Iredell-Statesville Schools
Together, Ensuring *Student Success* by Igniting a *Passion* for Learning

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2021 Teacher and School Leader Incentive Program

STRIVE: *Supporting Teachers and Redesigning Incentives*

using Value-added measures of Effectiveness

PROJECT NARRATIVE

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Budget Worksheets

Budget and Match Narrative

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Logic Model

Appendix B: Resumes and Job Descriptions

Appendix C: Letters of Support and Memorandum of Understanding

Appendix D: Match Intent and Ability Letter

Appendix E: High-Need Schools Data

Appendix F: Other -Citations, Indirect Cost Rate, Power Analysis, Fidelity Index, Educator Survey

Appendix G: TSL Applicant Checklist

A. NEED FOR PROJECT

(i) Gaps or weaknesses in services have been identified and will be addressed by project.

Iredell-Statesville Schools' (I-SS) mission is to produce college and career-ready students who are competitive in the global workforce of the 21st century by igniting our students' passion for lifelong learning. Our district is among the 20 largest in North Carolina and serves 20,150 students in a combination of rural, suburban, and urban areas in sprawling Iredell County, a suburb of Charlotte. Designed to meet **Absolute Priority 1: Human Capital Management System (HCMS) and Performance-Based Compensation Systems (PBCS),** our vision is to increase student academic achievement and improve equitable access to effective educators in our high-need schools by redesigning our existing HCMS and PBCS to better attract, place, retain, and sustain effective educators and develop and increase teacher and school leader effectiveness. Our program, *STRIVE: Supporting Teachers and Redesigning Incentives using Value-added measures of Effectiveness*, will impact 474 teachers, 28 leaders and 5,673 students in our 12 lowest-performing, highest-poverty schools selected based on: **(a)** All 12 are high-need with free- and reduced-lunch rates over 50%:[1] Elementary: Celeste Henkel (59%), Cloverleaf (66%), East (61%), Harmony (59%), NB Mills (87%), Scotts (62%), Third Creek (74%), Secondary: Pressly Alternative (62%), East Middle (63%), Third Creek Middle (77%), West Middle (56%), Statesville High (59%) **(Absolute Priority 2: High-Need Schools) [Requirement 5]. (b)** All are Title I eligible.[2] **(c)** Our schools are high minority with 60% minority students compared with 38% across the district.

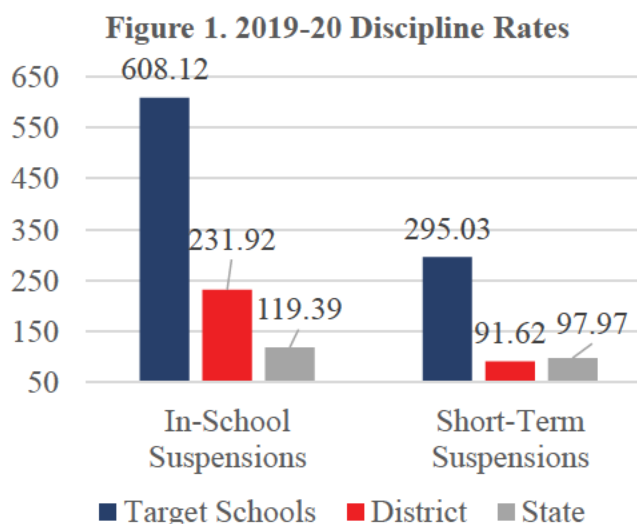| Table 1. Student Demographics[3]						
	Asian	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Two or More**	**White**	**Other**
Target School Average	3%	30%	21%	7%	40%	0%
I-SS Average	1%	14%	15%	5%	62%	<1%

Alarmed by the teacher shortages in our state and across the country and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our students, our district convened a task force comprised of educators, leaders, community members and parents to conduct a needs assessment examining student academic data and survey results, teacher indicators and survey feedback, and community data. Our 2021 district needs analysis revealed four significant gaps that *STRIVE* will address **[Requirement 2]**.

◆**Gap 1: Low Academic Achievement Coupled with Behavior and Attendance Issues:** On average, our target school students underperform both the district and state in math and English Language Arts (ELA) proficiency (Table 2) with some gaps as large as 29% **[Requirement 5]**.

Table 2. Students Proficient in Core Subjects (2019)[4]					
Elementary/Middle	**Math**	**ELA**	**High Schools**	**Math**	**ELA**
Target Schools	44%	42%	Target Schools	12%	31%
I-SS	62%	60%	I-SS	40%	57%
State	59%	57%	State	41%	60%

In 2019-20, our target schools' average suspension rates exceeded both the district and the state, with our in-school suspensions five times higher and short-term suspensions three times higher than the state (Figure 1) **[Requirement 5]**.

On average student attendance rates in our target schools have plummeted, seeing nearly a 5% decrease between 2019-20 and 2020-21. Our middle schools have seen the greatest declines with Pressly exceeding 10%. Addressing this gap is an integral part of our strategic plan with a goal to decrease

Figure 1. 2019-20 Discipline Rates

In-School Suspensions: Target Schools 608.12, District 231.92, State 119.39
Short-Term Suspensions: Target Schools 295.03, District 91.62, State 97.97

■ Target Schools ■ District ■ State

exclusionary discipline practices by 3% by June 2025 with academic targets focused on math/ELA.

◆**Gap 2: Lack of Diverse Educators:** Research suggests that teachers of color provide substantial benefits to all students, especially to students of color, such as improved math and science test scores, improved graduation rates, and lower rates of chronic absenteeism and suspension.[5] Yet, teachers of color are more likely to enter teaching through alternative certification pathways, which often omit student teaching, and are more likely to leave the teaching profession, exacerbating teacher shortages.[6] Unfortunately, our teachers do not mirror our student population: 60% are students of color, yet less than 8% are teachers of color – over a 50% gap.[7] Further, 52% of our target student population is male, while only 18% of our teachers in these schools are male. This gap has been recognized by district leadership and is reflected in our current strategic plan, with a goal to increase teacher diversity by 5% by June of 2025.

◆**Gap 3: High Attrition Rate:** For 2019-20, North Carolina experienced a statewide attrition rate of 7.5% with I-SS well exceeding this rate at nearly 11%.[8] Results from our 2021 TSL Educator Support Survey *(Appendix F)* found that nearly half of the educators who responded are neutral or disagree that our district has a robust onboarding process to support and retain new teachers with 40% indicating teacher turnover is a problem. Our district, challenged by a low teacher recoupment rate of 42%, must either hire teachers new to the profession or new to teaching in NC.[9] Both are initially less effective than teachers with experience. Data from the 2020 Teacher Working Conditions Survey show conditions exist for higher attrition due to factors our teachers rate the lowest: differentiated PD to meet individual needs, training to fully utilize technology, teacher assignment of classes, non-instructional time, focus on educating students with minimal interruptions, mentors did not teach the same grade level, and student conduct. Addressing this gap is in our strategic plan, with a goal to decrease teacher turnover rates by 2.5% by June of 2025.

◆**Gap 4: Inequitable Access to Effective Educators [Requirements 2 and 6]:** Our 2021 TSL Educator Support Survey *(Appendix F)* revealed that nearly half (49%) of educators are neutral or do not agree that our district recruits and retains high-quality, experienced educators. Inequities in access to effective teachers exist in our target schools: 10% are not fully licensed or have an emergency, provisional, or temporary certification compared to the district at 6%; 20% are beginning teachers compared to the district at 16%; and only 50% have more than ten years of experience compared to the district at 58%. North Carolina's teacher shortage has not spared I-SS, as we have twelve current vacancies for exceptional children teachers that we have been unable to fill.[10] In 2020-21, Statesville High had 20 lateral entry teachers—meaning they lacked a professional educator's license. A significant gap lies in our district due to the lack of partnerships to assist these educators in obtaining their license or a formalized beginning teacher program. On average, the students in our target schools have more educators with a provisional licensure (3%) compared to the district (0%) and have fewer experienced teachers (83%) compared with the district (87%). As noted in Table 3, the percentage of teachers rated in the top two categories, Accomplished and Distinguished, in our target schools is 9 percentage points less than the teachers rated in these categories districtwide.

Table 3. 2020-21 NC Educator Evaluation System: Teacher Standard IV Ratings[11]				
	Developing	**Proficient**	**Accomplished**	**Distinguished**
Target Schools	1%	36%	58%	5%
District	1%	27%	64%	8%

(ii) Project will build on related efforts to improve relevant outcomes from other programs.

