

PROJECT IGNITE
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSOLUTE PRIORITY 1: Human Capital Management System (HCMS) or Performance Based Compensation Systems (PBCS)	1
ABSOLUTE PRIORITY 2: High-Need Schools	3
COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY 1: QOZs	3
COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY 2: New Potential Grantees	4
I. NEED FOR PROJECT	5
(1) addressing gaps and weaknesses	5
(2) building on related efforts	9
(3) comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning	9
(4) addressing needs of the target population	12
II. QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN	18
(1) demonstrates a rationale	18
(2) methods of evaluation	26
III. QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT PLAN	32
IV. ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES	36
(1) likelihood project will result in system change	36
(2) likelihood of building local capacity to address target population	38
(3) resources to operate beyond length of grant	39

ABSOLUTE PRIORITY 1: *Human Capital Management Systems (HCMS) or Performance Based Compensation Systems (PBCS)*

Insight Education Group (Applicant/Fiscal Agent) proposes Project IGNITE, **I**nnovation **G**enerated by **N**etworked **I**mprovement **T**eams of **E**ducators, a *Teacher and School Leader Incentive Program* grant that creates a Networked Improvement Community (NIC) or “cross-school collaboration” of 4 school districts with 49 schools across 4 states. This project proposes a NIC in high-need schools in the School District of Palm Beach County (West Palm Beach, FL), Jackson Public Schools (Jackson, MS), the Syracuse City School District (Syracuse, NY) and the Greenville Independent School District (Greenville, TX). A NIC is a collaborative partnership based on the principles of improvement science and allows organizations to learn from different implementations of new ideas across contexts (Proger et al., 2017). The Project IGNITE NIC provides principals, school leaders, teacher leaders, and teachers with a wider network of peers for impactful, job-specific collaboration and provides systemic improvements to each district’s Human Capital Management Systems (HCMS) and Performance-Based Compensation Systems (PBCS). By focusing on the greatest school-related influencers on student achievement: recruitment, development, support and retention of teachers, teacher leaders, and principals within each district’s HCMS, the project seeks to elevate teaching and learning in every participating school and close the achievement gap between high- and low-performing students. All of this informs the Theory of Action and related activities for Project IGNITE. Our project objectives are clearly aligned to the Theory of Action: one - improve student achievement; two - increase teacher effectiveness; three - increase school leader effectiveness; four - evaluate each project activity against student achievement and cost; five - create sustainable systems of constant improvement for each of the previous four objectives.

Project IGNITE Theory of Action		
If districts:	Project IGNITE Related Structures and Activities	Expected Outcomes
See their human capital improvement efforts as part of a broader system that includes cross-functional dependencies.	Please see <i>Figure 2: Project IGNITE System of Supports</i> on page 10	Enhanced cross-functional operations in districts
Use an interconnected set of research-based approaches to improving human capital.	Strategic planning, recruitment and retention (equity focus), Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs), Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), Coaching	-Recruit/retain highly effective teachers -Increased educator effectiveness
Relentlessly evaluate the success of each improvement effort as well as the effects each effort has on other parts of the district.	Data dashboards for strategic planning, recruitment/retention, ILTs, PLCs. Virtual coaching platform.	-Improved data-driven decision-making -Established culture of routinely recalibrating and re-evaluating
Recognize that similar human capital improvement challenges exist in other districts.	Networked Improvement Community: -National conference (NELW) where NIC members learn from each other. -Multi-district IGNITE Council that considers policy implications across organizations. -Educator Exchange that harnesses the collective wisdom of districts, HBCUs, and MSIs to produce more teachers and leaders of color	-Continuation of project activities -Rapid, sustained scaling of effective practices
Operate as part of a Networked Improvement Community with other districts to learn faster and improve more efficiently.	-Virtual coaching platform to reduce cost, codify best practices, create a virtual library and share across the NIC and beyond.	
Then districts will maximize results that can be scaled within their organization and across other organizations leading to sustained improvement over time in the entire field.		

Table 1: Project IGNITE Theory of Action

ABSOLUTE PRIORITY 2: *High-Need Schools*

Project IGNITE’s proposed activities are concentrated on teachers and school leaders serving in high-need schools. The high-need schools participating in our project have disproportionately high percentages of economically disadvantaged students. All 49 schools served in the project meet the TSL criteria of a high-need school (at least 50% free or reduced priced lunch). The average free or reduced priced lunch (FRPL) rate across the Project IGNITE schools is 88 percent. Additional school data is provided in the table in Need For Project (4).

COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY I: (1) *Census tract numbers of QOZs*

Of the 49 schools participating in our project, 39 are located within Qualified Opportunity Zones (QOZ), as detailed with QOZ Census Tract IDs in the school data table on page 14 [Need for Project (4)].

COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY I: (2) *Qualified Opportunity Zones (QOZ).*

Nearly all project activities will take place within Qualified Opportunity Zones (QOZs), as all but 10 schools included in our proposal overlap with a QOZ. However, the few schools not directly within a QOZ do enroll students who live within a QOZ. Because our consortium of schools creates a large Networked Improvement Community (NIC) across multiple school districts and four states, services will be delivered in **28 distinct QOZs**.

Project IGNITE will support the ultimate goal of using QOZs to spur economic activity and create jobs in economically distressed communities in three distinct ways:

1. **Bring structures and funding for over 500 jobs** to 28 different QOZs in 4 states through targeted investment in recruitment activities and monetary incentives for qualified teachers and leaders.

2. **Reduce turnover** by retaining teachers and leaders through PBCS, recruitment and retention bonuses, stipends, and career ladders. Based on recent turnover rates and the average cost of teacher turnover (Learning Policy Institute, 2017) an estimated **\$5,361,000 annually** and a staggering **\$16,083,000 over the 3 years** of this project will **be saved and funneled back into the 28 QOZs**.
3. Serve as an **engine to produce more qualified workers** for the local communities by improving student achievement. Schools directly impact the skills of the workforce, which is directly related to economic growth of a state (Hanushek, 2016). By focusing resources and project activities in schools located in **QOZs**, our project will play a key role in driving economic growth, development, and job creation in these distressed communities. Additional details of the specific services provided to teachers and school leaders is included in **Quality of Project Design (1)**.

COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY II: *Applications from New Potential Grantees.*

None of the school district LEAs in the Project IGNITE consortium have ever received a Teacher and School Leader Incentive Program (TSL) award either individually or through membership in a group application. Three of the school districts (the School District of Palm Beach County, Jackson Public Schools, and Greenville ISD) have never received a Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant in accordance with 34 CFR 75.127-75.129. One school district, the Syracuse City School District, representing 14% of the schools in this project, was a subgrantee in a TIF grant awarded to the New York State Department of Education in 2010. This consortium of **new potential grantees** will benefit from the implementation of the proposed aligned and synergistic levers to improve teacher and school leader effectiveness.

I. NEED FOR PROJECT: (1) *Addressing gaps and weaknesses*

Project IGNITE builds upon the participating districts’ current Human Capital Management Systems (HCMS) and Performance-Based Compensation Systems (PBCS) to address their weaknesses and create a systemic approach that addresses how teachers are provided feedback and professional development, recognized, given opportunities to lead and advance, and given resources to help them succeed (AP1). We will address the gaps and weaknesses of our partner districts through improvement strategies in the following areas: the HCMS, recruitment and retention, teacher and principal professional development and support, teacher and principal evaluation, and teacher and principal performance pay and incentives.

