

Rural Educators for Appalachian Children (REACH)

Table of Contents

Absolute Priority 1	2
Quality of the Project Design.....	6
Rationale	6
Goals, Objectives and Outcomes	10
Comprehensive Effort to Improve Teaching and Learning and Support Academic Standards	10
Up-to-Date Knowledge from Research and Effective Practice	26
Performance Feedback and Continuous Improvement	28
Building Capacity and Yielding Results Beyond the Grant Period.....	29
Quality of the Project Evaluation.....	31
Evaluation Methods Provide Valid and Reliable Performance Data on Relevant Outcomes ..	31
Evaluation Methods are Thorough, Feasible, and Appropriate to the Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes	35
Adequacy of Resources.....	38
Support, including Facilities, Equipment, Supplies, and Resources.....	38
Adequacy of Budget	40
Reasonable Costs in Relation to the Objectives, Design, and Potential Significance	41
Resources and Sustainability Plan	42
Commitment of Partners	44
Quality of the Management Plan	45
Responsibilities, Timeline, and Milestones	45
Procedures for Feedback and Continuous Improvement	48
CPP1. Increasing Educator Diversity	49
CPP2. Supporting a Diverse Educator Workforce and Professional Growth to Strengthen Student Learning	51
CPP3. Meeting Teacher Candidates’ Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs	51
CPP4. Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities.....	52

Rural Educators for Appalachian Children (REACH)

Absolute Priority 1

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 97% of America's land mass is considered rural (America Counts Staff, 2017). Rural public schools serve 9.3 million students in the United States, more than the student enrollment of the country's 85 largest school systems (). Frostburg State University (FSU) is situated within the Appalachian region, serving high-need, rural communities in western Maryland (MD), West Virginia (WV), and Pennsylvania (PA). It is the only 4-year institution within a one-hour radius, providing an essential service to the surrounding counties. Rural Educators for Appalachian Children (REACH) has been designed to meet the needs of five partner districts in MD, WV, and PA, improve student achievement and long-term outcomes, and develop a comprehensive and collaborative model for strengthening the teacher career continuum in rural America. The project responds to Absolute Priority 1, the four Competitive Preference Priorities, and the Invitational Priority.

REACH will achieve its goals through four focused strategies:

1. Co-Implemented, Clinically Based Dual Certification Program – Serving a critical need in the region for special educators, the project will engage partners in co-designing and co-implementing a four-year undergraduate teacher education program with a fully integrated curriculum and nationally validated assessments that will result in teachers who are dually certified in elementary education and special education. The program will respond to the unique needs of rural districts by offering some courses on-site in schools, offering coursework that is co-taught by elementary and special education university professors, facilitating intensive and extensive clinical experiences, and allowing districts

to grow their own pipeline of teachers from dually enrolled high school students and currently practicing instructional assistants.

2. Two-Year Induction Program – FSU will collaborate with each of its partner districts to augment existing teacher induction offerings with two years of coaching, targeted professional learning, and microcredentials. Induction will focus on the science of reading, high leverage practices, and culturally responsive teaching.
3. Teacher Leader Pathway – REACH will cultivate teacher leaders through career advancement pathways featuring professional learning experiences and/or microcredentials for teacher mentors, induction coaches, and any teacher interested in pursuing National Board Certification in order to increase capacity for instructional leadership within each high-need school and improve retention of talented educators.
4. MegaCommunity for Systemic Capacity and Linkage Building – In rural districts, personnel often have to do double-duty, fulfilling multiple roles and making do with less systemic capacity and infrastructure. REACH will establish a MegaCommunity comprised of more than 20 organizations to leverage cross-sector expertise and resources among academic experts, policy makers, and industry leaders, building capacities and sharing resources to improve professional development infrastructures and educator career ladders for teacher advancement. This community will serve an advisory function to the project.

Together, these strategies will allow REACH to address issues across the teacher career continuum, including access, recruitment, preparation, support, induction, retention, and advancement. At the same time, the program will help realize multi-state priorities in preparing and retaining diverse, highly effective teachers in critical shortage areas, and respond to the

Blueprint for MD's Future, a comprehensive piece of legislation designed to elevate Maryland's education system to internationally benchmarked standards, as well as WV's Professional Learning Framework, and PA's Code of Professional Practice. Building upon common goals and leveraged resources among partnering agencies as well as promising practices from a graduate-level TQP grant awarded in 2019, the partnership is well-positioned to successfully impact the teacher career continuum and student achievement in Appalachia.

Eligibility

This section responds to Eligibility Requirements i.A, i.B.1, i.B.2, ii.A, ii.B, A1, A4, B1, B2, B3, C1 & C2.

Founded in 1898 to prepare teachers, FSU is a public, comprehensive, largely residential regional university located in the rural Appalachian region of western MD. With an enrollment of 5,675, FSU serves regional economic and workforce development initiatives, promotes civic responsibility and sustainability, and prepares future leaders to meet the challenges of a complex global society. The College of Education (COE) offers 14 diverse programs and is accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, now CAEP), approved by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), and Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Although MD does not rank its teacher preparation programs, FSU's COE is consistently held up as a model teacher preparation program in the state and has always stood in good standing with approved programs from MSDE and the University System of Maryland. (See the letter of support in Appendix E.) Within the current elementary education program, 100% of program completers pass Praxis Core, and 100% meet all requirements for their pedagogy assessment. 85% - 95% pass each of the four content area tests for elementary education (i.e., mathematics, reading, science, and social studies) at the time of graduation, and a majority of the rest pass those assessments within one year of graduation. All teacher candidates

(TCs) meet high academic standards as they prepare to become a credentialed teacher, demonstrate a record of success as they pass through gateways for progress in the program, and participate in intensive and extensive clinical experiences in partner schools.

COE works closely with the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (CLAS) in its operations of all teacher and administrator licensure programs. The collaborative operations among COE and CLAS have been institutionalized through the P20 Executive Advisory Council.

Five high-need LEAs will partner with FSU on the proposed project, including Allegany County (MD), Mineral County (WV), Morgan County (WV), Pendleton County (WV), and Turkeyfoot Valley Area School District (PA). These LEAs all serve high percentages of economically disadvantaged students, at two times or more the required rate for LEA eligibility (see Appendix H1 for High-Need Data). Each district has a high percentage of teachers with temporary certification or high annual teacher turnover rates, exceeding the national average, and all five districts have unfilled teaching positions for which they have no qualified applicants. A 2018 study indicates that the percentage of inexperienced teachers in MD is at 15.7% in comparison to 12.7% in the nation; uncertified teachers is at 3.4% for both MD and WV in comparison to 2.6% in the nation; and the percent of teachers planning to leave teaching is 10.1% in MD and 9.4% in WV, compared to 7.3% in the nation (Learning Policy Institute, 2018). While PA as a state performs slightly better than the national average on these metrics, Turkeyfoot Valley Area School District is in an extremely rural area of PA with severe poverty and staffing challenges. Within the identified LEAs, 13 schools (6 MD schools, 6 WV schools, and 1 PA school) are identified as high-need schools which will host REACH TCs during their extensive and intensive clinical experiences. These schools are all in the top quartile for poverty in their respective districts. See Appendix H1 for data on each of these schools.

Quality of the Project Design

Rationale

Needs Assessment

This section responds to General Program requirement a, and f.2.

The rationale for REACH is grounded in a comprehensive needs assessment of FSU's surrounding districts, completed in 2021 (Baker, in press), as well as state and national research.

In 2021, researchers from Central Michigan University and FSU collaboratively designed and collected survey responses from 140 superintendents, district administrators, and principals in the counties surrounding FSU. The survey focuses on teacher effectiveness, school improvement, educational leadership, communication, partnerships, outcomes, funding, and discipline-specific needs. Findings indicate that the greatest areas of need which overlap with the lowest level of teacher mastery include instructional differentiation, curriculum design, student supports for trauma, and data literacy, with WV respondents indicating the greatest need for professional development experiences for teachers. Respondents from WV also note a desire to improve the impact of their relationship with local institutions of higher education, and that is one of the main reasons why the REACH program is partnering with three WV districts. Additional findings from the local needs assessment are available in Appendix B.

Focus on the Teacher Career Continuum. In Appalachia, it is not enough to focus on the teacher pipeline. Needs are greater than teacher recruitment and range from accessibility of teacher education programs to teacher induction and support, to retention and advancement. A 2015 report from the Center for American Progress contains recommendations for how to elevate and modernize the teaching profession through systemic change that have guided the design of REACH: "In order to improve teaching and learning in the United States and keep up with

changing demands on students, teachers, and schools, policymakers and education officials must make systemic changes to all aspects of the teaching profession: recruiting; training; developing; retaining; and supporting teachers with effective leaders and professional learning environments. Each of these pieces is interconnected and must be aligned in order for change to be effective” ([REDACTED]).

Rural Focus. The opportunities and achievement gaps among underserved students in high-need rural settings are critically impacted by access to qualified teachers, and the low-performing student achievement status of the partnering high-need schools (see Appendix H1) demonstrates the urgent needs for high-impact interventions to recruit and retain qualified teachers. Beyond qualifications, access to culturally competent teachers from underrepresented backgrounds is increasingly an educational civil right for students. Teachers’ ability to work effectively with diverse students is a key strategy for inclusive excellence.

