

# Equity Leader Accelerator Program

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## **Absolute Priority and Competitive Priorities**

This Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) proposal to implement a program called the Equity Leader Accelerator Program (ELAP) will address Absolute Priority 2: Supporting Effective Principals or Other School Leaders. In addition, the program will address three Competitive Preference Priorities (CPP): (1) Increasing Educator Diversity, (2) Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities, and (3) Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs. The three CPPs are addressed throughout Section A: **Quality of the Project Design**, in Section B1: **Importance or Magnitude of the Results**, and in Section C1: **Goals, Objectives and Measurable Outcomes**.

## **A. Quality of the Project Design**

### **(1) Conceptual Framework**

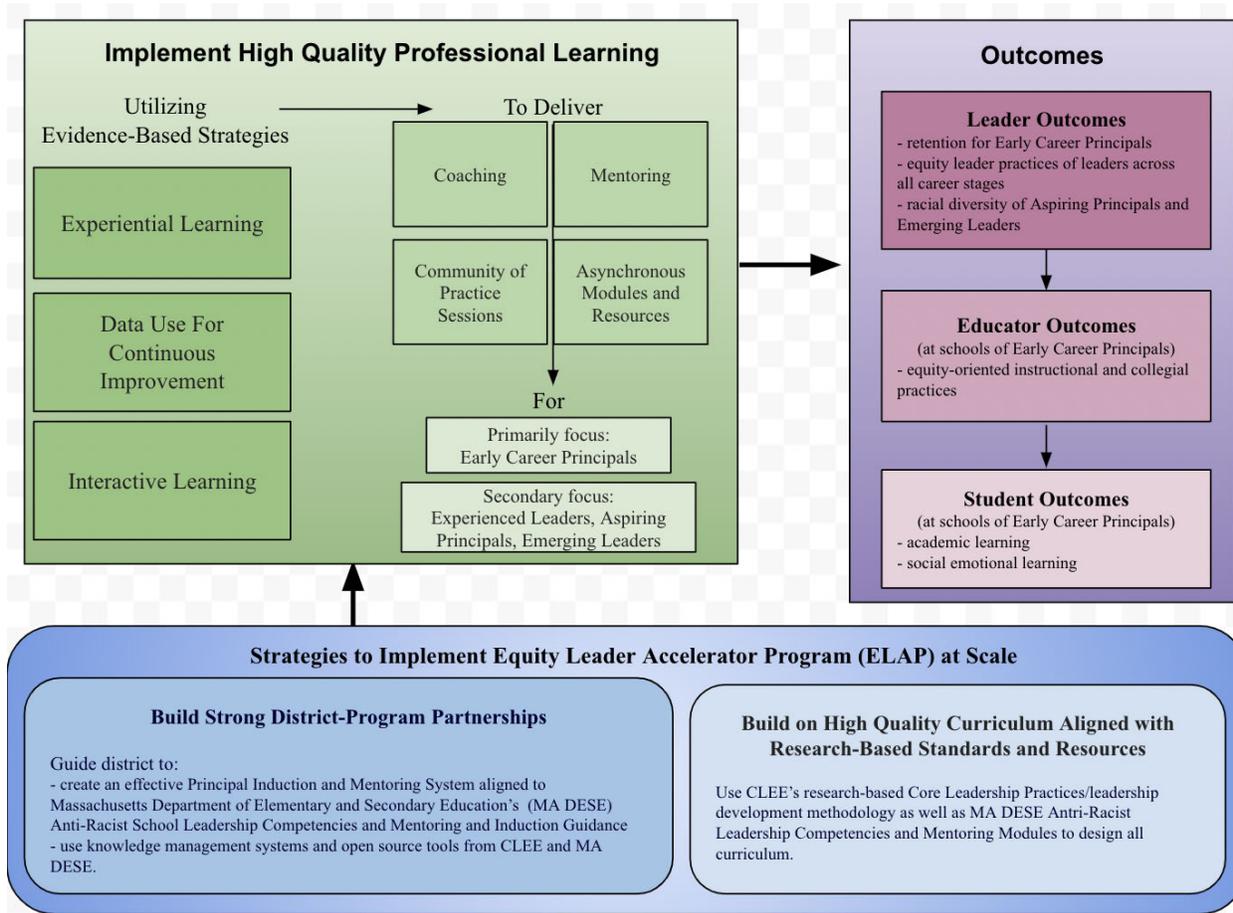
The Center for Leadership for Educational Equity's (CLEE) Equity Leader Accelerator Project (ELAP) utilizes evidence-based mentoring, induction, and preparation practices to increase equity leadership practices among Early Career Principals, as well as school leaders across career stages (see Table 1 for definitions). The project is based on a detailed conceptual framework. To describe the framework, we first present an overview (Figure 1) and then a more detailed logic model (Table 2). As an overview, the project's conceptual framework includes: (1) strategies to implement ELAP program at scale, (2) the ELAP program itself, and (3) the intended outcomes. These appear, respectively, in the bottom, upper-left, and upper-right of Figure 1. To ensure ELAP is scalable and sustainable, CLEE will build strong partnerships with districts<sup>1</sup> and build on high quality curriculum<sup>2</sup> (see blue box in Figure 1, Strategies to Implement

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<sup>1</sup> Aligned to New Leaders Study (Gates et al., 2019) Corresponding Component: *building strong district partnerships*

<sup>2</sup> Aligned to New Leaders (Gates et al., 2019) and National Institute for Leadership for School Leadership (NISL) (Nunnery et al., 2011) Corresponding Component: *developing high quality curriculum aligned to research-based standards*

ELAP at Scale). To achieve the outcomes, CLEE will implement professional learning that utilizes the evidence-based strategies of experiential learning, data use for continuous quality improvement<sup>3</sup>, and interactive learning components<sup>4</sup>. The strategies will be delivered through coaching, mentoring, community of practice sessions, and asynchronous modules and resources for Early Career Principals, as well as Experienced Leaders, Aspiring Principals, and Emerging Leaders (see green box in Figure 1, Implement High Quality Professional Learning).



**Figure 1. Overview of Equity Leader Accelerator Program Model**

<sup>3</sup> Aligned to New Leaders Study (Gates et al., 2019) Corresponding Component: implementing high-quality instruction that includes, experiential learning, data use for continuous quality improvement.

<sup>4</sup> Aligned to Corresponding Components from NISL (Nunnery et al., 2011): interactive learning components, specifically, diagnostic instruments to assess participants' skills and school climates, and coaching model for school leaders to work with teachers over multiple cycles of coaching to improve teacher effectiveness.

**Table 1: Definitions**

	<b>Definition</b>	
<b>Career Stages</b>	<b>Experienced Leaders</b>	A school and/or district leader with over five years of experience who will serve as a mentor to Early Career Principals (Year 1 of ELAP). These leaders may be principals (in the same or different school as Early Career Principals), or they may be principal supervisors or other experienced leaders in the district.
	<b>Early Career Principals</b>	A school leader who has been in a position for up to 5 years that requires a Principal/Assistant Principal Administrator Certification and who is responsible for instructional leadership schoolwide. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Career Principals who are in their first 1-2 years as a school leader will mentor Emerging Leaders in Year 2 of ELAP (because they will have between 2-3 years of school leadership at this time point).</li> <li>• Early Career Principals who are in their 3rd-5th year in school leadership will mentor Aspiring Principals in Year 2 of ELAP (because they will have between 4-6 years of school leadership at this time point).</li> </ul>
	<b>Aspiring Principals</b>	A teacher leader who has been accepted into CLEE’s principal preparation program (Year 2 of ELAP) to obtain a school administrator certificate.
	<b>Emerging Leaders</b>	A teacher leader who is exploring their interest in becoming a principal, and is building their capacity to lead (Year 2 ELAP).
<b>Equity Leadership Practices</b>	CLEE’s research-based Core Leadership Practices (Appendix G2) aligned with MA DESE’s Anti-Racist Leader Competencies (MA DESE, 2021, and see Appendix G4). Will be measured by the CLEE Core Leadership Practices (CLP) Self and Mentor Assessment (based on the CLP rubric that shows progression across career stages in Appendix G3) and the CLEE Learning Community Survey (Braun et al., 2015; included in Appendix G5).	
<b>High Need Focal Groups of Students</b>	<p>The ‘target population’ for this proposal refers to students who are underserved in participating schools (evidenced by student outcome data) from specific subgroups that MA DESE designates as high need. “A student is high needs if he or she is designated as either low income (prior to 2015, and from 2022 to present), economically disadvantaged (from 2015 to 2021), EL/former EL, or a student with disabilities. A former EL student is a student not currently an EL, but had been at some point in the four previous academic years” (MA DESE, 2022). EL refers to English Learners.</p> <p>Participating leaders will conduct an equity audit to identify a specific subgroup of High Need students that will be referred to as their focal group. The improvements that participating leaders lead will be aimed at increasing outcomes and equity for high need focal groups of students.</p>	

