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SECTION A: Significance

The *Partners to Lead Scaled* (PTL2) project addresses ***Absolute Priority #1*** (Moderate Evidence) and ***Absolute Priority #2*** (Field Initiated Innovation) and is submitted by a qualified **Rural Applicant**. PTL2 is based on our previous work with a successful EIR Early Phase grant - the *Partners To Lead* (PTL) project. PTL2 is further supported with evidence from two quasi-experimental research studies, both of which demonstrated significant impact on student learning in ELA and math.[1] PTL was unable to measure impact in FY21 because the state assessments were not administered due to the pandemic. However, preliminary findings from the PTL project indicate positive changes to principal effectiveness, particularly in high-need and rural schools.[2] In a recent survey of principals participating in PTL, 85% said that the coaching moderately to substantially improved their overall leadership practice. Specifically, 88% said that they improved practice engaging teacher teams in focusing on instructional improvements. Approximately 70% said they improved their practice related to collecting and using both instructional and student data and implementing distributed leadership practices in their school. Research indicates those are high-leverage practices that serve as leading indicators of improvements to teaching and learning.[3] PTL2 proposes to scale an improved multi-level intervention model to a new sample of schools located throughout Illinois, including rural and high-need schools. See Appendix N for the PTL2 response to ***Invitational Priority #1*** and Appendix K for ***Invitational Priority #2***.

1) National Significance

Findings from PTL2 will be timely and used to inform state and national policies and initiatives by serving as a replicable model for federally funded projects used to demonstrate effective interventions that can be scaled to a wide variety of schools and communities. PTL2 is aligned to state goals that will

[1] Nunnery, Ross, Chappell, Pribesh, & Hoag-Carhart, 2011; Nunnery, Ross, & Yen, 2010; Saunders, Goldenberg, & Gallimore, 2009
[2] The final PTL evaluation report, completed by the American Institutes for Research, will be available in the fall of 2022.
[3] Spillane, Parise, Sherer, 2011

maximize resources and ensure sustainability through state and local public funding streams. For example, PTL ROE partners served on statewide committees and effectively advocated for improvement to state-funded development programs for new educators. The efforts by our partners led to the passage of *Illinois Senate Bill 814*. An appropriation of $9.5M was also included in the state budget for New Teacher and New Principal Mentoring, and New Principal Recruitment (aimed at recruiting leaders of color and leaders for hard to staff and rural schools).

Building on PTL, PTL2 proposes to scale an improved intervention to another 80 schools. PTL2 will have broader impact that make PTL2 worthy of funding as statewide scale and project's connection to policymakers can influence state policy in ways that expand and sustain the project. Additionally, the 50 schools that previously participated will serve as legacy/demonstration sites and incubators for developing a district-level component to the model, bringing **the total number of schools involved to 130 – located in each education service area in Illinois.** As with PTL, **the majority of PTL2 participating schools will be located in areas with rural urbanicity codes** but will include schools in suburban and mid-sized towns. Having a broad representation of types, sizes, and locations of schools and districts will increase the generalizability of the results of the evaluation, informing replication and state and local policies. That will be particularly useful for populations in rural, high-need and/or hard-to-staff schools that have far too often been underrepresented in large research studies funded through competitive grant programs.[4]

To promote policy connections with PTL2, the project will continue to partner with the Center for the Study of Education Policy (CSEP) at Illinois State University (ISU). CSEP previously gained national attention for its contributions to improving principal preparation and development. Nominated by the National Conference of State Legislators, CSEP along with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), was selected by the

[4] The Rural School and Community Trust, 2011

Education Commission of the States for the 2014 award for State Policy Innovation. Since 2014, this work has repeatedly draw national attention, due to its continued success.[5] CSEP will work with PTL2 partners and tap into existing relationships with state and national organizations (e.g. state and national professional associations, teachers' unions, research organizations, and funders) forging new connections to elevate policy, practice, and research conversation involving principal effectiveness.

PTL2 will contribute to national educator effectiveness efforts by addressing the dearth of empirical studies that meet What Works Clearinghouse standards involving school leaders – particularly those in rural schools. The research footprint of PTL2's evaluation team at American Institutes for Research (AIR) can be leveraged for national significance. Over the last eight years, AIR has conducted 18 random control trial studies for the US Department of Education, philanthropic organizations, and international agencies, including studies involving professional development for school leaders. AIR is a national leader in educator effectiveness and is deeply engaged in efforts ranging from conducting high quality research, to applying research to policy and practice.

2) Contributions to the Field

PTL2 will increase understanding of how principal practice contributes to instructional quality, **contributing to the field in five ways**: 1) expanding the evidence-base of effective job embedded professional development for school leaders that positively impacts student learning[6]; 2) increasing understanding of role of the principal as an organizational leader of instructional improvement[7]; 3) demonstrating an effective diffusion model that engages all teachers in instructional improvement efforts producing schoolwide impact[8]; 4) informing replication by identifying invariable and variable

[5] Two articles highlighting Illinois' work in school leadership reform: *http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2017/01/25/principal-preparation-programs-get-major-makeover-in-illinois.html* and *http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2017/01/25/pressure-mounts-on-higher-ed-to-improve.html* The Wallace Foundation also published a video series on principal preparation in Illinois: *http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Pages/Series-Shows-How-Illinois-Successfully-Revamped-Requirements-for-See Principal-Preparation.aspx* and a book was published by Routledge that explored the program and policy work that led to the successful passage of a revised state statute (Hunt, Haller, Hood, Kincaid, 2019)

[6] Nunnery, et. al., 2011; Nunnery, et. al., 2010

[7] Grissom, & Loeb, 2009; Horng, Klasik, & Loeb, 2010; Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2019

[8] Saunders, et. al., 2009

aspects; and 5) engaging under-represented rural schools in a large scale evaluation involving an effective school leadership intervention.

First, through a random control trial research study conducted by AIR, PTL2 will demonstrate how supporting school leaders with high-quality professional development focused on instructional improvement can support teams in implementing high-leverage practices that results in increased student learning. A growing body of research has demonstrated that principals can act as "powerful multipliers of effective teaching and leadership practices in schools."[9] While it has been widely accepted that instructional quality is the single most important school-based factor leading to student achievement,[10] that research largely ignores the role of the principal in establishing a culture of inquiry and collaborative routines that promote teacher collaboration. High-quality instruction simply does not happen schoolwide without a strong principal.[11] Over the past two decades, researchers have begun to more closely examine principal's actions and have concluded that principals have a significant impact on student learning - independent of the other factors affecting achievement.[12] In fact, principals' influence accounts for one-quarter of school-level variation in student achievement[13] and their impact is greatest in schools with the greatest needs.[14] The question is no longer *does principal quality matter*, rather now we must ask *how can principals lead and organize schools in ways that routinely improve outcomes for students*?

Second, contrary to the myth of the "Superman" principal, one person working alone cannot bring about schoolwide change. Research suggests that the role of the principal is not to be the ultimate expert in every subject and every grade level.[15] Rather, through distributed leadership principals can

[9] Manna, 2015
[10] Darling-Hammond, 2000
[11] Bryke, 2010, Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000; Leithwood, et al., 2004; Waters, et al., 2003; Witziers, et al., 2003
[12] Fuller, 2014
[13] Leithwood et al., 2004; Waters, Marzano & McNulty, 2003
[14] Leithwood, et al. 2004; Branch, et al. 2009; Hallinger & Heck, 1998
[15] Grissom, & Loeb, 2009

engage and support teacher teams that harness and focus the collective knowledge, skills and abilities of the entire faculty toward improving teaching and learning. To that end, PTL2 supports principals in creating working conditions that promote a culture of inquiry focused on unearthing the root causes of student learning problems and addressing them through research-based instructional practices.

Third, based on lessons learned in PTL, PTL2 will provide supports to Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) to increase the knowledge and skills to conduct cycles of inquiry that identify and address specific learning problems. PTL initially relied on principals to share their learning with the ILTs, however we found the support received by ILT members varied. Therefore, training materials were developed that will be used by PTL2 trainers to support the professional learning of ILTs.

