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INTRODUCTION

With this proposal, the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College (MLFTC) at Arizona State University (ASU) seeks funds to support the redesign the Human Capital Management Systems (HCMSs) and related Performance-Based Compensation Systems (PBCSs) in the Mesa Unified School District (Mesa Public Schools; MPS), in alignment with **Absolute Priorities 1 and 2** of the Teacher and School Leader Incentive Program. With more than 80 schools and serving almost 58,000 students, MPS is Arizona’s largest public school district, and includes a racially, ethnically, and economically diverse student body. MPS is also one of MLFTC’s cornerstone district partners with a relationship dating more than 25 years and is often the partner with whom the college engages in path-breaking research and innovation.

This project, Building Human Capital Management Systems to Support the Next Education Workforce in Mesa Public Schools (NEW@MPS), recognizes that the current configurations of the education workforce are increasingly unsustainable and unattractive. Recently, MLFTC and MPS co-designed Next Education Workforce (NEW) models to introduce teams of educators with distributed expertise around groups of students. This approach delivers on a broader set of student outcomes captured in MPS’s *Portrait of a Graduate (PoG)* and creates new pathways into and through the profession (Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College (MLFTC), 2021; Mesa Public Schools (MPS), 2021). MPS has committed to transforming 50% of its schools to NEW models in the next several years and recognizes the important intersection between these team-based models and their larger HCMS strategy. As schools have started to transition to team-based models, it has become clear that the district’s current HCMS is out of sync with their strategic commitments to NEW, the MPS PoG, and, more broadly, equity.

This project, NEW@MPS, focuses on 17 High-Need Schools that are early in the work of building NEW team-based models. NEW@MPS has two overarching objectives: (1) Redesign existing HCMS and PBCS to be more data driven and aligned with the district's strategic initiatives around NEW and PoG; and (2) increase the satisfaction, effectiveness, and diversity of MPS's educator workforce. To meet these objectives, project partners will collaboratively implement twelve research-based strategies that fall into four areas: (1) Recruitment and hiring; (2) Creating educator pathways and new roles; (3) Improving educator effectiveness; and (4) Incentivizing effective educators and teams. Together, these areas represent the major aspirational components of MPS's HCMS.

The proposed project meets **Absolute Priorities 1 and 2** for this competition in that it will involve fundamental improvements to the school district's HCMS and PBCS, with proposed activities focused on a set of majority High-Need Schools. Additionally, the project supports both **Competitive Preference Priorities** in that it (1) provides educators with opportunities for personalized, professional growth, and (2) provides concrete strategies to diversify the educator workforce while equipping educators with skills to work with diverse learners and colleagues.

ASU will serve as lead applicant due to the institution's long history of successfully managing large federal grants and our capacity to focus on preparing this application while the district launched the 2021-2022 school year amidst the uncertainty associated with the surging Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus. A copy of Arizona Governor Doug Ducey's letter designating the university as "a state agency authorized to participate" in statewide educational improvement projects can be found in Appendix C. As an active and committed partner, MPS has collaborated closely in crafting this proposal and planning its execution.

SECTION I: NEED FOR THE PROJECT

Specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities to be addressed. MPS currently enrolls 57,876 children in K-12 schools, according to the most recent data from the Arizona Department of Education (ADE, 2021). The district primarily serves the city of Mesa—an area of approximately 189 square miles—and parts of each adjacent city (Apache Junction, Chandler, Gilbert, Tempe) and tribal land (Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community). MPS’s population of enrolled students is racially and economically diverse; 64 (83.1%) of all MPS schools are designated as Title I schoolwide eligible. There are currently 31 schools in the district (40.3%), with more than half of enrolled students eligible for the free or reduced lunch program; 17 of these 31 (55%) will participate in the NEW@MPS project.

Districtwide eligibility for free or reduced lunch is 44%, and the average for NEW@MPS participating schools is significantly higher (54%¹). Census data indicates that 16.3% of district families with children under age 18 are living in poverty, compared to 13.3% nationally.

To effectively serve students, families, and schools, MPS requires a robust, qualified, diverse, and talented workforce of teachers and school leaders. Like many districts across the state and nation, however, MPS has struggled in this area. Statewide, Arizona’s schools are losing more teachers each year than state universities are graduating, and a 2017 report from ASU’s Morrison Institute for Public Policy reveals that 42% of teachers hired in 2013 left the profession within three years (Hunting 2017). Within the existing workforce, over one-third of

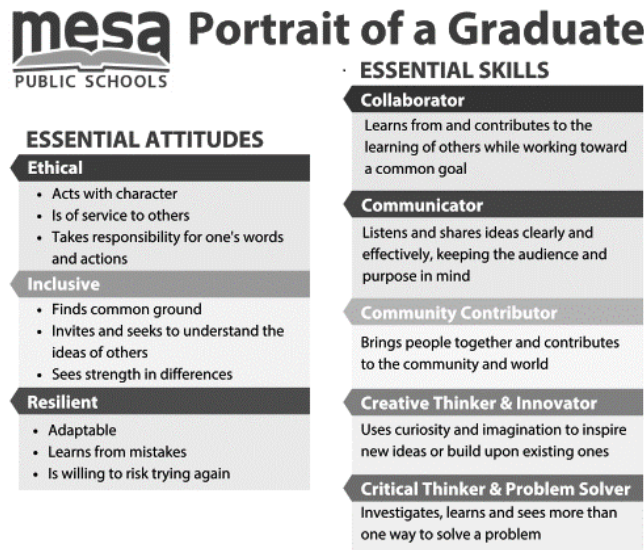
¹ Calculated using enrollment data from ADE, which excludes Riverview High School, an alternative high school that accepts students referred from geographically assigned schools. It does not have a separate reporting structure for enrollment purposes.

Arizona teachers have four years of classroom experience or fewer, and teacher pay is among the lowest in the nation (Hunting 2017). In Mesa, resignations and retirements increased in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and district leadership has reported continued shortages for full-time and substitute teachers (certified staff), as well as paraprofessionals and aides (classified staff), again amidst the pandemic (Barry, 2020; Wing, 2021). The district reported over 170 certified position vacancies and approximately 600 classified position vacancies, including almost 300 paraprofessional vacancies, as of July 25, 2021—one week prior to the start of classes.

To combat these human capital challenges MPS has identified two core gaps in its infrastructure and systems: 1) a misalignment between human resource management systems and district strategic initiatives, and 2) a lack of structure, capacity, and systems to make strategic and data-based human resource decisions. The current MPS HCMS cannot effectively support the diverse learners in district schools given these gaps.

Over the last 5 years, MPS and its governing board embarked on a journey to align teaching and learning with students' changing needs. In 2017, the district launched the *MPS Promise* to promote equity and learning for all students, ensuring that “every student is known by name, served by strength and need, and graduates ready for college, career, and community.” This promise grew into the Mesa PoG that details the essential attitudes and critical skills that a successful student should have upon graduation (*Figure 1*; MPS, 2021).

Figure 1. Mesa Public Schools’ Portrait of a Graduate (PoG) Model.



The existing one-teacher, one-classroom model proved incongruous with the commitments embedded in PoG. Traditional models favored teacher-centered practices, siloed content, and unsustainable workloads for educators. Recognizing these challenges, MPS and MLFTC began to co-design Next Education Workforce (NEW) models aimed at upending the ineffective and inefficient approach to traditional school models and staffing practices. The NEW models:

1. Provide all students with deeper and personalized learning by building teams of educators with distributed experience, and
2. Empower educators by developing new opportunities for role-based specialization and advancement.