◆**Federal:** Related to our efforts through TSL, we have four active federal US ED grants that focus on improving student academic achievement and social-emotional development: GEAR UP,

Education Innovation and Research, Project Prevent, and School Climate Transformation. These programs focus on student services; however, we will align the teacher professional learning components with *STRIVE*. Further, Title I and II funds pay for professional development and support staff in our Title I schools **[Requirement 9]**. We will leverage this funding to supplement our professional learning component with targeted training based on individual and group needs.

◆**State:** North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI) offers a robust training resource created to equip educators at all levels, including mentors and beginning teachers, with the tools and skills necessary to improve student academic achievement while earning CEU credits. These tools include:[12] full-length modules, mini-modules, instructor-led courses, evaluation standards, and NC Digital Learning Competencies. In addition, NC DPI has four reform models enabling low-performing schools to make adjustments to impact leadership, teaching and learning, and student outcomes.[13] Four of our target schools follow the Restart Model which gives autonomy and flexibility to improve academic standards, accountability, and greater choice.

◆**Local:** Each target elementary school has an instructional facilitator who will provide coaching, PD, and curriculum support while four content coaches serve our target secondary schools. To support *STRIVE*, this staff will redirect their time to provide intensive on-site professional development through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) model to support the development of highly effective educators. PLCs meet weekly in all schools and provide job-embedded professional learning instead of attending single-day workshops. In addition to sharing practices, this forum provides an arena for our educators to learn from one another and for coaches to focus on inquiry-based and data-driven solutions to address student and educator needs. To improve school climate and educator working conditions, a school resource officer in each target school will redirect their time and efforts to align with the

objectives our TSL grant. Using local funds for the 2021-22 academic year, we have planned a pilot PBCS strategy to complement our proposed TSL PBCS and will use the results from this pilot as data becomes available to inform and refine our PBCS **[Requirement 10]**: **(a)** Using NC Educator Evaluation System (NCEES) and Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS) results, we will employ a differential pay rubric to compensate principals at our 12 high-need schools. Principals, who are rated at least *Proficient,* are eligible for bonuses in the following areas: At-Risk Factors (Title I or % of EC students), Tiered Grade-Level, Advanced or Doctoral Degrees, Longevity, Evaluations featuring *Accomplished* or *Distinguished* designation across the seven standards, Average Daily Membership, Alternative School, and Superintendent Discretion (3-year trend for Meeting or Exceeding Growth, ACT score increase of 10% over prior year, or 150% growth on iReady Math/ELA). **(b)** For our hard-to-staff four Restart Schools, teachers of tested subjects meeting or exceeding growth through EVAAS and having no components of the NCEES below *Proficient* receive a bonus of ▆▆▆ annually. Non-tested subject teachers meeting or exceeding the school composite benchmark and having no components below *Proficient* receive a ▆▆▆ bonus annually. **(c)** As a recruitment incentive, teachers who transfer to one of our high-need schools and teach a hard-to-staff subject earn a signing bonus of ▆▆▆▆. **(d)** As an incentive for our hard-to-staff alternative school, annual stipends will be provided to Certified (▆▆▆▆) and Classified (▆▆▆) staff at one of our target schools, Pressly.

(iii) Project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning.

Our district follows the NC Statewide Accountability Model on Student Growth as a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning while supporting rigorous academic standards for students. This accountability model supports the use of our HCMS to implement human capital decisions on preparation, recruitment, hiring, placement, retention, dismissal,

compensation, and promotion through the EVAAS, the NCEES, and our personnel management system. EVAAS is a customized reporting platform with tools to support educators in improving student learning while reflecting on their own effectiveness. This system assesses the impact of teachers, schools, and districts on student learning, which can predict student success, demonstrate the effects of schooling, and reveal patterns in subgroup performance.[14] The State Board of Education has approved EVAAS as the tool to calculate student growth values based on results from EOC and EOG assessments, CTE state assessments, and NC final exams. EVAAS enables our district to monitor the progress of all groups of students, ensure growth opportunities, and deliver informed, data-driven decisions to help empower student progress. Another essential component of the accountability model is the NCEES that is based on the Framework for 21st Century Learning and the NC Professional Standards for educators, which emphasizes the importance of leadership, teamwork, authentic assessment, and technology-infused learning. The process for EVAAS and NCEES delivers a fair, rigorous, valid, reliable, and objective approach to evaluate educator performance on state standards and includes baseline measures of student academic achievement **[Requirement 4]**, as evidenced by the following components: **(a)** NCEES Standards: These standards empower effective leadership, quality teaching, and professional practice to progressively impact student learning.[15,16] Teacher standards include: Demonstrate Leadership, Establish Respectful Environment for Diverse Student Population, Know the Content Taught, Facilitate Learning for Students, and Reflect on Own Practice. School leader standards include: Strategic Leadership, Instructional Leadership, Cultural Leadership, Human Resource Leadership, Managerial Leadership, External Development, and Micro-Political Leadership. **(b)** Annual Evaluation Process: An objective process is used to evaluate educator performance and is focused on the following cycle for teachers:[17] principals, teachers, and peer evaluators complete

training on the process; orientation to the evaluation rubric and schedule; teacher self-assessment via a rubric; pre-observation conference to discuss self-assessment, professional growth plan, and written description of lessons to be observed; at least three observations by principal and peers; post-observation to discuss strengths and weaknesses; summary evaluation conference and scoring using the teacher summary rating form; and design of professional learning plans based on rating level. The principal and assistant principal evaluation cycle includes the following:[18] orientation to the process; pre-evaluation planning through self-assessment and performance goals; initial meeting to discuss self-assessment, goal development, and evidence with data and artifacts; data collection to support evidence; mid-year conference to discuss goal progress and review of school-wide student growth data; preparation of a consolidated performance assessment; and meeting to conduct a summary evaluation conference and agree on progress towards performance goals. **(c)** Scoring and Effectiveness Ratings: Highlighted below, the results of the annual evaluation process use a 5-point scale to assess achievement on NCEES Standards 1-5 (teachers) and 1-7 (leaders).[19]

Table 4. Teacher and Leader Rating Scale[20]		
Level	Rating	Evidence
1	Not Demonstrated	Did not demonstrate competence or adequate growth
2	Developing	Demonstrated adequate growth but not competence
3	Proficient	Demonstrated basic competence on standards of performance
4	Accomplished	Exceeded basic competence on standards most of the time
5	Distinguished	Consistently and significantly exceeded basic competence

EVAAS is used to develop a student growth measure to determine if students met state academic performance standards and exhibited expected growth compared to an annual statewide growth model.[21] Teachers from tested subjects of ELA, math, and science obtain growth calculated at the

classroom level. Once an educator has a three-year rolling average of student growth values, a 3-point scale is used to assess their impact on student academic growth that includes does not meet, meets, or exceeds expected growth. Growth rating at the school-wide level will be used to determine an effectiveness rating and PBC for teachers in non-tested subjects, instructional facilitators, and content coaches. As noted in Table 5, scoring derived from the NCEES standards and EVAAS are then used to determine an educator effectiveness rating.

Table 5. Teacher and School Leader Effectiveness Ratings[22]		
Level	Rating	Evidence
1	In Need of Improvement	Did not receive Proficient or higher on NCEES Standards 1-5 (teachers) or 1-7 (leaders) and "did not meet expected growth" on EVAAS
2	Effective	Proficient or higher on NCEES Standards 1-5 (teachers) and 1-7 (leaders) and "meets expected growth" or higher on EVAAS
3	Highly Effective	Accomplished or higher on NCEES Standards 1-5 (teachers) and 1-7 (leaders) and "exceeds expected growth" on EVAAS

These results provide a continuous process to inform our HCMS. For instance, weak areas for groups of teachers or individuals can pinpoint targeted PD needs. Educators who score below proficiency can be recommended for dismissal, demotion, or nonrenewal. Beginning teachers, who are not proficient, are not awarded a continuation license and are not eligible to remain employed as a teacher. If our district retains an educator on continuation status who scores below proficiency, they are placed on a PD growth plan and receive supports to help them reach proficiency in a year.

(iv) Project is appropriate to and will successfully address the needs of the target population.