As a fourth strategy, the CSEP team will explore the efficacy of PTL2 diffusion model (e.g. how improvement efforts by ILT provide a model for teacher teams working at the classroom level). The combination of research involving quantitative (by AIR) and qualitative (by CSEP) data analysis will identify variable and invariable aspects of the project design to inform replication.

The last area where PTL2 contributes to the field involves our intentional focus on addressing leadership challenges in hard-to-staff schools. By **targeting participation of rural and high-need schools**, PTL2 brings expertise and resources to schools that have largely been under-represented in competitive grant competitions and in multi-year rigorous research studies. Many of the districts in the regions served by our partners downstate are located in "higher education deserts."[16] Based on the magnitude of the anticipated impact on principal effectiveness and student outcomes, PTL2 will provide marginalized schools with high-quality, job-embedded professional development that improves teaching and learning. The model will be put to the test, as implementation will occur at a time when school leaders face unprecedented challenges in recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.

[16] IARRS Shortage report at https://iarss.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/IARSS-2020-Educator-Shortage-FINAL.pdf

SECTION B: Strategy to Scale

1) Strategies that Address Barriers to Scale

PTL2 was intentionally developed to attend to the necessary tension between standardization and customization necessary for the model to be applicable in a wide variety of schools and settings. PTL2 identified three barriers and developed corresponding strategies to address those challenges.

Barrier #1: Logistical challenges to convening participants that are spread across the entire state.

Strategies to Address Barrier #1: The PTL2 developed hybrid model of training and coaching was born out of necessity, due to the large geographical spread between participating schools. PTL2 has a statewide footprint, meaning participants could be as far apart as 400+ miles. Therefore, PTL2 includes a combination of; 1) *virtual check-ins* between principal and coach pairs; 2) *in-person, on-site, 1-on-1 coaching* designed to respond to specific needs of each participant; and 3) *in-person group training delivered regionally*. The hybrid model maximizes resources by reducing the amount of time principals need to be out of the building to engage in high-quality professional learning. This reduces cost and time spent traveling to trainings. On-site service delivery also provides opportunities for coaches to observe each unique school setting. A deep understanding of the contextual factors that influence implementation is essential for developing responsive coaching strategies.

Barrier #2: Educators are accustomed to short duration/topic-based training but want high-quality professional development that builds their capacity to substantially improve teaching and learning.

Strategies to Address Barrier #2: PTL2 provides an ongoing, cohesive professional development system that aligns to research-based standards: the Learning Forward *Standards for Professional Learning* guide our training design and delivery. By developing a system aligned to the standards, PTL2 provides a high-quality alternative to fragmented and short duration professional development that allows educators to keep their educator licenses valid but does little in terms of improving practice. This approach aligns with the project's desire to ***address inequities in access to high-quality, rigorous,***

engaging, and culturally responsive professional development. The PTL2 PD Design Team is made up of project staff and representatives from each of our partner regions. The ROE representatives are former educators with experience working in schools and districts in each partner area. Their input ensures training materials and coaching protocols meet local needs and use commonly understood terms or examples. An equity lens was added to PTL2 materials by aligning them to ISBE's ***Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning Standards.***

During PTL, project staff also developed **research-based *Performance Standards for Principal Coaching*** to standardize the coaching model. Research on effective practices in three areas (leadership coaching/mentoring, instructional coaching, and principal supervision) frame the Principal Coaching Standards and research on corresponding high-leverage practices guided articulated indicators of effective coaching. The *standards* define the performance expectations/goals for coaches, while the *indicators* describe the specific skills and/or practices that PTL2 coaches exhibit to demonstrate mastery of the standard. The six standards align to the Professional Standards for Education Leaders (PSEL) and the Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). ROE partners have worked with a communications consultant to develop marketing materials for sustainability and recruitment purposes. PTL2 will benefit from all of these resources.

Barrier #3: Lack of capacity and/or high turnover of district leaders results in inconsistent support for implementation in participating schools.

Strategies to Address Barrier #3: Our third barrier will be addressed by continuing to build the capacity of the partner ROEs to further scale and sustain the project. High turnover in small rural, and large high-need districts is a national challenge. School-level leaders are often left to fend for themselves, as they watch district leaders come and go. For that reason, ROEs are often seen as a consistent source of support to area educators. Providing professional development to school leaders

aligns directly to the scope of work of the ROEs, as established in state statute. ROEs provide an expanded level of expertise, guidance, and funding for area schools. The six partnering ROEs will leverage their strong relationships with local education leaders to support the scaling efforts of PTL2. While our previous work focused primarily on the principal, increased funding from an EIR Mid-Phase grant allows PTL2 to add additional layers of support by including professional development for Instructional Leadership Teams (ILT)s and to develop a district-level engagement component with legacy schools. PTL principals and coaches previously identified district engagement as an area of variation, however, the source of the variance was not immediately clear (e.g. size, remoteness, population served, readiness indicators, etc.). The goal of the district-level component would be to support district leaders in aligning systems and supports for implementation. We anticipate that the district component will require greater differentiation than school interventions because there is greater variation in number of district employees between our rural and suburban districts. Developing and testing a new component for district leaders will support PTL2 sustainability efforts.

Barrier #4: Districts, particularly those that are rural and/or high-needs, lack necessary funds to sustain vendor-reliant professional development.

Strategies to Address Barrier #4: The proposed project will achieve **two overarching goals: expansion and enhancement.** The first goal is to cost-effectively and equitably expand the program's reach to include additional rural and hard-to-staff school located throughout Illinois. Collaboration with ROEs located in the six education service areas in the state provides PTL2 with the reach it needs to successfully implement our statewide scaling plan**.** PTL2 will amplify the positive results from PTL and the recommendations of previous participants and partners to recruit and secure the commitment of a new group of schools. We will also capitalize on efficiencies previously established by our project partners, including standard routines and processes for data collection, data reporting, fiscal management, scheduling training, and other logistics.

The second goal will include enhancements to previous strategies and materials by reconceptualizing the role of the principals and exploring effective ways they can organized schools to promote engagement of teacher teams in schoolwide instructional improvement efforts. We will address enhancement in several ways, including: 1) applying lessons learned and findings from research on previous implementation to increase effectiveness and to ensure project supports are responsive to the schools we serve; 2) engaging previous participants in development of enhanced component for district leaders that will promote district-wide implementation; 3) focusing on PTL2's long-term sustainability by identifying potential state and local policy connections that support project continuation through funding streams; and 4) ensuring all PTL2 materials and resources are developed internally through PLT2 PD Design Team, with ROE partners sharing intellectual property through formal agreements that will sustain and scale the work by ROE partners. The PLT2 PD Design Team is integral to development of materials, and customization of supports, which provide partners with low-cost sustainability and eliminates need to pay external vendors in perpetuity.

Over a five-year period, **PTL2 anticipates serving a total of 130 school, impacting over 60,000 students.** We also anticipate significant **cost savings of over 23%** per participating school based on the amount of material development and staffing that was developed in the previous PTL project.

2) Mechanisms to Broadly Disseminate Information to Further Develop or Replicate

PTL2 model has great potential to be disseminated and replicated using three strategies: 1) aligning to state policy initiatives; 2) building regional dissemination and replication capacity; and 3) capitalizing on AIR's, CSEP's and other partners' mechanisms for disseminating project practices and outcomes.

State Policy Alignment and Influence **-** To disseminate and sustain the work, project staff and partners will work with the with Governor's Office, ISBE, and education stakeholder groups to improve existing state-funded leadership programs and policies and inform new ones. PTL2 supports align with statewide priorities identified in ISBE's *Strategic Action Plan* under Goal 1: Strategy 1.3:

"Increase supports for schools identified with the greatest need through ISBE's partnerships with the ROEs" and Goal 3: Strategy 3.1.4 "Retain educators by providing coaching and mentoring, teacher leadership opportunities, principal preparation support, and access to high-quality professional development."[17] PTL2 also aligns with several strategies identified in a statewide *Educator Pipeline Work Group* co-led by ISBE and Advance Illinois, which recommended the "launch (of) a new Office of Leadership at ISBE to support diverse and rural aspiring leaders and existing leadership."[18] PTL2 project aligns with these state priorities by: 1) leverage a statewide consortium of ROEs located in each of the state's six service areas that will support the newly created state Office of District and School Leadership; 2) connect the Performance Standards for Principal Coaching developed through PTL with ISBE's efforts to secure annual appropriations for new principal mentoring and induction.

