

## **New Leaders’ National Aspiring Principals Fellowship**

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## Quality of the Project Design

New Leaders® views the present—amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic’s impact on schools and students and the outcry for racial justice—as a critical moment for school leaders to imagine what real, lasting school transformation looks like. Founded in 2000, New Leaders, a national non-profit organization, envisions a day when there is excellence and equity in the American education system, when our schools prepare all children—particularly students of color and those living in poverty—for success in college, careers, and citizenship. New Leaders grounds its approach in a simple belief: every classroom must be led by an effective teacher, and every school must be led by a great leader. In 20 years, New Leaders has trained more than 6,000 equity-focused leaders, 60% of whom identify as leaders of color, allowing New Leaders to contribute to moving the needle on leader representation, recognizing the current yawning gap between school leader demographics and student demographics in U.S. schools. Leaders prepared by the organization reach more than 750,000 students in the United States’ K-12 school system annually and serve as powerful and positive forces for change in their communities (See Documentation of Eligibility in Appendix A).

Now, New Leaders is embarking on a bold new path to make its services available to any aspiring principal in the country through the National Aspiring Principals Fellowship™ (Fellowship). For its first 20 years, New Leaders worked primarily with school districts, providing a suite of leadership development supports to populations spanning teacher leaders to superintendents. The Fellowship will continue this outreach and partnership to key high-need districts, and through a unique partnership with two Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)—Morehouse College and Clark Atlanta University (CAU)—New Leaders will open its program to prospective school leaders across the country, especially those seeking to serve in

traditionally underserved LEAs. New Leaders is uniquely situated to achieve this ambition: No other principal preparation program will match New Leaders' geographic breadth or national scale, with a particular focus on preparing leaders of color.

The proposed program responds to Absolute Priority 2 and Competitive Preference Priorities (CPPs) 1-3, which are detailed in the Significance section below. The Fellowship is a 16-month clinically based principal development program focused on developing transformational leaders committed to equity and excellence in education in every school, for every student. Program participants will participate in coursework with related assignments to assess learning of key leadership concepts and competencies aligned to New Leaders' Transformational Leadership Framework™. Additionally, through a residency experience in the school where they work, participants will apply learnings in an authentic setting and receive ongoing feedback from a dedicated New Leaders leadership coach and residency site principal.

Currently, a pilot cohort is in the process of completing a certification-only version of the program. Over the next three years (i.e., the grant period), New Leaders proposes to build out its marketing, recruitment, and selection process to scale nationwide; refine its program offerings, graduate degree options, and pathways to administrator certification in additional states; and design and launch ongoing alumni supports for program graduates. During this period, the program will be validated through a rigorous evaluation that meets What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards with reservations conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR). AIR has significant experience in conducting evaluations of SEED grant-funded educational programs and interventions and is familiar with the features of the current grant program as well as WWC procedures and standards.

## Providing Services of Sufficient Quality, Intensity, and Duration

**Evidence-Based Programming:** According to the RAND Corporation, New Leaders' flagship offering, Aspiring Principals—the program from which the design for the Fellowship was developed—has the strongest evidence base of any principal preparation program in the country (Herman et al., 2016). Since that study, evaluators have uncovered even stronger results of the program (Gates et al., 2019). The most recent study of Aspiring Principals finds that students in New Leaders schools achieve at significantly higher levels than their peers *specifically because* they have a New Leaders principal. Using a quasi-experimental design that isolates the New Leaders program effect, independent evaluators found that (1) students in K-8 schools led by New Leaders principals significantly outperformed comparison students who did not have a New Leaders principal in math and reading achievement tests, (2) individual-level student attendance, an important proxy for students' engagement in their school's culture, was higher for students who attended K-8 schools with a New Leaders principal, and (3) participants who showed stronger skills in school operations and culture were more likely than other new principals to remain at their schools as principals for a second year. (See Documentation of Moderate Evidence on Evidence Form). The *New Leaders Effect* is well-documented. Third-party evaluators have found positive effects of New Leaders programming since 2006 (Gates et al., 2014; Booker & Thomas, 2014).

The Fellowship, an innovative program built on the firm foundation of this evidence, will be developed through four strategies, detailed below.

***Strategy 1: Design marketing, recruitment, admissions, & selection processes to maximize equity and access.***

In order to diversify the national principal workforce, New Leaders must develop a

comprehensive plan for targeted marketing and recruitment and ensure an equitable admissions and selection process to maximize equity and access and break down artificial barriers.

*Marketing & Recruitment.* The Fellowship's pilot cohort recruited 50 prospective applicants and accepted 34 into Cohort 1. 100% identify as aspiring leaders of color. This first cohort was built through collaboration with local education agencies (LEAs) that serve high-need students, including Baltimore City Public Schools (MD), Frayser Community Schools (TN), and the E.L. Haynes Public Charter School (DC), as well as Teach for America (TFA).

Partner-facilitated recruitment will continue to serve as an important pipeline for participant acquisition for future cohorts. New Leaders intends to work with existing and new partner LEAs, particularly those that serve high-need students and have identified advancing equity and closing representation gaps as a priority. Once a recruitment partner is identified, they sign a Memorandum of Understanding with New Leaders and work with the Fellowship Team to nominate individuals for the program, who then progress through the admissions process below.

In addition to partner-facilitated recruitment, the Fellowship will offer direct recruitment to individual educators throughout the country who desire an innovative principal preparation program focused on equity.

*Market Demand.* While partner-facilitated recruitment is a tested mechanism for New Leaders, direct recruitment is new, and it is not yet known in what proportion these two pipelines will contribute candidates for the Fellowship. Early results indicate that there will be strong market demand from direct-enrolled participants. In only one month, 220 individuals requested information about the new leadership program, even in the absence of marketing, and 77 aspiring principals signed up for an information session within two weeks. In addition, New Leaders has an existing alumni network of teacher leaders who are prime candidates for direct marketing.

Through SEED, New Leaders will develop a scaled marketing plan, identifying the audiences, channels, and high-level messaging for the Fellowship. This plan will include a focus on channels where the organization may access aspiring leaders of color, for example through paid ad space that has been hyper-targeted to specific demographics, or through national organizations for educators of color. Men of Color in Educational Leadership, Latinos for Education, Chiefs for Change, and Teach for America will support New Leaders' marketing for the Fellowship as channel partners, sharing information about the program through social media, newsletters, and email blasts to their membership/alumni. See the letters of support from these organizations in Appendix D. In addition, to increase scale and reach, the New Leaders will work to clarify the states where program completers have a pathway for state certification, further opening markets for applicants.

The cost to participants for the certification program is \$15,000, and for the combined Master's + certification program, \$25,000 (below the national average cost for a Master's degree). New Leaders has raised funding to guarantee fellows a \$5,000 scholarship for the first five cohorts, including the cohorts that conclude within the grant period. Financial aid and direct loans are also available for the Master's program.

*Admissions.* Much of the admissions process for the Fellowship is modeled after New Leaders' existing Aspiring Principals and Emerging Leaders programs, with input from HBCU partners. Admissions processes are designed to be free from bias and have been reviewed by an external consultant for equity. New Leaders has a series of equity questions that are used to evaluate each new admissions activity before it is implemented.

The Fellowship has a six-step admission process, including: (1) Eligibility verification: Candidates must have 2-4 years teaching experience; a bachelor's degree; a GPA of 2.7, with 3.0

preferred; a valid teaching certificate; and, if they are seeking certification only, a master's degree; (2) Personal leadership essay of 500-650 words outlining applicant vision for achieving equity and excellence and the role of the principal in achieving this vision; (3) Three references; (4) A Residency Site Principal recommendation and agreement to the terms of the residency; (5) Consent to a background check; and (6) Response to case study/asynchronous interview.