NEW is based on a conviction that districts like MPS do not lack a supply of qualified and passionate individuals ready to dedicate their careers to teaching; their challenge is with workforce design (Thompson, 2020). The current system is unsustainable as teachers are asked to be all things to all people, at all times, and for inadequate compensation. Daily demands are

relentless and unchanging, and too often, passionate early career teachers leave their positions before their opportunity to thrive. Low-income communities and communities serving predominantly minority or at-risk children experience the most dramatic shortages of qualified teachers and thus students perennially lack access to deeper and personalized learning.

By reallocating responsibilities sustainably across teams of educators with distributed expertise, NEW models take the enormous weight typically placed on an individual teacher's shoulders and provide meaningful opportunities for personalized professional learning, with opportunities for advancement that don't necessarily require leaving the classroom. Schools that are ready to transition to NEW models progress through four stages of transformation: Exploring, Launching, Expanding, Sustaining (see *Figure 2*).

Figure 2. NEW stages of school transformation.



The current HCMS lacks the mechanisms and systems to support strategic district initiatives including the PoG, NEW team-based learning environments, and role-based opportunities for educators. For example, current teacher evaluation processes are solely focused on the individual teacher with some components connected to student academic performance. Skills and dispositions aligned to the PoG are missing from the teacher evaluation process. Additionally, these evaluation tools neglect to consider the team of educators supporting student

learning. A HCMS redesign as described in the NEW@MPS proposal will allow broad changes away from systems and structures that support teacher-centered practices to those that support learner-centered approaches delivered by teams of educators with distributed expertise.

The second gap that MPS has identified is related to the lack of infrastructure, capacity, and policies to make strategic data-driven decisions in the HCMS. This challenge is further amplified when separate systems that do not share data are used within the hiring process (e.g., applicant hiring, staff demographics, evaluation). Currently, MPS's hiring practices involve a central hiring pool. Principals must sift through and review every applicant, rather than receiving lists of potential candidates who may prove to be a good fit for the particular school and position. Furthermore, current policies demand that principals interview *every* current MPS educator who applies for a position at a particular school—a time-intensive task that is not a strategic use of leaders' time. A core component of the NEW@MPS project includes an assessment of the current system, and as described below, a comprehensive effort to build better HCMS data systems, create expertise-driven hiring practices, and leverage MPS-recognized micro-credentials and specializations to dramatically improve the efficacy of current hiring practices.

Integrating with or building on similar efforts to improve relevant outcomes.

Multiple factors influence the teacher shortage in Arizona. Primarily, The Morrison Institute report suggests: subpar professional pay; increasing workloads; a lack of institutional and peer support; and low morale that can affect young teachers' passion for the profession (Hunting 2017). Despite many efforts over the years to influence these factors, the problem persists.

In 2000, Arizona voters agreed to increase education funding by passing *Proposition 301*. In 2018, with bipartisan support, the state legislature renewed this funding source through 2041. As a result, nearly 23% of \$640 million in annual tax-based revenue is specifically earmarked for

teacher performance pay (Senate Bill 1390, 2018). In the MPS context, which mirrors trends across the state, between 94% and 98% of teachers qualify for the full amount of performance pay under the Prop. 301 funded PBCS. Given that there is wide variation in student achievement, one can only assume that the system, as currently designed, is not an accurate measure of educator effectiveness. In essence, these monies are helping to correct for Arizona having the 46th lowest average educator salary in the nation (National Education Association, 2021).

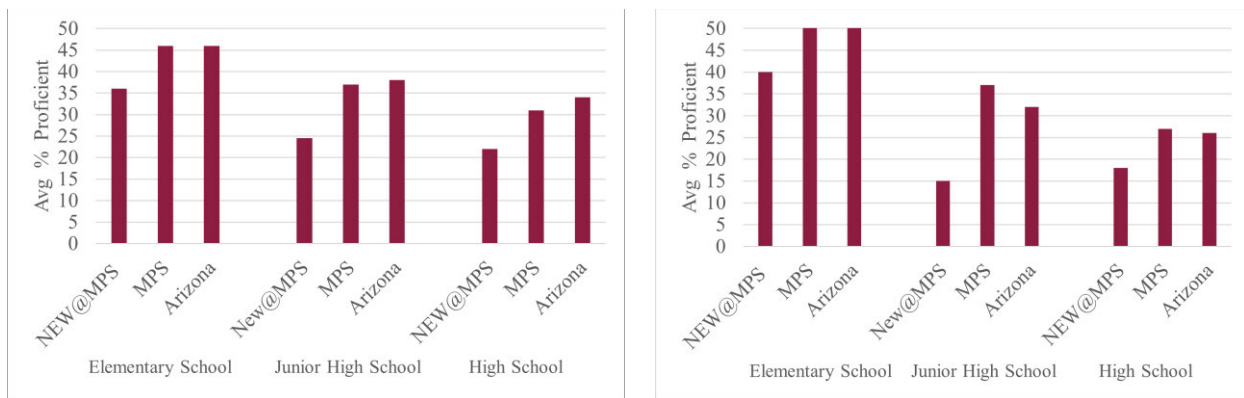
Any changes to Mesa's PBCS will need to align to statute. SB 1390 includes important requirements for any changes to the PBCS, including: (1) approval by at least 70% of the educators eligible to participate in the system; (2) a need to provide aligned professional development; and (3) an appeals process for those who have been denied. It will be possible to modify the existing evaluation and PBCS to better align with MPS's strategic initiatives of PoG and NEW; however, if that adjustment yields markedly fewer educators receiving performance pay, the decision will prove politically challenging and could actually increase the number of teacher vacancies in MPS. For that reason, the proposed improvements to the individual system change the focus of what counts, but likely will not immediately shift the number of educators who qualify for the incentives. This will *not* be the case for the additional team-based incentive system that will sit on top of the individual system. Here, not only will there be better alignment between the MPS's strategic initiatives, but because this is *additional* funding, it will be designed so that it is also a stronger signal of student outcomes. With time, it may be possible to leverage state PCBS funds in a different, and even more effective, way. This project begins that work.

Comprehensive efforts to improve teaching and learning for student achievement.

The MPS PoG is the North Star for teaching and learning and includes a broad definition of student learning that goes beyond academic achievement to the skills and dispositions students

need for success in career and life. NEW@MPS will target schools that are building NEW models, have more than 50% of their students qualifying for free and reduced lunch, and are committed to improving outcomes for all students. As seen in *Figure 3*, NEW@MPS elementary, junior high, and high schools are between 15-20% lower in proficiency on Arizona state tests than their peers in other MPS schools and across the state, in both ELA and mathematics. In particular, the largest gap exists in the NEW@MPS middle schools, where less than half of the percentage of students are proficient in math as compared to other MPS junior high schools. Without intervention, this gap will amplify as these students transition to a large comprehensive high school, as seen by the lack of growth in math proficiency in high school. The NEW@MPS project will focus on improving educator effectiveness through personalized professional learning for educators and support for educator teams, which will translate to improvements in student academic achievement.

Figure 3. Students at or above AZ proficiency levels in ELA (left panel) and math (right panel).



Additional gaps exist in NEW@MPS schools related to the proportion of novice and veteran teachers. District data indicates that 10 of the 17 NEW@MPS schools have a greater percentage of teachers with 0-3 years of experience compared to the MPS district average, with four schools having between 17% and 24% more novice teachers. NEW@MPS schools also

have distinct differences in the percentage of teachers with more than 10 years of experience. 12 of 17 NEW@MPS schools have fewer veteran teachers than the district average.

