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Midlands Community Development Corporation

(a 501(c)(3)nonprofit organization / fiscal agent)

and EDUCATION PARTNERS –

including:

The Center of Excellence for Educator Preparation and Innovation on the Campus of Voorhees College (HBCU)
The Institute for Organizational Coherence
The Call Me Mister Program at Claflin University (HBCU)
Many Additional Education Partners (see proposal)
And two, rural South Carolina School Districts:
Calhoun County School District
Orangeburg County School District

PROPOSE –

LIFE²:

Leveraging Innovation For Educator Excellence!

PROJECT NARRATIVE

INTRODUCTION: One of the most urgent priorities for the Midlands Community Development Corporation (MCDC) in Columbia, South Carolina, is not only igniting, but sustaining continuous improvement in every school in our region. MCDC is a strong advocate for school and district transformation. What we have discovered as we have worked with schools and honored the voice of those closest to impacting the learning of children – our teachers – is that it should not be the job of educators alone to transform schools. School reform and transformation cannot be sustained without the buy-in and ownership of community stakeholders. We must leverage the intellectual, political, legislative and social capital of all community stakeholders to ensure the engine of transformation for our schools continues to run and produce access to highly effective and accomplished teachers, school leaders and school superintendents who can accelerate closing stubborn and persistent achievement gaps and facilitate communities of "deep learning" for students. MCDC believes that access to a high quality education that equips students with the skills for post-secondary success is a moral imperative, and an urgent one at that! Lack of access to those competencies for college and career readiness is an existential threat to our community's survival, as well as posing a threat to our nation being able to continue to thrive. Given that, having access to exemplary teachers and school leaders is not inconsequential; instead, it is literally a matter of life and death. As a region, if we are going to thrive, we must value, support, professionally develop and equip our educators with the tools that they need to accelerate learning for all students in the 21st century. Our commitment has never been stronger to ensure that the "separate" and "unequal" reality that persists for children in poverty in rural districts plagued by underachievement be extinguished. *All children can learn* cannot just be a catch phrase that we use in the company of educators, we must ensure that educators are equipped with the tools and the environment needed to raise student achievement and to be reflective practitioners – then we will be able to eradicate academic underperformance. Understanding the urgency for providing the support that educators need to be equipped to positively impact learning in the classroom, MCDC is excited to pursue this funding opportunity. The investment of federal TSL dollars to: 1) expand the Human Capital Management System (and ecosystem of supports) in our districts; 2) use a Performance Based Management System to attract, recruit, retain and incentivize educator effectiveness; 3) create a diverse pipeline of exemplary educators; and 4) use professional learning to eradicate the professional expertise gaps that may exist which have disempowered educators from demonstrating the highest level of efficacy possible to ensure that every child experiences growth in learning and academic achievement – all of these goals align with our mission and strategic plan for this region. MCDC has recruited an accomplished educator who has consistently

raised student achievement in rural schools as a teacher, principal and superintendent to lead this initiative. It is the mission of MCDC to leverage support from the legislative, civic, and faith communities to provide wrap-around support to sustain school reform and educator effectiveness initiatives in our region.

Midlands Community Development Corporation (MCDC), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and fiscal agent, in partnership with Calhoun County School District, Orangeburg County School District, the Center of Excellence for Educator Preparation and Innovation on the campus of Voorhees College, The Institute for Organizational Coherence, the National Center for Research (Digital Promise), The New Teacher Project, the Call Me Mister Program at Claflin University, the Carnegie Foundation, Learning for Justice, Darden Curry Partnership and the National Board will apply for the U.S. Department of Education's *Teacher and School Leader Incentive Program Grant* (TSL). The purpose of TSL is to support local school districts in building organizational capacity to foster the conditions which accelerate continuous improvements in student academic growth and achievement. The 2021 TSL competition has two Absolute and two Competitive Priorities:

Absolute Priorities:

- Improving (or implementing) a Human Capital Management System which creates multiple measures for teacher and school leader evaluation.

- Supporting High Priority (and high poverty) schools to foster the conditions to raise and sustain higher levels of student achievement.

Competitive Preference Priorities:

- Design professional learning opportunities that close the professional expertise gap of educators. The goal is to empower educators with the tools and expertise to close persistent and stubborn achievement gaps that students experience in high-priority schools.

- Diversify the teaching profession because representation matters. Create an intentional pipeline to attract, recruit, hire and retain a diverse teaching force.

MCDC, The Center at Voorhees and IOC will develop and design a consortium-wide Human Capital Management System (HCMS) to improve teacher efficacy. A Performance Based Compensation System (PBCS) will be designed to recruit and incentivize exemplary teachers and building principals to serve in high priority schools whose efficacy can be linked to data and evidence-based improvements in student achievement. Our two school districts, Calhoun and Orangeburg, are excited to undertake this work and have pledged their support in letters and a commitment to matching funds (see *Appendix* for Letters and Match).

Rationale: The goal of this proposed model is to use a technologically-advanced, competency-based, Human Capital Management System (HCMS) to create horizontal and vertical organizational coherence. Our theory of change is that horizontal and vertical organizational alignment leads to sustainable system change which leads to significant and sustainable improvement in student achievement. Horizontal and vertical alignment, in this instance, means that organizational stakeholders at all levels (classroom teachers, principals, HR/instructional supervisors, and the superintendent/central office) will all utilize the same tools, language and protocols to solve problems of practice in student learning. We will also create a Performance Based Compensation System (PBCS) to recruit and incentivize teachers and principals to meet the urgent learning needs of students in high priority schools. Organizational change in this case is two-fold: 1) while the organization is building capacity to create a culture of competence, so too, 2) will the organization recruit, incentivize and retain diverse, highly effective teachers who can demonstrate strong evidence of raising student academic achievement and closing the achievement gap between high and low performing students in high priority schools. This multi-pronged approach (leveraging the combined efforts of the development and implementation of a technologically-advanced, competency-based, Human Capital Management System, as well as, the development and expansion of a Performance Based Compensation System) intersects, aligns and works in tandem to meet the needs of high priority schools. The goal is to both build and implement an on-going recursive system of supports to improve teacher and school leader effectiveness and increase, reward and incentivize the number of skilled educators who can effectively raise student achievement, especially for the most vulnerable students. It is not an "either/or", but an "and/both" proposition. We know that all students deserve access to an exemplary teacher and studies have shown that students who consistently have access to accomplished teachers do well academically. In order to educate all students well, there is no goal which rises to a level of greater urgency than accelerating student learning, which means, districts must grow and cultivate a culture of competence by improving teacher and school leader effectiveness.

Problem of Practice:

The field of education has faced a conundrum. There are a number of schools where 90% or more of the teachers have been evaluated as "highly-effective," "exemplary," or "accomplished," while student achievement data continues to remain persistently low, not creating a statistically-significant correlation between teacher evaluations and improvements in student achievement – the goal of this grant is to mitigate that outcome - through strengthening teacher practice; creating embedded professional learning to provide tools to identify

problems of practice; and training teachers to effectively use data (and a framework for improvement science) to close achievement gaps.

Absolute Priority 1: Human Capital Management System and/or Performance Based Compensation System

MCDC, The Center at Voorhees and the Institute for Organizational Coherence will work with high priority schools to ***develop, design and implement both***: 1) a comprehensive <u>Performance-Based Compensation System</u> to recruit and incentivize "highly-effective" and "accomplished" teachers and school principals who consistently provide strong evidence of raising student academic achievement and closing the achievement gap between high and low performing students to serve in high needs schools; and 2) a technologically-advanced, competency-based, <u>Human Capital Management System</u> which allows for recursive, real-time feedback to dramatically improve teacher effectiveness district-wide.

Broad Goals: (1) Use PBCS to recruit and incentivize exemplary teachers and principals to serve in the highest needs schools. (2) Through the development of a technologically-advanced HCMS, create system-wide coherence and supports to increase the pipeline of exemplary teachers and school leaders.

Absolute Priority 2: High Needs Schools

This grant will target high priority schools in two South Carolina rural districts that are seeking opportunities for sustainable tools for continuous improvement. These are schools which have been designated as high priority schools, currently having high levels of poverty (see chart on pages 9-10 and NCES data in *Appendix*).

Competitive Preference Priority 1: Professional Learning for Educators

MCDC will work with The Center at Voorhees College and IOC to design micro-credentials, pathways to advanced graduate training, virtual network improvement communities and protocols in improvement science that have evidence of significantly improving educator effectiveness and efficacy (see *Project Design*).

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Diversifying the Educator Pool

The Center for Educator Preparation and Innovation on the campus of Voorhees College, a Historically Black College or University (HBCU), IOC and the participating districts will develop a collective recruitment, hiring, and retention strategy to attract a diverse candidate pool of teachers and school leaders to serve in rural high priority schools. The Center will partner with the "Call Me Mister" program at Claflin University (another HBCU). "Call Me Mister" is a nationally renowned teacher preparation program that has more than a decade of research in exploring the impact that Black men have had in serving as teachers in high needs schools. The program is designed to recruit, train and place Black men as teachers in classrooms.

The Components of the Program:

The two participating, rural South Carolina districts have signed an MOU which commits to the following:

1. Implementation and use of the SIBME HCMS platform in conjunction with SWIVL software will be used district-wide to improve teacher efficacy and increase the pipeline of exemplary teachers. SIBME allows for virtual embedded professional development and the opportunity to store a repository of classroom observations with real-time, recursive feedback to improve practice.

2. Develop, implement and expand a Performance-Based Compensation System designed to recruit and incentivize "highly-effective" and "accomplished" teachers to serve in Qualified Opportunity Zone schools which can be studied and scaled-up district-wide in each of our two districts.

3. Effectively utilize blended instructional coaching, micro-credentialing, virtual networks for improvement and technical assistance to improve and create horizontal and vertical coherence in the district leading to large-scale change.

Human Resource Capital Management

Participating districts will be provided with resources from the grant to utilize and implement the SIBME software platform. SIBME captures video of daily instruction, and creates a digital portfolio, which can be uploaded and stored for teacher self-reflection, or to be shared with virtual coaches and instructional supervisors to help teachers improve the efficacy of their teaching.

Technology, I-Pads and SWIVL Devices

The grant will provide teachers and instructional supervisors with I-PADS and SWIVL technology to create a digital portfolio of teacher observations. SIBME and SWIVL combined will provide a platform for on-going, sustained and recursive feedback between teachers, instructional supervisors, principals and coaches.

Virtual Network Improvement Communities

Not only are teachers isolated within classrooms as they struggle with the conundrum of how to raise student achievement, that isolation is exacerbated as teachers attempt to collaborate outside of their schools with other educators. The goal is to empower teachers across our districts to use improvement science protocols: 1) identify problems of practice; 2) conduct root-cause analysis of those problems; 3) design a plan of action to address the problem; 4) implement the plan; 5) monitor the implementation; 6) course – correct if needed; and 7) teach to mastery (solve the problem). Accomplished and novice teachers will learn from each other across districts on

the effective classroom tools for raising and sustaining student achievement. Teachers will be able to conduct virtual instructional rounds and observe and give substantive feedback to each other to strengthen their practice.

Effective Strategies Clearinghouse

Teachers who are effective at raising student achievement will be invited to write white papers identifying the strategies, tools, implementation steps and results that have been effective at raising student achievement. Teachers across districts will also post videos modeling effective instruction to solve differentiated problems of practice. The platform will be made available as a resource and learning tool across each of the participating districts so that teachers have multiple examples of exemplary teaching practices which can be implemented to improve their own classroom efficacy.

Blended Coaching

Instructional Coaches will be provided by The Center of Excellence for Educator Preparation and Innovation at Voorhees College. The coaches, using the South Carolina Teacher Assessment Model and Rubric, which is based on the Charlotte Danielson Framework, as a framework, will provide modeling; paired-teaching; observations; and de-briefing with substantive feedback to build the capacity needed for teachers to provide highly-effective instruction. Because this is a "Blended Coaching Model", instructional supervisors and principals will build capacity to effectively assess / provide support for cultivating highly-effective instruction.

Performance Based Compensation

The Performance Based Compensation Plan, which will be designed in collaboration with both The Center, IOC and Calhoun / Orangeburg district stakeholders will be provided resources from the grant to provide bonuses / stipends to recruit, incentivize and retain teachers who have been evaluated as *Exemplary* and bonuses for those teachers who demonstrate academic growth for 90% of the students in their classroom.

Creating Virtual and Horizontal Coherence through Micro-credentialing	
Micro-credential Outcomes	
Teachers	Micro-credential in Improvement Science designed by The Center at Voorhees. Teachers will receive a micro-credential and develop competency do the following: 1. Use high-yield culturally-relevant strategies to create engagement and inquiry in the classroom within both virtual and on-site networks of improvement communities . 2. Identify and solve problems of practice. 3. Use data to conduct root-cause analysis. 4. Implement strategies for course-correction to accelerate learning and closing achievement gaps. 5. Close expertise gaps by working in community with accomplished

	educators to raise student achievement and solve problems of practice. 6. Incorporate equity-driven pedagogy.
HR Directors / Instructional Supervisors	Provide an inquiry-based learning and technical support group for District HR Directors and Instructional Supervisors. Learning sessions will lead to a micro-credential designed in collaboration with The Human Resource Management faculty at Voorhees College and the Improvement Science Clinical Faculty at The Center, and Participants will learn the following: 1. How to develop an outcomes-based Human Capital Management System with "best-in-class" strategies to increase teacher efficacy. 2. Study, implement and expand district-wide Performance-Based Compensation Systems which promote, sustain and incentivize "Exemplary" teaching practices. 3. Learn to effectively use and calibrate evaluation tools developed by the South Carolina Department of Education. 4. Effectively use SIBME software platform to create job-embedded professional learning and virtual coaching to significantly improve teacher effectiveness and use technology as a tool to conduct on-going "instructional rounds". 5. Learn to effectively use Charlotte Danielson Model and a blended coaching model as drivers to improve instruction.
Superintendents / Principals	This micro-credential, designed in collaboration with the Improvement Science Clinical Faculty at The Center at Voorhees College, will target district and building leaders to develop coherence in leading large-scale change. Leaders will learn: 1. How to effectively use, and evaluate the quality, consistency and reliability of Human Capital Management Systems. 2. Study the effectiveness of HCMS as a driver to improve teacher effectiveness. 3. Learn to effectively implement a Performance-Based Compensation System which maximizes teacher efficacy. 4. Learn how to effectively cultivate, grow and sustain a "culture of competency". 5. Effectively use technology as a tool to conduct on-going "instructional rounds". 6. Study the most effective frameworks for improving instruction. Learn how to incorporate the tenants of improvement science to effectively raise student achievement and close persistent achievement gaps.

