned with the hiring objectives of the high-need LEAs in the eligible partnership to ensure their areas of need are being met. *REP* is primarily focused on PK-6 partnerships; however, it is committed to working with its partners to assist in implementing program and curriculum changes, as applicable, to ensure that prospective teachers have the requisite content knowledge, preparation, and degree to teach Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate courses successfully. The faculty of the disciplines outside of teacher education will review the requirements and expectations for teacher content preparation for teaching Advanced Placement courses or International Baccalaureate courses. Content specifications will be reviewed against course content of the approved subject matter programs currently offered. Additional courses or enhancements to existing courses will be undertaken by the content faculty, as needed. The ongoing needs assessment of LEAs and their high-needs schools will be evaluated in collaboration with partner

LEAs. Further, the LEA representative to the LC will identify employment needs of the high need LEAs to advise UWA-COE on targets for teacher recruitment and admission.

(c) Clinical Experience and Interaction. *REP* is committed to developing and improving a sustained and high-quality preservice clinical education program to further develop the teaching skills of all prospective teachers. *REP* will be built around a cohort design to facilitate professional collaboration. The progression of cohorts is provided in **Appendix J**. In recent years efforts have increased to develop models of teacher preparation that address the critical and persistent disconnect between campus-based coursework and school-based clinical experiences (Zeichner, 2010). The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) calls for collaborative partnerships that are a shared endeavor meant to focus on the improvement of student learning and development and on the preparation of teachers. Partners work together to determine not only the values and expectations of program development, implementation, assessment, and continuous improvement, but also the division of responsibilities among the various partnership stakeholders. *REP* is a project that will be “situated at the nexus between universities and schools – the place where theory and practice can come together” (Rust, 2010, p. 5). This project will pair educator preparation content which incorporates a rigorous year-long clinical experience in classrooms in high-need rural schools served by the high-need LEAs in the eligible partnership, and identified by the eligible partnership. This practicum experience is designed to meet the specific staffing needs of the high-need rural schools in the partnership. The clinical experience will be closely supervised between prospective teachers and university faculty, experienced teachers, principals, other administrators, and school leaders at ECE programs and elementary schools. Faculty members will be given appropriate release time to provide training support for participants, including receiving course workload credit and

compensation for time teaching in the eligible partnership’s activities (see **Budget Narrative**).

Mentors will receive a stipend based on project responsibilities (see **Budget Narrative**). The

REP Initiative will implement high quality clinical experiences that include the following components:

- Integration of research-based pedagogy that weaves theory and classroom practice together in a year-long internship model of highly relevant teacher education whereby promotion of effective teaching skills in academic content areas are key;
- Prospective teacher candidates will learn alongside an experienced, trained mentor over the course of the EPP;
- Be tightly aligned with course work (and may be developed as a fifth year of a teacher preparation program through UWA-COE’s Alternative A route); and,
- Prospective teachers will learn to teach in the same or a similar rural LEA in which they will work, learning the instructional initiative and curriculum, therefore, providing training and experience to enhance the teaching skills of prospective teachers to better prepare them to meet the unique needs of teaching in high-need rural school communities.

The integration of pedagogy, classroom practice and teacher mentoring will be accomplished through a combination of online, on-campus, and on-site coursework, as well as field-based assignments and learning activities. Candidates will follow a standards based curriculum that is aligned with State and national standards and certification requirements per the Alabama State Department of Education. Field based experiences will begin early and often within the EPP through service in rural partnership schools to provide opportunities for observing and working in a variety of grade levels and settings, including EC education experiences, SPED resource classrooms, and linking theory to rural school and classroom practices. The summer prior to

candidates' beginning their internship year, interns along with their mentors will participate in a multi-day workshop focused on co-teaching models, communication styles and coaching, classroom-based action research and positive school environments. Interns will engage in learning activities during program coursework aligned with their classroom experiences. Educator preparation will be enriched by the inclusion of school site-based professional development activities focusing on content-specific literacy and pedagogy, integration of technology in instruction, standards-based curriculum development, and best practices in teaching ELL and students with disabilities, all of which will be available to both interns and mentor teachers. The UWA-COE in coordination with other colleges, the CRE, and the CETL will provide content workshops and on-site coaching in literacy, STEAM curricula, and effective teaching practices in high-need rural schools. In addition, interns will be engaged in extensive literature-based research throughout the program and will work with university faculty, mentors, and administrators at their school sites to identify place-based issues related to student needs and related questions, challenges, policies and/or practices in their rural classrooms. This process will guide interns through action research opportunities to gain an understanding for planning, instruction, assessment, data analysis, and reflection required for learning how to blend theory, inquiry and practice in making meaningful connections between current educational theory and research and effective instructional practices that lead to improved student achievement. A key element of *REP* is the opportunity for teacher candidates to learn alongside a trained and experienced mentor teacher. Teacher candidates will engage in intense collaboration to diagnose student needs, design interventions, monitor student progress, and adjust instruction and interventions as needed. Mentors will undergo initial training in state standards for general and SPED credentialing as well as training in co-teaching strategies and cognitive coaching to

facilitate support of interns. Mentors will receive release time to participate in professional development activities of the project and provide expertise and advice on the development of field-based assignments for program coursework. Mentors must meet specific criteria for selection as outlined in **Appendix H**, and will receive as stipend for their contributions and expertise in preparing teacher candidates (see **Budget Narrative**).

(d) Induction Programs for New Teachers. *REP* graduates will be provided, as described under Absolute Priority 1, through the induction program for new teachers, a two-year induction program that is collaboratively developed between partner school personnel, university faculty, the CRE, and the CETL. This program will include the development and implementation of an Individual Induction Plan for each beginning teacher and regular, ongoing, formal and informal meetings between support providers and participating new teachers. Induction programs will also be provided for EC education programs.

(e) Support and Training for Participants in ECE Programs. The *REP Initiative* proposes an EPP that engages candidates in a 4N1 Track which includes support and training in EC education. Upon program completion, graduates will be highly qualified EC educators with standards-based training and induction support with a special emphasis on serving high-need rural populations. *REP* will work closely with Alabama’s Office of School Readiness and Pre-K Programs to provide effective, high quality EC experiences that prepare candidates to work in EC settings that prepare Alabama’s children for school success and lifelong learning.