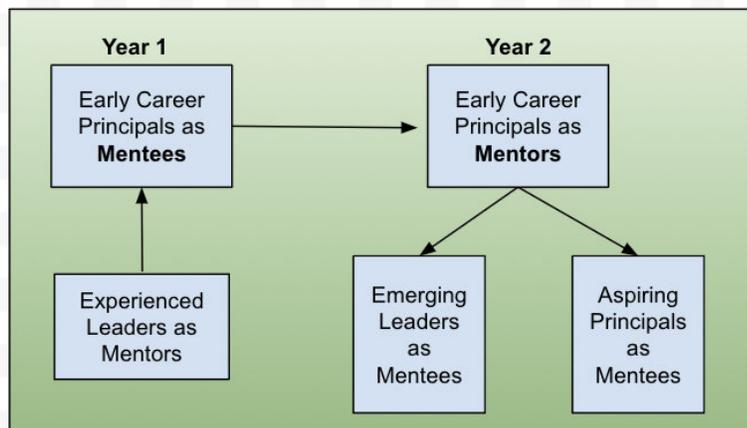
As evidenced from the footnotes in the previous paragraph, ELAP’s evidence-based strategies are aligned to corresponding practices from two studies designated in What Works Clearinghouse as achieving moderate evidence of effectiveness: the New Leaders study (Gates et al., 2019) and the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) study (Nunnery et al., 2011). CLEE implements these strategies throughout our programming and studies them through continuous cycles of research (Braun et al., 2021; 2017; 2013; CLEE, 2017). CLEE’s research on the strategies has also been included in the RAND’s study on effective school leaders preparation (Herman et al., 2017). See Appendix G1 for further research used in the design of ELAP.

The ELAP program expects to produce a set of outcomes, including leader, educator, and student outcomes (represented in the purple box in Figure 1). These include outcomes for early career principals, who are the primary focus of ELAP. In addition, there are outcomes for program participants from other career stages, who are a secondary focus.

**Primary focus: Outcomes for Early Career Principals.** The primary results of ELAP (represented in the purple box in Figure 1) will be improved (a) retention of Early Career Principals, (b) equity leadership practices of Early Career Principals, (c) implementation of effective instructional and equity practices by teachers at Early Career Principal schools, and ultimately (d) student outcomes in English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, and social emotional learning, especially for students in high need focal groups (see Table 1 for definition). The primary results will be studied through the outcome evaluation conducted by American Institutes for Research (AIR) represented in section D.

**Secondary focus: Outcomes for Experienced Principals, Aspiring Principals, and Emerging Leaders.** The secondary focus of ELAP will be studied in the formative evaluation (see section D). While ELAP’s unique design aims to primarily impact outcomes for Early

Career Principals, the model’s secondary impacts are critical to sustaining the primary results beyond the grant period. The secondary, formative evaluation will focus on (a) equity leadership practices for Experienced Principals, Emerging Leaders, and Aspiring Principals; (b) diversity of Emerging Leaders and Aspiring Principals;



**Figure 2. ELAP Two-Year Cycle of Professional Learning for Leaders Across Four Career Stages**

and (c) implementation of mentoring and induction systems in districts. These results will be accomplished through a unique two-year cycle of professional learning (detailed in section A2) for leaders across four career stages (see Figure 2 and definitions in Table 1).

The conceptual framework specifies ELAP’s evidence-based strategies that will drive impact. Specifically, the detailed Logic Model (Table 2) demonstrates how implementation of the strategies to scale (column 1), high quality instruction in a two-year cycle (column 2) and continuous monitoring (columns 3-5) will enable improved outcomes for the target population of high need focal groups of students (see Section A5). Footnotes 9, 10, and 11 indicate features of the logic model that exemplify the CPPs.

**Logic model column 1: Strategies to scale.** To enable ELAP to scale, ELAP will **Build Strong District Partnerships** to guide districts to create and sustain effective principal induction, mentoring and ongoing support structures. See section A3 for the ways this practice will build capacity in districts beyond the grant period. ELAP will also **Develop High Quality Curriculum Aligned with Research-Based Standards and Resources**. CLEE’s leadership curriculum will be modified to supplement the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and

Secondary Education (MA DESE) Induction and Mentoring Guidelines (MA DESE, 2021). All curricula will be aligned with CLEE’s Core Leadership Practices and MA DESE’s Anti-Racist Leadership Competencies (see equity leadership practices in Table 1).

**Logic model column 2: Program activities.** ELAP’s two-year cycle of program activities will build leadership capacity across the career stages with a concentrated focus on Early Career Principals. The training will equip the four categories of school leaders to enact equity leadership practices through engaging in **High-Quality Instruction** that includes **Experiential Learning, Data Use for Continuous Quality Improvement, and Interactive Learning Components**. These will be implemented throughout coaching, mentoring, peer sessions, network sessions and asynchronous modules (described in detail in Section A2).

As the primary focus of ELAP, Early Career Principals will receive two years of training, and the educator and student outcomes will be studied at their schools. There are a number of reasons for this design. The average length of time a person stays in a principal position is only 4 years (Levin & Bradley, 2019) and 50% of new principals leave their position after their third year (New Teacher Center, 2018). The impact of this turnover is the loss of time and money spent in preparation (New Teacher Center, 2018) and in the significantly negative impact on student achievement and teacher turnover (Henry & Harbatkin, 2019; Bêteille et al., 2012). Investing in Early Career Leaders can increase retention, strengthen their equity leadership practices, and positively impact students and educators. A key reason principals leave the profession is due to inadequate professional development and support for their challenging positions (Levin & Bradley, 2019). Providing support for Early Career Principals can have a ripple effect by increasing support for Experienced Principals who mentor Early Career Principals and for Emerging Leaders/Aspiring Principals mentored by Early Career Principals.

**Table 2: ELAP Logic Model with Corresponding Components, Data Sources and Competitive Priorities**

Strategies to Scale	Program Activities (see section 1b)	Fidelity Outputs	Outcomes for Leaders	Outcomes for Educators	Outcomes for Students
<p><b>Build Strong District Partnerships<sup>5</sup></b> Guide district to create an effective Principal Induction and Mentoring System and use open source tools from CLEE and MA DESE.</p> <p><b>Develop High Quality Curriculum Aligned with Research-Based Standards and Resources<sup>6</sup></b> Use CLEE’s Core Leadership Practices and leadership development methodology as well as MA Department of Educational Mentoring Modules to design curriculum.</p>	<p><b>Implement High-Quality Instruction</b> that includes: <b>Experiential Learning, Data Use for Continuous Quality Improvement<sup>7</sup>, and Interactive Learning Components<sup>8</sup></b></p> <p><b>Year 1: Experienced Leaders Mentor Early Career Principals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>For Early Career Principals</u>: coaching, mentoring, asynchronous modules/resources</li> <li>• <u>For Experienced Principals as Mentors</u>: coaching, mentoring, asynchronous modules/resources</li> </ul> <p><b>Year 2: Early Career Principals Mentor Emerging Leaders or Aspiring Principals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>For Early Career Principals as Mentors</u>: coaching, mentoring, asynchronous modules/resources</li> <li>• <u>For Emerging Leaders and Aspiring Principals</u>: coaching, mentoring, asynchronous modules and resources</li> </ul> <p><b>Year 1 and Year 2: Community of Practice Network Sessions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>For All Career Stages of Leaders</u>: network sessions, asynchronous resources</li> </ul>	<p><u>For Early Career, Experienced, Aspiring, and Emerging Leaders</u>: -quality of coaching and professional learning sessions -Session attendance (<i>CLEE Reflection form</i>) -completion of modules and methodology steps (<i>online platform metrics</i>)</p> <p><u>For District Leaders</u> -creation/adoption of a principal induction and mentoring system (<i>state report</i>)</p>	<p><u>For Early Career Principals</u> -retention in position and/or school, especially for principals of color (<i>state data</i>)*</p> <p><u>For Early Career, Experienced, Aspiring, and Emerging Leaders</u>: -leaders’ knowledge, skill, disposition in Core Leadership Practices (<i>CLEE Pre-Post survey, Core Leadership Practices Self and a Mentor Assessment</i>)</p> <p><u>For Aspiring Principals and Emerging Leaders</u> -increase in diversity of underrepresented groups (<i>demographic data</i>)<sup>9</sup></p>	<p><u>For all educators in schools of Early Career Principals</u> instructional and collegial practices that increase educational equity (<i>CLEE’s Learning Community Survey</i>)</p>	<p><u>For high need focal groups of students and for all students in Early Career Principals’ schools</u></p> <p>-ELA and math outcomes (<i>MA Comprehensive Assessment System</i>)*<sup>10</sup></p> <p>-school climate that supports students’ social emotional learning (<i>Views of Climate and Learning (VOCAL) school climate survey</i>)*<sup>11</sup></p>

Note. \*Measures with asterisk will be used in outcome evaluation. All other measures in parentheses will be used as formative measures (see Section D).