(A) NEED FOR PROJECT

Midlands Community Development Corporation (MCDC), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and fiscal agent, in partnership with Calhoun County School District, Orangeburg County School District, the Center of Excellence for Educator Preparation and Innovation on the campus of Voorhees College, The Institute for Organizational Coherence, the National Center for Research (Digital Promise), The New Teacher Project, the

Call Me Mister Program at Claflin University, the Carnegie Foundation, Learning for Justice, Darden Curry Partnership and the National Board, proposes *LIFE^2*: *Leveraging Innovation For Educator Excellence!* The two, rural South Carolina school districts in our consortium of partners, struggle to overcome daily challenges that impact the quality of education programs serving high-poverty, low-performing, isolated rural students.

(i) Identifying gaps/weaknesses in services, including nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

To meet diverse and changing needs, *LIFE2* districts convened a *TSL* Planning Task Force – comprised of district administrators, HCMS professionals, finance officers, curriculum specialists, principals, assistant principals and teachers – to design a comprehensive *TSL* initiative that will help our two districts improve the quality of education, elevate educator effectiveness, raise student achievement and increase equity in learning. During planning, the Task Force identified multiple barriers / needs that impede the success of South Carolina students and diminish district efforts to promote ongoing improvement of education, including: (1) Educator Needs; (2) Student Needs; (4) COVID Reentry Needs; and (4) Gaps and Weaknesses. **(1) Educator Needs:** There are 877 Certified Teachers in our two, rural districts – almost half of them 408 (47%) are Inexperienced Teachers and 15 are on Emergency Credentials. Of 877 teachers who were evaluated during the 2019-2020 school year, 74% were rated Proficient or Above. Our districts have a critical need for the services outlined in *LIFE2,* especially professional development in improvement science and equity and the support system found in Instructional Coaching, Personal Growth Plans and Deeper Learning Virtual Networks of Improvement.

School District	Certified Teachers	Teachers Evaluated	Proficient or Above	Emergency Credentials	Inexperienced Teachers*
Orangeburg	753	753	560	10	368
Calhoun	124	124	90	5	40
TOTALS	**877**	**877**	**650**	**15**	**408**

Source: *South Carolina Department of Education*, 2019-20 district data; * Inexperienced = < 4 years.

Educators across all *LIFE2* district schools – teachers and school leaders – lack access to professional learning and educator quality supports that reflect professional growth needs. High-need schools are unable to engage in programs that elevate educator expertise and increase educator capacity to integrate proven instructional strategies that raise student achievement in classroom learning. Ongoing struggles to maintain adequate school funding given a trend of decreasing enrollment as students leave the district for education alternatives has also resulted in the reduction and elimination of professional learning programs in high-need rural schools. Federal support is needed to expand educator access to professional development opportunities and to expand educator

capacity to utilize proven, research-based instructional strategies to increase the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Deep cuts to professional growth programs limit the capacity of rural educators to engage in the learning needed to raise student achievement and increase equitable access.

(2) Student Needs: The two rural South Carolina districts participating in *LIFE2* struggle to educate high-poverty (average 81% Free/Reduced Lunches and low-achieving students (average 32.5% proficiency in Reading, Math and Science). The chart below highlights schools' demographics/scores (***Absolute Priority 2***):

Orangeburg County School District	Student Enrollment	% Minority	% Low Income	Grad Rate	% Reading Proficient	% Math Proficient	% Science Proficient
Bethune-Bowman Elementary	277	95%	90%		21.1%	31.7%	33.3%
Bethune-Bowman Middle/High	349	94%	91%	98.1%	14.7%	10.7%	26.7%
					43.5%	14.3%	29.8%
Branchville High School	313	26%	53%	90.7%	42.7%	41.3%	52.5%
					62.0%	38.8%	18.9%
Brookdale Elementary School	279	99%	91%		34.6%	36.2%	30%
Carver Edisto Middle School	599	58%	84%		26.7%	23.1%	37%
					80.6%	54.5%	N/A
Dover Elementary	258	60%	84%		29.9%	27.1%	35.2%
Edisto Elementary School	476	58%	87%		30.8%	40.7%	44.6%
Edisto High School	624	59%	77%	76.4%	35.1%	26.2%	18.9%
Edisto Primary School	535	55%	85%		N/A	N/A	N/A
Elloree Elementary School	424	93%	90%		31.3%	26.8%	38.1%
					92.3%	46.2%	N/A
Holly Hill Elementary School	370	87%	94%		34.8%	33.8%	26.5%
Holly Hill-Roberts Middle School	463	89%	89%		18.9%	10.7%	13.8%
					92.9%	100.0%	N/A
Hunter-Kinard-Tyler High School	227	81%	85%	85.7%	21.4%	18.4%	32.8%
					25.8%	24.2%	5.4%
Hunter-Kinard-Tyler Elementary	183	84%	93%		22.2%	37%	30.8%
Lake Marion High School and Technology Center	661	93%	86%	80.4%	25.3%	9.4%	19.9%
Lockett Elementary School	228	40%	68%		58.4%	72.8%	72.7%
Marshall Elementary School	693	98%	87%		31.7%	30.5%	34.5%
Mellichamp Elementary School	219	98%	99%		20.3%	35.3%	35.1%
North Middle/High	286	56%	79%	96.8%	20.4%	9.7%	19.3%
					33.4%	12.5%	14.6%
Orangeburg Wilkinson High School	1,092	98%	87%	77.5%	37.1%	8.6%	13.4%
Rivelon Elementary School	239	96%	95%		N/A	N/A	N/A
Robert E. Howard Middle School	416	99%	92%		17.5%	6.9%	12.6%
					100%	N/A	N/A
Sheridan Elementary School	492	95%	93%		35.4%	33.5%	44.8%
St. James-Gaillard Elementary School	252	85%	93%		39.1%	39.7%	34.8%
Vance-Providence Elementary School	214	95%	96%		24.5%	21.8%	34.9%

Whittaker Elementary School	413	98%	93%		22.3%	19.5%	50%
William J. Clark Middle School	710	99%	85%		25.3%	17%	23.5%
					87.9%	87.5%	N/A
Orangeburg Totals / Averages	**11,292**	**82%**	**87%**	**81.1%**	**27.1%**	**26.0%**	**30.2%**
					44.5%	**19.3%**	**19.8%**
Calhoun County School District	**Student Enrollment**	**% Minority**	**% Low Income**	**Grad Rate**	**Reading Proficient**	**Math Proficient**	**Science Proficient**
Sandy Run K-8	614	42%	70.5%	N/A	46.9%	49.5%	49.4%
St. Matthews K-8	662	85%	90.3%	N/A	26.1%	32.4%	38.7%
Calhoun High School	446	72%	79.8%	89.3%	44.2%	54.7%	35.8%
Calhoun Totals / Averages	**1,722**	**66%**	**80.2%**	**89.3%**	**39.1%**	**45.5%**	**41.3%**
Orangeburg/Calhoun Totals/Averages	**13,014**	**74%**	**81%**	**85%**	**36.9%**	**30.3%**	**30.4%**

Source: *South Carolina Department of Education*, 2018-19 district data; see NCES data in *Appendix*.

 (3) COVID Reentry Needs: Our *LIFE2* district schools, like schools throughout the nation, have faced significant challenges imposed upon them by the COVID-19 pandemic and health crisis. All schools have been pretty much closed to in-person instruction since March 2020; most finished the 2021 school year in some form of hybrid learning environment. Challenges and obstacles faced by our rural schools include: isolation, limited technology, no Internet services, no transportation to/from remote areas and no way to stay in touch with teachers and schools. Now, as schools face the reality of student and educator reentry into lingering-COVID educational environments, personnel recognize the duration of the COVID-19 hiatus from school settings will result in social and emotional challenges among students AND educators that schools and faculty are ill-prepared to address and mitigate. Our schools require new supports to help students, families and educators transition from more than a full year of remote learning to in-person educational environments. *LIFE2* will launch educator quality supports that include strategies that prepare educators to support youth as they reenter school-based social and academic environments and cope with the trauma / stresses of COVID-19 reentry.

(4) Gaps and Weaknesses: In response to significant challenges and barriers impacting the success and future potential of students, MCDC, The Center at Voorhees, and partners, convened a *TSL* Planning Task Force to assess district needs and propose solutions that fill gaps and strengthen weaknesses. *LIFE2* – the result of collaborative planning, research, design and compromise – will improve educator quality in **28 high-need rural schools in 2 high-need districts**, enhance learning opportunities for **more than 13,000 low-performing students**, fill gaps in current programs and strengthen teaching and learning weaknesses that impede success.

South Carolina School Districts: Gaps	*LIFE2* **Improvement Strategies**
Need 1: Districts lack resources to consistently implement an effectiveness-based HCMS/PBCS across all schools.	

Gap 1: Multi-district implementation of effectiveness-based Human Capital Management and Performance-Based Compensation Systems in two rural districts is limited by resources.	*LIFE2* will improve and expand the Human Capital Management and Performance-Based Compensation Systems (Tier 1) and enhance educator effectiveness in high-need schools across two rural districts (Tier 2) to promote equity across all schools and districts.
Need 2: Districts lack sufficient capacity to objectively evaluate educator effectiveness across all schools.	
Gap 2: Use of *SC Evaluation Framework* to assess educator effectiveness is vulnerable to rater bias and lack of fidelity to the model.	*LIFE2* will provide educators Improvement Science training to increase fidelity of tool; coaching and "critical friend evaluations" will increase inter-rater reliability / reduce bias (Tier 1).
Need 3: Districts lack a process to connect educators with supports that increase effectiveness.	
Gap 3: Our two districts do not utilize systems of support that align professional development to individual strengths and weaknesses.	*LIFE2* will utilize Professional Growth Plans linked to effectiveness ratings to connect educators to extensive professional development designed to improve practice (Tier 2).
Need 4: District lacks strategies and resources to meet Local and State Equity Plans.	
Gap 4: HCMS strategies do not adequately address equity gaps that impair equal student access to high quality learning across the two districts participating in the project.	*LIFE2* will provide professional development to administrators and HCMS personnel to equitably distribute *Exemplary* / *Proficient* educators across ALL schools; incentives will encourage teachers to serve Targeted Support and Improvement schools.

Our two, partner, rural South Carolina school districts face significant challenges. Policies and systems do not support school districts prepared to overcome the challenges of educating high-need youth impacted by chronic failure, poverty, low education attainment and underprepared educators. *TSL* funding will provide resources to implement positive reforms that build local capacity to raise educator and student achievement.

(ii) Improve outcomes using existing funding streams supported by community, state, federal resources.

LIFE2 schools are committed to district-wide improvement that leads to positive social and academic outcomes for high-need students. During the past several years, our South Carolina districts have implemented multiple complementary projects targeting improvement across district priorities: (1) Learning Pathways to improve education alignment and increase student readiness for college and careers; (2) School Climate Initiative to increase student access to safe, supportive learning environments; and (3) Social and Emotional Learning and Mental Health to strengthen school and family supports for vulnerable students. After extensive investment in improvement initiatives focused primarily on student-centric strategies and currently funded with CARES Act and Recovery Act dollars, *LIFE2* seeks to focus reform efforts on improving educator quality across all grade levels and content areas to promote school improvement, increase equitable student access to high-quality

educators and elevate student academic and social outcomes. *LIFE2* will leverage lessons learned implementing complementary reform efforts and support continuous improvement of transformation initiatives:

- **Learning Pathways:** District-funded Learning Pathways provide real-world learning opportunities for students aligned to career and college readiness. Each pathway (Business, Arts; Project Lead The Way; STEM; World Culture and Languages; Manufacturing / Skilled Trades) is designed to offer students relevant and engaging coursework in partnership with business and industry. Pathway partnerships provide theme-based instruction, internships, mentoring, and shadowing opportunities for students as they explore diverse career and college options. Learning Pathway efforts ground PK – 12 teaching and learning in career/college readiness strategies that better position underserved students for career and college success.

- **School Climate Initiatives:** *LIFE2* schools are in the middle of a multi-year initiative to improve learning environments, strengthen mental health support systems, increase social and emotional learning supports for vulnerable students, reduce violence impacting schools / students / families and increase equity in learning by reducing barriers impeding the success of students of color / poverty / disability. School Climate Initiatives are designed to create safe, supportive, productive school environments that improve instruction, grades PK – 12, and empower positive academic and social outcomes in high-need students.

- **Social and Emotional Learning and Mental Health:** *LIFE2* schools are implementing district-funded strategies to strengthen Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and Mental Health supports for students, families and educators. Our districts recognize the need to invest in SEL and Mental Health to help both students and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, achieve personal and collective relationships and make responsible and caring decisions. SEL and Mental Health improvement strategies include professional development, restorative practices, implementation of PK – 12 SEL curricula, expanded mental health access through partnerships with mental health providers and school-based counseling. Strengthening SEL / Mental Health supports while improving instructional practices and academic content facilitates transition to a holistic approach to child development and learning. After nearly a year and a half of COVID, SEL supports are critical.

LIFE2 will provide the resources needed to expand upon existing student-centric improvement efforts and help our two South Carolina school districts elevate educator effectiveness through comprehensive, data-driven Human Capital Management Systems connected to educator effectiveness, educator support systems, performance-based compensation and complementary district improvement and reform strategies.

(iii) Comprehensive effort to improve teaching/learning, support rigorous student academic standards.