Need: Human Capital Management System	
<p><u>Gap:</u> Overall, the districts’ HCMS lack consistency, alignment, and transparency. Evaluators are not calibrated and trained to identify effective teaching consistently. Evaluation and professional development also do not closely align with one another. Project IGNITE districts are not helping teachers in their systems understand specifically how to improve or even that they have room to improve at all as evidenced by the high percentage of teachers rated effective or highly effective in all districts - 83.3%.</p>	<p><u>Strategy:</u> Project IGNITE creates a robust HCMS that addresses how teachers are provided feedback and PD, recognized, given opportunities to lead and advance, and given resources to help them succeed.</p>
Need: Recruitment & Retention	
<p><u>Gap:</u> All districts are struggling to recruit and retain effective teachers in high need schools.</p>	<p><u>Strategy:</u> Recruiting highly effective and diverse teachers and school leaders is a key component of</p>

<p>Several districts cite challenges filling hard-to-staff subject areas, like math and special education, and do not have large candidate pools of certified teachers. HR and Offices of Recruitment lead recruitment and retention efforts and typically utilize online job postings. The 10 participating schools from Jackson Public Schools had an average teacher turnover rate of 31.8% in 2019 - a number that has increased over the past 3 years. Research shows that the majority of effective candidates are hired by May 1 (Levin & Quinn, 2003) – for the 2018-2019 school year, the participating schools in SDPBC had only 46% of their hiring complete by May 1.</p>	<p>Project IGNITE. Each district will create year-round, multi-stakeholder, multi-channel recruitment and retention systems and will offer recruitment and retention bonuses.</p>
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Need: Teacher and Principal PD/Support

<p><u>Gap:</u> Professional development and support for teachers is inconsistent (in type, frequency and alignment to teaching expectations) and not job-embedded, leading to high turnover as teachers are not given the support needed to be successful. Greenville ISD’s participating schools have a teacher turnover rate of 39.7%.</p> <p><u>Gap:</u> While all districts provide some form of professional development to principals, most are district-wide sessions that are not tailored to individual principals. Greenville ISD’s participating schools had an average principal tenure of 1.5 years. None of the participating schools districts derive principal PD from clear needs that emerge in principal or teacher evaluations.</p>	<p><u>Strategy:</u> Teachers in Project IGNITE schools will have extensive, job-embedded PD opportunities. A coherent system of professional learning will be created that utilizes Instructional Leadership Teams, the STEP PLC model, and on-going coaching.</p> <p><u>Strategy:</u> School leaders will receive both individual executive coaching and cohort-based experience facilitated by a Principal Coach and through participation in Leadership Academies for Principals, Assistant Principals, and Aspiring Leaders. PD will be more closely aligned to teacher effectiveness priorities and principal evaluation systems than what is currently available in each district.</p>
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Need: Teacher and Principal Evaluation	
<p><u>Gap:</u> All districts have a valid evaluation system that incorporates student achievement. However, there is a disconnect between teacher evaluation and student achievement. For example, in the School District of Palm Beach County, 99% of teachers were rated as effective or highly effective while student proficiency is 44% in math and 35% in ELA. In the Syracuse City School District, 98% of teachers were rated as effective or highly effective while student proficiency is 17% in math and 17% in ELA.</p> <p><u>Gap:</u> Principal evaluations are aligned to the state requirements in each district, but they lack depth and consistent alignment to authentic tasks.</p>	<p><u>Strategy:</u> While each district has a valid evaluation system, Project IGNITE’s focus will be on calibrating evaluators to ensure inter-rater reliability for lesson analysis and instructional coaching. Our online platform will simplify observer calibration training which observers will take quarterly.</p> <p><u>Strategy:</u> Project IGNITE creates a more robust principal and assistant principal evaluation system that incorporates authentic observation of ILT facilitation and instructional coaching, student achievement, and other local measures determined by each district’s IGNITE Council.</p>
Need: Teacher and Principal Performance Pay/Incentive	
<p><u>Gap:</u> None of the districts tie performance-based pay to student achievement or teacher/principal performance.</p>	<p><u>Strategy:</u> Project IGNITE schools will use a combination of salary stipends for demonstration and lead teachers in addition to recruitment and retention bonuses for new teachers.</p>

Table 2: Identified Needs, Gaps, and Project IGNITE Strategies

A Systems-Based Approach to Addressing the Need – The complexity of sustainable improvement in schools and districts can only occur by viewing each need through the lens of the broader system, understanding the dependencies across the system that relate to each need,

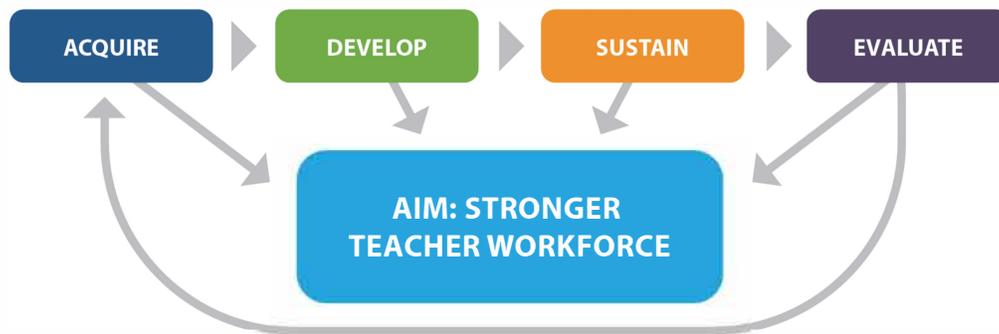


Figure 1: Teacher Human Capital Framework (adapted from Myung et al., 2013)

and addressing both the need and the dependencies simultaneously. We will employ a systemic human capital framework to our NIC that represents the core functions of an effective human capital management system: **Acquire**: Get the right teachers in the right positions on time; **Develop**: Support professional growth in schools; **Sustain**: Nurture, reward, and challenge high-performing teachers; and **Evaluate**: Inform evidence-based personnel decisions (Myung et al., 2013).

The funding through TSL for Project IGNITE will provide a catalyst for an aligned and systemic evidence-based plan to improve teacher and school leader quality and increase student achievement. Insight has extensive experience building upon and improving multiple districts’ HCMS that result in positive outcomes for educator effectiveness (AP1). Project IGNITE uses the strong foundation of the Empowering Educators to Excel (E3) project, a 2017 Funded TSL Grant, that created a multi-state Networked Improvement Community (NIC) across 4 states with 47 schools based on three key levers to improve student achievement. Project IGNITE will build on the successes of the E3 grant and is poised to make an even greater impact on the 4 new districts and 49 new participating schools, as Insight has developed and refined the proposed interventions to make the project even more efficient and effective (CPP 2).

NEED FOR PROJECT: (2) *Building on related efforts*

Each partner district will bring together different funding streams in order to integrate district and local priorities with the goals and processes of Project IGNITE. The following illustrates the similarities and differences between the districts' HCMS funding approaches: School District of Palm Beach County (local, state, Title I, IIA), Jackson Public Schools (local, state, Title I and Title II, Kellogg Foundation), Greenville ISD (Title I, Teacher Incentive Allotment [HB 3]), and the Syracuse City School District (Title I, IIA). The systemic, macro-micro level strategies implemented through Project IGNITE will utilize existing funding streams including current local, state, and federal dollars to support all participating districts (AP1).

Project IGNITE will build upon Insight's work successfully leading a NIC of 47 schools, in 5 districts and 4 states through our 2017 E3 TSL grant. We have the programmatic and fiscal expertise and have developed and refined HCMS and PBCS systems and resources that have resulted in increased student achievement. The following resources from Insight's 2017 E3 TSL grant will be leveraged in Project IGNITE: Data dashboards to produce analytics and improve efficacy of Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs), Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), strategic planning, recruitment and retention; Playbooks for launching, supporting and evaluating ILTs, PLCs, strategic planning, recruitment and retention, and coaching; the ADVANCE Platform for asynchronous coaching, PD, and calibration of evaluation.

NEED FOR PROJECT: (3) *Comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning*

Our project takes a comprehensive approach and utilizes aligned and evidence-based levers across the consortium of schools with the clear focus on improving teaching and learning by leveraging current human capital (AP1). This alignment makes the Project IGNITE spectrum of supports act as a system which enhances the likelihood of sustainability and impact over time.