<sup>5</sup> Aligned to New Leaders Study (Gates et al., 2019) Corresponding Component: *building strong district partnerships*

<sup>6</sup> Aligned to Gates et al. and Nunnery et al., 2011 Corresponding Component: *developing high quality curriculum aligned to research-based standards and resources.*

<sup>7</sup> Aligned to Gates et al., 2019 Corresponding Component: *implementing high-quality instruction (experiential learning, data use for improvement)*

<sup>8</sup> Aligned to Gates et al. and Nunnery et al. Corresponding Components: *interactive learning components*

<sup>9</sup> Competitive Priority 1: *increase educator diversity*

<sup>10</sup> Competitive Preference Priority 2: *Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities*

<sup>11</sup> Competitive Preference Priority 3: *Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs*

**Logic model columns 3-6: Output and outcome measures.** The data sources in italics in columns 3-6 of the Logic Model will be used to give formative feedback and in the evaluation study (see Section D). Two of the assessments are notable because they are based on the same six domains, the Core Leadership Practices, but will be administered to two different groups to build a rich picture of the degree of implementation. First, the CLEE Core Leadership Practices Self and Mentor Assessment will be used (based on the CLP rubric in Appendix G3) to measure equity leader practices for all leaders across the four career stages. Second, the CLEE Learning Community Survey for all staff in a school will be used (Braun et al., 2015; included in Appendix G5) to measure instructional and collegial practices that increase equity<sup>12</sup>.

The overview of the ELAP model (Figure 1) and the detailed Logic Model (Table 2) contextualize ELAP in research and evidence of effectiveness. They will guide the implementation of the program and the outcome evaluation conducted by AIR (see Section D).

## **(2) Quality, Intensity, and Duration to Lead to Improvements in Practice**

**Quality.** ELAP will advance equity leadership practices through the strategies detailed in the Logic Model (Table 2) and with the expertise and success CLEE has had in scaling the practices and outcomes for students (Braun et al., 2021; 2017) and school leaders across career stages in multiple states. The activities described in the detailed logic model--the strategies to scale and the program activities--incorporate design features and implementation processes that are high in quality, as argued above and elaborated further here. ELAP will support the four categories of school leaders at various career stages (see Table 1 for career stages). For each group, coaching, mentoring, community of practice sessions, and asynchronous modules and resources will be provided (see intensity and duration in Tables 3 and 4).

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<sup>12</sup> For the purposes of this proposal, educational equity means eradicating disproportionality in educational outcomes by ensuring all students have the access and support in the learning environments they need to thrive.

The ELAP program is likely to produce the primary and secondary results described above because its design is grounded in two theories of how adults learn. The first is Kegan and Lahey's (2016) conceptualization of the levels of adult mental complexity (or ways of knowing), which occurs in four key plateaus: instrumental, socialized, self-authoring, and transformational. To move people through the levels of complexity toward transformational learning, ELAP will use facilitative leadership practices (CLEE, 2019), which are akin to distributive leadership practices (Elmore, 1999; Spillane & Diamond, 2015). ELAP utilizes the methods described in this section to move leaders toward transformational ways of knowing by identifying and expanding assumptions in order for substantial shifts in practices and mindsets to manifest. The second adult learning theory that informs the ELAP model is Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning in a community of practice. ELAP will continuously engage participating leaders in authentic experiences to implement their (situated) learning with guidance from coaches and mentors. In addition, leaders participate in communities of practice of peers in their same career stage and across career stages. The result is dynamic and optimized learning amid participants of varying levels of experience.

ELAP will implement the instructional activities and services (Tables 3 and 4) using CLEE's high quality methodology (Braun et al., 2021; Li et al., 2022, Appendix G6), grounded in adult learning theories, to enable leaders to improve their schools through practitioner-based improvement cycles (Bryk et al., 2015) that strengthen educator practices in the instructional core (City et al., 2009). This approach has shown that it is possible to simultaneously increase learning for all students while also decreasing disproportionality between high need student focal groups and their peers (Braun et al., 2021). Leaders are trained to facilitate cycles of improvement by implementing CLEE's Core Leadership Practices (see Table 2, column 1 of the

Logic Model under Develop High Quality Curriculum): Setting Direction, Building Capacity to Teach, Building Capacity to Collaborate, Building Capacity to Lead, Reorganizing Systems, and Monitoring Progress (Braun et al., 2017). The steps of the high quality method include:

- **Setting Direction:**
  - identify an inequity within the school between a high need focal group of underserved students and their peers.
  - analyze the root causes of the inequity to set goals and actions steps to address.
- **Building the Capacity to Teach:** build the capacity for educators to improve practices in the instructional core to impact the root causes of the inequity.
- **Building the Capacity to Collaborate and Lead:** build the capacity for educators to collaborate and lead together to increase equity using facilitative leadership practices that empower shared leadership.
- **Reorganizing Systems:** reorganize systems to achieve the best outcomes.
- **Monitoring Progress:** monitor data and adjust efforts to continue improvements.

**Intensity and Duration.** ELAP will invest in Early Career Principal training toward a multifaceted impact on the equity practices of Early Career Principals, as well as similar results for Experienced Principals who mentor early career principals and Aspiring Principals and Emerging Leaders who are mentored by Early Career Principals in the second year of the program. See Tables 3 and 4 for a detailed description of the ELAP services, hours, and duration (see Appendix G8 detailed descriptions of each activity and service). The duration and intensity of all the ELAP services and activities are equal to or greater than the evidence-based programming with moderate evidence of New Leaders (Gates et al., 2017) and NISL (Nunnery et al., 2011).

**Table 3: Year 1 Program Activities and Services**

Year 1: Early Career Principals are Mentored by Experienced Leaders							
	Mentoring		Coaching		Community of Practice Sessions		Asynchronous Modules/ and Resources
Leadership Category	Job-Embedded Practice	Mentor Meetings	Coaching	Observations and Debriefs	Peer Learning Sessions	Network Sessions	
Experienced Leader <i>as Mentor</i>	Implementation of the Core Leadership Practices in leadership role.		6 - 60 minute one-on-one Mentoring coaching sessions with a trained CLEE coach.	2 observations and debriefs (90-min each) (one in fall, one in spring) by a CLEE coach of Mentor giving formal feedback to an Early Career Principal	2 - 120 minute peer learning sessions with other Mentors of Early Career Principals	3 - 120 minute networking sessions with all Early Career and Mentor Principals	Asynchronous learning modules and open-source resources
Early Career Principal <i>as Mentee</i>	Implementation of the Core Leadership Practices in leadership role.		8 - 60 minute one-on-one coaching sessions with a trained CLEE coach.	2 observations (one in fall, one in spring) by a CLEE coach and the Mentor (Experienced Leaders) of Early Career Principal leading improvements	2 - 120 minute peer learning sessions with peer Early Career Principals	3 - 120 minutes networking sessions with all Early Career and Mentor Principals	Asynchronous learning modules and open-source resources

