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Teacher and Leader Support Program

Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS), the twelfth largest school system in the country and the largest school system in Georgia, serves an economically, ethnically, and linguistically diverse population of students. This proposal for *Teacher and School Leader Incentive Program* funding (TSL) describes GCPS' Human Capital Management System (HCMS) along with our Performance Based Teacher Compensation System (PBTCS). **(Absolute Priority 1)** Our nearly 182,000 students come from 181 countries, speak 100 different languages, and represent one-tenth of the student population in the state. Across our 134 traditional elementary, middle, and high schools, 74 (55%) are currently considered to be high-need schools. **(Absolute Priority 2 - High-Need Schools)** The ultimate goal is to accelerate gap closures and improve performance for all students, especially for those in our high-need schools, by providing targeted support for our teachers and leaders. In addition, this proposal outlines plans to pilot an expansion of our novice teacher mentoring program focused in six schools located within Qualified Opportunity Zones. **(Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Investing in QOZ)** GCPS has never participated in a TSL or TIF grant **(Competitive Preference Priority 2-Novice Applicant)** and plans to leverage this funding opportunity to continue to build on the solid foundation already in place for teachers and leaders. With the support of the TSL grant, GCPS' Office of Leadership Development will be able to participate in extensive training and partner with nationally recognized organizations so we are better able to: expand the leader support model, identify and train teacher leaders, and provide embedded supports for novice or ineffective teachers. GCPS plans to launch an effort to increase leader and teacher efficacy and improve retention by expanding the support to address the challenges of our leaders and teachers, particularly for those serving in high-need schools. **This project will focus on three main improvement efforts:**

- 1. Expand mentoring/coaching for novice leaders to span three years of targeted and personalized support that will address the unique complexity of their role, build their leadership capacity, and increase their ability to identify and train teacher leaders to positively impact school and student outcomes.**
- 2. Expand the support model for novice teachers by providing mentoring and job-embedded professional learning in our high-need schools that will increase the likelihood they remain in their position and become highly effective teachers.**
- 3. Redesign the professional learning opportunities offered to leaders and teachers, particularly those in high-need schools, focusing on equity, social-emotional learning, and innovative instructional strategies including remote/digital learning.**

A. Need for Project (25 points).

(A1) The nature and magnitude of the gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project

“Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things.” This maxim holds true for any size or type of organization but especially for schools. Leadership is the fundamental element that can drive an organization to phenomenal success, and lack of leadership can anchor it solidly in mediocrity, or worse. The job of a school leader has been transformed by extraordinary economic, demographic, technological, and global change. The demands on leaders are great and require exceptional expertise. Over the past ten years, GCPS has seen a steady increase in enrollment, socio-economic need, and diversity that has led to a deeper focus on achieving equity for each student.

Year	Enrollment	% FRL	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	Multi-racial
2010	159,000	44%	35%	27%	22%	10%	4%
2020	182,000	56.6%	21%	32%	32%	11%	4%

A school leader in GCPS is essentially the CEO of a very large company, with school enrollments up to 3,600 students, staff as large as 300 people, sizable local budgets, and key performance goals that must be achieved. Given the importance of strong school leadership, it is troubling that most graduate schools of education have failed to provide the real-world, timely training principals need to be effective in today’s schools (Darling-Hammond et, al. 2007). Our schools have the responsibility of educating a population that is experiencing dramatic socio-economic and ethnic shifts. With about 181 countries represented, these shifts create a need for school leaders to address the social and emotional needs of students while simultaneously teaching educators to become more culturally responsive and competent. Specifically, across our 134 traditional elementary, middle, and high schools, 74 (55%) are currently considered to be high-need schools. **(AP2)** Particularly given recent developments affecting the economy and potentially impacting student academic and social-emotional needs, effective leadership is needed more than ever to ensure teachers are well-equipped to support the needs of each student. Through cross-divisional collaborations and analyses, **GCPS has identified three critical needs** with data supporting each detailed below:

- (1) Increasing percentage of novice leaders, especially in high need schools, due to higher turnover and increased enrollment.
- (2) Disparities in teacher engagement and student performance between high-need and lower-need schools, with high-need schools showing lower levels across both indicators.
- (3) Higher levels of turnover among novice teachers in high-need schools.

Need #1: Novice leaders in need of greater, more individualized support

One of the primary needs identified in our district is the relative inexperience of our school leaders. While we are continually working to build a pipeline of potential leaders, we have experienced higher turnover among leaders in recent years. This turnover, coupled with continued growth in enrollment, results in more principals needed to lead our schools.

Key gaps and weaknesses across GCPS	High-need schools (≥50% FRL)	Lower-need schools (<50% FRL)
Principal’s years of experience (National avg is 7.4 yrs.; Taie & Goldring, 2019)	4.1 yrs	7 yrs
% of principals considered novices (<5 yrs exp)	55.4%	38.3%
% of assistant principals considered novices (<5 yrs exp)	63.3%	41.2%
% of leaders (principals & AP’s) with <3 yrs at their current school (i.e. recent turnover)	58.2%	41.7%
# of new principals hired in 2019-20	11	6
# of new assistant principals hired in 2019-20	39	34
# of new principals hired in 2018-19	7	3
# of new assistant principals hired in 2018-19	40	29

We are seeking support for our efforts to strengthen leaders’ ability to engage their stakeholders, build a positive culture among their students and staff, tackle the challenges specific to their context, and increase their level of self-efficacy and retention. In order to slow the effects of leadership churn, principals need access to effective on-going, comprehensive support and development, far beyond the first two years on the job (School Leaders Network, 2014). Sudden or frequent leadership turnover can disrupt school progress, often resulting in higher teacher turnover and, ultimately, stagnant or declining student achievement (Levin, Bradley, & Scott, 2019). Turnover is especially significant in low-performing schools with nearly an 18% turnover

rate among leaders (Goldring & Taie, 2018). Research has indicated that one of the primary reasons for leadership turnover is inadequate preparation and professional development, however, implementation of: high-quality preparation programs that carefully select and deeply prepare principals for challenging schools; access to in-service training, mentoring, and coaching that continue to support and develop principals; and collaborations between professional learning programs and school districts can minimize the churn (Levin & Bradley, 2019).

Moreover, research has found that high-quality professional learning opportunities for principals, peer networks such as Networked Improvement Communities (NIC), and targeted mentoring and coaching support can help build capacity and lessen principal turnover (Jacob et al., 2015). In a recent New York City Leadership Academy report (2018), they found that **principals who were supported by a mentor or coach for five years remained in their schools more than twice as long as the national average**, and this support improved their ability to supervise staff, distribute leadership, communicate, and lead with resilience. Despite these findings, more than half of newly appointed principals, including those in GCPS, receive shorter-term coaching (NPTS, 2019). So, it is no surprise that the average new principal leaves their position in three years. In addition, data shows that schools with a high proportion of low-income students and students of color are far more likely to have a novice principal or a short-term leader thus exacerbating the issue of equity (Safir, 2019). We plan to address this need by strengthening our support for novice leaders across GCPS, primarily those serving high-need schools.

Need #2: Teachers in high-need schools report lower levels of engagement

Each year, our Human Resources and Talent Management (HRTM) division administers an online Teacher Exit Survey to all teachers exiting GCPS at the end of that school year. Our most recent data from 2019 indicates that **59.4% of exiting teachers indicated a “lack of**

support from administration” as having an impact on their decision to leave the district. Since 2016, GCPS has partnered with Gallup to administer the Q12 Employee Engagement Survey to all employees (see sample report in Appendix D). Results are disaggregated by school and provided to principals and district leaders for use in planning. In recent years, results have indicated that staff in our high-need schools are less engaged compared to our lower-need schools. This data is concerning as staff disengagement can be an early indicator or predecessor of staff turnover. The table below shows district averages from Q12 survey items, based on school-level means.