Through our 2021 gaps analysis, we identified four key needs at our 12 target schools that will be addressed by *STRIVE*: low academic achievement coupled with discipline and attendance issues,

lack of diverse educators, teacher attrition, and inequitable access to effective educators. Educator feedback at our target schools indicated a majority (nearly 70%) agree our district should pursue the TSL Program to confront these gaps **[Requirement 3].** To raise student academic achievement and improve equitable access to effective educators, we will improve our existing HCMS and expand our PBCS to better attract, place, retain, and sustain effective educators (**Absolute Priority 1**). We will use two key data analytic tools to expand and streamline our systems which will support our high-need schools in recruiting, preparing, hiring, supporting, developing and retaining qualified, experienced, effective, and diverse educators (**Competitive Preference Priority (CPP) 1**): **(a)** Hoonuit will serve as a comprehensive analytics platform to support informed decisions among the functions of our target schools and district including enrollment and location, student data and engagement, predictive early warning, ESSA and accountability, and finance and human resources insights.[23] One essential tool is the talent and business operations function which focuses on boosting talent management, improving equitable spending, streamlining business operations, understanding culture and climate impacts, and recruiting, developing, and retaining effective educators. **(b)** Frontline will serve as a school administration analytics software to support proactive management of human capital from recruiting to retirement.[24] This system will enhance our processes by customizing workflows; recruiting, hiring, and onboarding to secure outstanding, diverse talent; informing workforce planning, organizational mapping, and position management; and streamlining data management. *STRIVE* will emphasize evidence-based activities linked to our HCMS and PBCS processes to address needs of our target population and other gaps through the intersection and cumulative effect of four core strategies described below **[Requirement 1].**

◆**Strategy 1 - Recruit:** Our gaps analysis identified hard-to-staff subjects as exceptional children, secondary math, and ELA. We will offer one-time signing bonuses to fill hard-to-staff positions

with diverse, effective educators who will excel in achieving student growth as outlined below.

Table 6. Recruitment for Hard-to-Staff Positions PBC	
Purpose	Effective educators within or outside district transfer to high-need school
Eligibility	Rating of effective or highly effective with commitment to stay 3 years
Incentive	One-time signing bonus of ▮▮▮

Given the critical role of quality educators in improving student outcomes, a strategic, competency-based approach to recruitment and selection will be implemented.[25] Our process will focus on efforts to align strategies that link the criteria of educator competencies to district objectives and school needs, and staff our target schools with educators who mirror the demographics of our students, particularly male educators of color. With a focus on increasing educator diversity in our target schools **(CPP 2)**, we will enhance our recruitment processes as follows: **(a)** Ensuring our high-need schools have the most effective, diverse teachers begins with growing our own initiatives within our district. Our HR Team and principals report that teacher assistants who transition into a teacher position have been some of the most effective teachers in our schools. We will use classified personnel evaluation data from our HCMS to assess educator diversity and recruit our most promising teacher assistants into teacher shortage areas in our high-need schools **(CPP 1c)**. These candidates will have clear pathways and support (e.g., applying to bachelor's programs, stipends for obtaining licensure and certification, coaching, and Praxis bootcamps) to enter the teaching profession. Further, we will develop a teaching academy at each high school so students, starting in 10th grade, can explore careers in the education field especially in teacher shortage areas. This experience will enable students to participate in internships as well as get hands-on opportunities as teachers in which they are placed in an elementary school class to tutor and teach lessons to students. We will collaborate with Mitchell Community College so

high school students can earn an associate degree in Teacher Preparation focused on hard-to-staff subjects which will transfer to any NC university to meet the first two years of a four-year program. **(b)** We will partner with Western Carolina University (WCU) to implement <u>Students to Teachers Education Pathways</u>. Through this partnership, our high school students will receive career-themed, hands-on training, college access experiences, and transferable coursework to apply to teacher education programs at WCU. Our theory of improvement holds that providing college-level instruction focused on teaching as a profession and intentional college access opportunities in high schools with large populations of minority students will result in improved perceptions of teaching as a profession and college-going self-efficacy, which will increase the number of students in teacher preparation programs. WCU will have a regular presence through the following: at least one visit per month to a class or co-curricular club; WCU faculty visits on an ad-hoc basis; high school and WCU instructors co-teaching; a field component at our elementary schools; summer institutes and student visits to WCU during the semester; and workshops such as the college application process, FAFSA, scholarships, and Praxis Core preparation. **(c)** We will expand our partnerships with <u>university teacher education programs</u> (Livingstone College (HBCU), UNC-Charlotte, WCU) to support recruitment activities which will create a diverse pipeline of highly qualified teachers with emphasis on increasing the number of certified teachers in our shortage areas **(CPP 1c)**. We will collaborate with these universities to connect data from beginning teacher (student teacher) performance evaluations to recruit the best and brightest into our high-need schools. Recruiting activities will focus on on-campus interviews, resume referrals, career fairs, presentations, and advertising on university bulletin boards or via online services. Livingstone College's HBCU standing will help us recruit and hire for racial diversity. Moreover, Livingstone's Teacher Education Program is committed to preparing highly qualified teachers in

high need areas of secondary math, English, and social studies, which will support our efforts to recruit educators who more closely mirror our student population **(CPP 1b)**. **(d)** Through our partnership with WCU, we will link to the Call Me MISTER (Mentors Instructing Students Towards Effective Role Models) which is a program to increase the pool of available male teachers of color **(CPP 1b)**.[26] Originating at Clemson University, this program has resulted in a 40% increase in the number of black male teachers in South Carolina public elementary schools and provides financial support, technology packages, academic support system, mentorship activities to support leadership development, professional development and career support, and summer internships. **(e)** Our Aspiring Leadership Academy will serve as an avenue to recruit and prepare experienced, effective, and diverse school leaders as well as identifying leaders to participate in decision-making regarding school, district, and state policies and practices **(CPP 2b).** The purpose will be to develop a cohort of aspiring leaders with opportunities to practice their leadership skills in a problem-based, action-learning environment that simulates challenges school leaders encounter. Content is reinforced through authentic project-based activities that are supported with blended learning content and instruction being delivered online and face-to-face. Based on our experience, cohort members who participate in the academy are better prepared to meet their leadership responsibilities as well as equipped to pursue leadership positions in our district.

◆**Strategy 2 – Prepare and Support:** Through *STRIVE*, we will engage in strategies to support educators and their professional growth by increasing the percentage of well-prepared, experienced, effective, and diverse educators **(CPP 1)**. Activities will increase educator effectiveness with ongoing support and high-quality professional learning through the following **[Requirement 6]**: **(a)** Site-based elementary instructional facilitators and secondary content coaches will serve as the backbone to support educators and professional growth that is

collaborative, continuous, and embedded in daily practice and focused on student achievement. These educators serve as a trainer, coach, and support for teachers and PLCs and engage teachers by ensuring alignment of differentiated instructional strategies and assessments; co-teaching and modeling lessons in classrooms; assisting with data analysis to drive instructional planning; and facilitating MTSS processes. **(b)** Our Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP) is a multi-faceted tiered approach to support teachers during their first three years of teaching. Our program is aligned with the Mentor and Beginning Teacher Support Standards as adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education.[27] Our state provides a regional facilitator to guide our district as we provide a quality induction program and access to professional development.[28] The BTSP approach draws on the expertise of site-based mentors and support processes to provide a comprehensive program of mentor services to new teachers and lateral entries. This process assists these teachers in growing professionally, thereby increasing student academic success, satisfaction with the profession, and likelihood of retention. In addition to individual mentoring, new teachers will have further support through the following: monthly group sessions to discuss common struggles; targeted professional learning (e.g., licensure training via Praxis boot camps) from content coaches and instructional facilitators; support for lateral entry teachers (e.g., classroom management); and strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners **(CPP 1d)** and address bias in instructional practice **(CPP 2c)**. Experienced teachers who serve in a leadership role and take on additional responsibilities as a beginning teacher mentor in their school will have the opportunity to earn the following compensation in Table 7. Payout is contingent on the completion of a mentor portfolio (e.g., checklists, classroom observation, feedback logs, training, weekly meetings).