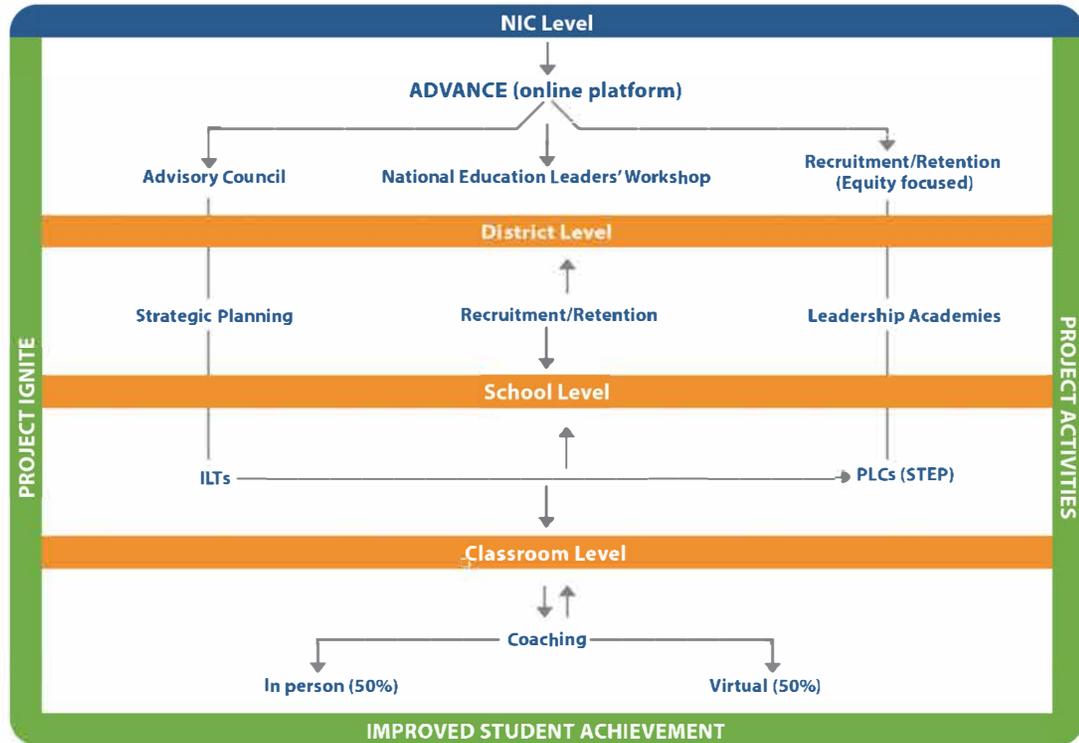


Figure 2: Project IGNITE System of Supports

This systems-level aligned approach begins at the **Networked Improvement Community** level within Project IGNITE.

NIC Level Components

1. **Online Platform.** The ADVANCE online platform connects all educators virtually across the NIC. It provides data management and analysis and will allow schools to store all HCMS data in one place. Professional development activities—ILT meetings, PLC meetings, and synchronous and asynchronous instructional coaching—are videoed and uploaded into the system to provide feedback for teacher leaders and as an additional quality control mechanism.
2. **The National Education Leaders' Workshop (NELW).** Bringing leaders from each district and school across the network together once per year is necessary to establish or deepen connections for educators. Serving as an annual convening, NELW, in combination with the ADVANCE

platform, serves as the central nervous system of the project in that every component being implemented in member districts results in data and feedback that are funneled through NELW and ADVANCE which then process and analyze this information and send a response back out to the districts to inform enhanced actions related to each of the Project IGNITE interventions.

3. *IGNITE Council.* The Superintendent and a board member from each member district serve on the Council. It is critical to have a board member engaged in the project for sustainability, as the board controls district funding. The IGNITE Council also considers policy implications for their organizations to inform district-level strategic planning teams and resource allocation.
4. *Recruitment and Retention.* Member districts will convene at an annual Educator Exchange of partners, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), higher education leaders, and students to connect and build partnerships. This also gives districts the opportunity to hear directly from prospective teachers of color.

District Level Components

1. *Strategic Planning.* Each district develops a new strategic plan or updates an existing one. This process will inform school improvement goals that will be carried out by ILTs at each campus. In this way, the strategic planning process informs and is aligned to school level ILTs.
2. *Recruitment and Retention.* Project IGNITE supports districts in building year-long, multi-stakeholder, and equity-driven recruitment systems to attract and retain effective teachers to their high-need schools (AP 2). Each district creates its own, context-specific resources to recruit teachers but leverages a collective 12-month process at the NIC level.
3. *Leadership Academies.* School administrators participate in leadership academies that focus on the successful implementation of improvement processes. These conditions support and are informed by problems of practice surfaced during teacher PLCs and ILTs.

School Level Components

1. *Instructional Leadership Teams*. ILTs work to operationalize school wide improvement goals which are driven by and aligned to district level goals articulated in the strategic plan. ILTs also identify guard rails for problems of practice for teacher led PLCs.
2. *Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)*. As ILTs surface challenges to achieving school wide goals, PLCs will examine the root cause of those challenges related to classroom instruction and identify solutions that can be scaled across the school (and ultimately the NIC).

Classroom Level Components

1. *Coaching*. Project IGNITE will employ in-person and virtual coaching proven to increase efficacy (Kraft et al., 2018). A random sample of teachers will be selected from Project IGNITE districts to receive virtual coaching. The rest will receive in-person coaching. Through the evaluation the Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) will attempt to answer the following research question: *Can virtual coaching match the level of efficacy of in-person coaching and reduce cost?*

NEED FOR PROJECT: (4) *Addressing needs of the target population*

Our project will implement all activities within high needs schools (> 50% FRPL) that overlap with 28 QOZs (AP 2, CPP 1) in the School District of Palm Beach County (SDPBC), Jackson Public Schools, the Syracuse City School District, and Greenville ISD. Our project has a specific focus on teacher and principal effectiveness as the levers to improve student outcomes, specifically for economically disadvantaged students who are largely minority, through a systemic focus on principal and teacher recruitment, development, support, and retention.

Identified Need: High Teacher Turnover Rates - Data from high-need districts show that the highest need schools often have the fewest effective teachers and highest rates of teacher

turnover. In fact, turnover rates are 70% higher for teachers in schools serving the largest concentrations of students of color (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). All schools in Project IGNITE serve 50% or more minority students with 36 of 49 schools serving 85% or more minority students (AP 2). Every district engaged in this project exceeds the national teacher turnover rate of 8% (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). While some districts are seeing better turnover rates than others, there is a lack of systems and scalability in all of the districts (AP1). *Project Elements Addressing Need:* 1) Systematic recruitment and retention systems, playbook, and data dashboard. 2) National Educator Exchange bringing together districts HBCUs and MSIs to increase pipeline and placement of teachers of color.

Identified Need: High Principal Turnover – 40% of the Project IGNITE schools had a new principal within the last year and principal effectiveness is the second greatest school related impact on student achievement growth (Seashore-Louis et al., 2010). *Project Elements Addressing Need:* 1) Leadership academies with job-embedded PD for current school leaders. 2) Aspiring leaders academy for future leaders of color. 3) ILT playbook, data dashboard and training to facilitate effective distributed leadership model.

Identified Need: Lack of Diverse Candidates - The Project IGNITE districts on average serve 88% minority students. However, only 51% of teachers in Project IGNITE districts are teachers of color. All districts face challenges recruiting high quality and diverse candidates into hard-to-staff subject areas and high needs schools. *Project Elements Addressing Need:* 1) Systematic recruitment and retention systems, playbook and data dashboard focused on teachers of color. 2) National Educator Exchange bringing together districts and HBCUs to increase pipeline and placement of teachers of color.