<i>Responses range from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)</i>	Mean- High Need Schools	Mean- Lower-need schools	<i>p- value</i>	Magnitude of the difference (e.g. effect size)
Overall - across all survey items	4.13	4.29	.000	<i>Medium</i>
How satisfied are you with your organization as a place to work?	3.96	4.23	.000	<i>Medium to Large</i>
At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.	4.14	4.34	.000	<i>Medium</i>
At work, my opinions seem to count.	3.74	3.94	.000	<i>Small to Medium</i>
My organization is committed to building the strengths of each associate	4.03	4.19	.001	<i>Small to Medium</i>
Overall % of staff scoring as <i>Engaged</i> or <i>Highly Engaged</i>	54.2%	62.6%	.000	<i>Medium</i>

In addition, teacher turnover rates are higher in our high-need schools. For example, from 2018-19 to 2019-20, the turnover rate across our high-need schools was 16% compared to only 12% in our lower-need schools. More specifically, turnover rates are highest among our high-need middle schools where the teacher turnover rate was 20.3%, compared to only 11.8% in our lower-need middle schools. Our middle schools have an average certified instructional staff of 88

teachers, ranging from a low of 50 at our smallest middle school to a high of 131 certified staff members at our largest middle school. Recent studies suggest teacher turnover can cost suburban districts as much as \$11,000 **per teacher**, and even more in urban districts (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). According to the calculator provided by researchers at the Learning Policy Institute, the overall GCPS annual turnover rate of 15% (1,556 certified staff) translates to an **annual cost of \$17 million** (learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/the-cost-of-teacher-turnover). Learning to develop effective strategies to reduce turnover by even 10%-15% can provide annual cost savings that far exceed the amount of TSL funding requested. Teacher turnover is also found to negatively impact student achievement (e.g. Guin, 2004; Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2012). Our high-need schools, attended primarily by economically disadvantaged students, are experiencing the bulk of our district’s teacher turnover; negatively influencing achievement among our most vulnerable students. The table below provides an example of the substantial achievement gaps in our district from the 2019 End-of-Grade (gr 3-8) and End-of-Course (high school) assessments. It is imperative we address these gaps by giving our leaders the support and professional learning resources they need to identify potential teacher leaders who can help move teachers and students forward.

<i>*Four performance levels, ranging from 1 (Beginning Learner) to 4 (Distinguished). Levels 3 & 4 are considered “proficient”</i>	% of students scoring proficient or above in high-need schools	% of students scoring proficient or above in lower-need schools
English/Lang Arts gr.3-5	41.5%	65.3%
Math gr. 3-5	48.1%	70.6%
5th grade Science	46.6%	68.4%
English/Lang Arts gr.6-8	42.5%	64.7%
Math gr. 6-8	30.7%	47.3%
9th grade Language Arts	59.4%	78.1%

High school Geometry	68.6%	88.8%
High school Biology	42.4%	65.2%

Need #3: Need for individualized mentoring support for novice teachers in high-need schools

Overall, the teacher workforce is becoming less experienced. According to the 2017-18 National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), about 1 in 8 public school teachers (13.6%) have 0 to 3 years of experience (Taie & Goldring, 2020). By contrast, almost 1 in 5 (18.1%) of current GCPS teachers have 0-3 years of experience. Across our elementary, middle, and high schools, there are close to 11,000 GCPS teachers with an average of 12.8 years of experience, compared to a national average of 14 years of experience. There is a greater gap between GCPS’ high- and lower-need schools. Specifically, teachers in our high-need schools have an average of 11.2 years experience, whereas teachers in our lower-need schools average 14.2 years experience. There is also a large gap in the percentage of teachers who are novices, with 0 to 3 years experience. Specifically, there is a gap of more than 8 percentage points in the proportion of novices in our high-need schools, with 22% of the teachers in our high-need schools considered novices, compared to only 13.6% in our lower-need schools. Through this grant, we plan to pilot an expansion of our novice teacher mentoring program to include six schools located within one of three **Qualified Opportunity Zones** within our district. These include four elementary, one middle and one high school. This addresses **Competitive Preference Priority 1**, designed to support growth in schools located within economically depressed areas of our district. **(CPP1)** The schools, census tracts, enrollments, and proportions of novice teachers and economically disadvantaged students (for 19/20) are included in the table below.

School	Census tract (QOZ)	# of students	% economically disadvantaged	% novice teachers
Baldwin Elementary School	13135050319	1,027	87%	15%
Beaver Ridge Elementary Sch	13135050319	1,072	84%	28%
Norcross Elementary School	13135050319	880	86%	21%
Stripling Elementary School	13135050306	687	84%	22.4%
Summerour Middle School	13135050319	1,648	86%	23.2%
Paul Duke STEM Magnet High Sch	*	866	60%	24%

**Enrolls students residing in both of the QOZ's listed, but located in an adjacent census tract*

Currently, GCPS offers a program that provides one year of mentoring to new teachers by assigning a peer within their building to serve as the mentor. There is also an optional process that allows principals to select one “Lead Mentor” for their school, a teacher with 3+ years teaching experience and evidence of leadership capabilities. Currently, about half of our principals use this optional role. This lead mentor attends monthly training sessions with district staff and disseminates/coordinates training resources to others in his/her building serving as peer mentors. No release time is currently provided for either peer or lead mentors and no stipends are provided to peer mentors. This is not uncommon, as a multi-state study conducted by REL-Central showed “in most districts, mentoring is provided by full-time teachers without release time”, and like GCPS, mentoring typically ends or declines after the first year of teaching. This study also found that “across all districts, lack of funding and lack of time” [for mentors to devote to their novice teachers] were “most commonly identified as the barriers to implementing adequate mentoring programs” (DeCesare, Workman & McClelland, 2016, p.7). According to a teacher exit survey, administered each May to all teachers leaving GCPS, recent data shows that among novice teachers leaving our district, 28.6% said they had “a mentor from same grade or subject” but it

was “not effective” and 38.7% of exiting novices said they had “a mentor from a different grade or subject” but reported it was “not effective”. We want to address this need by developing and piloting a more intensive mentoring model for novice teachers.

(A2) The extent to which the proposed project will integrate with or build on similar or related efforts to improve relevant outcomes, using existing funding streams.

GCPS has continued to assess and refine its HCMS and PBCS as part of its overarching management philosophy and district’s theory of action. The vision and mission are rooted in the commitment to providing a world-class education that meets the needs of each student through the use of funding streams such as: General (local) Funds, federal Title I, Title IIA, Title III, and various private grant funds. The adopted FY2020 budget illustrates the district’s significant investment in teaching and learning, as evidenced by the fact that 71% of the General Fund budget is targeted for instructional services. However, our state education agency recently informed districts of a 14% funding decrease for the FY2021 budget. Student achievement and the teaching and learning process are the central focus of the budget. This project requests funds for training and development, as well as some additional personnel to build on these efforts.

Fiscal Year 2020 (July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020) Adopted Budget Summary

Funds Comprising the Total Budget	FY2020 (in Millions)	FY2019 (in Millions)	Percent Change
<i>General Fund</i> represents 77.4% of the total budget. 71% of the General Fund budget is targeted for instructional services.	\$1,794.9	\$1,730.7	3.7%
<i>Special Revenue Fund</i> accounts for federal categorical grants such as Title I, Title II, Title IV-A, Title VI-B , and secondary vocational grants.	\$96.3	\$101.1	(4.7%)
<i>Capital Projects Fund</i> includes state capital outlay grants, the tax proceeds and expenses funded by the special local option sales tax (E-SPLOST) approved by voters since 2015.	\$141.9	\$178.0	(20.3%)

<i>Debt Service Fund</i> represents the budgeted principal and interest payments for outstanding debt.	\$177.2	\$140.1	26.5%
<i>Enterprise Fund</i> is a self-sustaining fund that contains the budget for the cafeteria operations for the school district.	\$96.6	\$97.4	(0.8%)
<i>Internal Service Fund</i> represents the operations of the school district’s workers’ compensation/risk management fund, employee short term disability program, and the in-house print shop.	\$12.2	\$11.9	2.5%
Total Budget	\$ 2,319.1	\$2,259.2	2.7%

This means using our financial and human resources to ensure our core business of teaching and learning is built on a rigorous curriculum, high-quality instruction and authentic assessments, providing a safe and secure learning environment, and governing the district fairly and openly, seeking the engagement of the many stakeholders we serve. Nonetheless, we continue to contend with the challenges school systems face across the country - recruiting and retaining highly qualified and effective teachers and leaders to improve student performance, especially in our high-needs schools. The COVID 19 pandemic has placed additional pressure and strain on school districts to ensure that schools have the adequate resources - human and financial - needed to return to school in the fall and address additional gaps especially as we support the social-emotional needs of our students.