(f) Teacher Recruitment. Special consideration will be given to recruiting applicants from or connected to rural communities, as well as underrepresented, high-poverty, minority culture and language groups with disabilities. Effective recruitment mechanisms and activities will be developed and implemented by the *REP Initiative* recruiter to expand the pool of qualified

candidates to become teachers who meet the applicable State certification and licensure requirements, including any requirements for certification obtained through alternative routes to certification, or, with regard to SPED teachers, the qualifications described in IDEA regulations. The project recruiter will collaborate with rural LEA partners to determine shortage areas, including mathematics, science, SPED, and the instruction of ELL students. Recruitment will begin at the high school level using Web-based and print materials, recruiting visits, networking, campus-based student support organizations and articulation and advising agreements with community colleges statewide. The project recruiter will work through the CRE to reach rural community colleges, high schools and ethnic communities to disseminate information about the program and identify potential candidates. Our rural school, business and community organization partners will also be encouraged to identify and recruit qualified individuals from their rural communities, including district employees, mid-career professionals, former military personnel and recent college graduates with strong academic records. A project website and other social media outlets will be used to enhance recruitment efforts.

(g) Literacy Training. The *REP Initiative* EPP will strengthen the literacy teaching skills of prospective teachers. Candidates will engage in experiences that employ screening, diagnostic, formative and summative assessments of students' literacy levels, difficulties, and growth so that classroom instruction and student reading and writing skills are improved. Teacher candidates and new teachers will also provide individualized, intensive targeted literacy instruction for students with deficiencies in literary skills, and they will integrate literacy skills in the classroom across subject areas. Pre-service and beginning teachers will engage in experiences which will improve their ability to use multiple literacies through an interdisciplinary approach. Such strategies will include implementing essential components of reading instruction, including:

activating relevant prior knowledge, determining importance, visualizing or imaging, drawing inferences, predicting, and retelling or synthesizing as well as oral language, phonemic awareness, phonics, and word identification; fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension; assessing all aspects of literacy learning; and managing literacy instruction across grade levels. This approach will prepare pre-service teachers to learn how to engage their students in becoming active readers who reflect on and process the multiple meanings across subject areas.

IV. PROJECT MANAGEMENT PLAN

(i) The adequacy to achieve the objectives on time and within budget. The management plan is designed to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget. Funds from UWA-COE, other colleges, partner LEAs, the CRE, and the CETL will be coordinated with grant funds to provide project support to meet and/or succeed project expectations. The Black Belt Teaching Corp (BBTC) has also committed funds to support the project by funding a position for the Recruitment Coordinator and to supply scholarship opportunities for underrepresented teacher candidates. UWA recently secured a US Department of Education PBI grant which has designated funds to provide professional development to advance the practice of teaching and learning with a special emphasis on effectively integrating new teaching and learning technologies and designing program curriculum as well as providing training in pertinent instructional strategies. **Figure 1** illustrates the flow of the basic organizational structure's ongoing cycle of work from planning, to development, to implementation, to feedback from LEAs to ensure continuous program awareness and improvement.

Leadership Council-composed of LEA representatives, UWA college deans and faculty, and members of the Project Management Team. The LC will set overall policies for the program, monitor the implementation of this proposal, review evaluation reports and make

recommendations for continuous improvements, discuss the project’s effectiveness, and develop plans to sustain the project after funding ends. **Project Management Team**-composed of the Project Administrator, Project Director, Project Coordinator, EPP Specialists, Evaluation Coordinator, UWA college deans/designated faculty, LEA Project Managers, Recruitment Coordinator will review timelines and milestones, monitor the budget, define the responsibilities of staff and focus teams, implementation and ongoing review of project plans, and monitor and modify the activities of the project based on feedback received. **Focus Teams**-multiple teams composed of recruitment, EPPs, professional development, induction, mentoring, assessment/evaluation/research, partnership development, and Program Advisory Councils (additional teams will be developed as needed).

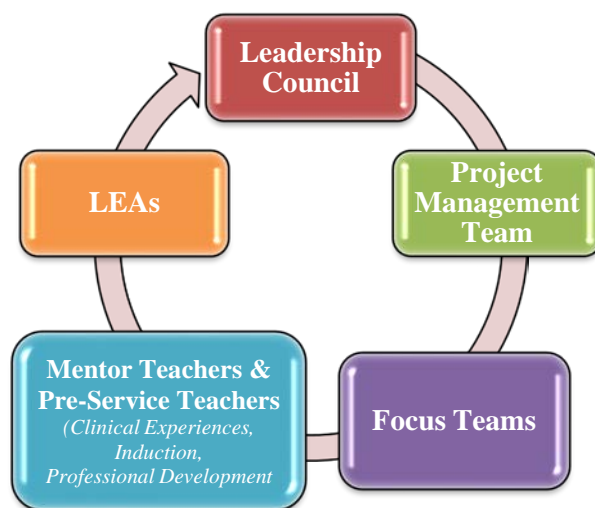


Figure 1.
Organizational
Structure’s Cycle
of Work

Qualifications of Key Project Personnel, including Relevant Experience

Project Administrator: *Dr. Jan Miller*, 10%, is the current Dean of UWA-COE. Since earning her doctorate in Educational Leadership from NOVA Southeastern University, she has coupled her public school administrative and teaching experience with over 10 years of higher education administration and teaching. Dr. Miller is a distinguished presenter at state and national

conferences on a variety of educational topics. She has led the charge for many state and national organizations. She co-authored the distinguished redesigned Instructional Leadership Program at UWA. Her experience managing federal, state, and local funding is vast. She will be responsible to the USDE for the achievement of project goals and objectives and the prudent use of resources to achieve project ends.

Project Director: *Dr. Denise Knight*, 10%, is currently the Director of bby Publications at UWA and an Associate Professor in Instructional Leadership. Dr. Knight completed her doctoral degree at NOVA Southeastern University. She co-authored the distinguished redesigned Instructional Leadership Program at UWA. She has extensive experience in directing federal, state, local, and philanthropic grants. Having served as a teacher and administrator in a rural LEA, she has a passion for working with students and teachers in high-need areas. She will be responsible for the achievement of project goals and objectives and overall project management.

Project Coordinator: *To Be Hired*, 100%, will manage day-to-day project operations and provide support for the Project Director, including management of coordination efforts across partnerships (colleges and LEAs) and focus teams.

Educator Preparation Program Specialists: *Dr. Esther Howard and Dr. Andrea Minear*, 11% each, Drs. Howard and Minear currently serve at UWA as Educator Preparation Program Specialists in PK-6 programs. They both hold extensive experience working in public education and in teaching in EPPs. Their project role will be to oversee and manage the clinical and internship components of the redesigned EPP. They will oversee faculty specialists and Focus Teams for each PK-6 certification area, including EC, ELEM, SPED, and EC/SPED.

Evaluation Coordinator: *Dr. Yan Sun*, 11%, currently serves as a faculty member of the UWA-COE. She teaches graduate courses in the Department of Instructional Leadership and Support.

Her proficiency is in assessment, evaluation, and technology. She has expertise in varied quantitative research designs, methodologies, and statistical analyses. Dr. Sun will supervise research efforts and oversee assessment implementation and data collection throughout the project.