PTL2 will also leverage strong relationships with the Governor's P-20 Council, which develops state policy and practice recommendations. That expectation was shared in letters of support from IL Deputy Governor of Education, ISBE Director of District and School Leadership, Executive Director of IEA, Director of Statewide Regional Offices of Education, Director of Statewide Rural School Association, and Director of Advance Illinois. The longstanding relationships the ROEs and CSEP have with policymakers and leaders in several State Education Agencies, professional associations, and teachers' unions, speaks to PTL2's ability to engage stakeholders in collaborative efforts to disseminate our work in an effort to improve state and local policy and secure public funding to sustain and replicate the PTL2 project.

For replication to be successful, it is essential to understand the invariable/essential elements of the project and other more flexible/variable elements that can be tailored to specific contexts. A common barrier to successful replication is the inability to articulate the key elements required for success.[19] Our partners at CSEP will conduct a qualitative research study that will richly describe the variable and invariable

[17] ISBE, 2021 https://www.isbe.net/strategicplan
[18] ISLAC, 2014
[19] RPS, 1994; Uvin & Miller, 1996

elements of the PTL2 model with a nuanced understanding of how contextual factors like location, size, etc. impact implementation. The quantitative study by AIR will provide evidence of impact from successful implementation and provide further insight in terms of whether impact varied among different types or sizes of schools. That information will be useful to those wishing to replicate PTL2. To aid replication, PTL2 intends to open-source materials developed for the project to the extent possible and will disseminate specific descriptions of the key organizational elements involved in the design. (See Appendix L for materials included in the PTL Toolkit).

Regional Capacity-Building for Dissemination and Replication - PTL2 has great potential to be sustained and scaled through three main strategies: 1) capitalizing on existing structures and partnerships; 2) further building regional and state-wide capacity to support, sustain, and scale the model, and 3) aligning PTL2 to ROEs organization mission to support area districts/schools. PTL2 staff will support PTL ROEs in building internal capacity to support, sustain, and grow the project beyond the region to their larger Education Service Area. ROEs are legislatively created local education agencies that provide supervision and support to all schools in their area. PTL2 participating ROEs serve as Leadership Hubs for their service area, while other ROEs may serve as Hubs focused on other topics where they have specific expertise (e.g. MTSS, SEL, Equity, etc.). The responsibilities of ROEs, outlined in Illinois statute and operationalized through administrative rules,[20] are directly aligned to goals of proposed project.

Dissemination Efforts - In order to reach researchers, practitioners, and policy makers, project staff will present the PTL2 project design and findings from the external evaluation, at a variety of forums including state conferences (e.g. IL Superintendents Association, Illinois Education Association, Illinois' Human Resource Directors Conference, Association of Illinois Rural and Small Schools, State ESSA Conference, etc.), and national conferences (e.g. National Rural Education Association, AERA, NASSP,

[20] IL Public Act 86-98 and 105 ILCS 5

NAESP, Learning Forward, etc.). Research briefs will also be developed to inform policy improvements or new policy formation. Dissemination efforts will include rural, suburban, and urban outlets. Finally, we will capitalize on AIR, CSEP, ROE and other project partner's social media outlets for more frequent news stories about project implementation to promote its practices and impact on school leaders and schools. Working with our partner ROEs and the affiliates, project staff will reach all corners of the state, as well as a national audience. Lastly, PTL2 will expand the marketing and branding work started through the PTL project involving a communications consultant working with project staff and partners to develop targeted dissemination pieces for practitioners and policymakers. We will also engage a web designer to build out a more robust public facing section of the project's website to develop a larger web presence.

SECTION C: Project Design

1) Conceptual Framework Underlying the Proposed Research

The qualifying research study that forms the foundation of PTL2 project was reviewed by WWC research panel that determined it **demonstrated moderate evidence** of effectiveness in terms of increased ELA and math scores for students in the treatment group in comparison to the scores of students in the control group.[21] (See *Evidence Form* for details on the qualifying study). There are additional quasi-experimental and correlational studies that also support the findings in the qualifying study.[22] Those additional studies indicate the effectiveness of a system of professional development that includes: 1) on-going, cohesive training, 2) 1-on-1, job-embedded coaching, and 3) engagement of teacher teams. Collectively, that research-base indicates that comprehensive, high-quality professional development can increase principal and teacher effectiveness and retention, improve instructional quality, and positively impact student achievement. PTL2 seeks to replicate the findings in the

[21]Nunnery, et al, 2011
[22]Cosner, 2012; Nunnery 2010, Saunders, et al 2009

qualifying study while expanding to include rural schools that have largely been under-represented in service delivery and large-scale research studies.[23]

Growing responsibilities and conflicting priorities create frustrations for the principal and lead to increases in leadership turnover, especially in rural and high-need schools that serve a disproportional number of poor and minority students.[24] Research has increasingly found that rural principals spend considerably more time and energy on administrative tasks and less time leading instructional improvement efforts.[25] A recent study found that half of new principals quit their jobs within three years.[26] Data from the National Center for Education Statistics indicates that principal turnover in rural schools is higher than the national average. Turnover is more disruptive for rural schools because they lack administrative structures, personnel, and resources to build effective succession plans.[27]

The PTL2 project design reflects research that demonstrates the limitations of instructional leadership that resides in a single position (e.g. the principal) and how an integrated leadership system can result in significant increases in student learning.[28] PTL2 provides the necessary training and supports that enables principals to establish strong professional communities with collective responsibility for improving teaching and learning. Central to the PTL2 *Theory of Change* is the efforts of the principal to create the conditions for teacher teams to engage in meaningful instructional inquiry focused on specific root causes of student learning problems. First the principal must develop a system of organizational routines that provide a platform for engaging teacher teams; then the principal uses those organizational routines to engage teachers in instructionally focused discussions aimed and improving teaching and increasing learning through responsive strategies that address

[23] Rural School and Community Trust, 2011
[24] DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Grubb & Flessa, 2006; Darling-Hammond, et al, 2009, Clotfelter, et al, 2006
[25] National Association of Secondary School Principals & Learning Policy Institute, 2020
[26] Illinois Principals Association, 2020; School Leaders Network, 2014
[27] Pendola & Fuller, 2018
[28] Grissom, & Loeb, 2009; Nunnery, et al 2010; Saunders, et al, 2009; Showers & Joyce, 1996

specific barriers to student learning, leading to increases in student test scores. **See Appendix G for the PTL2 Logic Model.**

Not all principals know how to organize schools for improvement, and they need professional development that recognizes their strengths and supports application of new learning in their specific school context. In other words, in order to change practice, professional development must be structured to more than the usual "sit and get." Table 1 below outlines how PTL2 professional development differs from training that educators typically receive.

Table 1: **PTL2 PD Model vs Traditional PD**

PTL2 Professional Development Model	Traditional Professional Development
Includes both group and individual training, with dynamic workshops that include active learning design (authentic data analysis, informed planning/review of prior work, peer problem solving, etc.)	**Relies solely on group training** which may or may not include active learning design that require participants to engage in authentic activities that are meaningful to their specific school/classroom
Supports Principals with role specific professional development, and provides training for Instructional Leadership Teams to promote authentic collaborative learning and diffusion to other teams	**Principals are generally trained alongside teachers,** but not specifically for their role as the leader who creates the conditions that facilitates or inhibits implementation of what is learning in training
Training provided in an on-going manner over three years, with supports for application activities that are completed between sessions; Designed to respond to specific principal and school needs	**Training is often limited in duration & scope**, treating complex issues (e.g. equity/SEL, etc.) in ways that undermine the comprehensive manner in which they should be addressed at all levels
Seamlessly integrates program content with differentiated learning needs in a single cohesive system that responds to the specific needs of the participants and their schools	**Multiple training sessions are presented by different providers** with little or no attention to how disparate topics or practices are made cohesive or applied in different contexts
Infuses equity and SEL focused throughout on-going trainings as a way to integrate focus into existing work/supports	**Treats each topic as stand-alone training** that are far too often implemented in isolation causing disconnects (e.g., equity, SEL)
Addresses the needs of specific roles and addresses root causes of student learning problems through responsive strategies to the school-identified improvement areas	**Topic focused training often provided to all** schools/principals/ teachers - regardless of the unique context within which they work, and without recognition of their different roles
Provides 1-on-1, job-embedded, on-site, and virtual coaching support with activities designed to promote and guide application of new learning	**Rarely provides any level of follow up** or coaching to promote changes to practice resulting from the training session(s)

