C. Project Narrative

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

Teaching Lab, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization (Applicant/Fiscal Agent), proposes **Project RISE**, **R**efine, **I**mprove, **S**hare, and **E**levate, a *Teacher and School Leader Incentive Program (TSL)* that creates a Networked Improvement Community (NIC) in partnership with Milwaukee Public Schools (Milwaukee, WI), Osceola School District #1 (Osceola, AR), Kemper County School District (DeKalb, MS), and El Paso Leadership Academy (El Paso, TX), TORSH, and Digital NEST. Project RISE's objective is to increase student academic achievement by 1) Refining human capital management systems to accurately identify effective and highly effective teachers and implement a performance-based compensation system that (a) rewards teachers who have a positive impact on student achievement, and (b) informs human capital decisions. 2) Increase recruitment and retention rates for effective and highly effective teachers. 3) Build a Networked Improvement Community (NIC) to engage in shared learning. 4) Increase teacher and leader effectiveness. 5) Evaluate each intervention against student achievement and cost to create sustainable and scalable systems of improvement.

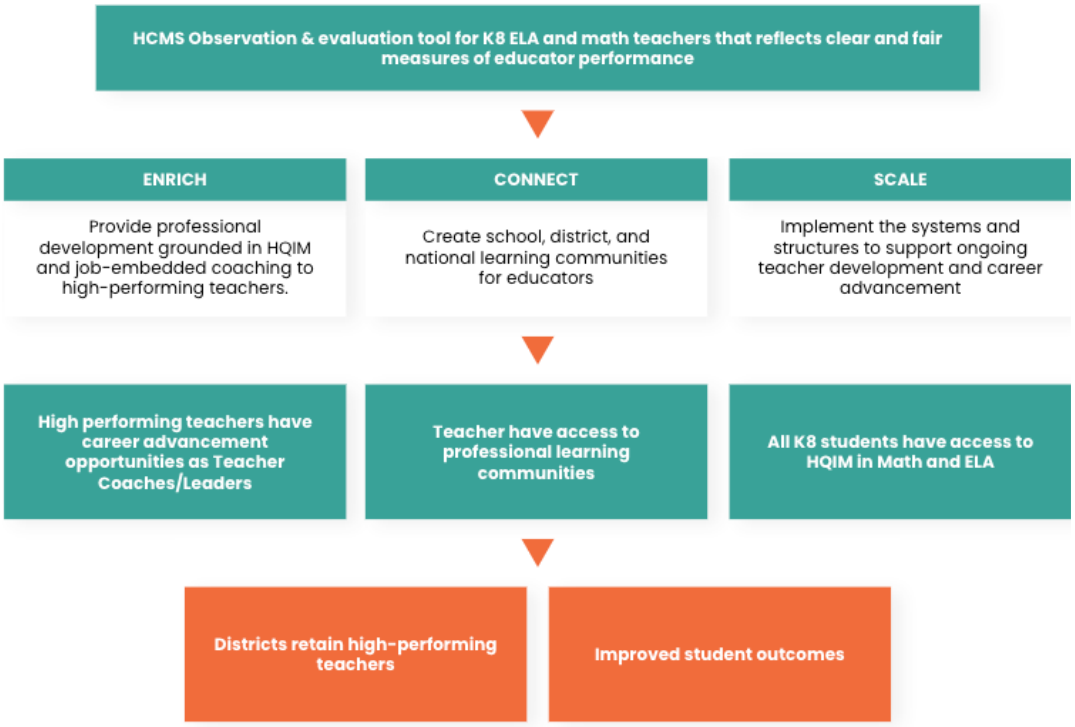

Figure 1: Theory of Action for Project RISE

ABSOLUTE PRIORITY 1: *Human Capital Management Systems (HCMS) or Performance Based Compensation Systems (PBCS) and Career Advancement Opportunities.*

Under this priority, Project RISE proposes to: **(1)** Refine HCMS, in collaboration with district leaders and district advisory councils, including students, teachers, families and members of the public, to ensure it clearly and equitably measures teacher performance and identifies development areas to inform targeted professional development support. **(2)** Design and implement a PBCS that identifies effective and highly-effective teachers and is based in part on measurable increases in student achievement and recognizes those efforts through bonus pay and career advancement. **(3)** Support career advancement opportunities that provide effective and highly-effective teachers with leadership opportunities that allow them to have a greater impact on their school community while remaining in the classroom and being compensated for additional responsibilities.

With the goal of improving student academic achievement, the components of Project RISE are anchored in the HCMS system and evaluation tools. An evaluation tool that clearly identifies the criteria for, and equitably measures the presence of, high quality instructional practices will provide district and school leaders data to inform critical human capital decisions in the best interest of students. Leveraging a distributive leadership model, teachers will lead alongside their principal to facilitate instructional improvement efforts and lead professional learning communities and provide coaching to teachers. These leadership opportunities support academic success for students while creating career ladders that support teacher retention. The goal is to elevate the quality of teaching and learning bridge the achievement gap between high-performing and low-performing students.

ABSOLUTE PRIORITY 2: *High-Need Schools.*

Project RISE proposes system-wide support and activities that are centered around scalable and sustainable capacity-building for teachers, teacher leaders, and school leaders serving in high-

need schools. As defined in the federal register, *high-need school* means a school with 50 percent or more of students enrolled are from low-income families, calculated using the national school lunch program. Schools supported through Project RISE are receiving direct-to-teacher and direct-to-leader professional development and job-embedded training. Additionally, participating teachers, school leaders, and district administrators will engage in shared learning and collaboration through the NIC. Finally, Project RISE will be providing financial incentives to participants and will be working closely with human capital teams across districts to implement PBCS. A full list of the **121 high-need schools** receiving TSL-funded support and the data supporting each school's designation as high-needs can be found in ***Appendix E***.

COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY 1 (1): *Increasing the number of effective educators and educators from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds.*

Project RISE is designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for students from high-needs and marginalized communities. Historically, schools serving high need and/or marginalized students have had to navigate the dual challenges of limited resources due to underfunding and high teacher turnover rates that have resulted in inequitable access to HQIM, effective or highly effective teachers and inconsistent learning experiences.

A core component of the Project RISE model is supporting recruitment and retention of effective and highly effective mathematics (math) and English Language Arts (ELA) teachers in third through eighth grade classrooms and building systems and structures to scale efforts to include all content areas and grades. The ideal teacher workforce is one that represents the diversity of the students they teach so the recruitment activities focus on attracting diverse candidates. This includes creating or redesigning recruitment incentive structures and creating pathways for teachers into the

classroom through strategic partnerships who have demonstrated success in attracting diverse candidates and building a sustainable pipeline of potential educators.

COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY 1 (2): *Improving the retention of fully certified, experienced, and effective educators in high-need schools or shortage areas.*

Our goal is to improve student outcomes and the research has shown that experienced effective and highly-effective teachers with access to and knowledge of HQIM are essential. To combat the record level rates of teacher attrition, Project RISE is implementing two research-based interventions to retain effective and highly-effective teachers: (1) building internal systems and capacity to provide teachers with intensive coaching and development grounded in HQIM, and (2) designing financial incentives and career advancement opportunities for effective and highly-effective teachers.

COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY 2: *Supporting a Diverse Educator Workforce and Professional Growth to Strengthen Student Learning.*

Project RISE aims to increase the number of prepared, diverse, and effective or highly effective teachers serving students by increase schools' and districts' capacity to hire, support, and retain an effective and diverse teacher workforce. This program will implement a year-round, multi-pronged approach to (1) support districts implement evidence-based strategies to diversify their recruitment pipelines, leveraging the expertise and experience of Digital NEST, and, (2) build the infrastructure to operationalize the recruitment strategies to increase the numbers of educators of color. Project RISE, district leaders, and human capital teams will co-design an HCMS, including observation and evaluation tools, that clearly and equitably diagnose teachers' development needs. A District Advisory Council will ensure that the community is represented in decision-making. To design effective strategic plans to sustain and scale efforts to support teacher diversity, we will leverage existing school

and district infrastructure to build a data dashboard and reporting schedule to progress monitoring updates to track the ongoing impact of RISE interventions.

