PROJECT edPIRATE

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Introduction

East Carolina University (ECU) College of Education (COE) in partnership with ECU's

Thomas Harriot College of Arts & Sciences (THCAS), four high-need rural Local Education

Agencies (LEAs): Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools (ECPPS), Greene County Schools

(GCS), Lenoir County Public Schools (LCS), and Washington County Schools (WCS), and 28

high-need elementary and middle schools within these districts propose Project edPIRATE

(Educator Pipeline In Rural Action for Teaching Equity) to develop effective K-8 teachers and

school leaders, improve student achievement, and increase the recruitment and retention of

diverse educators in our high need rural communities under **Absolute Priority 4. We will also**

respond to Competitive Preference Priorities 1-4 and the Invitational Priority.

ECU, located in Greenville, North Carolina (NC), is one of 17 constituent institutions of the

University of North Carolina system. With a mission of regional transformation, ECU is a

leading producer of teachers and administrators in the state's rural eastern region averaging 700

program completers annually across all licensure areas. ECU's exam pass rates for teachers,

overall and by license group, demonstrate that graduates have the content knowledge needed to

pass licensure exams within the three-year testing window allowed by NC. In 2016, the overall

pass rate for teachers was 94% and in 2017, the overall pass rate was 91%. Pass rates are 82%,

88%, and 88% for teacher cohorts completing in 2019, 2020, and 2021, respectively; however,

this data is preliminary, as these candidates remain within their testing window. NC Department

of Public Instruction data also shows that ECU has an overall pass rate of 94% in the required

edTPA teacher performance assessment across all pathways and licensure areas. ECU's teacher

preparation programs are CAEP accredited.

ECU's Department of Educational Leadership (LEED) serves aspiring school leaders

(principals and assistant principals) as well as district personnel. LEED has four programs to achieve this: Master of School Administration, Educational Specialist, Educational Doctorate, and a standalone Dual Language Administration certificate that prepares leaders to meet the needs of Multilingual Learners (English Language Learners). Over the past two years, 90 students have graduated from ECU's MSA programs; all of them earned principal licensure. ECU's EdD program recommends more than 20 candidates for superintendent licenses each year. LEED graduates hold more school and district positions than another other university in NC: currently 392 assistant principal positions, 376 principal positions, and 22 superintendents (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2020). LEED has agreements with 12 LEAs to deliver the MSA program in district cohort models. These agreements and recruitment efforts are a result of a collaborative effort among the superintendents and leadership teams in the respective districts. Placement data show that MSA candidates serve small and large enrollment districts with racial diversity ranging from 23% students of color to 90% or greater students of color. The MSA program is nationally recognized by CAEP, ELCC/NELP, and SPA.

Both undergraduate and graduate educator preparation programs have rigorous entrance and graduation requirements. ECU initial license preparation programs consist of rigorous core education courses and content-specific pedagogical courses aligned to Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) and NC Professional Educator Standards. ECU's quality assurance system uses multiple data points to assess candidates' performance and readiness to teach. Coursework and multiple clinical experiences prepare candidates to understand the critical concepts and principles of their discipline and to effectively work with diverse P-12 students. Analysis of teacher candidate performance data from proprietary and ECU created assessments, aligned to INTASC standards, clearly demonstrates that candidates can

effectively apply their knowledge to meet student needs (ECU CAEP Report, 2021).

Project edPIRATE reforms ECU's MAT program at the K-8 level by adding a residency component with stipends to counteract declining enrollment and numerous curricular reforms to meet the needs of our LEA partners. The revised program includes a one-year teacher residency with living stipends, graduate classes taught using a hybrid online-in-person model, and extended support for teachers after graduation. Complementing this teacher residency program, our leadership program will improve pre-service preparation of school leaders enrolled in ECU's MSA programs with programming specifically designed to address equity and rural educational justice, add a currently lacking mentoring component for new principals and assistant principals graduating from the MSA program, and develop skills of principals interested in ECU's EdS and EdD programs and serving as superintendents of rural districts. These principals will be supported in completing our micro-credential program with a focus on supporting new teachers.

As described in our Project Design section and documented in the TQP checklists, both the MAT teacher residency and school leadership programs include multiple evidence-based components and meet all of the statutory requirements for these programs.

a. Quality of the Project Design

i. Demonstrates a rationale

██████████ famously stated, "Only a change in practice produces a genuine change in norms and values. Or, to put it more crudely, grab people by their practice and their hearts and minds will follow" (p. 3). This project will fuse two bifurcated worlds: (1) the pre-service preparation of school teachers and leaders and (2) the induction and in-service professional development of school teachers and leaders. To do so, we use evidence-based practices to increase relational trust ██████████████████████████████████ as a pre-

condition for school change that emphasizes educational justice (███████████ ███ ████ resulting in synergistic systemic improvement in our rural communities (████████ █████████████.

  This project is rooted in a theory of action derived from both scholarship and practice: **IF** professional development is tightly coupled for pre- and in-service teachers and leaders providing them with a common framework, **THEN** rural schools can improve recruitment, reduce turnover, and improve classroom teaching and the instructional, equity focused leadership necessary to create the conditions for improving student academic achievement for all. As shown in Figure 1, (See Appendix C for full Logic Model with measurable outcomes), our project meets the challenges of building teacher and leader capacity in a rural context (high turnover, small

Figure 1: Project edPIRATE Simplified Logic Model
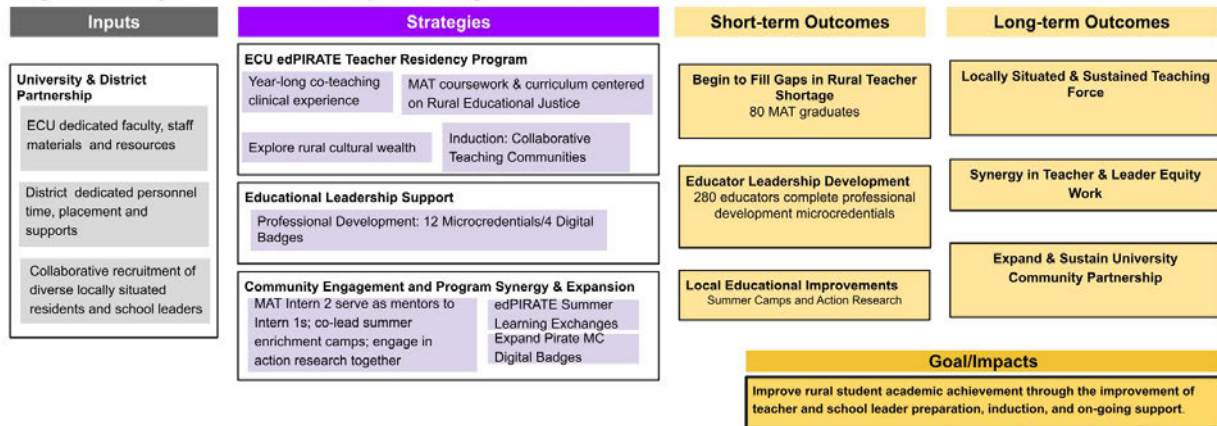
pool of qualified candidates, long distances between schools and outside resources, and high levels of poverty) with a set of research-based strategies and signature activities that build organizational coherence and individual capacity to achieve outcomes. Ultimately, ***our goal is to improve student academic achievement for all students through improvement of teacher and school leader preparation, induction, and on-going support in rural districts.***

Responding to LEA Needs

    ████████████████ Project edPIRATE design responds to both ECU and rural partner LEAs' needs. We have conducted an extensive needs assessment. As documented in Appendix B, while triangulated data from recent ECU graduates and LEA employers indicate overall ECU program strength, supporting English Language Learners (ELLs), students with disabilities (SWD), and Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) students consistently appear as areas needing increased attention in our preparation and on-going professional development programs. Furthermore, while our preparation programs are strong, induction programs and on-going support are lacking in these rural LEAs. North Carolina and our partner districts also have significant shortages in designated high-need areas: middle and elementary grades (NCACTE Advocacy and Policy Committee, 2022). O

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Partner district and school data as shown in Tables 1 - 3 and Figure 2, documented more fully in Appendix B, highlight the challenges including poverty, low achievement, and remoteness faced by rural districts. High teacher turnover in particular indicates a need to recruit people from within these communities, who are willing to commit to ongoing service there, and then to support their success with induction programs and enriched learning communities.

All four districts are located in eastern NC, but to the west of the more prosperous coastal counties (See map in Appendix B). All four are based in counties designated as Tier 1 - most economically distressed by the North Carolina of Commerce. As shown in Appendix B, our needs assessment found that child (ages 5 to 17) poverty in 2020 ranged from 23.5% for Lenoir County Public Schools to 36.4% in Washington County Schools (SAIPE, 2020). Moreover, as documented in Table 2 and in Appendix B, our partner districts need (a) highly qualified teachers that meet the requirements for full state licensure, (b) structures and supports that sustain a new teacher pipeline, and (c) structures and support for educator retention. Teacher turnover (attrition in NC) ranged from 8.7% in LCS to 15.7% in WCS in 2021 compared to an 8.2% state average; each of the districts reported more than 10% of teachers with emergency, provisional or temporary licensure (WCS has 28% of teachers in this category this year) compared to 6.3% in NC as a whole; and all LEAs reported difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified teachers and principals. Moreover, all of the LEAs report a need to hire a higher percentage of teachers of color to better represent the diversity of their student population. See Figure 2.

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Table 1: Partner LEA Data

ECPPS[1]	24.1%	RLIS	RF:41	9.9%	28.1%	216 (4%)	1
GCS	27.9%	RLIS	RD:42	17.6%	30.1%	363(13.3%)	1
LCS	23.5%	N/A	RF:41	18.6%	27.3%	455(5.5%)	1
WCS	36.4%	RLIS	RF:41	26.3%	24.3%	43(4.1%)	1
NC	17.0%	N/A	N/A	40.0%	46.0%	131,247(9.6%)	N/A

Notes: [1]ECCPS is Pasquotank County Schools in SAIPE database. [2]SAIPE, 2020. [3]DOE, 2022. [4]NCES, 2022. [5]NCDPI, 2021, [6]NCDPI, 2021, [7]NCDPI, 2022b, [8]NCDOC, 2022.