Explores impact on both leading and lagging indicators and uses feedback from participants and coaches to address differentiated needs	**Rarely measures impact,** or does so only with satisfaction surveys completed by participants at the end of a training event
Great return on investment as the principal acts as a change agent in schools leading to schoolwide improvements to instruction	**Poor return on investment** because it is vendor dependent and does little to build educator capacity. Wasted resources: funding, time, energy

Principal coaching is another area that sets PTL2 apart. Principal coaching has often involved little more that broad conversations involving "leadership" or includes "story-telling" from coaches based on their prior experiences. That approach is removed from the instructional improvement efforts needed to increase learning in specific priority areas. PTL2 addresses that disconnect by providing standardized, ongoing coach training through a hybrid model that includes in-person group training and a series of four coaching micro-credentials.[29] Table 2 below outlines how the PTL2 coaching model differs from traditional principal coaching. One of the most striking difference between the two is PTL2's ability to build from our prior work developing research-based Performance Standards for Principal Coaching, which were also used as a model by ISBE when they revised the state's New Principal Mentoring regulations. (See Appendix M for principal coaching standards and rubric).

Table 2: **PTL2 Principal Coaching Model vs. Typical Coaching Models**

PTL2 Principal Coaching Model	Typical Coaching Models
Grounded in research-based Performance Standards for Principal Coaching[30] focused on improving instructional quality	Generally focused on broad/general leadership practices, which may or may not align to research on effective practice
Builds capacity of principals and ILTs	Focuses solely on the principal
Concentrates on a schoolwide distributed leadership focused on instructional improvement	Concentrates on the actions and authority of the principal as the sole leader in the school
Differentiates to address specific problems of practice with consideration for each principal's strengths and areas for development	Standardized curriculum provided to all participating principals regardless of the school context or needs of the principal
Provided on-site, in a 1-on-1 structure that promotes authentic, job-embedded learning that is responsive to the unique school context	Often delivered in small groups, generally with few requirements in terms of session goals location/format/or duration

[29] Our Principal Coaching micro-credential series is available nationally, through the Bloomboard platform.
[30] Leading Ed Partnerships, 2020

Coaching supports provided by highly experienced and well-trained veteran administrators who are exclusively focused on developing and supporting the school leader	Frequently provided by those in the same role, or by principal supervisors as part of induction support for new school leaders, or as part of a remediation process for struggling principals
Employs a *Blended Coaching*[31] approach, including instructive, collaborative, and facilitative coaching strategies to support goal attainment	Coaching strategies rarely go beyond facilitation or reflection and are often reactive rather than pro-active in supporting improvement goals.

In addition to the coaching model, PTL2 supports teacher teams by providing training on applying Cycles of Inquiry (COI). PTL2's COI process is a targeted improvement process that requires a deep understanding of exactly *what* students are struggling with, *which* students are struggling, and *how* specific practices must change to respond to the learning challenge.[32] COI requires a sequential process by teacher teams that: 1) explore a variety of student performance data (formative and summative, disaggregated, growth and attainment, etc.) to clearly define *what* student are struggling with (learning problem), 2) identify research-based practices that address the specific learning problem, 3) explore instructional data to determine the root causes; 4) identify a responsive strategy that provides a necessary level of specificity for teachers to understand what and how their practices must to change, 5) establish process and outcome goals and a timeline for improvement work; 6) participate in adult learning focused on the specific knowledge and skills necessary to implement new practices; 7) engage in peer-supported implementation of new or improved practices; 8) participate on teams to support fidelity of implementation; and 9) explore progress toward goals, making adjustments when necessary. Through PTL2, principals and ILTs diffuse routines involving COI, so all teachers in the building are engaged and supported in developing and implementing instructional improvements that effectively respond to the specific learning challenges for specific groups of students. In that way, COI attends to both equity and SEL, both of which are themes that are fully integrated into all we do. See Appendix L for details PTL2 materials and tools, and Appendix N for our approach to equity and SEL.

[31] Bloom, Castagna, Moir, Warren, 2005
[32] Cosner, 2012

Project Goals, Objectives, Strategies, Measures, and Anticipated Outcomes

GOAL 1: **Develop highly effective principals in partnering rural and high-needs schools who positively impact student learning,particularly for high need students.**			
OBJECTIVE 1: **Provide training, coaching, tools & resources to 80 principals (40 treatment, 40 control schools that receive delayed treatment) to achieve results in positive student growth in ELA and math.**			
OUTCOMES: **80% of schools will demonstrate positive student growth; 70% of schools will demonstrate positive student growth with subgroups of high-need students; 70% of schools will demonstrate greater positive student growth than comparison schools; 70% of principals will remain in leadership positions in the district duringlife of grant; improved teacher retention rates; and 70% of schools will demonstrate positive ratings on state climate/culture survey (growth over time that is better than comparison schools)**			
MEASURE 1.1: Climate and culture survey data (from the validated 5 Essential Survey) and other indicators included on the Illinois School ReportCard, published annually by the IL State Board of Ed. (Years 2 – 5) ***MEASURE 1.2:*** Student growth on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (Elem & Middle) or SAT (HS) at PTL2 participating schools vs. a group of comparison schools. (Year 5) ***MEASURE 1.3:*** Student growth on Illinois Assessment of Readiness or SAT by high-need students at PTL2 participating schools vs. a group of comparison schools. (Year 5)			
GOAL 2: **Develop highly effective principals in partnering schools that improve instructional quality by engaging teachers through the PTL2 Leadership Framework.**			
OBJECTIVE: **2.1. Provide training & coaching to 80 principals (40 treatment, 40 control schools through delayed treatment) to improve instructional quality by engaging teachers with PTL2 Leadership Framework**			
OUTCOMES: 90% of p**rincipals report that training and coaching is adequate for growing instructional leadership practices to effectively engage their ILTs to improve instructional quality and student learning.**			
STRATEGIES	***MEASURES***	***TARGETS***	***COLLECTED***
Activity 2.1.1: PTL2 will provide on-going training to principals on effective strategies for engaging teachers in instructional improvement efforts using the COI process to prioritize instructional improvements and monitor effectiveness of school improvement strategies.	*2.1.1:* Monthly training attendance data spreadsheets	90 % of PtL2 principals complete 6 training sessions/year	Years 1.5 - 4
Activity 2.1.2: PTL2 coaches will provide on-going, context specific coaching support to PTL2 principals, and ILTs	*2.1.2:* Coaching Logs	90% principals receive 1.5 hours/month of coaching	Years 1.5 - 4
Activity 2.1.3: PTL2 staff and ROE partners will provide network meetings for principals and engage them in development of tools and processes focused on increasing efficiency and effectiveness in instructional improvement efforts.	*2.1.3:* Monthly network meeting attendance data spreadsheets	90% of PTL2 principals attend 1 principal networking session per quarter	Years 1.5 - 4
Activity 2.1.4: External evaluators and project researchers will provide ongoing feedback on fidelity of implementation, progress toward goals, and improvement that project staff and PDDesign Team will use to plan and develop training content and resources (e.g.,tools, protocols) for principals and coaches.	*2.1.4:* Training evaluation surveys *2.1.5:* Annual principal interviews & surveys *2.1.6:* Focus group/ interviews (coaches, principals, ILTs), and artifact analysis	Project researchers will present each quarter to project staff, project partners AIR external evaluators will report formative data semi-annually	Years 1.5 -5