Teacher Recruitment. Researchers widely agree that teachers are the single most important school-based factor affecting student achievement ([REDACTED]); however, teacher preparation program enrollments and rates of completion are down, nationally. Enrollments are down by more than a third from 2009-10—the height of enrollment over the past decade—while completers are down by a quarter ([REDACTED]), and the pandemic has further upended the teacher pipeline (Lachlan et al., 2020). The National Education Association reports that the ratio of hires to job openings in the education sector has reached new lows across the nation, with 0.57 hires to every open position ([REDACTED]).

MD and WV have both experienced a decrease in the overall number of teachers completing teacher preparation programs statewide. According to the 2020 federal Title II reports (the most recent reporting available), WV saw a decrease of 20% in program completers from 2017-18 to

2018-19, and MD saw a decrease of 9% during the same period. Annually, MD hires three times as many teachers as are produced by its teacher preparation programs, and WV is currently experiencing a shortage of approximately 1,000 teachers in all subject areas, with an especially critical shortage in special education, among other subjects (WV Dept of Ed, 2022). In PA, there has been a 66% drop in newly issued teaching certificates over an 11-year period (██████████). WV is also experiencing twice the national average for teacher attrition during the first year of teaching: 1 in 5 teachers who is hired leaves after only one year (██████████). This constant churn exacerbates problems in the teacher pipeline.

Special Education Focus. FSU is committed to increasing the number of certified teachers in critical shortage areas, and special education has an extremely acute need in the counties proximate to the university. FSU has received requests from multiple districts to begin a special education initial certification program at the undergraduate level. In Allegany County (high-need LEA partner in MD), district administrators have indicated that they employ 77 paraeducators with earned associate degrees who would benefit from the opportunity to obtain teacher certification, especially in special education.

With the opioid crisis, which has hit rural America especially hard, school systems are expected to experience a significant number of students entering schools with disabilities. In a recent collaborative meeting with school system representatives at FSU's P-20 Executive Advisory Council, administrators shared the increased needs for teachers to be prepared to meet cognitive, emotional, and developmental deficits that are a result of the opioid crisis. A representative from Allegany County Public School reported that 20% of babies born in the county have been exposed to drugs in utero, PA's attorney general has declared the heroin and opioid epidemic as the #1 public safety crisis in the state, and the drug overdose fatality rate in WV (largely opioid

related) is highest in the nation.

FSU also hears requests from potential students at recruitment open houses for an undergraduate program leading to certification in special education.

Elementary Focus. In rural schools, teachers often have to perform double duty. Dual certification is highly desired so that teacher skill can be maximized across sometimes low student populations. Elementary education is a high-leverage second certification area, as children spend about half of their time in P-12 education at the elementary level, and these are the six schooling years during which children learn the most. “The average student achievement gains during elementary school far outpace those seen before or after” (██████████). FSU’s current undergraduate elementary education program is aligned to the CAEP K-6 Elementary Teacher Preparation Standards. Curriculum from this program will be re-imagined and re-configured through REACH to create an integrated elementary/special education program of study.

Logic Model. Appendix C includes a logic model for the REACH project. The logic model begins by calling out the resources/inputs available to the project that will be leveraged in support of the work. The project will enact four main strategies to address the needs described above, including the design and co-implementation of a clinically based dual certification program; the co-creation of context-specific two-year induction programs; the facilitation of a new pathway to career advancement for teacher leaders; and the development of a MegaCommunity for systemic capacity and linkage building. Each of these strategies is linked to outputs and short-term outcomes, leading to the overarching goals of the project, outlined below. For information on the research basis supporting the strategies outlined in the logic model, please

see the section titled “Up to Date Knowledge of Research and Effective Practice.”

Goals, Objectives and Outcomes

This section responds to General Program requirement f.1 and Absolute Priority requirement I.a.1.i.

REACH will pursue the twin goals of improving student achievement and long-term life outcomes through partnerships with high-need schools, as well as developing a comprehensive and collaborative model for strengthening the teacher career continuum for rural America, with a specific focus on accessibility, recruitment, preparation, support, induction, retention, and advancement. This model will be developed, tested, refined, and shared during the grant period, allowing for widespread reach and impact.

The project will pursue three objectives: increasing the number of highly effective, culturally responsive teachers for special education in Appalachia; improving teacher support, retention, and advancement; and validating the impact of the model. Progress in meeting each objective will be tracked through performance measures and annual targets, as indicated in the Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes table in Appendix H2.

Comprehensive Effort to Improve Teaching and Learning and Support Academic

Standards

REACH is aligned with CAEP’s national accreditation standards, and the standards of the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) for initial certification programs. WV’s Professional Learning Reimagined Framework, PA’s Act 48 of 1999, as well as the Blueprint for MD’s Future (MD Senate Bill 1030; MD House Bill 1413) will be considered in the development of the program. In addition, the proposed program will support WV Professional Teaching Standards, PA’s Code of Professional Practice and the CAEP K-6 Elementary Teacher Preparation Standards, as well as WV and MD College- and Career-

Readiness Standards and PA Core Standards (which are all state versions of the Common Core and share many similarities). Guidance from the Council for Exceptional Children and American Council on Rural Special Education will be utilized for the development of the special education curriculum. Current federal funding from Title II, ESEA, ESSER, and IDEA will be used not as a match but in a coordinated manner to maximize results, especially related to special education services, reading intervention, teacher professional development, and new teacher induction. REACH supports state initiatives for recruitment of teachers in shortage areas, as well as the WV Grow Your Own initiative.

In MD, bi-partisan support for the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future offers vision and priorities in educational innovation and excellence that have served as a guiding framework in the development of the proposed project. Policy area 2 of the Blueprint, High-Quality and Diverse Teachers and Leaders, includes specific recommendations of “elevating the teaching profession comparable to other fields with the same education and with comparable compensation; establishing a career ladder so that excellent teachers remain in the classroom; and increasing the rigor of teacher preparation programs and state certification standards” (██████████). In direct alignment to the Blueprint, the four REACH strategies are designed to unify efforts across sectors and levels of schooling to create accelerated and sustainable pathways to improve the teacher career continuum, improve student achievement in high-need schools, and build institutional capacities among the IHE and partner LEAs.

Strategy 1: Co-Implemented, Clinically Based Dual Certification Program

REACH is designed to simultaneously increase teacher diversity and improve teaching competencies, while bridging opportunity and achievement gaps in high-need rural schools. The

centerpiece strategy is a co-implemented, clinically based undergraduate dual certification program in elementary and special education. Defining characteristics of this program include co-taught courses, with elementary and special education faculty collaborating to provide education coursework, as well as a summer institute and on-site courses offered within high-need schools in partner districts to accommodate the needs of instructional assistants (IAs). The dual major will transform FSU's existing elementary education program, fully integrating special education into coursework.

Recruitment & Support of Diverse Teacher Candidates

This section responds to Absolute Priority requirements I.b.5, I.f, I.f.1, I.f.2, I.f.3, and the Invitational Priority.

REACH partners are committed to increasing the diversity of the TCs entering the program and supporting their success through program completion, full state certification, and induction to the profession. The project's strategy for achieving this aim begins with accessibility. Teacher preparation programs are not accessible for individuals from underserved backgrounds who are not able to pass the content exams for teacher preparation. "An outsized number of elementary TCs struggle to pass their state licensing tests, especially in the content knowledge (English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies), defined by states as minimally necessary for the job. In many states, less than half of all test takers pass on their first try, with even lower pass rates reported for candidates of color" (██████████). Many students will leave the major when they cannot pass the tests. Students are in need of test preparation and test-taking/anxiety-reducing strategies.

REACH will establish a Teacher Education Advising and Support Center within the College of Education to provide Praxis Content tutoring and access to test preparation materials, both prior to program admission for students under a 3.0 GPA (who must pass Praxis Core for program

entry) and during the dual certification program for support of Praxis content exams.

Recruitment for the program will make full use of undergraduate recruitment campaigns already underway at the College of Education and will especially target underrepresented groups of students for the Dual Certification program. Underrepresented groups in elementary education include students with low socio-economic status/Pell grant recipients, males, first generation college students, veterans, disabled students, bilingual students, and Black, brown, indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC). Marketing materials will be designed, and recruitment travel and ad placement will be planned to maximize relevance and visibility for underserved students, in order to diversify the teacher workforce.

REACH will make use of a partnership with Bard High School Early College in Baltimore, MD (serving 90% students of color), other high schools implementing the Teacher Academies of Maryland (TAM) program, and high schools within the REACH partner LEAs to recruit high school students into the dual certification program (Grow Your Own – Dual Enrollment Program). Through this dual enrollment program, high school students may earn up to 6 credits that may be applied to their Dual Elementary/Secondary Education degree at FSU.

In addition, REACH will engage in a Grow Your Own – IA Program to recruit from IAs within partner LEAs and will offer coursework on a schedule and at a location that is conducive to the IA work schedule. Finally, students earning their Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) at local community colleges will be recruited to join the program.

Once students begin the program, REACH will work to support them and increase program persistence and retention, especially of students from underserved populations. The Teacher Education Advising and Support Center mentioned above will support TCs in cultivating a sense

of belonging on campus, through linkages to student organizations that are identity-affirming; surround the TCs with a support system of faculty and staff who are looking out for the students' best interests; and implement evidence-based advising.