Induction/Mentoring/Professional Development Coordinator: Dr. Sallie Harper; 10%; is currently the Coordinator of Professional for bby Publications at UWA. Dr. Harper also teaches in the UWA-COE. She has extensive experience in induction, mentoring, and professional development planning and implementation. She has numerous years of experience working with clinical students during field experiences and internship. In addition, she has extensive experience in directing federal, state, local, and philanthropic grants. Her role will involve oversight of the induction program, mentors, and coordination of professional development. She will be responsible for professional development, which aligns with LEA initiatives and state and national reforms.

Recruitment Coordinator-To Be Hired; match; will provide on-campus recruitment and coordinate opportunities for high school students to increase career readiness as related to the teaching profession. This position is supported through the Black Belt Teacher Corps (BBTC). The goal of the BBTC is to enroll ten college junior level teacher education majors a year, who are willing to participate fully in the program for two years, and commit to teaching in a Black Belt community for no less than three years.

Independent Evaluator-To Be Hired; contractual; will be an outside evaluator contracted to develop and establish the evaluation design per project requirement and criterion; train staff in evaluation including collection of data, compilation of data and documentation; evaluate the progress of the project based on objectives, activities, and projected outcomes; conduct ongoing

review and develop semi-annual and annual reports per format and requirements of the USDE; maintain contact through two (2) on-site visits each project year and monthly online meetings via conference calls and emails. The independent evaluator will assist *REP* staff in choosing appropriate evaluation tools for projects and in developing evaluation designs for statistical analyses and long-term outcomes based on proposed interventions.

LEA Project Managers-Match; will work with project staff to coordinate project components between the university and LEAs; representatives of each LEA will be the contact person for the district's office and liaise between the LEA, local schools, and UWA.

Mentor Teachers-Contracted; will be selected collaboratively between partner LEAs and the university but will require appropriate subject area knowledge and teacher effectiveness measures including; (1) Effective classroom practice demonstrating deep content knowledge and extensive pedagogy and assessment that includes the use of diagnostic and formative assessments to improve student learning; (2) instruction that engages students with different learning styles; (3) collaboration with colleagues to improve instruction; (4) analysis of gains in student learning based on multiple valid and reliable measures; and (5) appropriate skills in essential content areas of mentor candidates, including literacy and math. Mentor Teachers must be fully certified in the area in which they were trained to teach, commit to ongoing professional development requirements and other project mandates, and meet all state and local LEA requirements for serving in a Mentor capacity.

Administrative Assistant-To Be Hired-100%; will provide various administrative support, including clerical duties, managing and distributing project information to project participants, maintaining files, sending and receiving correspondence, bookkeeping and monitoring/recording expenditures/expenses, planning/scheduling events, preparing materials, etc. This position will

work directly with the Project Director and Project Coordinator and provide support to other staff as needed.

Graduate Assistants-To Be Hired-contractual/stipend-two (2) graduate assistants will be hired to assist in various capacities, including but not limited to assisting with professional development workshops, managing project data, and data analysis.

Figure 2. Key Personnel Organizational Chart

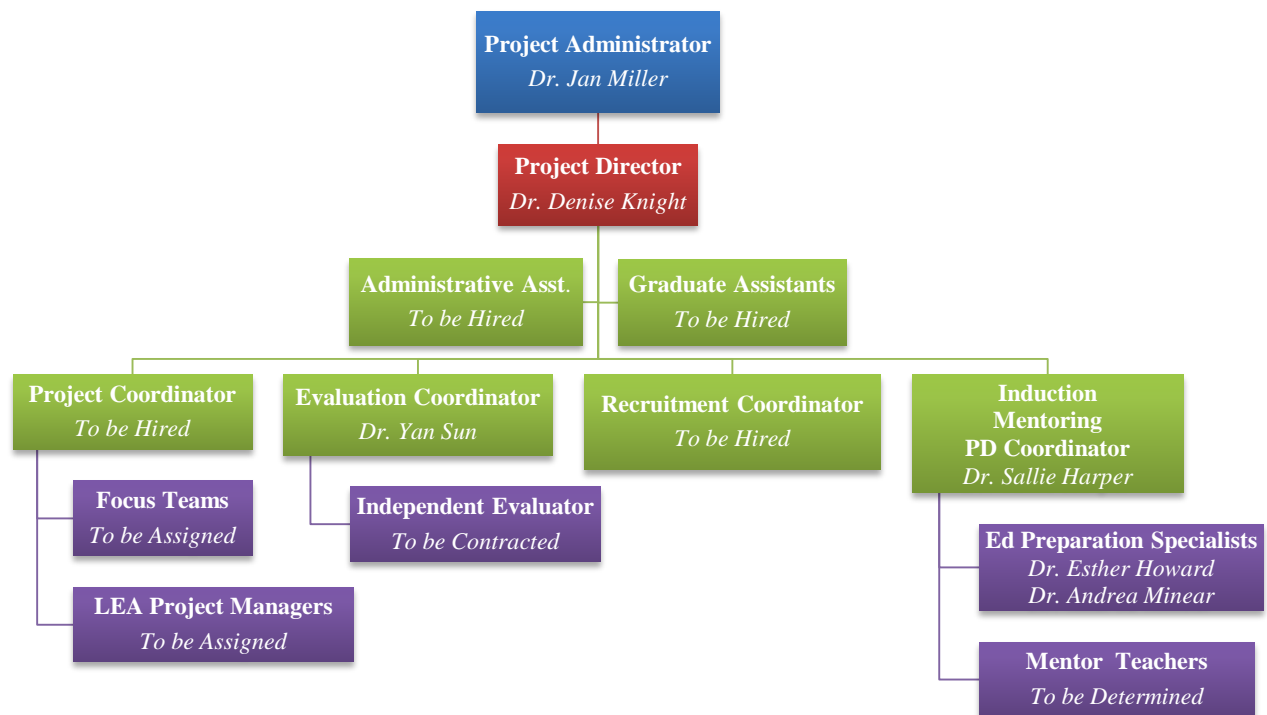


Table 3 outlines the interrelationship between activities, responsibilities, timelines, milestones, and persons responsible for accomplishing project tasks. Adequate budget support has been provided for each of the project’s activities. The Project Management Team will work collaboratively with LEA partners and Focus Teams to create actionable plans that break down yearlong goals into achievable objectives, allocating time, resources, and actions to achieve those goals.