MCDC, The Center at Voorhees and grant partners assembled to find ways to eradicate stubborn and persistent achievement gaps in high poverty rural schools in our region. We knew we would need to leverage the collective expertise of all instructional stakeholders across each of the two districts and throughout our partnership. Our goal through this critical work is to: 1) create a technologically- advanced platform that enables all stakeholders across schools and districts to provide the substantive feedback and supports needed to significantly improve teacher and school leader quality and efficacy; 2) incentivize exceptional performance in the classroom and accelerate school-wide transformation; 3) eradicate achievement and opportunity gaps for the most vulnerable students in high-poverty, high priority rural schools; 4) attract and retain a diverse pipeline of exemplary teachers and school leaders; 5) provide, use and implement evidence-based professional learning opportunities that will be the catalyst for igniting, accelerating and sustaining continuous improvement in all of our schools. Particularly challenging in rural districts is the isolation faced by educators. District by district, we can discover solutions to solve problems of practice; however, sometimes that process is slower moving in rural districts which have the compounded challenges of poverty and limited resources for professional development, and release time for teachers to engage in collaboration. However, when we collaborate across districts and pool our financial resources and intellectual capital together, the power of that collaboration empowers us to go *further faster*. We benefit by hearing from teachers and school leaders from across multiple schools and districts, with similar problems of practice, and solutions that eventually create a clearinghouse of promising practices that can be used to close the achievement and opportunity gaps for all students in our districts. Said differently, our isolation *stymies* us; however, our collaboration *accelerates* our ability to facilitate deep learning for children in classrooms facilitated by exemplary teachers whose mission is to ensure learning growth for every child in their classroom.   The Consortium discovered that our districts individually did not have sophisticated or technologically-advanced platforms or protocols (Human Capital Resource Management Systems) for our teachers and school leaders that enabled us to observe exceptional classroom practice, to collaborate virtually, or to receive deep, evidence-based, multiple-layered and nuanced feedback for improvement that was driven by both qualitative (anecdotal) and quantitative (formative and summative assessment) data. Partners also had not been intentional in creating a vehicle which honored "teacher voice" as a tool for school or district transformation. The critical significance of our work is that *LIFE2* partners intend, through our

collaborative work together, to change the paradigm of what drives district continuous improvement and that is – elevating teacher voice and using promising practices from the classroom to inform what measures are needed to place our schools on a path of continuous improvement. This means, each of us are committing to doing away with a top-down management approach and allowing the work of highly effective and accomplished teachers to inform how we grow excellence and competence in each of our districts. We are adding *Peer Review* as a weighted evaluation measure for all of our teachers. *Peer Review*, as one component of a comprehensive evaluation tool, will empower a team of "Exemplary" teachers who will receive compensation and release time to evaluate, support and mentor teachers in an effort to increase the pipeline of *Exemplary* teachers. We believe that adding *Peer Review* as an essential component of the evaluation process creates a collective and shared sense of ownership among all instructional staff for teacher efficacy and student achievement results in our schools. We have created an Advisory Board which includes superintendents, school leaders and accomplished teachers across both districts who will provide thought leadership, based on the data-informed results which emerge from exceptional classroom practice to inform how we incorporate, grow, magnify and accelerate results in achievement in all of the rural, high-poverty and high-priority schools within the consortium. In essence, the consortium is learning that through collaboration, implementing theoretically-sound, evidence-based protocols and using the outcomes from those experiences to grow competence allows what once appeared daunting to become doable. This paradigm shift in using promising classroom practices across districts to drive district transformation is helping us to evolve into learning organizations that will become "equity-driven; data-informed and student focused." We are chipping away quickly at the old paradigm of allowing bureaucracy to become an impediment to school and district transformation. We are shifting to creating organizations where teacher and school leader quality, practice, efficacy and voice inform critical decision making. Ultimately, both of our rural districts want to facilitate what Goodfellow, Bengio and Courville (2018) coined as *deep learning* in all of our schools. The consortium is committed to fostering the conditions that accelerate schools that work for all children. This new paradigm is powered by our collective embrace of a growth mindset which drives us to believe that we can eradicate stubborn and persistent achievement gaps and prepare our students to compete globally. Working in collaboration (as districts) will give us an opportunity to elevate and cross-pollinate promising evidence-based teaching practices to all teachers in our consortium; support

instructional staff by giving them 24/7 access to critical feedback, tools and resources that will support their instructional efficacy; allow us to recruit a diverse pipeline of *Exemplary* school leaders and teachers; and incentivize exceptional classroom practice among teachers and school leaders.

(iv) Project design appropriate to, and will successfully address, needs of target population.

Implementation of *LIFE2* will empower South Carolina districts to launch, refine, improve and sustain a project designed to meet the needs of schools, educators, students and families impacted by significant challenges impeding success. *LIFE2* will provide two Tiers of Service aligned to needs, gaps and weaknesses identified by the Planning Team (see *Project Design* for services and project goal, objectives and outcomes):

LIFE2 Project Design Framework	
Tier 1: Comprehensive HCMS	**Tier 2: Educator Quality Supports**
Evidence-based Human Capital Management Talent Management Educator Effectiveness Model High Quality Evaluation Plan Performance-Based Compensation	Professional Growth Tracks Professional Development Principal Network Instructional Coaching New Teacher Network Career Ladders
Need	***LIFE2* Strategies**
Need 1: Two Rural South Carolina districts lack resources to implement effectiveness-based HCMS across schools.	• *LIFE2* will conduct districtwide HCMS audits to identify strengths, weaknesses and gaps in systems capacity / functionality to transition to data-driven decision-making. • Harvard University Strategic Data Project training will prepare HCMS administrators to analyze and interpret data to impact all facets of human capital management. • Expanded Talent Management systems will increase capacity to integrate HCMS components and connect Educator Quality Supports to Educator Effectiveness data.
Need 2: Two Rural South Carolina districts lack sufficient capacity to objectively evaluate educator effectiveness across all schools.	• Districts will utilize South Carolina's recently-updated *Teaching Standards* rubric to increase rigor and improve alignment between educator performance ratings and student achievement with a minimum 50% of evaluation ratings determined by student growth measures. • Professional development – coaching, critical friend observations, educator evaluation process training – will support central administrators and school leaders responsible for conducting educator evaluations to increase fidelity to model and inter-rater reliability.
Need 3: Two Rural South Carolina districts lack a process to	• Professional Growth Plans will connect educator evaluation results to professional learning opportunities that address individual needs and solve shared problems of practice. • *LIFE2* will expand Coaching and Career Ladder opportunities to elevate performance and

connect educators with supports that increase effectiveness.	promote career advancement for principals, assistant principals and teachers. • Instructional Coaching, Principal Network, New Teacher Network and Career Ladders will provide supports to raise educator effectiveness and student achievement.
Need 4: Two Rural districts lack strategies and resources to meet state/local equity plans.	• *LIFE2* will hire an Equity Instructional Coach deployed to address issues of inequity in teaching and learning and facilitate strategies that reduce / eliminate equity barriers. • Retention PBCS bonuses / High Priority Content Area signing bonuses will motivate *Exemplary* educators to teach in and remain serving high-need schools.
Need 5: Two Rural South Carolina districts lack resources needed to integrate and accelerate systems change disrupted by COVID-19 pandemic.	• *LIFE2* will expand HCMS systems using Talent Management software to ensure Educator Quality Supports (professional learning) are connected to individual educator Professional Growth Plans to address instructional improvement needs of teachers and school leaders. • Performance-based Comp. will be distributed to educators who meet *Exemplary* rating standards and retention bonuses for educators serving high-poverty/low-achieving schools. • Educator Quality Supports will target individual professional learning needs, expand instructional coaching and diversify Career Ladder opportunities for educators.

(B) QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN

Midlands Community Development Corporation (MCDC), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and fiscal agent, in partnership with Calhoun County School District, Orangeburg County School District, the Center of Excellence for Educator Preparation and Innovation on the campus of Voorhees College, the National Center for Research (Digital Promise), The Institute for Organizational Coherence, The New Teacher Project, the Call Me Mister Program at Claflin University, the Carnegie Foundation, Learning for Justice, Darden Curry Partnership and the National Board propose a TSL grant that serves 13,014 students enrolled in 28 district schools. All 28 schools meet and exceed minimum 50% free and reduced lunch rate threshold and qualify as high-need schools (districtwide Free and Reduced Lunch Rate = 81% - see *Appendix* for NCES proof). To address the needs of educators and students, raise student academic achievement and increase equity in access to Exemplary educators and high-quality education programs, MCDC and consortium partners, proposes **LIFE2: *Leveraging Innovation For Educator Excellence!*** . Implementation of *LIFE2* will launch and sustain systemic improvements that elevate the function / effectiveness of Human Capital Management Systems, Performance-based Compensation Systems, Educator Evaluation Systems and Educator Quality Support Systems.

Goal, Objectives and Outcomes: After an extensive needs assessment, the *LIFE2* Planning Task Force designed a comprehensive effort to initiate, strengthen and sustain strategies supporting improvement in high-

need schools. Implementation of *LIFE2* will help South Carolina districts meet and exceed the following goal and objectives (see *Evaluation* in *Project Design* section below for measurable Performance Indicators):

GOAL: To improve student achievement by increasing access to effective educators in high-need schools.		
Objective 1: Reduce equity gaps through effectiveness-based Human Capital Management System.		
Outcome 1.1: Improved educator quality ratings in *LIFE2* schools.	**Outcome 1.2:** Diversified teachers and school leaders educating students in *LIFE2* schools.	
Objective 2: Assess educator effectiveness using validated tools to ensure objectivity.		
Outcome 2.1: Increased teacher effectiveness ratings.	**Outcome 2.2:** Increased administrator effectiveness ratings.	
Objective 3: Improve educator effectiveness through individualized learning and supports.		
Outcome 3.1: Professional Growth Plans for teachers and school leaders.	**Outcome 3.2:** Reduced numbers of teachers and school leaders rated *Progressing* or *Ineffective*.	
Objective 4: Increase student attainment of state academic performance standards.		
Outcome 4.1: Increased ELA / Reading Proficiency rates.	**Outcome 4.2:** Increased Math Proficiency rates.	**Outcome 4.3:** Increased Graduation Rates.

(i) Proposed project Demonstrates a Rationale.

Our Theory of Change is that horizontal and vertical organizational alignment leads to sustainable system change which, in turn, leads to significant and sustainable improvement in student achievement. Horizontal and vertical alignment, in this instance, means that organizational stakeholders at all levels (classroom teachers, principals, HR/instructional supervisors, and the superintendent/central office) will all utilize similar tools, language and protocols to solve problems of practice in student learning. This multi-pronged approach (leveraging the combined efforts of the development and implementation of a technologically-advanced Human Capital Management System [which provides tools for professional learning and coaching], as well as, the development and expansion of a Performance Based Compensation System) intersects, aligns and works in tandem to meet the needs of high priority schools. The goal is to both build and implement an on-going recursive system of supports to improve teacher and school leader effectiveness and increase, reward and incentivize the number of skilled educators who can effectively raise student achievement, especially for the most vulnerable students. It is not an "either/or," but an "and/both" proposition. We know that all students deserve access to a highly-effective teacher and school leader and studies have shown that students who consistently have access to accomplished teachers do well academically. In order to well-educate all students in our two, rural districts, there is no goal that has greater urgency than accelerating the closure of persistent

achievement gaps and raising student achievement for all of our students. This means the district must grow and cultivate a culture of competence by improving teacher and school leader effectiveness.

LIFE2 is the result of collaborative planning among each district in the consortium aligned to state reform initiatives, state equity plans and the need of each our districts to implement systems that support and create a sense of urgency to accelerate improving achievement in teaching and learning in all schools, particularly high-poverty/low-achieving schools. The *LIFE2* Planning Task Force completed extensive research and review of proven human capital management systems, performance-based compensation strategies, educator evaluation protocols and educator improvement plans.   <u>The Task Force was deliberate in its selection of school improvement strategies supported by Evidence of Effectiveness studies that meet U.S. Department of Education *What Works Clearinghouse* standards</u>. Multiple strategies central to the *LIFE2 TSL* Project Design are supported by strong and / or moderate Evidence of Effectiveness.   By utilizing programs supported by Evidence of Effectiveness, the Planning Task Force is confident *LIFE2* will yield positive, relevant outcomes for educators and students during the grant period and beyond (see *Appendix* - Literature Cited):

Program	*LIFE2*: Evidence of Effectiveness
Evidence of Support Study # 1: Teacher Induction	
Citation	Schmidt, R., Young, V., Cassidy, L., Wang, H., & Laguarda, K. (2017). Impact of the New Teacher Center's New Teacher Induction model on teachers and students. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.
WWC **Rating**	Meets *What Works Clearinghouse* design standards Without Reservations.
ESSA **Rating**	Tier 1 – At Least One Statistically Significant Positive Finding
Process	Review Standards 3.0; Teacher Training, Evaluation and Compensation Review Protocol 3.2
Evidence	Strong Evidence of Support.
Study Outcomes	Results of the randomized control study found that new teacher participation in induction support and new teacher mentoring / coaching increases student achievement in ELA / Reading and Math.
Relevance to Project	The *LIFE2* New Teacher Network provides three years of new educator supports including induction orientation, new teacher professional learning communities and new teacher mentoring / coaching to support instructional excellence.
Evidence of Support Study # 2: National Board Certification	
Citation	Cowan, J., & Goldhaber, D. (2015). National Board certification and teacher effectiveness: Evidence from Washington. Technical Report 2015-1, Center for Education Data and Research, Seattle, WA.
WWC **Rating**	Meets *What Works Clearinghouse* design standards With Reservations.
ESSA **Rating**	Tier 2 – At Least One Statistically Significant Positive Finding
Process	Review Standards 3.0; Teacher Training, Evaluation and Compensation Review Protocol 3.2
Evidence	Moderate Evidence of Support.
Study Outcomes	A quasi-experimental design study demonstrates National Board Certification leads to improved student achievement in elementary and middle school mathematics.
Relevance to	*LIFE2* proposes a Career Ladder strategy that promotes National Board Certification attainment for