Table 2: Indications of Need for Professionally Trained Teachers in Partner LEAs

ECPPS	12.3%	43 (12%)	73 (21%)
GCS	14.5%	21 (15%)	34 (25%)
LCS	8.70%	60 (11%)	50 (9%)
WCS	15.7%	16 (28%)	21 (26%)
NC	**8.20%**	**6.3%**[4]	**19%**[5]

Notes: [1] LEA self-report, 2022. [2] LEA self-report, 2022. [3] LEA self-report, 2022. [4] NCDPI, 2022c. [5] NCDPI, 2022c.

Table 3: Partner School Data

GCS	Greene County Middle	06-08	≥ 90%	RF: 41	20.7	32.4
GCS	Greene County Intermediate	04-05	≥ 90%	RF: 41	22.3	28
GCS	Snow Hill Primary	PK-01	≥ 90%	RF: 41	N/A	N/A
GCS	West Greene Elementary	02-03	≥ 90%	RF: 41	25.6	30.1
LCS	Banks Elementary	PK-05	≥ 90%	RD: 42	35.9	38.5
LCS	Contentnea-Savannah	PK-08	≥ 90%	RD: 42	30.4	33.5
LCS	EB Frink Middle	06-08	≥ 90%	RD: 42	35.4	35.1
LCS	LaGrange Elementary	PK-05	≥ 90%	RD: 42	31.9	35.7
LCS	Lenoir C. Learning Academy	PK-12	≥ 90%	RD: 42	<5	7.7
LCS	Moss Hill Elementary	K-05	≥ 90%	RD: 42	40.4	41.2
LCS	Northeast Elementary	PK-05	≥ 90%	RD: 42	6.4	11.9

| LEA						
LCS	Northwest Elementary	K-05	≥ 90%	RD: 42	22.6	24.5
LCS	Pink Hill	PK-05	≥ 90%	RD: 42	36	31.1
LCS	Rochelle Middle	06-08	≥ 90%	RD: 42	9.2	19.8
LCS	Southeast Elementary	K-05	≥ 90%	RD: 42	6.7	17.2
LCS	Southwood Elementary	K-05	≥ 90%	RD: 42	28.6	23.7
LCS	Woodington Middle	06-08	≥ 90%	RD: 42	31.4	43
ECP	Elizabeth City Middle	06-08	67.59%	RF: 41	16.3	31.3
ECP	HL Trigg Community	06-12	≥ 90%	RF: 41	N/A	N/A
ECP	Northside Elementary	K-05	60.49%	RF: 41	27	37.3
ECP	JC Sawyer Elementary	K-05	≥ 90%	RF: 41	12.6	29.5
ECP	Pasquotank Elementary	K-05	≥ 90%	RF: 41	13.7	28.8
ECP	PW Moore Elementary	K-05	≥ 90%	RF: 41	7	22.2
ECP	River Road Middle	06-08	69.27%	RF: 41	18.3	36.6
ECP	Sheep-Harney Elementary	PK-05	≥ 90%	RF: 41	18.4	31.6
WCS	Creswell Elementary	PK-05	≥ 90%	RF: 41	37.8	35.3
WCS	Pines Elementary	PK-05	≥ 90%	RF: 41	13.3	19.3
WCS	Washington County Union	06-08	≥ 90%	RF: 41	10.8	25.8
NC Average:			57.7%		40	46.0
Notes: [1] NCDPI 2022a; [2] NCES 2022. RF= Rural Fringe, RD=Rural Distant; [3] NCDPI 2021; [4] NCDPI 2021						
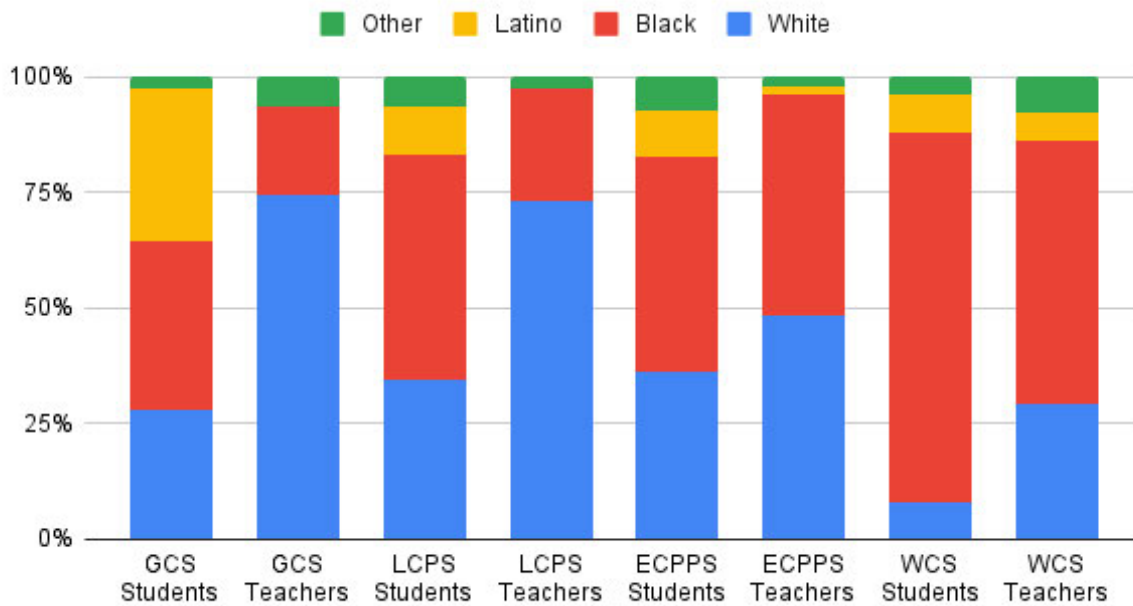
Figure 2: Student and Teacher Racial/Ethnic Representation in Partner LEAs

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Teacher Residency Program design

ECU faculty affiliated with COE's Rural Education Institute (REI) have collaborated with leaders in our partner districts to develop a comprehensive school-university-community collaborative model where teacher education, the schools, and the teaching profession fulfill a set of respective responsibilities that result in the preparation of teaching professionals who have the knowledge/skills to individually and collectively lead the transformation of rural schools and enrich the lives of diverse learners. Aligned with NC's academic achievement and content standards, and in conjunction with and in response to the needs of our partner LEAs, Project edPIRATE concentrates on preparing elementary and middle school educators with strong content knowledge, pedagogical skills, experience in making data-informed decisions and providing them with the knowledge, skills and experiences needed to meet the needs of all students including ELL and SWD. Components include: 1) recruitment of qualified teacher candidates, including deliberate strategies to recruit diverse candidates; 2) a multi-part selection process to ensure enrolled participants are likely to be successful; 3) a cohort model with groups of residents and their mentors in each district supported by coaching from project faculty; 4) graduate level coursework/experiences with a literacy and equity concentration taught by COE faculty (including the five essential components of reading instruction as defined by legislation) as well as those taught by THCAS faculty to strengthen content area knowledge aligned with the NC Standard Course of Study; 5) a one year residency of co-teaching clinical practice in a partner high need school that links explicitly to formal instruction, affording frequent opportunities to see effective teaching modeled, sustained experiences in high need rural settings, and with structured feedback and self-reflection; 6) learning exchanges and community engagement activities, and 7) continued mentoring and professional development support during the two year induction period following initial licensure. Longitudinally, no initiative will have a

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bigger impact on achieving high academic standards than ensuring equity-centered new and experienced teachers in every classroom.

Recruitment and Selection. During year 1 we will build consensus with partner districts on admission goals and priorities related to hiring needs, equity and sound pedagogical instruction in their communities. The program's focus will be on selecting diverse candidates from the communities served by the LEA partners resulting in residents who better represent the students they serve (See CPP 1 on p. 48 for specific plans to recruit persons from underrepresented groups). Further, in partnership with the Rural Schools Collaborative, we aim to recruit residents who are focused on rurality as a sense of place and identity, committed to understanding justice as it relates to rurality, and intent on community collaboration and serving as a catalyst for action (Rural Schools Collaborative, nd). Residents will be selected in a rigorous multi-stage application process including a written application, recommendations, and interviews. ECU will maintain its current high standards for admission to its MAT program which include a bachelor's degree, minimum GPA of 2.7, satisfactory entrance exam scores demonstrating content knowledge and communication skills. In addition, ECU will ensure that all residents are either recent graduates of a four-year IHE or mid-career professionals from outside the field of education possessing strong content knowledge or a record of professional accomplishment.

Participation Agreement. Once selected, residents will apply for the stipend and sign a contract providing a stipend of ██████ and agreeing to complete the residency year and committing to serve the district by teaching as a full time teacher in a partner high-need school for three years immediately following the residency year. **Our partner districts have committed to filling vacancies in high need schools with those residents who successfully complete the MAT residency program.** The partnership will document this service with

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certificates from the chief administrative officer of the LEAs at the beginning of and at the completion of each year or partial year of service. A repayment clause will be included in the case of residents who do not complete this service with certain exceptions due to lack of available positions or hardship (e.g. medical issue). edPIRATE will use any repayment to carry out activities that are aligned with the purposes of the teacher residency program. Residents will repay with interest at a rate specified in the stipend contract.

Cohort Model. We will place residents in cohorts and cohorts will be divided into two groups according to their location (NE or SE). Each year in Years 2 - 5, we will recruit and enroll a cohort of 20 students for a total of four cohorts comprising 80 students. The cohort experience begins with the edPIRATE Summer Learning Exchange (SLE) where residents, mentor teachers, district personnel, and faculty participate in a week-long experience on the ECU campus. This annual event adds opportunity for co-learning between teachers and leaders and among districts providing an opportunity to link practitioners with university researchers to share evidence-based research and practice. The planned SLE includes orientation and overview of the residency and begins developing relationships among all residents, mentors, ECU faculty, and LEA personnel. After the SLE, monthly cohort meetings with the Residency Program Coordinator are designed to build participants' awareness of requirements and timelines as well as capacity through new knowledge and skills centered on critical classroom content and community context. Each cohort will also be provided social supports to promote residents' success such as strategies designed to foster peer networking and counseling to address the challenge of balancing work, family life, and school.