In a one-teacher-one-classroom model, these experience levels can negatively impact students' access to deeper and personalized learning for students. In contrast, NEW team-based models allow teachers to distribute their expertise such that a school leader can build a team with a combination of experienced teachers and novice teachers. NEW@MPS proposes additional solutions to bridge the experience gap through team-based induction of novice teachers and targeted professional learning where teachers need it most.

Addressing the needs of the target population. Community demographics have shifted dramatically within MPS over the last 20 years. Free and reduced lunch program participation has increased from around 30% to greater than 50% in some schools. NEW@MPS project schools like Westwood High School have also seen a 40 point increase in enrollment of Hispanic students. Rhodes Junior High School has experienced a 300% increase in Hispanic students over the last 20 years. Unfortunately, these evolving demographics are not reflected in teacher staffing; the racial composition of the teaching workforce in NEW@MPS schools is 73% white compared to only 36% white in the corresponding student population.

Table 1 includes the list of 17 NEW@MPS schools: 13 elementary, 2 junior high schools and 2 high schools. Each school meets the high-need criteria (Absolute Priority 2) with at least half of its enrollment from families qualifying for the free or reduced lunch program. In 10 of the 17 schools, more 70% of the families meet this qualification. The subset of NEW@MPS schools also report special education as a high-need subject for hiring certified and paraprofessional educators. Additionally, all four NEW@MPS secondary schools report educator shortages math and science.

Table 1. School eligibility by free and reduced lunch eligibility and high-need subject areas.

School	Type	Enrollment	FRPL Eligibility	High-Need Subject(s)
Adams	Elementary	682	80%	SPED
Brinton	Elementary	428	55%	SPED
Irving	Elementary	494	58%	SPED
Jefferson	Elementary	472	81%	SPED
Redbird	Elementary	430	77%	SPED
Salk	Elementary	542	72%	SPED
Sirrine	Elementary	317	55%	SPED
Sousa	Elementary	416	55%	SPED
Stevenson	Elementary	561	78%	SPED
Taft	Elementary	503	74%	SPED
Washington	Elementary	434	55%	SPED
Whitman	Elementary	626	83%	SPED
Whittier	Elementary	453	74%	SPED
Rhodes	Junior High	816	77%	SPED, Math, Science
Smith	Junior High	852	60%	SPED, Math, Science
Riverview	High	120	82%	SPED, Math, Science
Westwood	High	3347	69%	SPED, Math, Science
MPS Overall	All	57,876	54%	

NEW@MPS is founded in the conviction that deeper and personalized learning is for *all* learners and that redesigning the HCMS with the appropriate structure, systems, and support for team-based models can bridge disparity gaps in academic achievement and broader outcomes for MPS students. As such, partners to this project propose to diversify the educator workforce and improve educator effectiveness.

SECTION II: PROJECT DESIGN & RATIONALE

Project rationale. NEW@MPS has two overarching objectives: (1) Redesign existing HCMS and PBCS to be more data driven and align with the district’s strategic initiatives around PoG and NEW; and (2) increase the satisfaction, effectiveness, and diversity of MPS’s educator workforce. To meet these objectives, MLFTC and MPS will collaboratively implement 12 research-based strategies that are associated with four components of the NEW@MPS program: (1) Recruitment and hiring; (2) Creating educator pathways and new roles; (3) Improving educator effectiveness; and (4) Incentivizing effective educators and teams.

Any of these changes in isolation would likely improve outcomes for students and/or educators. When made together as part of a systems-level improvement of the HCMS, we expect to see durable change that leads to improved outcomes beyond those associated with any of the constituent parts. The logic model in Appendix A depicts how each of the proposed changes will work together, and more information on each individual outcome can be found in Appendix F.

Review of literature, implementation, and methodology. Below, we describe 12 strategies comprising a coherent and interrelated set of actions that will lead to meeting the overarching objectives of NEW@MPS, with relevant supporting literature interwoven.

Component 1: Recruitment and hiring. The first component of NEW@MPS focuses on dramatically improving recruitment and hiring systems and processes at MPS. There is

growing evidence that attention to the hiring process in education is an important feature of improving productivity (Boyd et al., 2013; Engel & Jacob, 2011; Jackson, 2013). Research shows that students of teachers hired after the school year begins have significantly lower student achievement outcomes in reading and mathematics than their peers of newly hired teachers who started teaching on day one (Papay & Kraft, 2016). Additionally, late hire teachers are more commonly staffed in lower socioeconomic and lower performing schools and leave at higher rates than their on-time hired counterparts (Papay & Kraft, 2016). The education sector, however, has paid relatively little attention to the hiring process (Jacob, 2007). This can be attributed to the lack of data systems, which may impact efforts to improve educator preparation programs, teacher effectiveness, and student learning (Data Quality Campaign, 2017). Novel data systems could allow districts to meaningfully rethink their hiring practices. The first strategy, *(S1) Build and implement a strategic recruitment plan and HR data systems*, specifically addresses these insights from the research and the vision of MPS's Assistant Superintendent of HR.

Figure 4. Bersin by Deloitte's Human Resources Maturity Model (2014).



MPS seeks to enhance their HR strategy and data systems to reliably improve outcomes for students and educators. Currently, MPS self-identifies as a Level 1, Compliance-Driven HR Services unit, on Bersin by Deloitte's *Human Resources Maturity Model* (see *Figure 4*).

Through this project, MPS endeavors to become a Level 3, Strategic HR Department that can reliably serve NEW@MPS schools and the larger district. At minimum, this will entail: (a) a needs assessment and root cause analyses around all HR systems and policies; (b) better integration of the range of data systems; (c) new data fields, queries, and reports that better align with larger district goals and strategies, (d) setting and benchmarking a set of ambitious, HR-specific goals, and (e) building feedback loops to continuously improve systems and processes.

To reach Level 3 in only three years, MPS must dramatically increase the capacity of their recruitment and retention team in the short-term. Accordingly, this grant supports the addition of a director-level employee, two recruitment and retention specialists, and an HR data analyst. Working closely with the Assistant Superintendent, this team will help set HR strategy and build the systems associated with every other strategy discussed in this proposal.

The second strategy, (S2) *Expertise-driven recruitment and hiring practices*, both addresses inefficiencies in current HR practices and supports building teams of educators with particular areas of expertise. MPS currently recruits and hires teachers based primarily on whether they meet the basic certification requirements. Current systems do not allow educator teams to signal essential areas of expertise that they might need, nor can candidates specify their own areas of strength, and it is therefore difficult to match the most-qualified candidates with particular schools and teams. Improvements along these lines are imperative in the context of NEW@MPS schools that rely on educator teams with distributed expertise.

To design expertise-driven recruitment and hiring practices will require several changes to current systems. First, educators on the teams looking to hire a new teacher will need to be more involved in the hiring process and will need training and support to identify the key expertise that they may need in a new position. That information, along with input from the principal, must be built into the district recruitment system. Similarly, applicants should be able to list their areas of expertise and, ideally, the recruitment system would suggest strong matches between specific candidates and open positions. Finalist interviews should also be designed to discern candidates' expertise in the areas identified by the team. As data for areas of key expertise are aggregated, team and school trends can be identified and shared with local educator preparation programs interested in preparing candidates better aligned with MPS needs.