Table 7. Beginning Teacher Mentor PBC	
Purpose	Effective teachers mentor new teachers to ensure a smooth transition
Eligibility	Rating of effective or highly effective with commitment to mentor for 3 years
Incentive	███ annually (1 mentee) or ███ annually (2 mentees)

(c) <u>Professional learning</u> will emphasize helping educators understand their measures of effectiveness and empower them to increase their NCEES rating and impact on the EVAAS student growth measure **[Requirement 6]**. Each school's leadership team will examine data from educator evaluations and student assessments to determine common problem areas (such as math). This information will be used to design targeted training supported by content experts and our iQuest Online Professional Learning platform which hosts virtual, facilitator, and self-paced learning including both mini- and full-courses plus micro-credentialing on a multitude of topics including using technology tools, digital learning and teaching, and developing students' critical thinking skills. PLCs will enable teachers at all levels of experience and effectiveness to discuss and reflect on their practice and identify how they can use new methods and content knowledge to better impact student academic achievement. Our district has developed a PLC rubric, which will be launched with the 2021-22 school year, to provide a team-level self-assessment and evaluation process to evaluate PLC implementation fidelity at the school level via stakeholder feedback, while informing needed professional learning. We will enhance PLCs to include principal participation to move them from the role of manager to instructional facilitator as well as integrate vertical alignment strategies. Professional learning will include a variety of topics to support educators and their growth such as cultural responsiveness and meeting the needs of diverse learners including students with disabilities and English learners **(CPP 1d)**; maximizing use of our student learning and instructional platforms; collective teacher efficacy; MTSS; addressing bias in instructional

practice and fostering a supportive climate **(CPP 2c)**. School leaders, mentors, coaches, and master teachers will also have specialized, research-based PD in effective coaching and strategies through the Instructional Coaching Group which will vary from one-day to eight weeks depending on educator needs.[29] Based on our 2021 TSL Educator Support Survey *(Appendix F)*, our plan will incorporate improvements educators indicated in professional learning such as autonomy to decide training needs, implementation support in the classroom, attracting diverse candidates, teaching in a high-need school, cultural diversity and competency, and digital platforms. **(d)** Experienced leaders who take on additional responsibilities as a new principal mentor can earn the PBC below.

Table 8. New Principal Mentor PBC	
Purpose	Experienced leaders mentor new principals to ensure a smooth transition
Eligibility	Rating of highly effective with commitment to mentor for 3 years
Incentive	██████ (Year 1); $██████ (Year 2); ██████ (Year 3)

To provide further support to new principals, our novice principal group meets monthly. This group, led by our Directors of Elementary and Secondary Education and consultant ████████, provides an extra level of assistance to principals. Topics include using teacher evaluations to improve effectiveness; developing leadership skills; implementing strategies to support, develop, and retain qualified, experienced, effective, and diverse educators **(CPP 1b)**; supporting and developing talented teachers to serve as mentors **(CPP 1a)**; ensuring teacher practices meet the needs of diverse learners **(CPP 1d)**; addressing bias in instructional practice **(CPP 2c)**; and promoting inclusive and bias-free hiring practices to support educator diversity **(CPP 2d)**.

◆**Strategy 3 - Lead:** The creation of leadership roles and career ladders for effective and highly effective educators in our high-need schools will help ensure a pool of effective educators when looking at promotion and succession planning for leadership positions. In addition to beginning

teacher and principal mentors, we will offer two more pathways for educators to engage in leadership roles. **(a)** Master teachers (3 at each secondary school, 2 at each elementary school) who are rated as highly effective educators with a track record of impacting student achievement growth will spend half their day in their regular class as a model classroom and half-day co-teaching with beginning teachers and teachers needing support. This strategy will allow our most effective teachers to maintain an instructional role while positively impacting other educators at their school. Master teachers will model effective strategies and provide coaching and feedback to improve instructional practices. This engagement will ensure teachers are supported when transferring professional learning to classroom practice (e.g., meeting needs of diverse learners **(CPP 1d)**, addressing bias in instructional practice **(CPP 2b)**). We will also use an innovative Student Six facilitator model (be visible; create a safe space; connect to students' lives, culture, and future self; and address racial dynamics in the classroom) in which master teachers work with student leaders (grades 4-12) to gather feedback to create culturally sensitive classrooms.[30]

Table 9. Master Teacher PBC	
Purpose	Hands-on, targeted support for new or struggling teachers
Eligibility	Highly effective teacher evaluation rating with submission of portfolio
Incentive	██████ annually

(b) Teachers will have the opportunity to earn an incentive if they take on a leadership role through participating in growth and leadership opportunities to inform school, district, or state policies and practices to improve educator diversity **(CPP 2b)**; sponsoring a club; or facilitating the creation of a parent-teacher organization (PTO) to enhance school climate and family engagement. The policy committee, club, or PTO must meet before or after the teacher's scheduled working hours. Virtual, face-to-face, and hybrid meetings will be used and documented based on portfolio requirements

such as number of members and meetings, meeting minutes, photographs, videos, and artifacts.

Table 10. Teacher Leadership Roles PBC	
Purpose	Enhancement of school climate, polices/practices, and parent engagement
Eligibility	Effective or highly effective teacher rating with submission of portfolio
Incentive	███████████

◆**Strategy 4 - Reward:** Activities will increase educator effectiveness through high-quality support, preparation, and professional learning described above and recognize effective educators who meet or exceed individual or school-wide performance objectives that lead to student growth.

Table 11. Individual and School-Wide PBC	
Individual Growth for Tested Subject Teachers	
Purpose	Teachers use effective instructional practices that increase student growth
Eligibility	Effective or highly effective teacher evaluation rating
Incentive	Proficient or higher **AND** meets growth (████) or exceeds growth (████)
School-Wide Growth for Teachers, Instructional Facilitators, and Content Coaches	
Purpose	Educators use effective instructional practices that increase student growth
Eligibility	Effective or highly effective educator evaluation rating
Incentive	School grade of A, B or C **AND** meets growth (████) or exceeds growth (████)
Principal and Assistant Principal School-Wide Performance	
Purpose	School leaders contribute to school-wide student growth
Eligibility	Effective or highly effective evaluation principal or assistant principal rating
Incentive	Principal/AP effective (████/████) or highly effective (████/████)

B. QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN

(i) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale.

Inspiring educators to *STRIVE* to be their best, our project will raise student academic achievement and improve equitable access to effective, diverse educators in our district's 12 high-need schools (**Absolute Priority 2**). Increasing teacher and school leader effectiveness, we will enhance our existing HCMS and PBCS to better attract, place, retain, and sustain effective educators. Our theory of action purposes that <u>if</u> educators are exposed to high-quality experiences that **(a)** recruit, **(b)** prepare and support, **(c)** lead, and **(d)** reward, <u>then</u> this change will lead to equitable access to effective, diverse educators who have a positive impact on student academic achievement **[Requirement 10]**. Instead of taking a siloed approach, we hypothesize that the additive effect of all four components working together will result in a high-quality, streamlined HCMS and PBCS (**Absolute Priority 1**) on a continuum from recruitment to retirement that supports educators and their professional growth. Detailed in our logic model in *Appendix A*, the implementation of these project components is linked to relevant short-, mid-, and long-term outcomes that include increases in the following: students demonstrating on-grade-level academic achievement in reading and math, teacher and school leader diversity **(CPP 2)**, educators in hard-to-staff positions, retention of effective teachers at high-need schools, educators rated effective or highly effective **(CPP 1)**, educators who show improvement over the previous year on student growth metrics, teachers passing licensure or earning credentials, and positive school climate.

(ii) Design includes review of literature, plan for implementation, and methodological tools.

◆**Review of Literature:** Our project design is based on the educator human capital framework which is a synthesis of research and practices that integrates processes into four associated subsystems of core functions:[31] acquire (hire the right educators in right positions); develop

(professional growth in learning communities); sustain (reward and challenge effective educators); and evaluate (enlighten evidence-based staffing choices). With research citations documented in *Appendix F*, our project is designed using high-quality research and evidence-based findings that suggest our proposed strategies are likely to improve student and educator outcomes that include the following **[Requirement 10]**: **(a)** We will engage in high-quality strategies to recruit and retain effective educators that increase diversity, so our educators and student body more closely mirror each other **(CPP 1b)**. We will use a range of recruitment practices connected to higher educator qualifications: recruiting from multiple sources, automating algorithmic recruitment tasks, using a customer service orientation towards potential candidates, and creating a compelling recruitment message.[32] This process emphasizes activities **(CPP 2a)** such as funneling a pipeline of effective and diverse educators through our partnerships with university teacher education programs and HBCUs (Livingstone College), growing our own initiatives, WCU's Students to Teachers Education Pathways, Call Me MISTER, and Aspiring Leadership Academy. Studies find that educators of color positively impact improvements in academic achievement scores of students of color in math and reading, graduation rates, and aspirations to go to college.[33,34,35,36] Further, educators from ethnically and racially diverse backgrounds also help students of color advance and enroll in more rigorous coursework, hold higher expectations, and reduce the number of students being referred to special education.[37,38,39,40,41] Along with academic impacts, research shows social and emotional benefits for students of color when they have a teacher who reflects their race and gender such as being less likely to experience suspension, unexcused absences, and chronic absenteeism.[42,43] **(b)** Activities will increase teacher effectiveness with ongoing support through master teachers, elementary instructional facilitators, secondary content coaches, and beginning teacher support **(CPP 1a)**. Research finds a supportive rapport with an experienced