The admissions process is supported by Noodle, an online program management provider that is working with New Leaders to create a seamless integration of IHE resources as well as New Leaders content. Noodle is a strategic partner to New Leaders, aiding with the candidate admissions process and supporting data collection, reporting, data security, and integrations.

*Selection.* New Leaders utilizes a decision framework to make equitable selection decisions. The program's admissions process seeks to identify teacher leaders, instructional coaches, district-level coaches, and assistant principals (APs) who aspire to the principalship, demonstrate proficiency in the selection criteria, and possess an unrelenting commitment to servant leadership (a leadership philosophy in which the goal of the leader is to serve) and equity in schools. New Leaders assesses candidates on the following selection criteria: (1) *Personal Leadership*: Values, beliefs, and attitudes; (2) *Instructional Leadership*: Understanding curriculum, instruction, and data; (3) *Culture Leadership*: Mission, vision, and relationships, (4) *Operational Leadership*: Analysis, prioritization, and action planning; and (5) *Adult and Team Leadership*: Targeted support and professional learning. The Fellowship Team trains enrollment advisors, calibrates scoring, and performs quality assurance in the selection process, as well as works directly with applicants through admissions and enrollment.

### ***Strategy 2: Implement evidence-based Fellowship for aspiring school leaders***

Leadership preparation programs have a specific role in both increasing diversity in the principal

pipeline and preparing new principals to lead in a way that creates positive environments for teachers and students, specifically underestimated and underserved student populations. The Fellowship explores identity as it relates to the principalship and reinforces the need for inclusive practices in schools. It also provides a job-embedded and data-driven approach to leadership development. Aspiring school leaders engage in cohort-based learning experiences, competency-based online learning, and authentic practice via a job-embedded residency, supported by one-on-one coaching.

*Program Overview.* The Fellowship runs for 16 months, includes up to three in-person meetings, and is offered in two formats: (1) certification-only and (2) Master's degree + certification. New Leaders launched a pilot certification-only Fellowship cohort in January 2022, informed by content from both CAU and Morehouse College. Beginning in January 2023, Fellowship participants may choose between: enrolling in CAU to earn their master's and/or certification; or, enrolling at New Leaders, in a program supported by Morehouse, in a certification-only program (this program will operate through New Leaders for at least the first few cohorts while Morehouse pursues approval to offer post-baccalaureate programs). Each IHE has agreements in place with New Leaders to facilitate seamless program delivery and govern hiring of faculty and coaches.

*Curriculum & Assessment.* The curriculum includes a program orientation, followed by coursework. Courses include Introduction to Educational Administration and Supervision, History of Urban Education, School Culture and Community Relations, Curriculum Planning for Educational Leaders, Education Resource Management, Education Policy and the Law, Educational Tests and Measurements, Educational Research for School Improvement, Practicum I, and Practicum II. Leaders are assessed on their mastery of key leadership competencies and

interventions to support students, the results of which are tracked via data dashboards and reports for program improvement. See the curriculum overview in Appendix G.1 for course and assessment descriptions, noting that the scope and sequence may be adjusted to meet the needs of partner IHE requirements and academic calendars. The Fellowship offers a dynamic online learning environment, including synchronous and asynchronous experiences and maximum interactivity for participant engagement, designed with best practices for e-learning.

*In-Person Leadership Seminars.* In-person sessions will be held up to three times per year for all fellows, nationwide, to engage them in collegial, rigorous activities to develop empowered school leaders.

*Residency.* The Fellowship includes a program-long residency spanning 320 contact hours. This clinical experience allows program participants to: (1) increase their capacity to lead for equity (2) apply course content in an authentic setting; and (3) receive actionable feedback to support transformational leadership, equity, and excellence in education. The residency experience is completed at the participant's school and includes ten hours of clinical work each week.

Participants receive ongoing support and feedback from a New Leaders leadership coach and a Residency Site Principal. All leadership coaches are former school leaders who have demonstrated the capacity to improve outcomes for teachers and students. Individual coaching occurs on a monthly basis. Residency Site Principals meet regularly with program participants to provide insight into current practice at the school site and support participant implementation of leadership projects and job-embedded assignments. Residency Site Principals are provided with access to ongoing training and resources.

*Capstone.* The capstone project allows participants to bring together learning from all courses as well as the residency experience. The project encourages participants to think critically about

current challenges and their own moral imperative to create equitable and excellent schools. The capstone requires participants to submit a portfolio and culminates in a final presentation.

*PD for Instructors/Coaches.* New Leaders’ Fellowship team and internal Leadership Academy team provide development and support of program implementation staff. Program staff convene frequently to learn together, deepen understanding, and advance continuous improvement.

*Scale.* During the grant period, seven Fellowship cohorts will be active, with four cohorts concluding, six cohorts beginning, and three cohorts both starting and ending during the three years. See the table below; shading reflects dates that fall within the grant period. A total of 731 participants will be served.

**Table 1. Fellowship Cohort Schedule**

Cohort	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
# Participants	34	75	100	100	130	130	162
Start Date	1/2022	1/2023	8/2023	1/2024	8/2024	1/2025	8/2025
End Date	3/2023	4/2024	11/2024	4/2024	11/2025	11/2025	11/2025

The pilot cohort enrolled 100% leaders of color, representing 13 states. By the end of FY28, New Leaders aims to have 500 participants enrolled annually in the certification and combined master’s + certification programs, across fall and spring cohorts.

***Strategy 3: Support early tenure school leaders to drive student outcomes***

Career attainment, retention, and impact are three of the pillars that differentiate New Leaders from other principal preparation providers (Gates et al., 2019). Once program participants complete the Fellowship, they enter the New Leaders Network (NLN), joining 6,000 New Leaders alumni. While some graduates will enter immediately into the principalship, others will take AP positions or work in the teacher leader space while seeking a principal role. Through SEED, New Leaders will build out the supports alumni need, enabling them to use the leadership

skills they have developed to pursue promotion toward the principalship and to succeed in generating positive student outcomes. Alumni will receive certification services, ongoing professional development, and network convenings for collaborative learning.

*Certification.* The Fellowship is an approved program leading to a standard principal license, which opens up the route for program completers to use multiple pathways to certification, depending on the requirements of the state they ultimately wish to be certified in. Based on state approvals in Maryland, Georgia, and Indiana, pathways have been mapped to 37 states plus DC for our traditional (i.e., CAU master's in education) Fellowship and 7 states for our alternative version of the program (New Leaders in partnership with Morehouse College). Please see Appendix G.2 for further information. Candidates still need to meet all criteria for licensure required by their desired state. In addition to work on accreditation and approvals, New Leaders will provide group test preparation for any participant who requests it. The Accreditation and Approvals Team will release a public-facing landscape analysis that reflects on the trends surrounding principal preparation across the country and provides policy and practice recommendations related to school leader licensure.

*Professional Development & Coaching.* Alumni will be provided up to three years of programming, including a year for those in teacher leader and AP roles and two years for alumni in their first principal role. In addition, alumni will have perpetual access to online multimedia and print resources, such as case studies, video segments, and evidence-based research findings, tagged to the New Leaders' Transformational Leadership Framework (TLF).

All program completers will have access to comprehensive professional learning to help them implement and refine their leadership skills for current and future roles, secure a principal position, and succeed in the principalship, resulting in improved student outcomes. Professional

learning will include monthly, targeted sessions for cohorts and/or job-alike groups. Surveys of alumni will uncover time-sensitive topics on which they need more support, and professional learning will be designed to fill gaps and reduce stress for these educators. Topics can be one session only or developed into a series, ranging from six weeks to a full year. The series allows leaders a deep-dive learning experience around a particular topic and helps leaders actively learn how to best address challenges and implement solutions. In addition, it provides the opportunity for alumni to learn from leaders in the field who have demonstrated impact and excellence in the series' topics. Past session topics offered by New Leaders have focused on Establishing a High-Performing Team, Planning for High-Quality Instruction, Observation & Feedback, Coaching towards Excellence, Prioritizing and Navigating Work/Life Balance, Change Management, and Supporting a School Site Plan.