The Center Director will establish personal relationships with each of the TCs involved in the REACH initiative and act as a clearinghouse to connect students with academic, social, emotional, and career supports on campus, such as the following:

- Academic Supports - ACE Learning Studio (tutoring), Reading/Writing Center, Research Consultations at Strozier (personal support from a research librarian), Academic Resource Center, Academic Trainers
- Supports for Specific Student Populations - CARE (support for students who are first in their family to attend college), Adult Learning Evaluation Center (diagnosis of learning disabilities), Office of Accessibility Services (support for students with disabilities)
- Health Supports - Counseling and Psychological Services, Brady Health Center
- Identity-Affirming Organizations –Black Student Alliance, Caribbean Student Association, Chinese Culture Club, Ethiopian Student Association, Indian and South Asian Students Association, Japanese Cultural Club, Latin American Student Organization, NAACP College Chapter, NCNW (National Council of Negro Women), SPECTRUM (LGBTQ), Students for Women's Issues

REACH will also re-envision COE faculty's use of Beacon Alert, an online system for flagging students at risk of failure. Under the re-envisioned system, COE faculty and advisors will be trained to utilize *kudos* and *notes* in addition to *alerts*, thereby transforming the system from one that alerts students to action that they need to take to one that rallies the student's support system among faculty and staff to meet student needs and celebrate student successes in real time.

The project will focus on creating a positive, inclusive, and identity-safe climate within the College of Education under the direction of the Dean of the College of Education (also the PI of REACH), a Black woman. Faculty will model the culturally responsive practices that the college instills in its students. In addition, REACH will offer hiring bonuses for BIPOC faculty/staff to provide demographically similar mentors for incoming students. Historical and contemporary qualitative and quantitative research highlights that teachers of color improve learning as well as social and emotional development for their students of color (Bristol & Martin-Fernandez, 2019).

Coursework

This section responds to General Program requirement f.5.ii, f.6, f.8.ii, and Absolute Priority requirements I.b.2.iv, I.b.2.vi, I.b.3, I.g, I.g.1, I.g.2, I.g.3, and I.g.4.

Coursework in the proposed dual certification program will be co-developed with the input of COE, CLAS, and partner LEA faculty and staff, and aligned with academic content standards, under the direction of the Director of Teacher Education and REACH Curriculum Designer.

Professional education courses for IAs will be offered on-site in partner high-need schools, and courses both at the University and in school-based settings will be designed to be co-taught with Elementary and Special Education faculty and/or adjunct teacher leaders from high-need LEAs. Co-teaching will provide deliberate modeling for TCs as well as strengthen theory-to-practice connections, while valuing both evidence-based practices and practice-based evidence.

Content knowledge specific to the Elementary major have been co-designed with CLAS faculty. Content specific courses will ensure that TCs understand effective instruction across all content areas and meet certification requirements. Courses will include mathematics for elementary teachers (6 credits), lab sciences (12 credits), a course in the arts (3 credits), social science courses (6 credits), English and advanced writing (6 credits), a health/PE course (3 credits), an

educational technology course (3 credits), mathematics curriculum, methods, and assessment (3 credits), science curriculum, methods, and assessment (3 credits), social studies curriculum, methods, and assessment (3 credits), as well as a four-course sequence in Reading (12 credits). Other credits will be included to meet MHEC and MSDE requirements.

Reading courses include process and acquisition of reading, reading instruction, assessment for reading instruction, and materials and motivations for reading. Content will focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency including oral reading skills, and reading comprehension strategies, in alignment with the MD Keys to Comprehensive Literacy and student literacy standards in all three states. In addition, instruction that develops computational and conceptual thinking, mathematical problem-solving skills, and 21st century learning will be emphasized throughout the program.

Special education coursework will focus on the characteristics of students with exceptional learning needs; the field's history, law, procedures, and trends; key concepts of inclusion and co-teaching; assessment for special education; specially designed instruction, including how, when, and why to vary learning environments, developmentally appropriate activities, and content; universal design within a gradual release of responsibility model (GRRUDL), data-based decision making using technology, Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS); Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA) and how to develop a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP); communication with families; design of individualized education programs (IEPs); and Tier 1, 2, and 3 interventions across the content areas.

Courses will be co-taught with special education instructor and methods instructors both lending their expertise and modeling effective co-teaching for students. Through its reimagined coursework progressions and innovative course delivery, the program will provide intensive

deep-learning activities and integrated curriculum for content mastery with specially designed progressions to meet the needs of all students.

Clinical Experiences

This section responds to Absolute Priority requirements 1.a.1.ii, 1.a.2, 1.b.1, 1.b.2.iv.A, 1.b.2.iv.B, 1.b.2.v, 1.b.6, 1.c.1, 1.c.1.i, 1.c.1.ii, 1.c.2, 1.c.3, 1.c.4, 1.c.5, 1.c.6, 1.c.7, 1.c.8, 1.c.8.i, 1.c.8.iii, and General Program requirements b, f.6, f.7, and f.9.

Clinical experiences are the heart of the dual certification program in elementary and special education, with embedded clinical experiences throughout the program, culminating in a yearlong internship, as outlined in the table below.

Experience	Description
Early Field Experiences	With select courses held on-site in partner schools, professors will integrate classroom observation to complement curriculum. In addition, GoReact, a video platform that enables time-stamped discussion and analysis, will be utilized to engage TCs in analysis of classroom instruction, and its use will continue throughout later clinical experiences to facilitate teacher reflection on their own recorded instruction.
Apprenticeship	In the first semester of the junior year, TCs will complete 40 hours of clinical experiences with a special educator.
Assistantship	In the second semester of the junior year, TCs will complete 15 days of partner teaching with a peer in an elementary inclusion classroom.
Clinical Rounds	Held during the apprenticeship (see above), clinical rounds are daylong experiences that allow TCs to experience many different grade levels and areas of a diverse school setting.

Clinical Rotations	Held during the yearlong internship, clinical rotations are 3-day field experiences that provide TCs with exposure to urban classrooms such as Baltimore City Public Schools, to offer them a diversity of experiences in various locales. (See the MOU with the Baltimore City Board of Commissioners in Appendix E.)
Yearlong Internship	The yearlong internship engages TCs in the work of a full-time teacher for 120 days during their senior year. They are paired with a special educator and general educator for this extensive internship.

Building on evidence-based practices, the clinical experiences in the dual certification program provide highly structured and well-supported opportunities for fieldwork and applications of best practice under the supervision of university supervisors and teacher mentors. These experiences immerse TCs in high-need, rural schools and allow a gradual entry into the teaching profession and guided development of what it means to be a teacher in rural places ([REDACTED]).

“Prospective and new teachers should have the opportunity to learn from mentor teachers, practice essential teaching skills, and gradually improve their practice. Programs that support gradual entry into the teaching profession—including extended clinical preparation, residencies, and induction programs—provide this opportunity. Through these programs, prospective and new teachers spend more time working alongside experienced teachers, observing strong instruction and management, and receiving valuable feedback. The value of supported entry programs is twofold: Clinical training experiences will increase the number of teachers who are effective from the start; they also increase the proportion of teachers who are able to reach excellence and mastery in their early teaching years, thereby increasing the number of expert, experienced teachers in the highest-need classrooms” ([REDACTED]).

University supervisors will work extensively with TCs to understand the contexts in which they are placed, exploring culturally responsive teaching with place-consciousness, family engagement, and developing an asset-based lens for viewing rural communities. Clinical work allows TCs to experience many different grade levels and elements of schooling, through clinical rounds. *Clinical Rounds* are day-long field experiences in which TCs engage in a diverse community and school to better understand local culture and develop regional sensibilities. The Clinical Rounds Observational Framework focuses on four areas (1) cultural identity, (2) influence of culture on student learning, (3) influence of culture on instructional decisions, and (4) strategies that promote inclusive learning environments.

Teachers also have the opportunity to experience urban schools through clinical rotations. The *Clinical Rotations* are 3-day micro-immersion experiences in which TCs engage in residential internships at diverse school settings that are significantly different from their internship placement. The Clinical Rotations Assessment Framework focuses on observation within four areas (1) designing coherent instruction, (2) creating powerful learning environments, (3) implementing effective instruction, and (4) assuming professional responsibilities. The Clinical Rounds and Clinical Rotations have been tested in the past several years at multiple IHEs and LEAs. Results reflect positive influences based on assessments conducted by participants and mentors, and evaluations and observations conducted by an external agency.

The yearlong internship is designed to immerse TCs in the life of a teacher, while still providing them with the time and space to connect theory with practice and to engage in analysis and reflection for self-improvement. The internship provides opportunities for TCs to work in multiple classrooms, becoming an integral part of the general educator's classroom and assisting with the special educator's caseload. All activities within the internship follow a gradual release

model with suggested activities to move TCs from the periphery of teaching activities at the start of the year (e.g., introducing themselves to the class, writing a letter to families, developing instructional displays) to full-time “takeover” during the final semester.

To support TCs working with students in high-need schools, the *Preparing Educators for High Poverty/Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Schools* framework (MSDE, 2014), as well as specially designed instruction and alternate assessments for students with disabilities (SWD) and English learners (EL) are integrated into activities. Teacher candidates will integrate instructional technology, apply universal design for learning, implement positive behavioral interventions and supports, and enact trauma-informed teaching and culturally responsive practice. In addition, they will design, implement, and assess instruction to meet the needs of special populations of students, including EL, SWD, gifted and talented, and students with low literacy levels.