A. NEED FOR PROJECT (1): *Addressing Needs of the Target Population*

In October of 2022, the NAEP released the Nation's Report Card, the first since US schools closed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the results confirmed what experts in the field feared: across the United States, fourth and eighth grade math and reading scores declined. The drop in scores is statistically significant and suggests that many of our youngest learners lost critical instructional time when schools closed in 2020 to mitigate COVID-19 exposure. In third through eighth grade, students are engaging in foundational learning, developing the skills needed to support lifelong learning. Most of the learning loss was concentrated among high-needs students, in particular low-income, English learners, and black students. To bridge the learning gap, districts are increasingly adopting HQIM, known to have a significant impact on student academic outcomes. However, curriculum alone cannot make up for lost instructional time and close the achievement gap. Students need teachers who are well trained in HQIM and effective instructional practices to maximize the impact of the curriculum on student learning, and professional development is the key to empowering teachers.

Ongoing professional development is key to teachers' successful implementation of HQIM and incorporating culturally responsive instructional practices into their teaching to address the social-emotional needs of their students. Additionally, a demographically diverse workforce has a profound impact on students, in particular students from historically marginalized communities. Ensuring our most vulnerable students have access to HQIM taught by diverse effective and highly-effective teachers is essential, as research has shown that "[s]tudents of color who have teachers who look like [their teachers] have higher reading and math achievement scores and are more likely to graduate high

school and to enroll in college."[i] Given the impact of the lost learning time on the outcomes for our most marginalized communities, the need to recruit diverse educators and retain effective and highly-effective teachers and support them with strong standards- aligned professional learning is critical.

Despite the need, districts across the country are facing an acute teacher shortage fueled by high resignation rates. When district talent officers were surveyed, "76 percent of respondents said that resignations were higher this school year than in previous years, and 86 percent said it was more difficult to hire new teachers."[ii] The recent surge in resignations compounds a developing workforce crisis that pre-dates the pandemic. Between 2010 and 2018 enrollment in teacher preparation and alternative certification pathway programs steadily declined.[iii]

A recent survey found that while 86 percent of all teachers indicated that they would spend their entire career as a classroom teacher, only 52 percent of teachers of color reported this[iv]. Further, only 36 percent of teachers report that they have the curricular materials needed for effective instruction and only 30 percent have received the training to effectively implement those materials. Given the impact a representative teaching workforce could have on student academic outcomes, it is essential that districts focus their efforts on retaining effective and highly-effective teachers, building and developing a pipeline of diverse candidates, and providing them with HQIM materials and support to improve instructional practices.

When surveyed, teachers consistently cited the following reasons for leaving the profession: low compensation, insufficient professional development, and a lack of leadership opportunities while continuing to teach.[v] They confirm that despite the importance of strong standards- aligned professional learning grounded in HQIM, they are not receiving professional development that is content-specific or based on their areas of improvement. Teachers of color further indicated that school culture and working conditions contributed to their decision to leave the classroom, including

feeling undervalued while simultaneously "bearing the high cost of being a teacher of color"[vi] When teachers of color were asked what they thought what would retain diverse candidates, 41 percent identified leadership pathways.[vii]

NEED FOR PROJECT (2): *Comprehensive Effort to Improve Teaching and Learning*

REFINE: ***Existing HCMS do not clearly or reliably distinguish between effective and highly effective teachers and developing teachers.*** In order to make the academic gains necessary to reverse the learning loss third through eighth grade students experienced when schools closed to prevent the spread COVID-19, they need access to effective and highly effective teachers. However, districts across the country are using teacher evaluation tools that consistently over-estimate the number of teachers who are rated effective and highly-effective. It is hard to identify teachers who are providing students with grade-appropriate and aligned assignments grounded in HQIM that are delivered in a culturally responsive manner, and those who are not. Because the evaluation ratings are not correlated with student learning, district and school leaders are unable to use it to make informed human capital and workforce development decisions.

REFINE: ***Struggle to attract diverse candidates.*** Districts are struggling to identify sustainable pipelines to fill a growing number of vacancies, particularly pipelines of diverse teacher candidates. That challenge is magnified in districts that are considered "hard to staff". Those districts are overwhelmingly concentrated in rural communities and urban school districts, two regions where the number of high-needs students is the highest. Rural schools are also more likely to report difficulty filling vacancies, particularly in STEM positions, and have a harder time recruiting faculty for their growing population of English language learners than nonrural schools (NCES 2012; Player 2015).

REFINE: ***PBCS are not retaining existing teachers or attracting new ones.*** Performance-based compensation systems and financial incentives are used across sectors to reward outstanding

performers and those who take on responsibilities above and beyond the scope of their job. In education, in particular at the classroom level, the implementation of PBCS has been fraught with tension, most of which centers on the objectivity of the measurement tool and the reliability of using student performance data from summative examinations. Because of the resistance to using student test data to inform performance evaluations, PBCS have not had much success in motivating individual teachers and have not seen success as a recruitment tool. Though imperfect, value-added measures provide school and district leaders with significantly more information to consider and review when tasked with making high-stakes decisions that better serve the students in their districts.

IMPROVE: ***Teachers do not have access to professional development and coaching.*** Teacher attrition costs districts millions of dollars each year. Early career teachers have high rates of attrition and a majority of teachers of color are in the first few years of teaching. Despite being at the lowest level, there is evidence to suggest that increased job satisfaction could reduce attrition[viii]. In their study on the impact of job-embedded coaching grounded in HQIM on early career teacher retention, David De Jon and Ayana Campoli found that curricular coaching had a statistically significant impact on whether early career teachers left the profession.

SHARE: ***District and school leaders do not have access to shared learning spaces, to collaborate and leverage solutions and successes among peers with similar problems of practice.*** Nationally, educators work in isolation, with infrequent opportunities to meaningfully collaborate or engage in sustained learning with their peers within and across districts.[ix] Collaboration with peers improves knowledge, practice, and experience and improves student learning and academic outcomes,[x] but at the school and district level there are few systems in place to facilitate collaboration, putting the burden on school and district leaders to research, execute, reflect, and iterate new policies and processes in isolation.

NEED FOR PROJECT (3): A*ddressing gaps and weaknesses and building on related efforts*

Need: HCMS & PBCS that center and promote equitable student access to educational resources and opportunities and incorporating CRSE to measure teacher performance	
Gap: (1) Current HCMS evaluation tools do not clearly define what the observed behaviors and student outcomes of effective and highly effective teachers are. (2) PBCS are not aligned to student outcomes and in their current structure do not incentivize effective and highly-effectives teachers and/or diverse teachers, two groups of teacher districts are eager to retain. (3) PBCS for school leaders are not tied to teacher effectiveness and student academic outcomes. (4) Evaluation tools do not identify areas of development.	*Solution:* (1) Teaching Lab will collaborate with districts in Project RISE to design a clear and equitable HCMS that provides a reliable information regarding the effectiveness of the workforce. (2) Create a PBCS that uses, in part, a value-added calculation to measure the effectiveness of teachers based on student growth to reward effective and highly effective teachers.
Need: HQIM-aligned professional development and coaching for effective and highly effective teachers	
Gap: Teachers consistently cite a lack of professional development and coaching as a reason for leaving the classroom. When the professional development is provided it is delivered in a one-size-fits-all approach and not grounded in content or curriculum	*Solution:* (1) Provide professional development grounded in HQIM and ongoing job-embedded coaching to effective and highly effective math and ELA teachers supporting third through eighth grade classrooms. (2) Build their capacity to providing coaching and development to other teachers in the building. (3) Provide ongoing professional learning and support to teachers to support their professional growth through teacher-led professional learning communities.
Need: Career advancement and increased compensation for effective and highly-effective teachers	
Gap: (1) Teachers consistently cite career growth and compensation as a reason for leaving the profession. (2) There are too few opportunities for career advancement that allow teachers to remain in the classroom. (3) Teachers are interested in leadership opportunities and having the ability to	*Solution*: Create career pathway for career advancement for effective and highly effective teachers that provide them with increased compensation and an opportunity to remain in the classroom.