Effective Pre-service Preparation. Residents will complete foundational coursework in the summer prior to clinical residency. In these courses, faculty will focus on social foundations of

education in rural areas and whole child community-centered classrooms and curriculum. We will augment this coursework with Video Grand Rounds (VGR), a teacher education innovation developed in ECU's 2009 TQP, reforming our undergraduate programs. VGR was found to increase intern reflection and observations of critical aspects of teaching in early experience coursework (Cuthrell et al., 2014). Additionally, during the 1st and last summer of the 13 month residency, residents will complete Community Engagement Activities in conjunction with existing ECU's Rural Education Institute (REI) AmeriCorps programming. These service opportunities include summer learning enrichment camps in partnership with LEAs and local community agencies such as Boys and Girls Clubs. Residents who successfully complete the service requirements will receive an AmeriCorps Segal Education Award of estimated ███ , which can be applied to current or future educational needs. Faculty instructors will coach residents and serve as site supervisors for these activities.

Residency. Residents typically begin the clinical year observing, co-teaching, and being coached by the mentor teacher; as the year goes on, they gradually become the lead classroom teacher. The first semester is designed to acclimate the resident to the classroom and school environment, specifically to policies, procedures, and the multiple roles of the classroom teacher. The mentor teacher works closely with the resident to facilitate their understanding of the diverse needs of students, and to co-plan co-delivery of instruction and assessment. During the first semester, residents work at their school 4 full days per week. On the 5th day, residents will engage in coursework and community engagement activities. The second semester is a full-time student teaching semester, with the mentor teacher providing feedback to the resident. The University Supervisor (US) and mentor teacher jointly plan observation and teaching schedules for the resident, leading to the resident's total responsibility for instruction and other tasks

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normally performed by the mentor teacher. As feasible and appropriate, residents gain experience teaching a variety of subjects within their licensure area, different grade levels, and students of differing achievement levels. Middle Grades residents will have teaching experiences in each area of concentration.

Coursework. Coursework over the 13 month program includes 30 semester hours of graduate coursework leading to the MAT degree. Per NC licensure requirements, residents complete individual courses on teaching SWD and literacy foundations. These courses include training related to participation as a member of the individualized education program teams and IDEA regulations. Foundations of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, oral reading skills, and reading comprehension strategies) and content literacy instruction will anchor the literacy course. All courses will incorporate UDL practices and will explicitly name those practices in coursework. Given the population of ELLs in our partner LEAs, additional required coursework will focus on how to best support ELL in our rural communities. Further, residents will be encouraged to pursue additional advanced certification in Special Education/Exceptional Children (SPED), AIG, and ELL.

We will adopt a non-traditional course schedule with some asynchronous options to better meet the needs of rural adult students; cohorts will meet in central locations in the NE and SE monthly for Learning Exchanges with faculty instructors. All coursework will be anchored in Rural Educational Justice. Our curriculum posits an understanding of geographical, sociopolitical, and historical context, and is designed to transform schools as sites of freedom and possibility (███████) by building humanizing (████████████████████ ██████████████████████████████████ equity-oriented (███████████ ███████████████████████ curriculum and instruction. Residents will be trained for

advocacy, justice-oriented curriculum and pedagogical best practice within a community school

whole-child model (Figure 3) in order to rigorously engage in these three guiding questions:

- **Why do we teach?** With faculty, residents will examine the historical and contemporary
  competing goals for schools and teachers. This foundational coursework will also provide
  models and examples for how schools can facilitate family-community partnerships and
  foster community-centered agency.

- **What do we teach?** Coursework will also provide residents with whole-child and justice-
  oriented curriculum frameworks. Core disciplinary concepts and literacy skills will be taught
  as strategies for meeting the demands of the whole child and community-centered social
  justice.

- **How do we teach?** Lastly, coursework will prepare residents with high quality pedagogy that
  integrates community funds of knowledge into disciplinary inquiry and literacy practices.
  Core practices from the disciplines will be embedded within larger culturally responsive
  classroom community models.

Figure 3. Incorporating Whole Child Community School Model

Mentors. Mentor teachers will be selected based on agreed-upon criteria with the partner

districts as determined by district MOUs and mandated by NC legislation: mentor teachers must

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be recommended by their principal and/or district liaison, have at least three years of successful teaching experience, and hold an appropriate subject area license. Furthermore, mentor teachers must have received an overall rating of proficient or higher on each standard within the NC Teacher Evaluation Rubric. These standards include planning and preparation, use of formative and diagnostic assessments, instruction that engages students with diverse needs and learning styles, collaboration with colleagues to improve instruction, and specific skills for reading and mathematics instruction as appropriate to their teaching area. Moreover, NC includes measures of student growth in its teacher evaluation system. From these qualified teachers, we will select mentors with licensure and teaching assignments matching the needs of the residents.

ECU's Office of Educator Preparation (OEP) hosts **Initial Mentor Teacher Training** each summer. OEP works with partner districts to offer several full-day training sessions. Topics include coaching, teacher development, intern support, communication styles, effective conferencing, and internship evaluation instruments. Ongoing professional development provides networking and growth opportunities for clinical educators creating a learning community focused on supporting student learning. Mentors participating in the Co-Teaching Residency Model are required to complete an online co-teaching training and an annual pairs training alongside their interns.

Induction Program. A structured induction program will support all MAT graduates and to the extent possible all beginning teachers in the partner LEAs for at least their first two years as teachers. Beginning teachers will engage in co-planning, co-teaching, and co-reflecting with a school-based Facilitating Teacher (FT) (in most schools- an instructional coach who has demonstrated advanced mastery on the NC Teacher Evaluation Rubric); and engage in specialized training lead by their FT focused on motivating students, using formative and

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diagnostic assessment to plan instruction, effective literacy instruction. These FTs, as demonstrated by both classroom observation and student performance data, may co-teach across multiple classrooms with other teachers and apprentice them in the art and science of what highly effective instruction looks like. Induction support will be sustained after the grant period.

Collaborative Teaching Communities. FTs will serve by leading a Collaborative Teaching Community where they work side-by-side with a team of two to four less-experienced teachers. This Collaborative Teaching Community will co-plan together, allowing the FT to indirectly influence students' learning in multiple classrooms. Mentor teachers will participate in the Collaborative Teaching Communities. A key responsibility of the Collaborative Teaching Community will be the completion of an annual Collaborative Action Research Project focused on solving a classroom or school-level concern for learning. By becoming an expert in this area, FTs will then have the ability to share the results of their Collaborative Action Research with teachers across the district, building both individual and organizational capacity using research and data to improve instruction. This FT and Collaborative Action Research model is being piloted in several school districts in NC with promising results as advanced teacher pathways are being compensated (NCDPI, 2021).

ECU Faculty Roles. ECU faculty will embed co-teaching opportunities with Collaborative Teaching Communities. They will develop and implement these during their courses and will teach those courses as part of their teaching load. Faculty will provide training to implement literacy programs that incorporate the essential components of reading instruction, and support SWD in equitable ways. The THCAS faculty will also have monthly virtual coaching hours and will be available to the Collaborative Teaching Communities to discuss common problems of practice in STEM, literacy, and critical needs related to second language learners, and

psychological trauma supports in the classroom. ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ (THCAS, Mathematics) also serves as the Director for the statewide NC Early Mathematics Placement Testing Program, which supports secondary students and teachers in math preparation for post-secondary education. Her program will provide additional math coaching supports to school partners at no cost as part of her existing program.

Integration of Program Components and Coordination of Efforts. The reformed MAT residency integrates co-teaching seamlessly as residents, mentor teachers, facilitating teachers, and ECU COE and THCAS faculty intentionally center equity and rurality in their work. Developing expertise across the continuum of preservice to in-service teachers in literacy and community schooling, while offering pathways to advance certifications in SPED, ELL, and AIG will positively impact student learning and teacher retention. Further, as demonstrated by our letters of support (See Appendix E) galvanizing REI regional and national partnerships (i.e., AMEXCAN, Policy & Innovation-University of South Carolina, Rural Schools Collaborative, National Rural Education Association) in coordination with existing long-standing local and state offices (i.e., NC DPI, NC Early Mathematics Placement Testing Program, REI AmeriCorps, NC NEA, LCSN) ensures that the reform efforts take hold and evolve. In this case, we intend for history to repeat itself as many of our FY 2009 TQP teacher education/LEA reforms led to regional and national advances in the field ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮). Currently, we aim to advance a national model for developing and supporting Rural Educational Justice teachers through the MAT teacher residency design.

Leadership Program Design

Eastern rural NC has reformed pre-service school leadership programs including a Principal Fellows Programs at ECU (Pirate Academy) funded by the NC General Assembly. However,

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none of the programs provide support for an induction component, a critical deficiency, especially in small rural districts where it is more difficult to provide coaching for new principals. Additionally, professional development for existing school leaders is frequently relegated to decontextualized reform efforts that do not sustain relationships with the districts. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, programs do not directly connect teacher pre- and in-service development *with* school leader development. We seek to disrupt these traditional delivery models. Our redesigned Educational Doctorate and MSA programs, including the state funded Pirate Leadership Academy MSA program provide robust, evidence-based school and district leadership programs that serve eastern NC including our high-need partner LEAs. As shown in Table 4, these programs have many elements of an improved pipeline for principals in rural districts (ECU CAEP, 2021), but up to now have not been able to provide induction, ongoing support, or connections to teacher pre- and in-service education. The edPIRATE partnership seeks to remedy this in our partner LEAs and the surrounding rural region. edPIRATE will provide (1) induction support by linking leaders' development as coaches to beginning teachers' development, (2) ongoing support through the development and implementation of edPIRATE Digital Badge Microcredentials (Pirate-MCs) for aspiring and current school leaders, and (3) connections between leader and teacher development by offering Pirate-MCs to teachers, linked induction support for principals and teachers, and co-learning at SLEs. These supports will be implemented directly with LEAs as well as embedded in the ECU MSA programs. The linkages between pre- and in-service education and teachers and administrators provide a common framework, language, and tools for increasing equitable classroom and leadership practices, community engagement, and ultimately student achievement.