Table 3. *REP Initiative* Project Management Plan

OBJECTIVES/ACTIVITIES/MILESTONES	TIMELINES	RESPONSIBLE
O1: Establishing a System of Collaboration Among UWA-COE, UWA Partnership Colleges, DCS and SCS Public Schools LEAs for the <i>REP Initiative</i> TQP Project		
<p>Activity: Leadership Council (LC) established and meeting to collaborate and oversee ongoing planning and development</p> <p>Milestones: Quarterly meetings conducted as scheduled. LC members will rate the effectiveness of the collaborative functioning of the LC and the partnership to support effective teaching in the LEAs. (Y1-70%; Y2-75%; Y3-80%; Y4-85%; Y5-90%).</p>	<p>Oct 2016-Sept 2017 & Oct-Sept in Y2-Y5</p>	<p>LC, PA, PD, PC, EPPS, IMPDC, RC, EC</p>
<p>Activity: UWA-COE/LEA Focus Teams meet to collaboratively plan and implement the project’s objectives.</p> <p>Milestones: Focus Team members will rate the effectiveness of their collaborative functioning. (Y1-70%; Y2-75%; Y3-80%; Y4-85%; Y5-90%).</p>	<p>Oct 2016-Sept 2017 & Oct-Sept in Y2-Y5</p>	<p>FT, PD, PC, EPPS, IMPDC, RC, EC</p>
<p>Activity: Collaborative forums across rural LEAs are conducted each project year to gather input for continuous project improvement.</p> <p>Milestones: Two project forums are conducted each project year.</p>	<p>Completed by the end of each project year</p>	<p>PA, PD, PC, EPPS, EC, IMPDC, RC, EC</p>
<p>Activity: Partnership Schools are established in the rural high-need LEA schools in collaboration with university colleges.</p> <p>Milestones: Number of rural high-need Partnership Schools established by year (Y1-2; Y2-5; Y3-7; Y4-7; Y5-7)</p>	<p>Completed by the end of each project year</p>	<p>PD, LEAPMs, EC</p>
O2: Preparing Teacher Candidates to be High-Quality Teachers for High-Need Rural LEA Schools		
<p>Activity: Recruitment, enrollment, and retention of teacher candidates.</p> <p>Milestone: The number of cumulative teacher candidates recruited, enrolled, and retained in the EPP will increase from the baseline each year by (Y1-10%; Y2-15%; Y3-20%; Y4-25%; Y5-30%)</p>	<p>Oct-Nov 2016 & March-May of each project year</p>	<p>PD, PC, RC, FT, EC</p>
<p>Activity: <i>REP Initiative</i> teacher candidates participating in clinical programs aligned with pedagogy and academic content courses at partner high-need rural LEA schools.</p> <p>Milestone: Students participating in clinical programs by year. A new group will cycle in each semester. (Y1-40; Y2-100; Y3-100; Y4-100; Y5-100)</p>	<p>Jan 2017-July2017 & Oct-Sept of each project year</p>	<p>PD, PC, FT, EPPS, MTs, LEAPMs, EC</p>
<p>Activity: Educator preparation courses/programs redesigned with special emphasis on early childhood, elementary, special education, STEM, ELL, literacy, cultural competencies, and best practices in teaching rural students</p> <p>Milestone: Program Advisory Councils (PAC) meet each semester to review curriculum, course assignments, field/clinical experiences, standards alignment, etc. to provide input for continuous program improvement. (Y1-Program redesign approved by the AL State Dept. of Ed; Y1-Y5- PACs meet each semester)</p>	<p>Oct 2016-Dec 2017 & April-July of each project year</p>	<p>PA, PD, PC, EPPS, EC, FT, MTs, EC</p>

O3: Effectively Placing, Supporting, and Retaining New Teachers in High-Need Rural <i>REP Initiative</i> Partnership Schools		
<p>Activity: Placement of UWA-COE graduates in high-need <i>REP Initiative</i> Partnership Schools or other high-need rural schools in Alabama.</p> <p>Milestone: (Y1-15; Y2-40; Y3-40; Y4-40; Y5-40)</p>	Aug 2018-Aug 2021	PA, PD, PC, FT, EC, IE
<p>Activity: Induction/Mentoring program is offered in collaboration with the high-need rural LEA schools (includes pre-service and in-service teachers).</p> <p>Milestone: Teachers served by the Induction/Mentoring program. A new group will cycle in annually. (Y1-80; Y2-80; Y3-80; Y4-80; Y5-80)</p>	Aug 2018- Aug 2021	PD, PC, IMPDC, MTs, LEAPM, EC
O4: Improving the Academic Achievement of High-Need Rural Public School Students		
<p>Activity: High-quality, evidence based teacher practices (early childhood, elementary, special education, STEM, ELL, literacy, cultural competencies, and best practices in teaching rural students) are conducted in classrooms of <i>REP Initiative</i> graduates.</p> <p>Milestones: The total number of high-need rural students being taught by <i>REP Initiative</i> graduates teaching in high-need rural partnership schools and other high-need rural schools across Alabama (Y1-250; Y2-1,250; Y3-2,250; Y4-3,250; Y5-4,250 [based on 40 graduates placed in an average class size of 25 for year 1 though year 5])</p>	Aug 2018- Aug 2021	EPPS, FT, MTs, IMPDC, EC, IE
<p>Activity: Authentic inquiry-based teaching is conducted in classrooms of <i>REP Initiative</i> graduates.</p> <p>Milestone: Benchmark percentages of students taught by the <i>REP Initiative</i> graduates have demonstrated an increase in their achievement on current state assessments (Y1-0%; Y2-70%; Y3-75%; Y4-80%; Y5-80%)</p>	Aug 2018- Aug 2021	FT, LEAPMs, IMPDC EC, IE
<p>Key for Persons Responsible: Project Administrator (PA); Project Director (PD); Program Coordinator (PC); Educator Preparation Program Specialist (EPPS); Evaluation Coordinator (EC); Induction/Mentoring/Professional Development Coordinator (IMPDC); Focus Team (FT); Recruitment Coordinator (RC); Leadership Council (LC); LEA Project Managers (LEAPMs); Mentor Teachers (MTs); Program Advisory Councils (PACs); Independent Evaluator (IE)</p>		

(ii) The extent to which performance feedback and continuous improvement are integral to the design of the proposed project. The *REP Initiative* is committed to a continuous improvement approach which provides ongoing feedback throughout the project. Using performance feedback to track the project’s progress toward its objectives is considered a critical piece of improvement. In order to enact a continuous improvement process and ensure disciplined use of data, the project will use the Results Oriented Cycle of Inquiry (ROCI) presented in **Figure 3**. This five-step process includes planning, acting, assessing, reflecting and adjusting, and setting goals.