Group coaching sessions are provided for role-alike groups including those seeking a principal position, APs, first-year principals, and second-year principals and focus on elements of the TLF or problems of practice. APs will also be matched with a local mentor who has completed a New Leaders program and taken on a role as principal. Mentors will provide support to the APs, help them make connections, and support their job search.

Sessions for principals will enhance leadership capacity by focusing on leadership development and the habits to thrive in the leader's specific context. Coaches will offer strategic advising for school initiatives, projects, and priorities, including the development and implementation of a School Improvement Plan.

*Network Convenings.* One of the most meaningful elements of the alumni program is the New Leaders Network (NLN). While most programs end with graduation, at the conclusion of the Fellowship, a participant's network of support expands. Program completers are inducted into

the NLN at an in-person culminating event. Role-Based Communities of Practice of the NLN will bring together leaders in similar roles from different schools and districts to engage in topical learning, collaborative problem-solving, resource sharing, and general community building. These communities provide an opportunity to learn the “how” of best practices and get feedback from experienced colleagues on innovative practices.

#### ***Strategy 4: Validate the impact of the model***

During the grant period, both an implementation study, as well as a rigorous quasi-experimental design (QED) study that meets What Works Clearinghouse standards with reservations, will be conducted to determine fidelity of implementation to the evidence-based model as well as the impact of the Fellowship program on desired outcomes. See the “Quality of Project Evaluation” section for more information. Lessons learned will be shared through dissemination of knowledge with the field through published reports, white papers, toolkits, video assets, presentations at state and national conferences, and featured blog posts. See the “Dissemination of Results” section for more information.

#### **Building Capacity and Yielding Results Beyond the Grant Period**

The Fellowship represents a new undertaking for New Leaders. It offers both a direct enrollment track for any participant nationwide, as well as district partnerships, and it offers a pathway to a master’s degree in conjunction with administrator certification in many states. Each of these new elements will build capacity within the organization to increase scale and services over time.

Already, our work with Noodle on the learning management system (LMS) has resulted in exciting new integrations that make our virtual course offerings more vibrant and user-friendly.

In addition, we will build capacity within our marketing and recruitment team as well as on the accreditation team. Exploring the possibilities for direct marketing and recruitment will open an

exciting space for New Leaders, and our Accreditation and Approvals Team will be working diligently to provide up to date information to guide candidates in earning licensure in their home state, and continuing to clarify the potential for administrator licensure beyond the initial states.

These changes will have a lasting impact on the organization, increasing our reach and scale. The Fellowship itself will continue to grow beyond the grant period, reaching 300-400 participants per year by academic year 2027-28, funded primarily by tuition and philanthropic support. Those served by the Fellowship during the three-year grant period will impact over 350,000 students annually in the future as school leaders. As described in the “Magnitude of Results” section, having more diverse, effective leaders at the helm of over 545 schools is expected to have a positive impact on teacher retention, especially for teachers of color, and student outcomes, especially for underserved student groups.

### **Conceptual Framework**

**An Unparalleled Knowledge Base:** The high-quality resources and tools for the Fellowship reflect New Leaders’ substantial knowledge base around what works when recruiting, selecting, developing, and supporting leaders to transform America’s high-need schools and will be combined with the expertise of our HBCU partners. The Fellowship is grounded in the conceptual frameworks of each of our IHE partners, namely the CANDLE Framework (Morehouse) and the CAU Conceptual Framework, which are aligned with New Leaders’ Transformational Leadership Framework, depicted in the graphic below. For a crosswalk of the IHE frameworks and the TLF, see Appendix G.3. For more information on the TLF, see Appendix G.4.

**Figure 1. Transformational Leadership Framework Overview**



Our equity-based approach develops participants’ competencies across the TLF’s five evidence-based categories: 1) *Personal Leadership* to increase self-awareness of leadership strengths and gaps; 2) *Learning and Teaching* to advance rigorous, standards-based instruction and a data-driven culture; 3) *School Culture* to foster investment from staff, families, and students and build collective efficacy in a culture that facilitates social-emotional learning (SEL); 4) *Talent Management* practices that identify and develop existing talent and build the capacity of teacher teams; and 5) *Planning and Operations* to ensure that systems, structures, and resources support the district vision.

A comprehensive study by Johns Hopkins University validated the TLF, confirming it reflects the practices of schools that achieve positive results (Hutchins et al., 2012), and a 2021 report (Grissom et al., 2021) confirms that principals who measurably improve student and school outcomes are exceptional instructional leaders, strong people managers, and data-driven organizational leaders who strategically allocate resources to maximum effect. The TLF is currently being updated to incorporate the most current educational research and best practices, center equity, attend to the social and emotional needs of school leaders, and align more fully with New Leaders’ mission and vision.

Please see Appendix G.5 for the standards, concepts, and competencies aligned with the TLF that guide the Fellowship.

**Logic Model for SEED Project:** These frameworks form an important input for the proposed project, which has been designed according to the logic model provided in Appendix G.6.

### **Collaborating with Partners**

New Leaders has established goal-driven, collaborative partnerships through strong relationships with two IHEs with whom we are implementing the Fellowship. Morehouse College and Clark Atlanta University are both HBCUs located in Atlanta, Georgia. Morehouse is a four-year private, non-profit all-men's college. Founded in 1867, it is the only private historically Black all-male liberal arts college in the U.S. and offers its 2,200 students 33 majors within the humanities, sciences, social sciences, and business. With a 14-to-1 student-to-faculty ratio, Morehouse College is dedicated to creating strong mentorships between educators and students. Morehouse students strive to support and encourage each other while continuously improving their communities and themselves (Morehouse College, n.d.). Morehouse is ranked #128 for National Liberal Arts Colleges for 2022 from *U.S. News & World Report*.

Established in 1988, Clark Atlanta University (CAU) is a historically Black, private, coeducational four-year liberal arts college. It was created from the consolidation of Atlanta University and Clark College, established in 1865 and 1869 respectively, two of the nation's first higher education institutions to serve primarily Black students. CAU is the largest of 37 institutions within the UNCF network (CAU, n.d.). It currently serves over 4,000 students and offers bachelor's through doctoral degrees in 40 unique areas of study. *U.S. News & World Report* ranked CAU 13<sup>th</sup> in the Top 20 of its 2020 listing of America's Best HBCUs, and *Princeton Review* ranked the university as one of the "Best Southeastern Universities." Its

educator preparation program is accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

In addition to its IHE partners, which have contributed significantly to program design over the last 1-2 years, the Fellowship works with partner LEAs that nominate aspiring school leaders for the program, and with Noodle, our online program management provider, which provides the online capability and integrations for a seamless participant experience from admission through program completion. Channel partners, such as Men of Color in Educational Leadership, Latinos for Education, Chiefs for Change, and Teach for America, support New Leaders' marketing for the Fellowship by sharing information about the program through social media, newsletters, and email blasts to their membership/alumni. Finally, national education foundations and private philanthropists committed to promoting equity in our nation's schools are supporting the project through matching funds. Please see Appendix D for letters of support and commitment.

### **Addressing Needs**

Two years into the COVID-19 pandemic and with the continued outcry for racial justice, the widening inequities that pervade our schools and our society for students of color and children living in low-income communities are clearer than ever. In addition to challenges for students and families that have been exacerbated by the pandemic, schools and education systems are under tremendous strain with educators at every level feeling demoralized and overwhelmed. A recent survey points to concerning data specifically relevant to school leadership: 38% of principals expect to leave the profession in the next three years (NASSP, 2021). The pandemic has made the principalship more complex and burdensome: 79% of principals report they are working harder, 73% report working longer hours, and 62% are having a harder time doing their job than before (NASSP, 2021). Only 25% of principals believe they are getting the support they

need from their district to do their jobs and advance student learning (Steiner & Woo, 2021). School leadership efforts have too often fallen short, overlooking the need to thoughtfully explore the role that culture and race play in school communities (Gooden & Dantley, 2012). It is critical that aspiring and sitting school leaders have access to evidence-based, job-embedded professional learning, like the professional development offered through the Fellowship and alumni programming, to enable accelerated instruction, center equity, mitigate pervasive stress and burnout, and respond directly to administrator needs.