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Table 4: Leadership program alignment with TQP Requirements

(1) Promoting strong leadership skills and techniques for school leaders to effectively… i-vi:	The ECU MSA programs align with national and state leadership standards that address: school and student equity, data-driven professional learning communities, school climate, professional development focused on student achievement for all, instructional leadership, classroom instructional feedback, school environment, and community engagement. These are addressed through course work, full year internship, and School Leadership Projects (experiences and video artifacts of specific competencies). edPIRATE will provide opportunities for deeper learning and practice through competency-based Digital Badges within the ECU MSA and across the region's schools including: • Equitable Student Engagement in the Classroom; • Race and Rurality; • Authentic Community Engagement; and • Differentiated Instruction.
(2) Developing and improving a sustained and high-quality preservice clinical education program i-iii	ECU's pre-service MSA programs provide year-long clinical learning in schools throughout our region. The vast majority of these schools are rural and high-need and some are within the LEAs in the edPIRATE partnership. The content and pedagogy of these programs provide context specific learning with a focus on the unique needs of rurality, race, and poverty. The Pirate-MCs will strengthen this emphasis through (1) more specific attention to these issues, (2) advanced pedagogical and technological methodologies, and (3) connections across schools and teacher and leadership development programs. Faculty, instructors, and field supervisors in MSA programs and coaches in the PIRATE-MCs provide mentoring and supervision for pre-service school leaders.
(3) Creating an induction program for new school leaders.	edPIRATE will create an induction program for new principals in our partnership LEAs based on the nested coaching model where school leaders work in tandem with Mentor Teachers in the two year induction of Teacher Residents. Additionally, edPIRATE will link school leader and teacher professional development to provide a common framework and language for school improvement. This model will not only be sustained after the grant support ends, but also expanded to the surrounding schools in our region and across the state.
(4) Ensuring that school leadership participants receive i-iii	The ECU MSA pre-service programs are aligned with state and national professional leadership standards, have a strong mentoring component, and all graduates are licensed as school administrators.

TQP Requirements[1]	Current ECU Leadership Programs and Proposed TQP Enhancements
(5) Developing and implementing effective mechanisms to recruit i-iii.	The ECU MSA programs and the proposed edPIRATE all harness LEA partnerships to recruit high potential, underrepresented populations to build a pipeline of future school leaders in the rural communities we serve. These communities have school leadership shortages. We will recruit mid-career professionals to enter the MSA program. Our region has a large military population. ECU has established recruiting and programing for the current and ex-military population.
b) Eligible participants	edPIRATE school leader participants will either be enrolled in the ECU MSA program or teachers or administrators encouraged and prepared to apply for our MSA, EdS, or EdD programs. Additionally, credits can be used for certification programs such as our Dual Language Administration certification. Participants who earn Pirate-MC Digital Badges can purchase credit (up to 9 credits) toward the EdS or EdD; both lead to Central Office and/or superintendent licensure granted by the state.
Notes: [1] TQP requirements for Leadership Programs Under Absolute Priority 4 (Federal Register, 2022 p. 10911)	

Microcredentials (MCs) are innovations to professional leaning that differ from formal university classes and traditional professional development. An MC is a personalized, flexible, competency-based learning experience in which professionals learn and *practice* new knowledge and skills that are directly correlated to their practice. The practices utilize evidence-based protocols supported by a nested coaching model. The utility and popularity of microcredentials continues to grow. The National Education Association, for example, offers 175 online micro-credentials, and districts are using the MC as evidence of professional learning credits and step increases for salaries. In NC, the Department of Public Instruction has drafted plans for MCs as in-service continuing education units. The university setting offers a unique opportunity to combine research-based content, evidence-based protocols, and analyses of professional development effectiveness. The ECU LEED department entered the MC world with funding provided with a SEED grant led by ███████ (2018-22, award no. U423A180096). An MC was developed and implemented, reaching more than 200 school leaders. Our edPIRATE work

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will expand reach to teacher educators as well as create new MCs to support sustainability by directly linking MCs to university course work.

The terms MC and Digital Badge (DB) are used differently in various settings. For the purpose of this Project, we have defined MCs as short, intensive six (6) week sessions. Sets of three related MCs are clustered into DBs, each addressing a larger goal or concept and encouraging depth of learning and experience so as to increase the possibility of transfer to practice (███

████). Current school educators (school leaders, teacher mentors, and teacher resident graduates) will be able to complete MCs in order to earn DBs through this project. Digital Badges I, II, and III will be incorporated into the ECU MSA school leader preparation programs. All ECU MSA programs will incorporate these badges in place of courses: MSA 6908 Instructional Observation and MSA 6901 Community Engagement. Other participants will be able to pay to convert MCs to university credits in four program areas: Teacher mentors or resident teacher graduates can apply Digital Badge credits toward the ***Master in School Administration*** (MSA) degree or the ***Dual Language Immersion*** certificate at ECU and current school leaders can apply Digital Badge credits toward the ***Educational Specialist*** (EdS) or ***Educational Leadership Doctorate*** (EdD) degrees at ECU. The MSA, EdS, and EdD degrees all lead to certification.

Each 6-week Pirate-MC will include five components: (1) developing new knowledge of the content (online, asynchronous); (2) engaging with new protocols for practice; (3) practicing in one's school setting; (4) on-going synchronous coaching meetings (1:1 and with small groups); and (5) presenting a Keystone component to document and share competencies that were learned. Importantly, each Pirate-MC incorporates Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

A nested coaching model (███████████████████████ will support Pirate-MC

participants. Coaches meet with MC cohorts both individually and as a group. In turn, participants coach groups of teachers in their schools as they engage in MCs. Coaches are current or retired school leaders, trained in the use of the Pirate-MC protocols. The ratio of coaches to participants in Pirate-MCs will be 1:10 a "right size" ratio as determined from our SEED grant data (ECU SEED Annual Report, 2021). The Pirate-MCs will be assessed by our evaluation team with MC surveys, interviews, assessment of Keystone competencies, and a longitudinal study utilizing the CALL survey with two cohorts (see evaluation design).

Finally, each MC has an interactive technology component. Beyond asynchronous knowledge development and synchronous practice and coaching support, the MC utilizes supportive technologies. Each technology has already been developed and implemented for one of the MCs in the *Equitable Student Engagement* Digital Badge with previous funding. These technologies include: (1) Video Simulations focused on school leader and teacher conversations around classroom evidence of academic discourse, (2) Virtual Reality (VR) scenario focused on how teachers call-on students (see study of VR by ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮), and (3) Augmented Reality (AR) glasses (currently in a Beta stage) where principals wear AR glasses to "tag" (code) teacher actions in real time in live classrooms. The recorded teaching episode with associated codes can then be uploaded to share with a coach and/or with the teacher. AR decreases the opportunity costs often associated with advanced technologies, in this case, the promotion of the immediate documentation of non-judgmental classroom practice, the use of evidence-based observation protocols, and grounds for robust post-observation conversations with coaches and teachers. Video simulations and the AR will be incorporated in each of the Pirate-MCs. Table 5 shows the DBs and component MCs that will be implemented. Pirate-MC I has already been developed, piloted, and implemented as a part of the SEED project; the other MCs will be

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developed and implemented in this project as shown in Table 6.

Table 5: Digital Badges and Component MCs

MCs	MC I-A: *Equitable Academic Discourse*	MC II-A: *Perceptions & Identities*	MC III-A: *Community as Text*	MC IV-A: *Academically & Intellectually Gifted*
	MC I-B: *Evidence-based Observations Protocols*	MC II-B: *Racism & Community*	MC III-B: *Power of Place & Wisdom of People*	MC IV-B: *English Language Learners*
	MC I-C: *Evidence-based conversations*	MC II-C: *Social Emotional Learning*	MC III-C: *Community Learning Exchanges*	MC IV-C: *Special Education*

Table 6: Digital Badge Professional Development & Enrollment Schedule

(I) Equitable Student Engagement in the Classroom	Pre-service School Leaders (MSA)	10	10	10	10	10
	Partner School Principals & Mentors	10	10	10	10	
	Regional Rural School Leaders			10		
(II) Race & Rurality	Pre-service School Leaders (MSA)		10	10	10	10
	Partner School Principals & Mentors		10	10	10	
	Regional Rural School Leaders				10	
(III) Authentic Community Engagement	Pre-service School Leaders (MSA)			10	10	10
	Partner School Principals & Mentors			10	10	10
	Regional Rural School Leaders					10
(IV) Differentiated Instruction	Partner School Principals & Mentors				10	
	Teacher Residency Graduates					10
	Regional Rural School Leaders					10
Total Number of DB Enrollments		**20**	**40**	**70**	**80**	**70**

ii. Goals, objectives, and outcomes are clearly specified and measurable

Our overall goal is to improve student academic achievement for all students through the improvement of teacher and school leader preparation, induction, and on-going support in rural districts. Aligned with this goal, our logic model (see Figure 1 above and complete version in

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Appendix C), and the purposes of the TQP program, Table 7 below shows our objectives,

associated measurable outcomes and their alignment with TQP required performance measures.

Table 7: Objectives and Associated Measurable Outcomes.

A.1: Increase the scaled scores of MAT residents on edTPA following participation in the rural educational justice residency model.
A.2: All new school principals in partner LEAs participate in MC program and are supported by coaching.
A.3: Each cohort of 20 MAT graduates completes a two year induction program.
B.1: 20 participants graduate from MAT program each year in years 2-5 (total 80 over four years).
B.1.a. One year persistence of any MAT program participant who does not complete on time due to extenuating circumstances and remains enrolled. **Performance Measure (PM) 3**
B.2: 95% of MAT graduates complete all NC initial licensure requirements and pass all licensure assessments within one year of program completion. **PM 1**
B.3: Enrolled participants in the MAT program have a higher percentage of persons from underrepresented groups than the teacher population of their partner school district.
B.4: Participants in Pirate-MC digital badges represent the diversity of the administrators and teachers in the partner LEAs.
B.5 80 MAT graduates hired as teacher of record in high need schools in partner districts.
B.6 100% of MAT graduates who were employed for the first time as teachers of record in the preceding year by the partner high-need LEA were retained for the current year. **PM 4**
B.7 100% of MAT graduates become fully certified in the identified teacher shortage areas of elementary and middle grades teachers and 25% additionally complete add on licensure in one of the additional identified shortage areas of ELL, AIG, and SPED. **PM2**
C.1 95% of teacher graduates successfully complete 3 years of service in high need schools in partner districts**. PM 5**
C.2 Teacher turnover decreases by 1 percentage point per year in each partner district years 3-5.
C.3 ECU MSA graduates and MC participants are retained in high need LEAs throughout region.
D.1: 60 MAT graduates and teacher facilitators complete 60 rural action research projects
D.2: All mentor teachers complete Mentor training and Equity Microcredential
D.3: 120 pre-service school leaders, 110 current school leaders and mentor teachers,10 MAT graduates, and 40 additional regional school leaders successfully complete Digital Badges demonstrating increased knowledge and skill in Equitable Rural Leadership.