Figure 3. Results Oriented Cycle of Inquiry

During the ‘planning’ phase, the Management Team, in coordination with input from the LC, will develop achievable action plans aligned with time, resources, and actions to achieve project goals. The ‘act’ phase will bring Focus Teams to collaborative action through distribution of leadership and communication of expectations with supports through mentoring, modeling, partnership, and collaboration to build capacity for effective implementation. ‘Assessing, reflecting, and adjusting’ will be embedded throughout the project so that all activities work together fluidly to establish consistent use of data to provide information on what’s working/what’s not working while providing insight regarding needed programmatic adjustments. ‘Setting goals’ will then be data-driven, and the cycle of continuous improvement will remain constant. These steps will provide informative data that will identify project strengths to build on and opportunities to shore up gaps. The Management Team will assess

during each year the degree to which milestones have been met for all of the project’s objectives. The results will be shared on a quarterly basis at the LC meetings. Those results will include both qualitative and quantitative data such as pre-post surveys, feedback questionnaires, teacher observations, student test scores, interviews, etc. The Management Team will meet with the Focus Teams to review formative and summative evaluation findings to determine what changes and modifications in program design and implementation should be undertaken. Once modifications have been implemented, the Management Team will assess, in collaboration with the External Evaluator, the effectiveness of these changes and what impact the changes have brought, as an ongoing part of performance feedback and continuous improvement. Therefore, an ongoing feedback loop will be employed whereby data is reviewed quarterly; modifications in program implementation are made as needed to ensure that goals are being met; needed changes are implemented; and ongoing progress monitoring will be employed to continuously evaluate the effectiveness of these changes in improving the implementation of program objectives.

V. PROJECT EVALUATION

(i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes.

(1) Multi-level valid and reliable performance data are collected with validated instruments

The *REP Initiative* will collect valid and reliable performance data from four levels that correspond to the four objectives listed in **Table 3**: the *REP* partnership level, the teacher candidate level, the new teacher level, and the student level. **Table 4** lists the instruments the project will use to collect performance data for measuring the outcomes and the objectives at the above four levels.

Table 4. Instruments to collect performance data for assessing *REP Initiative* objectives

Performance Data Collection Level	Standardized Instruments	Instruments Developed by REP Research Team
REP Partnership	Not applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Partnership Collaboration Survey</i>
Teacher Candidates & New Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Skill Assessment Tests • Praxis® Subject Assessments • edTPA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Teacher Readiness Survey</i> • <i>Teaching Self-efficacy Survey</i> • quantifiable <i>Teacher Instruction Observation Protocol</i> • <i>REP Teacher Assessment Tests</i>
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dibels (reading for K-2) • ACT Aspire (Reading for 3rd-6th grade) • ACT Aspire (Mathematics for 3rd-6th grade) • ACT Aspire (Science for 5th grade) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the adapted <i>Engaged Learning Index (ELI)</i> scale (Schreiner & Louis, 2006) • <i>Student Self-Reported Learning Outcome Survey</i>

The standardized instruments listed in **Table 4** have been validated either by the State or by the testing service agencies and are therefore expected to possess sound validity and reliability. For the survey instruments and assessment tests developed by the *REP Initiative* Research Team, reviews by UWA faculty members and pilot tests with potential respondents will be conducted to ensure these instruments possess face, content, construct, or predictive validity as appropriate. In addition, these instruments will be revised based on calculated internal consistency reliability coefficient Cronbach's α to make sure the internal consistency reliability will be at least .80 before being administered in the study. Cronbach's α for scores obtained from instruments administered throughout the study will be calculated, reported, and are also expected to be at least .80. External observers outside the *REP Initiative* team will be used to collect instruction observation data with the quantifiable *Teacher Instruction Observation Protocol* in order to enhance the objectivity and reliability of the observations (O'Leary, 2014). The external observers will be trained and inter-rater reliability will be checked through pilot observations to ensure 100% agreement before actual observations.

(2) Valid and reliable performance data are aligned with REP initiative objectives. The performance assessments are conducted with validated instruments and the resulting valid and reliable performance data measure what they are purported to measure. Specifically, as shown in **Table 4**, the assessment instruments are aligned with the *REP Initiative's* four objectives and the performance data collected from these instruments assess the quality and extent of partnership collaboration, the effectiveness of teacher candidates, and new teachers' performance, and students' academic improvement.

(3) Performance assessments are ongoing formative assessments. The performance assessments are ongoing formative assessments yielding reliable data to continually assess the project objectives. Except for those standardized tests listed in **Table 4** which take place by a fixed time schedule, the performance assessment instruments will be administered periodically throughout each project year. Performance data thus collected not only possess greater reliability and validity but also provide timely feedback on how well the project is meeting the project objectives as indicated by the yearly outputs and benchmarks. Ongoing formative performance assessments will be conducted as specified below:

Partnership collaboration performance outcomes: The valid and reliable *Partnership Collaboration Survey* created by the *REP* evaluation team will be used to measure partnership collaboration outcomes. The survey will measure partnership collaboration performance in the following aspects: quality discussion during team meetings; resolving conflicts; making decisions effectively; speaking openly about ideas; and team members learning from one another and having defined roles. The instruments will be administered at the end of each Summer, Fall, and Spring semester. In others words, partnership collaboration performance data will be collected three times each academic year: 1) each data set will separately provide the outcomes

and its specific semester; 2) the three data sets will be approached as combinations of pre- and post-survey results to assess the annual partnership collaboration outcomes; 3) all data sets collected over the five-year period of the project will be looked at collectively to yield a comprehensive picture about the final outcomes of partnership collaboration.

Teacher candidate and new teacher outcomes: In addition to standardized teacher certification tests, the *Teacher Readiness Survey* and the quantifiable *Teacher Instruction Observation Protocol* will be used to collect performance data from teacher candidates and new teachers. For each cohort of teacher candidate or new teacher, the *Teacher Readiness Survey* and the instruction observations will be conducted multiple times each semester to produce univariate time series survey and observation data, from which not only timely reports of teacher performance outcomes become available but teachers' performance change trajectories become visible.

Student outcomes: In addition to standardized achievement tests, student learning performance will be measured by adapted *Engaged Learning Index (ELI)* (Schreiner & Louis, 2006) and the *Student Self-Reported Learning Outcome Survey*. The pre and post learning engagement data will be collected using the adapted *Engaged Learning Index (ELI)* (Schreiner & Louis, 2006) at the beginning and the end of each semester. The *Student Self-Reported Learning Outcome Survey* will be administered in the middle and at the end of each semester.

