

**PR Award #:** S423A200043

**Organization Name:** National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET)

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**Absolute Priority:** Absolute Priority 2 (Supporting Effective Principals or Other School Leaders)

**Competitive Preference Priorities:**

- 1) Promoting Science, Technology, Engineering, or Math (STEM) Education:
- 2) Fostering Knowledge and Promoting the Development of Skills That Prepare Students to Be Informed, Thoughtful, and Productive Individuals and Citizens; and
- 3) Spurring Investment in Qualified Opportunity Zones.

**Requested Total Award Amount:** \$2,546,515.00

**Project Description:**

SCPLN is a two-year cohort-based program aiming to build and accelerate the leadership capacity of 150 participating school leaders through high-quality virtual professional development, quarterly on-site coaching, and quarterly networking opportunities via virtual communities of practice (CoP). NIET, UofSC, and BranchED will provide partnering LEAs with 120 hours of evidence-based professional development to support effective school leaders. Evidence-based professional development rooted in the local needs of school leaders, teachers and students, including those in qualified opportunity zones, will allow participating school leaders to learn and apply impactful leadership skills with support from a leadership coach and network peers in their CoP. The alignment of local needs with evidence-based practices for excellence in leadership provides a powerful tool for advancing school leaders' leadership capacity, educator retention, school culture, and student outcomes.

**Project Expected Outcomes:**

This project will transform instruction and culture for the 95 partnering schools and their 58,385 students (over 56% in poverty). By increasing the leadership capacity of school leaders and providing a strong, sustainable network of support, the SCPLN will have cascading benefits: (1) less turnover, (2) enhanced school culture, and (3) improved student achievement

**Project Special Features**

WWC: The project evaluation is designed to meet What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Standards with reservations on the efficacy of a cohort-based principal leadership network, using rigorous methods to create well-matched samples of non-participating school leaders for statistical comparison. Our analyses will reveal whether and to what extent this program design of combined virtual and in-person training, coaching, and networking for school leaders will improve leadership practice, which will in turn impact educator retention and student achievement. 22

**Project Partners:**

University of South Carolina; Branch Alliance for Educator Diversity; Orangeburg Consolidated School District Five; School District of Pickens County; Laurens County School District 55; Spartanburg County School District One; South Carolina Public Charter School District; and the Charter Institute at Erskine.