***OBJECTIVE:* 2.2: Principals engage with their ILTs to implement the leadership framework and COI processes to focus the school on priorities for instructional improvements**			
OUTCOMES: 100% of principals establish improved organizational routines that build the capacity of ILTs to improve instruction in ELA and math; 100% of principals distribute leadership in ways that support a focus on instructional priorities by addressing identified root causes of problems of practice in ELA and math; 90% of ILTs improve instructional quality by implementing responsive strategies that provide instructional supports for students struggling with ELA and/or math content			
STRATEGIES	***MEASURES***	***TARGETS***	***COLLECTED***
Activity 2.2.1: PTL2 will provide on-going training to ILTs on effective strategies for engaging ILTs in instructional improvement efforts using the COI process using data to prioritize instructional improvements and monitor the effectiveness of identified school improvement strategies.	*2.2.1:* Monthly training attendance data spreadsheets	90 % of ILT members complete 6 trainings/year	Years 1.5 - 4
Activity 2.2.2: Principals and ILTs will convene formal ILT meetings focused on conducting cycles of inquiry to improve instructional practices; ILT members apply learning from PTL2 training to address problems of practice involving an ELA and mathematics	*2.2.2:* ILT meeting log	90% ILTs meet 2 hours per month; 90% of ILTs exhibit high problem of practice identification; 80 % of ILTs report high level of engagement in decision-making for instructional improvements	Years 1.5 – 4

2) Addresses the Needs of the Target Population

PTL2 represents a comprehensive effort by consortium of ROE partners, 130 participating schools, two research organizations, and multiple statewide professional associations.[33] We will maximize service delivery systems and leverage relationship ROEs have built with area schools, while assisting in the development of more cohesive and responsive supports for districts and school leaders. PTL2 represents the best research-based instructional leadership development practices and the most responsive adult learning methods. PTL2 group training, 1-on-1 coaching, and peer networks are tailor-made to address the national need for highly competent school leaders and ILTs. Further, it is a highly replicable and scalable model with a standard group training component. However, it is not a

[33] PTL2 partners and their roles and responsibilities are outlined in the Management Plan section of this proposal.

"cookie-cutter approach." PTL2 considers the principal's individual strengths and areas for development, along with the specific context of their school, providing a responsive support system that includes differentiated learning.

PTL2 emphasizes the role of principal as organizational leader who creates a culture where all teachers and students, particularly high-need students, are supported in meeting high standards and achieving challenging goals. PTL2 supports school leaders with effectively establishing working conditions, setting directions for teacher teams, addressing adult learning needs, and establishing effective organizational structures that improves teaching and learning in every classroom. Principals and ILTs are provided with specific tools and resources that arm them with knowledge and skills necessary to implement instructional improvement efforts targeted to real (not just perceived) instructional and/or learning gaps. PTL2 builds schoolwide capacity demonstrated in principal and teacher teams' ability to respond to ever-changing challenges that arise in today's schools.

The emergency closure period that occurred in response to the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates our project's ability to successfully address the needs of the target population. PTL saw a dramatic increase in time spent in coaching as schools attempted to shift on a dime to a remote learning environment. The global health crisis radically altered schooling on a scale that was truly unprecedented. Not only were school leaders seeking support from the PTL project, our coaches also turned to peers, project staff, and other experts to help identify emerging best-practices. PTL Design Team members collected information from national, state, and local organizations, and developed "just in time" tools and resources to respond to the urgent need of participating schools. PTL open-source materials were developed and included a recorded COVID-Response Webinar Series. But don't take our word for it, listen to a few of our participants describe the supports they received from their project coaches during the pandemic: *https://youtu.be/NPY_lzu8StY* (See also Appendix N for information on PTL's COVID-19 Response materials, tools, resources, and recorded webinars.)

SECTION D: Adequacy of Resources/Quality of the Management Plan

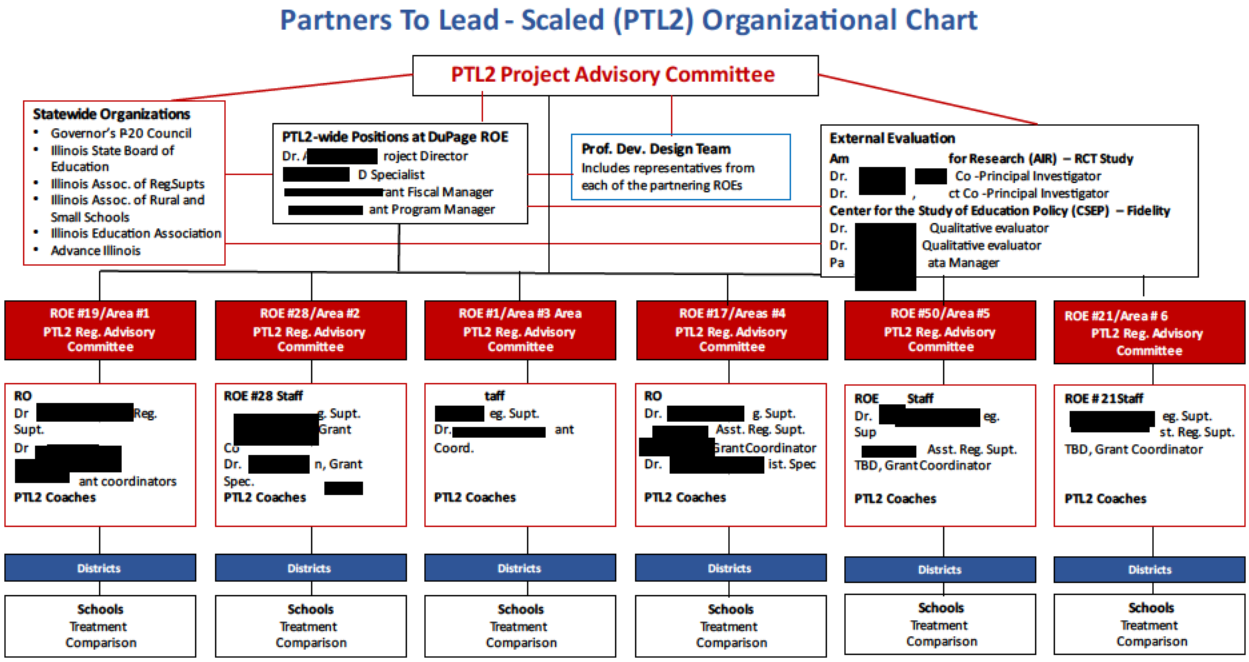
1) Capacity to Bring the Project to Scale on a Regional Level

The PTL2 project will be housed at DuPage ROE #19. PTL2 is based on a successful EIR Early Phase grant that demonstrates our capacity to manage a large-scale federal grant. Project staff all have extensive experience managing federal grants, and coaches have previously led schools and/or districts and have a proven track record of increasing student growth and achievement. PTL2 appropriately aligns grant resources to most crucial components of the grant, including: 41% on training and coaching, 31% on the external evaluation (quantitative and qualitative studies), and 26% on project staff and financial management of the grant. Additionally, PTL2 partners provide a tremendous amount of in-kind support in the form of staff time and effort.

PTL2 staff have a track record of responding to needs of schools and aligning to program goals. When other projects ceased service-delivery during the emergency closure period brought on by COVID-19, PTL staff and coaches doubled their efforts to respond to emerging needs of participating schools. Our evaluation partners at AIR developed new surveys to help us understand what was happening in schools. Coaching time increased, as did our efforts to provide participants with just in time supports. We were able to shift because we develop all materials in-house by a PD Design Team, which responded quickly with needed materials. Figure 2 represents the organizational chart for PTL2 project.

Key project personnel and project partners were selected based on their professional experience, formal training, subject-matter expertise, and commitment to the project's goals. Many have worked together for multiple years on state policy reform initiatives and on previous projects. Relationships and trust built through previous work mitigates some challenges to collaboration and reduces delays that can occur in the initial phase of project implementation. (See Appendix B for resumes of key personnel, and Appendix K for a map of PTL2 locations.)

Figure 2: PTL2 Organizational Chart



Additional details on key personnel are included in Table 3, including backgrounds, amount of time devoted to PTL2 and each role in the project. (See key personnel resumes in Appendix B).