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D.4: CALL survey documents increases in (a) relational trust and (b) discussions focused on classroom instruction and issues of equity in schools of principals participating in DB Program.

iii. Proposed project is part of comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students

Project edPIRATE was designed with input from key stakeholders including partner district leadership, COE and THCAS faculty associated with teacher preparation, and ECU's LEED faculty including the MSA program director. The design focuses on meeting rural district needs with a customized MAT program complemented by enhancements to our MSA program and professional development for teacher and school leaders. The MAT program includes multiple experiences planned to develop residents' content and content pedagogical knowledge in tandem with their classroom experiences. The leadership team's composition includes Co-PIs from different departments bringing breadth of expertise and promoting effective preparation of teachers combining development of content knowledge and effective pedagogy. The professional development is provided through MCs that teach leaders specific tools to improve their practice. For example, in the first Digital Badge, *Equitable Student Engagement in the Classroom*, participants will learn how to coach teachers to engage all students more fully in classroom academic discourse. Content knowledge and practice sessions will focus on using evidence-based observation tools and facilitating effective post-observation conversations with teachers. Since mentor teachers and school administrators in the partner schools will be engaged in these MCs, they will have a common language and tools to assist residents and other teachers in supporting rigorous standards with more equity and depth in classroom dialogue. In Pirate-MC DB II, *Race & Rurality*, participants will examine systemic causes and structures specific to the context of eastern NC that contribute to and perpetuate racial inequities. Content knowledge and

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practice sessions will focus on application of culturally responsive pedagogies. Again having MTs and principals experiencing the same MC will help to develop common understandings around needed pedagogical changes. In the third DB, *Authentic Community Engagement,* participants will investigate local stories to identify local sources of knowledge, power, and wisdom. Content knowledge and practice sessions focus on bringing together diverse aspects of a community to foster mutual understanding and create a collaborative vision of the future based on common goals and community assets. The fourth DB, *Differentiated Instruction,* has MCs focused on specific populations including ELLs and AIG students and will lead to increased numbers of teachers and administrators with expertise and add on licensure in these critical need areas. In the long term, simultaneous improvements in classroom instruction, instructional leadership, mentoring for beginning teachers, and support for educators across project schools should have positive and synergistic effects on student academic achievement and teacher and administrator retention.

iv. Reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice

Project edPIRATE is designed to address the needs of high-need rural schools and students. Both the Teacher Residency and Leadership programs build on models with extensive research support with additional specific research based components. The overall design builds on the Rural Cultural Wealth Framework (████████████████) with specific research supported components in both teacher preparation and leadership development. The Rural Cultural Wealth framework offers an asset-based window into the lived reality of people in rural places by privileging their knowledge, focusing on their empowerment, and disavowing deficit-oriented narratives of rurality.

Teacher residency models in educator preparation improve the quality of new teachers

(███

████████ increase retention (████████████████████████████████

████████), and positively impact student achievement (Lindsey & Hart, 2017; Glassfrog,

2020; NCTR, 2021). Teacher residencies are also a proven approach to increasing diversity in

the teacher pipeline (███████████ Teacher residencies are characterized by year-long

student teaching internships, ongoing feedback and coaching with an experienced mentor

teacher, and rigorous graduate coursework aligned with the experiential aspects of the internship.

edPIRATE's Teacher Residency has been carefully designed to include each of these important

aspects with an emphasis on co-teaching in our partner schools supported by the Residency

faculty and staff. Co-teaching is often utilized in teacher residencies to help novice teachers

develop their pedagogical skills or create classroom communities ████████████

██

Research indicates co-teaching during clinical experiences positively impacts student teachers

readiness to teach (██████████████████████████████████████

████████████ increases self-efficacy in collaboration and teaching skills ████████

███████████████████████████████, and enhances K-12 student

learning (Bacharach et al., 2010). Studies show that co-teaching positively affects student

growth, increases collaboration, decreases student-to-teacher ratios, provides differentiated

instruction, and improves classroom management (████████████████████████

████).

Another key element of teacher residencies, critical to developing equity focused teacher

practice that meets student and community needs, is building communities of practice for

beginning teachers ██████████████ Although practicing teachers serve as mentors to

their student teachers, the duality of the relationship acknowledges that student teachers also

contribute to the knowledge and growth of their mentor teachers. Thus, co-teachers are in a

unique position to develop equity literacy because they have the opportunity to contribute to one

another's growth. Building communities of practice for beginning teachers is critical to

developing teacher practice and leadership capacity (███████████████████████

████ and will be a focus of edPIRATE's induction program, FTs, and ECU faculty.

Effective leadership is also essential to improving student achievement ████████████

█████████████████████████████. The edPIRATE leadership components as

shown in Table 4 build on ECU's evidence-based MSA program by adding induction and

ongoing professional development support in rural districts, critical components of principal

pipelines ████████████), but difficult for small rural districts to implement. Moreover, each

aspect of this support builds on research in effective leadership support, aligns with state and

national leadership standards, and uses data to measure progress and make needed adjustments.

In edPIRATE we focus on three critical areas of school leadership development: (1)

Relational Trust, (2) Instructional Leadership, and (3) Leadership for Equity. Each Pirate-MC

focuses on these elements. Moreover, each of these leadership functions is measured in our

evaluation. One of the most important elements – often overlooked in professional learning – is

cultivating the importance of and measuring relational trust ████████████████████

████████████). In a large study of Chicago schools (████████████████), relational

trust was found to be key to implementing school reform and to the resulting gains in student

achievement. One important mechanism for building instructional leadership capacity (████████

██████ is evidence-based teacher observations (████████████████). The Pirate-MC

Digital Badges introduce school leaders (both principals and mentor teachers) to specific

research-based observation protocols for collecting data and coaching teachers in improving

academic discourse and equity in classrooms (███████ Finally, we focus on leadership for

all students, leading for and with equity (██████████████████

v. Performance feedback and continuous improvement are integral to edPIRATE.

edPIRATE's evaluation and management plans combine to provide actionable formative

performance feedback in a timely manner to encourage rapid attention to any issues which arise.

Rather than waiting for an annual report, summaries of formative data collected will be provided

as developed and the evaluation team will meet with the PIs bi-monthly to share insights. An

Advisory Board will provide additional perspectives. Relational trust is not only important

within schools but is also an essential element in any reform effort. Therefore it is essential that

all partners (LEAs, THCAS, COE - LEED and REI Teacher Residency program, Evaluation)

come together on a regular basis to examine progress and address concerns. The monthly

meetings including the PI team, key faculty and staff, and LEA liaisons) are critical to ensuring

the development of relational trust and a focus on continuous improvement.

vi. edPIRATE builds capacity and yields results extending beyond grant funding

edPIRATE will build lasting capacity for ECU and our partner districts. First, edPIRATE

will have produced 80 well qualified and trained new teachers with a commitment to teaching in

our partner districts, provided induction support to all new principals in our partner districts, and

provided professional development focused on equity and rural communities to 150 school

leaders including teacher mentors, teacher facilitators, and administrators. We will have also

expanded the capacity of teachers and administrators to meet the needs of ELLs, AIG, and SWD

and expanded the number of teachers with add-on licensure in these critical areas. As explained

in Section C iv (see page 41), we expect to maintain and expand the Teacher Residency program

to meet the needs of ECU's service area - consisting mostly of high need rural LEAs. Additionally we expect to incorporate the MC program into ECU's MSA and EdD programs and the Pirate-MC platform that will be developed with this grant funding will serve the region, state, and nation through a non-profit business model coupling professional development with research and evaluation to provide for more durable effects on schools and student achievement. The letters of support from our region (SE and NE RESAs), state (NCPAPA), and national (UCEA) organizations demonstrate the potential for this work beyond the funding period.

Although this project's budget is built for five years, its impact has generational possibilities. ECU's mission is: To serve as a national model for public service and regional transformation. edPIRATE is aligned with this mission as well as the call for the new TQP absolute priority that includes school leadership. Partnering LEAs with Teacher Education, Educational Leadership, and THCAS brings both capacity and coherence to change efforts and subsequent improved student achievement in rural NC. Additionally, this proposal integrates empirical literature to the design and implementation strategies. The change and organizational literature is replete with stories of failed implementation. We seek to ameliorate obstacles through collaboration, science-based design, and the assets of the communities we serve.

b. Quality of the Project Evaluation

i.   Methods will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes

ECU will contract with Policy Studies Associates, Inc. (PSA), an organization with over 35 years of far-reaching experience conducting formative and process evaluations on programs and policies, as well as rigorous, experimental and quasi-experimental high-impact research designed to improve leadership, teaching, and learning. PSA also provides evaluation design, data collection, consultation on continuous improvement processes, quantitative and qualitative

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analysis, and reporting services. PSA's client portfolio includes grant and contract work with federal, state, and local governmental agencies, private foundations, as well as national, regional, and local non-profit organizations. PSA will provide an external and independent evaluation of Project edPIRATE. Currently evaluating ECU's Project i[4], funded through a SEED grant, and other programs tracking teacher and school leader improvement and retention, PSA is uniquely positioned to bring an in-depth understanding of issues that arise in evaluating interventions to improve teacher and leader quality and retention.

PSA's evaluation team will be led by ███████████ PSA Senior Managing Director. She has over 25 years of experience conducting program evaluations, most involving a mixed methods approach to data collection and analysis. She leads the external evaluation of ECU's SEED-funded Project I[4], a professional learning initiative intended to help school leaders improve student performance in math and science by using evidence-based classroom observation practices; engaging in courageous, equity-focused conversations with teachers to improve their instructional practices; and utilizing an improvement sciences approach to data-based decision making. PSA's evaluation team will also include ███████████████ ████████ who have extensive experience using program-derived data to support embedded continuous improvement processes through work with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and as the internal evaluators for the Region 4 Comprehensive Center, which PSA hosts.