The importance of effective leadership as a driver for change is embedded in GCPS’ Quality-Plus Leadership Academy (QPLA) and the leadership pipeline. For the past several years, GCPS has utilized local funding sources and Title IIA to support the salaries of the Office of Leadership Development whose main purpose is serving our leaders, through a non-evaluative role that enhances leader learning and practice. Of these leaders, all six have graduate degrees and decades of educational leadership experience (resumes in Appendix B), and five are former

principals. Collectively, they are responsible for pre-service leader training, induction support and mentoring, professional learning sessions held throughout the school year, and designing our annual “Summer Leadership Conference”, held each June for the past 43 years, to provide professional learning to all of our school and district leaders. In 2012, GCPS was among six larger urban school districts awarded \$12 million from the Wallace Foundation to improve and strengthen the leadership pipeline, especially principal preparation, selection and support. As a result of the participation in the Wallace initiative, we were able to create a “dashboard”, used as our Leader Tracking System to provide real-time data on the characteristics and qualifications of our leaders, as well as those in our pipeline, and the schools they serve.

The Performance-Based Teacher Compensation System (PBTCS) augments our overall HCMS through the use of local funds to reward teachers who meet expectations on their performance evaluations and provides financial awards to top-performing teachers at the district and school levels based, in part, on demonstrated improvement in student academic achievement. (AP1) GCPS demonstrated commitment to this endeavor by dedicating a portion of our FY2020 budget to providing just over **\$12 million in bonuses to 3,144 teachers in December of 2019**, based on their performance during the 2018/19 school year. While we temporarily suspended the PBTCS for the 2019/20 school year due to the impact of COVID-19 on our achievement measures, we plan to continue this focus in the 2020/21 school year, using local funding sources.

(A3) The extent to which the proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students.

This TSL grant will allow GCPS to expand and re-design many of the supports provided by our district, while also allowing us to study the impacts of our efforts on teachers in terms of retention, mobility, job satisfaction and performance. While this grant will largely support the work of the Office of Leadership Development, it will have a positive effect on many additional

components of the comprehensive support provided to all of our teachers and leaders, ultimately leading to improvements in the achievement of our students. The collaboration among these departments and divisions are critical to developing the necessary support teachers and leaders need to be effective. The learning opportunities we deliver will be ongoing and differentiated, providing targeted support and opportunities for feedback to participants. (AP1)

Department	Programs
Leadership Development (LD)	Support to pre- and in-service leaders in our schools and district office.
School Improvement and Operations (SIO)	Support school improvement and academic support through the supervision and evaluation of school principals. Also includes our student mentoring program, discipline office, and health services.
Human Resources and Talent Management (HRTM)	Oversees the recruitment and retention of our employees, and partners with Georgia State University to implement a full-year teacher residency program for pre-service teachers in critical shortage areas such as STEM and teaching students with disabilities. Administers teacher exit surveys each year, and tracks data on teacher turnover and retention.
Curriculum & Instruction (C&I)	Houses the Staff Development Department, responsible for new teacher orientation, mentoring, support for alternatively certified teachers (e.g. nontraditional preparation) and pedagogy-focused professional learning for teachers. C&I also houses our Instructional Development and Support department responsible for providing curricular support to schools in the form of district instructional coaches in all core content areas as well as content-focused professional learning opportunities for teachers and leaders.

The table below outlines, in more depth, the components of our comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards.

Type of support	Department responsible	Brief description and target audience
Aspiring Leader Program (ALP)	Leadership Development	Provides training, in cohorts for a half-year period (i.e. 60 hrs total). Helps to bridge the gap between theory and practice for teachers aspiring to be assistant principals, which includes a residency.

Gwinnett County Public Schools - Teacher and Leader Support program

Aspiring Principal Program (APP)	Leadership Development	Yearlong instructional program, which includes a residency. Led by the CEO/Superintendent and members of the district’s senior leadership team, focused on leader performance standards, core knowledge of the major functions in the school district, and other skills needed to positively impact students, teachers, and communities.
Principal & Assistant Principal Learning Opportunities (PLO/APLO)	Leadership Development	Held monthly, leaders are actively engaged in collaboration and meaningful conversation about best practices and takeaways for immediate application.
Mentoring/coaching	Leadership Development	For 1st and 2nd-year principals and 1st-year asst principals to support their transition into new roles. Individualized support through one-on-one meetings, small-group support sessions, and just-in-time training on essential leadership topics.
Leader tracking system-LTS (i.e. dashboard)	Leadership Development	Provides real-time data related to leader demographics, ongoing training, and leader impact on student achievement, school climate, hiring practices, and capacity building of others. This system is also used to track numbers and characteristics of those aspiring leaders in our pipeline. GCPS’ LTS has been highlighted by Policy Studies Associates (2017).
New teacher orientation and mentoring	Staff Development (C&I)	4-day new teacher orientation for teachers new to the district, augmented by site-based mentoring for each teacher new to the district, or new to their school.
Coaching endorsement	Staff Development (C&I)	Training program delivered by district leaders to teachers wishing to add an endorsement to their teaching certificate. Focus is on teacher leadership and providing feedback and support to fellow teachers, to build their effectiveness.
Instructional Specialists- (Literacy & Math) serving lower-performing schools	Instructional Support Department (C&I)	GCPS employs 13 Literacy specialists and 17 Math specialists who focus their work on lower performing schools by spending 1-4 days/wk at each school (depending on need) working with teachers in collaborative planning and lesson modeling.
Summer Leadership Conference	Leadership Development	3-day event held each June, since 1977. Keynote speakers and breakout sessions provide learning experiences on diverse topics. Attended by 977 GCPS leaders in 2019.
Teachers as Leaders	Staff Development	Train 40-60 teachers per year, selected through an application process, to develop their leadership skills in

		the classroom and with fellow teachers
Teach Gwinnett - certification program for teachers w/out education degrees	Staff Development (C&I)	State-approved provider for program that trains alternatively-certified teachers in critical shortage areas (SWD, CTE, STEM) to become fully-certified
Instructional coaches provided in all core content areas, as well as CTE	Instructional Support Department	Six district coaches (1-2 per content area) provide professional learning support for local schools related to district initiatives and interventions (e.g. career academies, leveled literacy, balanced literacy/numeracy, etc)
Performance-based teacher compensation system (PBTCS)	Leadership Development	Based primarily on measures of teacher effectiveness and student achievement. (API). Rewards highly effective teachers with a performance pay award. Establishing performance, not experience credit, as the criteria for movement on the salary scale.

As described in greater detail in Appendix D, PBTCS is based primarily on measures of teacher effectiveness and student achievement. (**API**) In August of 2017, GCPS transitioned all teachers and certified staff compensated on the district’s teacher salary schedule to a Performance-Based Salary Schedule. This salary schedule acknowledges performance- not time on the job- as the impetus for movement on the salary schedule. This system increases the district’s capacity to recruit and retain effective teachers by rewarding highly effective teachers with a performance pay award; and emphasizing professional development and preparation focused on teachers’ contributions to the learning process.

However, the increasing complexity of the work of school improvement coupled with the constant teacher and leader churn, especially in our high-need schools, has led to declining or slow progress. The comprehensive sources of support outlined above will be expanded through this TSL grant to include: more intensive and longer-term mentoring for novice leaders and teachers, along with re-designed opportunities for our leaders and teachers addressing the increasing need

for professional learning about building social-emotional competence and use of innovative instructional strategies, including remote/digital learning for students and teachers.

(A4) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.

Identified need (Section A1)	Ways project will address the need
Increased percentage of novice leaders, especially in high need schools, due to higher turnover and increased enrollment and diversity.	Through this project, we will extend the coaching and mentoring support for novice principals to span three years in order to increase leadership effectiveness and efficacy, thus reducing the potential turnover especially in our high-need schools. This project will also provide extensive training for the district leaders responsible for providing this support, building their capacity to design the most effective learning experiences for our leaders.
Disparities in the level of teacher engagement and performance gains between high-need and lower-need schools, with high-need schools showing lower levels of teacher engagement and student achievement.	GCPS' Leadership Development (LD) Department will partner with nationally recognized organizations such as NASSP, Learning Forward, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and the New York City Leadership Academy to design new professional learning for our leaders focused on building a positive, equitable school climate and culture, helping their teachers feel supported and competent delivering high-quality instruction, while improving the classroom environment across our schools.
Higher levels of turnover among novice teachers in high-need schools.	Pilot an expansion of our new teacher mentoring program. Novice teachers in six high-need schools will receive face-to-face mentoring and coaching provided by our teacher mentors, at least weekly. These mentors will be dedicated to supporting novices, and will all be highly experienced teachers, with extensive content knowledge used to inform the personalized coaching.