influence decision-making.	
Need: School leader development to support teachers implement HQIM	
Gap: (1) School leaders need support ensure HQIM is being implemented with fidelity. (2) School leaders need to norm on indicators of high-quality instruction and what they look like in practice to provide targeted coaching to developing teachers.	*Solution*: (1) Provide school leaders with job-embedded coaching and ongoing development to building instructional capacity to support teachers implement HQIM in their classrooms. (2) Provide strategic advising to school leaders to design an instructional vision and strategic roadmap for implementation. (3) Engage in ongoing norming within and across schools to build a clear understanding of excellent instruction.
Need: Improvement Network	
Gap: Feelings of isolation among teachers and leaders have increased. There are limited opportunities for sustained cross- collaboration across networks to share practices.	*Solution:* (1) We are building a Networked Improvement Community where district and school leaders can engage in shared learning and collaborate with peers across geographically disperse regions. (2) Create shared network goals and engage in structured learning align to the components of Project RISE.
Need: Strategic guidance for district administrators to support recruitment and retention efforts	
Gap: Districts are struggling to retain effective and highly effective teachers. Recruitment pipelines are much smaller than they have ever been and districts in hard-to-staff regions have a hard time attracting talented educators.	*Solution*: (1) Comprehensive redesign of the HCMS to reliably identify teachers who are making an impact on student outcomes and implement a PCBS that rewards effective teaching. (2) In partnership with district leaders, we will build and development the systems, structures, and resources necessary to continue to retain effective and highly effective teachers and build a diverse pipeline that is representative of the community. We are going to build the capacity of district and school personnel to continue to identify and grow high performing teachers.

Table 1: Project RISE Needs, Gaps, and Solutions

B. QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN: (1) *Demonstrates a rationale*

Project RISE works at every level of the system, from the classroom to the district, to design and implement programs that lead to systemic change. Project RISE leverages high-impact,

research-backed solutions to attract, develop, and retain a well-qualified, effective, and diverse pool of highly skilled and effective teachers who are prepared to teach diverse groups of learners.

Project RISE provides an opportunity for districts to ***refine*** their HCMS and PBCS to clearly identify and norm on the observed behaviors of effective and highly effective teachers and incorporate a value-add metric to measure teachers' effectiveness. We will partner with school and district leaders to continue to ***improve*** the instructional practices of effective and highly-effective teachers and provide them with opportunities to advance their careers while remaining in the classroom. A newly formed NIC provides district administrators, school leaders, and classroom teachers with a centralized hub to connect with peers to ***share*** learning, and ***elevate*** best practices to sustainably expand the program component across the districts.

REFINE: ***HCMS & PBCS tool for ELA and math teachers that clearly and equitably measures teacher effectiveness***. An HCMS that clearly and reliably measures teacher effectiveness can have a positive impact on student academic outcomes. 1)They provide reliable, rapid feedback that can inform coaching, track teacher progress, and assess teacher effectiveness across the district and apply targeted interventions; 2) A reliable HCMS can help insure an equitable assignment to effective and highly-effective teachers across schools. 3) With a reliable HCMS increases the likelihood that a PBCS that accurately identifies highly effective educators and rewards them, increasing retention. Project RISE districts already know that equitable application is essential. To accomplish this many districts applied a broad framework and criteria that was open to interpretation.

District leaders will work with Teaching Lab leader coaches to refine their HCMS for kindergarten through eighth grade. Students are being taught foundational skills through the eighth grade that will set them up for academic success for the rest of the academic and professional

life. Missed learning compounds year-over-year and students with ineffective or developing teachers, many of whom are high-needs, are less likely to master the learning objectives. Project RISE will design a tool that centers high quality instructional practices that research has proven support student access, interpretation, and (correctly) apply curricular concepts to new situations.

Using the Instructional Planning Guide (hereinafter, IPG) developed by Student Achievement Partners as a guide, Project RISE will work with districts to realign or add instructional practices with a demonstrated impact on student achievement to the HCMS and teacher evaluation tool. Project RISE districts and Teaching Lab leader coaches will create specific standards depending on the needs of the district, but they will be grounded in the instructional shifts the IPG measures in ELA such as complexity, evidence, and knowledge and focus, coherence, and rigor in Math.

By focusing on the core characteristics of effective teaching, Project RISE districts are creating opportunities for teachers and leaders to use the evaluation tool in all classrooms informally and formally throughout the school year to measure improvement in instructional practice. The updated observation and evaluation tool not only provides clarity to teacher coaches and leaders on how best to support and develop the teachers in their building, it provides a level of assurance that students currently do or will have access to highly effectives instructional practices grounded in HQIM.

Project RISE districts will further refine their HCMS to include the presence of culturally responsive and sustaining educational (hereinafter, CRSE) practices. CRSE is based on a cultural perspective of learning and human development where multiple expressions of diversity are acknowledged and used as assets for teaching and learning. CRSE (1) builds student-focused learning spaces that affirm the intersection of cultural identities, (2) prepares students for academic

rigor and autonomous learning, (3) develops students' skills to connect across cultural differences, (4) uplifts and empowers historically marginalized voices and identities, and (5) empowers students to be change agents in society (NYSED, n.d.). To eliminate inequitable application of CRSE indicators, Project RISE applies Teaching Lab's rubric that clearly describes what you might see or hear to let you know teachers are applying CRSE in the classroom. A complete table of these indicators can be found in ***Appendix F.***

For high-need students, students from marginalized communities, students with learning differences, and multilingual learners the impact of ineffective teaching is amplified without additional learning scaffolds. ***Project RISE will work with districts to implement value-added metrics to measure the effectiveness of teachers relative to others in the school or district based on the incremental shifts in student performance as measured by annual summative assessment for students in third through eighth grades.*** Where there was little to no information previously, teachers will have a clear window into the link between the HCMS evaluation and the academic performance of their students and school and districts leaders will have a better understanding of how their teachers are distributed along a continuum of effectiveness and can use that information to make decisions about how to allocate resources or make decisions about the workforce that are in the best interests of students. Over time the value-added metric will improve recruitment and hiring practices by tracking the performance of all new teachers.

The district advisory council will advise the district leaders to ensure that decisions made represent the interests of the school community. District Leaders and Teaching Lab coaches will work with the Project RISE district advisory councils to provide them with the necessary information and context to interpret and provide informed guidance to the district on behalf of the stakeholder group they represent. The final decisions rests with the district leaders. If a decision is made that goes

against the recommendation of the advisory council because Teaching Lab and district leaders believe it to be in the best interest of the students, the decision and the rationale will be communicated to the district advisory council with an opportunity for them to voice their support or concerns.

One of the biggest challenges districts navigate is how to create criteria that are specific and clear, but can be applied more broadly. Currently, a majority of K-12 teachers in districts across the nation, and in RISE districts, are deemed "effective," meaning they are meeting the expectations of the job and are successful in producing a desired or intended result. If this were the case, the research suggests that, nationally, student performance on summative assessments would average at or above 50 percent. In the 2022 NAEP report card only 35 percent and 26 percent of fourth and eighth graders were proficient in mathematics, well below the number of effective teachers.

To ensure that HCMS and evaluation tools and rubric is consistently applied in schools and classrooms across the districts, leader coaches will provide school leaders with normed coaching and implementation support. The importance of norming and calibrating on what teaching looks like in each of the ratings and building inter-rater reliability will increase confidence in instructional leaders and the evaluation outcomes. Through Project RISE, school leaders and teachers engage in multiple observation cycles identifying, explaining, and providing feedback and support surrounding the criteria. Instructional observation cycles build leaders' instructional knowledge as they support teachers to improve their instruction and knowledge HQIM and effective instructional practices.

Observation Cycle Steps
Step 1: Initial Calibration of Indicators: Norming on expectations for each indicator of high-quality instructional practice. This process is essential to building shared understanding and professional learning coherence across the district. Leader coaches work with school leaders to identify what they would want to see and hear from students and teachers if the indicators were evident.
Step 2: Conduct Observations. School leaders learn how to prepare for and conduct observations. They work with leader coaches to identify the indicators of high-quality instruction in the classroom. Clear indicators remove the guesswork out of what practices should be observed during instruction.
Step 3: Calibrate on Observations. After the observations, school leaders debrief with leader coaches to calibrate on indicators and points of evidence. Observers will take turns sharing progress ratings and evidence for each indicator and discuss the progress ratings for each indicator. Leader coaches will notice points of agreement and disagreement to see which indicators might need more calibration.
Step 4: Areas of Improvement for Professional Development. After calibrating on observations, Teaching Lab coaches will work with school leaders to identify trends and use that data to help inform areas of coaching instruction to improve their practice.