Mentor teachers and induction coaches will be jointly selected by the IHE/LEA partners. Mentor teachers and induction coaches are selected for their (1) demonstrated teaching effectiveness with a minimum of 3 years of experience, (2) demonstrated professional engagement with a minimum of 1.5 years of mentoring experience, (3) demonstrated commitment to professional growth with a minimum of 6 earned professional development (PD) credits toward licensure renewal, and (4) by a recommendation from school/LEA leaders on subject area knowledge and teaching effectiveness. Careful mentor-candidate pairing will be jointly conducted by IHE/LEA to ensure matching of content expertise. Each mentor will engage in a 2-day intensive training, receive a stipend, and earn microcredentials for PD credit to build mentoring skills. Mentor effectiveness will be observed jointly by partners in four specific domains: (a) planning and preparation; (b) the classroom environment; (c) professional responsibilities; and (d) instruction, including data-informed instruction and improvement, in accordance with LEA-specific teacher

evaluation.

Through partnerships with high-need schools for clinical experiences, REACH aims to improve effectiveness of TCs as they graduate and become teacher fellows. “First-year teachers are more effective when they are teaching in the same grade, in the same school level, or in a classroom with student demographics similar to their student teaching classroom” ([REDACTED]).

Assessment

This section responds to General Program requirement c and Absolute Priority requirement I.b.2.iii.

The dual certification program will embed meaningful coursework and clinical experiences to engage TCs in selecting, designing, and delivering assessments, as well as using results from diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments to inform their teaching. As an example, during the yearlong internship, TCs will work with their mentor teachers in high-need schools to develop a Student Learning Objectives (SLO) project. This project requires them to interrogate their own teaching and student learning to determine inequities and inadequacies and then implement interventions and monitor student progress to determine the effectiveness of the selected interventions.

In addition, the final pedagogy assessment for TCs is the EdTPA, which requires TCs to collect and analyze data, develop plans grounded in data collection, and communicate with students and their families about student progress. Developed by SCALE at Stanford University, EdTPA is a standards-based, subject-specific performance assessment for beginning teachers. Advanced video recording and annotation of lessons taught by TCs will be part of the required evidence documenting competencies.

The overall assessment design for the dual certification program is discussed in the “Performance Feedback and Continuous Improvement” section.

Strategy 2: Two-Year Induction Program

This section responds to General Program requirements f.8.i, f.8.ii, f.10, g.1, g.3, and g.4, and Absolute Priority requirements I.b.2.vi, I.b.4, I.c.8.ii, I.d, I.g, I.g.1, I.g.2, I.g.3, and I.g.4.

The Maryland Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (2019) calls for induction (which is typically administered by the district) to be aligned more systematically with teacher preparation (which is traditionally administered by the IHE). Support from REACH will continue for two years beyond graduation for Teacher Fellows, those program completers who accept jobs within partnering high-need LEAs. In addition, REACH will allow for support to be provided to other novice teachers within high-need schools and to partner high-need districts. See the table below for the layers of induction support that will be provided through the project. The induction program will be managed by FSU faculty supervisors who are provided workload credit for their work.

Audience	Induction Support
Teacher Fellows	In-School Coach, Monthly coaching and professional learning, Microcredentials in High Leverage Practices and Culturally Responsive Teaching, Science of Reading course with literacy coaching
Other Novice Teachers in High-Need Schools	Microcredentials in High Leverage Practices and Culturally Responsive Teaching, Science of Reading course with literacy coaching
High-Need LEAs	Support in updating/improving induction program for all new teachers in the district

REACH will ensure that each Teacher Fellow has a job-alike induction coach who will be paid a

stipend, be trained in coaching and video-stimulated recall ([REDACTED]), and will meet with the novice teacher on a monthly basis to provide support and engage in lesson analysis. Release time will be provided for this work for the induction coach. In a recent meta-analysis of 60 studies, including only randomized controlled trials and quasi-experimental research designs that could credibly isolate the effect of coaching, researchers concluded that coaching works ([REDACTED] [REDACTED]). Remarkably, the analysis concluded that “with coaching, the quality of teachers’ instruction improves by as much as—or more than—the difference in effectiveness between a novice and a teacher with five to ten years of experience, a more positive estimated effect than traditional professional development and most other school-based interventions.”

To significantly strengthen teachers’ knowledge and skills to positively impact P-12 student learning, FSU will offer microcredentials and in-person professional learning for all novice teachers in identified high-need LEAs as well as all Teacher Fellows. Microcredentials “provide educators competency-based, on-demand, personalized, and shareable opportunities to demonstrate and be recognized for their professional learning” ([REDACTED]). “Early adopters are expressing enthusiasm for these more relevant performance-based assessments.”

Microcredentials will focus on high leverage practices and culturally responsive teaching. These microcredentials will engage teachers in practices that cultivate cultural competencies, growth mindset, and productive classroom environments for inclusive excellence.

Building on extensive research with multi-agency implementation through FSU’s prior TQP work, the microcredentialing model includes three key characteristics: (1) Learning ecosystem designed through the 3Hs: High-Tech, High-Touch, and High-Impact principles; (2) Learning experiences anchored by the 3Cs: Curriculum, Co-Curricular, and Community; and (3) Learning outcomes measured through the 3Es: Engaging Self, Engaging Others, and Engaging in Diverse

Communities. Specifically, each of the microcredentials include three sections: (1) *Engaging Self*: a theoretical learning unit with a focus on cognitive development for deep learning, (2) *Engaging Others*: a field-based audit in the classroom or community focusing on intra-personal development, and (3) *Engaging in Diverse Communities*: a project-based learning unit focusing on interpersonal development through demonstration of competency-mastery and documentation of impact on P-12 student learning. The rigorous experiences demand that participants serve as knowledge generators in classrooms and change makers in communities. Microcredentials will be offered for state PD credits.

In high-need schools, all novice teachers will be eligible to take a Science of Reading course for PD credit or college credit, which can then be applied to a master's degree. Through the Science of Reading course, participants will perform diagnostic reading assessments, identify students who need intervention supports, deliver evidence-based interventions, and utilize progress monitoring to determine the success of the intervention for identified students. Literacy coaches will guide participants through this process (see Strategy 3, below). The Science of Reading course will be developed in collaboration with faculty from the CLAS at FSU and will be offered through edX or a similar platform.

Finally, FSU commits to working with each of the five districts to strengthen their district-wide teacher induction program for all new teachers in the district.

Research suggests that teacher turnover can be attributed to lack of mentorship, lack of peer support, ineffective school leadership, and inadequate teacher preparation. NCTAF finds that when new teachers are well-prepared, their attrition is cut by half (NYU, 2017). Through a well-designed undergraduate experience and aligned induction program, REACH seeks to improve levels of teacher certification, placement, support, and retention.

Strategy 3: Teacher Leader Pathway

This section responds to General Program requirements f.8.i, f.8.ii, f.10, and Absolute Priority requirements I.b.2.vi, I.g, I.g.1, I.g.2, I.g.3, and I.g.4.

A lack of career pathways is a barrier to retaining teachers, particularly the best ones. Recent teacher surveys and case studies demonstrate a strong correlation between giving experienced teachers a voice through leadership opportunities and their job satisfaction and likelihood to stay in the profession ([REDACTED] [REDACTED]). In direct alignment with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, Policy Area 2, REACH will build a Teacher Leaders Pathway for talented, veteran teachers in identified high-need schools. The Teacher Leaders Pathway will improve teacher effectiveness, increase teacher retention, and accelerate teacher leadership advancement through sustained professional development; and improve teacher performance and student learning through evidence-based practices with competency-based microcredentials/professional learning experiences. This Pathway will allow teachers to participate in four ways: (a) as a teacher mentor during the yearlong internship, (b) as an induction coach during the 2-year induction period, (c) as a teacher pursuing National Board Certification (NBC), and (d) as a literacy lead.

Teachers who enter the Teacher Leader Pathway as a teacher mentor or induction coach must meet qualifications detailed under Strategy 2 and must complete training to prepare them for their role. They will also have access to professional learning coursework in the form of microcredentials, as well as in-person professional development that prepares them for their mentor/coaching role and equips them with the skills necessary for utilizing video-stimulated recall ([REDACTED]) to aid in teacher development. Microcredentials will carry PD credit for

renewal of teacher licensure.

Teachers in high-need schools who wish to pursue NBC may enter the Teacher Leader Pathway and receive support for their application. REACH will create an online course for educators pursuing NBC that is aligned to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) core propositions (NBPTS, 2016) that will introduce them to the NBC process and provide skill practice for meeting application requirements. This course may be audited, taken for PD credit, or taken for graduate credit that may be applied toward a master's degree.

REACH is committed to improving literacy in partnering high-need schools. As such, a comprehensive Science of Reading course will be offered through the induction program for all novice teachers and any other educators in high-need schools who desire to complete the course (described under Strategy 2). Teacher leaders who are certified as reading specialists may enter the Teacher Leader Pathway to coach their colleagues as they use screening, diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments for literacy diagnosis and progress monitoring. Literacy Coaches will receive a coach stipend.

The role of teachers in school leadership is strongly related to student achievement ([REDACTED]). In the analysis of the Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning (TELL) Survey with data from nearly 900,000 teachers in 25,000 public schools in 16 states, Ingersoll and team summarized that “the degree of both instructional leadership and teacher leadership in schools is strongly related to performance of schools.”

Up-to-Date Knowledge from Research and Effective Practice

This section responds to General Program requirement g.2 and Absolute Priority requirements I.a.1.ii, I.b.2, I.b.2.i, and I.b.2.ii.