The TSL grant will support GCPS' ongoing improvement efforts to refine and extend the training and mentoring/coaching support for our novice leaders in our high-need schools, thus improving teaching quality, retention, and student performance. This project will provide an opportunity to develop richer professional learning experiences for our leaders that will, in turn, improve their school's climate and culture, ultimately reducing teacher turnover. As Grisson

(2011) states, “*principal effectiveness is associated with greater teacher satisfaction and a lower probability that the teacher leaves the school within a year. Moreover, the positive impacts of principal effectiveness on these teacher outcomes are even greater in disadvantaged schools.*”

Through this TSL-funded *Teacher and Leader Support Program*, we will be able to provide targeted professional development that addresses commonly seen challenges for teachers and leaders such as developing rigorous, engaging lessons, creating a positive school climate, & effectively communicating with all stakeholders, ultimately building teacher and leader capacity.

<p>Goal 1: Improve leader retention by 2% annually, by developing expanded mentoring for novice leaders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Objective 1.1 - Structure leader mentors’ role to support novice leaders on a semi-monthly basis during their first three years ● Objective 1.2 - Create a Networked Improvement Community (NIC) for novice leader support spanning the first three years on the job, including professional learning opportunities(PLO) specific to the needs of novice leaders, especially those serving high-need schools
<p>Goal 2: Improve teacher retention by 2% annually, through the pilot of expanded mentoring for novice teachers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Objective 2.1 - Increase the frequency of individualized, job-embedded support for novice teachers including mentoring, that involves demonstration lessons, co-teaching, co-lesson planning ● Objective 2.2 - Increase the number of PLO’s specific to the needs of novice teachers in high-need schools
<p>Goal 3: Partner with nationally-recognized professional organizations to design new PLO’s for both teachers and leaders, emphasizing key areas of need in GCPS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Objective 3.1 - Develop and deliver professional learning focused on equity-centered leadership practices and stakeholder/community engagement ● Objective 3.2 - Develop and deliver professional learning for teachers and leaders focused on building social, emotional and cultural competence ● Objective 3.3 - Increase opportunities for professional learning for teachers and leaders focused on use of innovative instructional strategies, including remote/digital learning ● Objective 3.4 - Increase opportunities for leaders to identify and train teacher leaders.

B. Project Design

(B1) Project demonstrates a rationale. (Logic Model-Appendix A) The activities are evidence-based; and GCPS has experience in developing and implementing such activities.

The logic model provided in Appendix A clearly specifies the activities, outputs and outcomes expected through this grant, detailing the underlying research and evaluation processes.

***Evidence-based support for novice leaders’ (Goal 1) One of the three main goals of this project is to design a model for novice principal support that can provide our leaders with tools necessary to advance the achievement of their students and increase the likelihood they become highly effective principals who remain in their role for years to come. With the support of the TSL grant, GCPS is launching an effort to better understand and address the experiences and challenges of novice principals especially as it relates to leading large, diverse schools. Levin and Bradley (2019) state that the principal characteristics most strongly associated with job stability include preparedness for the position and in-service programs. Additionally, they state that better-prepared principals, including those who have had real-life, hands-on experiences and receive mentoring/coaching support are less stressed and stay longer, even if they are leading high-need schools.

In a 2014 study exploring the impact of McREL’s Balanced Leadership Program on principal leadership, institutional climate, principal efficacy, staff turnover, and student achievement, researchers found a statistically significant positive impact on the principal’s sense of efficacy and the rate of principal and teacher turnover (Jacob et al., 2015). Appendix D includes a document showing the alignment between McREL’s leadership framework and our GCPS principal responsibilities. Helping our principals become more effective in their roles will lead to outcomes similar to the above study, which met WWC standards without reservations. Walstrom, Seashore Lewis and colleagues (2010) state that “*efficacy beliefs, according to Bandura’s theory (1997), ... determine how much effort people will expend and how long they will persist in the face*

of failure or difficulty. The stronger the feelings of efficacy, the longer the persistence” (p.128).

Their research also concludes that an emphasis on a principal’s sense of collective efficacy is a key to leadership influence on teaching and learning. When principals see themselves as working collaboratively toward clear, common goals with district, peer, teacher, and community support, there is a higher degree of confidence leading to increased effectiveness.

Professional development can yield great learning opportunities for principals, but without practice, application, and feedback from a mentor or coach, the professional development can be episodic or incoherent. Mentoring and coaching is a critical component of the on-going support, especially for novice principals. Bloom (2005) defines coaching as a formal relationship between the coach and coachee built around a set of standards, structures, and expectations that include providing feedback while challenging coachees to improve their performance. This grant will fund additional formal training that will equip the leader mentors with a blend of facilitative and instructional coaching skills. Bloom (2005) states that facilitative coaching supports novice principals in developing habits of mind and internal capacity, while instructional coaching uses consultative feedback and/or collaborative techniques to share expertise, advice, and resources. This coaching approach coupled with additional training and support through the New York City Leadership Academy’s (NYCLA) **Coaching for Equitable Practice** workshop will provide the tools and resources needed to build the capacity of staff in our Office of Leadership Development to best support our leaders. NYCLA’s recent research (2019) supports the benefits of coaching, especially beyond the typical one to two-year period. Novice principals who received leadership coaching for five years remained in their schools for more than twice the national average of principal tenure; improved the novice’s ability to lead school improvement by effectively supervising and supporting staff, distributing leadership, communicating effectively with

stakeholders, and leading with high levels of efficacy and resilience; and created a personal, professional relationship that led to a network of leadership improving the performance of the collective (Drucker, Grossman, & Nagler, 2018). Through the TSL grant, GCPS will extend the mentoring and professional learning support to a minimum of three years in order to increase and improve principal efficacy, retention, and effectiveness.

Through this grant, GCPS seeks support for training, with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advance of Teaching, to develop the capacity of our Leadership Development department to create and sustain a networked improvement community (NIC) among our novice leaders, preparing them to become facilitators of improvement. Russell et al. (2017) define NIC's as "highly structured, intentionally formed collaborations among education professionals, researchers, and designers that aim to address a high leverage practical problem". Through this project, the NIC will include our novice principals, internal and external research partners, and members of our Leadership Development department who are the designers of professional learning for our school leaders. Additionally, pre-service training for leaders will be grounded in the national leadership standards and the practices and dispositions are supported and aligned with the NASSP Building Ranks™ Skill Dimensions (See Appendix D). These skill dimensions will guide initial coaching support early in the pipeline and after leaders are placed in their new roles.

***Evidence supporting novice teacher mentoring - pilot in six QOZ schools (CPPI) - (Goal 2)

A second goal of this project is to pilot an expansion of our new teacher mentoring program. Novice teachers (with 0-3 years of experience) in six high-need schools will receive face-to-face mentoring and coaching provided by teacher mentors, at least weekly. These mentors will all be highly experienced teachers, with extensive content knowledge they will use to inform the personalized coaching. Two will serve novice teachers in the four elementary schools

(estimated to include 43 novice teachers in FY21) and one will serve novice teachers in the middle school (estimated to include 26 novice teachers in FY21), and one will serve teachers in the high school (estimated to include 12 novice teachers in FY21). **Effective mentors are “often viewed as instructional coaches and are models of best instructional practices themselves”** (Moir, 2009). We will hire teacher mentors who: understand the specific context in which they are working (Valeni & Vogrinc, 2007); have both the content and pedagogical knowledge and competency to mentor; know how to actively construct and deconstruct knowledge; and exhibit skills in communication, collaboration and evaluation. A large, cluster-randomized control trial funded by IES found that districts operating a two-year comprehensive support model for novice teachers, very similar to the pilot proposed here, observed statistically significant, positive outcomes in terms of student achievement. (Glazerman, et al., 2010) This study **meets the What Works Clearinghouse evidence standards without reservations**. Further, an RCT conducted by Parkinson, et al. (2015) found that when teachers were provided intensive professional development for 1.5 years, utilizing classroom-based mentoring and individualized coaching, teachers’ instructional practice improved significantly. This study also met **the What Works Clearinghouse evidence standards without reservations**. Research has shown that high-quality induction programs can increase teacher effectiveness and improve student learning when implemented well (Glazerman, et al., 2010; Ingersoll and Strong, 2011). Additionally, Villar and Strong (2007) found that induction programs could return substantial financial benefits well beyond their costs by reducing costs of recruiting, hiring, and orienting new teachers to the district and school culture. Another study examined variations in mentor-based support models and found positive benefits for students whose teachers received mentoring from a dedicated mentor (as opposed to a fellow classroom teacher serving in a mentoring capacity in addition to their teaching