Table 2: Observation Cycle Steps

School and district leaders will have access to progress monitoring data to assess the implementation of the HCMS and PBCS at the school or district level. Project RISE will track all data for schools and districts in our NIC dashboards for leaders to review and make mid-course corrections.

IMPROVE: ***Improve the instructional practice of high-performing teachers with PD based in HQIM and job embedded coaching to increase job satisfaction and retention rate.*** Project RISE will leverage Teaching Lab's nationally recognized professional development model, coined Head, Heart, and Habits, to help teachers build and sustain teacher-led professional learning communities

focused on continuously improving teacher effectiveness demonstrated by improved academic outcomes for all students.

Teaching Lab integrates curriculum-based professional learning, side-by-side coaching, and culturally-responsive teaching and leadership coaching practices to build capacity. Teacher coaches will apply Teaching Lab's coaching framework (***Appendix F***) and create aligned professional development series to support effective and highly-effective teachers apply research-based leadership and pedagogy aligned with high quality instructional materials to classroom instruction. Through our professional learning series, teachers build their knowledge, skills, and expertise of HQIM and instructional practices by engaging in cycles of coaching, observations, feedback, and analysis to improve teaching and learning and to create a culture of inquiry.

The professional development and coaching sessions offer practical suggestions for ensuring meaningful and inclusive learning opportunities for all students, including those with diverse backgrounds, special education needs, and multilingual learners. Teachers will have the chance to apply their learning in upcoming lessons with real-time coaching support. Teaching Lab's intensive coaching approach involves modeling lessons and providing immediate feedback, which has proven effective in improving teacher practice. Additionally, Teaching Lab provides "micro-PD" sessions of 30 minutes or less to address specific needs or emerging trends identified through observations, meetings, and data analysis.

Effective and highly-effective teachers interested in advancing their careers without having to leave the classroom will have the opportunity to become a "Lead Teacher", or equivalent district title. Lead Teachers provide professional development and coaching to ineffective and developing teachers. The Lead Teacher professional development is designed to provide educators with evidence-based coaching practices to identify teacher and student needs in order to develop effective coaching cycles.

Lead Teachers will learn to make data-driven decisions to shift pedagogical practice by building capacity to evaluate the application of the appropriate instructional and pedagogical strategies, aligned to the objective. Project RISE acknowledges the additional demands additional professional development and coaching places on school-based staff. To acknowledge that additional effort, we propose the following stipends to participating teachers and school leaders. District advisory council members will receive gift cards.

Participant Stipends	Stipend Amount*
School leaders with TSL-funded activities	$5,000
School leader with no-TSL funded activities; attends all school leader trainings	$1,000
Effective/Highly-effective teachers participating in PD	$3,500
Effective/Highly-effective teachers receiving Lead Teacher coaching	$3,500
District Advisory council: excluding students (gift card)	$400
District Advisory council: Students (gift card)	$100

*Estimated average. Exact payments to participants will vary based on what the district can sustain

Table 3: Project RISE Participant Stipends and Amounts

SHARE: ***Networked Improvement Communities provide leaders at all levels of the system, from the classroom to the district, with ongoing access to resources and cross-district collaboration effectively implement and sustain Project RISE interventions.***

Project RISE's NIC is a collaborative environment that prioritizes learning and resource accessibility for teachers and school leaders. It fosters peer feedback and guidance exchange to address common challenges effectively. The utilization of a hub structure facilitates cross-team learning, and TORSH, an education technology organization, plays a crucial role in supporting and streamlining professional learning, mentoring, collaboration, and coaching. Through quarterly virtual convenings, district leaders, the grant management team, and implementation leads come

together to analyze data and make program adjustments. The NIC hub provides professional learning, coaching, and data to support leaders and teachers in addressing sustainability challenges.

ELEVATE: ***Share learning from the field to inform future initiatives and scale the systems and structures to support student learning.*** Project RISE focuses on establishing enabling conditions, sustainable systems, and internal capacity across all levels of the education system. Recognizing the significant influence of teachers on student learning, Project RISE aims to address the challenge of scaling teacher professional development (TPD) effectively, efficiently, and equitably (Wyss and Robinson, 2020).

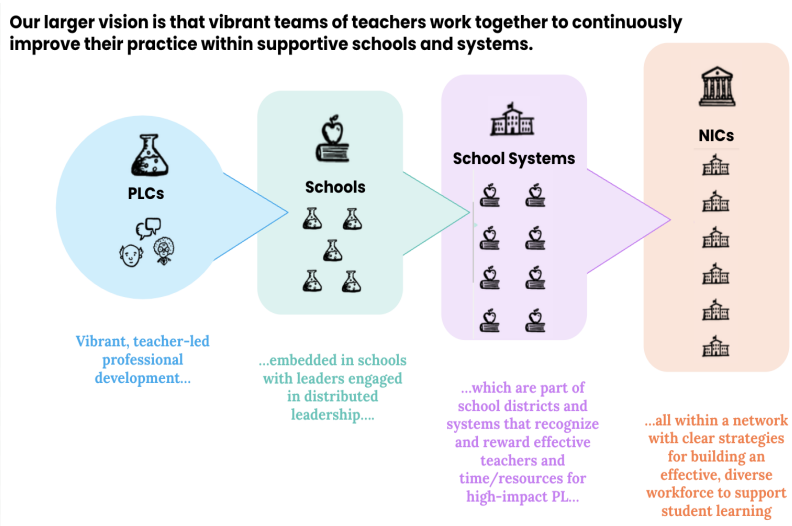

Figure 2: Project RISE Approach to Capacity-Building, Sustainable, and Scalable Support

School leaders provide the first layer of support needed to support Teacher Coaches and sustain professional development and PLCs in their buildings. Project RISE will incorporate Teaching Lab's school leader professional development to support Lead Teachers' participation in cycles of inquiry and to support teachers to implement HQIM and effective teaching practices. The school leader development course will include: 1) Support in developing a coherent instructional vision, grounded in high-quality instruction and curriculum; 2) Coaching Lead Teachers to build their understanding of curriculum-based instruction and how to engage in observation/feedback cycles grounded in HQIM; 3)Analyzing teacher observational data to action-plan; 4) Giving effective

actionable feedback when coaching educators; and 5) Plans to strengthen systems and structures for teacher professional development and leadership.

District leaders and administrators play a key role supporting and sustaining the systems and structures that improve students' outcomes by recruiting and retaining effective and highly effective teachers. Project RISE supports district leaders in implementing the HCMS and PBCS, starting with schools serving third through eighth grade and eventually scaling district-wide. District leaders collaborate with Project RISE experts and utilize the NIC community to share effective strategies and best practices. They work with leader coaches to create an instructional vision and implementation plan spanning three to five years, focusing on recruitment, retention, and student outcomes. Teacher evaluation and value-added scores help identify impactful teachers and provide support for career advancement. Digital NEST, a partner in Project RISE, contributes expertise in diversifying the educator workforce and recruitment practices. Annual convenings, including the National Project RISE convening, facilitate shared learning on topics such as HCMS implementation, equitable PBCS, high-performer retention, and building a diverse educator pipeline.