**Table 4: Year 2 program activities/services**

Year 2: Early Career Principals Mentor Emerging Leaders or Aspiring Principals						
Leadership Role	Authentic Practice/ Residency	Coaching	Observations and Debriefs	Peer Learning Sessions	Network Sessions	Asynchronous Modules/ and Resources
Experienced Leader <i>in Community of Practice</i>	Implementation of the Core Leadership Practices in leadership role.				3 - 120 minute sessions with leaders from all career stages	Access to all open-source resources
Early Career Principal <i>as Mentor</i>	Implementation of the Core Leadership Practices in leadership role.	6 - 60 minute one-on-one coaching sessions with a trained CLEE coach	2 observations (one in fall, one in spring) by a CLEE coach of Early Career Principal (as Mentor) giving feedback to an Emerging Leader or Aspiring Principal Mentee	2 - 120 minute sessions with other Early Career Principals serving as Mentors	3 - 120 minute sessions with leaders from all career stages	Asynchronous learning modules and open-source resources
Aspiring Principal <i>as Mentee</i>	Daily meetings with Mentor and gradual release of responsibilities in an intensive residency	3 - 60 minute one-on-one coaching sessions with a trained CLEE coach	2 observations (one in winter, one in spring) by a CLEE coach and Mentor (Early Career Principal) of Aspiring Principal leading improvements	24 - 180 minute sessions with other Aspiring Principals	3 - 120 minute sessions with leaders from all career stages	Asynchronous learning modules and open-source resources
Emerging Leader <i>as Mentee</i>	Weekly meetings with Mentor and gradual release of responsibilities for projects in a partial residency	2 - 60 minute one-on-one coaching sessions with a trained CLEE coach	1 observation (in the winter) by a CLEE coach and Mentor (Early Career Principal) of Emerging Leader leading a project	Monthly (10 - 120 minute) sessions with other Emerging Leaders	3 - 120 minute sessions with leaders from all career stages	Asynchronous learning modules and open-source resources

### (3) Build Capacity and Yield Results Beyond Federal Financial Assistance

ELAP will build substantial capacity for continued sustainable implementation and results beyond the period of federal assistance in a number of ways (see Table 5).

**Table 5: Continued Capacity Building and Results by Key Groups**

Key Groups	Capacity Built and Results Sustained After Federal Assistance
<b>ELAP Leaders Across all Career Stages</b>	<p>Capacity to implement equity leader practices for trained leaders (Experienced Leaders (<math>N = 40</math>), Early Career Principals (<math>N = 40</math>) and Aspiring Principals (<math>N = 40</math>)) will allow them to continually improve teacher practices and student outcomes in their own schools.</p> <p>Experienced Leaders and Early Career Principals will improve leadership practices for future leaders through mentoring, resulting in an increased number of leaders empowered to enact equity leader practices and improve teacher practices and student outcomes.</p>
<b>District Leadership</b>	<p>Capacity and structures will be built for district leaders to continue to implement systems of support (protocols, tools) for school leader development across the career continuum, resulting in retaining principals capable of enacting the equity leader practices and improving teacher practices and high and equitable outcomes for students.</p>
<b>MA DESE (State Agency)</b>	<p>Examples of district implementation of ELAP will give MA DESE the capacity to support other districts to implement key regulatory levers (e.g., principal induction requirements, Anti-Racist Leadership Competencies, prep program requirements, and administrator evaluations).</p>
<b>CLEE</b>	<p>For a description of the capacity-building and ongoing benefits to CLEE, see Section B3.</p>

ELAP has the potential to build capacity and results beyond the districts and state of implementation (Massachusetts) as a replicable model. As required by the U.S. Department of Education, CLEE will openly license all new content created with SEED funds. New digital content will be added to our open/free online resources housed on our website and to the learning management system utilized by participants. Further, the resources that MA DESE provides to districts are open source and housed on their website. Open access resources combined with the

dissemination efforts (see Section B4) will enable districts and state agencies to build their capacity to implement components of ELAP.

#### **(4) Collaboration of Partners for Maximizing Effectiveness**

A key component of ELAP is leveraging strong partnerships among CLEE, AIR, MA DESE, and MA districts. AIR's partnership will be critical in providing regular formative feedback that helps CLEE maximize the effectiveness of ELAP. The evaluation data described in Section D (see especially the subsection Performance Feedback and Assessment) will complement operational data continuously gathered by CLEE and inform repeated cycles of improvement. MA DESE's support is also essential. CLEE has collaborated with MA DESE since 2021 on supporting district teams (e.g., district leaders, Early Career Principals and Experienced Leaders as mentors) and principal preparation programs to improve the implementation of practices and systems that support principals across the career continuum in enacting MA's Anti-Racist Leadership Competencies. As part of this collaboration, it became clear that districts require a high degree of support and partnership. MA DESE set direction for this important work, developing key resources and guidance regarding:

- the support of early career principal development through model mentoring and induction resources.
- the recent adoption of the Anti-Racist Leadership Competencies aligned to the school administrator standards, soon to be piloted within the educator evaluation rubric and process for school leaders in Summer 2022.

- the revision of requirements for leadership preparation programs, including integration of the Anti-Racist Leadership Competencies into the required Professional Indicators for Administrative Leadership.

MA DESE has also drafted modules and guidebooks for districts to use to improve implementation of their required mentoring and induction programs. CLEE is collaborating with MA DESE to complete and improve these resources. The open resources created through the implementation of ELAP will enhance these tools, while also providing all MA districts, and beyond, resources to implement components of ELAP. See Appendix D for a letter of support from MA DESE, which includes their support for CLEE’s principal preparation program to become an approved preparation program for ELAP Year 2 (2024/2025).

MA districts are the final critical partner. It is clear district leaders value supporting principals across the career continuum to enact Anti-Racist Leadership Competencies. In the fall of 2021 when MA DESE invited districts to participate in a support network that CLEE facilitated, over 30 districts signed up. Throughout the course of supporting these districts, the need for further resources and capacity as outlined in this proposal has been evident. See Appendix D for letters of support from selected MA district leaders who CLEE has worked with in the past and/or who have participated in the MA DESE Mentoring and Induction Network.

## **(5) Addressing the Needs of the Target Population or Other Identified Needs**

Persistent and significant inequities exist in education (Reardon et al., 2015) for the ‘target population’ of this proposal - marginalized students identified in focal groups deemed high need (see definition in Table 1). While Massachusetts has received national attention for raising achievement overall, significant disparities remain for students in high need groups. For example, only 28% of low-income 8th graders are on grade level in math which is less than half

the rate for higher income students. And, 1 in 3 English learners don't graduate on time – and 1 in 7 dropped out of school (The Massachusetts Education Equity Partnership, 2018). The U.S. has a long history of racial oppression, segregation, economic discrimination, non-English language suppression, and low expectations for the academic success of marginalized students (Kincheloe et al., 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Love, 2018). Yet, every child from groups who have been oppressed has the unlimited potential to achieve outcomes as high and higher than their more privileged peers (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Love, 2018).

The disparities in educational outcomes between high need groups of students and their peers are often referred to as 'achievement gaps'. However, these gaps are not inherent in the abilities or efforts of students who identify with, or are categorized into marginalized groups. Instead, these gaps reside within the current capacity of educators, leaders, and policy makers, to manifest the conditions and practices needed to support students who have been systemically oppressed to realize their unlimited potential. Gloria Ladson-Billings refers to this as an "education debt" (2006) that is owed to oppressed groups. Preparing and supporting equity leaders, as the work represented in ELAP aims to do, represents a promising way to invest in repaying this debt.

ELAP can significantly and sustainably improve educational practices and systems to meet the needs of students, especially those from high need underserved focal groups. Educational leaders have inherited the complex work of rapidly transforming systems that perpetuate educational inequity into one in which each child in each classroom has their unlimited potential unleashed. ELAP trains leaders to harness widespread leadership to engage in continuous improvement cycles, creating learning environments where all students thrive, especially those who are underserved.

ELAP will increase high and equitable student learning outcomes in schools through implementation of facilitative leadership, which is operationalized in the CLEE Core Leadership Practices (Braun et al., 2017). Leaders across the career stages will be trained to guide schools through processes that use disaggregated student outcome data to learn and to implement improvements in the instructional core. These improvements are designed to increase equitable outcomes for a focal group of students who have not been well served, as indicated by their current learning outcomes (see Section A2 for further details). Through the implementation of the model, educator practices and dispositions are transformed into those that support the reorganization of systems and practices that drive high and equitable outcomes, shifting beliefs about student and adult abilities that underlie the structural mechanisms or root causes which maintain inequitable systems (Braun et al.).

To further serve the needs of the primary target population of underserved, high need focal groups of students, ELAP aims to positively impact the preparation and support for leaders of color. Leaders of color can positively impact the outcomes for teachers of color (Grissom & Keiser, 2011). Similarly, educators of color can positively impact the social emotional and academic outcomes for marginalized students (Carver-Thomas, 2018) and all students (Will, 2021). ELAP will support leadership of color by (a) supporting current Experienced and Early Career Leaders of Color, (b) recruiting and supporting Aspiring Principals and Emerging Leaders of Color in Year 2 of ELAP to train in CLEE's nontraditional preparation program (Competitive Preference Priority 1), and (c) building the capacity for leaders across the four career stages to create school cultures that educators are receptive to improving their dispositions to see diversity as an asset through enacting the Core Leadership Practices and MA DESE's Anti-racist Leadership Competencies.