responsibilities) for a period of two years. (Fletcher, Strong, & Villar, 2008) Teacher mentors in QOZ schools (**CPP1**) will attend professional learning events along with their novice teachers, and spend at least 3-4 hours per month in teachers' classrooms, providing guidance on lesson planning, co-teaching, and enactment of high-quality instructional strategies. In addition, they will be providing online curricular resources, reviewing videos of their teachers and providing specific feedback on teachers' enactment of effective practices. This provides an individualized experience for each teacher, so they are receiving support that is specific to the grade level and content area(s) to which they are assigned for that school year. This project will go beyond compliance-driven support for their novice teachers to provide **problem-driven support (e.g. activities linked to specific challenges encountered in the classroom) and eventually people-driven support (e.g. emphasizes both teacher and mentor growth)** increasing the likelihood teachers become highly effective and remain in the classroom for years to come. (SREB, 2018) While dedicated mentors will be piloted in a subset of high-need schools, we will also provide a stipend and five days of release time to Lead Mentors who participate in training from other schools. (AP2)

Further, we ensure a clear, cohesive design for mentoring by framing our process around the research-based High Quality Mentoring and Instructional Coaching Practices of New Teacher Center (NTC). This model of high-quality mentoring and instructional coaching practices includes: 1) careful selection of mentors based on qualities of an effective mentor/coach; 2) ongoing professional development and support for mentors; 3) committed time for interactions with teachers; 4) multi-year mentoring; 5) intensive and specific guidance and support that moves teaching practices and student learning forward.

*** Research supporting additional key areas for professional learning (Goal 3)- According to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (Bryk, 2018), five general features

characterize continuous quality improvement organizations: 1) They invest in developing all of their people. 2) They recognize improvement as a regular part of the work that people do and appropriate resources for it to happen. 3) **They prepare their principals and teacher leaders as coaches and facilitators of improvement.** 4) Everyone in the organization is an improver, and everyone in any form of leadership role is a coach of improvement. 5) Those demonstrating expertise in the work of improvement become prime candidates for promotion up through the system over time. A third goal of this project is to redesign the professional learning opportunities for our leaders and teachers, providing more emphasis on building capacity in three key areas: utilizing equity-centered practices; building the social, emotional and cultural competence of both adults and the students they serve; and supporting innovative instructional strategies, including remote/digital learning through increased use of tools for student learning beyond the classroom.

There is strong evidence that school principals influence school achievement primarily through changes in the school climate linked to supportive teaching and learning environments, shared and distributive leadership, monitoring the quality of teaching and leading (Allensworth & Hart, 2018). Darling-Hammond (2010) explains that *“A stable teaching force that becomes increasingly effective reduces the high costs of attrition while also reducing the costs of student failure”* (p. 27). Through this project, we intend to expand our support for teachers in high-need schools along with building our leaders’ capacity to recognize and support potential teacher leaders. According to Ladd (2009), *“Teachers are more satisfied and plan to stay longer in schools that have a positive work context, independent of the school’s student demographic characteristics. Furthermore, ...the specific elements of the work environment that matter the most to teachers are ...the social conditions—the school’s culture, the principal’s leadership, and relationships among colleagues—that [predict] teachers’ job satisfaction.”* This project focuses

on building our leaders' capacity to improve the school's culture. According to the *Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning* (CASEL), implementation of SEL activities was associated with more positive outcomes, such as better attendance and reduced discipline incidents. (Osher, et al. 2016) Their research also showed "district leadership plays a large role in driving SEL" and "principals across the U.S. understand how fundamental social and emotional learning (SEL) is to the development of students and their success in and out of school, but they **need more guidance, training, and support** to make effective school-wide implementation a reality". (DePaoli, et al., p.2) In addition to participating in CASEL's annual conference, we will use CASEL's district SEL planning and implementation rubric, along with their *Guide to Schoolwide SEL* to guide the design of our professional learning for our leaders in this area.

In addition to providing opportunities for leaders to attend Learning Forward's annual conference, this grant will provide an opportunity for one administrator from each level (elementary, middle and high) serving our high-need schools located within a QOZ to participate in the Learning Forward Academy, which is Learning Forward's flagship deep learning experience. (CPPI) These three administrators will spend 2 ½ years working with expert coaches and practitioners from around the world as they construct knowledge, improve their practice, create better learning conditions for colleagues, and improve results for students. The academy includes 12 face-to-face, team-based learning days for in-depth instruction and to build relationships and foster community; attendance at two of Learning Forward's annual conferences; and ongoing virtual support from an experienced coach to extend learning and for continuous process improvement. The participation by administrators serving these QOZ schools will also serve to augment the pilot of the new teacher mentoring program (described above) in each of these high-need schools. In addition, we will provide monetary incentives for teacher leaders who

complete the training required to add a coaching endorsement to their certificate, enhancing their ability to support and develop their colleagues in high-need schools. We also plan to increase the number of instructional specialists to support core content development and delivery in lowest-performing schools and our 74 high-need schools.

(B2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress towards achieving intended outcomes.

We plan to track the TSL-established performance measures for this program as follows:

a & b	Percentage of educators in all schools who earned performance-based compensation, overall and disaggregated by high- and lower-need schools
c	Gap between the retention rate of teachers receiving performance-based compensation and the average retention rate of teachers in high-need schools
d & e	Use of our HCMS, in both high- and lower-need schools alike, to inform the following: hiring; placement; retention; and professional development
f	100% of our performance-based compensation paid to educators will be with State, local, or other non-TSL resources
g & h	Percentage of teachers and principals who receive the highest effectiveness rating, overall and disaggregated by high- and lower-need schools

We will also be measuring the goals and objectives specified earlier, in Section A4. Thus, we have designed a process for evaluating each of the three components of this grant, allowing us to utilize our established continuous quality improvement (CQI) process to ensure we are making progress toward achieving our intended outcomes. Key grant personnel will also receive training in improvement science during years 1-2, facilitated by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. (CF) This training will build the capacity of both the Office of Research and Evaluation and the Office of Leadership Development to evaluate progress, contextualize the findings so we are better able to design meaningful learning experiences for our teachers and leaders. In partnership with our GCPS Office of Research & Evaluation, we can

“build on evaluation techniques...to craft a coherent and integrated framework that can guide future evaluative efforts for continuous improvement networks”. (Sherer, et al., 2020, p.29) We also plan to partner with faculty from the University of Georgia and a Research Practice Partner (RPP) to conduct an analytic audit of our leader preparation tools to provide valuable formative feedback (see letter of support in Appendix C). As Sherer, et al. (2020) point out, “analytic partners with training in qualitative research methods can assist members of a network in formulating questions for users and analyzing the data collected.” (p.31) Through this grant, the analytic audit, will enable us to refine the selection process, program content and delivery of our pre-service and in-service training programs. Recommendations from the study will be implemented as part of the redesign of subsequent cohorts of pre-service leaders & professional learning for in-service leaders. The table below shows the other instruments used to evaluate our progress toward achieving intended outcomes, with related objectives noted in parentheses.