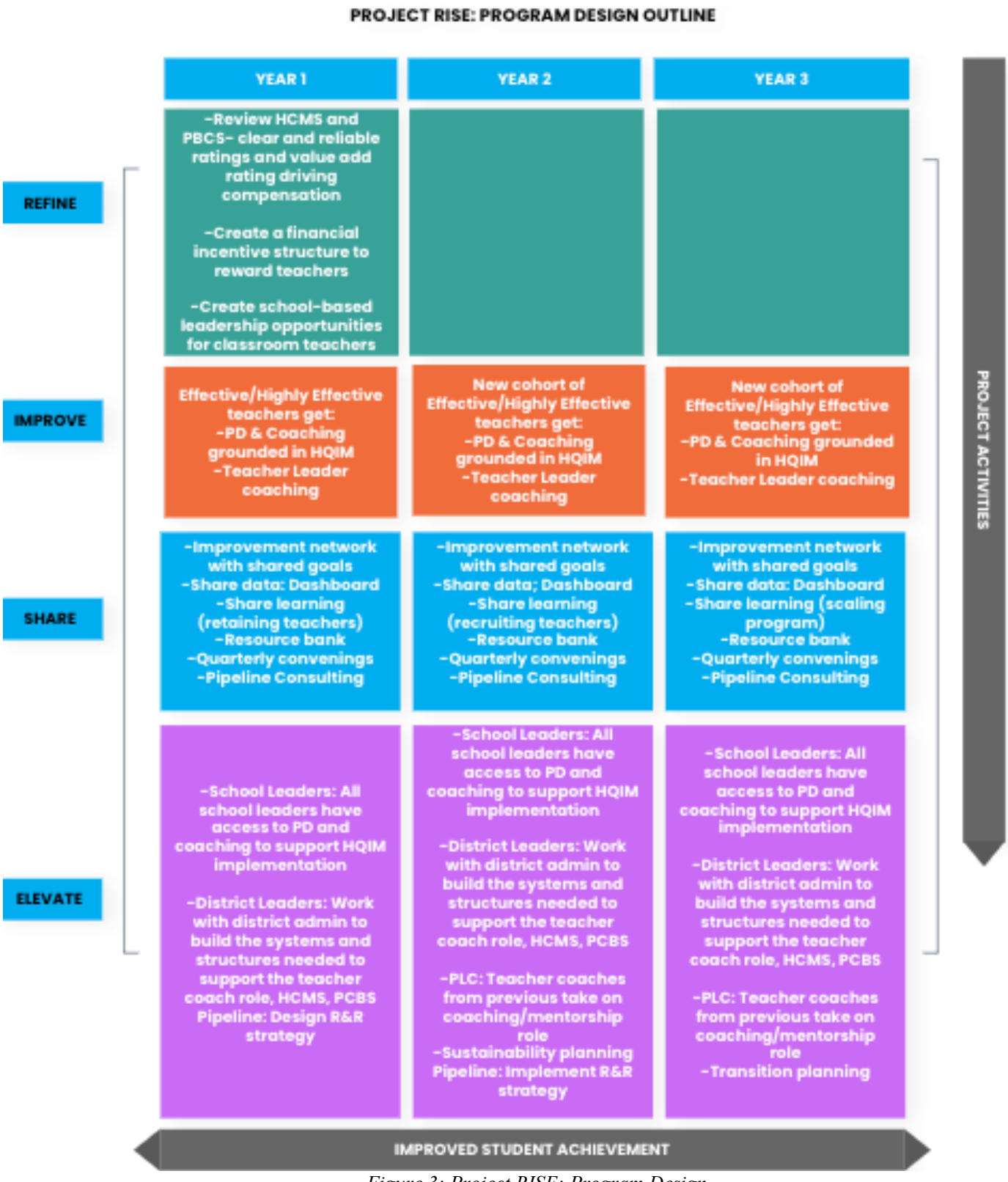

Figure 3: Project RISE: Program Design

QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN (2): *Relevant literature, a plan for project implementation, and methodological tools*

Project RISE's emphasis on improving educator effectiveness is based on relevant literature and research findings that highlight the paramount importance of teachers as the most influential school-related factor for students' academic and non-academic success (Opper, 2019; Doan, 2019). Effective school leadership also plays a critical role in improving student outcomes, as principals have a comparable impact on student achievement as teachers but with a broader scope encompassing the entire school (Grissom et al., 2021). Our project places specific emphasis on supporting teachers and leaders of color, who are underrepresented in public schools despite the increasing population of students of color (NCES, 2021a; NCES, 2020). Research demonstrates that racially diverse school leadership leads to positive school outcomes, including reduced suspension rates and improved equity in the representation of students of color in gifted programs (Green, 2018; Grissom et al., 2017).

REFINE. Research and application have shown that PBCS that include a "value add" score to be among the most accurate measure of teacher effectiveness. "[I]t can complement observational measures, parent feedback, and personal reflections on teaching far better than any available alternative. It can be used to help guide resources to where they are needed most, to identify teachers' strengths and weaknesses, and to put a spotlight on the critical role of teachers in learning." Critics of using value add as a measure of teacher effectiveness claim that it is an imperfect measure and express concern that "value-added scores reported at the level of individual teachers frequently misclassify teachers in ways that are unfair to teachers, e.g., identifying a teacher as ineffective who is in fact average", otherwise known as false negatives. Research from the Brookings Institute demonstrates that the number of false positives and of

false negatives is small and can be adjusted by moving the cut point along the teacher evaluation axis based on the preference for more or less false negatives. **IMPROVE.** Recent research reveals concerning trends in effective educators and their impact on student learning and well-being. Teacher turnover rates are significantly higher in Title I schools compared to non-Title I schools, and schools serving students of color experience even higher turnover rates than majority-white schools. These trends disproportionately affect students with the greatest needs, resulting in negative consequences. High teacher attrition imposes financial burdens on school districts and hampers academic progress for students (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). This includes the integration of career ladders and leadership support structures to enhance career advancement opportunities, particularly for teachers of color who often encounter limited professional support in advancing their careers (Dixon et al., 2019). Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) play a pivotal role in empowering teachers by providing a platform for collaborative learning and fostering autonomy in professional growth. **SHARE.** Project RISE's activities are firmly rooted in evidence and backed by relevant literature. The foundational framework of a Networked Improvement Community (NIC), consisting of diverse school districts, draws upon a well-established model by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching over a decade ago. This model has been successfully implemented in various contexts to facilitate accelerated improvement (McKay, 2017). The effectiveness of a NIC in generating and expanding "change ideas" to enhance teacher effectiveness has been demonstrated in a case study conducted by LeMahieu et al. (2017). This study showcases the success of a NIC in implementing and scaling up these innovative ideas across multiple school systems, supporting Project RISE's NIC solution. Research has established a clear connection between structured opportunities for collaboration and support, and significant improvements in

instructional practices (Ermeling, 2010). Moreover, these collaborative efforts have been shown to positively impact student performance, as demonstrated by studies conducted by Edmonson (2012) and others (2014). A NIC serves as a structured and collaborative network that enables individuals and groups to collaboratively develop, test, and scale improvements, leading to accelerated learning outcomes (McKay, 2017). **ELEVATE.** The project builds on evidence-based practices to enhance support systems for educators. Literature on Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) highlights the benefits of shared decision-making and positive teacher perceptions (Weiner, 2016). Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) contribute to teacher capacity and student outcomes (Stoll et al., 2006). Instructional coaching has a positive impact on instruction and academic achievement (Kraft et al., 2018). Insufficient resources and support contribute to teacher attrition, especially among teachers of color (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Year-round recruitment and retention efforts demonstrate commitment to supporting teachers and fostering their professional commitment.

The selection of methodological tools for this project is closely aligned with its objectives and the specific requirements identified. These chosen methods are informed by the aforementioned research findings and our extensive experience from previous successfully funded projects. For further information, please refer to the subsequent section (*Quality of the Program Design (3) Methods of Evaluation*), where additional details are provided.

***Legend**: PD – Project Director; GM – Grant Manager; DM – Data Manager; LC Leader Coaches; TDD – TSL District Director; CC –Coach Coordinator; DIL– District Implementation Lead; DN – Digital NEST; TORSH -TORSH *– Activity will lead to project sustainability*

Project Activity	Person Responsible	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Establish the project-level RISE Council to meet quarterly	PD	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Hire other project-level positions	PD, GM	x											
Create multi-channel communication campaigns for recruitment of new staff to disseminate information about the project and success to key stakeholders*	TDD, DIL	x				x				x			
Collaborate with each district to create specific metrics for effectiveness	PD, DM	x											
Create a process for collected data needed for the project	DM	x											
Create a training program that focuses on fiscal management and the processes for managing the TSL grant for partner organizations.	GM		x										
Administer baseline project-wide assessment to students and leadership surveys	DM, PD		x										
Each school's PBC metrics approved by RISE Council	PD, DM		x										
Strategic guidance on recruitment/retention with each district's key stakeholders	PD, DN	x	x	x	x	x				x			
Quarterly Project Reports to all schools	PD		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Post and hire Lead Teachers	PD, LC, TDD		x										
Review and refine HCMS to ensure CRSE, clear, measurable, aligned criteria	PD, LC	x	x										
Provide PD, Instructional Leadership, PLC, Coaching Training to all ILT members grounded in HQIM	LC, TDD, DIL		x										
Provide access to the TORSH online platform for identified teachers, lead teachers	TORSH			x									
Provide Coaching Training to all teachers	CC, PD			x									