SCHOOL	Student Pop.	FRPL %	Minority %	'18-'19 State Math	'18-'19 State ELA	Teacher Turnover Rate 18-19	% Teachers of Color	# of Years Principal has been at School	QOZ Census Tract ID (CPP 1)
GREENVILLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT, TEXAS (10 SCHOOLS)									
Bowie Elementary School	637	67.8	59.2	71	67	36.6	16.8	2	Students live in QOZ
Carver Elementary	549	94.5	91.6	67	52	37.5	42.5	0	48231960800
Early College High School	21	88	67	100	95	N/A	18.2	1	Students live in QOZ
Greenville Alt. Ed. Program	28	86	82.1	N/A	N/A	75	31.6	0	48231960800
Greenville High School	1429	89.3	67.8	78	63	28.7	19.8	9	48231961300
Greenville Middle School	741	64.5	69.2	69	67	34.1	10	1	Students live in QOZ
KGJ STEM @ Crockett	204	70.9	54.9	82	80	50	0	0	Students live in QOZ
Lamar Elementary	581	67.2	49.2	73	74	32.5	7.8	1	Students live in QOZ
New Horizons High School	77	74	67.5	83	49	30.7	35.6	0	Students live in QOZ
Travis/6th Grade Center	625	83.5	72	68	49	24.3	23.1	1	Students live in QOZ
JACKSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, MISSISSIPPI (9 SCHOOLS)									
Barack Obama Magnet School	229	100	98.7	79.8	91.6	26.7	75	1	28049001600
Bates Elementary School	326	100	98.5	22.9	32.5	14.3	100	8	28049011001
Blackburn Middle School	358	100	100	24.4	17.2	36.4	96.9	1	28049011500

Brinkley Middle School	405	100	99.3	7.6	8.5	17.1	94.6	1	28049001100
Cardozo Middle School	409	100	99.3	6.6	11.4	31.3	96.6	2	28049011001
Galloway Elementary School	418	100	99.5	10.8	22.6	47.6	78.9	3	28049001100
Pecan Park Elementary School	410	100	99.8	33.5	35.6	30.8	65.2	15	28049002100
Provine High School	928	100	99.6	4.6	12.4	44.1	91.4	1	28049002100
Van Winkle Elementary School	329	100	97.9	14.9	23	37.5	81.3	2	28049010902
SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA (23 SCHOOLS)									
Barton Elementary School	1094	97.1	96.2	43	29	14	55	8	12099005102
Benoist Farms Elementary School	523	86.2	93.1	49	42	12	50	12	12099007833
Clifford O Taylor Kirklane Elementary	1248	87.5	94.7	52	42	12	38	4	12099004201
Crossroads Academy	54	92.6	94	3	0	6	71	12	12099008201
Dr. Mary Mcleod Bethune Elementary	625	91	96.5	52	34	10	83	6	12099001404
Galaxy Elementary School	655	89.8	95.7	55.2	44.9	10	43	4	12099006100
Hope-Centennial Elementary School	729	92.2	86	49.1	39.9	8	70	1	12099003102
John F. Kennedy Middle School	825	94.2	93.7	25.1	23.8	14	87	2	12099001404

K.E Cunningham/Canal Point Elementary	299	99	93.6	49	40.9	7	53	8	12099008001
Lincoln Elementary	440	88.2	93	61.8	28.6	9	76	4	12099001404
Northboro Elementary School	769	80.4	97.1	73.3	55.7	8	47	9	12099001700
Northmore Elementary School	634	91.8	95.6	50.6	37	5	64	6	12099001801
Pahokee Elementary School	435	96.3	99	47.2	36.8	14	86	9	12099008002
Pahokee Middle-Senior High	881	95.1	97.6	25.6	34.4	13	77	4	12099008002
Pine Grove Elementary	423	95	98	26.7	32.8	13	52	4	12099006801
Poinciana STEM Elementary Magnet School	516	69	82.4	66.5	65.1	13	27	4	12099006100
Riviera Beach Preparatory and Achievement Academy	157	77.1	98	4.6	9.5	17	74	2	12099001404
Rolling Green Elementary School	761	94.1	97.9	35.5	28.7	18	45	5.6	12099005701
Rosenwald Elementary School	336	95.8	99	53.4	29.6	10	96	1	12099008302
S.D. Spady Elementary School	601	59.1	70.2	68.1	58.7	7	28	7	12099006700
South Area Secondary Intensive Transition Program	55	83.6	90	21	12.5	0	57	5	12099005102
Village Academy-Arts/ SJ Kobacker Campus	791	92.9	100	35.2	36.2	9	62	5	12099006801

West Riviera Elementary School	594	93.6	97.3	56.6	37.1	8	91	1	12099001403
SYRACUSE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT, NEW YORK (7 SCHOOLS)									
Delaware Primary	584	86.1	88.1	7	8	10	16	5	Students live in QOZ
Frazer Pre-K-8 School	935	84.6	74.3	9	14	10	16	1	36067002101
PSLA @ Fowler	1034	82.8	77.7	52	44	10	16	1	Students live in QOZ
Roberts Pre-K-8 School	673	70.0	81	14	15	10	16	3	Students live in QOZ
Seymour Dual Language Academy	567	85.5	94.4	5	8	10	16	2	36067004000
STEAM @ Dr. King	476	86.1	97.1	*	*	10	16	1	36067005300
Syracuse STEM @ Blodgett	418	91.6	90.9	*	*	10	16	1	36067003000

*New schools in 2019-2020

Table 3: Participating Schools Data (All high-need schools)

II. QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN: (1) *Demonstrates a rationale*

As described in Need for Project (3), the purposeful alignment of treatments and supports throughout Project IGNITE is a critical aspect of our theory of action which ensures the **supports provided work synergistically as a system** rather than isolated silos of intervention. Isolated interventions often do not work because they are seen as “add ons” on top of an already taxed system and individuals (Harris & Chrispeels, 2006). **An aligned, systems-level approach creates a feedback loop up and down the system which improves districts’ ability to operate as the dynamic interconnected organizations they are.** Each **proposed activity** is outlined in the next section coupled with **research-based evidence** and **results from Insight’s prior experience developing and implementing these activities.**

Proposed Activity: Build a Networked Improvement Community (NIC) Our project seeks to build a “cross-school collaboration” or Networked Improvement Community (NIC) across four states and 49 schools. The community will provide all stakeholders with a broader network of peers for meaningful, job-specific collaboration, as well as systemic pathways to spread effective practices. **Evidence-based rationale:** Research has found that NICs provide an opportunity to build the capacity of educators and allows those improvements that have been sustained by schools through multiple changes in district leadership, labor unrest, low per-pupil expenditures, and other external factors, including high poverty districts (Pitcher et al., 2016). **Prior experience developing and implementing activity:** Including a heterogenous group of districts with complementary needs in the NIC was a key lesson learned from Insight’s 2017 E3 grant, as a totally homogenous group of districts with exactly the same challenges will not spur as much learning (LeMahieu, 2015). The participating districts are complementary in that, among many other synergies, SDPBC has comparatively low teacher turnover (10%), JPS has

high percentages of teachers of color (86%), Greenville has high student proficiency in math (77%), and SCSD has unique supports to leverage such as their involvement with the New York University Residency program which serves the most high-need schools. Our project will facilitate collaboration, sharing resources and expertise across districts to avoid replication of mistakes and accelerate improvement.

Proposed Activity: Build Upon and Improve Human Capital Management Systems (API) Project IGNITE builds upon the districts' existing systems to create a robust HCMS that addresses: Teacher Professional Development, Principal Professional Development, Teacher Evaluation, Principal Evaluation, Recruitment and Retention, Teacher and Principal Performance-Based Compensation, and a Career Ladder. **Evidence-based rationale:** A strong and data-driven HCMS with strong teaching talent can significantly boost teacher and school leader effectiveness in ways that dramatically improve instructional practice and student learning (Odden, 2011). **Prior experience developing and implementing activity:** At the start of Insight's 2017 E3 grant, each participating district had components of a HCMS, but they were not aligned. Within three years of the grant, common HCMS were in place across all five districts and 100% of the districts used educator evaluation systems to inform their human capital decisions.

Proposed Activity: Strategic Planning Our project will work with each district's key stakeholders, including the superintendent, school board, district leaders, and teachers, to create or update their strategic plans with priorities and goals aligned to Project IGNITE. The strategic planning work will happen early in the project and will be critical to integrating tools and resources from the project into the ongoing district priorities to ensure sustainability. **Evidence-based rationale:** According to Childress et al. (2007), leaders must develop a district wide

strategy for improving teaching and learning and then design and manage the entire organization in a coherent way that strengthens and supports the strategy. **Prior experience developing and implementing activity:** During our 2017 E3 project, we worked with each district to create or update their strategic plan aligned with the grant and a result, we are developing a Strategic Planning Dashboard for districts to track Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) internally and externally and publishing a playbook that systematizes the strategic planning process which we can utilize with Project IGNITE districts.