PSA will use a mixed-methods evaluation design to study the implementation, outputs, and outcomes of Project edPIRATE. Primary data sources will include: (1) administrative data generated in the operation of edPIRATE; (2) administrative data from edPIRATE and ECU tracking participants' progress in earning degrees, and micro-credentials; (3) administrative

school-level data tracking year-over-year teacher and administrator retention rates in intervention schools; (4) surveys, interviews, and focus groups of participating residents, mentor teachers, facilitating teachers, and LEA liaisons, school/district leaders.

The evaluation is designed to provide formative feedback to support continuous program improvement, provide annual reports to evaluate progress towards edPIRATE's outcomes, and generate summative impact data to identify changes in outcomes associated with program participation. The formative evaluation will inform edPIRATE's efforts to train teachers for high needs rural schools, documenting, for example, candidates' engagement in and performance on project activities using ECU's administrative data and participant surveys and focus groups. It will also inform PSA's summative evaluation tracking change in teacher and leader practices and participants' persistence in their placements in high-need, rural partner LEAs.

To ensure effective communication, as well as inform the continuous improvement process, PSA will work collaboratively with edPIRATE faculty, consultants, and participants to ensure timely feedback. As part of this collaboration, PSA and the edPIRATE PI team will meet monthly to share project and evaluation progress updates and PSA will generate interim reports on an annual basis to share progress towards outcomes for reporting to partners and other key stakeholders, such as the U.S. Department of Education. PSA will also produce a summative report for dissemination that documents findings over the course of the grant. Table 8 provides a schedule for providing formative feedback and reporting performance progress.

Table 8: Schedule for Performance Progress and Updates

Bi-monthly meetings with edPIRATE Staff	Evaluation progress updates, including findings on fidelity of implementation and impact data as it becomes available to inform continuous improvement
Project edPIRATE Report: Fall 2023	Implementation findings update in addition to reporting baseline performance data for participants

Project edPIRATE Reports: Annually from 2023-2027	Implementation findings update in addition to performance data for MAT residents.
Final edPIRATE Report: 2027	Final dissemination of report to Project edPIRATE

The evaluation questions are designed to support continuous learning over the course of the grant and to determine project impact on critical teacher and school leader outcomes such as retention in under-resourced rural schools. We put emphasis on the importance of improving teacher retention as an outcome. Teacher retention in rural schools is a persistent problem, and researchers find that relationships, support, and school leaders have a significant role in ensuring teachers remain in rural districts ██████████████). Table 9 provides a crosswalk of the research questions with Project edPIRATE measurable outcomes, data and frequency of data collection, and the analysis methods PSA will use.

Table 9: Evaluation Questions, Data Collection, and Analysis Methods

Evaluation questions [Measurable outcomes]	Data (frequency of data collection)	Analysis methods
[Measurable outcome A: Improve teacher and school leader preparation, induction, and on-going support] Are teacher and school leader preparation and induction improving? Does diversity of applicants/participants reflect population of community?	• Program administrative data tracking participant recruitment, selection, and enrollment with project activities (fall and spring of each school year) • School-level administrative data tracking induction activities (annually) • ECU administrative data re participants' edTPA scores (annually)	Descriptive analysis of program- school- and district-level data Qualitative analysis of focus group interviews, surveys
[Measurable Outcome B: Produce highly qualified and diverse teacher and leader graduates to be placed in high need rural schools] Are highly qualified (as defined by NC) and diverse teacher and leader graduates placed in high-need rural schools at higher rates than prior to the intervention?	• Program administrative data tracking participant engagement with project activities (fall and spring of each school year) • School-level administrative data tracking hiring and vacancy rates (annually) • ECU administrative data tracking participants' micro-credential, certificate, and	Descriptive statistics tracking changes over time in program completion, rates of candidate placement, faculty vacancy rates, and number and types of micro-credentials, certificates, and degrees attained.

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	degree attainment (annually)	
[Measurable Outcome C: Improve teacher and school leader retention rates in high-need rural partner districts] Is participation in edPIRATE associated with an increase in teacher and school leader retention rates in high-need, rural partner districts?	• ECU administrative data tracking program participation and completion (August, December, and April of each school year) • School-level administrative data tracking hiring and vacancy rates (annually) • School- and district-level teacher and school leader retention rates (annually)	Descriptive analysis of school- and district-level hiring and placement of program completers and longitudinal analyses of teacher and administrator retention rates in high-needs rural districts
[Measurable Outcomes D: Improve project participants' knowledge, skills, and dispositions for equity-centered curriculum, pedagogy, and leadership] Do participants show growth in knowledge, skills, and dispositions for equity-centered curriculum, pedagogy, and leadership?	• CALL survey data (Cohort I & III) • Program administrative data (annually)	Descriptive statistics; Factor analyses; linear regression analyses

ii. Methods are thorough, feasible, and reliable

The PSA evaluation team will work with partners, project staff, and participants to maximize the value of the data collected as part of Project edPIRATE and to ensure that the data are analyzed and reported in ways that are accessible and support continuous program improvement.

PSA will access publicly available data to track teacher and school leader retention rates in partner districts in order to report on the measurable goals, objectives, and outcomes defined in this proposal and to comply with Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) indicators for the TQP Program. ECU administrative data will be used to report on the Federal cost per program completer (Efficiency Measure). PSA will also use the Comprehensive Assessment for Leadership Learning (CALL) survey, a nationally validated 360º diagnostic pre/post assessment of school leaders and teachers that measures five domains of leadership practice that lead to

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school effectiveness (███████████████████████████████████████

█████████. These domains are (1) focus on learning, (2) monitoring teaching and

learning, (3) building nested learning communities, (4) acquiring and allocating resources, and

(5) maintaining a safe and effective learning environment. Additional domains measure factors

aligned with edPIRATE outcomes—relational trust and discussions focused on culturally-

relevant classroom instruction. Partner schools, hosting MAT residents in Cohorts I and III,

which will then also have principals and mentor teachers participating in the Pirate-MCs, will

administer the CALL at the beginning and end of the school year. PSA's evaluation plan will

ensure coordination with edPIRATE staff and staff from the CALL assessment system to

minimize burden on school staff.

Annually, PSA will survey participants and hold focus groups to capture participants'

perceptions of program activities and the relationship between the Project edPIRATE

intervention and changes in their practice or in their intentions to continue working in a high-

need rural partner school.

Using descriptive analyses, PSA will track changes over time in participants' perceptions, in

their practice, as reported by non-participating teachers in their schools on the CALL survey, in

their attainment of micro-credentials and additional certifications, and in participants' retention

in partner schools. For example, these analyses will include comparisons of average retention

between participants' and comparison schools and among participants' schools. These

descriptive analyses and the variation we observe will contribute to building regression models

and supplement interim reporting. Where the data can support regression analyses, PSA will use

linear growth models to test the significance of longitudinal (i.e., growth) and cross-sectional

(i.e., by cohort) changes in teacher and school leader hiring and retention over time, controlling

for school and participant characteristics, program participation and perception data, and year-school fixed effects. The longitudinal fixed-effects models will use CALL data collected from Cohorts I and III, while descriptive analyses will include all cohorts.

c. Adequacy of Resources

i. Adequacy of support

ECU has emerged as a public research university; the third largest university in NC with over 28,000 students. It is fully accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral degrees. It is known for its strong research and training work designed to transform lives and lift eastern NC out of poverty and is the largest producer of both teachers and school administrators in eastern NC. It was designated a Carnegie Engaged University in 2008 and again in 2015, documenting a commitment to research that directly matters to people's lives, and matching the University's motto: *Servire*, to serve. ECU was designated a Millennial Campus by the University of North Carolina Board of Governors as part of an effort to enhance entrepreneurship, build partnerships with industry, and increase innovation. To that end, ECU has developed a broad research infrastructure designed to facilitate engaged research and enhance innovation. ECU's continued commitment to research and training will provide infrastructure and support for edPIRATE during the grant funded period and beyond.

The COE and the THCAS are fully committed to supporting edPIRATE including synergistic aspects that reach beyond traditional silos to create a common language and framework for improved pedagogy and equity. COE and edPIRATE partnerships will support the implementation and sustainability of edPIRATE. For example, ECU's Latham Clinical Schools Network is a formal partnership between COE and 43 eastern NC school districts

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(almost all rural and high need) that will support regional expansion of edPIRATE's Teacher Residency model and the Pirate-MCs.

Rural Education Institute (REI) at ECU. REI was established over 30 years ago with funding from the NC legislature to focus on the advancement of education in rural eastern NC. From its inception, REI has been a major catalyst of improvement in the region, and university administration is keen to see REI maintain its focus on collaborative partnerships oriented towards educator education while developing its research program at a national level. REI collaborates with stakeholders towards positive transformation in families and schools through grant funded projects. REI's mission and specific goals of improving educational outcomes for schools, students, and communities through collaboration are aligned with and support edPIRATE's outcomes.

Online Education. ECU is a state and national leader in online education offering more than 100 online degree and certificate programs. As many of the COE graduate programs are offered via distance learning, faculty are adept at engaging with students via email, phone, or web conferencing platforms. These communications provide students with pertinent timelines, program offerings, and additional graduate school engagement opportunities. As ECU students, MAT residents will have full access to ECU's services, including technology support and online library access. Information related to programing is also posted on departmental and program websites and social media platforms.

Grant Management. ECU's Division of Research, Economic Development and Engagement oversees a 3-Hub research and grant management structure across the University, one of which is based in the COE. This hub provides pre-grant support and manages post-grant administration including: a) fiscal management, expediting grant transactions; b) budget

forecasting aligned with project goals and implementation; c) budget monitoring, monthly

reconciliation, and reporting; d) compliance monitoring; e) liaison with ECU's university-level

Offices of Sponsored Programs and Grants and Contracts; and f) liaison with researchers and

other resources. Since 2013, ECU has received over 1,348 funded awards totaling over ███

███████ ████████ of those funds were awarded to the College of Education, which

houses REI and LEED. Through these awards, the COE has demonstrated its ability to manage

large grants, manage large budgets with subcontracts, coordinate the work of multiple partners,

and complete required reporting. The budget narrative of this proposal highlights our fiscal

responsibility to utilize funds in order to meet grant objectives. Additionally, the non-federal

portion of the budget documents how this proposal can *exceed* the 100% match requirement.

ii. Extent to which budget is adequate

The ECU investigator team worked closely with one another and with partner LEA's to

design an asset and needs based intervention: edPIRATE. As demonstrated by our budget and

budget narrative, we have carefully identified the necessary support and cost to support each

component of our program. The 100% match requirement challenged us to engage in

conversations and collaborate with partners within the COE, the THCAS, LEAs, schools, and

philanthropic organizations. Additionally, we also harnessed the benefits from other grant

supported work for teachers and leaders, specifically the Summer Enrichment Camps for K-12

students (REI AmeriCorps), Race & Rurality Micro-credential (REI Diversity & Inclusion

Support Endowment), and the Wells Fargo Endowment (LEED).