**Current State of Diversity in Schools and School Leadership:** The student population of U.S. public schools is incredibly diverse. As of fall 2017, 52% of elementary and secondary school students were students of color. This is an increase from 39% students of color in fall 2000 (NCES, 2020b). But the leadership of public schools does not come close to representing the diversity of the students in them. In the 2017-2018 school year, 78% of principals were white, and only 11% Black, 9% Hispanic, 1% Asian, 1% American Indian/Alaska Native, and 1% two or more races (NCES, 2020a).

Significant barriers exist for teachers of color who seek to become school leaders, including assessment and hiring biases. One study of the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) reported that test-takers of color were 12 percentage points less likely than similarly qualified white test-takers to achieve the minimum score on the licensure exam for administrators (Grissom et al., 2017). Black principal candidates are 18% less likely to be promoted than equally qualified white candidates and have had to wait longer for promotion (5.27 years versus 4.67 years for white teachers) (Bailes & Guthery, 2020). The proposed project will provide group tutoring for aspiring principals who need assistance preparing for required assessments in the state in which they are seeking certification and coaching related to the job search.

Problems also exist with teacher attrition, especially for teachers of color. 19% of teachers of color move schools or leave the profession annually, compared to only 15% of white teachers (Kaput, 2019). The strongest complaints of teachers of color are a lack of collective voice in educational decisions and a lack of autonomy in their classroom (ASI, 2015). By preparing diverse school leaders who understand existing barriers and work to create inclusive school cultures, the Fellowship will support teacher retention, especially for teachers of color (CPP1).

## **Significance**

### **Magnitude of Results**

A recent report concluded that “the effectiveness of the principal is more important [for a school as a whole] than the effectiveness of a single teacher” (Grissom et al., 2021). Directly or indirectly, the work of the principal impacts classroom instruction, school climate and safety, teacher hiring and retention, teacher satisfaction, and student learning. Grissom et al. (2021) conclude that “if a school district could invest in improving the performance of just one adult in a school building, investing in the principal is likely the most efficient way to affect student achievement.” Preparing school leaders who are intentionally focused on creating schools and classrooms that are equitable, especially for underserved student groups, will support students in fully realizing their futures as the next generation of great thinkers, innovators, and advocates in service of a stronger, more equitable, and more just society.

Fellowship participants served under the SEED grant will end up leading over 545 schools nationwide and impacting 350,000 students annually, with compounding effects as the Fellowship continues beyond the grant period and more school leaders assume principal roles. Results of the proposed project are expected in the following areas:

**Serving High-Need Schools:** Nationally, in schools with New Leaders principals, 87% of

students are children of color, and 78% are growing up in low-income households.

**Retention in the Principalship:** New Leaders Aspiring Principals Program completers have demonstrated a long-term commitment to their schools: RAND’s 2014 study found that New Leaders principals were more likely to stay in their school for three or more years as compared to other newly placed principals, a particularly important measure in the high-need schools they serve.

**Student Achievement:** According to Gates et al. (2019), students in K-8 schools led by New Leaders principals significantly outperformed students without a New Leaders principal on math and reading tests. A study by Mathematica Policy Research found that students attending New Leaders-led schools benefited from the equivalent of four additional months of learning in math and 1.5 months worth of additional learning in reading (Booker & Thomas, 2014).

**Student Attendance:** Effective principals also have positive, measurable effects on chronic absenteeism, particularly in high-poverty and urban schools (Bartanen & Grissom, 2019). Individual-level student attendance, an important proxy for student engagement in their school’s culture, was higher for students who attended K-8 schools with a New Leaders principal than for students with a non-New Leaders principal (Gates et al., 2019).

**Teacher Retention:** Teachers with highly rated principals report higher job satisfaction and are less likely to leave, and teachers are more likely to be retained in school when they report feeling support from their administration (Carver-Thomas, 2018). Principal effectiveness is even more important to teacher turnover in high-poverty schools (Grissom et al., 2021).

Data from the Fellowship’s first pilot cohort indicates that participants are having a positive experience with their coach and instructors, and 100% of participants are earning an A or B in

their first courses. Cohort members report that they appreciate being able to explore how identity influences leadership with others who share similar identity markers. In addition to the areas identified above, the research base on increasing educator diversity (CPP1), promoting equity (CPP2), and meeting student social-emotional needs (CPP3) also points to the magnitude of results expected from the proposed project.

### **CPP 1: Increasing Educator Diversity**

Research supports the fact that a principal's influence on school culture and disciplinary practices can have a large impact on student experiences and achievement (Grissom et al., 2021). And effects are even greater when a school leader of color leads schools serving students of color. Even in the absence of a Black teacher, Black students' math achievement was increased in schools with a Black principal (Bartanen & Grissom, 2019). A 2004 study of Texas schools showed higher attendance rates and likelihoods of taking advanced courses by Latinx students under Latinx administrators, and a 2016 national data review reported that schools with Black teachers or Black principals had a higher representation of Black students in gifted programs (Grissom et al., 2017). In a Tennessee study, Black students in schools with Black principals were 1.5 percentage points less likely to receive in-school suspensions, and that percentage decrease continues to grow the longer the principal remains at the school (Grissom et al., 2021).

Strengthening diversity of school leadership is also directly related to increasing teacher diversity. Principal race and/or ethnicity influence who they hire, as well as teacher retention and satisfaction, and will, over time, noticeably impact the diversity of a school (Grissom et al., 2021). This change is due in part to the ability of Black principals to better attract, hire, and retain Black teachers, reducing teacher turnover (Barshay, 2020; D'Amico et al., 2017). The impact of teachers of color on students is an ever-growing focus of educational research,

showing clear short and long-term benefits to students of all races (JHU, 2017; Mahnken, 2018; Blad, 2016; Grissom & Reading, 2016; Superville, 2019).

Investing in and increasing principal diversity creates a virtuous cycle which grows diversity in the teacher workforce through better hiring and retention of teachers of color, strengthening the pipeline of teachers of color developing into leadership positions.

The Fellowship is designed to increase the diversity of both school administrators, and by extension, teachers in schools led by Fellowship alumni. In addition, through the SEED project, New Leaders will produce multimedia assets for IHE partners' educator preparation programs with the intention of augmenting high-quality teacher preparation program, thus better preparing future teachers of color and increasing the number of those hired and retained.

New Leaders will produce up to 10 multimedia assets, including but not limited to: professional videos of classroom practice, team meetings, data talks, case studies, post-observation conferences, and mock employment interviews that can be used as teaching tools within the teacher preparation program. The team will coordinate with appropriate vendors to produce each asset, including by capturing video, audio, necessary permissions, and releases. Simultaneously, these multimedia materials will be tagged to the elements and drivers of the TLF and integrated within the TLF asset repository for New Leaders staff to leverage in program delivery and will be made available to the members of the NLN.

In addition, although this effort would not be supported directly with SEED funding and no federal funds would be expended for advocacy, New Leaders plays an important leadership role in the national 1 Million Teachers (+30,000 Leaders) of Color coalition. This coalition is led by The Hunt Institute and TNTP and is dedicated to eliminating the educator diversity gap by 2030. New Leaders is leading the coalition's efforts to determine opportunities for collective action to

increase the number of teachers and leaders of color through federal policy. This includes analyzing a range of policy opportunities, identifying those that are most feasible to advance, and collaborating on collective advocacy. The number of new teachers and leaders of color supported by this SEED grant would be counted in the coalition's overall goals for increasing educator diversity.