teacher boosts new teacher capacity and retention as an educator.[44] Additionally, having peer coaching support can promote improvements by increasing the quality of classroom interactions with students, strengthening reform measures, and helping teachers improve their instruction.[45] Studies show that first-year teachers who engage in induction and mentoring support are twice as likely to remain in teaching than those who did not get support, particularly for teachers of color.[46] **(c)** Effective school leaders are crucial to strengthening teaching and school communities and play a critical role in students' academic success by creating cultures of high expectations for both students and instructional staff.[47]Activities will increase leader effectiveness with ongoing support through new principal mentors and novice principal groups **(CPP 1a-b)**. Research finds effective school leaders are essential in creating environments where teachers want to continue to teach.[48,49] Support through our principal mentor activities will empower our school leaders to improve working conditions in their schools that will help motivate teachers to stay and increase their effectiveness. Expert coaching has led to increases school leader effectiveness and impacts on instructional quality through improved instructional leadership which leads to increased student achievement.[50] Further, research finds that principal transformational leadership is positively and significantly linked to teacher leadership which contributes to teacher self-efficacy.[51] Evidence demonstrates that administrative support is particularly vital in increasing the retention of teachers of color.[52] **(d)** Professional learning that is content-focused leads to improvements in educator practices.[53] Our PD framework will include the following components known to lead to a successful impact on student learning:[54] appropriate content (subject-specific and pedagogical); collaborative culture (PLCs); active engagement (hands-on learning); job-embedded (classroom based); systems perspective (linked to instructional goals); sustained efforts (supported over time); and student-focused (centered on analysis of student learning). PLCs build collective responsibility

for student learning, helping students achieve at higher levels and producing higher levels of teacher satisfaction.[55] High-functioning PLCs also assist in skill-building for new educators and lead to greater teacher retention.[56] Professional learning delivered within PLCs has shown to be one of the most effective modes of delivery, improving teacher practice and student achievement.[57]

(e) We will provide PBC to recognize effective educators who meet or exceed individual or school-wide performance objectives that lead to student growth. Studies find positive and statistically significant effects of teacher merit pay on student test scores.[58] Research shows positive impacts of pay-for-performance on teacher and principal ratings based on student achievement growth, teachers earning higher classroom observation ratings, and higher student achievement in reading and math.[59] Further, studies find that pay-for-performance initiatives are more likely to be successful when coupled with improvements to working conditions offered through *STRIVE* such as job-embedded PD, collaborative teacher groups, and leadership opportunities.[60]

◆**High-Quality Implementation Plan:** Our implementation plan will emphasize the following core focus areas: **(a)** <u>HCMS</u> (**Absolute Priority 1**): Building a sustainable human capital infrastructure and increasing capacity to attract and retain effective educators by aligning with our district instructional improvement vision; building capacity and sustainability by improving current HCMS; and designing an integrated process to inform essential human capital decisions.

(b) <u>PBCS</u> (**Absolute Priority 1**): Implementing a robust educator evaluation system that supports differentiated levels of incentives, leadership roles, and effectiveness by developing a strategy and process to involve educators in the design of the PBCS; continuing to develop the capacity of the educator evaluation process that provides valid, reliable, and objective measurements of skills and student achievement; and integrating the use of data warehousing and integration systems. **(c)** <u>Professional Development</u>: Providing ongoing, personalized support to ensure educators develop

high-quality skills as an effective educator using disaggregated data to identify professional development needs. **(d)** <u>Access to Effective Educators</u>: Ensuring students in high-need schools **(Absolute Priority 2)** have equitable access to educators with experience, credentials, and a demonstrated track record of success by using high-quality evaluation and support systems. High-quality implementation will be guided by a variety district tools and processes which are highlighted in detail in Section D: Adequacy of Resources and include the following: I-SS 2025 Strategic Plan which is organized into three overarching focus areas including Eliminate Opportunity Gaps, Improve School and District Performance, and Increase Educator Preparedness;[61] I-SS Model to Raise Achievement and Close Gaps as a continuous improvement process so educators are empowered in making decisions that impact curriculum, instruction, and assessment;[62] logic model in *Appendix A* and an evaluation to ensure implementation is focused on system change; SWOT analysis to evaluate school progress towards goals identified in school improvement plans; and our detailed management plan in Section C.

◆**Objectives/Methodological Tools:** Table 12 highlights our use of appropriate methodological tools to ensure achievement of objectives **[Requirement 11]**. In addition to the required GPRAs, performance measures have been written with annual benchmarks to monitor progress.

Table 12. *STRIVE* Goals and Objectives
Goal 1: Redesign our district's existing HCMS and PBCS
1. <u>Staff diversity</u> will increase at least 1 percentage point in each of Years 1 – 3. **Measure:** Percent teachers and leaders of color. **Baseline:** 8% in 2021.
2. <u>Retention</u> of the most effective teachers in high-need schools will increase at least 1 percentage point in each of Years 1 – 3. **Measure:** % of teachers rated Accomplished or Distinguished in high-need schools in Spring who do not request a transfer from a high-need school to a non-high-

need school the following fall. **Baseline:** To be established in Fall 2021.

3. <u>Hard-to-staff positions</u> that are vacant will decrease at least 1 percentage point in each of Years 1 – 3. **Measure:** % hard-to-staff positions vacant on September 1. **Baseline:** 4% in 2021.

4. **(GPRA D)** At least 85% of teacher and school leader <u>evaluations inform human capital management decisions</u> each year. **Measure:** % teachers and school leaders in TSL schools evaluated in a given year for whom evaluation ratings were used to inform decisions regarding recruitment, hiring, placement, retention, dismissal, PD, tenure, and/or promotion. **Baseline:** N/A.

5. **(GPRA E)** Percent of teachers and school leaders within the district who earn <u>PBC</u> based on their individual evaluation ratings. **Measure:** % of teachers and school leaders evaluated in a given year who earn PBC based on evaluation ratings. **Baseline:** N/A.

6. **(GPRA F)** At least 80% of teachers and school leaders in TSL schools will earn <u>PBC</u> based on their individual evaluation ratings in Y1, 85% in Y2 and 90% in Y3. **Measure:** % of teachers and school leaders evaluated in a given year who earn PBC based on ratings. **Baseline:** Year 1.

7 and 8. **(GPRA G and H)** The number of teachers (GPRA G) and Leaders (GPRA H) <u>receiving PBC</u> disaggregated by race, gender, and where available, disability status. **Baseline:** N/A.

9. At least 90% of <u>BTs receive support</u> from a mentor each year. **Measure:** % teachers in their first three years of teaching who agree or strongly agree that their BT mentor has provided support that has been instrumental in their professional growth on an annual survey. **Baseline:** N/A.

10. At least 90% of <u>beginning leaders receive support</u> from a mentor each year. **Measure:** % leaders in their first 3 years who agree or strongly agree that their mentor has provided support that has been instrumental in their professional growth on an annual survey. **Baseline:** N/A.

Goal 2: Develop and increase teacher and school leader effectiveness

11. Decrease provisionally <u>licensed teachers</u> in TSL schools by at least 2 percentage points in each

of Years 1-3. **Measure:** % teachers in TSL schools who are licensed/credentialed. **Baseline:** 10%.

12. At least 80% of teacher report effective job-embedded PD in Y1, increasing to at least 85% in Y2 and at least 90% in Y3. **Measure:** % of surveyed teachers who report PLCs or coaching with a master teacher has been "instrumental in their professional growth." **Baseline:** N/A.

13. (GPRA A) Increase the percentage of effective teachers and school leaders in TSL schools by at least 2 percentage points in each of Years 2 and 3. **Measure:** % of evaluated teachers and leaders rated effective or higher by the evaluation and support system. **Baseline:** 87% in 2018-19.

14. (GPRA B) The percentage of teachers and school leaders across the district that show improvements, over the previous year, on the student growth component of their evaluation rating. **Measure:** % of teachers and leaders in the district rated not met or met who increase at least one rating level the next year. **Baseline:** N/A.

15. (GPRA C) Increase student growth ratings of teachers and leaders in TSL schools by at least 50% in each of Years 1 - 3. **Measure:** % of teachers and leaders in TSL schools rated not met or met who increase at least one rating level the next year. **Baseline:** Year 1.