Implementing the third strategy, *(S3) Paid residents in team-based models*, involves three sets of actions. First, MLFTC and MPS's Recruitment and Retention team must work together to strategically place MLFTC residents in NEW@MPS schools. Student teaching placement has proven to be highly predictive of where a teacher finds their first teaching placement—much more so than the educator preparation program they attend or their hometown (Kreig et al., 2016). Nearly 40% of teacher candidates found jobs in the same district that they student taught in, and even after 5 years, teacher residences yield above-average teacher retention (Goldhaber et al., 2014; Guha et al., 2016). Thus, student teaching placement in the context of a residency program is a powerful mechanism for teacher recruitment for districts. As a teacher resident, working as a member of a team differs fundamentally from being placed in the classroom with a single mentor teacher. Based on data collected in another Arizona district, researchers found that school administrators regarded residents from team-based models “as more prepared for first-year teaching positions than teacher candidates who had not participated in the [team-based]

pilot” (Thompson, 2020). Currently, MLFTC residents are placed in MPS primarily out of convenience and precedent, not to help achieve a larger strategy or objective. Prioritizing the placement of MLFTC residents in NEW@MPS schools will help to ensure that they get the benefits of team-based pre-service experiences, increase the likelihood that they ultimately teach in that school, and because MLFTC residents are more racially diverse than the current MPS workforce, also help to increase educator diversity in program schools.

Second, MPS must design a recruitment system that considers an applicant’s status as a former MLFTC resident, which will help yield more MLFTC graduates as full-time, first year teachers. The vast inequities that plague the hiring process—especially the hiring of Black and Hispanic teachers—can be mitigated by posting jobs earlier as evidenced by Boston Public Schools’ Human Capital Initiative. When job postings were listed sooner, nearly 40% of teachers hired before August were Black or Hispanic compared to 27% made in August in Boston Public Schools (Boston Municipal Research Bureau, 2016). As part of the NEW@MPS residency strategy, the district will provide early contracts to residents and prioritize the match between areas of resident specialization and needed expertise, as communicated by teams with vacancies.

A final part of the NEW@MPS residency strategy involves paying residents. There is evidence that paid teacher residencies are successful when recruiting teachers of color in high-need subject areas (e.g., mathematics and science) and to high-need urban and rural districts (Guha et al., 2016). MPS plans to fund 40 MLFTC residency slots each year. As proposed, this grant creates a bridge to a sustainable, 40-student, paid residency program in NEW@MPS schools. The grant covers all 40 residency slots in year 1, 30 slots in year 2, and 20 slots in year 3. After that point, the district believes they will be prepared to support all 40 paid residency slots moving forward.

Implementing these three strategies associated with recruiting and hiring components of MPS's HCMS will not only improve efficiency and satisfaction for all those involved, but if done thoughtfully, can also significantly increase equity, inclusivity, and the diversity of the educator workforce.

Component 2: Educator pathways and new roles. The need to create new pathways into the teaching profession and new roles within it are central to NEW@MPS and will impact many other aspects of the HCMS. The fourth strategy, *(S4) High-school "Grow-Your-Own" (GYO) programs*, will leverage resources already established through MPS's Office of Career and Technical Education to build a new GYO program at Westwood High School—the only large high school among the NEW@MPS schools.

GYO programs generally offer a promising strategy for recruiting a more diverse educator workforce (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Partnership for the Future of Learning, 2021). This is particularly true for Arizona, where Hispanic students comprise the largest racial/ethnic group (more than 35%) enrolled in Educators Rising, the co-curricular organization associated with high school GYO programs (L. Rollins, personal communication, July 16, 2020). In MPS, at the four high schools already offering GYO programs, 59.2% of students in those programs identify as students of color. Given that students of color comprise 58%, on average, across the student bodies of these four schools, GYO programs appear to appeal proportionally to students of color in MPS. This fact, along with data that Westwood is more racially diverse than other MPS high schools suggests that adding a new GYO program at Westwood is a long-term strategy to increase the diversity of MPS's educator workforce.

Because four other MPS high schools already have established GYO programs, it will be less difficult to implement a new GYO program at Westwood. The primary difference in this

implementation involves the team-based models at Westwood and at the neighboring elementary schools of Whitman and Whittier. Because each of these schools have embraced NEW models and rely on educator teams, there is a unique opportunity for GYO students to take on meaningful roles (e.g., small-group reading facilitator, math tutor, or project-based mentors) in the elementary schools. Research suggests that pre-service educators who have higher-quality student teaching experiences report feeling significantly better prepared to teach and higher levels of teacher self-efficacy (Ronfeldt & Reininger, 2012). Additionally, the magnitude of the effects of working with students in clinical experiences is greater when pre-service educators work in schools with more historically underserved racial groups of students, such as Black and Hispanic students (Ronfeldt & Reininger, 2012). This is promising evidence for more meaningful outcomes from pre-service educators who conduct their clinical experiences in MPS since many schools are composed of a majority of historically underserved racial groups.

As MPS commits to the strategy of GYO programs to diversify its educator workforce in NEW@MPS schools (and beyond), they also recognize necessary changes to other parts of the HCMS. HR data systems need to include fields around GYO affiliations; for example, GYO students could receive guaranteed interviews for summer school assistant teacher positions or for paraeducator roles. As part of the NEW@MPS program, MPS and MLFTC will also create dual-enrollment credit opportunities with ASU so that GYO graduates at Westwood and other MPS schools leave with a high school diploma and up to six credit hours toward a degree in teaching.

The fifth strategy, *(S5) Paraeducator pathways*, also works to increase the diversity of teachers in NEW@MPS schools by creating a tailored, responsive program for paraeducators interested in becoming professional teachers. On average, racial identity markers for paraeducators tend to match more closely those of an increasingly racially diverse student

population (Williams et al., 2016). Paraeducators are also more likely to have strong connections to the local community and are often advocates for students and their families (Villegas & Clewell, 1998). There is also promising evidence that paraprofessionals will complete teacher certification programs. In an evaluation of three groups placed in pathways to teaching certifications, paraprofessionals were the most likely to have remained in teaching for three years and to have continued in teaching after the three year period (Clewell & Villegas, 2001).

However, the barriers to teacher certification are often high for paraeducators—both structurally and culturally (Gist, et al., 2021). Gist and colleagues make several concrete suggestions to those designing paraeducator pathways, including: wraparound support at every stage of the process, allowing for paid work-based experience, and aligning data systems to track program completion, job placement, and retention (2021). These suggestions reinforce similar trends from a needs assessment conducted by MLFTC. Current and prospective paraprofessional students reported three common needs: flexibility, personal support, and affordability.

Grounded in this research, MLFTC will partner with MPS to build a pathway to certification for paraeducators in NEW@MFLTC schools and expand district-wide by year 3. The program will leverage existing state dollars from the Arizona Teachers Academy to fund full tuition at MLFTC for paraeducators, increasing affordability. Although the funds are available and coursework exists, the infrastructure around creating a para-friendly pathway in MPS has not been developed (MLFTC, 2019). This pathway must achieve three things: (1) value the current knowledge and skill of paraeducators; (2) allow for uninterrupted employment; and (3) provide intentional systems and supports at every stage of the process (recruitment, during coursework, and induction) to ensure that paraeducators are successful in their pursuits. This grant will fund a full-time program coordinator at MLFTC in the first two years to build and launch this program

with MPS. The position then steps-down to 75% funding in year three as the coordinator primarily focuses on supporting students; it will be self-sustaining within five years.

The sixth strategy, *(S6) Establishing a range of new educator roles*, directly supports the notion of distributed expertise in team-based NEW@MPS models and creating these roles impacts the design and strategy of the HCMS. The job of “teacher,” as typically defined, is likely too complicated to staff with fidelity at scale. The work of teaching is incredibly complex, often multidimensional, simultaneous, and unpredictable (Loewenberg Ball and Forzani 2009; Doyle 1977). Given this and compounding factors including relatively low wages, challenging working conditions, and lack of societal status, it should surprise no one that many communities face perennial teacher shortages (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003).