## **CPP 2: Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities**

The Fellowship will develop leaders who critically examine historical policies and practices, listen to the voices of students and their families, and create equitable school practices. Our alumni carry out these practices in elementary, middle, and high schools. In addition, through the implementation of this program, New Leaders has examined and will continue to examine inequity within our own programs and design intentionally for inclusivity to create empowering and identity-safe learning environments for the leaders we serve, from admissions, through the Fellowship, and through alumni supports, providing a model for alumni to apply in their own schools. One example of this internal work is the effort to refresh the TLF in order to center equity and inclusivity for underserved populations. Since the TLF is the guidebook for leaders to implement equitable and inclusive environments for students and the backbone on which all New Leaders programs are based, these revisions will have a widespread effect. Another example is the work being done to ensure that the Fellowship promotes equitable access for people from marginalized groups who face additional barriers to the principalship. Admissions processes are designed to be free from bias, and New Leaders has a series of equity questions that are used to evaluate each new admissions activity before it is implemented. We seek out leaders who will lead with equity at their core and whose work will be launched with the support of the program. In addition, online coursework is carefully designed with accessibility features and is fully ADA-

compliant, accommodations are provided through Student Support Services for fellows with disabilities, and confidential counseling services are available through Noodle’s Student Assistance Program.

As an example of the ways in which the Fellowship directly promotes educational equity for underestimated and underserved K-12 students, in the Educational Research for School Improvement course, aspiring principals conceptualize and build an Action Research Project that identifies a current school practice that is actively marginalizing students and details an intervention to disrupt inequity. For the end-of-course assessment, fellows finalize their Action Research Project components, state a theory of change, and summarize the research and data analysis that guides their work. Then, throughout their residency, aspiring school leaders implement their Action Research Project under the direction of their leadership coach and Residency Site Principal, analyze data, and reflect on their ability to enact change to advance equity within their school buildings.

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

The Fellowship prepares school leaders to develop a school culture that fosters student well-being (especially for underserved students) and physical safety, and to establish schoolwide programs that address student SEL, trauma-sensitive instruction, and mental health. One of the five main elements of our TLF is School Culture, and it is developed with three drivers of Social-Emotional Learning Skills & Supports, Relationships, and Family & Community Engagement. The revised TLF will even more prominently feature inclusive learning environments, SEL, wellness, and trauma-informed approaches. These drivers represent major concepts around which program competencies and assessments are designed.

As an example, in the School Culture and Community Relations course, Fellowship participants

examine the role of the principal as a leader in building a school culture where all students are able to thrive academically, intellectually, socially, and emotionally. The course explores specific leadership actions for schools in the areas of adult leadership, student experience, trauma-informed instruction, and community engagement. As a final assessment, aspiring leaders draft key leadership actions for building a school culture of collective efficacy, equity, justice, and well-being across all learning environments. The plan must include how the leader will build a social-emotional program to support the well-being of all students, support teachers in building a school culture that is inclusive of students and families, and amplify the assets of students, families, and the school community.

During the Residency, fellows create, implement, and adapt structures designed to cultivate relationships with and purposefully engage families in support of student academic and social-emotional success. Finally, during the Educational Resource Management course, fellows focus on facilities and ways to ensure the physical safety of students. Please see the Fellowship Course Overview in Appendix G.1 for many more examples of the ways New Leaders cultivates leaders who meet their students' social, emotional, and academic needs.

### **Reasonable Costs**

The total federal costs requested in support of the Fellowship equal \$10,564,616. These costs, as defined in the Budget Narrative, are reasonable in relation to the overarching goal, nine objectives, and four strategies of the proposed project (see the Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes section) and have been estimated based on New Leaders' extensive experience in the principal preparation space. Requested funds will build capacity to design and deliver the recruitment and selection, program implementation, and alumni support elements of the Fellowship and position New Leaders and its partners for continuation of the program beyond the grant period.

Funding is requested for personnel for project management and oversight; marketing, recruitment, and admissions; implementation of the Fellowship; accreditation; alumni support; and program learning. In addition, funds are requested for contracts for evaluation, marketing, video development, and online program management. Finally, travel costs and expenses related to in-person meetings are requested for both participants and program staff.

During the grant period, the Fellowship will serve 731 aspiring principals, 731 Residency Site Principals, 12,422 teachers and 334,850 students.<sup>1</sup> This is an equivalent of \$761 per educator in requested federal funding and \$32 per student.

Through the proposed project, front-end investments will enable low-cost and high-impact strategies for scaled implementation. The project will create a comprehensive and collaborative model for a national aspiring principals fellowship to increase the number of diverse, equitable, and inclusive school leaders; retain teachers of color; and improve student outcomes for all students, especially for students of color and students from lower income communities. The dedication to these aims is reflected in the commitment of philanthropic donors to providing scholarships of \$5,000 for each participant across the Fellowship's first five cohorts. In addition, funding for operational support has been committed to exceed the required 25% match.

### **Sustainability**

By the end of the grant period, the Fellowship will be fully integrated with the work of New Leaders and will continue, due to its long-term field-based, organizational, and financial sustainability.

**Field-Based Sustainability:** New Leaders' development of a national aspiring principals fellowship focusing on equity and excellence is supported by national organizations such as Men

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<sup>1</sup> Assuming that aspiring principals impact 5 teachers and 250 students annually and that after graduation, school leaders will serve 38 teachers and 650 students.

of Color in Educational Leadership, Latinos for Education, Chiefs for Change, and Teach for America. In addition, partnerships with IHEs and districts give the program staying power to persist beyond the startup years. New Leaders' two IHE partners and channel partners demonstrate broad local support of the program. Please see the letters of support in Appendix D.

**Organizational Sustainability:** The Fellowship has been designed on a firm foundation of New Leaders' TLF, and the work is aligned with the New Leaders mission and its FY25 Strategic Plan. Furthermore, the Fellowship makes use of current organizational structures and supports rather than being supported by an entirely new team of personnel. This embeddedness of the program contributes to its organizational sustainability, long-term.

**Financial Sustainability:** Under the leadership of CEO Jean Desravines, New Leaders has been in strong financial position for some time, diversifying revenue to include fee-for-service (at the start of Jean's tenure as CEO in 2011, 0% of revenue was earned revenue; in recent years it has been between 24% - 33%) and maintaining financial discipline. New Leaders' work and financial sustainability has been buoyed by the continued investment of private philanthropy.

Tuition for the Fellowship will offset the cost of the program, and cost-sharing arrangements have been made with IHE partners and Noodle for long-term sustainability. Tuition is covered through a blend of partner district fees (where applicable), scholarships from philanthropic revenue that cover a portion of costs for individual students, and student-paid tuition. In addition, the work of securing program approval, developing admissions processes, and designing alumni supports are one-time expenses that can be leveraged beyond the grant period in support of the program.

### **Dissemination of Results**

New Leaders houses robust internal policy, learning, and communications teams that publish and

disseminate papers, lead presentations, and facilitate discourse at various educational conferences, such as the annual conference of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). Under the SEED grant, New Leaders will publish three public reports: one focused on the opportunities and challenges for leaders of color moving into the principalship; one focused on the national landscape of administrator licensure; and one detailing lessons learned about conditions and strategies that enable implementation of the Fellowship. New Leaders will also seek to identify opportunities to share tools and resources that benefit the broader education community, such as video assets created with grant funds, research reports and white papers, recommendations for states on certification policies and practices, tools for districts for use in principal hiring and selection, and recommendations for school districts around building a leadership pipeline. To disseminate its publications and resources, New Leaders will share through the NLN and channel partners, as well as our website.

In addition to seeking a presentation at AERA, New Leaders will target other conferences attended by principal preparation organizations, such as the University Council of Educational Administration (UCEA) and Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness. New Leaders and AIR will also execute an aggressive dissemination plan to make the external impact results and internal implementation findings widely known and available.