## ***B. Significance***

### **(1) Importance and Magnitude of the Results**

The potential impact of ELAP on improving teaching and learning, especially for students in high need focal groups, is significant. CLEE has a 12-year history of studying the relationship between the variables in the ELAP Logic Model (see Table 2) and using the results to continuously improve our model and programming (described in Section A2). Further, a significant evidence base, including CLEE’s research and outcomes, indicates that the ELAP leadership development activities will result in the following important outcomes.

**Impact on student learning.** The ELAP evidence-based leadership development practices (see Appendix G1 for evidence and research base), as well the equity leadership practices ELAP will foster, have a significant impact on improving student academic and social emotional learning (Leithwood et al., 2010; Waters et al., 2003). Further, Braun et al. (2021; 2017) have shown that the use of equity leader practices (i.e., CLEE Core Leadership Practices) is significantly correlated (medium to large effect sizes) with increasing growth for focal groups of students in high need groups and their peers.

**Impact on educators.** The ELAP evidence-based practices as well the equity leader practices ELAP will foster have a significant impact on improving the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that support collaboration and instructional practices of educators (Herman et al., 2017; Leithwood et al., 2010; Waters et al., 2003) needed to increase equity. Further, CLEE research has shown critical beliefs regarding educator efficacy and students’ unlimited potential are impacted by the ELAP practices (Li et al., 2022; Braun et al., 2017; 2021).

**Impact on leaders.** The ELAP evidence-based practices have a significant impact on the ability for leaders to implement equity leadership practices (Braun et al., 2017; Leithwood et al.,

2004). Further, effective professional learning for school leaders can impact retention of school leaders (Jacob et al., 2015; Levin & Bradley, 2019).

**Impact on districts.** Participating districts will gain skilled mentors and systems to continuously implement and improve preparation, induction and mentoring of school leaders with strong equity leadership practices. Further, districts who do not participate will gain from the open-sources resources, tools, and examples of collaboration between districts, providers, and state agencies, to guide their own implementation.

**Impact on research and the field.** ELAP's results will strengthen the literature and research of leadership preparation and professional learning practices that support school leaders to implement equity leadership practices. Most leadership development research examines only the aggregate results for all students. ELAP's model and evaluation will also examine results for specific high need focal groups of students, adding important understanding to the leadership and professional development practices that increase learning for high need groups.

## **(2) Reasonable Costs**

Often, even when professional learning for principals is done well, it is limited to supporting individual leaders in isolation. In order for the field of education to benefit from the positive influence of equity leaders in our schools, a more systemic approach needs to be enacted by districts in partnership with preparation programs and professional learning providers. However, intensive authentic residencies for Aspiring Principals and/or support for Early Career Principals has often been approached in ways that are cost prohibitive for many districts (e.g. hiring outside mentors, releasing aspiring principals for a full year).

Without innovative solutions to support a sustainable and continuous pipeline of equity leaders, the burden and cost of bringing new leaders into the field, and retaining them, sits

heavily on individual candidates and leaders. ELAP was designed to establish a new model, one where districts, state educational agencies, and professional learning providers work collaboratively to leverage resources in a sustainable way. In many districts, engaging in professional leadership learning and coaching; agreeing to mentor an early career, aspiring, or emerging leader; and/or pursuing a principal certificate is seen as an individual choice for a person looking to advance their skills and career, rather than a district strategy to continuously improve educator practices and equitable student outcomes. Because creating new and supporting current leaders isn't seen as a systems-improvement strategy, districts do not have enough structures set up to support the authentic capacity-building that is necessary (e.g. effective induction mentoring, robust residencies, etc.). Implementing and studying ELAP will provide a needed and cost effective model of how a collaborative systems-approach to principal preparation, induction and support across the career stages can be implemented as a sustainable investment.

A number of strategies will be used to control for reasonable costs throughout the implementation of this proposal, including:

- **Use of hybrid programming** to hold both virtual and in-person synchronous sessions, while integrating asynchronous learning and resources.
- **A blend of formats** will allow for more intense and costly formats (one-on-one coaching and observations) will be blended with peer group and network sessions.
- **Use of job-embedded** support from mentors who are district employers by building the capacity of Experienced Leaders and of Early Career Principals to mentor as part of their own professional learning and scope of work in the districts.

- **An innovative, affordable model for non-traditional principal preparation** that allows authentic, rigorous preparation while aspiring principals continue largely in their core roles, eliminating the need for paying full time salaries to enable authentic preparation. CLEE has iterated methods to fully enact our evidence-based, high quality preparation practices while finding ways to make it cost effective for candidates and districts to invest in preparing equity-driven, highly capable candidates.

Beyond ensuring the program design can be implemented at a reasonable cost in future districts beyond the grant period, the investment in this proposal will serve participating and future districts in a number of ways: (a) support for districts to create a system of structures and processes that support mentoring and induction is limited to a one-time cost, (b) current and future districts can continue to use the open source tools and resources from CLEE and MA DESE, and (c) current and future districts will benefit from the investment in building the capacity of mentors in the district to support a continuous pipeline of Emerging Leaders and Aspiring Leaders.

### **(3) Incorporation of Project Activities and Benefits into the Organization**

The proposed project will build the capacity and become part of the ongoing leadership development work of CLEE. Founded in 2010, CLEE has grown to annually serve an estimated 500 educators, 45 Local Educational Agencies and educational organizations, and 2 State Educational Agencies across 4 states, impacting more than 120,000 students. CLEE has successfully scaled multiple professional learning programs, such as the Principal Residency Network (PRN) that will be used to train Aspiring Principals in Year 2 of ELAP. Established in 2000, the PRN is one of the country's first and longest-running *nontraditional* residency-based

programs and holds the rare status of “approved with distinction” by the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE). The research conducted by CLEE staff used to develop and support the PRN’s evidence-based professional development practices is cited in RAND’s 2017 evidence review of school leadership practices (Herman et al., 2017). Over the past 20 years, the PRN has trained over 500 aspiring and mentor principals; 56 districts and charter schools in RI, MA, and 9 other states have sponsored or hired PRN graduates; over 90% of program graduates have been hired into school leadership roles; and over 50 graduates have also earned doctorates in Educational Leadership through a partnership with Johnson and Wales University. Further, students in schools led by PRN graduates have statistically significantly higher growth in English Language Arts and increases in equity between target and peer groups when compared to schools led by non-PRN graduates (CLEE, 2017).

Practices across CLEE’s programming, including the PRN, will evolve by using the formative data collected to continue improving toward lower-cost, higher impact, sustainable strategies to achieve the outcomes of ELAP. The hybrid approach and associated materials developed will allow CLEE to address current and future barriers of time and travel (for participants and CLEE Staff), as well as release costs for participants. This will increase accessibility and likelihood of sustaining work past the grant funding for districts and allow for CLEE to use the curricula, hybrid approach and materials in future trainings to keep costs low while continuing to support more districts.

Asynchronous learning modules and open-source resources will be a key component to blend with the coaching, professional learning sessions, and residency/practice hours. When working with school leaders, a common obstacle CLEE hears is that it often feels that they have

no time to focus on themselves. Asynchronous modules and resources allow leaders to engage in transformational learning in the time that works best for them.

#### **(4) Dissemination**

Sharing the components, results, and lessons learned from implementing ELAP is a key goal of the project (see Section C1, Goal 2). CLEE has a history of research and dissemination of practices through research publications (see Appendix G7) and through open resources on the CLEE website, monthly newsletters, blogs, and social media posts. Dissemination efforts will occur during and beyond the grant period, including:

- CLEE will disseminate key information about the ELAP components, open resources and results to its community of over 8,000 members across the country who receive email communication and social media posts.
- MA DESE mentoring resources (which CLEE is partnering with DESE to complete) will be supplemented with the open educational resources produced in this grant. Close collaboration with MA DESE allows progress and results to be shared state-wide and influence statewide initiatives to support principal development.
- CLEE will respond to calls to present at the American Education Research Association Conference and Carnegie Advancement of Teaching and Learning CI Summit, as well as other appropriate venues.
- AIR will feature dissemination products about the project on the AIR website, which logs hundreds of thousands of visits monthly. AIR will also use the e-mail networks it maintains for those who use evidence to support high-quality leadership and teaching. For example, AIR will leverage the dissemination networks of its Center on Great

Teachers and Leaders and Regional Educational Laboratories, each of which engage policymakers, practitioners, and researchers.