Table 3: **Key Project Personnel: Roles & Responsibilities**

Name	Affiliation	Background	Time	Role in PLT2 Project
Fiscal Agent - Key Personnel				
Dr. [redacted]	DuPage ROE	Served as Co-Director for EIR Early Phase, SLP, and SEED grants; former principal and district administrator	50%	Project Director
Dr. [redacted]	DuPage ROE	Elected Regional Superintendent; appointed by the governor to the board of IBHE;	5% In Kind	Administrative Oversight
Dr [redacted]	DuPage ROE	Chief School Business Officer, Served as an auditor for the state, MBA	5% In Kind	Fiscal Oversight
[redacted]	DuPage ROE	Previously served as a PD Specialist for EIR Early Phase and SEED grants; former principal with extensive experience in school improvement	100%	Professional Dev. Specialist
[redacted]	DuPage ROE	Chief School Business Officer with background in school finance; MBA	75%	Grant Financial Administrator
[redacted]	DuPage ROE	Experience with conference planning, and organizational management	75%	Administrative Assistant

Partners - Key Personnel				
[redacted] and Dr. [redacted]	ROE #19	Former principals and district administrators	100% Partial In kind	Regional Grant Coordinators
Dr. [redacted]	ROE #1	Former rural principal and district administrator	50% In kind	Regional Grant Coordinator
Dr. [redacted]	ROE #28	Former rural principal and superintendent	50% In kind	Regional Grant Coordinator
[redacted]	ROE #17	Former principal and district administrator	10% In kind	Assist. Reg. Supt.
[redacted]	ROE #17	Former principal and superintendent	50% In kind	Regional Grant Coordinator
TBD	ROE #50	Prior experience as a principal and in a role supporting/supervising principals	100%	Regional Grant Coordinator
TBD	ROE #21	Prior experience as a principal and in a role supporting/supervising principals	100%	Regional Grant Coordinator
PLT2 Coaches	Each ROE	Coaches will be selected based on specific criteria established according to job description and hiring protocol	20-50%	Each ROE will hire 2-3 Coaches to support principals and ILT members
Dr. [redacted]	ROE #28	Former rural principal and superintendent	50%	District Technical Assistance
Dr. [redacted]	ROE #17	Former principal and large district superintendent	50%	District Technical Assistance
Dr. [redacted]	ROE #19	Former suburban principal and superintendent	50%	District Technical Assistance
External Evaluation - Key Personnel				
Dr. [redacted]	AIR	Principal Researcher at AIR, has conducted extensive research on educator effectiveness	Project based	Co-Principal Investigator, Conducting RCT Study
Dr. [redacted]	AIR	Principal Economic Researcher at AIR, previous research on educator effectiveness	Project based	Co-Principal Investigator, Conducting RCT Study
Dr. [redacted]	CSEP	Previously served as Co-Director for EIR Early Phase, SLP, and SEED grants; appointed by the governor to the IL P-20 Council	50%	Qualitative Project Evaluation Team
Dr. [redacted]	CSEP	Previously served as Co-Director for a SEED grant; extensive experience as a researcher on numerous state and federal projects	50%	Qualitative Project Evaluation Team
[redacted]	CSEP	Previously served as grant manager on a SEED grant, experience with budget and compliance regulations	50%	Data Manager
In-Kind Staff Supports				
[redacted]	ROE #1	Elected Regional Supt; former Assist. Regional Supt. and elementary school principal	In kind	Oversee ROE participation in the project; serve on Project Advisory Committee

Dr. [redacted]	ROE #17	Elected Regional Sup.; former prof. dev. director for ROE; EdD in Ed. Adm. & Policy	In kind	Oversee ROE participation in the project; serve on Project Advisory Committee
[redacted]	ROE #21	Elected Regional Supt; former alternative school principal; former teacher	In kind	Oversee district participation in the project and serve on the Project Advisory Committee
[redacted]	ROE #28	Elected Regional Supt; former P-12 teacher and university administrator	In kind	Oversee district participation in the project and serve on the Project Advisory Committee
[redacted]	ROE #50	Elected Regional Supt; former teacher and Title I and gifted coordinator	In kind	Oversee district participation in the project and serve on the Project Advisory Committee
IL Gov's Office Staff	Office of Governor	Leverage support with Educator Pipeline Data Portal and Diverse Educator Pipeline	In kind	In-kind contributions identified in letter of support from Education Systems
ISBE staff	State Board of Ed	Statewide support with scaling and sustaining through leveraging state resources and seeking state funding	In kind	In-kind contributions identified in letter of support
IEA Staff	Teacher's Union	Statewide union serving important policy role, including work with Governor's P-20 Council;	In kind	In-kind contributions identified in letter of support
IARSS Staff	Regional Supts	Statewide org. for ROEs; support to build ROE Leadership Hub model	In kind	In-kind contributions identified in letter of support
AIRSS Staff	Rural Schools	Statewide org. to ensure PTL2 responds to rural schools' needs	In kind	In-kind contributions identified in letter of support
Advance Illinois	Advance Illinois	State advocacy support & alignment of work with broader policy agenda	In kind	In-kind contributions identified in letter of support

To maximize the impact of robust partnerships, PTL ROEs have outlined specific expectations and responsibilities in formal MOUs (Appendix C includes partner MOUs and Letters of support). Policy partners, including Governor's Office, ISBE Department of District and School Leadership, and other key organizational partners will be integral in communicating with policymakers and promoting PTL2 sustainability and replication as a statewide policy agenda.

2) Management Plan/Roles, Responsibilities, Timelines, and Milestones

PTL2 key personnel and their roles and responsibilities are outlined in the table above, including both grant-funded and in-kind positions. The **33 positions involved in PTL2 demonstrate extensive capacity to meet project milestones and goals**. The list represents a variety of roles at partner institutions (ROEs, policy and research organizations, professional associations, etc.) and were chosen based on previous experience, success with collaborative partnerships, and understanding of

effective school improvement strategies. They will apply that knowledge and experiences to **ensure project activities, fiscal administration, and the research component all operate as planned.** For example, ROE personnel **will leverage existing relationships with area District Leaders to meet the PTL2 scaling goal** by recruiting 80 new schools.

Critical to the project's sustainability will be the expanded role ROEs will have in state policy collaborations with ISBE, IBHE, and Governor's Office. Additionally, Project Director, Dr. Alicia Haller has experience managing large federal, state, and foundation grants. She currently serves as the Co-Director of a $4M EIR Early Phase grant and a $16M SEED grant (TEAM Lead)., both of which end in 2022. Dr. Haller previously served as a Project Director on three School Leadership Program grants (IL-PART, ELIS, and ELIS II). She has **successfully track record of leading projects that achieved their goals - on time and within budget.** Dr. Haller's will allocate resources and manage project workflow to ensure all milestones are met. In-kind contributions from each of the partnering Regional Superintendents, and Regional Grant Coordinator ill support the logistics involved in regional delivery of PTL2 training and coaching services, as well as support a Regional Advisory Committee that provides feedback to inform PTL2 improvements and sustainability. Table 4 below outlines the project milestones, including the timeline for project activities involved in interventions, and the qualitative and quantitative research studies.

Table 4: **PTL2 Milestones/Timeline/Responsibilities**

Milestones	2022 Year 1	2023 Year 2	2024 Year 3	2025 Year 4	2026 Year 5
Recruitment and selection of 80 schools *Persons Responsible:* ROEs	Jan-May				
Random selection of treatment and control schools *Persons Responsible:* AIR	May				
Readiness for treatment sites *Persons Responsible:* ROEs; AIR	June-August				
Ongoing Implementation Activities					
Bi-Monthly Coordinators Meetings *Persons Responsible:* CSEP; ROEs; PTL Coordinators	All 12 months (2x/mo)	All 12 months (2x/mo	All 12 months (2x/mo	All 12 months (2x/mo	All 12 months (2x/mo