## **Quality of the Management Plan**

### **Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes**

The following goals, objectives, and outcomes drive the proposed project and will be achieved by the end of the grant period:

**Goal:** Create a scalable, sustainable model for a national aspiring principals fellowship to increase the number of diverse, equitable, and inclusive school leaders; retain teachers of color;

and improve student outcomes for all students, especially for students of color and students from lower income communities.

**Strategy 1: Design marketing, recruitment, admissions, & selection processes to maximize equity and access**

Objective 1.1: Recruit and admit 697 fellows to the program. (Y1: 175; Y2: 230; Y3: 292)

Objective 1.2: 75% of applicants are aspiring leaders of color. (Y1: 70%; Y2: 73%; Y3: 75%)

**Strategy 2: Implement evidence-based Fellowship for aspiring school leaders**

Objective 2.1: 75% of program starters complete the program, with no discrepancy in results by race/ethnicity or gender (i.e., subgroup disparity). (Y1: 70%; Y2: 73%; Y3: 75%)

Objective 2.2: 75% of program participants earn a B or better in competency-based coursework. (Y1: 75%; Y2: 75%; Y3: 75%)

Objective 2.3: 90% of participants express satisfaction with the Fellowship. (Y1: 80%; Y2: 85%; Y3: 90%)

**Strategy 3: Support early-tenure school leaders to drive student outcomes**

Objective 3.1: Provide alumni supports to 229 program alumni. (Y1: 24 Cohort 1; Y2: 55 Cohort 2; Y3: 150 Cohorts 3-4)

Objective 3.2: 90% of program completers express satisfaction with alumni supports. (Y1: 80%; Y2: 85%; Y3: 90%)

**Strategy 4: Validate the impact of the model**

Objective 4.1: Score adequate or higher on 6 of 7 elements on the New Leaders Principal Preparation Program Quality Rating Tool (Y1: 4; Y2: 5; Y3: 6)

Objective 4.2: Conduct impact evaluation. (See Evaluation section.)

In addition, the evaluation will collect the following data for reporting on the required

performance measures: (a) the percentage of teacher, principal, or other School Leader participants who serve concentrations of high-need students (School demographics); (b) the percentage of teacher and principal participants who serve concentrations of high-need students and are highly effective (School demographics, Administrator evaluation data); (c) the percentage of teacher and principal participants who serve concentrations of high-need students, are highly effective, and serve for at least two years (Alumni survey); (d) the cost per such participant (SEED financial reports); and (e) the number of grantees with evaluations that meet the WWC standards with reservations (Evaluation report).

**Responsibilities, Timelines, and Milestones**

New Leaders employs a diverse and dedicated staff of approximately 160 people with deep roots in schools and the communities where the organization works. The SEED project will receive oversight from a Leadership Team that spans four departments within New Leaders as well as the two partner IHEs, for cross-functional communication and collaboration. The Leadership Team’s role is to govern, manage, implement, and achieve stated goals on time and within budget. The Leadership Team (see chart below) will meet on a monthly basis to review status, address barriers, and adjust operations to ensure progress and achieve goals. Please see resumes for key personnel as well as the job description for the proposed Project Manager in Appendix B.

**Table 2. SEED Project Leadership Team**

Name	Title	Role for SEED Project
[REDACTED]	National Senior Executive Director, New Leaders	Primary Investigator & Project Director, Fellowship
[REDACTED]	Executive Director, Strategy and Operations, New Leaders	Program Lead
To Be Hired		Project Manager
[REDACTED]	Chief External Relations Officer, New Leaders	Project Director, Recruitment & Selection
[REDACTED]	National Senior Executive Director of Strategic Partnerships and Alumni Impact, New Leaders	Project Director, Alumni Support

██████████	Senior Director, Alumni Programming, New Leaders	Alumni Programming Lead
██████████	Senior Director, Program Impact & Learning, New Leaders	Program Impact Lead
██████████	Director, Accreditation & Approvals, New Leaders	Certification Lead
██████████	Senior Executive Director, Finance	Budget
██████████	Director, Morehouse Center for Excellence in Education	Liaison, Morehouse College
██████████	Dean, School of Education, CAU	Liaison, CAU
██████████	Senior Researcher, Education Systems, AIR	Lead Evaluator, Implementation Evaluation, AIR
██████████	Senior Researcher, AIR	Impact Evaluation Lead, AIR

The management plan table below 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 are indicated.

**Table 3. Gantt Chart (✓ indicates milestones)**

	Owner	Year 1			Year 2			Year 3		
		Fa	Sp	Su	Fa	Sp	Su	Fa	Sp	Su
<i>Strategy 1: Design marketing, recruitment, admissions &amp; selection processes to maximize equity and access</i>										
Develop & pilot targeted recruitment strategy & marketing plan	██████████	✓								
Develop & pilot indicators of non-biased recruitment and admissions	██████████	✓								
Develop & pilot admissions & selection processes	██████████	✓								
Implement & refine marketing, recruitment, admissions & selection policies and processes	██████████				✓					
<i>Strategy 2: Implement evidence-based Fellowship for aspiring school leaders</i>										
Cohort 1 (in progress, ending March 2023)	██████████		✓							
Cohort 2 (January 2023 – April 2024)	██████████		✓							
Cohort 3 (August 2023 – November 2024)	██████████			✓						
Cohort 4 (January 2024 – April 2025)	██████████					✓				
Cohort 5 (Beginning August 2024)	██████████							✓		
Cohort 6 (Beginning January 2025)	██████████								✓	
Cohort 7 (Beginning August 2025)	██████████									✓
Host in-person Leadership Seminars (up to 3x annually)	██████████									
Partner with CAU’s teacher preparation program for development of video assets	██████████					✓				

	Owner	Year 1			Year 2			Year 3		
		Fa	Sp	Su	Fa	Sp	Su	Fa	Sp	Su
<b>Strategy 3: Provide ongoing support and wraparound services for Fellowship alumni</b>										
Develop transition process between Fellowship & NLN	██████████									
Conduct NLN induction (numbers represent cohort #s)	██████████	1			2		3	4		
Provide certification support	██████████	✓			✓					
Offer monthly consultancy workshops	██████████				✓		✓			
Provide group coaching	██████████				✓		✓			
Hold Community of Practice convenings	██████████				✓		✓			
<b>Strategy 4: Validate the impact of the model</b>										
Complete detailed evaluation plan	██████████, Evaluator	✓								
Finalize data sharing agreements & secure IRB	██████████, Evaluator	✓								
Draft data collection procedures, survey instruments, and interview protocols	██████████, Evaluator	✓								
Collect program documents and extant data	Evaluator	✓								
Collect survey data and conduct interviews	Evaluator	✓								
Analyze implementation data and collect scores for fidelity indicators	Evaluator		✓							
Collect district administrative records on teacher employment/retention and student outcomes	Evaluator									
Analyze impact data	Evaluator									✓
Provide annual implementation briefs and final, public report to Leadership Team	Evaluator									✓
Disseminate lessons learned & results (publications & presentations)	Leadership Team					✓		✓	✓	
<b>Grant Management</b>										
Hire Project Manager	██████████	✓								
Hold Leadership Team Meetings	Proj Man	✓								
Attend SEED trainings and meetings	██████████, Proj Mgr									
Submit Annual Reports	██████████ Proj Mgr				✓			✓		
Submit Final Report	██████████ Proj Mgr									✓

## Quality of the Project Evaluation

AIR will conduct a rigorous mixed-methods evaluation of the Fellowship. The Fellowship focuses on developing participants’ competencies across the five dimensions of the TLF including personal leadership, learning and teaching, school culture, talent management, and planning and operations (described further under Conceptual Framework above). AIR will

conduct a **quasi-experimental impact evaluation** designed to meet WWC standards with reservations, examining student and teacher outcomes in the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years. A **formative evaluation** of the Fellowship will include quantitative and qualitative analyses to assess the degree of program implementation fidelity and to provide performance feedback for continuous improvement.