Project	educators that increases educator ability to pursue instructional leadership positions.
Evidence of Support Study # 3: Transfer Incentives	
Citation	Glazerman, S., Protik, A., Teh, B., Bruch, J., & Max, J. (2013). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, USDOE.
***WWC* Rating**	Meets *What Works Clearinghouse* design standards Without Reservations.
***ESSA* Rating**	Tier 1 – At Least One Significantly Positive Finding; Strong Evidence of Effectiveness
Process	Single study review protocol, Review Standards 3.0
Evidence	Strong Evidence of Support.
Citation Outcomes	Results of randomized control study demonstrate transfer incentives increase high-quality teaching in high-needs schools and improves achievement in Math and Reading.
Relevance to Project	*LIFE2* includes transfer / signing bonuses to incentivize *Exemplary* teachers to teach in high-needs schools.
Evidence of Support Study # 4: Professional Development and Coaching	
Citation	Parkinson, J., Salinger, T., Meakin, J., & Smith, D. (2015). Results from three-year i3 impact evaluation of Children's Literacy Initiative (CLI): Implementation/impact findings of an intensive professional development & coaching program. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.
***WWC* Rating**	Meets *What Works Clearinghouse* Standards Without Reservations. At Least One Statistically Significant Positive Finding
Process	Review Standards 3.0; Teacher Training, Evaluation and Compensation Review Protocol 3.1
Evidence	Strong Evidence of Support.
Citation Outcomes	Results of randomized control study demonstrate evidence that providing teachers with coaching and professional development focused on pedagogical content knowledge can lead to positive changes in teachers' practice and students' achievement.
Relevance to Project	*LIFE2* proposes extensive professional development and an Instructional Coaching Model for educators to improve competency and instructional practice.
Evidence of Support Study # 5: Professional Development	
Citation	Heller, J., Daehler, K., Wong, N., Shinohara, M., & Miratrix, L. (2011). Differential Effects of Three Professional Development Models on Teacher Knowledge and Student Achievement in Elementary Science. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching 49(3)* 333- 362.
***WWC* Rating**	Meets *What Works Clearinghouse* design standards Without Reservations.
***ESSA* Rating**	Tier 1 – At Least One Finding Shows Strong Evidence of Effectiveness
Process	Single study review protocol.
Evidence	Strong Evidence of Support.
Citation Outcomes	Results of randomized control trial demonstrate that investments in professional development improve educator/student achievement on content knowledge assessments.
Relevance to Project	*LIFE2* includes extensive professional development designed to improve educator instructional practice and increase student academic achievement.
Evidence of Support Study # 6: Principal Coaching	
Citation	Gates, S. M., Hamilton, L. S., Martorell, P., Burkhauser, S., Heaton, P., Pierson, A., … Gu, K. (2014). Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.
***WWC* Rating**	Meets *What Works Clearinghouse* design standards With Reservations. At Least One Significantly Positive Finding

Process	Single study review protocol; Review Standards 3.0
Evidence	Moderate Evidence of Support.
Citation Outcomes	Results of quasi-experimental design study demonstrate principal development model providing coaching and mentoring support improves student achievement in Reading.
Relevance to Project	*LIFE2* includes Principal Network supports that partner struggling and / or new principals and assistant principals with mentors and coaches to improve leadership practice.
Program	*LIFE2*: Research Base
HCMS with PBCS	Evidence of Effectiveness: Pay-for-performance bonuses generated slightly higher student reading achievement, and gains in math were similar in magnitude. Researchers confirmed that positive impact of pay-for-performance on student achievement was reflected in positive impacts on educator effectiveness, as measured by ratings educators received from their districts (Chiang, et al, 2015).
Teacher Supports	Evidence of Effectiveness: After controlling for initial ability (as measured by test scores) and other student characteristics, teacher effects are statistically important in explaining 9th-grade math test score achievement (Aaronson, Barrow & Sander, 2007).
Principal Supports	Evidence of Effectiveness: Leadership is second to teaching (among school-related factors) in its impact on student learning and the impact of leadership is greatest in schools where student learning needs are most acute (Leithwood, et al, 2004).
Educator Induction	Evidence of Effectiveness: Results of a randomized control study conclude teacher induction and new teacher support increases the test scores of average students by 4 percentile points in reading and 8 percentile points in math (Glazerman, et al, 2010).
Educator Retention	Evidence of Effectiveness: Analytical, random study of a Boston Teacher Residency retention incentive program in high-need schools indicates attrition stabilizes after three years of service and incentive recipients more likely to remain in school five or more years (Silva, et al, 2014).

Based on research of evidence-based HCMS, PBCS, educator evaluation and educator improvement practices, the Planning Task Force developed a Logic Model grounding the project in a strong theory of support and rationale. The validated logic model framework – developed by the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Northeast & Islands and WestEd and aligned to the FORECAST evaluation strategy (see *Program Design* below), grounds *LIFE2* in strong theory and demonstrates a rationale supporting project elements:

LIFE2 Logic Model				
GOAL: To improve student achievement by increasing access to effective educators in high-needs schools.				
Objective 1: Reduce equity gaps through effectiveness-based Human Capital Management Systems.				
Objective 2: Assess educator effectiveness using validated tools to ensure objectivity.				
Objective 3: Improve educator effectiveness through individualized learning and support.				
Objective 4: Increase student attainment of state academic performance standards.				
INPUTS >	**ACTIVITIES >**	**OUTPUTS >**	**SHORT TERM OUTCOMES >**	**LONG TERM OUTCOMES**

• **TSL Grant Resources**
  o District expertise
	•**Tier 1: Comprehensive HCMS**
	  o Update and
		•**Tier 1: Comprehensive HCMS**
		  o Effectiveness-
			•**Tier 1: Comprehensive HCMS**
			  o Improve Retention of *Exemplary* Educators
				•**Tier 1: Comprehensive HCMS**
				  o Improve Retention of *Exemplary* Educators in

implementing educator evaluations. ○ TSL Project Personnel Expertise ○ TSL Partner Expertise / Resources ○ TSL Vendor Expertise / Resources • **In Kind Match Resources** ○ Multi-year use of state-approved Educator Evaluation System ○ Experience distributing Performance-based Compensation ○ Existing Personnel Capacity ○ Experience with Instructional Coaching Model ○ Existing Partner Expertise / Resources	Improve Strategies ○ Expand *Talent Management* systems ○ Conduct annual Educator Evaluations ○ Distribute *Exemplary* PBC Incentives ○ Distribute Retention / Signing Incentives • **Tier 2: Educator Quality Supports** ○ Establish / Maintain Professional Growth Plans ○ Equity in Teaching and Learning ○ Principal Network ○ Instructional Coaching ○ New Teacher Network ○ Career Ladders ○ Professional Development ○ Virtual Networks for Improvement	based HCMS ○ Annual Educator Performance Ratings. ○ Annual Performance-based Comp. awards. ○ Professional Growth Plans for all educators. • **Tier 2: Educator Quality Supports** ○ Annual New Teacher Induction Coaching, Mentoring, PLC. ○ Annual Principal Network Coaching and Mentoring. ○ Annual Professional Learning Linked to Growth Plans. ○ Annual Career Ladder Opportunities – Microcredentials, Badging, Lead Teachers, Coaches, Mentors • ***LIFE2* Evaluation** ○ Data Collection. ○ Data Analysis. ○ Site Visits. ○ Progress Monitoring. ○ Annual / Final Performance Reports.	in High-Need Schools. ○ Increase Racial Diversity of Applicants for new Positions. ○ 100% of Educators will Receive Annual Effectiveness Rating. ○ Increase Educator Eligibility for PBC Incentives by 3%. ○ Increase # *Exemplary* Educators by minimum of 3%. • **Tier 2: Educator Quality Supports** ○ 75% of New Teachers will Receive Mentoring / Coaching / PLC Support. ○ 75% of New Teachers will Complete Annual New Teacher Orientation. ○ 75% of Educators will Maintain Professional Growth Plans. ○ Reduce % *Minimally Effective and Ineffective* by 5%. ○ 50% of Educators will Participate in Instructional Coaching. ○ Professional Learning in 100% of Schools. ○ Increase ELA, Math and Graduation Rates a minimum of 3%.	High-Need Schools 10% by 2024. ○ Increase Racial Diversity of Applicants for new Positions 10% by 2024. ○ 100% of Educators will Receive Annual Effectiveness Rating. ○ Increase Educator Eligibility for PBC Incentives 10% by 2024. ○ Increase # *Exemplary* Educators a minimum 10% by 2024. • **Tier 2: Educator Quality Supports** ○ 90% of New Teachers in Mentoring / Coaching / PLC Support. ○ 90% of New Teachers Complete Annual New Teacher Orientation. ○ 90% of Educators will Maintain Professional Growth Plans. ○ Reduce % *Minimally Effective and Ineffective* 10% by 2024. ○ 75% of Educators will Participate in Instructional Coaching. ○ Professional Learning in 100% of Schools. ○ Increase ELA, Math and Grad Rates a minimum of 10% by 2024. ○ Increase % *Exemplary* Educators in *LIFE2* Schools a minimum 10% by 2024.

Grant managers, the *LIFE2* Advisory Board (see *Management Plan*) and evaluators will utilize the Logic Model to ensure alignment of activities with the project goal, objectives and timeline, ensuring equitable delivery of the Tiers of Support and proposed services.

(ii) Thorough, high-quality review of relevant literature, high-quality plan for project implementation.

Podolsky, A., Kini, T. and Darling-Hammond, L. (2019) concluded that teacher efficacy, when supported with evidenced-based professional learning and job embedded-professional coaching, can significantly improve over time. First, the authors find that teaching experience (supported by job-embedded coaching and professional learning) is positively associated with student achievement gains throughout much of a teacher's career. Second, as teachers gain experience (and have access to multiple pathways for professional growth and development), their students are more likely to do better on measures of success beyond test scores. Third, teachers make greater gains in their effectiveness when they teach in a supportive, collegial environment, or accumulate experience in the same grade, subject or district; and finally, more experienced teachers confer benefits to their colleagues (serving as mentors who can offer strategies to eradicate persistent problems of practice).

The National Strategic Planning & Analysis Research Center (2017) reported that an analysis focused on Kindergarten and third grade students attending Mississippi public schools during the 2015-2016 school year, enforces the notion that teacher quality matters. The report shows that students with a National Board Certified reading teacher had significantly higher literacy proficiency levels than those students who had a non-National Board Certified reading teacher on measures of reading ability. In particular, kindergarteners who received reading instruction from a National Board Certified Teacher were 5.1 percentage points more likely than other kindergarteners to achieve a proficient score on the MKAS2 reading test, and 1.8 percentage points more likely to achieve performance growth on the MKAS2.

Researchers Goldhaber and Cowan (2015) used seven years of statewide data to study the effectiveness of National Board Certified Teachers in Washington State. Researchers found that Board-certified teachers produce nearly six weeks of additional learning gains in middle school math classrooms and one to two weeks of additional learning gains in elementary classrooms and middle school reading classrooms. Finally, they found that teachers who achieve Board certification on their first attempt produce four and a half weeks of additional learning gains compared to those teachers who pursue but never achieve Board certification.

Exemplary school leaders are also critical to fostering the conditions needed to raise student achievement in schools. Research studies show that strong principals play an important role in creating a positive school culture

and raising student achievement. Hollingworth, Olsen, Asikin-Garmager, & Winn (2018) assert that highly effective school leaders are essential to retaining highly effective teachers and raising student achievement, in all schools, especially in schools that serve the most vulnerable students. Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond (2017) in their examination of teacher turnover attribute highly effective school leaders to being a critical element in growing teacher competence, establishing supportive Professional Learning Communities and ensuring that students' social and psychological needs are met. Adams, Olsen, & Ware (2017) conclude that there is a positive relationship between highly effective principals, student learning and academic achievement. Among a number of positive outcomes, Coelli & Green (2012) found that greater school leader effectiveness is associated with higher graduation rates especially in high priority schools. Research also bears witness to the fact that when principals are able to grow their competence through meaningful professional learning that improves their efficacy, those school leaders, in turn, have a positive impact on raising student achievement (Grissom, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2015; Dhuey, E., & Smith, J., 2014; Branch, G. F., Hanushek, E. A., & Rivkin, S. G., 2012; Coelli, M., & Green, D. A., 2012).

Policy expert, Desiree Carver-Thomas (2018) in a research study, "Diversifying the Teaching Profession: How to Recruit and Retain Teachers of Color", conducted by the Learning Policy Institute found that: 1) Teachers of color boost the academic performance of students of color, including improved reading and math test scores, improved graduation rates, and increases in their aspirations to attend college; and 2) Both students of color and white students report having positive perceptions of their teachers of color, including feeling cared for and academically challenged. The report also provides several recommendations which guide and inform our work in the *LIFE2* TSL Grant. First, the report recommends offering comprehensive induction to support teachers of color in their first years of teaching. Induction often includes being matched with a veteran mentor teacher and can also include seminars, classroom assistance, time to collaborate with other teachers, coaching and feedback from experienced teachers, and reduced workloads. Second, the research supports implementing *Grow Your Own* programs at the district level that recruit teacher candidates from nontraditional populations which can be supported through university-based partnerships and other financial and programmatic policies and support. Finally, the report suggests that districts should provide ongoing professional learning opportunities for school leaders (in diversity, equity and inclusion) to develop the skills to support teachers effectively.

The *LIFE2* Planning Task Force, based on extensive research of effective practices proven to yield positive outcomes relevant to the proposed *LIFE2 TSL* vision, created a high-quality plan to implement a comprehensive,

transformative project designed to raise student academic achievement through increased educator effectiveness and elevated equity in learning for all students. The *LIFE2* Framework includes the following elements: (1) Prioritization of Services; (2) Goal, Objectives and Outcomes and (3) Tiers of Support.

(1) Prioritization of Services: <u>*LIFE2* will serve 28 South Carolina schools in two districts – **average Free and Reduced Lunch rate is 81% and all schools meet the *TSL* criteria of High-Need School**</u>. *LIFE2* will serve all 28 district schools to ensure consistency of efforts, promote equitable access for students to high-quality educators and education programs and because *LIFE2* schools have multi-year trends of increasing poverty and needs. To ensure services target highest needs students and schools, the Planning Task Force identified a **School Priority Level** strategy to identify schools most in need of improvement. Schools in Priority Level 1 will be served to the maximum extent possible; Schools in Priority Level 2 will receive moderate supports to the extent possible based on capacity of services beyond Priority Level 1 demand; Priority Level 3 schools will benefit from professional development and career ladder opportunities to the extent capacity allows upon meeting Priority Level 1 and Level 2 demand. Schools in all Priority Levels will benefit from HCMS systemic improvements and PBCS strategies. *LIFE2* Priority Levels include:

School Priority	*LIFE2* School Priority Level Classification
Priority Level 1:	Schools with 90-100% Free/Reduced Lunch rates performing in bottom 10% of state schools.
Priority Level 2:	Schools with 80-89% Free/Reduced Lunch rates performing in bottom 20% of state schools.
Priority Level 3:	Schools with 70-79% Free/Reduced Lunch rates performing in bottom 30% of state schools.

Our South Carolina Consortium designed a project based on Evidence of Effectiveness and peer-reviewed research. A Logic Model grounds *LIFE2* in strong theory. Prioritizing services using a Priority Level strategy provides a rationale for ensuring *LIFE2* benefits highest-poverty / lowest-performing schools and closes education equity gaps impacting all grades, PK – 12.