(ii) The evaluation is thorough, feasible, and appropriate to goals, objectives, and outcomes

(1) Overview of the thoroughness of the evaluation methods

a. All objectives covered by the evaluation plan: The project's evaluation plan covers all four objectives the project team aims to achieve. Specifically, both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected concurrently from the *REP Initiative* partners, teacher candidate and new

teachers enrolled in the initiative, and students taught by the teacher candidates and new teachers. Thorough analyses of the data will inform whether the project's objectives have been met.

b. Thorough evaluation data collection: quantitative data supplemented by qualitative data:

Throughout the project, the performance of the *REP Initiative* partnership, teacher candidates, new teachers, and students will be assessed through the following quantitative measures: repeated measures of surveys from *REP Initiative* partners, teachers, and students (see **Table 4**); quantifiable teacher instruction observations; teachers' standardized tests scores from state assessments of academic proficiency and academic content, and assessments of teacher candidates meeting state teaching and learning standards; teachers candidates' LiveText assessments; students' standardized test scores; students' end of semester course grades. The quantitative performance data are supplemented by comprehensive qualitative data: teacher candidate, new teacher, mentor teacher, and LC member focus group interviews; teacher evaluations; cooperating teachers' reports; project meeting notes and minutes; lesson plans; portfolios. The quantitative data will be analyzed using t-tests or their nonparametric comparisons, repeated measures ANOVA, or growth curve modeling whenever appropriate. The qualitative data will be analyzed using inductive or deductive qualitative analysis methods or content analysis as appropriate.

c. Thorough analysis through summative and formative assessments: The *REP Initiative* evaluation is based on ongoing multi-level quantitative and qualitative data collection. Thorough and comprehensive data collected will allow the REP research team to produce a thorough analysis of whether the project's objectives have been met through summative assessments and

how the project can be improved in terms of design and implementation of project programs and activities through formative assessments.

2. Feasible project evaluation management and implementation

a. Feasible project evaluation management: The project's Research Team possesses expertise in project evaluation in terms of evaluation design, data collection, data management, data analysis, reporting and interpreting results. The project Research Team will be responsible for the project's evaluation design. The project's Research Team will work with a qualified external evaluator selected by the project's Management Team. The following is the feasible internal/external division of labor for the evaluation between the project team and the external evaluator:

Instrument Development: the external evaluator will work with the project Research Team to develop and validate data collection instruments and to have all instruments ready at the end the first semester of the project.

Data Collection: The project Research Team will collect the data with the external evaluator providing validity checks through analysis and/or re-sampling where appropriate.

Data Preparation: The project Research Team will be responsible for providing the data on spreadsheets (quantitative) and narrative (qualitative) forms.

Data Management: The project Research Team will be responsible for creating a database and storing data and data file in the database.

Data Analysis: All data analysis will be done by the evaluator with review by the project Research Team.

Evaluation Reports: While the Management Team, in conjunction with the Project Director, will be responsible for all federal accountability reports, the external evaluator will be

responsible for completing evaluation reports to assist the project in making appropriate adjustments in its project design and implementation.

b. Feasible evaluation implementation: The project Research Team with the help of the external evaluator will set feasible timelines for data collection, data analysis, and reporting of results so that the project evaluation activities will be conducted in a timely manner. Feasible evaluation data collection plans will be made regarding the following aspects:

- Make plans and define responsibilities for creating and distributing surveys, and for returning survey responses
- Make plans and define responsibilities for collecting teacher candidates' and students' standardized test scores, teacher candidates' LiveText assessment results, and students' end of semester course grades; and other artifacts including meeting notes and minutes, teacher evaluations, portfolios, lesson plans, cooperating teacher reports, and supervising teacher reports
- make plans for recruiting teacher candidates, new teachers, cooperating teachers, students, and school administrators for focus group interviews
- schedule focus group interviews
- define procedures and craft details for training external observers for instruction observations
- schedule instruction observations
- make plans and define responsibilities for managing data collected

One purpose of this project evaluation is to provide data-derived evidence of whether the project's objectives have been met. To fulfill this purpose, the *REP* Research Team will raise feasible research questions, both quantitative and qualitative (see **Table 5**) tied to the project objectives. These feasible evaluation questions facilitate smooth implementation of project

evaluation plans and, more importantly, ensure that both evaluation data collected and evaluation data analysis are aligned the project objectives.

**3. Project evaluation methods appropriate to project goal, objectives and outcomes:
outcomes, benchmarks, outcome and performance measures and assessment instruments**

The ultimate goal of the *REP Initiative* is to prepare and retain quality teachers for teaching in high-need rural schools and to improve academic achievement of students in high-need rural schools. To achieve this goal, the *REP Initiative* set four objectives and

outcome benchmarks for these objectives. The project evaluation methods in terms of outcome and performance measures and assessment instruments are aligned with the project objectives and are appropriate to assess the objectives. The output and outcome benchmarks, outcome and performance measures, and assessment tools for each project objective are specified in **Table 6**.

(iii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. The REP evaluation methods include both summative elements and formative elements. While the summative elements help to reveal whether the project's objectives have been met, the formative elements inform how the project can be improved in terms of design and implementation of project programs and activities. The formative elements in the REP evaluation design form a system that provide timely performance feedback and ongoing assessments of progress toward achieving intended outcomes via a myriad of effective channels as outlined in **Table 7**.

Table 5. Research/Evaluation Questions

<p>Objective 1: Establishing a System of Collaboration Among UWA-COE, UWA Partnership Colleges, DCS and SCS Public Schools LEAs for the <i>REP Initiative</i> TQP Project</p>
<p><u>Quantitative:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do the REP partners rate the quality of communicate among them? 2. Does the quality of communication among REP partners change over time? 3. Are the REP partners satisfied with their collaboration in implementing the REP programs? 4. How do the REP partners rate their effectiveness in making continuous project improvement? 5. How do the REP partners’ effectiveness in making continuous project improvement change over time? 6. How do the REP partners rate their effectiveness of collaboration? 7. Does the effectiveness of collaboration among the REP partners change over time? 8. Does the REP partnership effective in decision making?
<p><u>Qualitative:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does the REP partnership make a difference in supporting effective teaching in the LEAs? 2. What types of support are needed from the REP partnership to allow effective teaching to happen in the LEAs? 3. What need to be done to improve the communication among the REP partners? 4. What aspects of the REP partnership need to be improved to enhance the effectiveness of implementing the REP programs? 5. What does the REP partnership need to do to make continuous project improvement happen?
<p>Objective 2: Preparing Teacher Candidates to be High-Quality Teachers for High-Need Rural LEA Schools</p>
<p><u>Quantitative:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do teacher candidates’ basis skills in teaching improve as a result of participating in the REP programs? 2. Do teacher candidates’ content knowledge improve as a result of participating in the REP programs? 3. Do the REP programs improve teacher candidates’ teaching self-efficacy? 4. How does teacher candidates’ self-efficacy in teaching change over time? 5. Do the REP programs improve teacher candidates’ readiness for teaching? 6. How does teacher candidates’ readiness for teaching change over time? 7. Do the REP programs improve teacher candidates’ teaching practices?
<p><u>Qualitative:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the effects of the REP programs in teacher candidates’ teaching practices 2. What types of support do teacher candidates need to improve their self-efficacy in teaching? 3. What types of support do teacher candidates need to improve their readiness for teaching? 4. How do teacher candidates conceptualize authentic learning? 5. How does teacher candidates’ conceptualization of authentic learning change as a result of participating in the REP programs? 6. How do the REP programs improve teacher candidates’ cultural competency in teaching rural students? 7. How do teacher candidates conceptualize best practices in teaching rural students? 8. How does teaching candidates’ conceptualization of best practices in teaching rural students change as a result of participating in the REP