Proposed Activity: Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) ILTs will be established at all Project IGNITE schools and ILT members across the four districts will receive training for leading instructional improvement efforts, promoting cohesion among members, and learning the process for managing instructional improvement efforts in authentic situations. **Evidence-based rationale:** ILTs not only set the vision and goals, but as a cohesive group of leaders, they proactively, efficiently, and regularly work through issues that impede progress so that real student achievement and learning can happen (Wickman, 2011). **Prior experience developing and implementing activity:** All of Insight's E3 schools have operationalized the ILT process and meet weekly for at least an hour and once every 45 days for two hours. Insight developed an ILT dashboard to track and manage ILT implementation and efficacy and published a playbook to guide leaders through the process which Project IGNITE districts can also utilize.

Proposed Activity: Career Ladders (API) In order to provide additional leadership opportunities for teachers, Project IGNITE will implement a career ladder of **Classroom Teacher > Demonstration Teacher > Lead Teacher**. Though specific job responsibilities may vary, core responsibilities include demonstration teachers' classrooms serving as model classrooms and lead teachers observing, team teaching, coaching, facilitating STEP meetings,

and serving as a member of their school's ILT. The Project IGNITE career ladder has evolved through lessons learned from E3 and has replaced the Mentor Teacher with the Demonstration Teacher role to narrow the responsibilities most impactful to fellow teachers: serving as model classrooms. **Evidence-based rationale:** Stipends provided through the additional professional development responsibilities provide teachers with the option to remain at the school and in the classroom, while also being able to increase their salary and their role. Evidence has shown that many teachers want to see their performance or the addition of new and increased responsibilities dictate movement up a career ladder and salary structure (Odden, 2011; Johnson & Papay, 2010). **Prior experience developing and implementing activity:** During the first three years of the E3 project, 39 educators advanced through the career ladder in one of the five partner districts. Growth and transition of promoted staff members into their new leadership roles reinforced the importance of the districts' career ladder opportunities, and reflected the successful retention of educators.

Proposed Activity: Leadership Academies Based on evidence-based research, the Leadership Academy model is a customized professional development experience with specific course cadences tailored for aspiring leaders. In addition, districts will also establish Aspiring Leaders Academies specifically for educators of color which combines in-person, monthly training with specific follow-up to ensure traction and accountability. **Evidence-based rationale:** Though more than half of U.S. students are minorities, recent data shows that about 78% of principals are white (NCES, 2018). Having more diverse leaders is linked to positive school outcomes, including lower suspension rates and more students of color represented in gifted courses (Green, 2018; Grissom et al., 2015). A recent study also suggests that having a black principal increases the likelihood of hiring and retaining black teachers (Bartanen &

Grissom, 2019). **Prior experience developing and implementing activity:** A survey of 2019 Leadership Academy participants from E3 districts found that: 100% of administrators strongly agreed or agreed that Leadership Academies were aligned to district priorities and were relevant to their role, and 94% of administrators strongly agreed or agreed that they were supportive of their professional needs.

Proposed Activity: Teacher Leadership and Capacity Building Through the Supporting Teacher Effectiveness Project (STEP) The STEP framework, a systemic, data-driven professional learning community (PLC) structure, guides educators in identifying the bright spots, or assets, that can be leveraged and scaled toward greater improvement and replication. **Evidence-based rationale:** Developed in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, American Institutes for Research, and Kitamba, the STEP framework helps teachers solve problems through discovering, testing, and sharing better practices. While aligned to the overall tenets of Rick DuFour’s Professional Learning Community (PLC) model (DuFour, 1998), STEP applies principles of improvement science and adds a specific “asset-based” approach based on the theory of positive deviance that enables the school community to discover successful strategies from within and develop a plan to promote their adoption school-wide (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). **Prior experience developing and implementing activity:** External researchers visited eight partner schools within our E3 consortium to conduct an evaluation to better understand which STEP mechanisms are most effective in creating impact. The evaluation found that the use of student data helped teachers change elements of their practice: 74% of teachers reported that they have changed their instructional practice, and that their practice has improved. During E3 implementation, Insight published a STEP playbook that codified the best practices from STEP implementation to guide Project IGNITE districts.

Proposed Activity: Implement Job-Embedded, Instructional Coaching Project

IGNITE Coaches will engage in four key professional development activities with educators: modeling, observing, collaborative planning, and collaborative analysis. Not only will building level administrators provide feedback but the NIC will expand educators' networks and allow feedback from peers within the community as well. ADVANCE, Insight's online platform, will be the mechanism for synchronous (i.e. live, via video) or asynchronous (i.e. through comments) coaching. **Evidence-based rationale:** Recent research from a meta-analysis by Brown and Harvard indicates the most effective form of professional development to increase student achievement is one-on-one coaching (Kraft et al. 2016). **Prior experience developing and implementing activity:** During E3, Insight created a Coaching for Change playbook to codify best practices, which can assist Project IGNITE districts and educators in delivering effective coaching.

Proposed Activity: Teacher Recruitment: Project IGNITE will support districts in creating a year-round recruitment system to attract teachers to schools that need them most (AP 2). Each district will build a multi-channel, online, and in-person marketing campaign to attract new candidates. Recruitment bonuses will be allocated based on student enrollment, differentiated by hard to staff grades or subjects, allowing local flexibility. Teachers must commit to the school for four years and be rated as effective or higher in order to be eligible, thus linking recruitment to retention. **Evidence-based rationale:** According to a jobs report from the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), there are 389,000 fewer teachers in the K-12 workforce than are needed to keep up with a growing student population (Jacobson, 2018). Project IGNITE will support districts in recruiting teachers, and specifically teachers of color. **Prior experience developing and implementing activity:** Data from our E3 project show that we achieved

significant results from our recruitment and retention supports as noted previously, particularly with the increased numbers of teachers of color.

Proposed Activity: Support Educator Retention Retention is promoted as part of Project IGNITE’s comprehensive human capital plan and work with leaders. (AP1). **Evidence-based rationale:** Research shows that the single largest factor impacting teacher retention is the quality of the principal (Sanders & Rivers, 1996). By focusing project activities on coaching and on-going development for principals, our project is likely to increase teacher retention. Teachers also cite a lack of belonging and lack of connection as major reasons for leaving the profession (Teach Plus, 2019). Onboarding Teams will address this challenge in each school and serve as a bridge between recruitment and retention. **Prior experience developing and implementing activity:** Between the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years, the number of educators recruited across the five different E3 school districts went up 1% while the number of educators hired went down 36%. This shows that districts had more applicants for fewer positions, allowing districts to select higher-quality applicants.

Proposed Activity: Prioritize Equity To Permeate Every Aspect of Project IGNITE Project IGNITE will incorporate initiatives and processes that prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion, all with the intent of improving the academic achievement of students and eradicating the gaps that exist. Through the launch of a district-wide equity team in each district, these entities will develop or improve upon a district Equity Plan to guide district equity work in future years. An Educator Exchange, a centerpiece of our 2017 TSL E3 project, will continue in Project IGNITE. **Evidence-based rationale:** Research consistently finds that schools with disproportionate shares of minority children employ teachers with lower qualifications than schools with fewer minority students (Carroll et al., 2000). The least experienced teachers are

consistently and disproportionately concentrated in low income, high minority schools, yet evidence shows that “having three years of good teachers (85th percentile) in a row would overcome the average achievement deficit between low-income kids (those on free or reduced-price lunch) and others” (Hanushek, 2002; Hanushek & Rivkin, 2012). **Prior experience developing and implementing activity:** One E3 district tripled its percentage and another doubled its percentage of newly hired teachers of color. Third through eighth grade African-American students in every E3 district with available data are outperforming their white counterparts when compared to their peer-alike state averages in Language Arts and Math.