16. (GPRA I) Provide PBC for teacher leadership opportunities for at least 72 teachers in Years 1 - 3. **Measure:** # teachers receiving PBC for leadership responsibilities disaggregated by race, gender, and where available, disability status. **Baseline:** 0.

17. Increase in percent of teachers reporting a positive school climate by at least 2 percentage points in each of Years 1-3 or until 90% report a positive climate. **Measure:** # teachers completing Annual Teacher Working Conditions Survey who agree or strongly agree that "My school is a good place to work and learn." **Baseline:** 87% in 2018.

18. Increase student math proficiency by at least 3 percentage points in each of Years 2-3. **Measure:** % proficient on State math assessment (3 – 8) and Math I EOC. **Baseline:** 44% in 2019.

19. Increase <u>student ELA proficiency</u> by at least 3 percentage points in each of Years 2-3.

Measure: % proficient on State ELA assessment (3 – 8) and English I EOC. **Baseline:** 44% 2019.

20. The TSL program will be <u>implemented with at least 90% fidelity</u> in each of Years 1-3.

Measure: Score on Fidelity Index (*Appendix F*) based on activities and outputs in the logic model.

(iii) Methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and assessment of progress.

◆**Evaluating and Monitoring [Requirement 11]:** Our primary evaluation components are depicted via our logic model (*Appendix A*) which will be used to guide *STRIVE's* design and development from beginning to end. The model provides a logical base to conduct the program evaluation, spells out desired outcomes, and dissects the crucial pieces of our plan, including inputs, activities, outputs, and the extent to which activities have targeted their intended audience.[63] Logic models also set the stage for successful evaluation by clarifying expectations, identifying evaluation questions, and ensuring alignment between activities and the performance goals and objectives.[64] Our logic model's underlying <u>theory of change</u> is based on motivation theory— people will change their behavior to increase the likelihood they will receive an incentive. *STRIVE's* theory of change connects performance pay with improved student academic growth and is highly dependent upon educator perceptions, cognitions, and beliefs.[65]

◆**Formative and Summative Evaluation:** Efforts will include formative and summative evaluation to assess progress in achieving outcomes and objectives and provide feedback to guide implementation and make mid-course corrections. The extent to which any program achieves its desired outcomes is strongly linked to fidelity of implementation.[66] Formative evaluation will include tracking implementation with a Fidelity Index (*Appendix F*) based on the activities and outputs identified in the logic model that assesses the type, quality, and quantity of activities being delivered (expressed in frequency, intensity, and duration); the extent to which participants are

Iredell-Statesville Schools: Narrative   Page 26 of 40

exposed to and engaged in activities; and the reactions of stakeholders, such as administrators, teachers, and students. Reactions are defined as participants' cognitions, opinions, and beliefs expected to change with program exposure. Assessing reactions throughout our project's life cycle is important as PBCS cannot be sustained in a climate of negative reactions from key stakeholders. The key questions we will use to assess stakeholder reactions include the extent to which teachers and school leaders: **(a)** are aware of, understand, and accept *STRIVE* goals; **(b)** believe they have the competencies, resources, and support to succeed; **(c)** trust that positive consequences, including rewards and recognition, will result from their success; **(d)** value the rewards; and **(e)** understand their performance results, accept the validity of the results, and recognize why they did or did not receive PBC. Our overarching summative question is how, if at all, did the PBCS affect student performance? The summative evaluation will use a short-term interrupted time series design with a comparison group (SITS-C) to assess program impact on school-level standardized achievement scores in math and reading for Grades 4 and 8, and the ACT for Grade 11. The SITS-C design measures program impacts on student performance by comparing standardized test scores for annual student cohorts in a specific grade after a reform is launched (its follow-up period) with the scores of cohorts from several years before the reform was launched (baseline).[67] Impact is measured as a deviation, or difference, from the past pattern of performance. To further increase confidence in impact estimates, we will use propensity-score matching using key variables such as school level, ethnicity, percent eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, and dollars spent per pupil to identify a comparison group of 60 high-need schools in neighboring school districts. We will compare trend data for all schools five years before and three years after the program's implementation. Deviation differences from actual versus past performance in *STRIVE* schools and comparison schools will be used to determine impact. Although this type of summative data

will not be available until 2023-24, we are committed to assessing our program's impact and, to the extent possible, data for grade levels in addition to Grades 4, 8, and 11 will be added to capture variation between grades. Our summative study power analysis is included in *Appendix F*.

◆**Methods:** Our evaluation incorporates a mixed-methods approach that will triangulate our data and significantly contribute to the validity of the evaluation process.[68] Combining qualitative and quantitative methods will increase the depth of our information and provide feedback that will enable us to make critical mid-course corrections and program adjustments in a timely manner. Quantitative data sources include student standardized test scores; teacher promotion, turnover, and retention rates; and surveys that include scale items measuring teachers' cognitions, opinions, and beliefs. Qualitative data sources include interviews, focus groups, open-ended survey questions, and project meeting minutes. Interviews with key school- and district-level leaders, including the project director, principals, and management team, will assess their role in building awareness, communicating goals, promoting effective communication strategies, supporting implementation of the program, and will gauge their perceived outcomes of the program, including its effects on teaching and any unexpected or unintended consequences. Educator focus groups will be conducted to assess general reactions to the program, identify areas of concern and how best to address these concerns, and assess the extent to which the PBC influences teaching and leading, as well as the decision to return to (or leave) the high-need school.

◆**Data Analysis:** Quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics (i.e., means, standard deviations, frequencies, percentages). Parametric and non-parametric inferential statistics (i.e., chi square, t-tests, ANOVAs) will be used where appropriate, and effect sizes will be computed between groups. Results will be reported in aggregate and disaggregated by school to promote utilization at the school-level. Qualitative data will be coded and analyzed thematically

to gain a richer and deeper understanding of stakeholder reactions.

◆**Reporting and Continuous Feedback:** *STRIVE's* success relies heavily on continuous high-quality feedback. The independent evaluator will participate in monthly management team meetings to build consensus on critical evaluation questions, methods, instruments, data collection protocols, and reporting formats. Whenever possible, evaluation results will be shared via a data dashboard with charts and graphs for ease of interpretation as well as through interim and annual reports, survey, and focus group snapshots, and in-person briefings provided by our evaluator to the board, administrators, principals, and staff. This participatory approach builds stakeholders ownership, increasing the likelihood that results will be used to improve the program and achieve positive outcomes. We will share evaluation findings with the US Department of Education and the What Works Clearinghouse and post resources, videos and photos of project activities, and evaluation/assessment snapshots and reports on school district and partner websites **[Requirement 11]**. This information will be promoted through social media to maximize accessibility. Evaluators will also publish results in ERIC and other applicable journals. Finally, the *STRIVE* Management Team, partners, and the evaluation team will present at conferences such as MTSS Innovations, American Association of School Administrators, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and American Evaluation Association to share findings and provide in-depth professional learning for those seeking to recreate this program in their own communities.

C. QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

(i) Adequacy of the management plan for accomplishing project tasks.

We designed our management structure to ensure effective administration and high-quality implementation to achieve objectives on time and within budget. Resumes and job descriptions in *Appendix B* demonstrate the qualifications of our key personnel. Our structure includes: **(a)**

STRIVE Management Team (SMT): Meeting monthly, this team will be led by our Chief Elementary and Secondary Academic Officers and includes our Assistant Superintendent for HR; Director of Accountability, Testing, and Student Information; Executive Director of HR; and Director of Secondary Curriculum & MTSS. This team will be responsible for monitoring implementation to maximize the quality-of-service provision; reporting updates to stakeholders; examining educator feedback on the PBCS; allocating resources; assessing school results to ensure intended outcomes are met; supporting recruitment and retainment of diverse educators; identifying best practices to improve educator effectiveness; and developing a sustainability plan.