<p>programs?</p> <p>9. How do the one-to-one mentor-novice relationship between cooperating teachers and teacher candidates improve teacher candidates' confidence and competence in teaching?</p> <p>10. What can be done to allow teacher candidates benefit more from the one-to-one mentor-novice relationship?</p>
<p>Objective 3: Effectively Placing, Supporting, and Retaining New Teachers in High-Need Rural <i>REP Initiative</i> Partnership Schools</p>
<p><u>Quantitative:</u></p> <p>1. Do the REP programs help retain new teachers in high-need rural schools?</p> <p>2. Do the REP programs improve new teacher's teaching self-efficacy?</p> <p>3. How does new teachers' self-efficacy in teaching change over time?</p> <p>4. Do the REP programs improve new teachers' readiness for teaching?</p> <p>5. How does new teachers' readiness for teaching change over time?</p> <p>6. Do the REP programs improve new teachers' teaching practices?</p>
<p><u>Qualitative:</u></p> <p>1. What are the effects of the REP programs in new teachers' teaching practices</p> <p>2. What types of support do new teachers need to improve their self-efficacy in teaching?</p> <p>3. What types of support do new teacher need to improve their readiness for teaching?</p> <p>4. How do new teachers conceptualize authentic learning?</p> <p>5. How does new teachers' conceptualization of authentic learning change as a result of participating in the REP programs?</p> <p>6. How do the REP programs improve new teachers' cultural competency in teaching rural students?</p> <p>7. How do new teachers conceptualize best practices in teaching rural students?</p> <p>8. How does new teachers' conceptualization of best practices in teaching rural students change as a result of participating in the REP programs?</p> <p>9. How do the one-to-one mentor-novice relationship between cooperating teachers and new teachers improve teacher candidates' confidence and competence in teaching?</p> <p>10. What can be done to allow new teachers to benefit more from the one-to-one mentor-novice relationship?</p> <p>11. What can be done for projects like the <i>REP Initiative</i> to improve new teacher retention rate in high-need rural schools?</p>
<p>Objective 4: Improving the Academic Achievement of High-Need Rural Public School Students</p>
<p><u>Quantitative:</u></p> <p>1. Do the REP programs improve students' achievement in reading?</p> <p>2. Do the REP programs improve students' achievement in mathematics?</p> <p>3. Do the REP programs improve students' achievement in science?</p> <p>4. Do the REP programs improve students' learning outcomes?</p> <p>5. Do the REP programs improve students' learning experience?</p> <p>6. Do the REP programs enhance students' learning engagement?</p>
<p><u>Qualitative:</u></p> <p>1. What differences do teacher candidates or new teachers make in students' learning experience?</p> <p>2. How do teacher candidates or new teachers enhance student learning engagement?</p>

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. How do students think about their learning experience with the teacher candidate or new teacher who taught them? 4. What are the learning needs of students in high-need rural schools that need to be address in order to improve students’ academic needs? 5. Do the REF programs address these needs and how? |
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Table 6 Output and outcome benchmarks, performance measures, and assessment tools

<p>Objective 1: Establishing a System of Collaboration Among UWA-COE, UWA Partnership Colleges, DCS and SCS Public Schools LEAs for the REP Initiative TQP Project: By Fall 2016, a system of collaboration will have been established among UWA, DCS, SCS, and their community-based organizations to support the preparation of quality teacher candidates, the effective mentoring and induction of teachers, and retention of teachers in the two LEAs.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Output benchmarks for objective 1: LC meetings are held quarterly each year and UWA-COE/LEA Focus Teams meet twice a year to collaboratively plan and implement the project’s objectives. Two project forums are conducted each project year to gather input for continuous project improvement. b. Outcome benchmarks for objective 1: In each year of the grant, the following percentages of LC members and the Focus Team members will rate the partnership as functioning effectively to support effective teaching in DCS and SCS, and that the partners will have been effectively collaborating on improving teacher candidates, new teachers, and student achievement: Y1-70%; Y2-75%; Y3-80%; Y4-85%; Y5-90%. c. Outcome and performance measures for objective 1: By September 30, 2021, plans will have been developed and implemented indicating that a system of collaboration between UWA and the LEAs has been developed by the <i>REP Initiative</i>; the partners in the initiative will continue to collaborate to institutionalizing the REP programs after federal funding ends; and at least 90% of the LC members will rate the leadership as functioning effectively in supporting effective teaching and learning. d. Assessment instruments for outcomes of objective 1: <i>Partnership Collaboration Survey</i> three times a year to assess the effectiveness of the REP partnership collaboration; LC member focus group interviews; UWA and LEA documents describing policies and practices, and organizational units in the partnership; reports documenting changes in teacher preparation courses, clinical programs, and mentoring and induction; notes and minutes from LC meetings, UWA-COE/LEA Focus Teams meetings, and Collaborative forums; plans and reports documenting the work of LC and UWA-COE/LEA Focus Teams.
<p>Objective 2: Preparing Teacher Candidates to be High-Quality Teachers for High-Need Rural LEA Schools: By September 30, 2021, approximately 400 teacher candidates will have increased their ability, knowledge, and skills to provide effective and high-quality teaching to students in high-need rural schools and to improve their learning and achievements.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Output benchmarks for objective 2: The first cohort of teacher candidates will be recruited in the first project year and a new cohort will cycle in each ensuing project year. The number of cumulative teacher candidates enrolled in the REP Initiative by year will be as follows: Y1-40; Y2-100; Y3-100; Y4-100; Y5-100. At year 5, approximately a total of 400 teacher candidates will have been enrolled in <i>REP</i> specialized <i>REP Initiative</i> training in early childhood, elementary, special education, STEM, ELL, literacy, cultural competencies, and best practices in teaching rural students and will have had successful clinical experience. b. Outcome benchmarks for objective 2: The number of cumulative teacher candidates recruited, enrolled, and retained in the EPP will increase from the baseline each year by Y1-10%; Y2-15%; Y3-20%; Y4-25%; Y5-30%; the benchmark percentages of teacher candidates making statistically significant improvement in teaching self-efficacy for each of the five project year are: Y1-80%; Y2-85%; Y3-90%; Y4-95%; Y5-