Data source	Frequency of data collection	Purpose
Q12 survey for teachers	Annually	12-item survey that measures teachers’ job satisfaction. Aggregated to the school level and included in the leader dashboard as an indicator of teacher engagement. (Obj. 1.1, 2.2, 3.4)
Parent perception survey	Annually	Administered in multiple languages, aggregated to the school level, used as one component of principal’s evaluation to determine stakeholder satisfaction. (Obj.3.1, 3.2 & 3.3)
Teacher perception survey	Annually	Administered to all teachers in all schools measuring factors such as instructional support, facilities, safety, etc. Aggregated to the school level, used as one component of principal’s evaluation measuring teacher satisfaction. (Obj. 1.1, 3.1, &3.3)
Student Engagement Instrument (SEI)	Semi-annually	Survey administered to students in grades 4-12 in the fall & spring. Data included in student information system, and aggregated to school level, used as one component

		of principal’s evaluation, as a measure of student perceptions of school climate. (Obj 3.2)
HCMS data on leader and teacher turnover	Annually	Counts of teachers returning from year to year, along with characteristics of exiting teachers. Teacher mobility (within district transfers requested v. granted) tracked to determine trends in mobility based on leader performance (Obj. 2.2 & 3.3)
Standards Assessment Inventory	Annually	Survey developed by <i>Learning Forward</i> , administered annually to measure alignment of our professional learning with their national Standards for Professional Learning . The SAI helps GCPS assess the impact of professional learning and identifies areas of focus for professional learning, and ensures we maximize the return on PD investments.(Obj3&4)
Student achievement data	Quarterly & Annually	District assessments in all core content areas and grade level are administered each 9 weeks to measure progress toward mastery of grade-level content. Annual state assessment data also included in leader dashboard. (Obj. 2.1, 2.2 & 3.3)
Professional learning feedback	Monthly	Leadership Development collects survey data on a monthly basis measuring leader perceptions of the professional learning opportunities, identifying areas for growth. (Obj. 3.1, 3.2 & 3.3)
Focus groups	Semi-annually	Qualitative feedback will be collected from teachers and leaders participating in the professional learning supported through this grant, at least semi-annually, to provide performance feedback that will allow periodic revisions that allow us to maximize effectiveness of both the content and the delivery approach.
Agenda, logs, training artifacts	Monthly	Agendas from professional learning sessions, coupled with logs of mentoring activities and sample of resources developed will be reviewed monthly to measure progress toward meeting our intended outcomes. (all objectives)

Additional quasi-experimental evaluation of the novice teacher mentoring pilot (Goal 2)- We will measure domains specified in the *Evidence review protocol for Teacher Excellence – Version 4.0* published by the What Works Clearinghouse in May 2019. A quasi-experimental design will allow us to measure the effects of a 2-year intensive novice teacher mentoring program on teachers and

students. As detailed above, we will use this grant to pilot a more intensive novice teacher mentoring program with six schools located with a QOZ. (CPP1) We will select matched comparison schools from elsewhere in our district that are similar to our pilot schools in terms of: level (elem, middle or high); the percentage of economically disadvantaged students; student demographics; and number of novice teachers. A two-level hierarchical model will be used to measure the effects of the intervention. In the interest of increasing precision in our estimates of program impact on student outcomes, we will include teacher-level and student-level covariates in the model. Subgroups of interest for teachers (Level 2 covariates) include whether they are in treatment or control schools, and years of experience. Subgroups of interest for students (Level 1 covariates) will include gender and economic disadvantage status along with individual-level test scores lagged one year. This quasi-experimental study will include outcome measures in the WWC review protocol:

Eligible student outcome domains	-Student achievement – core content areas
Eligible teacher outcome domains	-Instructional practice – after two years of support -Teacher retention at their school -Teacher retention in the district

Student achievement measures will include scale scores from the state ESSA assessments in math and ELA, administered annually by GaDOE. The high stakes nature of these tests will ensure their validity and reliability as well as the integrity and consistency of administration across multiple sites. Prior year same-subject score will be used as a covariate, since ELA and Math tests are administered annually in grades 3-8. In order to allow aggregation across grade levels, scale scores will be converted to z-scores using the state-level mean and standard deviation provided by the GaDOE assessment office. Outcomes for high school students will use 8th grade same-subject z-score as a covariate. For the dichotomous teacher outcome variables focused on teacher retention, logistic regression will

be used to determine whether participating in the piloted novice teacher mentoring makes teachers significantly more likely to remain in their schools and in the district.

(C) The management plan enables GCPS to achieve the objectives of the project on time and within budget

Clearly defined responsibilities (Resumes for key personnel listed below in Appendix B)

Highly effective coordination of the project is integral to the success of its implementation; and understanding the significance of the outcomes of this project for leaders, teachers, and students is paramount to the overall success of the school community. Cross-divisional expertise and support will ensure fidelity of implementation of this project. Members of the divisions of School Improvement and Operations, Curriculum and Instruction, and Human Resources and Talent Management will collaborate with Leadership Development to ensure a cohesive support model that builds the collective leadership capacity within our schools. The collective team will engage in periodic discussion, planning, implementation, and evaluation as part of a continuous quality improvement cycle to meet the goals and objectives of the project. The grant will be managed by Dr. Jeff Mathews, project director, along with the following key project personnel that will meet bi-monthly as the core cross-divisional TSL project management team:

Leadership Development and Research/Evaluation – Project Management Team (PMT)	
Dr. Jeff Mathews, Assistant Superintendent for Leadership Development	TSL Project Director; Member of the Superintendent’s Executive Management Council and Cabinet where he helps to foster and implement the district’s strategic direction. Graduate of APP, principal of two high schools, and served on a number of local and state committees including the state commission to create a statewide leadership academy. Will have the overall responsibility for developing and implementing all project activities according to the prescribed timelines, directing and supervising project staff, ensuring funds are expended appropriately, and providing status reports at the bi-monthly at the PMT meetings. Will ensure all project activities are progressing according to the prescribed management plan.
Dr. Kendra Washington-Bass,	Worked in Leadership Development for 12 years and supported the development of APP, ALP, and leader mentoring program. Will lead

<p>Executive Director of Leadership Development</p>	<p>activities related to facilitating the planning and implementation of leader mentoring and on-going support through the NPSP. Will assist the Project Director in managing the project’s timelines according to the prescribed management plan.</p>
<p>Dr. Michelle Farmer Eliana Pereyra Dr. Chandra Walker, Directors of Leadership Development</p>	<p>Each has extensive experience leading schools and/or improving professional learning and human resources strategies. Will support the overall project by facilitating, monitoring, assessing, and refining the project components. Will work with internal and external partners to refine the support for novice leaders, including pre-service and on-going training support.</p>
<p>James Nebel, Jr., Executive Director of Continuous Quality Improvement.</p>	<p>Cross-divisional support of improvement efforts will enable multiple stakeholders to support the project and ensure its alignment to the district’s strategic direction. He will participate in training with the Carnegie Foundation, leading GCPS efforts to deepen our continuous improvement processes.</p>
<p>Dr. Melinda Mollette, Coordinator of Program Evaluation (will transition to role as TSL grant coordinator)</p>	<p>Assist in the monitoring and assessment of the overall project. Participate in training on improvement science and collaborate with the LD team to implement/document strategies within the project delivery. Analyze data related to novice teacher mentoring pilot, provide annual evaluation reports to TSL project team. Assist with preparation of semi-annual reports for U.S. DOE, tracking important implementation metrics.</p>
<p>Dr. Shanna Ricketts, Director of Data Analytics for PBTCS</p>	<p>When GCPS began implementation of the PBTCS, Dr. Ricketts was hired to support the data analytics associated with this addition to our HCMS, focusing on the impact it has on teacher retention and mobility. She will continue to support the work of this grant through data analysis related to teacher and student outcomes.</p>
<p>Leilani Esmond, Director of Staff Development</p>	<p>The Office of Staff Development, housed within our C&I division, is responsible for providing professional learning to GCPS teachers, via programs that include new teacher orientation, mentoring, training for a coaching endorsement or a teacher leadership role, and PL on specific topics identified as areas of need.</p>

Partner liaisons

Any time a new strategy or project is initiated, it is effective practice to build in periodic assessments and evaluations to determine the effectiveness of project implementation, and ultimately if it is meeting intended outcomes. Formative and summative evaluations of progress coupled with education partner organizations will refine and strengthen the support for teachers

and leaders. GCPS intends to work with the following partner organizations to assess, evaluate, and support teacher and leader development (letters of support Appendix C):

Organization*	Description
University of Georgia	Research partner to provide an audit of pre-service content and delivery as well as graduate outcomes to inform PD for novice leaders.
Learning Forward	Participation in the mentor and coaching academy for teacher leaders to improve practices for novice teachers.
NASSP	Participation in the Building Ranks Diagnostic to establish baseline leadership skills for coaching and development.
NYCLA	Participation in Coaching for Equitable Practice workshop to improve leadership practices for novice principals.

* The specific organizations may change based on capacity, funding, and the impact from COVID 19.