Project Activity	Person Responsible	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Share data dashboards and learnings	TDD, DIL		x			x				x			
Digital NEST Monthly Recruitment/Retention sessions and working group activities	TDD, PD, DN		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
All school leaders have access to PD and coaching for HQIM implementation	PD, LC		x			x				x			
Begin mini PD and PLCs and peer coaching for all teachers	PD, LC, CC,			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Work with district administration to build systems and structures needed to support coaches, HCMS, PBCS	PD, LC, TDD, DIL			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Host annual convening & training for district & school leaders interested in joining the NIC*	PD, TDD		x				x				x		
Annual Project RISE evaluations will determine if lead teachers retain those roles in upcoming years	ALL						x				x		
Identify conferences that are relevant to the project's focus and objectives, where the activities and preliminary results can be presented.	PD, DM, GM				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Conduct annual step-back meetings to measure fidelity of implementation	ALL		x				x				x		
Gradual Release Model: ILT Train the Trainers*	PD (LC)									x			
Gradual Release Model: PLC*	PD (CC)										x		
Gradual Release Model: Coaching*	PD (CC)											x	
Gradual Release Model: Recruitment and Retention*	PD (TDD)												x
Prepare/submit high-quality, data-rich Annual Performance Report to US DoE	PD, GM, DM			x				x				x	
Create an adaptive Sustainability Model for each partner district*	PD, DM, GM				x				x				x
Annual Board Presentation	PD					x				x			

Table 4: Project RISE Project Implementation Plan and Timeline

QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN (3): *Methods of Evaluation*

The evaluation activities are critical to the success of RISE. Together with American Institutes for Research, we have designed an evaluation that will: (1) provide iterative, actionable performance feedback that empowers the partners to improve the design of the components and the quality of implementation; (2) track progress on the key outcomes from the logic model; and (3) determine the impact of the teacher PD and coaching component definitively, using a randomized controlled trial to meet the standards of the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC). These activities will support not only the partnership but also the field, through dissemination of evaluation findings to a national audience.

The evaluation planning table in Exhibit 1 defines the evaluation questions (EQs), data sources, and frequency of data collections for each of the three foci: performance feedback (EQs 1, 2, and 3), progress on outcomes (EQs 4 and 5), and impact of the teacher PD and coaching (EQs 6, 7, 8 and 9).

Actionable feedback about performance to inform program design and implementation. The first purpose of the evaluation is to provide feedback on performance that the partners can use to guide their efforts. To that end, the evaluation will produce results separately by district, and cohort within district. This disaggregation will allow the partners to respond through efforts focused on the locations and groups that need attention. The planned timing of the data collections will give the partners time to address performance problems between measurement occasions—which are as frequent as quarterly (see Exhibit 1, EQ1, EQ2, and EQ3). The partners will receive findings quarterly in a dashboard format and will present their interpretations at the project's quarterly convenings. This routine will foster sustained collaborative problem solving and social accountability, and increase awareness and support of the project activities.

Evaluation questions	Data sources
Performance Feedback (Project Years 1, 2, and 3)	
EQ1. What is the district's specific plan for implementing the component? (e.g., who participates and when, what are the plans for local adaptations of the component and coordination with existing structures and practices)	Updated district plans (quarterly) Telephone interviews (three times per year) Site visits (each fall)
EQ2. What is the extent of participation in the component? (e.g., teacher attendance, principal engagement, frequency of coaching)	Program component participation data (quarterly)
EQ3. What is the quality of participants' experiences? (e.g., perceived usefulness of the component's support)	Teacher surveys (each fall and spring) Principal surveys (each winter)
Progress toward Achieving Outcomes (Project Years 1, 2, and 3)	
EQ4. What is the retention rate for high-performing teachers?	District employment records (annually) District evaluation records (annually)
EQ5. What is the level of student achievement in math and ELA/reading?	District achievement records (annually) District demographic records (annually)
The Impact of the teacher PD and coaching component (Project Year 2)	
EQ6. To what extent is the teacher PD and coaching component implemented as expected?	Program component participation data Teacher surveys (fall and spring) Teacher interviews (spring) Coach interviews (spring)
EQ7. What is the treatment-control difference in the professional learning experiences received by teachers?	Teacher surveys (fall and spring)
EQ8: What is the impact of the component on teachers' use of HQIM?	Teacher surveys (fall and spring)
EQ9: What is the impact of the component on teachers' instructional self-efficacy?	Teacher surveys (fall and spring)
EQ10: What is the impact of the component on student achievement in math and ELA/reading?	District electronic records (summer, pertaining to achievement from spring and the prior spring)

Table 4: Project RISE Evaluation Questions and Data Sources

Actionable feedback about performance to inform program design and implementation. The first purpose of the evaluation is to provide feedback on performance that the partners can use to guide their efforts. To that end, the evaluation will produce results separately by district, and cohort within district. This disaggregation will allow the partners to respond through efforts focused on the locations and groups that need attention. The planned timing of the data collections will give the partners time to address performance problems between measurement occasions—which are as frequent as quarterly (see Exhibit 1, EQ1, EQ2, and EQ3). The partners will receive findings quarterly in a dashboard format and will present their interpretations at the project's quarterly convenings. This routine will foster sustained collaborative problem solving and social accountability, and increase awareness and support of the project activities.

To make the data actionable, the evaluation instruments will operationalize the overarching EQs for each of the program components separately. For example, the Improve component is intended to engage teachers in specific professional development and coaching activities. For that component, EQ1 requires that we examine the local plans for carrying out the activities with specific individuals, EQ2 requires we determine the participation rates in those activities, and EQ3 calls for gathering teachers' perceptions of the usefulness of those activities. The EQs thus focus the evaluation on findings that will help the partners improve specific components and spur further thought about how to ensure implementation integrity. To develop instruments needed to measure performance for specific components, we will draw on measures used successfully in past evaluations, adapting them with input from the partners to ensure relevance and buy-in. AIR will share teacher and principal survey instruments used in formative and summative evaluations of educator evaluation initiatives, such as the AIR evaluation of teacher and leader evaluation systems (Song et al., 2021; Garet et al., 2017; Wayne et al., 2016), the RAND-AIR evaluation of the Gates Intensive Partnership Sites (Stecher et al., 2018);

and implementation evaluations conducted for the U.S. Department of Education and others (e.g., Wayne et al., 2017).

Objective measures of progress toward achieving outcomes. The second purpose of the evaluation is to assess progress on the outcomes that the TSL activities are intended to affect. The project's theory of action specifies two strategic outcomes: retention among high-performing teachers and student achievement. These outcomes are measured objectively through annual collection and analysis of district administrative data: 1)For retention of the high-performing teachers (EQ4), the TSL activities are intended to encourage retention in the district as a teacher in high-needs schools. We will track that retention rate as well as the rate of retention in the teacher's current school—which is important to principals seeking a stable, effective faculty—and the rate of overall retention in the district. 2)For student achievement (EQ5), we will draw on extant state test scores. These are available across sites at grades 3-8 in ELA/reading and math. To provide perspective on progress on the outcome measures, the reporting will always include data from prior years, as well as the current year. In addition, we will disaggregate results—as described above for the performance measure—to help partners see where there appears to be progress on the outcome measures, or a lack of progress.

In addition to annual feedback on the two primary outcomes from the logic model, we will also track progress using the GPRA Measures, as specified in the NIA and reproduced in Exhibit 2. We will gather these measures from administrative data, and, in the case of GPRA 5 (*The percentage of teachers and School Leaders within the participating district(s) who earned performance-based compensation based on their individual evaluation ratings*), from interviews with principals and central office human resource staff. The Department requires annual reports on the GPRA measures as part of its oversight of the TSL grants programs, and partners may find some of these measures useful as well. A list of the GPRA measures used in our project evaluation can be found in ***Appendix F.***

The Impact of the PD and Coaching on Teacher Use of HQIM and Student Achievement

The third purpose of the evaluation is to examine impact using a design that is feasible and meets WWC standards. There is strong interest among the partners and in the field overall to rigorously test the impact of the teacher PD and coaching aligned to HQIM in districts that have adopted HQIM (Hill and Papay, 2021), as proposed in Exhibit 1 in EQs 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10. To date, there have been no impact studies with this focus.AIR will lead this part of the evaluation, drawing on the expertise of two impact evaluation co-PIs. [redacted] brings a track record of research on the implementation and impact of educator evaluation systems and teacher professional learning, as well policies related to equitable distribution of effective teachers. [redacted] brings deep experience with workforce and equity issues, and quantitative data collection and analysis. (See resumes in ***Appendix F***.)