(2) Goal, Objectives and Outcomes: Implementation of *LIFE2* will help schools meet/exceed the following goal and objectives (see *Evaluation* in *Project Design* section below for measurable Performance Indicators):

<u>**GOAL**</u>: **To improve student achievement by increasing access to effective educators in high-need schools.**	
<u>**Objective 1:**</u> Reduce equity gaps through effectiveness-based Human Capital Management System.	
Outcome 1.1: Improved educator quality ratings in *LIFE2* Priority Level 1 schools.	**Outcome 1.2:** Diversified teachers and school leaders educating students in *LIFE2* schools.
<u>**Objective 2:**</u> Assess educator effectiveness using validated tools to ensure objectivity.	

Outcome 2.1: Increased teacher effectiveness ratings.	Outcome 2.2: Increased administrator effectiveness ratings.
Objective 3: Improve educator effectiveness through individualized learning and supports.	
Outcome 3.1: Professional Growth Plans for teachers and school leaders.	Outcome 3.2: Reduced numbers of teachers and school leaders rated *Minimally Effective* / *Ineffective*.
Objective 4: Increase student attainment of state academic performance standards.	

Outcome 4.1: Increased ELA / Reading Proficiency rates.	Outcome 4.2: Increased Math Proficiency rates.	Outcome 4.3: Increased Graduation Rates.

Evaluation of the goal, objectives and outcomes will include assessment of required GPRA performance indicators and project-specific measures, as well as a quasi-experimental design study with research questions.

(3) Tiers of Support: Implementation of *LIFE2* during the initial three-year grant period will provide diverse services and supports across two Tiers of Support: Tier 1 - Comprehensive Human Capital Management System; and Tier 2 - Educator Quality Supports.

Tier 1 - Comprehensive Human Capital Management System – *LIFE2* schools will launch an initiative to reimagine Human Resource Departments into data-driven Human Capital Management Systems linked to effectiveness data. *LIFE2* will expand district-funded efforts to reform their HCMSs and will provide district and school administrators with the tools to support verifiable improvement in highest-need schools. Supports include: (1) Effectiveness-based Human Capital Management; (2) Talent Management; (3) Educator Effectiveness Model; (4) High Quality Evaluation Plan; and (5) Performance-Based Compensation.

- **Effectiveness-based Human Capital Management:** Annual evaluation of educator effectiveness using the *Teacher, Instructional Support Personnel, School Leader and the District Leader Evaluation Models* (below) will provide data to inform all elements of LIFE[2] Human Capital Management Systems, including:

Component	*LIFE2* HCMS Improvement Strategy
Recruitment	• *LIFE2* will strengthen the screening and selection process to assess the effectiveness of prospective teachers, principals and administrators by identifying candidates who understand and embrace our instructional vision. Because recruiting quality candidates is a challenge, the district is mindful of the efficacy of alternative certification programs, partnerships with colleges and universities, and "grow your own" recruiting programs to best provide teachers / principals able to raise student achievement. *LIFE2* will collaborate with the Center of Excellence for Educator Preparation and Innovation at Voorhees College to develop and implement a plan to recruit, employ and retain minority educators and will utilize local HR systems to post positions and produce recruitment videos to highlight unique aspects of *LIFE2* schools.

Hiring	• *LIFE2* schools will provide equal opportunity for employment without regard to actual or perceived age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or other protected class. Prior to conferring employment offers to highly-qualified candidates, HCMS officers will disclose to candidates the components of the Educator Effectiveness Model. Upon hiring, new educators or educators new to our schools will be assigned to the New Teacher Network and Professional Growth Track # 1 (see Tier 2) to facilitate extensive induction, on-boarding, multi-year coaching and mentoring. Districts will streamline current hiring processes by implementing the *Applicant Tracking* and *Employee Records* with Sync systems.
Placement	• Districts will seek equitable placement of *Exemplary* teachers / principals in highest need schools aligned to the School Priority Level classification (see above). New teachers and current educators willing to teach in highest poverty / lowest-performing schools who meet *Exemplary* standards will qualify for compensation incentives that promote equitable access to *Exemplary* educators for students in failing schools (see *PBCS* below).
Retention	• Multiple initiatives – New Teacher Network, Instructional Coaching, Principal Network, Career Ladder and Professional Development (see Tier 2) – will provide professional growth opportunities to increase educator quality and promote retention. <u>*LIFE2* will offer *Exemplary* teachers who complete a minimum of two consecutive years of service in designated highest poverty / lowest performing schools Retention Bonuses to increase equity in learning and improve student access to high-quality teachers in high-need schools</u>.
Promotion	• *LIFE2* districts do not currently implement a system to promote educators based on proven ability to raise student achievement. *LIFE2* will connect promotion to an Educator Effectiveness Model that uses validated evaluation rubrics and student growth measures. Promotion will be linked to performance-based compensation strategies that reward *Exemplary* educators through incentive pay and Career Ladder (see Tier 2) professional growth.
Dismissal	• *LIFE2* districts will assist employees in any way possible as they pursue professional growth and will customize individual Professional Growth Plans to improve skills and raise achievement. Educator Quality Supports (see Tier 2) – comprised of *Professional Growth Tracks* and *Professional Growth Plans* – will promote educator improvement and facilitate courageous discussions that consider alternative roles for, or dismissal of, ineffective educators.
Compensation	• *LIFE2* districts will adopt a Performance-based Compensation System for teachers and school leaders that rewards *Accomplished* teaching and leadership (see PBCS below).
Professional Development	• Effectiveness data will allow *LIFE2* districts to prioritize use of limited professional development funds to target district and school needs while facilitating individual educator improvement.

	Performance labels – *Exemplary, Proficient, Needs Improvement, Unsatisfactory* – connect to one of four Professional Growth Tracks and determine components of Professional Growth Plans (see Tier 2). *Talent Management* platforms will track effectiveness ratings, categorize professional development, inform educators of opportunities and monitor completion of PGPs.

- **Talent Management:** MCDC and *LIFE2* partners believe that highly effective organizations are not produced serendipitously, but with intention. In order to create a culture of competence, all of our stakeholders must have a shared understanding and language, along with a vast toolkit that we can use to strategize on how to improve teacher practice, as well as, achievement outcomes for students. With the use of these technologically-advanced digital tools, teachers and school leaders at all levels can engage in anytime-anywhere learning, choose from different professional learning pathways, receive and incorporate feedback from coaches through differentiated pathways for professional development and job-embedded on-going professional learning used to significantly improve their effectiveness. We believe that developing modules for learning at every level sends a powerful message to all of our stakeholders that learning is happening at all levels, especially if all stakeholders are encouraged to provide feedback. When we empower our stakeholders with agency in this manner, we increase buy-in and create a learning community in which everybody is expected to learn and grow together, while also understanding that it is our collective responsibility to ensure that all of our students are learning at very high levels in our districts. Over time, using a technologically-advanced Human Capital Management System, coupled with a Performance Based Compensation System, will enable our organizations to manage the entire talent lifecycle—from effectively sourcing and recruiting to onboarding new hires, managing goals and performance, rewarding for performance, providing continuous learning, developing careers and conducting talent reviews and planning for best-fit successors—all while ensuring districts continually improve and build capacity to achieve:

  o *Talent acquisition:* We believe that educators enter the profession with a desire to be effective. We can attract compelling candidates when they know they will be supported and have an opportunity for career growth and will receive the supports they need to be highly effective in their practice. With this investment we have the opportunity to leverage innovative technologies as tools to make education attractive as a career choice which leads to high impact.

  o *Performance management:* Align student learning and achievement goals with teacher and school leadership effectiveness and support employees with frequent checkpoints to optimize performance.

- *Career development:* Identify career opportunities for aspiring teacher leaders and school leaders and maintain a development plan to bring employees closer to their career aspirations.

- *Talent review and succession management:* Evaluate macro-organizational talent trends and proactively plan for future needs in leadership and other critical roles.

- *Learning:* Cultivate a culture of competence, while providing opportunities for learning at all levels to foster a shared understanding and standard of effectiveness. Leverage innovative technology tools to provide a tailored professional development experience which can be used as a job-embedded tool for continuous improvement.

Educator Effectiveness Model: As we increase our investment in providing pathways towards excellence to improve the effectiveness of our teachers and school leaders, it is important that as an organization that we concomitantly direct resources towards rewarding exemplary teaching and school leadership and attracting teachers to teach in schools where they are needed most. We believe that one of the most important data points for exemplary teaching is growth in learning and increases in student achievement. We want to be clear that a "Exemplary" rating can only be paired with an increase in growth in student learning. The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) Assessment Model and Rubric is based on the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teacher Evaluation, which is used for teacher evaluation in the state of South Carolina and will be used as the evaluation framework. The South Carolina Department of Education will train all teachers and administrators in our *LIFE2* districts in how to effectively use the state model. In the highest priority schools receiving intensive support, the SCDE will work closely with administrators, teachers and coaches to facilitate formal teacher evaluation, collect data, and use digital portfolios to identify areas of improvement in practice of teachers and administrators.

Educator Effectiveness Formulas – Annual effectiveness ratings will be based on formula calculations that combine multiple factors – equal weight is given to Student Achievement and non-achievement-based metrics (observations / surveys / school commitment).

Peer Review: One of the critical components that we are adding to the *LIFE2* Evaluation and Effectiveness Formula is Peer Review which will account for 10% of the total weighted score of the evaluation. A team of 3-5 teachers who have been evaluated as "Exemplary" for at least 3-5 consecutive years will provide an evidence-based assessment of the teacher's efficacy using video observation footage; notes from critical feedback from *SIBME Huddles*; formative and assessment data; evidence from Virtual Networks for Improvement; and running

notes from lesson studies facilitated by the teacher. The Peer Review team will develop a digital portfolio that will chart the teacher's growth in effectiveness throughout the course of the academic year. The Peer Review team will be provided with a stipend and bi-weekly release time to provide support and hold critical conversations with teachers.

LIFE2 Effectiveness Formulas						
Component	**Component Score**		**Percent of Score**		**Weighted Score**	
Essential Practices (EP)	0.0 - 4.0	x	20%	=	0 – 80	
Peer Review	**0.0 – 4.0**	**x**	**10%**	**=**	**0 – 40**	
Individual Value-Added Student Achievement Data (IVA)	0.0 - 4.0	x	35%	=	0 - 140	
Teacher-Assessed Student Achievement Data (TAS)	0.0 - 4.0	x	15%	=	0 - 60	
Student Survey of Practice (SSP)	0.0 - 4.0	x	10%	=	0 - 40	
Commitment to the School Community (CSC)	0.0 - 4.0	x	10%	=	0 - 40	
Total *LIFE2* Evaluation Score Range:					**0 - 400**	
Core Professionalism (CP)	Meets Standard				No Change	

Educator Effectiveness Labels – Upon completion of annual effectiveness evaluation procedures and after annual student growth data is linked to observational results, each educator will receive an Effectiveness Performance Rating aligned to a numerical score:

LIFE2 Educator Effectiveness Rating (Score)			
Unsatisfactory	**Needs Improvement**	**Proficient**	**Exemplary**
(0.0 – 200)	(201 – 299)	(300 – 349)	(350 – 400)

Educator performance ratings and scores will influence placement in Professional Growth Tracks and will help administrators and teachers develop Professional Growth Plans that promote improvement (see Tier 2). Educators who attain *Exemplary* and *Proficient* ratings will be eligible for annual performance-based compensation awards.

Performance-based Compensation: The *LIFE2* district consortium will distribute performance-based compensation incentives and sustain beyond federal funding a PBCS that links salary advancement and promotion to annual educator evaluation results and willingness to serve lowest-performing schools. Educators will be eligible to receive annual performance-based compensation, based on effectiveness evaluation ratings, high-priority hiring and placement incentives and *Targeted Support* / *Improvement* school retention incentives.

LIFE2: Teacher Performance-Based Compensation Rewards *		
Area	**Exemplary**	**Proficient**
Overall Educator Effectiveness Rating Award • 50% Educator Evaluations / Observations / Surveys/ Peer Review • 50% Student Achievement Measures (IVA and TAS)	███ per year	███ per year
High-Priority Content Area Placement Incentive (Placement of ESL / Special Ed. / World Languages / Math educators in <u>Priority Level 1 schools</u> – 50% upon hiring; 50% upon completion of first school year contingent on *Exemplary or Proficient* rating)	$███	███
Maximum PBCS Awards	Up to ███	Up to ███

* *Actual PBCS reward amounts subject to change, based on number of eligible candidates.*

TEACHERS PERFORMANCE BASED COMPENSATION
Tier 1 Compensation: Recruitment. Teachers who accept a position at one of the high priority schools designated for intensive support will receive a ███ signing bonus.
Tier 2: Compensation: Performance Category A – Teachers. Teachers who receive a rating of "Exemplary" or move from "Proficient" to "Exemplary" will receive a ███ dollar yearly bonus. Overall effectiveness rating will be based on 50% Educator Evaluations/ Observations/Surveys/Peer Review and 50% Student Achievement Measures (SC Assessment System / Rubric).
Tier 3: Compensation Performance Category B – Teachers. Teachers who receive an "Exemplary" rating or move from "Proficient" to "Exemplary" will receive a ███ dollar yearly bonus. The Overall effectiveness rating will be based on 50% Educator valuations/ Observations/Surveys/Peer Review and 50% Student Achievement Measures (SC Assessment System / Rubric)
SCHOOL LEADERS PERFORMANCE BASED COMPENSATION
Tier 1: Compensation: Recruitment. School leaders who have shown evidence of consistently raising student achievement (5 years or more as an "Exemplary" teacher or school leader) and accepts a position at one of the high priority schools designated for intensive support will receive a ███ signing bonus.
Tier 2: Performance Based Inventive Category A – School Leaders. School leaders who receive an "Exemplary" rating based on 85% of the students in the building showing 1 year of growth in student learning on the South Carolina Department of Education Statewide Assessment and achieve and maintain an accountability grade of a "B" or higher will receive a bonus of ███.
Tier 3: Compensation: Performance Category B – School Leaders. School leaders who receive an "Exemplary" or "Proficient" rating whose state accountability grade moves from a "D" to a "C"; from a "C" to a "B", etc.) and sustains the accountability grade of a "B" or higher will receive a bonus of $███.

The ultimate goal is to create job-embedded supports which empower teachers and administrators with a pathway towards fostering classrooms and buildings where student learning remains the foremost important function of the work occurring in schools.