The teaching profession may benefit from defining new educator roles that could be filled by educators with a range of training. Task-shifting is a method applied in healthcare settings to strengthen and deliver healthcare services (World Health Organization (WHO), 2008) more effectively. The method involves moving specific tasks from highly-qualified healthcare workers (i.e., doctors and nurses) and redistributing them to “workers with shorter training and fewer qualifications in order to make more efficient use of the available human resources for health” (i.e., technicians) (WHO, 2008). Task-shifting from highly-trained healthcare workers with broad expertise to a range of roles with differential amounts of preparation exhibited the potential to reduce costs without compromising the outcomes for patients (Mdege et al., 2013).

Task shifting provides a theoretical framework to reconsider traditional educator roles and create new ones. Like the examples in medicine, new educator roles will range across a continuum of educator skill—from more focused roles for aspiring teachers in high school GYO programs or paraeducators (e.g., Literacy Accelerator or Digital Learning Facilitator) to those for

professional educators (e.g., Lead Teacher of a NEW team, Team-Based Teacher Educator, or Cross-Team Curriculum Designer). These roles may be full time or part time. They may be compensated as formal new positions within the MPS HCMS, or with stipends, or through non-financial means such as additional preparation time during the workday.

To formally establish these roles within NEW@MPS schools, the following actions must take place: (a) examine student and educator outcomes data and identify un- or undermet needs; (b) create role descriptions with a focus on key knowledge or skills; (c) build any relevant HCMS components, including recruitment processes, hiring processes, evaluation system, and compensation system; (d) gain governing board approval, if needed; (e) add the position to the *MPS Educator Hiring Guidelines* document. Beyond the new role of “Lead Teacher,” which is currently being piloted in a handful of NEW@MPS schools, other new roles will be determined by educators and leaders working in NEW@MPS schools with guidance from the MLFTC’s NEW initiative team, MPS HR staff, and with input from students, families, and the community.

Component 3: Improving educator effectiveness. A key component of improving the overall HCMS in MPS relates to the ongoing professional learning for educators. Research shows that there is a strong association between educators’ job satisfaction and self-efficacy and their retention in the profession (Curtis, 2005). MPS has strategically bet that team-based models will improve educator effectiveness, retention, and improve a broad set of student outcomes. The seventh strategy for this program, *(S7) Supports for educator teams* builds on the evidence base from co-teaching, Opportunity Culture models, and team-based models from other professions.

Co-teaching between general and special education teachers (Cook & Friend, 1995) can lead to statistically significant test score improvements for students with and without disabilities (Jones & Winters, 2020). Co-teaching is the closest “team-based” structure for which there is

robust experimental research (Murwaski & Swanson, 2001) and to the best of our knowledge, there is no experimental research related to team-based models in the way they will be implemented in NEW@MPS schools. These models involve multiple professional educators, paraeducators, and pre-services teachers who all share responsibility for a common roster of students. Opportunity Culture (OC) models, which are more similar to NEW@MPS team-based models than co-teaching models, involve a “multi-classroom leader” who works alongside and supports a group of other teachers in their classrooms. Research from Opportunity Culture schools shows that these models produce sizable, statistically significant gains in math (Backes & Hansen, 2018). Team-based models are more frequently constructed, adopted, implemented, and studied in business and healthcare settings, yielding notable effects (see James, 2012). There is increasing evidence that team-based healthcare delivery is linked to improved outcomes for patients and clinician well-being (Welp & Manser, 2016). We hypothesize that NEW@MPS models, which are inherently team-based *education* delivery, will have the same result in education: simultaneously improving student outcomes and improving educator well-being. The WHO identifies characteristics that make teams effective, such as specific task-distributed roles based on specialized knowledge and skills, working toward a common goal, team decision making, and collective action from task interdependence (2012).

Transitioning a school from a more traditional structure to a NEW team-based model requires intensive support for leaders and teachers. MLFTC’s NEW initiative team offers professional learning in all stages of the adoption of NEW models: exploring, launching, expanding, and sustaining (see *Figure 2*). As teams form and scale, support is provided to guide teams through Tuckman’s (1965) classic human resource development work, which identifies team stages of development: forming, storming, norming, and performing. As such, facilitating

sustained change management is important for schools and districts, transforming them into professional communities (Cuban, 1992; Louis, 2006). MLFTC's NEW initiative team will offer the following: (1) Summer Institute: an annual multi-day gathering that prioritizes team-based collaboration around laying the groundwork for a successful year, building team culture and developing the critical systems and structures that will allow teams to distribute expertise and deepen and personalize learning for students; (2) Networked Cohorts: monthly, remote, facilitated communities of practice during the academic year that bring together educator teams across schools by grade-level bands (K-3, 3-6, 7-12) and school transformation phase and allow educators to share best practices and next steps for iterative refinement and implementation; (3) Elements Deep Dives: remote and in-person, team-based experiences that align with the Elements of NEW (e.g., establishing an environment of trust, authentic assessment, flexible scheduling), and prioritize team-based collaboration; (4) Site-Based Coaching: individualized support to school leaders in the form of coaching collaboration, development of specific resources, and facilitated connections to other leaders building NEW models.

Building and supporting robust, team-based models creates the conditions for the eighth strategy, *(S8) Team-based induction of new teachers*. Given that about a quarter of MPS teachers and about one third of the teachers in NEW@MPS schools have three or fewer years of experience, it is essential to get induction of novice teachers right to improve the effectiveness and retention of the MPS educator workforce. Research shows that teachers who participate in induction—in-service programs that focus on teacher socialization, adjustment, development, and assessment—have significantly greater student achievement results (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011) and there is a strong relationship between the effectiveness of a novice teacher's mentor and their own effectiveness (Goldhaber et al., 2020). One experimental study reveals the

importance of trained mentors. Teachers who received induction support from full-time, trained mentors and who were in-field with them had positive, statistically significant student outcomes in their third year (Schmidt et al., 2017). Finally, working in a highly-collaborative environment with regularly scheduled collaboration, opportunities for observation, and career advancement is linked to retention (García & Weiss, 2019; Borman & Dowling, 2008).

First-year teachers hired into NEW@MPS schools and placed on educator teams will enjoy all of the advantages of robust induction programs: a high-quality, in-field mentor, highly collaborative environments, opportunities to observe and be observed, and opportunities to increasingly take on more responsibility. Novice teachers will have access not only to a single mentor, but to several other professional educators on the team. Perhaps most importantly, the novice is never left alone to “figure it out.” As will be described in relation to the next strategy, MLFTC will also develop a specialization for team-based teacher educators, of which a component will be specifically about supporting novice teachers in team-based models.

The ninth strategy, (*S9*) *Personalized professional learning for educators*, will take two primary forms: a micro-credentialed learning system and a credit-based specialization system. In both cases the educators, leveraging data from HCMS systems, will direct their own professional learning, and in so doing, model the self-direction they are expecting of their students.

Building teacher capacity through job-embedded opportunities can improve instruction, and has been shown to improve teacher self-reported perceptions of leadership, learning community, resources, collaboration, and equity (Elmore, 2004; Harris, 2009). Additionally, students who attended schools with job-embedded professional development had higher scale means than those teachers who engaged in traditional professional development (Harris, 2009). In addition to job-embedded professional learning, professional development should move away

from traditional, isolated professional development to “sustained, active personalized professional learning” (Hall & Trespalacios, 2019; Opfer & Pedder, 2011).