AIR will examine the impact of the PD and coaching on teacher and student outcomes using a school-level RCT design that complies with latest WWC standards (WWC, 2022). The WWC standards specify the design parameters and analytic methods needed to address potential threats to causal validity (e.g., cluster attrition, composition changes in the clusters due to joiners and leavers). The RCT will occur in Milwaukee Public Schools because of its large number of high-need elementary schools. In these schools, students in grades 3, 4, and 5 take achievement tests in ELA/reading and math every spring. The RCT will focus on teachers of grades 4 and 5, using their students' prior year scores (i.e., grade 3 scores) to adjust for prior year achievement, which minimizes bias and improves statistical precision. AIR's design for the RCT focuses on the impact of the PD and coaching component on teachers in schools participating in the second cohort of the TSL activities. To facilitate the RCT, MPS will limit the first cohort to 15 or fewer schools, leaving about 100 to enroll in the second or third cohorts. For a school to be eligible to enroll in the second or third cohort, the RCT requires that the principal and at least two effective or highly effective teachers volunteer for the component by the end of the 2023-24 school year. At that time, AIR will randomly assign the eligible schools to treatment and control conditions. Schools in the treatment condition will receive the PD and

coaching component starting in the 2024-25 school year (i.e., Project Year 2), and schools in the control condition will wait to receive it until 2025-26 (i.e., Project Year 3).

The use of random assignment allows AIR to rigorously answer EQ8, EQ9, and EQ10. To do so, AIR will gather the teacher and student outcome data depicted in Exhibit 1. The differences in outcomes between the treatment and control conditions as of spring 2025 represent the one-year impact of the program. The teacher outcome measures will be teachers' use of HQIM (using a teacher survey measure adapted from Doan et al., 2022) and teachers' instructional self-efficacy (using the measure developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk, 2000, who report alpha=.90). The primary student outcomes will be achievement in math and ELA/reading, based on the achievement tests already administered in MPS. The WWC considers such tests valid and reliable and robust to student non-response and attrition within clusters.

III. QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Project RISE leverages feedback loops to facilitate the flow of information and data to inform strategic decision-making and adjustments to align the support to the local context and climate. At every level of the system, leaders and leadership teams engage in data-informed decision-making and make recommendations for enhancing implementation and impact. Collaborating with grant management and district implementation teams, these leaders ensure that evidence-based best practices are effectively adapted to their unique context. A district advisory council (DAC) consisting of diverse stakeholders, including community members, families, teachers, students, and school leaders, will provide input and guidance to district leaders on grant-related activities. The district implementation teams (DIT) collaborate closely with district administrators, school leaders, and teachers to ensure equitable implementation of Project RISE within and across districts, aligning with existing infrastructure. The grant management team, comprising senior district officials and administrative staff, meets quarterly to review data and assess program effectiveness. To facilitate and expedite data

sharing, AIR, Project RISE's external evaluator and the TSL data strategy team will leverage the Networked Improvement Community infrastructure. While individual district leaders will have access to their full data, a shared dashboard exists to compare trends across districts and iterate on implementation plans, informed by the DAC and the DIT. ***Appendix F*** outlines the annual reporting cycle.

Project RISE Key Personnel*	
Role	Primary Responsibilities
Project Director (PD) *Fully-Dedicated*	The Project Director manages the project against goals, activities, timeline, and budget and leads annual reporting efforts. They represent Project RISE and Teaching Lab at all U.S. Dept. of Education convenings. They work closely with district leaders to coordinate the execution of the grant activities and provide strategic guidance and thought partnership. The Project Director directly manages the District Implementation Leads
Grant Manager (GM) *Fully-Dedicated*	The grant manager provides operational and administrative oversight of the TSL grant, including risk mitigation and implementing federal compliance controls. They work closely with and support the Project Director to execute the components of Project RISE in alignment with the grant terms and financial obligations. The Grant Manager leads the preparation of all Annual Performance Reports and supports all ad hoc reporting requested by the U.S. Dept. of Education and district partners.
District Implementation Lead *Fully-Dedicated*	The District Implementation Leads each support MPS or the SW consortium (EPLA, OSD1, KCSD) to implement the components of the program alongside district leaders. They provide district leaders with strategic advising and support to execute the project while working within timelines and budgets. The District Implementation Lead manages the client/partnership manager, the instructional designers, the coach coordinator and the TSL District Director.
Leader Coaches *Fully-Dedicated*	Leader coaches provide job-embedded coaching, professional learning and strategic advisory support to school leaders. They build school leader understanding of what excellent curriculum-based instruction looks like and how to engage in observation/feedback cycles grounded in high-quality content. They work with leaders to create plans to strengthen systems and structures for professional development and support implementation plans grounded in HQIM.
Teacher Coaches *Fully Dedicated*	-Teacher coaches design/adapt content and then facilitate professional learning with teachers. They engage in observation and feedback cycles with teachers. They build the internal capacity of the Lead Teachers to sustain professional development and coaching.

TSL/District Director *Fully Dedicated*	The TSL District Directors provide cross-functional support to implement recruitment and retention strategies at the district level. They provide onboarding training to district and school-based staff directly engaging in TSL-funded activities and provide guidance on communications and marketing strategies for districts and schools to build diverse pipelines.
Data Manager (DM) *Fully Dedicated*	TSL District Data Managers build the infrastructure and systems to collect and analyze data to measure impact and support district-level reporting needs. They coordinate activities with the external evaluator and Teaching Lab Learning & Research team to make sure the district reporting timeline aligns to the TSL grant. The District Data Manager collects and reports on data and supports districts in utilizing data dashboards to make data-driven decisions

*Table 5: Project RISE Key Personnel; *Additional members of the project support team are described in the Appendix F*

Project RISE personnel will adhere to the project implementation plan, outlined in the previous *Quality of the Project Design* (2) section, which clearly defines the project activities, responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES

Each component that Teaching Lab is proposing to scale and strengthen through Project RISE requires a strong foundation of experience, capacity, and commitment from our organization and our district and organizational partners. Our district partners are committed, and Teaching Lab and our organizational partners have the institutional knowledge, capacity, and track record of success supporting change management and ensuring the sustainability of large-scale programs. The Project Director, [redacted] has led large-scale initiatives including several federally funded multi-state, multi- district consortia, and state-level large-scale partnerships in Texas, Tennessee, Louisiana, and Ohio. (***Appendix B***).

ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES: *(1) Likelihood Project will Result in System Change*

Project RISE includes activities at every level of the education system–network, district, school, and classroom. **Student Achievement.** The Project RISE logic model (***Appendix A***) strategically presents evidence-based activities and interventions designed to improve student achievement. Teaching

Lab's professional development has yielded data that indicates this project will result in system change and data that positively impact students' classroom experiences and mindsets, across a range of measures. Preliminary analyses of our work with the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) indicate that Teaching Lab's professional development is shifting student outcomes with effect sizes of around ~0.5 SD. In this partnership teachers were randomly assigned to participate in our professional development. Students whose teachers participated in Teaching Lab's professional development reported that their teachers engaged in CRSE practices more than those who had not. The study also found that teachers who participated challenged students with rigorous academic content (roughly 0.4 SD) and built strong interpersonal relationships with students (roughly 0.3 SD). Students whose teachers participated in the professional development in the fall reported having significantly higher self-efficacy in mathematics than students in control classroom. We interpret this as evidence of the success of Teaching Lab's professional development program and therefore a strong indicator that providing this same high-quality professional development can likely result in system change.