<p>95%; the benchmark percentages of teacher candidates making statistically significant improvement in teaching readiness for each of the five project year are: Y1-75%; Y2-80%; Y3-85%; Y4-90%; Y5-95%;</p> <p>c. Outcome and performance measures for objective 2: By September 30, 2021, 90% of the 400 teacher candidates graduating from the <i>REP Initiative</i> will have passed the Basic Skill Assessment Tests, Praxis® Subject Assessments, and edTPA.</p> <p>d. Assessment instruments for outcomes of objective 2: Basic Skill Assessment Tests, Praxis® Subject Assessments, and edTPA; univariate time series <i>Teacher Readiness Survey</i>, <i>Teaching Self-efficacy Survey</i>, and quantifiable <i>Teacher Instruction Observation Protocol</i>; the <i>REP Teacher Assessment Tests</i>; teacher candidate and cooperating teacher focus group interviews; teacher candidate LiveText assessments; teacher candidate end of semester course grades; teacher evaluation reports from cooperating and supervising teachers; cooperating teachers’ reports; lesson plans; and teacher candidate portfolios.</p>
<p>Objective 3: Effectively Placing, Supporting, and Retaining New Teachers in High-Need Rural REP Initiative Partnership Schools: By September 30, 2021, approximately 175 new teachers who are the <i>REP Initiative</i> graduates will have increased their ability, knowledge, and skills to provide effective and high-quality teaching to students in high-need rural schools and to improve the students’ learning and achievements. At least 160 <i>REP Initiative</i> graduates will be hired, retained, and teaching in high-need <i>REP Initiative</i> Partnership Schools or other high-need rural schools in Alabama.</p>
<p>a. Output benchmarks for objective 3: The number of new teachers graduating from the <i>REP Initiative</i> by year will be as follows: Y1-15; Y2-40; Y3-40; Y4-40; Y5-40. At year 5, approximately a total of 175 new high-quality teachers with specialized training in early childhood, elementary, special education, STEM, ELL, literacy, cultural competencies, and best practices in teaching rural students and with successful clinical experience will have been hired in high-need <i>REP Initiative</i> Partnership Schools or other high-need rural schools in Alabama.</p> <p>b. Outcome benchmarks for objective 3: The benchmark percentages of new teachers who will be retained per year: Y1-95%; Y2-90%; Y3-85%; Y4-80%; Y5-80%; the benchmark percentages of new teachers making statistically significant improvement in teaching self-efficacy for each of the five project year are: Y1-80%; Y2-85%; Y3-90%; Y4-95%; Y5-95%; the benchmark percentages of new teachers making statistically significant improvement in teaching readiness for each of the five project year are: Y1-75%; Y2-80%; Y3-85%; Y4-90%; Y5-95%.</p> <p>e. Outcome and performance measures for objective 3: 95% of the 175 new teachers who are graduates from the <i>REP Initiative</i> will have passed the REP Teacher Assessment Tests and acquired the knowledge and skills to be effective teachers according to the <i>REP Initiative</i> criteria based the learning needs of students in high-need rural schools; After the first two years of teaching, at least 85% REP graduates will have been retained in their positions.</p> <p>c. Assessment instruments for outcomes of objective 3: univariate time series <i>Teacher Readiness Survey</i>, <i>Teaching Self-efficacy Survey</i>, and quantifiable <i>Teacher Instruction Observation Protocol</i>; LEA teacher retention records; cooperating teacher and new teacher focus group interviews; teacher evaluation reports LEA schools; lesson plans; and new teacher portfolios.</p>
<p>Objective 4: Improving the Academic Achievement of High-Need Rural Public School Students: By September 2021, PK-6 students in high-need LEAs who are taught by the <i>REP Initiative</i> graduates will have increased their achievement with higher percentages of students meeting state standards for academic performance.</p>
<p>a. Output benchmarks for objective 4: The total number of high-need rural students being taught by <i>REP Initiative</i> graduates teaching in high-need rural partnership schools and other high-need rural schools across Alabama will be: Y1-250; Y2-1,250; Y3-2,250; Y4-3,250; Y5-4,250 [based on 40 graduates placed in an average class size of 25 for year 2 through year 5].</p>

- b. Outcome benchmarks for objective 4:** The benchmark percentages of students taught by the *REP Initiative* graduates demonstrating an increase in their achievement on current state assessments are: Y1-0%; Y2-70%; Y3-75%; Y4-80%; Y5-80%.
- c. Outcome and performance measures for objective 4:** The benchmark percentages of students taught by the *REP Initiative* graduates demonstrating an increase in their learning outcomes are: Y1-75%; Y2-80%; Y3-85%; Y4-90%; Y5-90%; the benchmark percentages of students taught by the *REP Initiative* graduates demonstrating an increase in their learning engagement are: Y1-75%; Y2-80%; Y3-85%; Y4-90%; Y5-90%.
- d. Assessment instruments for outcomes of objective 4:** Dibels (reading for K-2); ACT Aspire (Reading for 3rd-6th grade); ACT Aspire (Mathematics for 3rd-6th grade); ACT Aspire (Science for 5th grade); univariate time series *Engaged Learning Index* Survey, *Student Self-Reported Learning Outcome Survey*; student focus group interviews; and artifacts from student course projects or assignments.

Table 7. Outcome Assessments

1. Monthly feedback from the Management Team and the external evaluator
The Project Director and the LC will receive monthly feedback from the Management Team and the Independent Evaluator regarding issues and progress in project management, implementation, and evaluation.
2. Periodic feedback from REP program implementation
The REP programs include professional development programs for mentor teachers and teacher training programs for teacher candidates and new teachers. At the end of each program session, the leaders of those programs will meet to reflect on how effective the program was implemented and what improvement is needed. The program leaders will also collect open-ended feedback survey data from program participants and provide the data timely to the REP Research Team.
3. Ongoing formative assessment data collection and analysis
Ongoing formative assessment data from the REP partners, instructional leaders, teacher candidates, new teachers, and students will be collected through the each project year. The assessment data will be analyzed timely and reported to the LC and the Project Director to be discussed and compared with outcome benchmarks in the quarterly LC meetings.
4. Periodic feedback from focus groups
Periodic teacher candidates, new teachers, cooperating teachers, students, and school administrator focus group interviews will be conducted throughout each project year. Feedback conveyed through the interview will be timely reported to the Project Director and the LC for continual project improvement.
5. Feedback collected from Collaborative Forums
Collaborative forums across rural LEAs are conducted twice each project year. The forums gather input from partner schools for continuous project improvement.
6. Feedback from teacher candidates and new teachers
Teacher candidates and new teachers report to their supervising teachers or mentor teachers regarding their feedback on REP programs, their concerns or needs in teaching and suggestions of effective teaching support. The supervising and mentor teachers send a monthly feedback report to the Induction/Mentoring Coordinator who will prepare combined feedback reports to be discussed in the quarterly LC meetings.

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