Timelines and milestones for accomplishing project tasks

Key - Leadership Development (LD), School Improvement and Operations (SIO), Human Resources and Talent Management (HRTM), Curriculum and Instructional Support (C&I), Research and Evaluation (R&E), and Project Management Team (PMT-above)

Goal 1: Improve leader retention by developing expanded mentoring and coaching for novice leaders					
KEY MILESTONES	Person(s) Responsible	Milestone Year			
		1	2	3	4-5
Conduct focus groups with novice leaders to identify gaps in the on-going support and training they are receiving.	LD and R&E	X		X	
Clearly define/refine the role and expectations of leader mentors. Identify any gaps in training and support needed to increase effectiveness especially of leaders in high-needs schools.	LD and SIO	X		X	
Select a core project team to review, revise, and recommend enhancements to mentoring and ongoing support based on data collected from initial focus group feedback.	LD and R&E	X			
Partner with local and/or national organizations (eg. NYCLA, Learning Forward, NASSP, Carnegie, etc) to support refinement of the mentoring program to align with national standards.	LD	X		X	
Refine leadership support and participate in on-going mentoring/coaching training to align to the support needed to increase leader effectiveness especially in high-need schools.	LD	X	X	X	X

Gwinnett County Public Schools - Teacher and Leader Support program

Training with Carnegie Foundation in supporting networked improvement science and facilitating improvement teams	LD and R&E	X	X		
Development and refinement of new mentoring/coaching resources and tools to use with novice leaders.	LD	X	X	X	X
Members of the PMT (listed above) meet quarterly to discuss trends and strategies for continued leader support.	PMT	X	X	X	X
Launch of the three-year Novice Principal Support Program (NPSP) using the NIC as a strategy to improve effectiveness and outcomes.	PMT	X	X		
Using LTS, maintain a monthly log of mentoring/coaching in order to track novice principal support progress.	LD	X	X	X	X
Conduct annual assessment of mentoring/coaching and support programs - surveys, mentoring log reviews, focus groups, etc.	LD and R&E	X	X	X	X
Contract with a third-party consultant (eg. NYCLA, Learning Forward, NASSP, Carnegie, etc.) to assess the leader mentor/coaching program and recommend refinements.	LD, SIO, and R&E			X	
Goal 2: Improve teacher retention through pilot of expanded mentoring for novice teachers in 6 high-need schools					
KEY MILESTONES	Person(s) Responsible	Milestone Year			
		1	2	3	4-5
Kickoff meeting with principals in the six pilot schools, and district leaders to review grant goals and objectives, and scope of mentoring support provided to novice teachers in high-need schools.	Cross-divisional PMT	X			
Define the teacher mentor role and align the job description with national standards and practices.	LD, C&I, and HRTM	X			
Recruitment and selection of teacher mentors.	HRTM and C&I	X			
Execute MOUs with partner organizations (Learning Forward, CASEL, etc.) to train and support teacher mentors and assess the fidelity of the pilot teacher mentoring program.	LD and C&I	X	X	X	X
Engage teacher leaders in robust mentoring training to support designated pilot schools.	C&I and LD	X	X	X	X
Create a Building Support Team consisting of the principal, teacher, teacher mentor, and district supervisor.	C&I and LD	X	X	X	X
Assign teacher mentors to a caseload of teachers coupled with the building Support Team to support, supervise, and evaluate work.	C&I	X	X	X	X

Gwinnett County Public Schools - Teacher and Leader Support program

Engage in monthly training and feedback sessions to improve the effectiveness of the mentor and teacher(s) he or she supports.	C&I	X	X	X	X
Collect annual data on teacher turnover, and effectiveness of the teacher mentoring program to inform refinement and scalability.	PMT, R&E	X	X	X	X
Conduct evaluation of the novice teacher mentoring pilot that meets What Works Clearinghouse evidence standards.	R&E			X	X
Goal 3: Partner with nationally-recognized professional organizations to design new PLO's for both teachers and leaders, emphasizing key areas of need in GCPS					
KEY MILESTONES	Person(s) Responsible	Milestone Year			
		1	2	3	4-5
Examine trend data related to the strengths and gaps of students, teachers, and leaders. Discern any differences in teacher and leader training and on-going support, especially in high-need schools.	Cross-divisional PMT	X	X		
Conduct focus groups with principals to determine needs and relevant issues facing schools such as equity, SEL, and instructional leadership.	Cross-divisional PMT	X		X	
Execute MOU with partner organizations (Carnegie, NYCLA, Learning Forward, NASSP, CASEL, etc.) to outline the scope of work for support in developing content and training resources for pre-determined professional learning needs aligned with adult learning theory practices.	LD	X		X	X
Engage a design team, a cross-functional team of stakeholders, who will provide input and feedback related to the content, delivery, and outcomes.	Cross-divisional PMT	X	X	X	X
Training of internal and/or external facilitators on content delivery.	LD	X	X		
Identify teacher leaders in high-need schools to receive training leading to a Coaching endorsement.	Principals		X	X	X
Expand instructional support model for high-need schools that provides content expertise in the form of collaborative planning and lesson demonstrations at least weekly.	C&I		X	X	X
Regularly scheduled feedback to refine subsequent learning and mentoring/coaching sessions.	LD	X	X	X	X
Administer teacher exit survey and conduct qualitative analysis of comments along with quantitative analysis of responses. Provide comprehensive summary to senior district leaders.	HRTM and R&E	X	X	X	X
Administer annual assessment of training content, delivery, and outcomes to refine the experience and effectiveness of the	LD and R&E	X	X	X	X

professional learning. (<i>Standards Assessment Inventory</i> , developed by Learning Forward)					
Administer Student Engagement Instrument to students in grades 4-12, semi-annually to measure changes in school culture.	R&E	X	X	X	X

Resources

(D1) The project will result in systemic change and improvements to the structure of our support for teachers and leaders.

Multi-year **Strategic Initiatives and Priorities (SI&P)** are identified by the Board of Education and CEO/Superintendent, Mr. Wilbanks. The purpose is to ensure that appropriate attention, resources, and management oversight are provided throughout the district. The following three initiatives are included in the focus of the SI&P approved in January of this year, covering 2020 to 2024 and are particularly relevant to this project: (1) Leadership development; (2) Compensation and Evaluation Systems; (3) Transforming teaching and learning and teacher support. The project objectives, along with the personnel and training components funded through this TSL grant are directly aligned to this document and specific verbiage for each initiative are provided below: (full document provided in Appendix D)

Leadership Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review and revise the curriculum for the programs operating within the Quality-Plus Leader Academy (QPLA). The QPLA is evidence that GCPS recognizes that everything rises and falls on the quality of leadership performance at all levels in the district. To ensure its continued effectiveness, each program’s curriculum must be reviewed periodically so potential improvements can be identified and implemented. ● Enhance other leadership development activities in the district to maximize the effectiveness of current leaders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Design and implement a program of targeted professional development for new principals that addresses commonly seen challenges for novice leaders overall, as well as perceived deficiencies within individual leaders. The program would include four sessions a year for first-year principals, followed by three sessions a year for second-year principals, and concluding with two sessions in the third year of the new principal’s tenure. (Objectives 1.1 and 1.2) ● Deliver ongoing training and support for novice assistant principals. (Objective 1.2) ● Provide additional training and support for leaders on how to build and sustain effective

teams. (Objective 3.1)

- Orchestrate ongoing leadership development opportunities for current leaders that focus on system-wide initiatives. (Objectives 3.1 & 3.2)

Compensation and Evaluation Systems

- The new system began in August 2017 with the implementation of phase one, a Performance-Based Teacher Salary Schedule, and became fully operational in the 2018-2019 school year with the institution of phase two, the Performance-Based Awards, distributed for the first time in December 2019. (detailed metrics in Appendix D)
- GCPS now moves to the next phase in which it will **develop and implement a process for evaluating the impact and success of the Performance-Based Teacher Compensation System**. The District Management Group will continue to assist in the development and review of such an evaluation process.

Transforming Teaching and Learning and Teacher Support

- Recognize and incentivize successful cluster-level or multi-school innovation through the “Superintendent’s Innovation & Transformation Award,” presented to clusters or group of schools that bring the initiatives and priorities to life for students and educators, making a greater impact on students as they progress through school K-12.
- Continue providing district-wide support for effective implementation of the newly refreshed, research-based Quality-Plus Teaching Strategies (QPTS) by providing focused staff development to teachers on how to select the best strategy and effectively implement it (Objective 2.2)
- **Improve the district’s ongoing processes to ensure effective induction of new teachers by providing guidance and support for administrators who lead and mentor teachers** (Objective 2.1)
- Increase the instructional value of Principal Learning Opportunities by incorporating a focus on strategies for leading effective instructional planning and delivery, and recognizing effective instructional practices. (Objective 3.3)
- Improve teacher capacity for identifying and delivering appropriate academic and behavior interventions by implementing the refreshed Plan/Do/Check/Act-CQI instructional cycle. (Objective 2.1, 3.4)

GCPS is deeply committed to developing structures for improvement that last well beyond the life of this grant. GCPS is funding a majority of the personnel, and fully funding the PBCS. This grant is only requesting funding for training, research and development costs associated with building the capacity of our district leaders, partnering with external, national organizations for training and

research, and piloting expanded forms of support so we can study the cost-effectiveness of different approaches. This grant will lay the foundation for long-term improvements in our district.