(b) Project Director (PD): A full-time, grant-funded master's level Project Director will lead the TSL program; ensure fiscal management; communicate with school personnel, independent evaluator, partners, and the federal program office; adhere to the grant timeline; meet program milestones; coordinate grant components and professional learning; lead sustainability planning efforts; and participate on the Management Team and District Executive Cabinet meetings. **(c)** Accountability Coordinator (AC): A full-time, grant-funded Coordinator will maintain accurate reporting in compliance with federal regulations; ensure budget management; track matching funds; manage and train schools to use student and teacher data; work with finance and HR to link data regarding educator contracts, employee compensation, and testing data; and assist with federal reporting requirements. **(d)** HR Team: Meeting monthly and led by our Executive Director of HR, this team will synthesize *STRIVE* evaluation data and information from our data analytics platforms to inform and improve upon our HCMS and PBCS as well as monitor improvements in increasing educator diversity in our target schools and overseeing timelines and action plans for promoting inclusive and bias-free HR practices **(CPP 2d)**. **(e)** Content Coaches (CC) and Instructional Facilitators (IF): Site-based elementary IF and secondary CC will support educator

professional growth that is collaborative and embedded in daily practice and focused on student achievement. These educators serve as a coach and engage teachers by ensuring alignment of instructional strategies and assessments; co-teaching and modeling lessons in classrooms; assisting with data analysis to drive instructional planning; and facilitating MTSS processes. **(f)** Master Teachers (MT): Three grant-funded teachers at each secondary school and two at each elementary school who are rated highly effective with a proven track record of impacting student achievement growth will spend half their day in their regular class as a model classroom and half-day co-teaching with beginning teachers and teachers identified as needing targeted support. Master teachers will model effective strategies and provide observations, coaching, and feedback designed to improve instructional practices schoolwide. **(g)** School Resource Officers: To improve school climate and thus increase teacher working conditions, satisfaction, and retention, SROs in each school will redirect their time and efforts to align with the objectives of our TSL grant. **(h)** The Evaluation Group (TEG): Identified through a procurement process that complies with 2 CFR 200.317-200.327, TEG will conduct an impact study to gauge program effectiveness, inform fidelity of implementation, and disseminate findings for continuous improvement and replication. Table 13 provides a summary of the management plan highlighting key milestones, timelines for activities and promoting inclusive and bias-free HR practices **(CPP 2d)**, and responsibilities during our three-year implementation with the use of funds detailed in our budget narrative **[Requirement 7]**. Our plan allows for initial efforts to solicit additional stakeholder feedback and input, make modifications, and provide information sessions to ensure understanding of the PBCS.

Table 13. Management Plan: October 2021 – September 2024		
Milestones	**Timeline**	**Responsibility**
Convene management team to monitor project progress	10/21, monthly	CAO

Confirm grant timeline, partners, and vendors	10/21 – 11/21	SMT
Post job openings, hire, and orient new grant staff	10/21 – 12/21	SMT
Participate in calls and check ins with ED program officer	11/21, monthly	PD, TEG
Begin program evaluation (plan, data analysis, tools)	11/21, ongoing	TEG
Oversee compensation, contracts, and staff database	12/21, ongoing	AC, HR
Design stakeholder input plan and solicit input on PBCS	12/21 – 4/22	PD, TEG
Identify and make key PBCS modifications	5/22-7/22	SMT
Provide sessions to ensure educator PBCS awareness	7/22, biannually	PD
Compile fidelity of implementation data by school	1/22, monthly	TEG
Provide snapshot reports and evaluation briefs	9/22, semi-annually	TEG
Submit APR to program office and share with I-SS Board	12/22, annually	PD, TEG
Develop written sustainability plan	1/23, quarterly	PD, TEG
Conduct an evaluation impact study	1/24 – 9/24	TEG
Request TSL renewal funding for Years 4 and 5	5/24	PD
Submit final performance report to the program office	12/24	PD, TEG
Strategy 1: Recruit		
Revise educators of color recruitment strategy	2/22	SMT
Confirm and develop partnerships with IHEs and HBCUs	2/22	PD, HR
Implement recruitment and hiring strategies	3/22, ongoing	PD, HR
Identify historically effective teachers in high-need areas	3/22, ongoing	PD, HR, SMT
Identify/recruit effective educators for transfers in district	4/22, annually	PD, HR, SMT
Identify historically effective principals and APs	3/22, ongoing	PD, HR, SMT
Identify/recruit effective leaders for transfers in district	4/22, annually	PD, HR, SMT

Complete transfers and pay one-time signing bonuses	6/22, annually	PD, HR, SMT
Strategy 2: Prepare and Support		
Provide PD on coaching and mentoring	11/21, ongoing	PD
Develop school-wide and targeted PD plans	12/21, quarterly	SMT, PD, AC
Develop criteria to support inclusive & bias-free practices	12/21, ongoing	HR
Implement school-wide professional learning	Begin 1/22, ongoing	CC, IF
Provide individualized coaching based on NCEES data	Begin 1/22, ongoing	CC, IF, MT
Model and coach effective instructional strategies	Begin 1/22, monthly	CC, IF, MT
Offer PD in inclusive and bias-free practices to leaders	Begin 1/22, monthly	HR, PD
Provide training on using EVAAS data	1/22, ongoing	AC
Assist in educator observation process	1/22, ongoing	HR, CC, IF
Participate in ED meetings and AVID Summer conference	6/22, annually	PD, MTs
Finalize criteria for PBC and disseminate to teachers	5/22-8/22	SMT, PD, AC
Pay teacher and leader mentor incentives	10/22, annually	PD, AC
Strategy 3: Lead		
Define master roles through the PBCS	2/22	SMT, PD
Offer applications for teacher leadership roles	2/22, ongoing	PD
Identify effective educators as master teachers	2/22, ongoing	SMT, PD
Identify teachers not scoring at least accomplished	2/22-3/22	SMT, PD
Pair new and struggling teachers with master teachers	4/22, ongoing	PD, AC
Provide master teacher PBC	5/22, annually	PD, AC
Strategy 4: Reward		
Pay PBC for individual and school-wide growth	10/22, annually	PD, AC

D. ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES

(i) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement.

To ensure system change, all district improvement initiatives, including *STRIVE*, are designed based on our I-SS Model to Raise Achievement and Close Gaps. Use of this continuous improvement process means that educators are empowered in making decisions that impact curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Our triangular model ensures educators are heavily involved in looking at data not only to make decisions about student learning and instruction but other key human capital processes such as recruitment, hiring, retention, and compensation. The base of this model is driven by our mission, vision, and values; data-driven decision making; MTSS; plan, do, study, act processes; and aligned strategic plans. This model is a learning-centered approach which compares the results of formative assessments and other key indicators against the NC Essential Standards and curriculum guides using collaborative teams to answer five questions: What do students need to learn? How will they learn it? How will we know they have learned it? What will we do if they do not learn it? What will we do if they already know it? With the I-SS model at the forefront, we designed *STRIVE* based on our prior experiences, best practices, and evidence-based approaches highlighted in detail in Section B. The following resources will be used to guide system improvements: **(a)** Our logic model in *Appendix A* highlights key activities that will result in system changes that focus on a transformational approach through a redesigned HCMS and robust PBCS at our high-need schools: attracting diverse, effective educators into hard-to-staff subjects who will excel in achieving student growth; increasing educator effectiveness through preparation, support, and high-quality PD; and offering incentives for educators who engage in leadership roles or contribute to student growth. Through *STRIVE*, we will produce a variety of system changes at our high-need schools with increases in the following: students

demonstrating on-grade-level academic achievement in math and reading; positive school climate; retention of effective teachers; leaders and teachers rated as effective; and leaders and teachers who show improvements on student growth metrics. **(b)** Independent evaluation will result in objective, ongoing, formative feedback about our progress, impact on student achievement, and educator effectiveness. While each strategy is based on strong research *(Appendix F: Citations)*, we will use evaluation findings to identify those that are most effective in increasing educator effectiveness, equitable access to effective educators, and student achievement to incorporate into system improvement efforts. **(c)** At the beginning and middle of every school year, principals work with their staff to complete a SWOT analysis to evaluate their school's progress towards goals identified in their individual school improvement plans. This approach includes review of academic, social-emotional, behavioral, and school-climate indicators with comparisons to district and state averages and next-steps identified. The SWOT includes open-ended questions on the focus of content coaches and instructional facilitators, PLC goals, how struggling teachers are being supported, integration of technology with instruction, progress of underrepresented student subgroups, and parent and community engagement and feedback. **(e)** Once the SWOT has been completed, it is used by our superintendent during beginning and mid-year school process check meetings with the principal. At school-year end, updates are made for use in development of the school-wide improvement plan for the following academic year. Progress towards improvement goals is also used as part of the principal's end-of-year review. This process enables us to identify trends and allocate resources to ensure continuous improvement at our target schools and district.

(ii) Project is likely to build local capacity to expand services that address needs.

STRIVE will address the four needs identified in our gaps analysis by focusing on increasing student academic achievement and improving equitable access to effective educators in 12 high-

need schools. By redesigning our HCMS and expanding our PBCS, *STRIVE* builds local capacity by attracting effective, diverse educators into hard-to-staff positions; recruiting and supporting aspiring administrators into leadership roles; increasing educator effectiveness through mentoring and professional learning; and providing opportunities for a career ladder via leadership roles. Highlighted in Section A, our project builds on prior experiences and existing district initiatives to expand services to address the needs of our target population highlighted in Table 14.