Scientifically validated approaches and evidence-based practices support the strategies of the

REACH project and will be infused throughout the undergraduate teacher preparation program, the induction program for novice teachers, and the professional development program for teacher leaders. What Works Clearinghouse practice guides and intervention reports will be used extensively during the program development to plan for evidence-based design. As an example, design of the Teacher Education Advising and Support Center will incorporate the Tier 1 intervention to focus on the development of sustained, personalized relationships with individual students throughout their college career and the Tier 2 intervention to provide integrated advising that incorporates academic and non-academic supports to empower students to reach their educational goals ([REDACTED]). Content and methods courses for mathematics will utilize the WWC practice guide for elementary students struggling with mathematics ([REDACTED] [REDACTED]), and reading/literacy coursework and professional learning for practicing teachers in partner schools will incorporate Tier 1-4 interventions from the WWC practice guide on foundational skills to support reading for understanding, K-3 ([REDACTED]).

Elements of the proposed program, such as the grow your own model for high school students taking dual enrollment courses have been developed as a result of research indicating strong evidence (Tier 1) for dual enrollment's outcomes related to college access and enrollment, college degree attainment, and credit attainment (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

Beyond What Works Clearinghouse resources, program design will be conducted with the use of the InTASC standards (CCSSO, 2011), Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching ([REDACTED]) and High-Leverage Practices (TeachingWorks, 2013). In addition, international best practices will guide the development of evidence-based teacher preparation (see [REDACTED]). REACH interventions will be research-based in the areas of culturally responsive pedagogy (Muniz,

2019; Responsive Classroom, 2019); best practices in teaching diverse students and communication with diverse student families ([REDACTED]); effective management of student behavior, including training in the use of restorative practices and trauma-informed approaches (Keels et al., 2021, Minahan, 2019); social emotional learning (CASEL, 2022); recognition of student mental health disorders (MHTTC & NCCSMH, 2020); competency-based credentialing [REDACTED]); and teacher professional learning ([REDACTED] [REDACTED]).

Teacher candidates will learn to use research to inform their own practice through routine exposure to the research that informs the frameworks, models, and strategies they are learning. Teacher candidates will also be expected to justify their rationale for selecting particular methods in their lesson planning, referring to recent research within their justifications. Evidence of this competency will be collected through coursework assignments and EdTPA.

Performance Feedback and Continuous Improvement

This section responds to General Program requirement f.11.

Performance feedback will inform continuous improvement at three distinct levels: the project level, program level, and individual level.

Project Level feedback will be provided through meetings of the MegaCommunity, described in the section below. The MegaCommunity will include representation from stakeholders and will provide both formal (survey) and informal (discussion) opportunities to provide feedback, advice, and direction for the program at quarterly meetings. In addition, the project evaluation will include twice yearly reports to the MegaCommunity that will summarize progress (including retention data to evaluate effectiveness of the support system), raise concerns, and make

recommendations for continuous improvement. Finally, the Project Director will ensure that the project milestones and deliverables are proceeding according to the workplan and that the project is staying on budget. Workplan and budget will be discussed at the start of each month by Leadership Team members.

Program Level improvements are guided through a formalized process at FSU for program accountability and reporting through an established Quality Assurance System. The Assessment Process Cycle graphic in Appendix H3 outlines the process, from definition of program goals through implementation of assessments, analysis of assessment results, and program improvement. Semester-based and annual cycles will be used for implementation, testing, and revision leading to continuous improvement.

Individual feedback is provided to TCs as they progress through the program by each professor and as the candidates pass through program gateways, including Entrance Interviews which are held prior to the yearlong internship and Exit Interviews which occur at the conclusion of the program. Professors receive written results of TC surveys at the end of each course, and TCs also have the opportunity to provide feedback on the mentoring and supervision they receive during the internship and the coaching they receive during the induction period.

Building Capacity and Yielding Results Beyond the Grant Period

Strategy 4: MegaCommunity for Systemic Capacity and Linkage Building

In high-need, rural communities, building capacity is essential. Only through interdependence and collaborative infrastructure building can goals be achieved. FSU has a long history of partnering deeply with local LEAs. Its P-20 Advisory Council and Professional Development

Partnership Schools Network have been in existence for many years, and the P-20 partnership reflects a region-wide commitment to maximizing impact and ensuring sustainability.

REACH will leverage cross-sector expertise and resources among academic experts, policy makers, and industry leaders through the establishment of a MegaCommunity (Gerencser et al., 2009), connecting the higher education learning ecosystem and the educator employment ecosystem. The MegaCommunity will build capacities and leverage shared resources for teacher leader pathways with professional development infrastructures and career ladders for teacher advancement, and conduct research and promote promising practices for potential scaled implementation, validation, and replication in high-need rural communities. The innovative multi-sector investment mechanisms will help maximize social benefit, collective impact, and economic return. The intent is to build local capacities and linkages for sustained educational engagement and economic advancement.

The MegaCommunity will function as a learning ecosystem. () describe the learning ecosystem as a “network of relationships among learning agents, learners, resources, and assets in a specific social, economic, and geographic context... [that is] successful when participants begin to think strategically about the whole ecosystem and identify their unique organizational strengths and assets in relation to others in it.”

At the conclusion of each grant year, the MegaCommunity will host a meeting in which participants share lessons learned and promising practices resulting from the program. Inputs, outputs, outcomes, and implications will be examined for continuous improvement.

Bi-annual and annual reports will document processes, products, strategies, outcomes, as well as unanticipated barriers to progress and possible solutions. The reports will be made available to

stakeholders and the U.S. Department of Education. Lessons learned and promising practices will be shared at state and national conferences and through white papers and peer reviewed journals. Outreach activities will be monitored through annual targets with a goal of 15 presentations or publications by the end of the grant period.

The systematic approach in building capacities and increasing effectiveness will enable low-cost and high-impact strategies for rapid and scalable implementation within and beyond the grant period. The Leadership Team will work with the evaluator to study the efficacy, impact, and potential for scaled implementation and replication of the model in larger contexts of higher learning and community development, particularly among high-need rural communities.

Expected findings demonstrating the project's positive impact will help establish a comprehensive and collaborative model for strengthening the teacher career continuum in rural America.

Quality of the Project Evaluation

This section responds to General Program requirement f.4.

External evaluation will be conducted by MN Associates, Inc. (MNA), an independent third-party evaluation firm. MNA is a P-12 research and consulting company with extensive experience conducting a broad-range of studies. Highlights of recent evaluation activities include grants affiliated with the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Labor, the U.S. Department of Defense, the MD State Department of Education, and the National Education Association. Dr. Kavita Mittapalli, founder of MNA, and senior researchers will support the initiative from design through post-grant reports and dissemination. The profile of MNA is presented in Appendix D.

Evaluation Methods Provide Valid and Reliable Performance Data on Relevant Outcomes

The REACH evaluation will include both an implementation (formative) study and a summative (impact) study. In years 1, 2, and 3, MNA will focus mainly on the implementation study as REACH project activities come online and are revised based on feedback for continuous improvement. In years 4 and 5, MNA will emphasize the impact that REACH is having on the MegaCommunity, TCs, teaching fellows, and the high-need LEAs and schools the new teachers and their coaches are serving. MNA will examine which promising practices can be sustained beyond grant and how findings may inform a comprehensive model for strengthening the teacher career continuum for rural IHEs and LEAs.

The REACH evaluation approach uses a concurrent mixed-method, theory-based design. The design employs a culturally responsive evaluation lens ([REDACTED]) using the standards of the American Evaluation Association and the Common Guidelines from the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, and the National Science Foundation (2013). Throughout the project period, MNA will also operationalize the evaluation by employing a participatory, utilization-based, and collaborative approach with the REACH Leadership Team and MegaCommunity. This approach ensures engagement and coordination through all the stages of the evaluation ([REDACTED]).

The impact evaluation will involve a pre-post single subject design for the study of TCs who later become Teaching Fellows (TFs) as well as an examination of groups of novice teachers who graduated from the REACH program based on the characteristics of the districts and schools that hire them: REACH partner school districts and schools, other high-need rural school districts and schools, and other high-need non-rural school districts and schools.

The single subject is the individual TC/TF who is measured against himself or herself. This approach will take into account the multiple data points each TC/TF will generate over the

course of their participation in the REACH program. The pre-post nature will take into account perceptions of growth from multiple perspectives (e.g., TC/TFs, instructors, mentor teachers, induction coaches, principals) for individual TC/TFs participating in the project. Besides perceptions of growth measures, other data points taken at various stages as the TR/TF progresses through the program will provide supporting or contradicting evidence to those perceptions of growth (see Data Sources and Data Collection Plan table below).

A comparative examination of the novice teachers based on their school and school district placement will elucidate the various conditions and contexts the novice teachers will be working in, particularly regarding factors that support them and help retain them in their teaching positions. These include the robustness of their hiring districts' teacher induction program and other formal and informal opportunities for teachers to grow and contribute to their professions. MNA will review any documents regarding existing district induction programs and professional development activities including calendars of events and activities, meeting agendas, curricula, and participation records.

For the impact evaluation study of the Teacher Leader Pathway, participation records, semiannual surveys, microcredential scores, and sample microcredential work products will generate information from veteran teachers (including teacher mentors and coaches) on how the REACH program is affecting their leadership abilities, particularly in their pursuit of National Board Certification.

For the impact evaluation study pertaining to the MegaCommunity, MNA will use a mixed methods non-experimental approach that documents the formation, implementation, and institutionalization of the MegaCommunity among the core partners of the project and will utilize the results of the MegaCommunity's self-assessment, performed using the EDI

Assessment Framework (see Appendix H4).