TIER OF SUPPORT 2: Educator Quality Supports – The districts in our *LIFE2* consortium will implement an HCMS, guided by use of an *Evaluation System* that yields annual educator ratings, influences distribution of performance-based compensation and triggers development of Educator Quality Supports designed to increase the number of educators who attain *Exemplary* and *Proficient* performance ratings. Implementation of *LIFE2* will support the hiring of two *LIFE2* Achievement Specialists – one for Grades K-6 and one for Grades 7-12 (see *Management Plan*) to coordinate educator effectiveness improvement strategies that connect district and school leaders and instructional staff to professional learning aligned to the individual needs of educators. Coordinators, linked to district, school and individual achievement benchmarks will catalyze improvement across all performance levels and include: (1) Professional Growth Tracks; (2) Equity in Teaching and Learning; (3) Principal Network; (4) Instructional Coaching; (5) New Teacher Network; (6) Career Ladders; and (7) Professional Development.

(1) Professional Growth Tracks: The *LIFE2* HCMS drives all aspects of the educator evaluation process and influences all of its components. An essential component of the *LIFE2 HMCS System* is the Professional Growth Tracks strategy. Annually, all educators – newly-hired and experienced – will be assigned to a Professional Growth Track based on effectiveness data and ratings:

LIFE2 : Professional Growth Tracks		
Track	**Audience**	**Professional Growth Strategies**
Track 1: Initial Professional Development	• All educators with less than 3 years experience	• Designed to support growth of new educators – both new educators and new to *LIFE2* district schools – during probationary period. • Strategies promote assimilation of educators into district culture and promote mastery of district instructional / administrative strategies.
Track 2: Ongoing Professional Growth	• Experienced Educators – *Exemplary*, *Proficient*	• Designed to support experienced educators demonstrating mastery of educator effectiveness domains. • Strategies promote development of leadership skills, advanced certifications and peer support to promote sharing effective practice.
Track 3: Professional Development	• Experienced Educators – *Needs Improvement*	• Designed to support experienced educators demonstrating single-issue concern or single-issue deficiency in effectiveness domains. • Strategies promote development of skills aligned to effectiveness domains

– Concern		and strengthen weaknesses identified during evaluations.
Track 4: Professional Development – Warning	• Experienced Educators – *Unsatisfactory*	• Designed to support experienced educators demonstrating less than satisfactory performance across multiple effectiveness domains. • Strategies develop skills aligned to effectiveness domains / strengthen multiple weaknesses identified during evaluations. • Strategies mitigate deficiencies to avoid potential dismissal actions.

Annual assignment of educators to Professional Growth Tracks will trigger Professional Growth Plans that connect educators to support, professional development and quality improvement strategies that promote educator attainment of *Exemplary* and *Proficient* performance ratings. **LIFE2 seeks to raise student achievement by connecting all students attending schools with *Exemplary* and *Proficient* educators**.

(2) Equity in Teaching and Learning: *LIFE2* districts, guided by work with the New Teacher Project, National Center for Research, Voorhees College, Claflin University, the Carnegie Foundation, Learning for Justice, Darden Curry Partnership and the National Board will engage in professional learning opportunities that elevate the skills and competencies needed by educators to ensure that instruction is culturally responsive, equity-driven and data-informed. Both The Center of Excellence for Educator Preparation and Innovation at Voorhees and The Institute for Organizational Coherence will collaborate with superintendents, central office staff and school leaders to ensure that equity resonates in all teaching and learning decisions, education administration and human capital management decision-making. Equity in teaching and learning is critical to the success of the students in our districts, the success of *LIFE2* schools and the success of the communities in which students live and learn - communities improved by Midlands Community Development Corporation, the nonprofit organization and fiscal agent for *LIFE2*. Professional development and leadership training will ensure equity is a key factor in all *LIFE2* programs and experts from MCDC, The Center at Voorhees and IOC will provide technical assistance and professional development for district administrators, school leaders, instructional leaders and teachers to increase leadership and instructional coherence across all district and school programs serving high-needs schools through the lens of equity. The Center at Voorhees and IOC will also collaborate with *LIFE2* districts to implement a comprehensive plan that aligns with the goal and objectives of *LIFE2* to accelerate student achievement in high-priority schools.

(3) Principal Network: The *LIFE2* Principal Network will improve educator effectiveness through individualized learning and support for assistant principals and principals. Principal Network professional learning and professional growth strategies will include:

- o Blended Coaching: Leadership coaches will work with principals and assistant principals to provide the following supports: review and discuss school level data; assist in setting and reaching professional goals; engage in coaching conversations related to Culturally-Responsive PBIS behavior management protocols; provide best practices to ensure objective teacher evaluation; assist in supporting data-driven decision-making and curriculum design; engage in shared professional learning; reflect on day-to-day leadership challenges; model effective school management practices and support implementation of the Charlotte Danielson Model educator evaluation tool. Leadership Coaches will provide monthly coaching to participating principals / assistant principals. Coaches will be assigned to school leaders in their first year of school administration or to principals / assistant principals who receive *Needs Improvement* or *Unsatisfactory* ratings. Principal Coaches will complete leadership training offered by The Center of Excellence for Educator Preparation and Innovation at Voorhees College.

- o Leadership Evaluation Development: *LIFE2* districts will collaborate with The Center at Voorhees, The Institute for Organizational Coherence (IOC) and Learning For Justice (LFJ) to improve the ability of principals and evaluators to conduct high-quality instructional observations and use evidence-based targeted feedback to educators. JEDI will develop Equity Score Cards which provide school leaders with teachers' disaggregated data, coupled with a root cause analysis to show areas where there are gaps in equity-driven practice and strategies to close the equity gap. The Center, IOC and LFJ will develop professional learning that will nurture the growth of aspiring instructional leaders within districts by helping current and future school leaders develop a shared vision for high-quality instruction that is equity-driven; utilize non-judgmental methods for observing and analyzing instruction with a lens geared towards cultural responsiveness; employ transformative skills in providing targeted feedback; promote development of professional learning communities focused on student learning and grow a deeper culture of public practice.

- o Professional Learning: *LIFE2* will offer extensive leadership professional development to support the growth and continuous leadership improvement of central district administrators, principals and assistant principals. The *LIFE2* HMCS platform will include a catalog of professional development options designed to elevate effectiveness and fill gaps in expertise and knowledge identified during the annual administrator effectiveness evaluation process (see chart below for menu of professional development – additional opportunities will be available during the three-year grant period). *LIFE2* district administrators will complete annual professional development. Options will include, but not be limited to: Facilitating Deep

Learning; Equity-Driven Assessments; How to Facilitate Better Coaching Conversations that Significantly Improve Teacher Effectiveness; Blended Coaching; Strengths-based Leadership; Culturally-Responsive Pedagogy, and Using Data to Lead School-wide Transformation.

(4) Virtual Instructional Coaching: *LIFE2* districts will utilize a *Blended Coaching* model for educators. Instructional Coaches who have been rated Exemplary and/or are National Board Certified will support *LIFE2* educators with research-based, validated coaching and mentoring strategies. The Instructional Coaching effort will support educators with embedded professional development that raises competencies in instructional practice, teaching with equity and social and emotional learning. *LIFE2* will engage a team of Coaches that will be deployed to schools virtually to supplement existing Coaching capacity at each school with expertise in specialized pedagogies and competencies that can work with educators across grade levels and schools to address common instructional growth needs. Instructional Coaches will increase instructional support strategies in Special Education; Math; Science; English Language Learners; Social Studies/History; and Social / Emotional Learning and Equity. A team of twenty coaches will provide specialized supports across our 28 *LIFE2* schools; Coaches will be assigned to schools using the School Priority Level strategy.

(5) New Teacher Network: *LIFE2* will offer multi-year support for new teachers entering district schools to prepare them with skills to meet the urgent needs of students in high priority schools; understanding policies and practices in each district; and elevating the quality of the practice of new teachers during the early phase of their careers. <u>This is a critical need because 408 of our 877 teachers (47%) are Inexperienced Teachers.</u>

o **Induction Support:** *LIFE2* districts will offer an Annual Induction Orientation – a blended learning experience of one day workshop and online modules – that prepares new teachers who choose to serve in *LIFE2* consortium schools who may have had previous experience in other districts prior to serving in the consortium district. Teachers will learn how to effectively use the *LIFE2* HCMS, educator evaluation systems / effectiveness tools, district policies, South Carolina state standards / expectations and instructional / assessment philosophies.

o **New Teacher Virtual Networks for Improvement:** *LIFE2* districts will assign new teachers (Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 teachers) to specialized Learning Communities to connect them with New Teacher Network Mentor Teachers through a Virtual Network for Improvement. New Teacher Network Mentors and Instructional Specialists (Career Ladder position) will lead monthly Virtual Networks for Improvement

and connect new educators with instructional / curricular resources and support vital to ensuring new teachers meet and exceed performance standards.

o **New Teacher Mentoring:** Every first-year teacher entering *LIFE2* schools from a university teacher preparation program or alternative certification program will be assigned a New Teacher Mentor (Teacher Mentors have maintained an *Exemplary* rating for at least three consecutive years) from the same grade level or curricular subject. New teachers will meet with Mentors monthly throughout their first three years of teaching to learn from experienced educators and increase support for new teachers vulnerable to attrition from the profession. Mentor Teacher assignments will be maintained for the first three years of teaching.

(6) Career Ladders: Professional learning opportunities will be provided which link professional growth to educator performance. Career Ladders will offer multiple strategies to advance eligible *LIFE2* educators to higher level leadership and instructional positions. Educators who maintain *Exemplary* ratings for a minimum of three consecutive years will be recruited to pursue career advancement positions in instructional or school leadership positions. Career Ladder opportunities will include:

o **Harvard University Strategic Data Project:** *LIFE2* will engage outstanding educators from two participating, rural South Carolina school districts – central administrators, principals, assistant principals, HCMS administrators and / or teachers – in outstanding professional learning through the Harvard University Strategic Data Project. The Strategic Data Project Fellowship is a two-year program that strengthens the capacity of education agencies to use data to drive instructional improvement. The Fellowship prepares data strategists to advance critical analytic initiatives, uncover valuable insights, measure solutions, communicate evidence to stakeholders and build a strong data culture in schools vital to advancing educational priorities impacting the success of educators and students. *LIFE2* consortium districts will recruit up to eight candidates per year to complete the Harvard University Strategic Data Project Fellowship. The goal is to develop a brain trust of talent (teachers and school leaders) whose skills can be leveraged across districts to serve as thought leaders in developing evidence-based protocols to accelerate putting each of the high priority schools in *LIFE2* on a path of continuous improvement.

o **Micro-Credentials:** *LIFE2* will advance knowledge in the field pertaining to the concept of micro-credentials and the role they play in the ongoing effort to improve educator effectiveness. *LIFE2,* in partnership with The National Center For Research (Digital Promise), will clearly define through practice what micro-credentials are and provide multiple opportunities to engage educators in micro-credential

courses of study that will demonstrate the benefit micro-credentials add to the educator preparation and development field. *LIFE2* will demonstrate that micro-credentials are powerful change agents allowing aspiring, novice and experienced educators to increase knowledge and competency through intensive study of targeted education topics that deconstruct barriers impeding student success and perpetuating cycles of inequality in K – 12 education access / opportunity. Educators who attain *Exemplary* or *Proficient* performance ratings will be eligible to complete micro-credentials. Upon successful completion of micro-credential courses of study, *LIFE2* educators will then qualify to fill Career Ladder positions of elevated instructional leadership and school leadership responsibility and compensation (New Teacher Mentors, Instructional Coaches, Principal Network Coaches, Virtual Network for Improvement Facilitators, Curriculum Design Specialists, PBIS Behavior Support Team members, etc.).

Creating Virtual and Horizontal Coherence through Micro-credentialing	
Micro-credential Outcomes	
Teachers	Micro-credential in Improvement Science designed by The Center at Voorhees. Teachers will receive a micro-credential and develop competency do the following: 7. Use high-yield culturally-relevant strategies to create engagement and inquiry in the classroom within both virtual and on-site networks of improvement communities . 8. Identify and solve problems of practice. 9. Use data to conduct root-cause analysis. 10. Implement strategies for course-correction to accelerate learning and closing achievement gaps. 11. Close expertise gaps by working in community with accomplished educators to raise student achievement and solve problems of practice. 12. Incorporate equity-driven pedagogy.
HR Directors / Instructional Supervisors	Provide an inquiry-based learning and technical support group for District HR Directors and Instructional Supervisors. Learning sessions will lead to a micro-credential designed in collaboration with The Human Resource Management faculty at Voorhees College and the Improvement Science Clinical Faculty at The Center, and Participants will learn the following: 6. How to develop an outcomes-based Human Capital Management System with "best-in-class" strategies to increase teacher efficacy. 7. Study, implement and expand district-wide Performance-Based Compensation Systems which promote, sustain and incentivize "Exemplary" teaching practices. 8. Learn to effectively use and calibrate evaluation tools developed by the South Carolina Department of Education. 9. Effectively use SIBME software platform to create job-embedded professional learning and virtual coaching to significantly improve teacher effectiveness and use technology as a tool to conduct on-going

	"instructional rounds".
	10. Learn to effectively use Charlotte Danielson Model and a blended coaching model as drivers to improve instruction.
Superintendents / Principals	This micro-credential, designed in collaboration with the Improvement Science Clinical Faculty at The Center at Voorhees College, will target district and building leaders to develop coherence in leading large-scale change. Leaders will learn: 7. How to effectively use, and evaluate the quality, consistency and reliability of Human Capital Management Systems. 8. Study the effectiveness of HCMS as a driver to improve teacher effectiveness. 9. Learn to effectively implement a Performance-Based Compensation System which maximizes teacher efficacy. 10. Learn how to effectively cultivate, grow and sustain a "culture of competency". 11. Effectively use technology as a tool to conduct on-going "instructional rounds". 12. Study the most effective frameworks for improving instruction. Learn how to incorporate the tenants of improvement science to effectively raise student achievement and close persistent achievement gaps.

o **Badging:** *LIFE2* will introduce the emerging professional growth concept of Badging to *LIFE2* district schools. Similar to the micro-credential approach, Badging will serve as a Career Ladder strategy to promote the internal development of education leaders. *Exemplary* and *Proficient* educators who maintain ratings a minimum of three consecutive years will be eligible to develop priority skills from existing *LIFE2* district specialists in instructional leadership and school leadership areas of focus (Coaching, Social and Emotional Learning, ELL / Special Education Instruction, Educator Evaluation, Literacy, Equity in Education, etc.). Badging will promote self-directed growth by allowing educators to choose from a menu of Badging options – aligned to Career Ladder positions and outlined in the *LIFE2* HCMS – that advance their careers as they move up the Career Ladder. Badging will include coaching, mentoring, PLCs, e-learning and / or embedded professional learning to increase educator quality and expand *LIFE2* districts' capacity to address the learning needs of students.

o **National Board Certification:** *LIFE2* teachers who maintain *Exemplary* or *Proficient* ratings for a minimum of three consecutive years will be eligible to apply for participation in the National Board Certification initiative. Annual cohort of educators who complete the rigorous program will then be eligible to pursue advanced Career Ladder positions (New Teacher Mentors, Instructional Coaches, Principal Network Coaches, PLC Leaders, Curriculum Design Specialists, PBIS Behavior Support Team members).