## C. Quality of the Management Plan

### (1) Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes Clearly Specified and Measurable

ELAP goals, objectives, outcomes and measures are articulated in Table 7 below and detailed in the Grant Application Form for Project Objectives and Performance Measures. In addition, CLEE is committed to collecting data related to all the SEED GPRA measures.

**Table 7: ELAP Goals, Objective, Outcomes and Measures**

<b>Goal 1: Increase academic and social emotional learning outcomes for students in high needs focal groups through equipping school leaders to improve their own and educators' equity leadership practices. (Aligned to Competitive Preference Priority 1, 2 and 3)</b>	
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Outcomes (<i>Measures</i>)</b>
1.1 Increase <b>high and equitable outcomes for students</b> (CPP 2 and 3)	-increased and equitable academic learning outcomes for students in high needs focal groups in Early Career Principals' schools ( <i>MCAS state ELA and math assessments</i> )  -improved social emotional learning outcomes of students in high need focal groups in Early Career Principals' schools ( <i>VOCAL school climate survey for identified high need focal groups and for all students</i> )
1.2 Increase <b>educators'</b> instructional and collaborative practices that support academic and social emotional learning for high need student focal groups (CPP 2 and 3)	-Increased ability for educators to collaboratively improve instructional and school practices to support academic and social emotional learning for high need student focal groups in Early Career Principals' schools ( <i>CLEE Learning Community Survey</i> )
1.3 Increase <b>Early Career Principals'</b> capacity to improve educators' instructional and collaborative practices and systems that advance high and	- retention in leadership ( <i># remain in leadership</i> )  - proficiency in equity leadership practices ( <i>Self/Mentor Assessment of CLEE Core Leadership Practices</i> )

equitable outcomes for students	- ability to build the capacity of educators to improve educators’ instructional and collaborative practices and systems that advance high and equitable outcomes <i>(Measures for Objectives 1.1 and 1.2)</i>
1.4 Increase <b>Experienced Leaders’</b> capacity to mentor Early Career Principals to improve educators’ instructional and collaborative practices and systems that advance high and equitable outcomes for students	- ability to build the capacity of Early Career Principals to improve educators’ instructional and collaborative practices and systems that advance high and equitable outcomes <i>(Measures for Objective 1.3)</i>
1.5 Increase capacity of diverse <b>Emerging Leaders and Aspiring Principals</b> to improve educators’ instructional and collaborative practices and systems that advance high and equitable outcomes for students (CPP 1)	- Increased diversity of new school leaders ( <i># of racially diverse emerging leaders and aspiring principals</i> )  - proficiency in equity leadership practices ( <i>Self/Mentor Assessment of CLEE Core Leadership Practices</i> )  - Completion and matriculation into leadership ( <i># of aspiring principals who complete preparation program and # securing leadership position after year 2 of ELAP</i> )
<b>Goal 2: Accelerate equity leadership in schools through documented and replicable systems and strategies that can be scaled to other districts.</b>	
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Outcomes/Measures</b>
2.1 <b>Equip district leadership</b> with guidance, resources, and support needed to support equity leadership practices at every career stage of principals.	- Improved district systems and practices to support from emerging through experienced principals through preparation, induction and mentoring ( <i>self-reported degree to which district guidance is implemented in participating districts</i> )
2.2 Enhance <b>resources and tools for replication</b> of ELAP for use in other districts and state contexts	- creation of a toolkit that documents the key strategies to scale with critical resources that are made open access to the public via CLEE website and DESE website ( <i>degree to which toolkit includes key strategies and tools</i> )
2.3 <b>Disseminate strategies to scale</b> ELAP in other districts and state contexts	- strategies to scale and key resources are disseminated through a wide variety of formats ( <i># of pieces/products such as blogs, white papers, peer reviewed publications</i> )

## (2) Management Plan, Including Responsibilities, Timelines, and Milestones

The CLEE and AIR team bring together decades of experience managing large scale multiyear program implementation and evaluation. This section reflects how this experience will be used to successfully manage ELAP implementation and evaluation. The overall responsibilities of ELAP key personnel are described in Table 8 and resumes/CVs of key personnel are included in Appendix B.

**Table 8: Responsibilities of Key Personnel Responsible**

Title, Name, Percent of Time on Grant	Responsibilities
Project Director, ██████████, 50%	Project administration, including overall management of the budget, regulatory compliance and reporting, and collaboration between program implementation and evaluation
Senior Program Director, ██████████, 50%	Oversee design of curriculum, including hiring, evaluation, and retention of program staff, execution of programming components, collaboration with district and state partners
Program Director, Mentoring and Induction, ██████████, 75%-100% pending year of grant	Oversee implementation of Year 1 mentoring and induction activities for Early Career Principals and Experienced Principals
Program Director, Principal Preparation, ██████████, 50%-100% pending year of grant	Oversee implementation of Year 2 principal preparation for Emerging Leaders and Aspiring Principals, including mentor training for Early Career Principals
Lead for Scaling, ██████████, 75%-100% pending year of grant	Design and support implementation of all the strategies to scale for all years of ELAP.
Lead for Online Learning, ██████████, 100%	Create and support implementation of all the asynchronous modules and resources for all years of ELAP
Lead for Principal Preparation Staff, ██████████, 50%-100% pending year of the grant	Train and support the coaches working with Aspiring Principals and Early Career Principals as mentors in Year 2 of ELAP
Lead for Administration of Principal	Set up and implement all needed systems for

Preparation Programming, ██████████ ██████████ 50%-100% pending year of the grant	recruiting, selecting, and training Aspiring Principals in Year 2 of ELAP
4 Coaches, To be hired (see Appendix G9 for job description) 100%	Train in 2022/2023 to serve as a coach in 10 schools in Year 1 and Year 2 of ELAP.
2 Instructors, To be hired (see Appendix G9 for job description) 100%	Train in 2022/2023 to serve as an instructor for all the peer and network sessions in Year 1 and Year 2 of ELAP.
Data Systems Leader, ██████████ 75%	Collaborate with the AIR team to collect all needed formative data to the program staff and to the AIR team.
Finance and Administration, ██████████ ██████████ 75%	Administer all systems for budgeting, spending, monitoring and reporting on all fiscal resources of the grant.
ELAP Coordinator, To be hired	Provide communication and operations support to ELAP program staff.
AIR team	See Appendix B for a description of the roles and experiences of the AIR team

The ELAP management plan to achieve the objectives (see Table 7) is detailed in Table 9. The timeline as well as the milestone/activities and primary people responsible is included. The detailed evaluation activities, timeline, and qualifications of the AIR team are included in AIR’s budget narrative (see Appendix H3).

**Table 9: Timeline, Milestone/Activities, Primary Person Responsible by Objectives**

Objectives	Years	Month	Milestones/Activities	Primary People Responsible
<b>Preparation to Implement Equity Leader Accelerator Program</b>				
1.1 - 1.5	22/23	Oct - May	<input type="checkbox"/> Modify existing leadership development curriculum to develop ELAP materials, content, tools	Senior Program Director and Project Directors

1.1 - 1.5, 2.1	22/23	Oct - May	<input type="checkbox"/> Hire and train coaches and instructors	Senior Program Director and Project Directors
2.1	22/23	Dec - March	<input type="checkbox"/> Obtain signed MOU/DSAs to formalize partnerships among participating MA districts, CLEE, and AIR.	Senior Director, Project Directors, and Data Systems Leader, with the collaboration of MA DESE.
2.1 - 2.2	22/23	Dec - March	<input type="checkbox"/> adapt district guidance curriculum, resources and tools to integrate and enhance MA Department of Ed open source resources.	Project Director for Mentoring and Induction, in collaboration with MA DESE.
1.1 - 1.5	22/23	Jan - April	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify, recruit and obtain commitment of Early Career Principals and Experience Principals	Project Director for Mentoring and Induction, in collaboration with participating districts
1.1 - 1.5	22/23	Jan - April	<input type="checkbox"/> Set up data collection process and create Google Datastudio dashboard for all fidelity measures (see logic model) and outcomes for leaders and educators.	Principal Investigator and Data Systems Leader in collaboration with AIR team
1.1 - 1.5	22/23 - 24/25	Each quarter	<input type="checkbox"/> Review and use data quarterly for program staff to adjust instruction and support for participants.	Senior Program Director, Project Directors, program staff (with support from Data Systems Leader and AIR team)
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Milestones/Activities</b>	<b>Primary Responsible Person</b>
<b>Implementation of Equity Leader Accelerator Program</b>				
1.1 - 1.5	23/24	<b>1st year</b> of ELAP June - May	<input type="checkbox"/> Implement Year 1 programming to train 40 Experienced Leaders to Mentor 40 Early Career	Senior Program Director, Project Director for Mentoring and Induction, program staff