Proposed Activity: Create and Improve Upon Performance-Based Compensation

Systems (AP1) Project IGNITE will use district evaluation data for teachers and principals to inform key human capital management decisions across all schools (AP1). This data will be stored and made available to each educator on our online platform, providing transparency. Local stakeholders in each district will create metrics for effectiveness and the exact amounts of PBC outlined below:

Type	Metrics	Range
Administrator Stipend	Required: Student Achievement at a minimum of 35%;	\$5,000-\$10,000/year
Lead Teacher Stipend	Other possible metrics: Evaluation data, survey results,	\$4,000-\$10,000/year
Demonstration Teacher Stipend	Student Learning Objectives, Professional Development	\$5,000-\$8,000/year
Recruitment & Retention	Evaluation, retention, other local (approved) metrics	\$5,000-\$15,000/year

Table 4: PBC Stipends

Evidence-based rationale: In order to balance participating in the consortium and NIC while retaining local control, the IGNITE Council, made up of local, district-level stakeholder groups, to create and approve the specific and localized policy for the performance-based compensation.

Prior experience developing and implementing activity: 74% of eligible educators across the five E3 districts earned compensation incentives, which far exceeded the program target of 25%. Additionally, the retention rate for PBC earners exceeded the overall average teacher retention rate. The retention rate for “effective educators” was 97%, and there was a 10% increase in retention for effective educators overall.

Proposed Activity: Provide Ongoing Virtual Support through ADVANCE Using our proprietary online platform, ADVANCE, we will provide ongoing virtual support to sustain learning between trainings. This platform is unique in that it allows for the work of coaching, PLCs, and ILTs to be housed in one location thus aligning each of these components of improvement in one system (API). **Evidence-based rationale:** Virtual coaching removes barriers to managing quality and scaling that traditional coaching systems struggle to control. In addition, given the uncertainty of the current situation with COVID-19, we will be able to leverage this technology to conduct all training virtually if needed. **Prior experience developing and implementing activity:** All five E3 districts successfully utilized the ADVANCE platform as a form of coaching, self-reflection, and feedback. Since 2017, 5,415 videos have been uploaded and 3,516 videos have been shared by E3 educators, indicating a high level of engagement with the platform.

QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN: (2) *Methods of evaluation*

Insight Education Group and Project IGNITE districts will cooperate in any program evaluation conducted by the U.S. Department of Education; however, we will also engage Steve Cantrell with Middle, LLC to create a robust, adaptive external evaluation (See Appendix B for resume; Appendix D4 for evaluation plan details). Project IGNITE’s primary focus is to improve its participating districts’ HCMS. To this end, the evaluation will monitor and display key

implementation metrics, develop results and process measures, build measurement and visualization capacity, provide rapid feedback and forecasting, and assess the impact of selected interventions. Project IGNITE will utilize the TSL Performance Measures in order to gauge implementation progress and determine the impact of services (See Appendix D4).

Examine measures of effective teaching (TSL Performance Measures a, b, and g). The marquee intervention of this project is performance-based compensation (PBC). For PBC to work, it must reward the teaching characteristics that produce better learning. Through this evaluation, we will help districts assess their existing teacher evaluation systems to determine which of the measured characteristics are useful to predict a teacher's future impact on student learning. We will use past teacher evaluation and student performance data to forecast whether a particular measure or combination of measures identifies teachers whose students perform exceptionally high (or low). Along with improving what they measure, we will also help districts improve how they measure. Improving both the measures and the measurement practices will greatly increase the probability that educators who earn PBC are those who accelerate students' learning.

Increase retention among effective teachers (TSL Performance Measures c and e). An additional test for a well-designed performance-based compensation system (PBCS) is whether or not PBC increases retention among high-performing teachers. We will sensitize our district leaders to differential attrition, to effective teachers' oversized impact on overall student learning within a district, and the various ways districts can encourage their best teachers to remain. Again, we will use past data to estimate a baseline rate of differential attrition and use this baseline to compare progress over time. We will calculate the retention rate for teachers who

receive PBC and compare it with the retention rate for other teachers at these same schools. Finally, we will encourage and, as needed, update the practice of registering the reasons teachers leave a school. Often called “leave codes,” such documentation helps the district to better understand why teachers leave, modify conditions to limit unnecessary departures, and to separate types of voluntary exit, such as personal life factors and career factors, from less desirable types of exit due to school factors, assignment and classroom factors, or other failures of support or culture.

Increase equitable assignment to effective teachers (TSL Performance Measures c, d, and e). Project IGNITE will place special emphasis on the impact of our interventions upon the most vulnerable student populations and the schools that serve the greatest numbers of high-needs students. We believe it is particularly important to monitor student assignment to effective teachers and ineffective teachers to ensure that all students have equal access, and as few students as possible spend two or more consecutive years in an ineffective teacher’s class. This goes beyond tracking the percent of effective teachers in schools with the most high-need students because it helps school leaders see and prevent systematic bias and, where merited, work to reverse these patterns by selectively assigning the most effective teachers to the students with the highest needs.

Assess the HCMS’s ability to increase effective teaching (TSL Performance Measures d, and e). All components of the HCMS should be aligned to produce more effective teaching and learning. Measuring effective teaching can and should inform all of these components, not merely teacher evaluation. While effective teaching measures are certainly important when making decisions about which individuals to dismiss or promote, they are equally important for

making important decisions about the design and effectiveness of system-level policies and central office supports. We plan to help districts improve their hiring procedures by tracking the future performance of each new hire. Over time, these data can be used to assess and improve the hiring criteria. Teacher recruitment, similarly, can be judged by whether the district attracts sufficient numbers of high-quality candidates to ensure that each position is filled by a candidate likely to become an effective teacher. We will help districts to understand the impact of their current standards for tenure and recommend that these tenure standards include whether a teacher's current performance indicates a high likelihood of future effectiveness. Similarly, we will recommend that our partner districts assess professional development quality based on improving teaching practices and content known to help students learn better. While this may delay immediate changes to the official evaluation system, it needn't prevent districts from discovering and using the best available measures of effective teaching for any non-personnel evaluation purpose. Moreover, should the current system result in too many teachers and principals receiving the highest effectiveness rating, we will propose to our district partners a means to supplement or substitute the current system with the best available measures for the purposes of identifying the exemplary teachers and principals who receive performance-based compensation and other interventions designed to reward, recognize, and retain these most valuable educators.

Monitor implementation. As the above suggests, our evaluation will invest heavily in the development and use of indicators for feedback and improvement. In addition to this work, the evaluation will develop process indicators to help the districts track implementation progress and make mid-course corrections, should the implementation not go according to plan. Some of these implementation measures have already been developed. An Instructional Leadership Team (ILT)

dashboard has already been built and tested for use with our district partners in the E3 TSL project. Having a well-reviewed existing dashboard with low costs of data collection will help our Project IGNITE partners see the value of having this information and increase their willingness to work with us to develop similar dashboards for other project components. By the end of the grant period, we expect to have built or refined three dashboards: the ILT dashboard, a PLC dashboard, and a teacher recruitment dashboard.

Rigorous experimentation. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) require effective facilitation. Coaches are expensive and effective coaches are hard to find. Moreover, few schools are large enough or resourced enough to provide coaches with strong content expertise for teachers across all disciplines. One potential solution is for districts to share coaches who are, collectively, able to support the content-specific needs of teachers. Our experiment aims to learn whether a Virtual PLC, with a skilled, content-enabled facilitator, provides a teacher development experience equivalent to or better than the existing school-based coaching model. This is an important question for Insight Education Group, as we develop cost-effective solutions for districts, and also for the schools themselves, whose leaders need better information about tradeoffs in order to allocate resources more effectively. Teachers in the status quo condition will participate in PLCs led by school-based coaches. Teachers in the treatment condition will participate in Virtual PLCs led by centralized coaches with same-discipline expertise. We will randomly select treatment teachers in subject by grade by school-level clusters. Status quo teachers will participate in their school PLC and receive development services from the school-level coach. The teachers selected for treatment will not. The treatment teachers will only participate in the Virtual PLC. Our outcome measures will include student performance on both the state standardized assessment and local formative assessments. We will compare

performance of students taught by a Virtual PLC teacher with performance of students taught by control teachers. While all non-Virtual PLC teachers will receive the control treatment, not all non-Virtual PLC teachers will be part of the study. The comparison will focus on control teachers in the same grades and subjects as the Virtual PLC teachers.