We are pleased to report matching of federal funds in every category of the grant except for

the training stipends category (resident living wage and teacher mentor stipends) and believe we

will be able to find support for these in the future. We connected with resources across campus,

within LEA's, and community agencies to meet the match requirement. The budget narrative provides a detailed justification and explanation of these matching funds and our key partners have provided letters detailing their commitments in Appendix E. Two key funds in the College of Education are supporting this work (1) Wells Fargo Endowment, directed by Dr. Militello, is focused on supporting regional school leadership efforts and (2) the Rural Education Institute, directed by Dr. Kristen Cuthrell, supports rural school and community educator development projects. Finally, the indirect costs for this project are limited to 2%, providing even more direct dollars to support our work. In the end, we have (1) created a program scope and structure aligned with the purpose of TQP funding and local needs, (2) integrated resources and funds from multiple sources, (3) created a budget that will fortify this work for the duration of the grant and beyond (see Sustainability statement).

iii. Costs are reasonable

The overall Federal costs of edPIRATE are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design and significance of this project. The project will result in 80 new MAT graduates committed to at least 3 years of service in 28 rural high-need partner schools in four rural LEAs. These graduates will be supported by an induction program including Learning Communities with Mentor Teachers, Facilitating Teachers, and principals all participating in our leadership program's Pirate-MCs - professional development designed to build a common framework for understanding and overcoming challenges facing rural educators. This support will not only benefit our MAT participants and their students, but also other teachers and students in these high need schools. The support provided to teachers and leaders should also reduce turnover - leading to increased stability and lower costs for LEAs and greater achievement for students. The project will also work synergistically with LEAs and communities to provide educational

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summer camps for elementary age students. Not only will these camps provide additional teaching practice for our MAT students, they will also provide social and emotional benefits and reduce summer learning loss for K-8 students. There will also be long-term institutional benefits for ECU's MAT and leadership programs; strengthening these programs will have long-term benefits for educators and students across ECU's service region. In addition to the feedback for continuous improvement, by documenting implementation and measuring outcomes, edPIRATE's evaluation will provide important information for other projects seeking to replicate or build on our strategies.

The edPIRATE budget was developed with partners demonstrating their commitment to outcomes with their matching contributions. All of the expenses in the edPIRATE budget have been carefully reviewed and are necessary to the project's success, allowable, allocable, and reasonable. Stipends for MAT residents are the largest single cost of the project; 45% of the federal funds requested. This ███████████████, while not large, will be adequate to attract high quality candidates from the communities served by the partner schools and allow them to commit to the MAT program and service in these schools.

iv. Sustainability

Once established, ECU and our partner LEAs plan to maintain the new teacher residency program including induction support and improvements to the leadership pipeline as well as expanding them to additional rural districts in our service area. Once our model is operational, many aspects are sustainable using ongoing aspects of our match funding and the increased capacity of district personnel. According to the National Center for Teacher Residencies, IHEs and school districts can utilize existing funds to support the teacher stipends and residency supports. Through financial modeling, partnerships can utilize Title 1, Title 2A, IDEA, ESSER,

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AmeriCorps, among other private foundational funds to continue the living allowances in high need LEAs. Additionally, states and districts can designate the residency internship as an apprenticeship and potentially utilize local workforce apprenticeship dollars. NC is exploring legislative changes to licensure pathways and is considering the use of apprenticeships. ECU has had AmeriCorps, national service program, funding for 20 years. The programming is currently housed within REI because of REI's collaborative approach to leveraging university resources and faculty expertise with grant resources that focus on community voice and assets. Tutors, counseling and teacher interns commit to service term with a local schools and nonprofit organization. Members who successfully complete the service requirements receive federal educational awards that can be applied to current or future educational needs. Dependent on member performance and service start dates, members may have the opportunity to complete more than one service term within a year. Therefore, teacher residency stipends may be funded in part with AmeriCorps funding.

Please see Appendix E: Letters of Support, showing support and specific commitments to both short-term success and on-going sustainability from LEAs, Regional Education Service Alliances (RESAs), NC DPI, LCSN, THCAS, AMEXCAN, NREA, NC NEA, University of SC-Policy and Innovation Research.

v. Relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner

See letters in Appendix E for demonstrated commitment of partners and explanations of how each is integral to the success of edPIRATE.

d. Quality of the Management Plan (20 points)

i. Adequacy to achieve objective on time and within budget

The edPIRATE leadership team and ECU have the demonstrated **capacity needed to**

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manage this project and ensure adherence to the timeline and budget. edPIRATE's management

plan includes an organizational structure (Figure 3), detailed timeline of tasks, responsibilities

and milestones (Table 10), and detailed budget narrative. The project also benefits from

institutional support provided by ECU's Division of Research, Economic Development, and

Engagement; COE Office of Research and Innovation; and COE Office of Educator Preparation.

Each member of the edPIRATE Team has distinct expertise and responsibilities, representing

diverse backgrounds. The teams will meet monthly for Year 1 and quarterly thereafter.

Figure 3: Organizational Structure
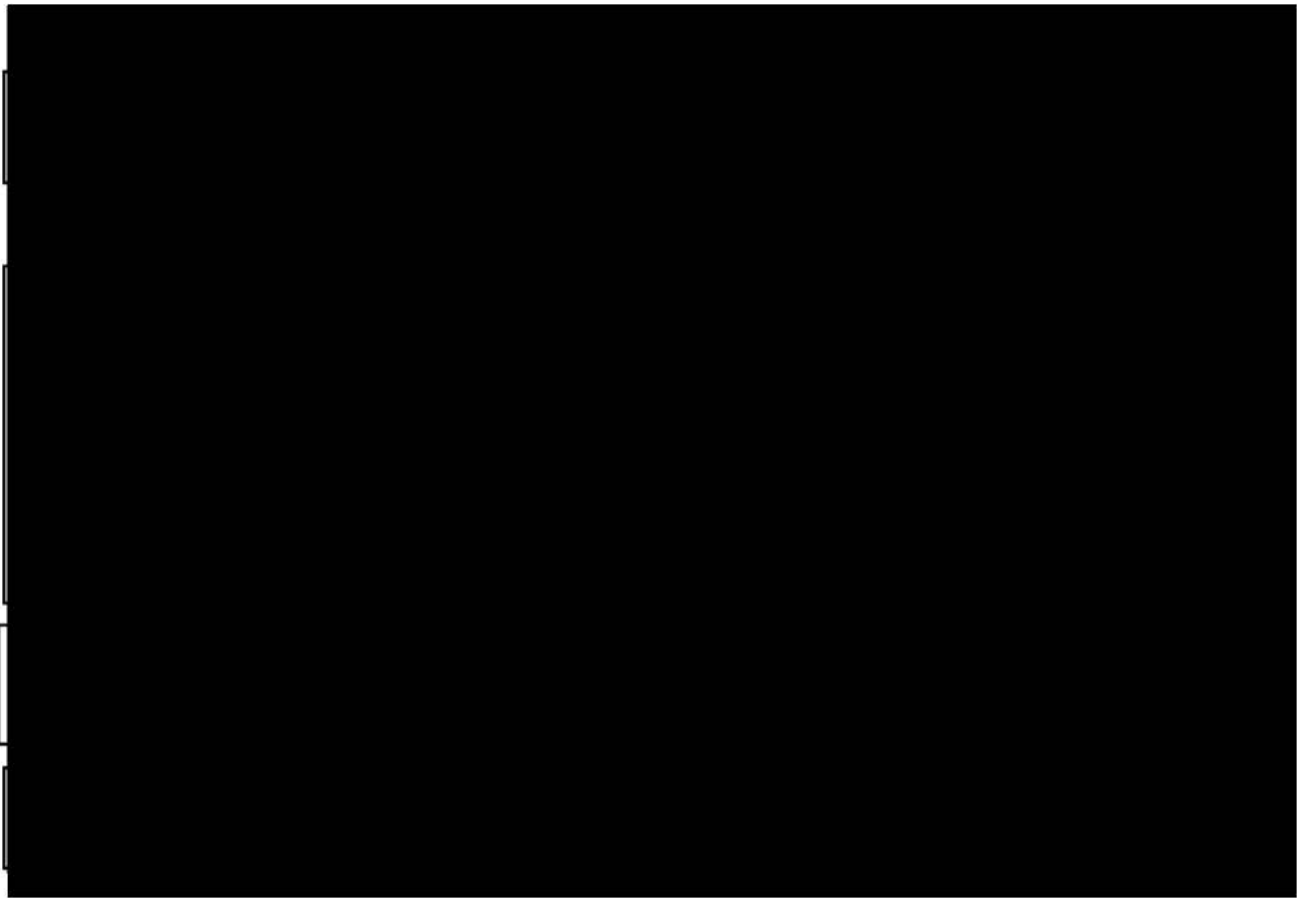
Leadership Team ████████████████████ serve as PI and Project Director,

devoting 33% of her time to Project edPIRATE. She is a Professor in the Department of

Elementary Education and Middle Grades Education (ELMID) and Director of REI and brings

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previous experience as Co-PI of ECU's previous 2009 - 2015 TQP project reforming the baccalaureate level teacher preparation program. She will lead the MAT Teacher Residency program development and implementation. ███████████████, Wells Fargo Distinguished Professor in Educational Leadership will serve as co-PI, devoting 25% of his time to edPIRATE and will lead the School Leader team that is responsible for MC and DB development and implementation. █████████ brings extensive experience as a researcher and PI of grant-funded projects. Working closely together, ██████████████████ will bring together the resources of REI, LEED, the Department of Elementary and Middle Grades Education, ECU's THCAS faculty, and the four partner LEAs to create a synergistic pipeline from recruitment to pre-service, residency, induction, and on-going professional development serving teachers and administrators and building a common framework to support equity and student growth.