### Evaluation Produces Evidence That Meets WWC Standards

Table 4 below summarizes the three impact evaluation research questions (RQs) and data sources. AIR will implement a propensity score-matching approach to create balanced intervention and comparison groups for the impact evaluation in order to measure the effectiveness of the Fellowship on the following outcomes: student attendance (RQ1), student achievement in mathematics and English language arts (ELA) (RQ2), and teacher retention (RQ3). These outcomes are described in further detail in the section titled Evaluation Provides Valid and Reliable Performance Data on Relevant Outcomes. Empirical within-study comparisons demonstrate that studies using propensity score methods can reproduce the results of randomized experiments (Pohl et al., 2009; Shadish et al., 2008).

**Table 4. Impact Evaluation Research Questions and Data Sources**

Research Question (RQ)	Data Sources
<b>RQ1:</b> What is the impact of the Fellowship on student attendance? Does the impact vary across Fellowship alumni, student, or school characteristics, e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, free and reduced-priced lunch?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School attendance</li> </ul>
<b>RQ2:</b> What is the impact of the Fellowship on student achievement in mathematics and ELA? Does the impact vary across Fellowship alumni, student, or school characteristics?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student achievement on state test scores</li> </ul>
<b>RQ3:</b> What is the impact of the Fellowship on teacher retention? Does the impact vary across Fellowship alumni, teacher, and school characteristics?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State/LEA teacher retention data</li> </ul>

**Matching Fellowship Schools to Comparison Schools:** AIR will use propensity score matching to match elementary and middle schools from at least six local education agencies

(LEAs)/regions that participate in the Fellowship program to similar nonparticipating schools within the same LEAs. Fellowship schools are defined as schools with leaders (principals and assistant principals as well as teacher leaders with oversight of ELA and math teams) who participated in New Leaders' Fellowship and were placed in a leadership position at the school after they completed the program. The matching process will exact match on principals' years of experience and will use pre-intervention characteristics captured in district and/or state administrative data, especially student-level average achievement on state standardized tests in math and ELA, as well as school-level characteristics (e.g., the percentage of English learner students, the percentage of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch services, school size, and grade levels served). AIR will use data from the 2022-23 (cohort 1) and 2023-24 (cohort 2) school years to estimate the propensity score model. The matching process will identify a comparison group that is optimally similar on preintervention measures of outcomes and demographic characteristics of the students (for RQs 1 and 2) and teacher characteristics (for RQ3). Prior to evaluating program impact for each outcome, AIR will examine quality of the matching process by confirming balance on the standardized mean difference (SMD) of baseline measures (as specified in the relevant WWC review protocols) between intervention and comparison students (or teachers) is less than 0.25.

**Power Calculations:** Assuming that each school leader is in a school containing an average of 200 students in tested grades and 10 teachers (20 students per teacher, on average) and that AIR is able to match 24 schools containing a New Leaders alum to two comparison schools (1:2 match for 72 schools total), the estimated sample for student achievement (RQ2) will include 14,400 students (4,800 treatment and 9,600 comparison) taught by 720 teachers (240 treatment and 480 comparison) across elementary and middle school grades. These calculations

conservatively assume an effective match rate of 83% (identifying at least one matched comparison for 20 of 24 treatment schools). The sample for student attendance (RQ1) would have at least this many students, not limited to those in tested grades. Using the Blocked Cluster Randomized Assignment Design Module (Model 4.4) in the PowerUp! Program (Dong & Maynard, 2013), this sample would allow us to detect differences of a minimum detectable effect size (MDES) of  $d = .15$  for student-level outcomes. Separate power analyses were run for RQ3 (using PowerUp Model 4.4). We estimate a MDES of  $d = .21$  for teacher retention. These effects are policy relevant and consistent with the meta-analytic evidence on professional development-type interventions. For instance, a meta-analysis conducted by Kraft, Blazar, and Hogan (2018) found that coaching interventions had an average effect size of 0.18 for student achievement. Further power analysis details and model specifications are located in Appendix G.7.

**Analysis of Student- and Teacher-Level Outcomes:** The outcome evaluation will include two cohorts of teachers and students. Cohort 1's first treatment year is 2023–24, while Cohort 2's first treatment year is 2024–25. To estimate the impact of the program and maximize statistical power, the samples will be pooled across the two cohorts. AIR will analyze data using multilevel regression models that account for the variability in preintervention teacher and student characteristics and for the nesting of data. Models will be estimated separately by outcome, controlling for student- (or teacher-) level and school-level characteristics as well as baseline measures for each outcome. A school random effect and a state-level fixed effect will be included to account for the fact that students are nested in schools and regions. The baseline year is 2022-23 for cohort 1 and 2023-24 for cohort 2, with outcome years occurring for 2023-24 for cohort 1 and 2024-25 for cohort 2. AIR will also conduct an exploratory analysis of Cohort 1's 2<sup>nd</sup> treatment year in 2024-25. Using a quasi-experimental design, a process for establishing

baseline equivalence, and valid and reliable outcomes as described above, sets up the impact study to produce evidence of effectiveness that meets the WWC (4.1) evidence standards with reservations.

### Evaluation Provides Performance Feedback and Periodic Assessment of Progress

Throughout the project, AIR will analyze and report quantitative and qualitative data about program implementation to assess progress toward the intended short- and long-term program outcomes shown in the Logic Model in Appendix G.5. New Leaders will use evaluation data and evidence to engage in two main forms of continuous learning: single-loop learning to inform immediate changes and double-loop learning (Cartwright, 2002) to challenge underlying assumptions of the Fellowship program design. Continuous learning will occur through leadership team meetings, staffworkgroups, and community of practice calls for Fellowship staff who directly coach participants and other staff to share implementation across sites. In-depth data conversations will allow us to examine implementation data to identify root causes for observed patterns and make short-term adjustments and inform program design. Table 5 below summarizes the implementation evaluation research questions and data sources.

**Table 5. Implementation Evaluation Research Questions and Data Sources**

Research Question (RQ)	Data Sources
RQ4: Is the Fellowship implemented with fidelity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AIR administered annual Fellowship participant and alumni surveys</li> <li>• AIR administered annual participant, coach, and Residency Site Principal interviews</li> </ul>
RQ5: What are the supports and barriers to the implementation of the Fellowship?	

<p><b>RQ6:</b> Do participants in the Fellowship report an increase in the knowledge and skills needed for building effective school cultures and learning communities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Leaders administered surveys: Coach/Residency Site principal surveys; annual alumni surveys; in-person session feedback surveys and end-of-course satisfaction surveys from Fellowship participants</li> <li>• Program implementation data provided by New Leaders and its two HBCU partners: session attendance data; coaching logs; Learning Management System engagement; participants’ Action Research Project data; and participants’ personal leadership self-assessment</li> <li>• Data on program fidelity from New Leaders’ existing fidelity matrix (Principal Preparation Program Quality Rating Tool)</li> <li>• Program improvement reports from New Leaders</li> </ul>
<p><b>RQ7:</b> Do teachers in schools with Fellowship program participants report improvements in instructional leadership and school climate?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AIR administered annual teacher surveys</li> </ul>

**Implementation Fidelity:** To understand the extent to which the Fellowship program was implemented with fidelity (RQ4), aligning program goals and objectives, and leveraging New Leaders’ existing fidelity matrix (also known as the New Leaders Principal Preparation Program Quality Rating Tool), AIR will work with New Leaders in Year 1 to identify benchmarks for successful implementation at the participant and program levels. Data collection to inform implementation fidelity will include coaching logs, post-session surveys of program participants after each tri-semester, documents created by New Leaders’ staff, and AIR administered participant surveys and interviews. Fidelity data will be collected in the final semester of each cohort’s programming during the grant period (Cohort 1: 2022-23; Cohort 2: 2023-24; Cohort 3: 2024-25). AIR will code and analyze data across these data sources to provide ratings on each indicator and measure of implementation as well as an overall implementation score. The analyses will aggregate indicators across program participants to produce frequency estimates of core program activity implementation overall and will also examine variations in implementation across districts, as applicable. AIR will also work with New Leaders to collect and report on the

GRPA measures required for reporting on SEED.