MPS has been interested in building job-embedded micro-credentialing into the HCMS for more than three years. As a large district with a dedicated professional learning department, they already have a robust set of content aligned to the Danielson components of the existing evaluation systems, but lack a system for managing and displaying individual educators’ progress toward that learning. This grant provides for a full-time professional learning specialist who will oversee MPS’s procurement of a micro-credentialing platform and pilot of job-embedded, micro-credential-based professional learning in the subset of NEW@MPS schools. Although MPS has yet to pick a vendor for their micro-credentialing platform, they identified BloomBoard in previous vetting conversations as a leading contender. BloomBoard has expressed interest in supporting the micro-credentialing work associated NEW@MPS (see Appendix C for a letter of support). This platform will allow educators (both leaders and teachers), based on their personal evaluation results, to access and choose from a suggested list of micro-credentialed learning opportunities. To incentivize use of micro-credentials, it is proposed that completing at least one of these micro-credentials will be necessary to earn the highest level of performance-based compensation.

In addition to micro-credentialed professional learning, MPS is also interested in developing a deeper, credit-based specialization system that will be co-designed with MLFTC. Anchored in the idea of building team-based teaching models, this specialization system will provide a mechanism for individual educators to pursue training that will allow them to fill important gaps on their teams and/or develop the knowledge and skills necessary to take on new roles in NEW@MPS schools. Three, 3-credit courses comprise each specialization. This grant

will fund the development of four specializations, two in year 1: (1) Leading Educator Teams, and (2) Teaching English Language Learners; and two in year 2: (3) Meeting the Needs of Students with Special Needs, and (4) Supporting Teacher Development. Specializations confer university credit and therefore MPS educators will be eligible to receive the existing, district-sponsored \$58/credit hour increase on base pay. Additionally, specializations are designed to meet the needs and schedule of in-service educators and are available as three courses instead of an entire master's or doctoral degree, thereby lowering barriers to pursuing these opportunities and allowing more equitable access to a greater number of educators. In addition to financial incentives, there are other incentives for educators to take specializations, including guaranteed interviews at schools using expertise-driven hiring, priority for hosting teacher candidates, and preference for working at schools with particular student populations. This grant covers 80 scholarships to encourage targeted professional learning across MPS. Scholarships will be awarded based on a short application with preference given to educators from NEW@MPS schools. To help sustain this program, MPS may choose to leverage credits that are given to any LEA hosting MLFTC residents. Currently, for every resident hosted each semester, the LEA receives a waiver for six credit hours of tuition per semester. These credits could be pooled at the team and/or school level and serve as an additional incentive (i.e., free tuition).

Component 4: Incentivizing effective educators and teams. The tenth strategy, (*S10*) *Incentives for Lead Teachers*, builds on MPS's commitment to team-based models and specifically incentivizes, with title and a stipend, an advancement pathway for effective educators. Research shows that career ladders (Ingersoll, 2004) and teacher leadership roles are effective ways to retain experienced and talented educators in the profession (Rosenblatt, 2001),

and in NEW@MPS models, without teachers having to leave the classroom. Increasing the number of students for whom Lead Teachers are responsible will multiply their impact.

Several steps must be taken to effectively implement incentives for Lead Teacher roles in NEW@MPS schools. These include: (1) identifying key responsibilities associated with this role; (2) determining how Lead Teachers are selected; (3) creating a means of evaluating this role; and (4) providing access to up-front and on-going professional learning. This work will be done in collaboration between MLFTC's NEW initiatives team, MPS HR, principals, and teachers. The grant provides for up to 90 Lead Teacher stipends, increasing in number for each year of the grant as more NEW@MPS schools add more teams. Associations between Lead Teacher stipends and key student and educator outcomes will be studied over the course of the grant. Should there be positive associations, MPS will look to sustainably fund Lead Teacher stipends.

The 11th strategy, *(S11) Aligning MPS strategic priorities and educator evaluation*, helps to address the mismatch between the current educator evaluation system and MPS's commitment to broader student outcomes through their Portrait of a Graduate and team-based models, as discussed in Section 1. Narrowly defined and relatively easily-measured outcomes of student learning (e.g., growth models or value-added models) are most often used in education settings to measure individual teachers' causal impacts on student learning and achievement growth over time, as disaggregated and pulled away from the teams of teachers with whom individual teachers often teach (Sanders et al., 2009; see also Bausell, 2013; Corcoran, 2010; Nelson, 2011; Putnam et al., 2011). First, these measures capture only a subset of the broader student outcomes about which families and educators care (Close et al., 2020). Second, they assume that school leaders and teams of teachers do not have significant impacts on student learning and

achievement (see also Buddin & Zamarro, 2008; Corcoran, 2010; Scherrer, 2011). NEW@MPS challenges this assumption.

To better align educator evaluation with the strategic priorities of PoG and NEW, two new measures must be created to support and provide feedback for educator teams and to operationalize the PoG. For this critical work, we will partner with the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET), an organization uniquely positioned to lead this work, having developed numerous tools to support educator, school, and district improvement both in Arizona and around the country. NIET will lead two working groups comprising stakeholders from MPS central office staff, building-level principals from NEW@MPS schools, and members of MFLTC's NEW initiatives team. Building these instruments will take place in year 1, with training, implementation, and iteration in years 2 and 3. For a detailed description of this work and implementation plans, please see Appendix F. This work will be part of a larger evaluation and incentive systems team co-lead by Co-PIs, [REDACTED] (Assistant Superintendent HR, MPS) and [REDACTED] (Professor, MLFTC). Together, with other key stakeholders, they will build these new measures into the educator evaluation systems in NEW@MPS schools and integrate them into the revisions associated with the PBCS, as appropriate.

The 12th, and final, strategy, (*S12*) *Team-based incentives*, adds an additional incentive above and beyond the existing individual pay-for-performance systems in NEW@MPS schools. Likely the most common complaint about attaching performance incentives to individual teacher evaluation system output is that doing so fails to recognize teacher teamwork, subsequently undermining collaboration (Harris, 2011). Hence, while teacher evaluation systems that preference team teaching are highly valued (Harris, 2011; see also Baker et al., 2010; Buddin & Zamarro, 2008; Witham, 2011), they are much less common. This is true even today, after the

passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015), by which the federal government relaxed states' prior requirements to base their teacher evaluation systems in part on value-added-based output. More desirable are teacher evaluation systems that allow for teams of teachers to create collective (not individual) goals anchored in the continuous improvement of teaching and learning for the groups of students they collectively teach (Close et al., 2020; Sparks, 2013). Researchers of the only study of which we are aware that examined the efficacy of team incentives found "no significant effects on the achievement of students or the attitudes and practices of teachers" (Springer et al., 2012, p. 367). There are questions about the generalizability of those findings to team-based incentives in NEW@MPS schools. First, the sample included only junior high schools and only the four core teachers (math, ELA, science, social studies) on each team. Second, the incentive was a cash bonus awarded to each of those four teachers. Third, the bonus was linked to student performance on only a narrow set of value-added scores from the Texas state assessments. Finally, the majority of participants (54%) reported, "they did not understand the criteria for earning a bonus" (Springer et al., 2012, p. 386).

The team-based incentive in NEW@MPS schools builds from the larger research base around team-based incentives and addresses some of the shortcomings identified in the Springer et al. study. First, as per Arizona state statute, any PCBS must be approved by 70% of the educators who could potentially earn the award. Like the evaluation system, care will be taken to invest stakeholders throughout the iterative design process so they will both understand and support the final versions of the systems. Second, the PCBS will include measures of student achievement, but will include broader student outcomes aligned to MPS's PoG. Finally, the team-based PBCS will present a cash incentive *at the team level*. Aligned to the importance of increasing educator autonomy, teams will have (within reason and guardrails) the ability to use

their team-based incentive as they see fit. In this grant, the team-based PBCS is budgeted at [REDACTED] per team. As schools transition more educators onto teams each year, the budget for team-based incentives increases proportionately: 51 teams in year 1, 70 teams in year 2, and 90 teams in year 3. Associations of team-based incentives with key student and educator outcomes will be studied over the course of the grant. Should there be positive associations, MPS will look to sustainably fund team-based incentives going forward.