Table 14. Local Resources to Build Capacity to Expand Services	
Principal Performance-Based Incentives (local)	Hoonuit and Frontline Analytics Platforms
Title I and II professional learning (federal)	Aspiring Leadership Academy
Instructional Facilitators and Content Coaches	Beginning Teacher Support Program
NC DPI Professional Learning (state)	iQuest Online Professional Learning Platform
NC DPI Restart Model Schools (state)	PLC Rubric
Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)	Four US ED Grants (federal)
Data-Based Systems: EVAAS and NCEES	NC DPI Beginning Teacher Facilitator (state)

(iii) Demonstrates the resources to operate the project beyond length of grant.

Our district has a variety of evidence to ensure *STRIVE* operates beyond the life of the grant which includes a financial and operating model, commitment of partners, and support from stakeholders.

◆**Financial and Operating Model:** Building the capacity of our educator effectiveness initiatives and improving the diversity of our educators has been a long-term district focus to help improve academic outcomes for students at some of our highest need, low-performing schools. Our solid commitment to future expansion and sustainability is evidenced by our I-SS 2025 Strategic Plan which is organized into three overarching focus areas: Eliminate Opportunity Gaps, Improve School and District Performance, and Increase Educator Preparedness.[69] Each of these focus areas

Iredell-Statesville Schools: Narrative

has goals and objectives our district monitors to gauge how effective strategies are working. The plan commits to continuous improvement as adjustments to the strategies used will be made to maximize effectiveness. Five key TSL-related objectives in our strategic plan demonstrate our commitment to provide resources beyond the length of the grant: By June 2025 **(a)** the overall satisfaction on climate surveys will meet or exceed 90% for Teacher Working Conditions Survey and 90% for the I-SS Climate Survey. **(b)** increase the diversity of staff by 5% and decrease the teacher turnover rate by 2.5%. **(c)** the percentage of I-SS educators that meet or exceed expected growth on EVAAS will be 100%. **(d)** increase the number of culturally relevant, equity-focused resources for educators by 10%. **(e)** 100% of BTs will have a rating of proficient on all five standards and meet or exceed expected growth. Our solid commitment to future expansion and sustainability is evidenced by our efforts and commitment of extensive resources to engage in TSL services. Further, for *STRIVE*, we have committed substantial investments and in-kind resources to ensure success and sustainability as indicated by our 50% match detailed in the budget narrative. Through *STRIVE*, our 3-year project will enable us to continue this momentum via a HCMS and PBCS designed to meet the needs of our target population. Table 15 summarizes our plan.

Table 15. District Multi-Year Long-Term Plan	
Current	Pilot local PBC strategy: principals, Restart Schools, hard-to-staff subjects/schools
Year 1	Solicit input on *STRIVE* PBCS; modify; begin recruitment strategies
Year 2	Pay incentives; continue recruitment strategies; begin sustainability planning
Year 3	Continue full PBCS implementation; complete development of sustainability plan
Years 4-5	Request TSL renewal funding; identify best practices; continue applying PBCS
Years 6-10	Implement sustainability plan including reallocating Title funds, building PBC into budget allocations, embedding mentors in PLC structures, merging MT and IF roles

To ensure long-term success, our management team will develop a multi-year sustainability plan that delineates a financial and operating model which retains best practices from the grant as well as state, local, and private funds after TSL funding ends **[Requirements 8 and 9]**. Our sustainability plan will include:[70] **(a)** history, progress, and future plans outlining the case for each school through background information, strengths and weaknesses; **(b)** achieving goals and strategic considerations that details how external circumstances can impact our schools and how the goals will be achieved under these conditions; **(c)** financing plan highlighting the assumptions about each school's future funding needs and how they will be met; **(d)** action plan and timeline that includes tasks and benchmarks for each sustainability strategy and who is responsible for each; and **(e)** conclusion that delineates the anticipated outcomes resulting in a sustained program model.

◆**Commitment of Partners:** Collaboration with a range of partners will be critical to maximizing the effectiveness of *STRIVE* and continuing services beyond the life of the grant. With letters of support in *Appendix C*, these partners and experts will be essential to delivering services and include: **(a)** Livingstone College (HBCU): Sharing job listings; identifying opportunities for the district to connect with diverse students such as career fairs and mock interviews; providing lessons learned through experiences recruiting and retaining diverse candidates to their educator preparation program. **(b)** Western Carolina University: Sending a representative to make monthly visits at Statesville High; working to recruit diverse students into STEP; providing students who take courses FE21 and FE22 with college credit; inviting students to attend a summer institute at WCU; designating a WCU instructor to co-teach with high school instructors; and promoting employment with teacher candidates. **(c)** Mitchell Community College: Providing opportunities for students to earn an associate degree in Teacher Preparation while in high school. **(d)** UNC Charlotte: Participating in college awareness events; working to offer dual enrollment

opportunities; promoting employment with the district to students from diverse backgrounds; and allowing access to the "Hire-a-Niner" job portal to post opportunities for employment. **(e)** Dream Builders: Offering diversity and inclusion training services for teachers on serving diverse learners and convening HBCU round tables with match valued at $315,000. **(f)** AVID: Offering discounted professional learning focused on strategies to authentically connect with students from diverse backgrounds. **(g)** Edgenuity: Offering a match valued at $15,000 and providing professional development to instructional educators. **(h)** Edmentum: Offering professional development services at a discounted rate. **(i)** Curriculum Associates: Offering a match valued at $45,000 and providing discounted professional development on i-Ready. **(j)** i-LEADR: Providing an in-kind match valued at $190,068; supporting educators using RTI: STORED! early warning platform. **(k)** Adding to Education: Providing in-kind math content, pedagogy and curriculum support at $60,000. **(l)** Emerald Education: Offering an in-kind match valued at $21,000 and providing training, coaching, and support for math teachers. **(m)** PowerSchool: Supporting use of Hoonuit to mainstream talent and business operations with a $15,728 discount based on preliminary quote.

◆ **Stakeholder Support:** Documented in *Appendix C* through letters of support and a MOU, we have ongoing support from stakeholders and a future multi-year plan that is critical to our long-term success **[Requirement 3]**: **(a)** School Board and Superintendent: Through district initiatives and our strategic plan, ensuring students have access to highly qualified, diverse educators has been a longstanding effort of our district. Outlined in our budget, leadership has shown their support by ensuring we have over 50% match (totaling $12,585,795) to implement activities supported by the grant such as principal incentives, instructional facilitators, content coaches, school resources officers, technology resources, and facilities usage. **(b)** Management Team: Each team member has been actively involved in the design of *STRIVE* by conducting a gaps analysis,

examining best practices, and assessing educator feedback to inform the project design. Team members will support our project by applying unique knowledge promoting success from developing the initial framework to implementation to sustainability and working in collaboration with the Project Director to produce positive outcomes. **(c)** <u>Community</u>: We have variety of district- and school-level structures that have both community and parent stakeholders to offer feedback to project operations, which include School Improvement Teams and strategic plan focus groups and surveys. **(d)** <u>Principals</u>: As evidenced by a MOU, each principal has committed to collaborating with grant staff to reach *STRIVE* goals in areas such as streamlining our HCMS to recruit, place, retain, and sustain effective educators; expanding our PBCS using stakeholder feedback; incorporating recruitment practices aimed at increasing diversity; recruiting skilled educators to fill hard-to-staff positions; improving beginning teacher and lateral entry efforts by introducing written policies and mentor training; and identifying and recruiting master teachers.

(e) <u>Educators</u>: To gather feedback from stakeholders, we conducted a 2021 Educator Support Survey with 212 educators from our 12 target schools providing input *(Appendix F)*. Nearly 70% agree we should pursue a TSL grant. Specifically, teachers indicated a need for recruiting and retaining diverse leaders who are reflective of the student population; enhancing the onboarding process for new educators; and increasing opportunities for teachers to take on leadership roles. School leaders indicated a need for recruiting and retaining diverse educators who are reflective of our students; recruiting high-quality, experienced educators; providing compensation for leadership roles; and paying more based on student academic performance. To ensure that stakeholders continue to have a voice in the design of the PBCS, we will conduct educator focus groups in Year 1 to provide input on our initial draft PBCS as we refine and roll out *STRIVE: Supporting **T**eachers and **R**edesigning **I**ncentives using **V**alue-added measures of **E**ffectiveness*.