**Supports and Barriers Associated with Implementation:** AIR will collect information at multiple points to understand supports and barriers to the implementation of the Fellowship (RQ5). AIR will analyze New Leaders' program implementation surveys and related documents that include data on aspects of each course, session, and coaching event. To allow participants to reflect on their particular experiences with the Fellowship program and strengthen and supplement these other data sources, a random sample of 15–20 program participants and their coaches and residency site principals will be asked to reflect on successes and barriers to the program more broadly in semi-structured, 45-minute virtual interviews in the final semester of each cohort's programming during the grant period (Cohort 1: 2022-23; Cohort 2: 2023-24; Cohort 3: 2024-25). AIR expects to conduct 35–45 interviews per cohort, with a total of up to 135 interviews during the 3-year grant period. AIR will use NVivo qualitative analysis software to analyze interview transcripts inductively, incorporating a systematic method of managing data through reduction, organization, and connection (Dey, 1993; LeCompte, 2000).

### **Increases in Relevant Knowledge to Build Effective School Cultures and Learning**

**Communities:** AIR will develop and administer a survey to Fellowship participants to measure the self-reported capacity of Fellowship participants and alumni to build effective school cultures and learning communities (RQ6). AIR will utilize existing valid and reliable survey items or scales (example surveys include NCES's Principal Questionnaire of the Schools and Staffing Survey [SASS] and noninstructional staff survey items from the U.S. Department of Education School Climate Survey [EDSCLS]). The survey data will be supplemented by program participant and alumni data from extant New Leaders surveys and end-of-course surveys, which measure perceptions of knowledge gained, impact of the program, and whether participants

achieved their intended learning goals for each course.

**Changes in Instructional Leadership, Instructional Improvement, and School Climate:** To assess teacher perception of changes in instructional leadership and school climate (RQ7), AIR will administer an online 30-minute survey to teachers in tested grades (Grades 4-8, estimated at 10 teachers per school) in the Fellowship program participant schools in the spring of each implementation year throughout the grant period. The survey will draw candidate items from existing measures related to principal instructional leadership (e.g., Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale [Hallinger & Wang, 2013]), and school-working conditions (e.g., Massachusetts' survey of school climate [Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2011]). Also, to provide more nuanced evidence on instructional leadership, instructional improvement, and school climate, AIR will supplement survey findings with findings from interviews with program participants, residency site principals, and coaches (see RQ5).

### **Use of Objective Performance Measures Related to Intended Project Outcomes**

Throughout the 3-year grant, AIR will examine a variety of objective performance measures using qualitative and quantitative data, aligned to the research questions and the program outcomes (see Logic Model in Appendix G.6), to understand the extent and quality of program implementation towards achieving the intended programmatic goals. Program records will provide objective measures such as on participation and progress through the program (RQ 3). AIR will use surveys and interview protocols to examine participant experiences, including an emphasis on measuring progress toward outputs and short-term program outcomes (RQs 4–7 listed in Table 5). AIR will develop questions (and answer options for surveys) that are clear and concise, understood by respondents in the same way, and offer sufficient response flexibility to ensure measurement quality. Survey instruments will incorporate validated measures and scales

(RQs 6 and 7). AIR will test the validity and reliability of the surveys after each survey administration period, using factor analysis and the Rasch model for ordered categories (Andrich, 1978; Rasch, 1980; Wright & Masters, 1982; Wright & Stone, 1979), adjusting instruments for subsequent administrations, if needed. For the interviews, AIR will check for intercoder reliability of coded interview data to test for the validity of constructs that emerge from the data (Kurasaki, 2000).

### Evaluation Provides Valid and Reliable Performance Data on Relevant Outcomes

In alignment with the short- and long-term outcomes described in the Logic Model (Appendix G.6), AIR will obtain valid and reliable performance data on student attendance, student achievement, and teacher retention. For the impact analysis, student-level state standardized test scores and demographic information will be requested from the state board of education and/or school district and analyzed by the evaluation team (Table 6).

**Table 6. Impact Evaluation Measures and Data Collection Activities**

Outcome and Data Sources	Measure	Data Collection
Student attendance (WWC outcome): administrative data	Student attendance is measured as a proportion [0,1] of days attended out of days enrolled.	Attendance data for students will be collected in Years 1-3.
Student achievement in Mathematics and ELA (WWC outcome): administrative data	Student achievement will be measured with students' scores on state standardized tests in Mathematics and ELA/Reading, which have been deemed valid, reliable, and policy relevant by WWC.	Scores will include pre-intervention baseline (2022-2023 for cohort 1 and 2023-2024 for cohort 2) and post (2023-2024 for cohort 1 and 2024-2025 for cohort 2). The impact analysis will be conducted in study Year 3. AIR will also conduct an exploratory analysis of Cohort 1's 2nd treatment year in 2024-25.

Outcome and Data Sources	Measure	Data Collection
Teacher retention (WWC outcome): administrative data	Teacher retention will be measured by the proportion [0,1] of teachers that return to teach at their school in the subsequent year.	AIR will collect teacher retention data on an annual basis each spring in Years 1-3.
Demographic information: administrative data	Data includes student characteristics (e.g., LEP status, free or reduced-priced lunch eligibility, race/ethnicity) and teacher characteristics (e.g., teacher race/ethnicity and years of experience).	Characteristics of students will be collected in the summer/fall of Years 2 and 3.

**Implementation and Evaluation of Project to Guide Replication**

**Implementation Analysis to Guide Replication:** The implementation evaluation will describe implementation and the extent to which, and under what conditions, the Fellowship participants are learning and developing. To ensure continuous touchpoints to provide recommendations for improvement and highlight any best practices or challenges to program supports, AIR will engage in ongoing, monthly communication with New Leaders throughout the duration of the grant. AIR will also create an implementation brief in the final quarter of each year of the grant. This report will document implementation, including key components and adaptations, and synthesize areas in which the program could be improved to guide replication.

**Moderator Analyses to Guide Replication:** The impact design provides an opportunity to examine sources of variation in impacts across multiple regions and contexts. For both the analysis of student outcomes (RQs1-2) and teacher outcomes (RQ3) and given the focus of the Fellowship on developing diverse leadership, AIR will investigate how each of these outcomes is moderated by race/ethnicity and gender of the school leader. In addition, AIR will examine how teacher-level variables (e.g., race/ethnicity, grade level, and subject taught) and school-level variables (e.g., school characteristics) moderate each outcome of interest. These analyses will provide evidence on the extent which the effectiveness of the strategies employed

by the program vary among contexts, which will contribute to understanding the generalizability of the findings and inform future replication.

Additionally, AIR will pre-register the Fellowship impact study in the Registry of Efficacy and Effectiveness Studies, including research and analysis activities, and sample information, and update the registry if changes are necessary.

In Year 3, AIR will work with New Leaders to draft and submit **a public evaluation report that includes findings from lessons learned** about conditions and strategies that enable implementation of the Fellowship, and conduct **up to three sensemaking sessions** – one sensemaking session with New Leaders, and up to two sensemaking sessions with program participants and/or stakeholders from participating LEAs to inform New Leaders and partner school districts of the extent to which programs meet intended teacher and student outcomes, with qualitative data to supplement summative evaluation findings. Further, AIR and New Leaders will make the Fellowship study information, and implementation and impact evaluation results publicly accessible through publications, AIR and New Leaders’ websites with contacts included, and dissemination through webinars, conferences, and professional meetings, as described in the Dissemination of Results section.