			Leaders (see Section A2 for programming details)	
1.1 - 1.5	23/24	<b>1st year</b> of ELAP Oct - August	<input type="checkbox"/> Collect and visualize all data in the Dashboard <input type="checkbox"/> Administer assessments of leader and educator outcomes (see logic model)	AIR team, in collaboration with Principal Investigator and Data Systems Leader
1.5	23/24	to prepare for <b>2nd year</b> of ELAP Jan - May	<input type="checkbox"/> Recruit and admit 40 diverse Emerging Leaders and Aspiring Principals for year 2 programming	Project Director for Principal Preparation, in collaboration with participating districts
1.1 - 1.5	24/25	<b>2nd year</b> of ELAP June - June	<input type="checkbox"/> Implement the year 2 programming to train the 40 Early Career Leaders to mentor 40 Emerging Leaders/Aspiring Principals (see Section A2 for programming details)	Senior Program Director, Project Director for Principal Preparation, and Project Director for Mentoring and Induction, program staff
	24/25	<b>2nd year</b> of ELAP Oct - August	<input type="checkbox"/> Collect and visualize all data in the Dashboard <input type="checkbox"/> Administer assessments of leader and educator outcomes (see logic model)	AIR team, in collaboration with Principal Investigator and Data Systems Leader
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Person Responsible/Activities</b>	<b>Milestone</b>
<b>Scaling of Equity Leader Accelerator Program (ELAP)</b>				
2.2 - 2.3	24/25	Jan - August	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete open source bank of resources to replicate ELAP in other districts <input type="checkbox"/> Submit blogs and white paper to describe program components (also for use in	Principal Investigator, Senior Program Director, Project Directors, program staff

			peer-reviewed article submission)	
2.3	24/25	August - Sept	<input type="checkbox"/> Use final results to complete a peer-reviewed submission	Principal Investigator, Data Systems Leader, in collaboration with AIR

**CLEE’s track record of project management.** CLEE’s ability to successfully execute ELAP and achieve the goals and outcomes is supported by the clear roles and plans (see Tables 7, 8, and 9) to ensure adequate resources to achieve the ELAP goals and objectives, as well CLEE’s track record of successful project management. CLEE achieved all goals and objectives as the lead applicant and fiscal agent for a USDOE Turnaround School Leaders Program (TSLP) grant. In addition, CLEE has successfully achieved all goals and objectives for multiple multi-year foundation grants and projects, including multimillion scaling grants from Overdeck Family Foundation, Networks for School Improvement from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and as a subcontractor with the RI Department of Education’s USDOE School Climate Transformation grant. Annually, CLEE successfully works intensively with over 45 State and Local Education Agencies across multiple states.

**CLEE’s organizational learning culture.** CLEE has adept use of communication, project management and accountability tools (e.g. Asana, GoogleSuite, including Google Data Studio dashboards) to track progress, adjust efforts, and ensure communication needed to successfully achieve outcomes and deliverables. Further, CLEE’s collaborative culture focused internally on continuous improvements has formal processes for using data to adjust and improve practices, as well as on building shared leadership across projects and the organization.

## D. Quality of the Project Evaluation

### Project Evaluation

The ELAP theory of action posits that improvements in Core Leadership Practices of Early Career Principals will result in improved principal retention, especially among principals of color; increased diversity within the administrator pipeline; the implementation of effective instructional and equity practices at the school-level; and ultimately improved student academic performance in ELA and mathematics and school climate that supports students’ social emotional learning. AIR will conduct an independent, rigorous evaluation of ELAP that is aligned with the program theory of action and includes both formative and summative components.

### Evidence about Effectiveness Designed to Meet WWC Standards with Reservations

The outcome evaluation will examine the impact of ELAP on the intended student, school, and principal outcomes (Exhibit 1). AIR’s use of a quasi-experimental research design, valid and reliable outcome measures, and rigorous analytic methods will put the impact evaluation on the path to produce evidence of effectiveness that meets *What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) 4.1 Standards with Reservations*.

**Exhibit 1. Outcome Evaluation Research Questions and Data Sources**

Program Outcomes	Research Questions	Data Sources
Increased student achievement in ELA and mathematics (Objective 1.1)	<b>RQ1:</b> What is the impact of ELAP on student achievement in mathematics and reading in Grades 3–8 and 10? <b>RQ1a:</b> Do effects differ for high-need students?	Student-level Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) English language arts and math scores for 2022–23, 2023–24, and 2024–25.
Improved school climate that supports students’ social	<b>RQ2:</b> What is the impact of ELAP on school climate that supports students' social emotional learning? <b>RQ2a:</b> Do	School-level results from the Views of Climate and Learning (VOCAL) Survey Project for

emotional learning(Objective 1.1)	effects differ for schools with large proportions of high-need students?	2022–23, 2023–24, and 2024–25.
Increased retention of principals (Objective 1.3)	<b>RQ3:</b> What is the impact of ELAP on retention of Early-Career Principals? <b>RQ3a:</b> What is the impact of ELAP on retention of Early-Career Principals color? <b>RQ3b:</b> Do the effects differ by principal and school characteristics?	School personnel records for 2022–23, 2023–24, and 2024–25 from the Massachusetts Education Personnel Information Management System.

To estimate program impacts on student achievement (RQ1), school climate that supports students' social emotional learning (RQ2), and principal retention (RQ3), AIR will employ a comparison group design using propensity score matching (Rosenbaum & Rubin, 1983). This design allows for a rigorous and cost-efficient evaluation of outcomes with large samples of students in different grades and subjects across multiple districts served by ELAP. CLEE expects a single cohort of Early Career Principals in 40 Massachusetts public schools led by Early Career Principals to participate in the two-year intervention during 2023–24 and 2024–25 school years.

Four comparison schools will be matched to each participating school, and schools will be “exact matched” on school level, so that elementary schools are compared to elementary schools, middle schools to middle schools, and high schools to high schools. Across the 200 study schools (40 intervention and 160 comparison schools), approximately 50,000 students (10,000 in intervention schools and 40,000 in comparison schools) in grades 3–8 and 11, 6,500 teachers (1,625 in intervention schools and 4,875 in comparison schools), and 200 principals (40 in intervention schools and 160 in comparison schools) are expected to contribute to the impact evaluation.

The condition for comparison schools will be “business-as-usual” (i.e., whatever would otherwise be available to the group targeted for the intervention). Comparison-group schools will be identified before AIR receives outcome data for intervention and comparison schools. To meet WWC Group Design Standards with Reservations for studies with cluster-level assignment,

AIR will demonstrate that individuals in the analytic sample are representative of the clusters (schools), and that the treatment and comparison clusters (schools) are equivalent at baseline. These criteria will be demonstrated for each outcome measure.

To meet the baseline equivalence requirement, AIR will demonstrate that the standardized mean difference (SMD) of baseline measures (as specified in the relevant WWC protocols) between intervention and comparison schools is less than 0.25. The statistical models AIR will use to measure program impact will include controls for baseline outcome measures, as well as controls for student and school characteristics (for RQs 1 and 2), and student, school, and principal characteristics (for RQ 3). The levels of observation for RQs 1, 2, and 3 will be students, schools, and principals, respectively. Because the level of observation for RQ 1 will not match the level of treatment assignment (schools of participating principals), our statistical models for RQ 1 will account for clustering of students within schools (Abadie, Athey, Imbens, & Woolridge, 2017).

To determine whether the impact of ELAP on student achievement differs for high-need students (RQ 1a), AIR will estimate a version of the statistical model that interacts with the treatment indicator with a binary measure of student disadvantage. AIR will then evaluate the magnitude and statistical significance of the estimated moderator effect as measured by the coefficient on the interaction term. AIR will perform analogous analyses to determine whether school characteristics moderate program impacts on school climate that supports students' social emotional learning (RQ 2a), and whether principal or school characteristics moderate program impact on principal retention (RQ 3a). These analyses will help deepen understanding of the relative effects of the program in different contexts.

Power calculations performed using PowerUp! (Dong and Maynard, 2013) indicated that

the minimum detectable effect sizes (MDES) for student-level outcomes ranges from 0.14 with no attrition to 0.16 at 20% attrition of Early-Career Principals. Kraft (2020) characterizes effect sizes in this range as “moderate” effect sizes, and effect sizes in this range are educationally meaningful, equivalent to increasing average teacher effectiveness at intervention schools by more than one standard deviation (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2010). The estimated MDES for school- and principal-level outcomes range from 0.42 with no attrition to 0.47 at 20% attrition, which would allow detecting “large” differences under Kraft’s benchmark.