It is important to note that we intend to design and employ a randomized controlled trial study that will meet the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards without reservations. Our study will be powered to account for clustered assignment to treatment and our analyses will use Hierarchical Linear Modeling or an equivalent method to adjust for school and grade level effects. We will carefully track overall and differential attrition. We will establish baseline equivalence of treatment and control group members' performance on similar outcomes. We will provide both intent-to-treat and treatment-on-the-treated impact estimates. Our lead evaluator has considerable experience managing randomized controlled trials.

We will support Project IGNITE's districts to field smaller localized experiments. Two strong candidates are likely to emerge from testing districts strategies to increase effective teacher retention and to make effective teacher assignment more equitable. Our districts have already committed to developing and testing strategies which emphasize retaining teachers with outsized impact on student learning and are motivated to distribute teaching effectiveness more equitably. These localized experiments will meet as many of the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Group Design Standards as feasible. We will spend considerable time helping districts to better understand the WWC standards and identifying opportunities where the conditions allow rigorous testing. While we still need to develop these study designs, there are obvious opportunities to randomize these necessarily targeted interventions to test their efficacy prior to rolling them out systemwide.

III. QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Because our project involves four districts across four states, Insight Education Group recognizes the need for a clear management plan and a highly-skilled Project Director (PD) to lead and navigate the complexity of this project. Alejandra Pinto Rice, who has extensive project leadership experience as a previous Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant Project Director and supported district leadership with fund allocation, hiring, coaching and ensured the smooth implementation of the large grant, will serve as 100% PD on this project. In addition, Alejandra has extensive experience delivering the interventions outlined in Project IGNITE and has worked with districts across the country to implement them with fidelity. The PD will serve as the primary contact for partners and will manage the daily implementation of the project and provide sustainability support and training to the IGNITE Council. In order to balance cross-district collaboration while retaining local control, Project IGNITE will utilize a quarterly IGNITE Council composed of the superintendent and one board member from each district, as well as district level leaders, principals, higher education partners, and teachers from each participating school.

The PD will be accountable to the Principal Investigator (PI). Jason Culbertson, who has extensive experience as a project director on five large, federal grants and has provided executive oversight to more than 20 others, will serve as the project's PI. Jason serves as chief executive officer of Insight Education Group. He has partnered with schools, districts, and states to implement systems level projects directly impacting over 5 million students over the past 20 years. The PI will systematically review project costs to ensure alignment to the work and budget plan and will use routine cost-control mechanisms. In addition to the grant leadership team, the project will leverage key personnel with the skills and expertise to successfully implement

Project IGNITE. Below are descriptions of key project staff followed by the project implementation timeline. Additional details on roles and responsibilities can be found in Appendix D1.

Project IGNITE Key Personnel	
Role	Primary Responsibilities
Project Director (PD) <i>Fully-Dedicated</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leads overall implementation of the project and provides oversight and coaching to project staff - Manages the project against goals, activities, timeline, and budget - Establishes and is accountable to IGNITE Council and PI
Grant Manager (GM) <i>Fully-Dedicated</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides overall day-to-day support for entire project team - Support all administrative and operational support across the project, including preparation of internal and external project reporting
Teacher Support Coach (TSC) <i>Fully-Dedicated</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides ongoing, job- embedded professional development, coaching, and feedback to lead and demonstration teachers across districts - Uses data across Partner Districts to develop professional development priorities that are either devised or delivered at the network level or to individual schools
Principal Coach (PC) <i>Fully-Dedicated</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides ongoing, job- embedded professional development, coaching, and feedback to principals across districts and supports facilitation of ILTs - Works with administrative team to ensure consistent alignment of project to district initiatives
Recruitment and Retention Coach (RRC) <i>Fully-Dedicated</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implements recruitment and retention strategies across the districts - Leads implementation of onboarding teams - Provides guidance on communications and marketing strategies for districts and schools
Technology Coach (TC) <i>Fully-Dedicated</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assists districts in utilizing online and virtual platform with synchronous/asynchronous support - Provides training and use cases for effectively utilizing coaching and peer-to-peer feedback
Data Manager (DM) <i>Fully-Dedicated</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frequently collects and reports on data and supports districts in utilizing data dashboards to make data-driven decisions

Table 5: Project IGNITE Key Personnel

Legend: PD – Project Director; PI – Principal Investigator; GM – Grant Manager; DM – Data Manager; PC Principal Coach; RRC – Recruitment and Retention Coach; TSC – Teacher Support Coach; TC – Technology Coach; *- Activity will lead to project sustainability

Project Activity	Person Responsible	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Establish the project-level IGNITE Council to meet quarterly	PD												
Hire other project-level positions	PI, PD												
Create multi-channel communication campaigns for recruitment of new staff and public information, including districts to disseminate information about the project and success to key stakeholders*	RRC												
Work with each district to create specific metrics for effectiveness at every level	PD, DM												
Create a process for collected data needed for the project	DM												
Develop training on fiscal management and processes of TSL grant for partners	GM												
Administer baseline project-wide assessment to students and leadership surveys	DM												
Each schools PBC metrics approved by IGNITE Council	PD, DM												
Strategic Planning process with each district’s key stakeholder group	PD, PI												
Quarterly Project Reports to all schools	PD												
Post and hire Lead Teachers	PD, PC												
Post and hire Demonstration Teachers	PD, PC												
Provide Instructional Leadership, PLC, Coaching Training to all ILT members	PC, TSC												
Provide access to the ADVANCE online platform for all teachers	TC												
Provide Coaching Training to all teachers	TC, PD												
Educator Exchange with MSIs and HBCUs	RRC												

Project Activity	Person Responsible	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Monthly Recruitment/Retention sessions and working group activities	RRC												
Leader and Aspiring Leaders in the Academy work to identify their POIP	PD, PC												
Begin STEP PLCs and peer coaching for all teachers	PD, PC, TSC,												
Leadership Academies and Aspiring Leaders Academies	PD, PC												
Host annual symposium & training for district & school leaders interested in joining the NIC*	PD, RRC												
Annual Project IGNITE evaluations will determine if lead and demonstration leaders retain those roles in upcoming years	ALL												
Identify relevant conferences to present activities & preliminary results from project	PD, DM												
Conduct annual school reviews to measure fidelity of implementation	ALL												
Calibration Activity for leaders, teachers and coaches	PD, PC, TSC, TC												
Gradual Release Model: ILT Train the Trainers*	PD (PC)												
Gradual Release Model: PLC*	PD (TSC)												
Gradual Release Model: Coaching*	PD (TSC)												
Gradual Release Model: Recruitment and Retention*	PD (RRC)												
Prepare/submit high-quality, data-rich Annual Performance Report to US DoE	PD												
Create an adaptive Sustainability Model for each partner district*	PD, DM, GM												
Annual Board Presentation	PD												

Table 6: Project IGNITE Project Plan and Timeline

IV. ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES: (1) *Likelihood project will result in system change*

Because our project focuses activities at every level of the education system - NIC level, district level, school level, principal level, and classroom level - system changes and improvements are expected. Insight has extensive experience implementing the same system changes of Project IGNITE in various school districts across the country with positive results indicating a system change or improvement; therefore, we expect system change and improvement from Project IGNITE. **Student Achievement.** Third through eighth grade **African-American students** in every E3 district with available data are **outperforming their white counterparts** when compared to their peer-alike state averages in Language Arts and Math. The graphs show how much more favorable the

achievement for black students is compared to their statewide peers versus the white students compared to their statewide peers in two of the E3 districts. **Recruitment and Retention.**

Project IGNITE will use a strategic approach to an equity-driven teacher recruitment and

retention system that has achieved significant prior results (AP1). In the

2016-17 school year, just 24% of teachers in one of the E3 NIC member districts were African-American. In 2019-20, that number grew substantially to 40% due to the implementation of E3 recruitment and retention strategies. This is important to note, as the district serves approximately 72% students of color. The recent trends in the district's teacher demographic profile show the district is quickly closing the gap between the percentage of teachers of color