Research and evaluation questions include the following:

- 1) What are the contexts, conditions, characteristics, and strategies of the co-implemented, clinically based dual certification program that improve TCs' content and pedagogical knowledge and skills necessary for new teachers, and improve interns' specialized competencies and influence on student learning in high-need communities?
- 2) What are the contexts, conditions, characteristics, and strategies of the Teacher-Leader Pathway and Two-Year Induction Program that a) improve new teacher knowledge, skills, and effectiveness, and b) improve teacher engagement, retention, satisfaction, and movement toward career advancements?
- 3) What are the contexts, conditions, characteristics, and strategies of the MegaCommunity that a) increase capacities to deliver high quality teacher preparation and induction programs for inclusive excellence, and b) improve teacher effectiveness, retention, and student learning, particularly in high-need schools?

The project evaluation will study the efficacy, impact, and potential for scaled implementation and replication in larger contexts, particularly among geographically dispersed and high-need communities.

Qualitative and quantitative data generated from the implementation and impact studies will be collectively reviewed at the MegaCommunity meetings on a twice-yearly basis to gauge progress in meeting program objectives and to inform programmatic adjustments. Fidelity examinations will be conducted to ensure appropriate execution of interventions as designed. Knowledge gained and lessons learned will be shared through outreach to build capacities and encourage

adoption of evidence-based practices.

Evaluation Methods are Thorough, Feasible, and Appropriate to the Goals, Objectives, and

Outcomes

The rigorous evaluation strategies, methods, and structured data collection processes and timeline are designed to ensure thoroughness, feasibility, and fidelity. In the table below, valid and reliable data for each of the goals and objectives and a data collection timeline are provided, as well as a crosswalk against research questions (RQs) and project strategies (S). The schedule begins each summer and ends each June with evaluation reporting conducted in April (covering October 1-March 31 activities and events) and September (covering October 1-September 30 activities and events) each year, with Year 1 focused on development of evaluation protocols and IRB.

RQ	S	Data Collection	Analysis	Years 2-5
GOAL 1: Improved student achievement and long-term life outcomes.				
GOAL 2: Comprehensive and collaborative model for strengthening the teacher career continuum in rural America.				
RQ 1	S1	OBJECTIVE 1: Increase the number of highly effective, culturally responsive teachers for special education in Appalachia.		
		1.1 Recruitment Efforts	Document review	Fall-Spring
		1.2 Initial Survey for Teacher Candidates, Teacher Fellows (Y3-5), Teacher Mentors (Y3-5), Teacher Coaches (Y4-5)	Descriptive statistics and content analysis of open responses	After Orientation Meeting
		1.3 Application Information including Essays	Document review and content analysis	Summer
		1.4 Upload Syllabi	Document review and content analysis	Fall-Spring
		1.5 GPAs and End of Course Grades	Descriptive statistics (inferential statistics when possible)	Fall-Spring
		1.6 Mentor & Supervisor Completed Observation Rubrics (Fall = 2 per mentor/supervisor, Spring = 4 per mentor/supervisor)	Descriptive statistics (inferential statistics when possible)	Starting Y3 (December, May)
		1.7 Site Visits & Classroom	Content analysis	Starting Y3,

RQ	S	Data Collection	Analysis	Years 2-5
		Observations Rubric		2nd half of April
		1.8 End-of-Year Surveys (for TCs /mentors/supervisors)	Descriptive statistics and content analysis of open responses	Starting Year 4, May
		1.9 Praxis Results	Descriptive statistics (inferential statistics when possible)	Starting Year 4, May
		1.10 EdTPA Results	Descriptive statistics (inferential statistics when possible)	Starting Year 4, May
RQ 2	S2 & S3	OBJECTIVE 2: Improve teacher support, retention, and advancement		
		2.1 Job Placements	Content analysis	Starting Year 4, July
		2.2 End-of-Year Surveys (for REACH graduates, TFs, and coaches)	Descriptive statistics and content analysis of open responses	Starting Year 4, May
		2.3 Microcredentials (receipt of credentials)	Descriptive statistics	Starting Year 4, May
		2.4 End-of-Year Surveys (TFs and teachers involved in induction and advancement activities)	Descriptive statistics and content analysis of open responses	Starting Year 4, May
		2.5 De-identified teacher evaluation results/measure of student growth for teacher fellows	Descriptive statistics	Starting Year 4, May
		2.6. Classroom, school & district demographic information, Information on school districts and schools hiring REACH program graduates, including their induction programs, professional development, and support activities	Content analysis	Starting Year 3, May
RQ 3	S4	OBJECTIVE 3: Validate the model.		
		3.1 MegaCommunity Meeting Survey	Descriptive statistics and content analysis of open responses	January & June
		3.2 EDI Assessment Framework Results	Content analysis	June
		3.3. REACH Leadership Team meeting agenda and notes and correspondence, survey	Descriptive statistics and content analysis of open responses	June
		3.4 Other Publications/ Presentations	Content analysis	June

Multiple data collection methods will be utilized. Survey questions will be developed with input and feedback from the REACH Leadership Team. The development of these questions

will be informed by existing surveys [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], Five Dimensions of Effectiveness of Research-Practice Partners [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]). MNA plans to deploy these instruments over the course of the grant period to various stakeholders and participants of the project, including the TCs/TFs, mentors, coaches, instructors, principals of partner schools, the REACH Leadership Team, and teachers in partner schools who participate in induction or teacher leadership activities. The frequency will depend on event, activity, or stakeholder type. Focus groups and interviews will be deployed at least once during the grant period, while each survey will be distributed at least once a year.

In addition to the surveys and focus groups, MNA will rely on meeting notes, correspondence, site visit and classroom observation notes, attendance/participation records, and other extant project records. These project records would include application data for the dual certification program (e.g., application information, GPA, and Praxis Core/GRE/SAT/ACT scores) and teaching fellows' teacher of record assignment and performance records from school districts.

Lastly, MNA will tap into results from TCs or TFs' locally developed, regionally validated, and nationally validated assessments. These assessments include microcredential scores, internship evaluations, induction reflections, GPAs, end-of-course grades, key assessments, Praxis II scores, EdTPA, and teacher evaluation scores. If and when possible, MNA will also work with the REACH Leadership Team to access classroom student achievement data, and any other data that contribute to the reporting of the GPRA performance measures.

Qualitative data collected across all instruments will be analyzed using qualitative descriptive thematic analysis. Inferential statistical analysis, such as regression analysis may be applied

based on the data presented. Qualitative and quantitative data will be triangulated and synthesized and included in the interim and annual reports to address progress, barriers, outcomes, and implications for improvement.

Data privacy will be respected for all grantees and participants. Evaluators will follow a multi-tiered process to ensure that all data use, handling, retention, and disposal (including data that would come from FSU to MNA and between MNA staff members) are fully secure, confidential, and comply with state and federal laws and policies. The REACH project will (1) ensure that all the personnel handling personally identifiable data for the project will be CITI-certified to conduct human subjects research, (2) gain approval from FSU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and REACH partner school districts' permission on collecting data from participants, and (3) secure written consent from all participants for the duration of the project. After the project has concluded, MNA and FSU will determine how raw, analyzed, and reported data (including written reports) will be archived or disposed in keeping with state and federal laws and policies for federally funded grants.

[Adequacy of Resources](#)

Support, including Facilities, Equipment, Supplies, and Resources

This section responds to General Program requirements d.1 and e.1.

The commitment to improving the teacher career continuum among the partnering agencies is reflected in the leveraged physical resources as well as human and social capital with 100% match funding. To build capacities for sustainable improvement, each of the agencies has provided a letter of support in Appendix E.

Physical Resources. As accredited agencies, FSU and the LEA partners have demonstrated the adequacy of facilities, materials, equipment, and educational resources necessary to effectively

support the initiative. FSU, as the lead agency, is the anchoring institution in rural western MD and contiguous WV and PA counties with state-of-the-art facilities inclusive of instructional, research, recreational, and residential buildings. The 260-acre main campus houses multiple educational centers and learning laboratories, supports a vibrant campus life, and is equipped with advanced technologies for 21st century education. The dynamic learning and assessment system, Watermark, at FSU will be used to support the innovative competency based microcredentials for new teachers, mentor teachers, and induction coaches.

Partner schools and districts offer a range of meeting spaces, technologies, curricular materials, and school library media resources.

Human and Social Capital. Tapping into the power of many, REACH leverages expertise and support from its MegaCommunity with participation from IHE researchers, teacher educators, district leaders, school administrators, experienced mentor teachers and coaches, the university system-wide P-20 council, state-wide policy makers, as well as professional groups and industry leaders.

The in-kind contributions of the core partnership are articulated in the budget and its narrative. Current federal funding from Title II, ESEA, ESSER, and IDEA will be used not as a match but in a coordinated manner to maximize results, especially related to special education services, reading intervention, teacher professional development, and new teacher induction. The synergistic combination of leveraged expertise, shared resources, and common strategies for teacher-leader advancement are designed to ensure achievement of goals on time and within budget.

FSU has a long history of partnering deeply with local LEAs. Its P-20 Education Council and

Professional Development Partnership Schools Network have been in existence for many years, and the P-20 partnership reflects region-wide commitment to maximizing impact and ensuring sustainability. These relationships and ongoing partnerships will be transformed into the REACH MegaCommunity, allowing the grant partners to build decades of work to extend impact.

Adequacy of Budget

This section responds to General Program requirement e.2.