A 2017 national survey of public school principals found that approximately 18% of principals had left their position since the year before (Goldring & Taie, 2018). Because leaders who commit to participating in ELAP are likely to be more committed to their roles than the “average” school leader, AIR expects that less than 20% of Early Career Principals who begin program participation in 2023–24 will leave their position, and thus the sample for the impact evaluation, in 2024–25. Details about the statistical models and power analysis are presented in Appendix H.

## **Objective Measures that Provide Valid and Reliable Evidence on Intended Outcomes**

AIR will measure program impact on **student achievement** in grades 3–8 and 10 using ELA and mathematics scores on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) next generation test. To make MCAS scores comparable across grades, subjects, and years, AIR will standardize the scores within each grade, subject, and year. **School climate** that supports students' social emotional learning will be measured using publicly available school-level results from the Views of Climate and Learning (VOCAL) Survey Project from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). VOCAL is a valid, reliable

(Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2018) annual student survey administered to students in grades 4, 5, 8, and 10. The reliability of schoolwide VOCAL scales, as measured by Pearson Separation Reliability (PSR), ranges from 0.91 to 0.93

(Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2018). **Principal retention** will be measured using administrative personnel data from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE), following guidelines from the WWC Review Protocol for School Leadership (2019) on using retention as an outcome measure.

### **Performance Feedback and Assessment of Program Progress and Implementation Using Objective Measures**

The formative evaluation will examine fidelity and quality of implementation, providing periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended project outcomes. The performance measures are aligned with the intended project outcomes and will measure progress toward equity-focused practices in ELAP schools, using mixed methods with quantitative and qualitative data (Exhibit 2).

**Exhibit 2. Formative Evaluation Research Questions and Data Sources**

<b>Program Outcomes</b>	<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Data Sources</b>
Activities are completed as intended, with the expected level of resident participation	<b>RQ4:</b> To what extent is ELAP implemented with fidelity? <b>RQ4a:</b> What factors support or inhibit program implementation?	Records of attendance at ELAP PD, networking, and peer learning sessions; CLEE Reflection Forms completed by participants following coaching sessions; records of principal completion of learning modules; ELAP implementation documents.
Participants report positively on the quality of the program	<b>RQ5:</b> To what extent do participants find key components of ELAP to be useful and of high quality?	Annual interviews with ELAP participants, ELAP program staff, and CLEE coaches.
Teachers, participants, and	<b>RQ6:</b> To what extent do	Teacher responses to the

mentors report improvements in school and leader practices that promote equity in student access to educational resources and opportunities (Objectives 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5)	teachers, participants, and mentors report improvements in school and leader practices that promote equity in student access to educational resources and opportunities?	Learning Community Survey and leader self-assessments using the Core Leadership Practices Rubric.
District leadership receives guidance and resources needed to increase educator diversity and support equity leadership practices among principals at each career stage (Objective 2.1)	<b>RQ7:</b> To what extent do district leaders report districtwide systems and practices that increase educator diversity and support leaders through preparation, induction, and mentoring?	District self-assessment checklist.

To assess fidelity of implementation (RQ4), AIR and CLEE will develop an implementation fidelity rubric and examine adaptations and challenges in implementation. AIR and CLEE will identify specific implementation indicators and associated thresholds for program delivery, activities, and participation, aligned to the key components of the ELAP logic model. AIR will code data from attendance records, CLEE Reflection Forms, records of participant completion of learning modules, and other ELAP program documents to determine whether expected thresholds for adequate implementation are met for the implementation indicators in 2023–24 and 2024–25. The analyses will aggregate indicators across Early-Career Principals to measure core program activity implementation overall and will also examine variations in implementation across principals and schools. This method will provide a quantitative and replicable assessment of the extent to which program features were implemented as expected.

To help ensure that implementation data provide objective measures of program activities, AIR will collect attendance data for all coaching and PD at the completion of each session. Early Career Principal, Aspiring Principal, and Emerging Leaders will be reminded to submit CLEE Reflection Forms within 48 hours of completing the coaching sessions. Summaries of peer-learning sessions will be collected via the CLEE Reflection Forms, and CLEE will use

participant login data to track participant completion of online asynchronous learning modules. AIR will process and review implementation data monthly to identify and address potential individual and systematic errors, missing items, irregularities, or duplicates in the data, and implementation data will be reported to CLEE biannually.

To provide more nuanced evidence on implementation, AIR will use qualitative data from interviews with participating principals, as well as interviews with ELAP staff and CLEE coaches (RQ 5). Interviews with principals will focus on their perceptions of program quality and utility, as well as their perceptions on the extent to which ELAP helped build their capacity to enact Massachusetts' Anti Racist Leadership Competencies in service of increasing high and equitable outcomes in their practice. Interviews with ELAP staff and CLEE coaches will elicit perspectives on facilitators and barriers of successful program implementation.

To measure improvements in school and leader practices that are designed to promote equity in student access to educational resources and opportunities (RQ 6), AIR will administer the Learning Community Survey to teachers in the schools of participating Early Career Principals in fall and spring of 2023–24 and spring 2025. This survey is a valid, reliable measure of leadership practice in the following domains: Reorganizing Systems, Setting Direction, Monitoring Progress, Building Capacity to Teach, Building Capacity to Collaborate, and Building Capacity to Distribute Leadership (Braun, Gable, & Billups, 2015). AIR will examine the distribution of responses to individual survey items from each survey administration to track and report changes in teachers' perspectives on the degree of implementation of school and leader practices that increase educational equity in the schools of participating Early Career Principals.

The Core Leadership Practices rubric, which covers the same domains as the Learning

Community Survey, will be completed by Early Career and Aspiring Principals and their mentors in fall and spring of 2023–24 and spring 2025. AIR will examine the distribution of responses to individual survey items on each survey administration to track and report changes in leaders' and mentors' progress implementing the Core Leadership Practices to improve instruction, school practices, and student outcomes.

In fall 2023, spring 2024, and spring 2025, AIR will collect a self-assessment checklist of district systems and practices that support leaders through preparation, induction, and mentoring, completed by leadership in districts of participating principals (RQ7). Each participating district will complete a self-assessment checklist. AIR will examine the distribution of checklist responses from each administration to track and report changes in the extent to which district leaders report districtwide systems and practices that increase educator diversity and support leaders through preparation, induction, and mentoring.

AIR will use findings from the evaluation to assess progress toward achieving intended outcomes and provide performance feedback and through regular check-in meetings with CLEE and quarterly progress update memos in Years 1 to 3. In Years 1 to 3 AIR will also submit two briefs annually that are aligned to the RQs and highlight key implementation findings and outcomes that CLEE can use formatively to make iterative improvements to ensure student, school, and leader outcomes are met. In Year 3, the final report will also include outcome findings and will highlight the extent to which ELAP achieved its intended outcomes, with qualitative interview data to supplement where appropriate.

## **Guidance on Replication of Project Activities and Strategies**

The proposed evaluation will inform development and generate guidance for future scaling through both its formative and outcome evaluations. AIR will document ELAP

implementation, including key components and adaptations, as part of the formative evaluation. AIR will pre-register the ELAP impact study details, including the design summary, confirmatory contrasts, and impact models, in the Registry of Efficacy and Effectiveness Studies, updating the registry if and when changes are needed. The final evaluation report will be published on AIR's website and presented at conferences to ensure that information about program effectiveness can guide implementation of ELAP by other organizations. AIR will also write and publish a journal article and support CLEE in disseminating evaluation results to parents, teachers, and school staff in participating districts.

The program will capitalize on the insights gained from developing ELAP to provide guidance for future implementation or testing of the program in other settings, building a strong foundation for future replication efforts. AIR will analyze a rich set of implementation data to assess both implementation fidelity and quality, which will be used to provide independent feedback to CLEE throughout the grant period (RQs 4 to 7). AIR will triangulate the quantitative and qualitative data for a systematic review across school sites, providing key information to inform future replication efforts. The evaluation also will provide guidance for subsequent replication and testing by exploring whether the program impact differs across student (RQ 1a), school (RQs 2a and 3a) and principal (RQ 3a) characteristics. These results from these moderator analyses will help indicate whether the ELAP needs refinement to better support participants, their schools, and their students in specific settings and will provide insights to inform later efforts to scale.

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