(7) Professional Development: *LIFE2* will generate objective effectiveness data used to inform all aspects of the HCMS (Tier 1) and will connect educators – through Professional Growth Tracks (Tier 2), monitored by Learning For Justice (Tiers 1&2) – to diverse and evidence-based professional development that reflects individual needs. *LIFE2* proposes an innovative professional development delivery model that expands upon the outstanding work which first began with Voorhees College. The *LIFE2* Professional Development strategy will be to provide weekly, job-embedded coaching, and provide 24/7 access to both online and hybrid professional learning modules that all schools will be able to access that address diverse content areas, leadership skills and instructional competencies. Weekly *LIFE2 interactive* modules will be taught by a rotating team of Coaches, Instructional Specialists and experts from partner organizations with expertise in teacher and school leader effectiveness. *LIFE2* interactive modules will provide a cost-effective, sustainable approach to ongoing professional development that provides weekly opportunities for educators to address professional growth in collaborative, *Deeper Learning Communities of Practice* that provide extensive and diverse options for professional learners. Implementation of *LIFE2* will supplement the district-driven weekly interactive modules (the expansion of an effective Voorhees strategy developed in a Project SEED grant) with external professional development provided by outstanding, respected leaders in the field of educator quality improvement.

o **High Impact Professional Learning:** *LIFE2* will utilize resources to invest in High Impact Professional Learning that will help districts meet high-level priorities and implement transformative, districtwide improvement strategies. High Impact Professional Learning will include:

LIFE2: Professional Development	
Program / Provider	**Purpose / Impact**
The Center of Excellence for Educator Preparation and Innovation at Voorhees College (The Center)	The Center has served as the convener of each of the two district consortia and crafted the MOU for cross-district collaboration among each of the regional stakeholders. In the *LIFE2* TSL, The Center will facilitate Virtual Instructional Coaches who will provide blended coaching to improve teacher efficacy; design competency-based micro-credentials that increase efficacy; drive recruitment, selection, training and retention of new candidates through its alternative teacher certification process who will serve in high priority schools within the two districts; provide professional development for both teachers and school leaders that will provide new pathways to certification in areas of teacher shortages (e.g. STEM, special education, world languages, etc.). The Center will facilitate Networks for Improvement to train teachers to facilitate "deep learning" and will provide blended professional learning that will include in-person job-embedded coaching and workshops and robust online courses to help district administrators and school leaders effectively use SIBME to support the implementation of objective educator effectiveness evaluations.

The Institute for Organizational Coherence (IOC)	IOC will design and assist in the implementation of a comprehensive plan for large-scale transformation (which includes the HCMS Framework and a PBCS adopted by the *LIFE2* consortium districts). IOC will support the learning needs of superintendents and school leaders and help stakeholders at the central office level clearly define goals, capture data, and outline and roll-out the implementation of HCMS and the PBCS across the two districts. IOC will work across districts as a strategist at the macro level to ensure that there is intersectionality among each of the components (coaching support, professional learning, talent management, recruitment, performance based compensation) of the strategic plan and proposal. IOC's goal is to ensure that the *LIFE2* proposal is implemented in alignment with GPRA measures, targets and goals of the TSL grant.
The New Teacher Project	Given the number of novice teachers new to the profession who are serving in consortium districts, we are making a bold and robust investment in new teacher quality by enlisting the evidence-based expertise of The New Teacher Project. TNTP will design our New Teacher Induction Support System to include in-person support, curriculum design and on-going virtual coaching for teachers in their first three years of service. They will provide critical feedback to improve teacher efficacy, support and build capacity with teachers who have a "developing" skill-set. The goal will be to grow teacher competence and move all teachers from "developing" to "effective" and "highly effective," raising student achievement.
Harvard University Strategic Data Project	This two-year Fellowship will transform educators into data strategists and research professionals with skills to build schoolwide / districtwide cultures driven by use of data to inform strategic decisions impacting district, school and instructional practice.
Learning for Justice (LFJ)	LFJ will provide professional development, supplemental curriculum materials and a train-the trainer model for equity-driven education. LFJ will facilitate conversations to spark deep learning on the impact of culturally-relevant and responsive pedagogy and how our perspectives, attitudes and actions impact student learning and achievement in the classroom. School leaders will develop management skills to increase the effectiveness of culturally-relevant conversations about student learning with peers at all levels of performance, competence, and commitment. Coaching will provide educators the ability to positively impact employee competency, engagement and retention.
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards	Educators receiving *Exemplary* and *Proficient* performance ratings will pursue National Board certification to develop mastery of advanced competencies – National Board certification will promote advancement through Career Ladder opportunities.
Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning	*LIFE2* teachers and school leaders across districts will learn to use Improvement Science protocols: 1) identify problems of practice; 2) conduct root-cause analysis of those problems; 3) design a plan of action to address the problem; 4) implement the plan; 5) monitor the implementation; 6) course – correct if needed; and 7) teach to mastery (solve the problem). Accomplished and novice teachers will learn from each other across districts on the effective classroom tools for raising and sustaining student achievement. Teachers will be able to conduct virtual instructional rounds and observe and give substantive feedback to each other to strengthen their practice.

Micro-Credentials	*LIFE2* will partner with Digital Promise to connect educators with diverse and respected leaders in the field of education leadership and instructional practice to offer micro-credential courses linked to Career Ladder positions available throughout targeted schools.

- **Virtual Networks for Improvement:** Through research and training facilitated by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning teachers and school leaders will be trained to facilitate *Virtual Networks for Improvement*. Not only are teachers isolated within classrooms as they struggle with the conundrum of how to raise student achievement, that isolation is exacerbated as teachers attempt to collaborate outside of their schools with other educators. The goal is to empower teachers and school leaders across districts to use improvement science protocols to: 1) identify problems of practice; 2) conduct root-cause analysis of those problems; 3) design a plan of action to address the problem; 4) implement the plan; 5) monitor the implementation; 6) course – correct if needed; and 7) teach to mastery (solve the problem). Accomplished and novice teachers will learn from each other across districts on the effective classroom tools for raising and sustaining student achievement. Teachers will be able to conduct virtual instructional rounds and observe and give substantive feedback to each other to strengthen their practice.

LIFE2 and its Tiers of Support will provide each of the district partners in the consortium with a mechanism to make effectiveness-based HCMS decisions, improve instructional leadership, enhance classroom education, improve equitable access to quality teaching for all students and raise achievement in high-need schools.

(iii) Methods of evaluation will provide feedback / assessment of progress toward outcomes.

Midlands Community Development Corporation (MCDC) plans to contract with EduShift, Inc., a 21-year-old grants and program evaluation organization, to implement an objective evaluation of *LIFE2*. Project Leader, ████████, is a seasoned grants administrator and evaluator. She has served as principal investigator in over 100 federal and state government grants since 1990 – including six previous *Teacher Incentive Fund* and *Teacher and School Leader* grant projects – and has been a field instructor with Indiana University and St. Francis College. She has substantial experience administering federal, state, corporate, and foundation grants and has served as an evaluator for the United States, Indiana and Michigan Departments of Education, as well as dozens of school districts throughout the country. With a strong background in education, administration, accounting, auditing, research and program implementation, Guse, and her team of professionals have over 50 years of combined grant experience and offer tremendous expertise that will ensure objective, ongoing evaluation of *LIFE2* across multiple GPRA measures, locally-developed project measures and two research

questions. Evaluation of *LIFE2* will include: (1) Evaluation Methodology; (2) Process and Outcome Evaluation; (3) Evidence of Promise and (4) Objective Performance Measures.

(1) Evaluation Methodology: Evaluators will utilize the research-based *FORECAST* model (*FORmative Evaluation, Consultation, And System Techniques*) to guide an objective evaluation structure (Goodman 1994; Goodman 1998; Goodman 2006; Katz, Wandersman, Goodman, et al., 2013). Four tiers of assessment provide a validated evaluation planning framework:

MODEL – Action Model of Project	Evaluators will construct an action model for each year of the project that includes all events, linking the implementation timeline and logic model with evaluation activities to ensure all facets of the evaluation process are aligned.
MARKER – Indicators of Progress	Evaluators will collect baseline data and identify annual benchmarks based on performance measures (including annual growth targets) to determine if progress is sufficient to attain goals and determine the magnitude of results.
MEASURE – Tools to Assess Achievement	Evaluators, project personnel and partners will implement assessment tools (educator effectiveness rubrics, state content exams, surveys) aligned to *LIFE2* strategies to collect data. Analysis will link statistical relationships to outcomes.
MEANING – Assess Outcomes, Verify Impact	Data analysis will equip evaluators with indicators needed to draw conclusions / assess strengths and weaknesses. Interpretation of data will provide feedback that helps stakeholders make informed decisions about strategy effectiveness.

The *FORECAST* model will provide evaluators, the Project Director and Advisory Board with feedback regarding the effects of specific program elements. Evaluation of *LIFE2* using the FORECAST model will allow evaluators to address two critical questions (see below for description of Treatment / Control Groups):

LIFE2 **Research Questions**
Do LIFE2 schools receiving TSL funds (Treatment Group) measure greater student achievement gains than non-LIFE2 schools that do not receive TSL funding (Control Group)?
Does TSL funding improve equity in education by improving student access to *Exemplary* educators in Targeted Support and Improvement schools compared to Control Group schools?

(2) Process and Outcome Evaluation: EduShift, Inc will conduct a thorough evaluation of all project elements that measures both process and outcome indicators. **Process Evaluation:** Process evaluation will provide feedback pertaining to the achievement of operational benchmarks and milestones in accordance with proposed timelines. Process measures will ensure that all program activities occur in a timely manner so that completion of the project will yield outcomes. The *LIFE2* Timeline, Logic Model (see *Project Design*) and FORECAST action model will serve as process tools allowing EduShift personnel to determine compliance with the scope

and schedule of the proposed project. Process Evaluation will: (1) evaluate and document fidelity and variability in program implementation across sites and student subgroups in relation to Logic Model, Timeline and proposed scope of the project; (2) monitor dose of interventions across *LIFE2* sites and across intended recipients of interventions; (3) provide accountability data needed to inform stakeholders and partners of implementation progress and (4) generate feedback data to promote improvement of project, refinement of services and replication of effective strategies. **Outcome Evaluation:** Outcome evaluation assesses the impact of the *TSL* grant on *LIFE2* schools, educators and students. Evaluators will use nine Required GPRA Measures and project-specific indicators to evaluate the impact *LIFE2* strategies have on Human Capital Management Systems (including Performance-based Compensation Systems) and Educator Quality Support Systems. Outcome evaluation will focus on the measurement of performance indicators that correspond to the purpose of the program – including improving equity in education, increasing educator effectiveness and raising student achievement – and will measure program success and its impact on students / families / schools / communities. Outcome evaluation will generate data that verifies the impact of implementation rather than focusing on the timely completion of proposed activities. Outcome evaluation will equip grant managers with the information needed to analyze results by project component and by subgroups / schools to determine if interventions yield positive growth and promote success; analysis will promote replication and sustainability of effective practices and refinement of strategies to maximize results. **Treatment and Control Groups:** Evaluators will collect data to facilitate evaluation that meets *What Works Clearinghouse* standards:

TREATMENT GROUP	Targeted Support and Improvement – South Carolina state-designated Targeted Support and Improvement schools administered by *LIFE2* School Districts as of October 1, 2021.
CONTROL GROUP	South Carolina Targeted Support and Improvement – Matched Comparison of six South Carolina Targeted Support and Improvement schools as of October 1, 2021 matched to grade levels, poverty levels, achievement levels, etc. of Treatment Group schools.

(3) Evidence of Promise: Design Meets *What Works Clearinghouse* Standards – Evaluation will include Quasi-Experimental Design (QED) assessment of outcomes through comparison of Treatment and Control Group educators. Matching - In the impact evaluation, EduShift will use a propensity-score matching (PSM) approach designed to meet WWC standards with reservations. The evaluation will examine outcomes for *LIFE2* students enrolled in high-need schools in our participating two, rural districts. *LIFE2* is estimated to reach more than 13,000 students annually who will enroll in 28 district schools. ESI will use administrative records from schools within the district to create a sample of treatment schools (serving students enrolled in *Targeted Support*

/ *Improvement* schools) that are closely matched to South Carolina non-*TSL* state-designated *Targeted Support /*
Improvement control group schools on key characteristics – including ethnicity, gender, poverty, academic
performance, enrollment, grade level configuration and funding allocations (control school and treatment school
will be matched to ensure paired schools receive similar funding other than TSL funding). Other factors to be
considered will include: school size, pre-intervention student achievement in ELA, math and science, and the
proportion of economically-disadvantaged students, students of color, racial group isolation, special education
and English learners. ESI will evaluate the quality of the matching by examining whether the matched treatment
and control group means for each measure included in the matching process are within 0.25 standard deviation
of each other (the baseline equivalence threshold to meet *WWC* standards with reservations). If the differences
are greater than 0.25 standard deviation, ESI will refine the matching approach to achieve a baseline equivalence
acceptable to meet WWC standards with reservations. Once treatment (*Targeted Support / Improvement*)
schools are matched to comparison (non-*TSL* South Carolina *Targeted Support / Improvement*) schools,
evaluators will use <u>ANOVA</u> (analysis of variance) to analyze results. Since ANOVA only measures if a
difference exists between control and treatment groups and whether it is significant, evaluators hope to
demonstrate, due to the matching process, that the program was the cause of the variation in measured
objectives. <u>Statistical Adjustment</u> - In accordance with *What Works Clearinghouse QED, with reservations*,
evaluators will also perform ANCOVA (analysis of covariance) on control and treatment groups to assure there
are no confounding factors (or control them if they exist) between control and treatment groups. <u>Effect Size</u> -
Effect size will be calculated by taking the difference in means between two groups and dividing that number by
combined (pooled) standard deviation. Effect size tells evaluators how many standard deviations of difference
exist between the means of the intervention (treatment) and comparison conditions (an effect size of 0.25
indicates treatment group outperformed comparison group by 25% of one standard deviation). For *LIFE2*,
evaluators will use an effect size of 0.25 as the threshold to meet "Practice with Rigorous Scientific Evidence"
standard. Evaluators selected a 0.25 effect size because it represents a conservative estimate of effects and
because it meets USDOE *WWC* "substantively important" threshold. <u>Cross-Contamination</u>: Evaluation will
assess cross-contamination of control / treatment groups and remediate contamination if needed. Evaluators will
complete statistical treatments of data to assess results, casual inference of outcomes, relationships between
interventions / results and correlation of variables.