Monthly Coach Training Sessions *Persons Responsible:* ROEs; PLT Coordinators; Trainers	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec
Monthly Coaching Sessions *Persons Responsible:* ROE Coaches	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec
Monthly Principal Training and/or Networking Sessions *Persons Responsible:* ROEs; PTL Coordinators	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec
Monthly ILT Meetings *Persons Responsible:* Principals and ILT members	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec
Regional Advisory Committee Meetings (quarterly) *Persons Responsible:* ROEs; PLT Coordinators	Jan; Apr;Aug; Oct/Nov	Jan; Apr;Aug; Oct/Nov	Jan; Apr;Aug; Oct/Nov	Jan; Apr;Aug; Oct/Nov	Jan; Apr;Aug; Oct/Nov
Biweekly Project Professional Development Design Team Meetings *Persons Responsible:* PD Dev Specialist	All 12 months (2x/mo)	All 12 months (2x/mo)	All 12 months (2x/mo)	All 12 months (2x/mo)	All 12 months (2x/mo)
Advisory Committee Mtgs. *Persons Responsible:* ROEs; PLT Coordinators	February; July (2x/yr)	February; July (2x/yr)	February; July (2x/yr)	February; July (2x/yr)	February; July (2x/yr)
Data Collection & Analysis					
Monthly coaching logs (minutes, format, focus) *Persons Responsible:* CSEP	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec
Monthly Vital Signs Survey (e.g., ILT and teacher teams) *Persons Responsible:* CSEP	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec
Monthly Coach Training Evaluation Surveys *Persons Responsible:* CSEP	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec
Monthly Principal Training Evaluation Surveys *Persons Responsible:* ROEs; Grant Coordinators; CSEP	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec
Monthly Principal Training Attendance Data *Persons Responsible:* ROEs; Grant Coordinators; CSEP	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec
Monthly Coach Training Attendance Data *Persons Responsible:* PD Dev Specialist	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec	Jan-June; Aug-Dec
Qualitative Study of Principal Project Experiences Persons Responsible: CSEP	Mar-Dec	Jan-Dec	Jan-Dec	Jan-Dec	Jan-Dec
Annual Principal Survey on PD Experiences *Persons Responsible:* AIR		Apr-May	Apr-May	Apr-May	
Climate & Culture Survey *Persons Responsible:* AIR		July	July	July	
Student Assessments *Persons Responsible:* AIR		Nov. - Dec.	Nov. - Dec.	Nov-Dec.	
Quarterly Reports for Project Continuous Improvements *Persons Responsible:* CSEP	June; Oct; Dec	Mar; June; Oct; Dec	Mar; June; Oct; Dec	Mar; June; Oct; Dec	
Annual Evaluation Reports *Persons Responsible:* AIR; CSEP		Feb	Feb	Feb	Feb

3) Reasonable Costs in Relation to Objectives, Design, and Potential Significance

PTL2 is a cost-effective way to increase educator effectiveness **(objective 1)** and improve teaching and learning schoolwide **(objective 1 and 2).** The PTL2 project design benefits from all the capacity-building and material development that was completed through our previous project. The PTL project involved a five-year, $4 million investment, that served 53 schools. As part of that project, ROE partners engaged in a comprehensive cost model review, applying an analogous method for cost estimating, to ensure the **project service costs were both reasonable and sustainable**. PTL2 will scale PTL to include a total of 130 schools,[34] **impacting roughly 70,000 students, at a cost of $84.38 per student.**[35] Each of the ROEs involved are in the process of launching a fee-for-service model to further scale the improved model, providing a more comprehensive support system than other training and coaching programs currently operating in Illinois. Through PTL2, ROEs that participated in PTL will continue to collaborate by identifying additional efficiencies that can support long-term sustainability. This will be important as some districts plan to use ESSER III funding for services from the ROEs and may not able to sustain that after funding ends in 2024.

PTL2 is not only appropriate, it represents a massive return on investment. School leaders have a profound impact on student outcomes. A recent meta-analysis revealed that increasing school leadership effectiveness by one standard deviation could lead to a ten-percentile point gain in student achievement.[36] Also, "the positive impact of principal effectiveness on teacher outcomes are even greater in disadvantaged schools."[37] Therefore, developing a highly effective principal may be the most powerful and cost-effective method to improve schools, because there is no evidence of a low-performing school ever being turned around absent the intervention of a powerful leader.[38] Principal

[34] 130 includes 40 treatment schools, 40 control school (will receive delayed treatment), and 50 demonstration schools.
[35] Not including the qualitative or quantitative research studies.
[36] Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003
[37] Grissom, 2011
[38] Leithwood, et al. 2004

leadership is the single most determinant factor in teacher attrition, with even greater influence on retention of diverse teachers.[39] Research indicates that 38% of teachers who change schools and 26% who leave the profession cite insufficient support by principal as their primary reason.[40] That turnover costs the US up to $2.2B annually[41] and is why leadership development has been identified as a key strategy for addressing the teacher shortage.[42] Ineffective principals can certainly be replaced, but that too has negative consequences. In fact, students and districts both pay a steep price when it comes to principal attrition, as student achievements has been shown to decrease in the year following a principal departure,[43] and hiring and onboarding a new principal costs districts on average $75,000.[44]

SECTION V: Project Evaluation

American Institutes for Research (AIR) has designed a feasible experimental study that measures program impact on student ELA and mathematics performance, school culture and school staffing that meets ***What Works Clearinghouse 4.1 standards without reservations*** (Institute of Education Sciences, 2020)[45] when fully implemented. The PTL2 study: answers critical questions about scaling leadership professional development programs at regional levels within a state, across diverse schools and geographies; and considers how leadership professional learning costs change with scale without loss of implementation. Table 5 displays alignment between goals, research questions and data. To sensitize PTL2 to potential service/outcomes disparities, we plan to obtain, analyze, and report findings (See Appendix J).

[39] Ingersoll, R. & May, H., 2011
[40] Ingersoll & Smith 2003; Luekens, Lyter, Fox & Chandler 2004
[41] Alliance for Excellent Education, 2018
[42] Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, and Carver-Thomas, 2016; Learning Policy Institute, 2016; Barnett, Henry, Vann, & St Clement, 2008
[43] Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom & Anderson. 2010
[44] Beteille, T., Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2011; and Johnson, 2005
[45] The AIR research team is well-positioned to implement the study because the team has studied PTL through an EIR early phase grant.

Table 5: **Alignment of Research Questions with Outcomes and Data Sources**

Project Goals	Research Questions	Data Sources
D1. Impact Study		
Student Outcomes		
Statistically-significant, positive student ELA and mathematics academic achievement	**RQ1:** What is the impact of the PTL2 on students' (1a) achievement in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics? (1b) Did effects differ by student demographics and school characteristics?	(1a) Student Illinois Assessment of Readiness and SAT[46] test scores from Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), ACCESS student scores; (1b) ISBE student and school characteristics.
Educator Outcomes		
Statistically-significant, positive school culture and instructional leadership quality	**RQ2:** What is the impact of PTL2 on schoolwide culture and instructional leadership quality in ELA and mathematics?	Teacher responses to the annual Illinois *5Essentials* survey[47].
D2. Implementation Study		
Strong implementation fidelity, as described in the fidelity of implementation matrix	**RQ3:** To what extent was PTL2 implemented with fidelity? (5a) Did implementation differ across school levels and school locations? (5b) Why does implementation vary across school levels and school locations?	Program fidelity of implementation measures, including coaching log, training attendance data, end-of-session surveys, program document review; and interviews with PTL2 project administrators.
Provide equitable service at reasonable cost across sites	**RQ4:** What is the total cost of PTL2 implementation, cost per principal and cost per student? (6a) Do costs vary by school location?	DuPage County ROE and school district financial records; ISBE school grade band, student demographics, staffing data; federal school urbanicity and location data.

1) Impact Study: Meets WWC Standards Without Reservations

AIR will use a cluster-randomized control trial (CRT) design with school-level random assignment to evaluate the impact of the PTL2 in 80 Illinois public schools (Detail in Appendix J). In a CRT, individuals (in this case students and school staff) are randomly assigned to the treatment or comparison based on the cluster (in this case schools) they are in: students and staff who are in treatment schools are

[46] Starting with the 2016-17 school year, all Illinois public school students in Grade 11 are required to complete the SAT. The SAT serves as the state assessment for purposes of state and federal accountability.
[47] https://asqnc.com/?page_id=2302

exposed to the intervention, and students in staff in control schools are not. A CRT design is used when testing impact on a system or collective unit, such as PTL2 schools implementing new COI strategies, though the treatment may not be taken up by all individuals within the unit.[48] A well-designed CRT with low levels of cluster-level attrition, low risk of individuals joining clusters following randomization (or where joiners pose no risk of bias), and low rates of individual non-response is eligible to meet WWC standards without reservations. To ensure low levels of attrition and non-response, we will analyze program impacts in an intent-to-treat (ITT) framework, in which outcomes are analyzed for schools as randomized for duration of the study, even if schools change conditions.