The total federal costs requested in support of REACH equal [REDACTED]. These costs, as defined in the Budget Narrative, are adequate in relation to the requirements of the two goals, three objectives, and four strategies of the REACH project. The costs reflect specific front-end investments in building capacities to design and deliver the *Co-Implemented, Clinically Based Dual Certification Program; 2-Year Induction Program; Teacher-Leader Pathways; and MegaCommunity* and position FSU for sustainability of the dual certification program beyond the grant period.

Funding is requested for a full-time project director, a project management consultant (in years 1 & 2 only), a .4 FTE curriculum designer/induction lead, program design consultants (in year 1 only), and 1.5 FTE faculty members for the new program including 1 FTE for special education/elementary and 0.5 FTE for elementary.

To support recruitment for the program, funds are requested for recruitment travel, recruitment printing/ mailing, and a marketing consultant. To support candidates once they enter the program, funds are requested for a 0.5 FTE Teacher Education Advising and Support Center Director, content tutors for Praxis test preparation, and Praxis test preparation materials.

The evaluation and continuous improvement plan will be supported by an external evaluation

firm, a full-time senior research associate, and travel funding for conferences. The clinical and coursework experiences will be funded for supervisors and faculty to travel to high-need schools, for teacher candidates to travel to an urban field experience such as Baltimore City, stipends for teacher mentors and teacher coaches, special education program materials, and an annual subscription to GoReact for faculty and TCs. Finally, funds for a sustainability consultant have been requested for Y3-5 to plan for the continuation of the project beyond the grant period.

Reasonable Costs in Relation to the Objectives, Design, and Potential Significance

REACH will serve five school districts, 120 TCs, and 210 additional educators, for a total of 330 adults directly served and approximately 10,000 students indirectly served. This is an equivalent of [REDACTED] per educator served or [REDACTED] per student impacted in requested federal funding.

Through REACH, front-end investments will enable low-cost and high-impact strategies for rapid and scaled implementation. In addition to the development of a much-needed path to certification as a special educator for high school students, community college students, IAs, and other undergraduates, as well as microcredentials/PD experiences on the Science of Reading and preparing for National Board Certification, the REACH project intends to create a comprehensive and collaborative model for strengthening the teacher career continuum in rural America. This aspiration has widespread application, as there are over 25,000 rural public schools in the United States (NCES, 2017).

Project findings will include best practices for (1) establishing rural MegaCommunities for information sharing, collaboration, and infrastructure building; (2) establishing cutting edge programs that are collaborative with school districts and provide an on-site option in rural schools and intensive and extensive clinical experiences; and (3) co-developing and

implementing induction and teacher leadership programs to address needs of recruitment and advancement. The value and return on investment are further justified in relation to the state-of-the-art next generation Microcredentialing System that will be scalable and sharable across regions and the anticipated impacts on increased teacher effectiveness and improved P-12 student achievement in high-need rural communities.

The four strategies of REACH provide high-tech, high-touch, and high-impact services for (1) candidates who otherwise would not have the opportunity to pursue and engage in a high-quality program that prepares them to teach in high-need schools; (2) new teachers who otherwise would have limited access to high-quality professional development that supports diversity and inclusion; (3) high-need LEAs in rural settings that otherwise would not have the sole capacity and resources for systemic transformation; and (4) elementary students in high-need, low-performing rural schools who otherwise would have limited access to high-quality instruction taught by highly effective and diverse teachers. Collectively, the four innovations serve to unify efforts across sectors in addressing the critical needs of improving teacher effectiveness, community engagement, and student achievement.

Increasing efficacy and effectiveness are the underlying premises for innovation. With shared operational protocols, recruitment and retention strategies, pathways toward teacher leader advancement, data collection processes, and content and assessments, as well as validation of microcredentials in a dynamic learning environment powered by advanced technologies, REACH is well-positioned to advance innovation in Appalachia within and beyond the grant period.

Resources and Sustainability Plan

This section responds to General Program requirements d.1 and d.2 and Absolute Priority requirement I.a.1.i.

REACH is being designed for institutional sustainability beyond the grant period. To facilitate institutionalization and ensure stewardship of the TQP funding, a Sustainability Consultant will work with the Leadership Team during years 3, 4, and 5 of the grant period to develop action plans to sustain the innovations beyond the grant period through appropriated, reallocated, and/or leveraged private and state funds. In addition, the project design maximizes political sustainability, organizational sustainability, and financial sustainability.

Political Sustainability. As stated above in the “Comprehensive Effort to Improve Teaching and Learning and Improve Academic Standards” section, REACH is aligned with a number of national and state standards (e.g., accreditation standards, PD standards, professional teaching standards, and student content standards), state legislation, and state and local initiatives (e.g., grow your own, teacher diversity, shortage areas, NBC). Such intentional alignments are designed to ensure organizational support with sustainable operations during and beyond the grant period.

Organizational Sustainability. In rural education systems, context is key. The initiatives of REACH are place-conscious, meaning that the project will be co-designed and implemented with place in mind. Coursework, clinical experiences, and the induction program will be offered on site in schools for IAs, and efforts will be coordinated with existing curriculum, assessments, and standards operating within those sites. Additionally, FSU is committed to coordinating with each LEA to strengthen and support its current induction program, rather than simply adding to or changing what exists.

The collaborative governing structure and processes embedded within the MegaCommunity are designed to strengthen IHE-LEA community-wide capacities by (1) minimizing common organizational and operational barriers to recruitment, retention, and career advancement; (2)

improving P-20 alignment of curriculum and assessment with internationally benchmarked state standards; and (3) enhancing evidence-based practices toward improved student learning outcomes as measured through LEA and state assessments as well as teacher evaluations.

Financial Sustainability. To maximize resources and increase return on investments, the grant further employs a range of cost-effective strategies such as the development of shared instructional materials and assessments, effective use of local and regional facilities, common placement protocols and operations, and innovative use of technology for scalable delivery.

The evaluation of the project will produce the data needed to advocate for future appropriations for continued implementation of REACH programs and initiatives. In addition, during the grant period, internal staff at FSU and the LEAs will be trained to perform the work of consultants so that the project can operate at a reduced cost beyond the grant period. Overall, the project is well-positioned to leverage resources and maximize social benefit, collective impact, and economic return, and the collaboration is expected to continue beyond the grant period.

Commitment of Partners

This section responds to General Program requirement e.3.

Using co-constructive approaches to leverage cross-organizational expertise and resources, the proposed model encourages simultaneous renewal and reciprocal transformation across partners with joint commitment and shared accountability. The strategic partnerships of REACH are built on shared organizational commitments to improving teacher effectiveness and student achievement. The enthusiasm and commitment through human capital, social capital, and financial resources with 100% match funding (see Budget Narrative) are reflected in the letters of support (Appendix E). In addition, memoranda of understanding (MOU) are provided for the partnership with Baltimore City for Clinical Rotations and with Allegany County Public Schools

and Mineral County Public Schools (Appendix E). Additional MOUs will be negotiated with the remaining partner LEAs upon grant award.

To maximize resources and increase return on investments, REACH further employs a range of cost-effective strategies for partners, as described above under Financial Sustainability.

Similarly, rigorous training and ongoing support will be provided for participating mentors, coaches, school administrators, and LEA leaders to ensure relevancy and fidelity of implementation while building human and social capital for sustainable advancement.

Several partnerships have been established with FSU to ensure a region-wide commitment to maximizing impact and ensuring sustainability of quality education for students and teachers. In addition to the P-20 Executive Advisory Council and Professional Development School Partnership Network, FSU has MOUs that exist with local community colleges that contribute to seamless transitions and a shared vision for teacher education and a working partnership with TAM and Bard Academy for high school dual enrollment.

Quality of the Management Plan

Responsibilities, Timeline, and Milestones

The MegaCommunity (described above) serves as the advisory board for the REACH project. The MegaCommunity will meet quarterly and will involve representatives of FSU administration, COE faculty, CLAS faculty, district personnel from high-need LEAs, administrators of high-need schools, teacher mentors, induction coaches, TCs, teacher fellows, evaluators, consultants, State Education Agency representatives from each of the three partner states, Higher Education Commission partners from each of the partner states, University System of Maryland, and community and business partners.

An annual Strategic Planning meeting will be held each spring. This meeting will engage MegaCommunity members in (1) reviewing policies, operations, and qualitative and quantitative data to ensure accountability, (2) refining strategies and practices to address needs of REACH partners and ensure continuous improvement, and (3) sharing findings and implications to build capacities for scalable and sustainable improvement. Please see additional information about the MegaCommunity under Strategy 4, above.

A REACH Leadership Team will enact the day-to-day operations of the REACH project. This Leadership Team's role is to govern, manage, implement, and achieve stated goals on time and within budget. The REACH Leadership Team will meet on monthly basis to review status, address barriers, and adjust operations to ensure progress and achieve goals. This team will include the following individuals, whose resumes appear in Appendix D. (For those positions that are To Be Hired, a brief job description is provided.)

██████████ will serve as PI overseeing direct execution of the initiative. She is the Dean of FSU's COE and has extensive leadership experience in national and international educational policies and accreditation, and in supporting minority serving institutions. ██████████

██████████ will devote 11% of her time in Y1, 10% in Y2-4 and 5% in Y5 as a match, overseeing institutional operations and project execution, including direct implementation to ensure implementation and institutionalization.

Project Director. Full-time, 100%. The project director will support the PI with 100% time toward project implementation, including content development, activity delivery (including the planning and staffing of specialized coursework for IAs), and project maintenance. Qualification requirements include experience with large-scale grant-based initiatives, demonstrated expertise in teacher education, and demonstrated abilities to collaborate with diverse stakeholders and

execute project plans under strict policies and timelines.