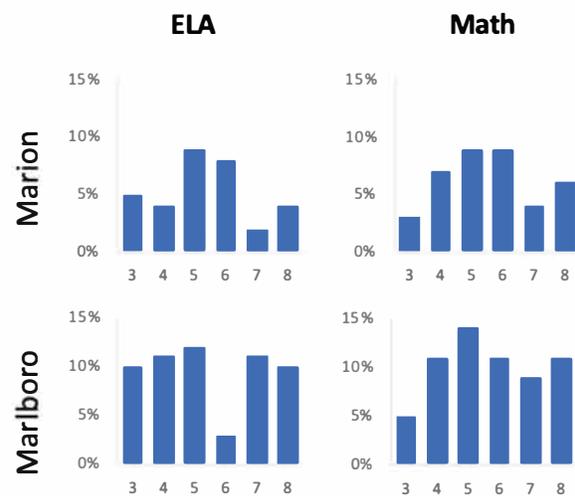


Figure 3: % African American Students are outperforming their white peers compared to state average

and its percentage of students of color and student achievement is reflecting this change. **Human Capital Management Systems.** As documented in the Irreplaceables (2012), “teacher evaluation systems in many districts rate nearly all teachers “good” or “great” and provide little insight into any individual teacher’s success in the classroom, making it difficult to identify low-performing teachers in the first place” (Jacob et al., 2012). A baseline evaluation report from Insight’s E3 project evaluated data prior to the 2017-18 school year and before implementation of the E3 project. The data showed no apparent connection between a given teacher’s evaluation score and the academic performance of the students taught by that teacher. This disconnect is clearly evidenced in the figure above in the 2016-17 graph. As a result of implementing similar systems to those proposed in Project IGNITE, we saw a notable shift in the correlation between teacher

effectiveness ratings and student performance. As you would expect, teachers with higher effectiveness ratings are correlated to higher

student performance. Note the

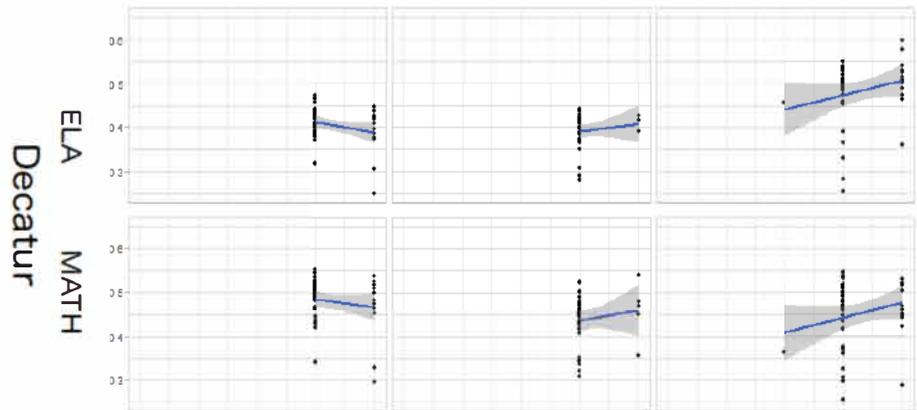


Figure 4: Teacher Effectiveness Ratings and Student Performance - A comparison of correlations by subject, over time

steeper slopes in 2018-19 for Language Arts and math indicating observers are more accurately and more rigorously recognizing the level of effective instruction necessary to impact student achievement results. Project IGNITE’s calibration activities and extensive data dashboards will be used to align teacher effectiveness ratings and student achievement. **STEP PLCs.** Project IGNITE will leverage STEP PLC resources developed as part of Insight’s E3 project. In spring 2019, a University of Connecticut research team administered a survey to teachers in 32 schools

implementing STEP - 66% of teachers reported that their students' achievement has improved. **ILTs.** The resources and approach planned for Project IGNITE ILTs have demonstrated results. The percent of E3 ILTs utilizing distributed leadership at a proficient level or above grew 60% over the course of the project. This data suggests that the impact of ILTs are maximizing the strengths and talents of those on their leadership teams. **Playbooks and Data Dashboards.** For each major component of Project IGNITE, NIC members will have access to playbooks and data dashboards that provide a blueprint for launching and sustaining each aspect of the project.

ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES: (2) *Likelihood of building local capacity to address target population*

The inherent design of Project IGNITE is about changing systems. Changing systems is a capacity building endeavor as it creates sustainable improvement that remains beyond the individuals currently in the system (Stoll, 2009). Data will be central to the examination of efficacy of each system level change. The Project IGNITE evaluation will produce indicators to support district and school personnel track implementation, which will help both the project team and district administrators determine implementation strength and estimate whether the intervention is likely to achieve its intended effect. **ADVANCE online platform.** The platform houses both qualitative and quantitative data including classroom observations, student growth metrics, and PBC in one place and produces video of all grant activities for future use and quality control purposes. Additionally, asynchronous coaching enabled by ADVANCE gives districts' the ability to provide coaching without hiring additional coaches or pulling great teachers out of the classroom which expands the services districts are able to provide. **Recruitment and Retention Systems.** A recruitment and retention dashboard will be developed and used to track educator recruiting, especially of diverse candidates. The dashboard will be mapped to Insight's

12-month recruiting process for identifying measurement opportunities. *Leadership Systems*.

The ILT dashboard will be populated with data culled from the ILT Meeting Protocol, a tool to be used by the ILTs at all 49 schools.

Addressing Needs of Target Population. The target population for Project IGNITE is largely minority. Students of color benefit from excellent teaching **and** they benefit from teachers who look like them (The Education Trust, 2017). The extensive recruitment and retention systems described above will result not only in securing great teachers but will uniquely focus on teachers of color. Marlboro and Gainesville, two districts in Insight's E3 NIC, have almost doubled the percent of new teachers who are teachers of color as a result of the 12-month recruitment process put in place. Project IGNITE will track teacher assignment by race and ethnicity and will report on teacher assignment by prior student performance. **Scaling to Other Districts with Similar Target Populations.** We have selected the participating districts for this project because they demographically represent every district in the United States - from small rural districts to medium-sized urban districts to large urban districts, every district in the country can see themselves in this project's work. As such, there is a high level of scalability and replicability to share our learnings and takeaways with other districts across the nation.

ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES: (3) Resources to operate beyond length of grant

Sustainability and scalability are built into Project IGNITE. As evidenced by the letters of support and intent and memoranda of understanding (Appendix C), there is broad project support and buy-in from teachers, school and district leaders, superintendents, board of education members, and members of congress. The districts each also agree to the basic tenets of participation in the grant as outlined in the memoranda of understanding, including the matching fund requirement (Appendix C). Each district will match TSL funding at 50% which

demonstrates a major commitment of resources to Project IGNITE. While the basic tenets are common across all districts, local control will still take priority, as local stakeholders will tailor specific policy decisions and granular metrics to their local needs. In addition, each district has committed to sustain the systemic aspects of Project IGNITE following the grant. Once established, the systems can be sustained by the districts in perpetuity at no additional cost.

Given our previous experience with supporting the sustainability of projects, two trends are apparent that we can apply to Project IGNITE. First, any initiative perceived as extraneous will not be sustainable beyond the life of the grant. Secondly, partner districts must have agency in the design phase as well as flexibility to modify specific aspects of the project based on local contexts in the development phase. Through our previous experience successfully managing and sustaining large-scale systems change we have outlined a process to maintain balance between ensuring the fidelity of implementation while still allowing project partners to make the work their own through their identified needs. Project IGNITE will collaborate with the IGNITE Council to systematize the structures outlined in this proposal in order to create guidance around the implementation of HCMS, teacher and school leader evaluation, teacher recruitment and retention, professional development and support, PBC; however, each partner district will create a similar cross-functional council to customize the project implementation in their specific district and school contexts. The budget has been purposefully crafted for the partner districts to take on increasing responsibility for funding positions in order to ensure future sustainability. The recurring costs are de minimis and all participating partner districts have a plan and necessary funding to keep all Project IGNITE systems in place beyond the life of the grant.