Figure 5, below, includes a detailed overview of the timeline and activities associated with each strategy and its corresponding component.

Figure 5. Overview of strategies by component and associated activities for years one to three.

C1: Recruitment and hiring	<i>(S1) Enhance data systems related to recruitment, hiring, and retention</i>		
	YEAR 1: Conduct detailed needs assessment of current HR data systems; identify key reports needed for data-based recruitment, hiring, and retention	YEAR 2: Develop and implement data-based strategies for recruiting and retaining instructional roles; collect baseline data from new systems; implement streamlined hiring processes; build new staffing models	YEAR 3: Continuous improvement of systems based on user experience and formative data
	<i>(S2) Expertise-driven recruitment & hiring</i>		
	YEAR 1: Identify, at the team level, key educator expertise; design systems around expertise-driven recruitment and hiring	YEAR 2: Refine needed educator expertise; implement expertise-driven recruitment and hiring systems in at least 50% of NEW@MPS schools	YEAR 3: Refine educator expertise, refine expertise-driven recruitment & hiring systems; implement in 100% of NEW@MPS schools
C2: Educator pathways & new roles	<i>(S3) Paid residents in team-based models</i>		
	YEAR 1: Design systems for strategically placing paid teacher residents on educator teams; place 40 residents in MPS with at least 10 residents in NEW@MPS school;	YEAR 2: Adjust systems and placement strategies; MPS covers 25% of resident stipend; place 40 residents in MPS with at least 20 candidates in NEW@MPS schools	YEAR 3: Adjust systems & placement strategies; MPS covers 50% of resident stipend, place at least 40 candidates in NEW@MPS schools
	<i>(S4) High-school “grow your own” program</i>		
	YEAR 1: Explore current GYO models in MPS, AZ, and high schools across the US, review the credential, certificate, or diploma offered if the GYO program is funded through Perkins.	YEAR 2: Design GYO with knowledge, skills, and dispositions that prepare students to assume roles on NEW@MPS	YEAR 3: Launch GYO at Westwood HS, integrate GYO students on teams at Whittier and Whitman elementary schools
	<i>(S5) Para-educator pathways</i>		
	YEAR 1: Customize existing para-pathway program between MPS and MLFTC	YEAR 2: Implement para-pathway program with at least 20 paras from NEW@MPS schools	YEAR 3: Adjust pathway program, open pathway program to all MPS paras; enroll at least 40 paras
	<i>(S6) Establishing a range of new educator roles</i>		
	YEAR 1: Identify new roles, write job descriptions, create training for roles, build into budget models, build into HCMS	YEAR 2: Implement at least one new roles across at least 50% of NEW@MPS schools	YEAR 3: Implement at least one of three new roles across 100% of NEW@MPS schools

C3: Improving educator effectiveness	<i>(S7) Supports for educator teams</i>		
	YEAR 1: Monthly Networked Cohorts for NEW@MPS teams, Week-long summer institute NEW@MPS teams, coaching around NEW@MPS models for school and district leaders	YEAR 2: Adding more differentiated experiences of Y1 offerings aligned to developmental trajectory of NEW@MPS schools and teams	YEAR 3: Adding more differentiated experiences of Y1 & Y2 offerings aligned to developmental trajectory of NEW@MPS schools and teams
	<i>(S8) Team-based induction of new teachers</i>		
	YEAR 1: Design systems to support placing first-year teachers in NEW@MPS schools	YEAR 2: Implement team-based induction systems in 100% of NEW@MPS schools (where there are new teachers hired)	YEAR 3: Adjust induction systems; implement improved systems in 100% of NEW@MPS schools and at least 10 other MPS schools
C4: Incentivizing educators & teams	<i>(S9) Personalized professional learning for educators</i>		
	YEAR 1: Select micro-credential (MC) system; design two specializations; build systems that allow educators to pursue specialization; build specialization incentive systems	YEAR 2: Launch MC system in NEW@MPS schools w/ 25% of educators earning at least one MC; design two specializations; at least 30 educators in NEW@MPS schools pursue specializations	YEAR 3: Launch MC system in all NEW@MPS schools w/ 70% of educators earning one MC, 50 additional educators from across MPS will pursue specializations
	<i>(S10) Incentives for Lead Teachers</i>		
	YEAR 1: Create process for hiring lead teachers, determine evaluation for lead teachers; select Lead Teachers for SY2022	YEAR 2: Implement Lead Teacher role across at least 20% of NEW@MPS schools; select Lead Teachers for SY2023	YEAR 3: Adjust Lead Teacher systems; implement Lead Teacher role across 40% of NEW@MPS schools
	<i>(S11) Aligning MPS strategic priorities and educator evaluation</i>		
	YEAR 1: Design team-based evaluation instrument(s); design instrument(s) to measure student outcomes aligned to MPS POG; integrate new measures into existing evaluation systems	YEAR 2: Implement evaluation in at least 50% of NEW@MPS schools	YEAR 3: Adjust instruments and evaluation system; implement revised instruments and system in 100% of NEW@MPS schools
	<i>(S12) Team-based incentives</i>		
	YEAR 1: Iteratively design new team-based incentive system	YEAR 2: Implement new team-based incentive system in at least 50% of NEW@MPS schools	YEAR 3: Adjust incentive system; implement revised team-based incentive system in all NEW@MPS schools

Methods for evaluation to provide performance feedback and periodic assessment.

In addition to reporting on the nine measures associated with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), the program director, in coordination with the external evaluator (John Hopkins University), will provide formative feedback and ultimately evaluate the success of NEW@MPS based on the outcomes identified in the logic model (Appendix A). More detail on these outcomes, the strategies associated with each, and the timeline for collecting formative and summative data on each can be found in Appendix F. All survey instruments will utilize constructs with strong validity and reliability based on preliminary administrations. All data will be stored on secured file servers and personally identifiable data will be de-identified. Additionally, MLFTC and MPS have an existing signed data sharing agreement that will provide ease of sharing data between the two organizations in a timely manner.

SECTION III: MANAGEMENT PLAN

Project leadership, roles, and responsibilities. ASU and MLFTC are highly competent in managing complex, collaborative and impactful projects similar to what is being proposed in this application. Project leadership, identified below, are extremely well-qualified and seasoned professionals with the skills, abilities, and support necessary to carry out the project successfully. Each individual was selected to create an accomplished and visionary team, with representation from both MLFTC and MPS, to achieve ambitious goals. For a complete list of the project working group, project strategies, project outcomes, and key personnel associated with each, please see Appendix F. Information on additional personnel can be found in the budget narrative.

██████████ (PI): As Executive Director of the NEW Initiative, ██████████ will oversee the proposed project and strategic planning; manage the team to meet deliverables, milestones, and

reporting requirements; maintain communication with all project stakeholders; participate in all dissemination activities. He will also lead the project advisory board.

██████████ (Co-PI; MLFTC): ██████████ will serve as the NEW@MPS Project Director.

She will oversee all day-to-day program aspects and coordinate with the PI, Co-PIs, and MLFTC, MPS, and NIET leadership to manage the data collection, analysis, and reporting; oversee the evaluation and research components of the project in collaboration with the Office of Data Strategy at MLFTC, Mesa Public Schools, and external evaluators.

██████████ (Co-PI; MLFTC): ██████████ is a Professor with expertise in teacher evaluation, educational evaluation systems, and Value-Added Models, including their use in accountability systems. She will lead planning and design of the educator evaluation system and the PBCS system. She will co-lead the working group on evaluation and incentive systems.