██████████ will serve as MegaCommunity Coordinator overseeing the MegaCommunity processes and operations. She is the Associate Dean of FSU's COE, supporting all licensure and credential programs at the COE. ██████████ will devote 14% of time in Y1-2, 10% in Y3-4 and 5% in Y5 as a match, collaborate with the Project Director, and engage in direct implementation to ensure project goals are achieved on time and within budget.

██████████ will serve as Curriculum Designer and Teacher Leader/Induction Lead for REACH. ██████████ serves FSU as a program director and faculty member. He was previously supervisor of professional learning, new teacher induction, P-20 liaison, assistant principal, and history teacher for Allegany County Public Schools. ██████████ will devote 40% of his time to REACH.

██████████ is the Director of Teacher Education within FSU's COE. ██████████ will be responsible for management and administration of the Elementary/Special Education dual major, including program planning and operation, maintenance of program accreditation, and continuous improvement activities. ██████████ will devote 20% of her time in Y1, 15% in Y2, 10% in Y3-4, and 5% in Y5 to the REACH project, as a match.

██████████ is a faculty member with CLAS in the English and Foreign Languages Department. She will serve as the primary contact from CLAS to the REACH project and will contribute to the development of special education literacy, English Language Learners, and induction literacy components.

The management plan table (see Appendix H5) provides the activities and benchmarks that will be implemented in order to achieve the objectives, outcomes, and goals of the proposed project.

For each activity/benchmark, the person responsible and timeline for the work is indicated.

Within the five-year grant period, all elements of the proposed program will be implemented; the first TCs will graduate in Y3 and complete their two years of induction in Y4-5.

Procedures for Feedback and Continuous Improvement

Project Level feedback will be gathered by the evaluator through surveys and focus groups, including TCs, teacher fellows, mentors, coaches, principals, teachers who participate in PD/induction, school administrators, and faculty members. In addition, feedback will be solicited during quarterly meetings of the MegaCommunity from representative stakeholders, government officials, and business partners.

The project evaluator will include twice yearly reports to the MegaCommunity that will summarize progress, raise concerns, and make recommendations for continuous improvement, and the MegaCommunity will advise on strategic responses and directions for program improvement.

Finally, the Project Director will ensure that the project milestones and deliverables are proceeding according to the workplan and that the project is staying on budget. Workplan and budget will be discussed at the start of each month by Leadership Team members, and procedures will be put in place that will require remediation within two weeks of any missed milestone or any budget category that exceeds a 7% variance.

As explained above, Program Level improvements are embedded within FSU's accountability system. Formal processes govern semester- and annual-based cycles that involve data collection from key assessments, analysis of data, and action for continuous improvement. For more information, see the "Performance Feedback and Continuous Improvement" section, above.

Competitive Preference Priorities

Note to Reviewers: All information in the Competitive Preference Priority sections below has also been included in the narrative above. It is collected here under the CPP headings for ease of review.

CPP1. Increasing Educator Diversity

REACH is committed to increasing the diversity of the TCs entering the program and supporting their success through program completion, full state certification, and induction to the profession. The Elementary/Special Education dual major aims to increase diversity of teacher candidates, especially under-represented groups, through the campus-based program, while “grow-your-own” Instructional Assistants will be fully site-based with many first-generation students. The project’s strategy for achieving this aim begins with accessibility. Teacher preparation programs are not accessible for individuals from underserved backgrounds who are not able to pass the exams for teacher preparation. “An outsized number of elementary TCs struggle to pass their state licensing tests, especially in the content knowledge (English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies), defined by states as minimally necessary for the job. In many states, less than half of all test takers pass on their first try, with even lower pass rates reported for candidates of color” (██████████).

REACH will establish a Teacher Education Advising and Support Center within the COE to provide Praxis tutoring and access to test preparation materials, both prior to program admission (Praxis Core is required of any student who is entering with less than a 3.0 GPA) and during the dual certification program. Further, the Advising and Support Center will provide evidence-based and relationship-centered advising to students (see the response to Competitive Preference Priority 3) and connect students to affinity groups on campus such as the Black Student Alliance, Caribbean Student Association, Chinese Culture Club, Ethiopian Student Association, Indian and

South Asian Students Association, Japanese Cultural Club, Latin American Student Organization, NAACP College Chapter, NCNW (National Council of Negro Women), SPECTRUM (LGBTQ), and Students for Women's Issues.

Recruitment will especially target underrepresented groups of students for the Dual Certification program. Underrepresented groups for elementary schools include low SES/Pell grant recipients, males, first generation college students, veterans, BIPOC, disabled students, and bilingual students. Marketing materials will be designed, and recruitment travel and ad placement will be planned to maximize relevance and visibility for underserved students, in order to diversify the teacher workforce.

REACH will make use of a partnership with Bard High School Early College in Baltimore, MD (serving 90% students of color) to recruit high school students into the dual certification program. Through this partnership, students will earn up to 6 credits in high school that may be applied to their Dual Elementary/Secondary Education degree at FSU. In addition, REACH will offer hiring bonuses for faculty/staff of color to provide demographically similar mentors for incoming students.

REACH will also re-envision COE faculty's use of Beacon Alert, an online system for flagging students at risk of failure. Under the re-envisioned system, COE faculty and advisors will be trained to utilize *kudos* and *notes* in addition to *alerts*, thereby transforming the system from one that alerts students to action that they need to take to one that rallies the student's support system among faculty and staff to meet student needs and celebrate student successes in real time.

The induction program will provide support for diverse teachers as they enter the profession.

Through this program, REACH will endeavor to pair students with induction coaches who share

demographic identity markers with the student.

CPP2. Supporting a Diverse Educator Workforce and Professional Growth to Strengthen Student Learning

REACH is designed to increase the proportion of well-prepared, diverse, and effective educators who become certified as special educators and work in high-need LEAs and schools in rural Appalachia. The project's plan for recruiting and supporting diverse TCs is outlined under Competitive Preference Priority 1.

Special education is a shortage area in all three partner states, as evidenced by the U.S. Department of Education Teacher Shortage Area database (2022). 100% of the TCs who graduate through the proposed dual certification program will be eligible for certification in special education. Each of these teachers will have completed embedded clinical experiences in both urban and rural high-need schools and will complete their yearlong internship in a high-need school within a high-need LEA, so teachers will be well prepared to meet the needs of underserved students.

In addition, the REACH induction program will include microcredentials/PD in the areas of the science of reading, high-leverage practices, and culturally responsive teaching. Competency-based microcredentials, by design, ensure participant mastery of the skills embedded within the credential through performance tasks.

REACH also includes a Teacher Leader Pathway that engages veteran teachers in preparing for NBC, with the intent that these educators will go on to become Board-certified and advance along the career ladder for educators within their LEA.

CPP3. Meeting Teacher Candidates' Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs

As described under Competitive Preference Priority 1, REACH will establish a Teacher Education Advising and Support Center for TCs enrolled in the dual certification program. This Center will surround the TCs with a support system of faculty and staff who are looking out for the students' best interests and sharing notes and kudos with one another through Beacon Alert (see CPP1 for more information); implementing evidence-based advising; and supporting the TCs in cultivating a sense of belonging on campus, through linkages to student organizations and services such as the following:

- Supports for Specific Student Populations - CARE (support for students who are first in their family to attend college), Adult Learning Evaluation Center (diagnosis of learning disabilities), Office of Accessibility Services (support for students with disabilities)
- Health Supports - Counseling and Psychological Services, Brady Health Center
- Identity-Affirming Organizations – see CPP 1

REACH will also focus on creating a positive, inclusive, and identity-safe climate within the College of Education under the direction of the Dean of the College of Education (also the PI of REACH), a Black woman. Faculty will model the culturally responsive practices that the college instills in its students. In addition, REACH will offer hiring bonuses for faculty/staff of color to provide demographically similar mentors for incoming students.

CPP4. Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities

REACH will promote educational equity and adequacy of resources for underserved students in a number of ways: (1) through the dual certification program curriculum, (2) through student learning objective (SLO) projects during the yearlong internship, and (3) through the Science of Reading course and Culturally Responsive Teaching microcredential for teaching fellows and other teachers in high-need schools.

The curriculum of the dual certification program will prepare teachers to develop and implement specially designed instruction to meet the needs of students with disabilities, as well as GRRUDL (universal design for learning [UDL] embedded within a gradual release of responsibility [GRR] teaching methodology) to foster accessible educational experiences for *all* students. In addition, coursework will focus on evidence-based methods for establishing and maintaining inclusive, identity-affirming learning environments.

During the yearlong internship, TCs will work with their mentor teachers in high-need schools to develop an SLO project. This project requires them to interrogate their own teaching and student learning to determine inequities and inadequacies and then implement interventions and monitor student progress to determine the effectiveness of the selected interventions. SLOs typically focus on underserved groups of students who may not be well-served by the standard curriculum.

A similar experience will take place during the Science of Reading course. Participants will perform diagnostic reading assessments, identify students who need intervention supports, deliver evidence-based interventions, and utilize progress monitoring to determine the success of the intervention for identified students.

To increase their effectiveness in serving students from diverse cultures, teaching fellows and other novice teachers in the induction program will engage in a Culturally Responsive Teaching microcredential drawing from current research ([REDACTED] [REDACTED] that explores and engages teachers in practices that cultivate cultural competencies and growth mindset for inclusive excellence. Through performance-based microcredential experiences, teachers will develop the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions to effectively affirm and empower students from diverse cultures.