(D2) The project will build GCPS' capacity to improve and expand services that address the needs of the target population

Each year, GCPS hosts a summer leadership conference for all principals, assistant principals and district leaders. This 3-day event provides keynote speakers, team-building activities and dozens of breakout sessions on a variety of topics to support leader learning. This demonstrates our commitment to continued growth for our leaders. In addition, our capacity for continued improvement is evident through our process for **Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)** which is a management philosophy adopted by GCPS in 1994. The CQI mindset, coupled with its tools and processes, is used to engage district and local school leaders in improvement strategies to improve the quality of our processes, people, and the services provided to our internal and external stakeholders. Leaders who embrace the core concepts of CQI recognize that schools and districts must move toward building the capacity to function as a relentless learning organization and embrace the systematic development of each stakeholder's capability to rapidly learn as their primary strategy for achieving the district's vision (Dixon and Palmer, 2020). In fact, our strategic initiatives (described above) strive to "equip leaders with knowledge and tools for renewing the concept of GCPS as a 'practicing Quality organization' within their areas of influence so as to meet the district's goal of applying CQI strategies and principles as the way the organization does business." Through an extended period of analysis, we have identified the primary needs that will be addressed through this grant, which are leader turnover, teacher turnover, and re-designed professional development support for our teachers and leaders. We will address these needs through a series of steps that include extensive training for members of our Leadership Development department in evidence-based practices for supporting leaders and teachers. In

addition, this project will deepen the partnership between GCPS Offices of Leadership Development (LD) and Research and Evaluation so these district leaders can work to design improved learning opportunities while also carefully evaluating the implementation and outcomes associated with their use. Training with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (CF) will be funded through this grant, allowing opportunities to strengthen our capacity for guiding networked improvement teams, and the use of improvement science in practice. We will also participate in training that LD will redeliver to school leaders, focused on facilitating improvement teams at the school-level. In addition, we plan contract with external evaluation partners in years 3-5 to study the outcomes associated with implementation of our various forms of support. The recommendations derived from the work will help to determine the feasibility, sustainability, and scalability of the teacher mentor program and the novice principal support program beyond the grant period. GCPS will contract with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching to provide a 2-day workshop for up to 30 of our district and school leaders in Spring 2023 and Spring 2025, focused on improvement science. This will build our capacity to take the data we have compiled from the initial years of the TSL grant and consider how we can scale-up the evidence-based programs and resources we are developing with the TSL support. Carnegie Foundation has specific expertise and significant credibility in this area. Helping GCPS contextualize our findings and examine sources of possible variability in outcomes between high-need schools will help our leaders plan expansion efforts and scale-up in a manner that is more likely to be successful.

All of this training and research support would not be possible without these funds but will allow us to improve and expand the services currently provided to our teachers and leaders. In addition, we have budgeted for some additional personnel to facilitate the expansion of our professional learning support for novice teachers, who comprise about 1/5 of our teaching workforce. Expanding the services we are able to provide to teachers should reduce turnover while

also building their capacity to deliver more effective instruction that ultimately improves student achievement. With the recent developments in our society related to COVID-19, there is uncertainty as to the economic toll this will take on the district and our ability to continue to provide services, as well as the emotional toll it will take on our teachers and students. It is more important than ever to equip teachers and leaders with the skills to address students' academic needs along with their social and emotional needs to support their well-rounded development.

(D3) GCPS has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, including a sustainable multi-year operating plan and broad support from stakeholders

GCPS' ongoing commitment to leadership and effective governance are outlined in the district's vision, mission, and strategic goals. Underlying this commitment is the Board of Educations' core beliefs and commitments and the district's Strategic Direction 2020-2030. The Strategic Direction keeps the district focused on teaching and learning as its core business, while ensuring equitable access to educational opportunities for all students, especially in our high-need schools. Included in Appendix D is the 2-page **GCPS Strategic Direction for 2020-2030**, approved by our Board in January of 2020. We are printing copies this summer for every employee and family so that we can provide a copy to all in the fall. We also will be building a page on the website for this information. To prepare for the next decade, in 2019 GCPS launched a community-wide campaign to invite input on updating the Strategic Priorities. Many stakeholders were involved in crafting what is now called the *Strategic Direction for 2020-2030*. Two series of 12 focus groups each gathered the thoughts and ideas of parents, GCPS employees, students, and community members, and an online survey brought in thousands of responses. Like its predecessor, the *Strategic Direction for 2020-2030* consists of 10 components or "drivers" that guide our day-to-day work. Several components from the previous version remain, but stakeholders also felt GCPS should focus on some new ones moving forward. The plan documents

seven strategic goals which include: “Recruit, employ, develop and retain a workforce that achieves the mission and goals of the organization”. This strategic direction also states a goal that all GCPS employees will: “respect cultural differences and build on the rich diversity found within our student population and workforce” and “communicate in effective and meaningful ways that foster positive relationships”. It also states GCPS schools will: “promote a culturally responsive classroom”, “cultivate a culture of leadership that recognizes and builds the capacity of leaders at all levels” and “cultivate respect, empathy and kindness throughout the learning community”. These goals are directly aligned to the professional learning opportunities we are using TSL funds to support - such as the NYCLA Equity-Centered practices, Learning Forward Academies, and designing professional learning for our leaders and teachers on how to build social and emotional competence of staff and students.

Each spring, GCPS principals are asked to complete a survey providing feedback related to support they receive from all of the central office divisions and departments in our district. The spring 2020 survey asked principals about our systems for determining effectiveness (e.g. PBTCS) and 99% of respondents said this system met or exceeded expectations. For example, one principal shared *“thank you for giving our teachers an opportunity to earn a financial award this year. As a principal, I was so happy to see our top teachers awarded...”*. As stated in an article published in the District Management Journal in 2019 (included in Appendix D), GCPS dedicated two years to researching and designing the new compensation model, “placing priority on research, planning, stakeholder input, and communication” and includes a clear and concise theory of action. (Kim, Wirenusz, & Cleveland, 2019) This article points out that GCPS “leveraged the district’s robust internal communications capabilities, which they had built over many years”. (p.31) Specifically, stakeholder input was sought from principals, assistant principals and the Teacher Advisory

Council, which includes a representative from each school. During the 2015/16 school year, the Steering Committee invested in broadening and deepening engagement with staff through multiple focus groups and an online survey.” The 35 focus groups included over 245 participants comprising randomly selected classroom teachers, special education teachers, ELL teachers,...counselors, media specialists, coaches, and other staff from across the district”. (p.34)

The survey was distributed to 12,259 staff and received a 70% response rate. GCPS used all of this feedback to guide their design of the PBCS and ensure that it was easily understood by all stakeholders. In addition, after the distribution of the first performance-based awards in December of 2019, GCPS leaders continued to seek feedback from staff and community members which led to the approval of some minor changes that will apply to the next round of awards. In February of 2020, an update was provided to all staff and posted to the public website (see Appendix D) detailing PBCS metrics and revisions for 2020/21. Specifically, the district said a minimum of 20% of teachers at each school would receive awards, estimated distribution in December 2021.

All of these publicly-available documents demonstrate GCPS commitment to transparency and fairness in the design of our overall HCMS, and how this system is used to inform major decisions related to the professional growth and development of our teachers and leaders. A significant financial commitment of over \$12 million annually, coupled with in-kind contributions of over \$1 million in numerous district leader positions will ensure the success of this project, resulting in long-term improvements in teaching and learning throughout GCPS. As our CEO/Superintendent, J. Alvin Wilbanks has stated “Nothing is more important for student success than having quality teachers in the classroom, and our work to improve our compensation system will help ensure Gwinnett can attract and retain the teachers it needs”. (Kim, et al., p.28, full text provided in Appendix D)