The **REI Teacher Residency team** includes REI Associate Faculty-█████████████ ██ ██████████████████████ will lead the team and it will be supported by a TBN Residency Program Coordinator and teaching faculty with expertise in ELMID, SWD and AIG. ██████████████████████████ have foundational experiences in teaching and preparing rural teachers in educational justice and will facilitate the MAT curriculum and residency reform. Additional ELMID faculty may join the team during program development. The **LEA Team** will include superintendents, HR Directors, Beginning Teacher Coordinators, and principals. The HR Directors and Beginning Teacher Coordinators will serve as liaisons and attend regular meetings with the PI team. The **School Leader Team** includes█████████████████████████ ██. This team has an extensive record of successful grant projects supporting and working in rural eastern NC. The

team is responsible for the development and implementation of the MCs and will meet regularly to support school leader cohorts. **THCAS Team** includes ███████████████████ ██ ██████████████████████████████. These faculty have received numerous awards for their teaching and contributions to their disciplines. Each has direct experience supporting teacher development and will provide virtual coaching during the school year and SLE training incorporating STEM and whole child/community supports (ELL and equitable trauma informed school practices).

A five-person **Advisory Board** will provide expertise and complementary perspectives. They will meet biannually and provide individual expertise as needed. See Appendix D for resumes for the following committed members: ████████████████████

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Table 10 presents an overview of key tasks, along with the lead person or group responsible for that task, the timeframe for completion, and milestones.

Table 10: Tasks, Lead Person/Office, Timeline, Milestones

Task	Lead	Timeline	Milestones
Key: ORI = ECU COE Office of Research and Innovation, PI = Cuthrell, PI Team = PI and all Co-PIs, MM =M. Militello, Fac=Faculty, LL= LEA liaisons CH=C. Howard, AS= A. Swain, JG=J. Gallagher, KJ= K. Jones, LH-L. Hodgkins, C. Morris-CM, RC-Residency Coordinator, A&S-Arts and Science Faculty, OEP- ECU COE Office of Educator Prep, Residency Team(RT)-PI,CH,AS,JG, RC, School Leader(SL)-MM,KJ,LH,CM			
Initiate Project Tasks-Year 1			
PI training	ORI	Oct '22	Training completed

Grant accounts set-up	ORI	Oct '22	Accounts initiated
Kickoff meeting with all Partners	PI	Oct '22	Meeting held
Personnel	PI,MM	Oct '22	Hiring/onboarding complete
Equipment	PI	Oct '22	Purchased technology
Contracts	PI/ORI	Oct '22	Contracts executed with PSA, Sparkplug, CALL
Website	RC, CM	Nov '22	Website functional
Develop Evaluation Plan	Eval team	Nov '22	Evaluation plan accepted
Develop Recruiting Plan	PI Team/LL	Nov '22	Full recruiting plan
Recruiting materials	RC, LH, CM, KJ	Dec '22	Materials created
MAT application process	RT	Dec '22	Application materials vetted and approved
Summer Learning Exchange (SLE)	PI Team, LL,LH, CM, RC, A&S	May '23	Learning Exchange planned
Pirate-MC adaptions	LH, CM	May '23	MC 1 and 2 adapted to edPIRATE specific needs
MC coaches hired/onboarded	CM	May '23	Onboarding complete
MAT curriculum	RT	Sept '23	Curriculum revision process completed
Pirate-MC development	SL	Sept '23	MC 3 and 4 developed
Data Collection	PSA	See Eval Plan	Collected data
Evaluation Discussion	PI, LL, PSA	2x year - Fall/Spring	Evaluation findings meeting
Advisory Board meeting	PI	Fall and Spring	Recommendations to PI team
PI Team meet to make adjustments based on feedback from partners, Eval team, Advisory Board	PI Team	Monthly Y1, quarterly thereafter	Implementation adjustments made and documented
Disseminate findings	PI Team, LL	Spring annual	Findings published/presented
Federal Reporting	PI	Fall annual	Report filed
Cohort recruitment - Annual	RT,LL	Dec-Mar	Qualified Applicants
Cohort Selection	RT,LL	Mar	residents selected
Recruit, select, train Mentor Teachers	OEP, RC	Jan-Jun	Mentors selected and trained

Cohort enrollment	RC	Mar-Jun	20 residents enrolled, sign participation agreements, begin stipend payments
Coursework	Fac	June-July	Courses taught-13 months
Summer Enrichment Camp Participation	RFs/Fac	June	Camps offered for community engagement
edPIRATE SLE	PI Team, RC, A&S, LL, CM	July	Completion of week-long Learning Exchange
Residency-Co-Teaching	RC,OEP	Aug-May	Completed residency
Document completion of service	RC	July	Certification of service
Licensure requirements	RFs, OEP	July	Fully licensed residents
Hire RFs in Partner Schools	LEAs	Aug	Employed residents
MAT Induction Support Tasks- Years 2-5			
Collaborative Teaching Communities	RC,RT	Aug-May	Communities established
Virtual Coaching Check-ins	A&S	Aug-May	Check-ins completed
Collaborative Action Research	RC	Jan-Jun	Action Research complete
Leadership Program Tasks-Annually			
Pirate-MC recruitment	SL	Dec-Mar	Qualified applicants
Pirate-MC nested coaching and implementation	CM,LH	Aug-Jun	School leaders complete MCs and DBs
edPIRATE SLE	SL	July	Complete1-week SLE
Interactive Technology for MC 2-4	CM, LH, SparkPlug	Aug-May	Technology developed/implemented
Sustainability and Project Completion Tasks- Year 5			
Americorps position	PI team	Mar '27	Apply for future residents
Apprenticeship status for residents	PI team	Mar '27	Apprenticeship designation secured
Summative Evaluation	PSA	Aug '27	Evaluation discussed. Findings published.
Final Reporting	PI	Sept '27	Report filed

ii. Adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement

Building individual capacity is just one part of the equation for successful implementation of

innovations (███████). Coherence is an often overlook set of variables that can subsume

reform efforts ███████████████ For the edPIRATE innovation to take and sustain, we

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harness the power of our people, context, and research design. Our advisory board will serve as macro-level observers. Our greatest asset are the local school liaisons who are well situated to understand the needs and context. Finally, our evaluation team partners will collaborate with the PI's to create a robust formative evaluation that will lead to feedback. This trilogy, in combination of the edPIRATE team's willingness and nimbleness to effect change, creates the necessary conditions for change.

Competitive Preference Priorities

CPP 1: Increasing Educator Diversity under option b

Project edPIRATE will increase educator diversity by making changes to ECU and partner district recruitment and support mechanisms to ensure potential candidates (for both teacher residency and leadership development) from underrepresented groups are fully represented in admission, completion, placement, and retention. Financial barriers posed by unfunded teacher residencies and long commutes from rural communities to the university will be overcome with stipends and by holding the majority of program activities at partner schools or online. To provide role models of success, we will recruit teachers from underrepresented groups to serve as mentors for teachers and in our leadership program. We will work with partner LEAs to recruit diverse candidates. We will use culturally responsive supports for participants before and after students enroll in the program. We also will intentionally orient the MAT and the induction program to promote and value diversity, equity, and inclusion mindsets.

In studies of COE recruitment efforts, access to information and application forms on-line yielded higher enrollment, particularly for those who are geographically isolated. The COE recruits through numerous online sites, news/highlights, social media sites, and a blog. Project edTEACH will partner with ECU's Troops to Teachers program, which recruits from a large

local population of retired military and spouses of active duty military. As a 'military friendly'

institution, ECU has a dedicated portal for recruitment and support of veterans, active duty

service members, and their families. ECU policy mandates that all its web pages meet Federal

and State accessibility requirements and Institutional Computing and Technology Services

supports creation and maintenance of accessible web pages and online instructional platforms

and resources. ECU and COE recruitment efforts include dissemination to the English and

Spanish media and the COE has a targeted set of recruitment strategies, designed in partnership

with its 43 LEA member Latham Clinical Schools Network, to recruit members of historically

underrepresented groups.

CPP 2: Supporting a Diverse Educator Workforce and Professional Growth to Strengthen Student Learning

We will address CPP 2 in our MAT program by increasing the number of certified teachers

for shortage areas in our partner districts as documented in our needs assessment and with a

micro-credential program for current educators leading to add-on licensure in teaching ELLs and

AIG students, two areas of state wide as well as local need.

CPP 3: Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs

Our models for both the MAT and school leadership programs include several components

important to creating an inclusive and supportive environment for our participants and for

teaching them the skills to create this environment in their schools. A nested coaching model

with specific protocols and tools to develop and measure relational trust (as described in the

main narrative (p. 35-36) foster a sense of belonging and are evidence-based practices for

advancing our participants' success as well as that of their students. The cohort design further

creates community and increases sense of belonging for participants. Additionally, ECU has

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exceptional wellness support for graduate students through the Counseling Center, LGBTQ Center, Black Student Association, and academic support in tutoring and writing centers.

CPP 4: Promoting Equity in Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities

The MAT will be oriented in an equitable framework through its rural educational justice curriculum and embedded community engagement activities and the professional development that will be taken by mentor teachers, school leaders, and other program participants will include two Digital Badges (a series of 6-week Pirate-MCs equivalent to 3-unit courses) specifically focused on examining and overcoming sources of inequity in rural classrooms. While pedagogy cannot overcome inequitable funding for rural school districts, nor environmental injustice in our communities, it can be used to foster equity and rigor within classrooms and schools.

Invitational Priority - Grow Your Own.

Project edPIRATE will incorporate widely accepted GYO elements in developing a comprehensive educator development model centered on transforming rural schools and enriching the lives of diverse learners. The GYO elements include a residency program that will offer financial assistance, paid job-embedded learning, academic advising, flexible scheduling, mentorship, tutoring, test preparation, and a cohort model. Further, GYO elements will be incorporated in the recruitment and program design targeting current teachers and administrators in the district to participate in the school leader micro-credentials. Both the Pirate-MC platform (and associated protocols and technologies) and edPIRATE teacher residency induction design offer improvement efforts in eastern NC today and beyond.

References

See Appendix H: *Other* for a full list of references.