To reduce the potential differences between schools randomized to treatment and control groups, AIR will sort schools into blocks based on schools' ROE, school level (elementary, middle, or high) and baseline achievement (high or low) and then, prior to the start of the 2022–23 school year, randomly assign schools within each block to either treatment or control conditions (with equal probability of assignment to treatment). AIR will randomly assign 40 schools to PTL2 treatment and the other 40 to control group, which will receive three-year delayed treatment after PTL2 impact has been measured (2024-25). In the design, students and teachers are nested within schools.

Schools recruited to be randomly assigned to intervention or control conditions will meet criteria designed to minimize study attrition and ensure that program impact is evaluated for a diverse set of students. The schools will be (a) located within a public school district; (b) committed to joining the intervention/control group and the research study for the duration of the project; (c) committed to allocating principal time to fully participate in PTL2; (d) supportive of retaining effective principals in schools for the duration of the project; (e) organized with a schoolwide instructional leadership team and content/grade teacher teams; and (f) be representative of schools and students in participating ROEs in terms of school level, school urbanicity, and student economic disadvantage, English

[48] Cook, DeLong, Vollmer, & Heagerty, 2016

proficiency, disability status, race, and ethnicity. AIR will survey comparison-group principals annually to confirm that crossover has not occurred and that principals in comparison schools have not received professional development similar to that provided by PTL2.

Our use of an experimental research design, valid and reliable outcome measures, and industry-standard analytic methods ensures that the impact evaluation produces effectiveness evidence that meets the WWC evidence standards without reservations. We will compare the outcomes between schools assigned to the treatment and control groups to test the extent to which PTL2 has a positive impact on student achievement, school culture, and educator retention. We analyze impact data using multilevel regression methods that account for the variability in school, teacher, and student characteristics, blocked random assignment, and clustering of teachers and students in schools. AIR will analyze potential moderators of program impact, including student race, ethnicity, gender, school grade band and urbanicity, to explore program strengths and limitations.

The study design has sufficient statistical power to detect PTL2 effect on outcomes. AIR will use an ITT framework, analyzing outcomes for schools as randomized for the duration of the study, even if schools change conditions or exit from program participation. AIR will obtain data on outcomes from Illinois State Board of Education, which will allow for intent-to-treat analyses of all schools as randomized for the duration of the study. Therefore, AIR expects little, if any, study attrition. If outcome data is available for all schools initially assigned to the treatment or comparison condition, the minimum detectable effect size (MDES) for student-level achievement outcomes is 0.18 and the MDES for school-level outcomes (school culture) is 0.55. See Appendix J for detail on power analysis.

AIR has selected valid and reliable outcome measures that provide objective assessment of project impact. (Details in Appendix J) The outcome measures include standardized test scores, state and district administrative records, and survey measures:

- ***Student ELA and mathematics achievement scores.*** We will use student-level Illinois Assessment of Readiness standardized test scores for elementary and middle schools and student-level SAT test scores in high schools.[49]
- ***5 Essentials school culture survey*** will be used as a medial impact measure. The 5 Essentials survey was developed by researchers at the University of Chicago. It is administered annually to teachers within schools by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and includes an instructional leadership construct.[50] The survey displays Rasch individual reliabilities on subscales between 0.64 and 0.92, and school reliabilities between 0.55 and 0.88.

2) Implementation Study: Guidance about strategies for effective replication

RQ3 and RQ4 evaluate program cost and fidelity of implementation across diverse educator contexts, describing conditions for effective implementation and replication. Annual implementation study reporting will be timed to continuously improve implementation of the proposed PTL2 program, and an end-of-treatment, summative report describes organizational conditions for strong/weak PTL2 implementation.[51] AIR will not report implementation for schools receiving the delayed treatment in 2024-25.

RQ3 uses quantitative and qualitative data to describe implementation across diverse student, school (e.g. grade band, urbanicity, region in state) and leader (e.g., years of experience in school) contexts. Two analytic approaches will be used to describe and explain PTL2 implementation. Statistical analyses of program implementation fidelity and qualitative analysis of treatment school leaders' and teachers' description of project participation, These data will be compared to a detailed fidelity matrix created by AIR and DuPage ROE, in collaboration with EIR technical assistance providers (Details in Table D1 in Appendix J).

The study includes a cost analysis (RQ5) to document direct and indirect total program cost, cost per treatment principal and cost per treatment student. Cost by school location are calculated to

[49] Beginning in 2016, all Illinois public school students in Grade 11 were required to complete the SAT for state and federal accountability.
[50] https://www.isbe.net/Documents/5E-survey-manual-2016-17.pdf
[51] We foresee creating a readiness guide for PtL implementation, which describes organizational conditions for implementation. We will not fund production of the readiness guide through EIR.

explore variation and access due to distance from training sites. "Direct costs" are incurred by DuPage County ROE and partnering agencies in the provision of professional learning to include administration, financial incentives, and other frontline services. "Indirect costs" include school/district costs such as principal and teacher hourly wages, educator substitute costs, curriculum planning, material/website development and other secondary costs for PTL2 participation and implementation. Direct and indirect costs will be added together to determine "total program cost."

AIR will examine budget reporting documents to determine total direct and indirect costs using the "ingredients" method for apportioning program costs from within budget line items.[52] As a condition of grant participation, DuPage ROE will require districts and partnering agencies to report financial data to AIR. AIR will consult with DuPage ROE and school districts on current budget line items, financial definitions in order to formulate a budget data request, and provide reporting forms to districts in order to conduct the cost analysis and reduce variation in cost reporting across organizations.

Total program cost will be compared with program effectiveness metrics to create a cost-effectiveness ratio. Two effectiveness metrics will be addressed: student performance (outcome)and COI implementation (implementation metric). AIR plans to examine cost variation within the treatment group, as a factor in program scaling. We anticipate program implementation costs will vary by school performance history, location, grade band and other factors.

Qualitative Implementation Studies

Project researchers at CSEP will also conduct qualitative studies of project implementation to track fidelity of implementation, as well as to collect the experiences of PTL2 principals and their ILTs. With these studies, researchers are able to provide more timely reports of how the project is being implemented in the schools and the effects it is having on leadership practice, organizational routines, instructional quality, and student learning. Formatively, these data can be used by project

[52] Hollands, et al., 2014; Levin and McEwan, 2001

staff, PD design team, and ROE staff to make adjustments to project PD training and coaching activities, and the development of additional resources and differentiated PD. The PTL2 PD Design Team and project staff receive quarterly reports of implementation data to guide the development of additional trainings, resources for coaches, principals, and ILTs.

Summatively, the qualitative data will provide descriptive data that uncovers the underlying mechanisms—the variable and invariable characteristics—of the PTL2 project model that should be sustained as well as the regional and local contexts that will foster the sustainability of this project model in schools (e.g., school demographics, urbanicity, school level). Table 6 shows the alignment between the project goals, qualitative research questions, and data sources.

Table 6: **Alignment of Qualitative Research with Outcomes and Data Sources**

Project Goals	Research Questions	Data Sources
Effects of Project on Participants		
Student Outcomes		
Positive student ELA and mathematics academic achievement	**QRQ1:** How does participation in the PTL2 project help leaders and ILTs improve student learning in their schools?	Interviews & focus groups with principals, ILT members, other school staff; Artifacts (e.g., ILT agendas; lesson plans; curriculum maps; formative assessments; student work)
Educator Outcomes		
Positive school culture and instructional leadership quality	**QRQ2:** What is the impact of PTL2 on schoolwide culture and instructional leadership quality in ELA and mathematics?	Interviews & focus groups with principals, ILT members, other school staff; artifacts of shared decision-making and other organizational routines that foster a culture of inquiry
Fidelity of Implementation Study		
Strong implementation fidelity, as described in the fidelity of implementation matrix	**QRQ3:** To what extent was PTL2 implemented with fidelity? (5a) Did implementation differ across school levels and school locations? (5b) Why does implementation vary across school levels and school locations?	Program fidelity of implementation measures, including coaching log, training attendance data, end-of-session surveys, program document review; and interviews with PTL2 project administrators.