██████████ (Co-PI; MPS PI): ██████████ is the Assistant Superintendent, HR for MPS. He has 25 years of experience in PreK-12 educational human resources and financial systems and was previously recognized by the Arizona School Personnel Administrators Association as Administrator of the Year. He will serve as the MPS PI and the primary contact for work with the district. He will lead the working group on recruitment, hiring, and retention and co-lead the working group on evaluation and incentive systems.

██████████ (MPS): ██████████ is the Director of Professional Learning for Mesa Public Schools. She will supervise the grant-funded Professional Learning Specialist and will ensure the successful adoption of the micro-credential platform and all professional learning associated with the redesigned educator evaluation systems. She will also lead a working group on personalized professional learning for educators.

██████████ (MLFTC): ██████████ is a Senior Program Manager with the NEW initiative team, specifically focused on building professional learning opportunities and model development. ██████████

██████████ will work with MPS to help build new educator roles, work on outcomes associated with educator effectiveness in team-based models, and help build systems and content associated with personalized professional learning for educators. She will lead a working group on new educator roles and supporting educator teams.

██████████ (MPS): ██████████ is Director of Career and Technical Education and Innovative Partnerships at Mesa Public Schools. She will participate in designing and launching a “Grow Your Own” program at Westwood High School and will lead the working group on this topic.

NEW@MPS Advisory Board. An advisory board will be appointed with membership to include senior leadership from all three implementing organizations and a mandate to ensure that the project moves forward on time, on budget, and that appropriate resources are provided to navigate challenges as they arise. This group will meet monthly for 90 minutes in Year 1, and quarterly for 90 minutes in Years 2 and 3, or more frequently, as needed.

Project timelines and milestones: *Table 2*, below, outlines the key timelines and milestones associated with managing this project. Timeline details and milestones associated with specific strategies can be found, above, in *Figure 4*.

Table 2. Project timelines and milestones.

Project task	Timeline
Convene project advisory board to announce grant, determine communication plans within MLFTC, MPS, NIET, and general press.	Oct 2021
Write and advertise job descriptions for all grant-funded positions	Oct 2021

Convene research working group to review data collection timeline & measures.	Nov 2021
PI and Project Director convene all working group leads	Nov 2021
Establish plan to support and check-in with each working group	Dec 2021
Kick-off meetings for each working group	Dec 2021
MILESTONE: All grant funded positions fully staffed.	
Design systems for strategically placing paid MLFTC teacher residents on educator teams in NEW@MPS schools	March 2022
MPS governing board approves recommended micro-credential system	May 2022
Establish Lead Teacher incentive process	May 2022
Conduct detailed needs assessment of current HR data systems	May 2022
Teachers and leaders in NEW@MPS schools approve redesigned versions of educator evaluation system, individual PBCS, and team-based PBCS	May 2022
MILESTONE: MPS Governing Board approves redesigned educator evaluation and PBCs for subset of NEW@MPS schools (June 2022)	
Detailed plan for HR data systems modifications	Aug 2022
Implement educator evaluation system and PBCS	Aug 2022
Launch para pathway program	Oct 2022

Iterate and finalize instruments for teachers and leaders for team-based models	Oct 2022
Iterate and finalize instruments aligned to PoG for teachers and leaders.	Oct 2022
Launch micro-credential system	Oct 2022
MILESTONE: All 10 of 12 HCMS strategies launched and reviewing periodic feedback data. (Oct 2022)	
New educator roles built into MPS HCMS	Feb 2023
Launch GYO	Aug 2023
Identify consultant to work with MPS to determine strategies for sustaining roles and incentive after the grant ends	Oct 2023
Review educator satisfaction survey data	May 2024
MILESTONE: Submit final reports aligned to GRPAs and outcome data (Aug 2024)	

SECTION IV: PROJECT RESOURCES

NEW@MPS will result in system change. In addressing **Absolute Priority 1** and **Absolute Priority 2**, NEW@MPS proposes to redesign existing HCMS and PBCS systems to be more data driven and align with the district's strategic initiatives in a set of high need schools. Beyond year 3, the changes seen in NEW@MPS schools will begin to be implemented system-wide. These system changes are significant given the complexity of the HCMS in the largest K-12 district in the state of Arizona. An educator workforce that is diverse, effective and satisfied in their work will equate to stronger academic outcomes for students. NEW@MPS will also

reach beyond the MPS district through dissemination of the project learnings and outcomes to other districts in Arizona and the nation. First, this will occur through local and state networks that to which both MLFTC and MPS belong. Through the work of the NEW Initiative, MLFTC has a platform that it currently uses to share resources and tools for other districts to build similar models. Secondly, with the support and partnership of John Hopkins University as an external evaluator and NIET as an expert in teacher and school leader evaluation, the NEW@MPS project is poised to have great influence outside Arizona. Designs, iterations, failures and successes will be documented and shared widely to promote internal improvement and even more importantly, greater influence on HCMS and PBCS changes in other systems.

Building local capacity to serve the target population. A mutually beneficial partnership is one where both organizations work together towards a common goal, one that benefits both parties without sacrificing their mission and purposes. The NEW@MPS project budget, activities and timelines were drafted collaboratively with long-term sustainability as the primary goal. Staffing allocations will catalyze MPS capacity to continue the work after funding from this project. Positions created with the funding from this project are primarily for MPS to carry out the goals and objectives of this project internally. Additionally, some funding was intentionally decreased over the last year of the project so that internal funds can be identified to continue to fund positions deemed as necessary.

Providing resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant. The proposed project is a continuation and expansion of ongoing efforts and will be fully integrated into the NEW model and MPS budget going forward. Federal funding will support development and implementation of broad scale changes to the HCMS that will start in NEW@MPS schools and ultimately expand district-wide. Ongoing costs will be integrated into MLFTC and MPS's

organizational budgets, without a need for additional funds beyond the period for potential renewal. There are several places in the budget that intentionally step-down in later years of the grant to signal commitment to continuing this work (e.g., stipends for paid residents, MLFTC positions related to paraeducator pathways and specializations). Additionally, because the four positions on the MPS HR team are associated with systems building, they will be eliminated or funded by the district at the end of the grant. As a public K-12 school district, MPS participates in internal budget planning and projections annually based on enrollment and needs of the district. NEW@MPS aligns to district strategic initiatives set by the MPS School Board and thus the components and building of HCMS and PBC systems are fully supported.

MLFTC will leverage other activities and existing funds to ensure the success of the project. For example, the cost share budget is primarily comprised of salary for faculty and staff developing the module materials and delivering the instruction over the course of the project. In addition, cost share of external philanthropic funding (i.e., Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; see confirmation in Appendix D) for program redesign is also budgeted to support the project. Funding from the TSL program will supplement these existing resources and enhance the teams' abilities to complete the redesign and implementation of the program efficiently and effectively.

Demonstrated commitment of partners and stakeholder support. Partners to this project share a deep commitment to teacher effectiveness, student outcomes, and diversifying the educator workforce as well as a common conviction that one-size-fits-all approaches in our current education system prevent both learners and educators from performing to their fullest potential. As the project host district, MPS has worked closely with MLFTC to free teachers from the constraints of a one-teacher-one-classroom model by building teams of educators that can surround learners with diverse areas of expertise.

NEW@MPS is bringing together partners such as NIET and John Hopkins University to realize the goals for this project. Additionally, as seen in support letters from the Gates Foundation and BloomBoard, the NEW@MPS project extends beyond the Arizona context and aligns with national initiatives and work with common goals and outcomes.

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