Recruitment and Retention. To support the recruitment and retention of teachers of color we are partnering with Digital NEST, an organization with a proven track record of implementing best practices and strategies to diversifying the educator pipeline. **Human Capital Management Systems.** Project RISE specifically incorporates research and best practices for improving upon HCMSs nationally from the findings presented in "The Irreplaceables" (2012), teacher evaluation systems in numerous districts commonly assign high ratings such as "good" or "great" to the majority of teachers. As a result, these systems offer limited insights into individual teachers' effectiveness in the classroom, making it challenging to identify underperforming teachers from the outset. (Jacob et al., 2012).

Professional Learning Communities and Coaching. Teaching Lab provided in in a state-wide coaching across the state of Mississippi during the 2021-2022 school year. The impact of direct-to-teacher, job-embedded coaching on student performance was evident on the Mississippi Academic

Assessment Program (MAAP) assessment data. Across the 26 schools supported by Teaching Lab coaches, 86 percent of teachers demonstrated growth through student outcomes when compared to 2020-2021 MAAP results. Evidence indicates our intensive and targeted coaching model improved practice and increased student engagement. Consequently, these instructional improvements contributed to the impressive performance on the 2021-2022 MAAP assessment. **School Leader Development and Support.** In the same state-wide coaching engagement across Mississippi, Teaching Lab leader coaches provided school leader professional development and coaching. District administrators engaged in administrator trainings using protocols that are intended to support administrators in developing the enabling conditions to sustain the significant improvement in math instruction due to the direct-to-teacher coaching services provided by Teaching Lab.

The logic model for Project RISE is organized around capacity areas which are critical for transitioning impactful aspects of the project into systemic improvements during and beyond the life of this grant. The project includes frequent reporting cycles and project monitoring and a third-party external evaluation which will inform improvements allowing the project team to refine and adjust as needed and in real-time. The specific internal capacity created through the RISE initiative that will be sustained when the grant ends are: increased student achievement, a more diverse workforce, an effective HCMS and PBCS, structures for professional learning communities at the school and district level, data tools and dashboards, and multi-year plan for sustaining improvement.

ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES: ***(2) Building Local Capacity to Address Target Population***

Project RISE's evaluation will yield indicators about personnel implementation tracking that will have lasting impacts on the district and provide Teaching Lab with data to improve the way we support with districts. The specific systems that districts will continue to implement that will allow them to continue to support high needs students are: HCMS and PBCS to inform human capital decisions, a system for sustaining professional development and job-embedded coaching, diverse pipelines, and

TORSH online coaching platform to support leaders and network teams. As part of Project RISE, Teaching Lab will be disseminating learnings and key- takeaways through publications, blogs and social media to ensure our learnings can be incorporated into districts across the country.

The project team will employ a Gradual Release Model (GRM) with partner schools and districts to shore up capacity at the local level and guarantee effective knowledge transfer during the second and third years of the grant project (Fisher & Frey, 2013). The GRM is structured to develop and strengthen the local capacity required to ensure the long-term sustainability of the project and its positive impact on high-need students. Throughout Years 1-3, Project RISE will focus on undergoing a gradual evolution, resulting in a transfer of responsibility and ownership of activities to the participating districts. In the first two years, Project RISE's project-level support team will provide training and support to initiate the interventions. By Year 3, the support responsibility will be shared between the Project RISE project-level support team and the partner districts, with the support team serving as quality-control for the project. The primary objective throughout Years 1-3 is to establish a self-sustaining system of support and growth that will endure beyond the grant period.

The target population for Project RISE is largely students of color from high-need schools where 90 to 100 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced lunch programs. Research has shown that students of color benefit from excellent teaching and they benefit from teachers who look like them (The Education Trust, 2017). The recruitment and retention strategies prioritize recruitment of exceptional teachers but place particular emphasis on promoting diversity among teachers. To ensure transparency and accountability, Project RISE will diligently monitor and track teacher assignments based on race and ethnicity, as well as report on teacher assignments in relation to their prior student performance. We have thoughtfully selected the participating districts for this consortium because of their similar needs and similar problems of practice. Given this, there is a high potential for scalability and replicability to share our key learnings with other small rural and large urban school districts across the country.

ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES: ***(3) Resources to Operate Beyond Length of Grant***

Ensuring that the partner districts included in RISE have the ability to sustain and scale this work post- grant was a key consideration in the selection process. With over 50 letters of intent and support ***(Appendix C),*** there is clear evidence of strong engagement and buy-in from key stakeholders. All participating LEAs have a clear plan and necessary funding to keep all RISE systems in place beyond the life of this grant, as well as the flexibility to modify aspects of the project based on local context in the development phase. Our experience in other districts demonstrates that this work will be sustained beyond the grant by working with districts on the balance between fidelity of implementation and being responsive to partners to make the work their own. Teaching Lab will ensure that by the end of the grant period, there are systematic structures to create guidance around implementation of HCMS, teacher/school leader evaluation/incentives, recruitment and retention, PD, as well as installing a cross-functional council for customization of project implementation in specific district/school contexts. Additionally, the budget has been thoughtfully crafted for partner districts to take on increasing responsibility for funding incentives and positions in support of the project to ensure sustainability.

Sustainability, scalability, and replicability are embedded within the foundation of Project RISE. The logic model ***(Appendix A)*** clearly delineates sustainability as a priority of our work. Project RISE intentionally creates structures and resources to continue this work beyond the life of this grant and built in guidance for our district partners to continue this work even after our engagement with this project ends. The sustainability plan for Project RISE is organized around the key capacity areas critical to the project including the human, material, organizational, and structural capacity needed for this work to continue. Additionally, we will commit to crafting an adaptive sustainability plan with each of our partners to ensure their success beyond the life of this TSL grant.

The two primary strategies to support the Project RISE consortium districts with ensuring that they are financially equipped to continue with this work beyond the length of the grant are centered around sustaining performance-based compensation and incentives through public funds and through sustaining and expanding the NIC. As demonstrated in our letters of intent and letters of support the Project RISE consortium will meet the required 50% match for this project which is indicative of a significant investment and commitment of resources to the activities, objectives, and goals of this project. The Project Director and the project-level team will work closely with each participating school in our consortium to determine which funds (e.g. Title I and Title II, part A) can be utilized to continue this important work. Project RISE schools will use a combination of public funding in order to maintain the PBC beyond the life of the TSL grant.

Our objective is to provide Project RISE schools with both asynchronous and synchronous supports, enabling educators to refine their teaching practices and effectively meet the needs of their students. Additionally, we aim to equip them with a comprehensive library of resources to sustain this progress. Throughout the three-year duration of the grant, Project RISE will prioritize the development of "Sustainability Resources" which other districts can make use of to replicate the structures and activities in this project in their own contexts. These essential resources and supports will empower schools to continue implementing the project activities even after the grant period concludes. This will include virtual trainings on key project components, accessible through the TORSH platform. The resources will also include exemplar materials such as candidate interviews, PLC meetings, and instructional coaching. Furthermore, within the initial three years, the Project RISE (NIC) will curate a video library showcasing effective practices across various grade levels and subject areas, supplemented with relevant materials. Based on our past experience in sustaining large-scale projects, two discernible trends have emerged that we can apply to Project RISE. First, any component perceived as extraneous will not maintain sustainability beyond the grant period. Second, partner districts must have the

autonomy to participate in the design phase and the flexibility to adapt specific aspects of the project to align with their local contexts during the development phase. Leveraging our experience managing systems change, we have devised a process to strike a balance between ensuring fidelity of implementation and adapting to local needs. Teaching Lab has an experienced project team to lead this work in collaboration with a cadre of coaches, facilitators, and contractors so that our district partners will have no shortage of support. Project RISE will collaborate through the NIC to establish the standardized structures outlined in this proposal, providing guidance on the implementation of HCMS, teacher and school leader evaluation, teacher recruitment and retention, professional development and support, and PBCS. The budget has been deliberately crafted to gradually shift responsibility to the partner districts, ensuring future sustainability by allocating funds for positions. The recurring costs are minimal, and all participating partner districts have devised plans and secured necessary funding to sustain all Project RISE systems beyond the grant period.

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[i] Voices from the Classroom: *Leveraging the Perspective of Teachers of Color and Policy Opportunities to Recruit and Retain BIPOC Teachers*. Educators for Excellence and The Education Trust. 2022. Page 1. https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Voices-Deep-Dive-BIPOC.pdf Accessed 06/21/23

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