(4) Performance Measures: The goal, objectives, GPRA measures and indicators will be used to assess

implementation progress and the impact / outcomes of services. Evaluation will review program activities and budget expenditures to assess progress in meeting the goal and objectives of *LIFE2*. Evaluators will collect Baseline Data for each measure to facilitate progress monitoring/promote improvement across project outcomes:

LIFE2: Goal, Objectives, GPRA Measures, Project Indicators October 1, 2021 - September 30, 2024	Evaluation Source
GOAL: To improve student achievement by increasing access to effective educators in high-need schools.	
GPRA A: The percentage of teachers and School Leaders within the TSL-assisted schools rated effective or higher by their districts' evaluation and support systems.	
GPRA B: The percentage of teachers and School Leaders across the participating district(s) that show improvements, over the previous year, on the student growth component of their evaluation rating.	
GPRA C: The percentage of teachers and School Leaders within the TSL-assisted schools that show improvements, over the previous year, on the student growth component of their evaluation rating.	
GPRA D: The percentage of teachers and School Leaders in TSL-assisted schools for whom evaluation ratings were used to inform decisions regarding recruitment, hiring, placement, retention, dismissal, professional development, tenure, promotion, or all of the above.	
GPRA E: The percentage of teachers and School Leaders within the participating district(s) who earned performance-based compensation based on their individual evaluation ratings.	
GPRA F: The percentage of teachers and School Leaders in TSL-funded schools who earned performance-based compensation based on their individual evaluation ratings.	
GPRA G: The number of teachers receiving performance compensation disaggregated by race, gender, and where available, disability status.	
GPRA H: The number of School Leaders receiving performance compensation disaggregated by race, gender, and where available, disability status.	
GPRA I: The number of teachers receiving performance compensation for leadership responsibilities disaggregated by race, gender, and where available, disability status.	
Objective 1: Reduce equity gaps through effectiveness-based Human Capital Management Systems.	
Indicator 1.1: A minimum of 80% of educators in Targeted Support and Improvement schools will attain *Exemplary* or *Proficient* rating by end of grant, 10/1/21 – 9/30/24.	Effectiveness Rubric
Indicator 1.2: Increase the racial diversity of educators teaching in targeted schools a minimum of 15% by end of grant period, 10/1/21 – 9/30/24.	Employment Data
Objective 2: Assess educator effectiveness using validated tools to ensure objectivity.	
Indicator 2.1: 100% of instructional staff will receive an annual educator effectiveness rating, using state-approved evaluation tool, each year of the grant, 10/1/21 – 9/30/24.	Teacher Ratings
Indicator 2.2: 100% of principals / assistant principals will receive an annual educator effectiveness rating, using state-approved evaluation tool, each year of the grant, 10/1/21 – 9/30/24.	Leader Ratings
Objective 3: Improve educator effectiveness through individualized learning and support.	
Indicator 3.1: 100% of educators (instructional and leadership) will maintain annual Professional Growth Plans each year of the grant, 10/1/21 – 9/30/24.	Teacher Portfolios
Indicator 3.2: Reduce the number of educators who receive a *Needs Improvement* or *Unsatisfactory* rating a minimum of 15% compared to previous year, 10/1/21 – 9/30/24.	Educator Ratings
Objective 4: Increase student attainment of state academic performance standards.	

Indicator 4.1: Increase the % of students who achieve ELA proficiency benchmarks a minimum of 10% by end of grant period, 10/1/21 – 9/30/24.	SC Test Data
Indicator 4.2: Increase the % of students who achieve Math proficiency benchmarks a minimum of 10% by end of grant period, 10/1/21 – 9/30/24	SCTest Data
Indicator 4.3: Increase graduation rate a minimum of 10% by end of grant period, 10/1/21 – 9/30/24.	SC Data

Evaluation of *LIFE2* will produce data to assess impact of the project and promote continuous improvement:

- **Data Collection:** EduShift and the Project Director will collect data to establish baseline benchmarks for each performance measure. Baseline data (collected at beginning of Year 1) will facilitate comparative analysis of interim, annual and end-of-project data to measure outcomes. Data collection using project-specific tools will facilitate outcome analysis and reporting of results. Data collection will involve grant staff, school faculties, students, families and partners to ensure data reflects a diversity of stakeholders.

- **Evaluation Tools:** Evaluators will utilize multiple instruments to collect qualitative and quantitative data: (1) Assessment Scores and Grades: Student and teacher assessment results will measure academic outcomes. School performance statistics (ELA/Reading and Mathematics state assessment results and / or NWEA or other locally-used academic assessment data) will assess impact of *LIFE2* on graduation rates, academic achievement and classroom performance. (2) Educator Effectiveness Data: Annual results of educator effectiveness evaluation systems will be measured to determine educator improvement and eligibility for performance-based compensation. (3) Participant Surveys: Students, teachers, Project Director and partners will complete annual surveys to assess perceptions of project quality, personal growth, attitudes toward *TSL* grant impact and impact of program on education outcomes. (4) Site Visits: EduShift, Inc. will complete multiple site visits (virtual and / or in-person) per year to solicit feedback and conduct observational analysis of progress. (5) Focus Groups: Evaluators will conduct annual focus groups (virtual and / or in-person) to collect data from diverse stakeholders (student, parent, teacher, partner) through structured interviews regarding project impact; (6) Formative Assessment Data: Evaluators will review student assessment data to monitor growth and provide administrators with performance data.

- **Data Analysis:** Statistical treatments of data will assess results, casual inference of outcomes, causal relationships between interventions and results (if any) and correlation of variables to results. Subgroup analysis will track changes in achievement / equity gaps. Evaluators will collect data for Treatment / Control groups to facilitate impact evaluation that meets *What Works Clearinghouse* standards.

- **Reporting:** EduShift, Inc. will collaborate with the Project Director to submit biannual performance reports to USDOE that present data for each measure, address strengths / weaknesses and include suggestions for

improvement. Supplementary progress reporting of data to the Advisory Board (see *Management Plan*) will ensure partners and stakeholders receive meaningful feedback. Analysis of data will be ongoing to ensure a constant flow of feedback to facilitate improvement and sustainability of effective strategies. Evaluators will monitor all components of *LIFE2* through continuous assessment of process and outcome measures to examine the effectiveness of the program as it evolves. Grant managers will implement a coordinated Dissemination Plan (see *Management Plan*) to facilitate replication of effective strategies in additional district schools and in learning environments across the region, state and nation.

- **Evaluation Timeline:** The EduShift, Inc. Evaluation Team, in collaboration with grant personnel and program partners, will complete a rigorous and ongoing evaluation of all activities. The timeline below details completion of evaluation activities during *LIFE2*:

LIFE2: ANNUAL EVALUATION TIMELINE
Annual Evaluation Milestones / Benchmarks
Collect baseline data for all required and project performance measures (Year 1).   Collect annual data for all required and project performance measures (Years 1 – 3).   Conduct annual participant surveys (students, teachers, parents, stakeholders – Years 1 – 3).   Conduct multiple site visits to observe implementation progress at *LIFE2* schools (Years 1 – 3).   Complete Annual Performance Reports (Phase 1 and Phase 2) as required by USDOE (Years 1 – 3).   Present annual findings to Project Director and School Districts to promote improvement (Years 1 – 3).
Quarter 1: Annual Evaluation Activities
Work with grant personnel to create or revise annual FORECAST action model; Prepare or revise survey tools for *LIFE2* elements identified in action model; Initiate monthly conference calls with personnel; Review survey tools with grant personnel; Conduct surveys and compile Years 1 – 3 educator and student academic statistics.
Quarter 2: Annual Evaluation Activities
Monitor program activities; Collect surveys / analyze results; Conduct focus groups; Continue monthly evaluation conference calls; Implement process evaluation monitoring tool linked to Logic Model, Work Plan and Timeline.
Quarter 3: Annual Evaluation Activities
Administer post-survey for mandatory indicators and project specific outcomes; Administer year-end student, parent & teacher surveys; Continue monthly update conference calls with grant personnel; Conduct site visits and meet with focus groups; Prepare / submit Annual Performance Report Phase 1.
Quarter 4: Annual Evaluation Activities
Plan activities for upcoming year; Review evaluation results with district / grant personnel to identify and mitigate weaknesses; Offer improvement suggestions based on evaluation results; Prepare and submit Annual Performance Report Phase 2; Present evaluation results to Project Director / Advisory Board / Boards of Education.

(C) QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT PLAN

Over the past 15 years, Midlands Community Development Corporation has demonstrated its commitment to education and the revitalization of the Midlands communities it serves, including Calhoun and Orangeburg and their rural school districts. Major grant awards and projects spearheaded by MCDC include the launch of Project 180 – an at-risk youth development program that has kept over 200 youth from entering the juvenile justice system. We estimate the economic benefit of our award winning projects is in excess of $4.4 million dollars, annually. What we are facilitating with this investment of federal TSL dollars is a <u>large-scale transformation initiative designed to eradicate academic underperformance in high-needs schools and significantly improve teacher and school leader effectiveness</u>. While partners in *LIFE2* are many, this is not just a hodgepodge of players coming together to serve schools. Instead, this is a large-scale transformation initiative aimed at providing targeted assistance to remote, rural schools which have not had access to a large-scale investment of evidence-based professional learning. *LIFE2* Consortium stakeholders will foster greater efficacy in serving vulnerable children significantly impacted by the precipitous effects of poverty. In this proposal, we are bringing a number of "best-in-class" educational partners together who have used evidence-based strategies to significantly increase teacher and school leader efficacy; used Performance Based Compensation as a tool to incentivize stakeholder effectiveness; re-designed Human Capital Management Systems to provide an ecosystem of support to improve student achievement; and have used protocols in Improvement Science to facilitate deep learning and solve problems of practice in schools. Our intention is to saturate our stakeholders with the competencies, tools, and skills to draw a line of demarcation between academic failure and academic growth and acceleration. Ultimately, exceptional educators build their work on the principle that <u>learning to improve is iterative, recursive and cyclical</u>. Improvement is continuous, perpetual and never-ending – we can always out-do our last best effort for the children that we serve. Our goal for the South Carolina *LIFE2* Consortium is to develop a systematic approach, through the implementation of a technologically-advanced Human Capital Management System, which has the tools that empower our district stakeholders to be engaged in the process of *learning fast in order to achieve quality outcomes reliably at scale.* Coupled with that, we want to foster the *habit of mind* that empowers our partners to develop an insatiable passion to "get better at getting better." In fact, we have a moral imperative to improve educational outcomes for children assigned to high-needs schools. We can only improve the educational outcomes of children in poverty by improving the efficacy and performance of those who are responsible for educating them – hence the investment of these TSL dollars.

Achieving objectives on time/within budget, clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones.

Midlands Community Development Corporation, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and fiscal agent, will implement a structured grant management plan to ensure thorough, timely, efficient implementation of *LIFE2* with fidelity to the Project Design. Intentional management connecting project administrators, educators, partners, school personnel, students, families and community representatives will ensure inclusive involvement of diverse stakeholders that aligns *LIFE2* to the needs of the target audience and aligns *LIFE2* to the program requirements outlined by the United States Department of Education. Grant management strategies promoting continuous improvement of the project and facilitating efficient and effective implementation of *LIFE2* during the three-year grant period include: (1) Equal Access; (2) Timely Implementation; (3) Budget Oversight; (4) Procedures; (5) Personnel; (6) Timeline; (7) Feedback; and (8) Engaging Under-represented Groups. **(1) Equal Access:** MCDC and all *LIFE2* partners will provide equal access for participation across all services regardless of actual or perceived age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or other protected class. All teachers, administrators, students, families and community stakeholders will be encouraged to participate in activities to maximize impact of project. *LIFE2* Tiers of Support (Human Capital Management Systems; Educator Quality Supports) will be administered to guarantee equal treatment of and equal opportunity for all participants. MCDC and partners will fully comply with the equal access regulations outlined in the General Education Provisions Act section 427 (GEPA 427). **(2) Timely Implementation:** MCDC will initiate *LIFE2* immediately upon funding and will manage all grant activities – to the maximum extent possible given the chance of unanticipated challenges – in accordance with the *LIFE2* Timeline (see below). Grant personnel and external evaluators will utilize multiple process evaluation tools to monitor implementation and align progress to the *LIFE2* Logic Model (see *Project Design* and *Appendix*). Evaluators will develop a FORECAST Model of *LIFE2* to guide ongoing evaluation of the effort and will share the model with stakeholders to ensure transparency of evaluation and reporting and provide managers with additional tools to support timely implementation of the project. Projected annual milestones (see Timeline below) will help MCDC and grant administrators plan and schedule key activities to promote achievement of implementation benchmarks. **(3) Budget Oversight:** The Planning Task Force designed the budget to meet goals and objectives, ensure equal access and promote sustainability of strategies. Each line item is linked to one or more grant components, services and / or priorities. The budget is fiscally efficient while providing sufficient funds for comprehensive programming. The Project Director and MCDC Finance Office will manage

expenditures in accordance with state and U.S. Department of Education regulations and will prioritize allocations to ensure completion of project. The PD and Advisory Board will identify complementary district / partner programming and funds that expand the reach of *LIFE2* and sustain systemic changes initiated during the grant. **(4) Procedures:** Coordination guided by management procedures will help MCDC achieve the goal and objectives on time and within budget:

a) **Initiate Grant** – MCDC will hire staff and brief project partners to launch *LIFE2*;

b) **Convene Advisory Board** – The Planning Task Force will transition into the *LIFE2* Advisory Board; Advisory Board will create Budget, Equity and Sustainability sub-Committees to provide critical implementation oversight during the grant period;

c) **Ensure Equal Access** – MCDC and all partners will provide equal access / treatment for participants without regard to actual or perceived age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or other protected class for all services;

d) **Implement Records Management Protocol** – Project Director will maintain program file to document implementation, evaluation and fiscal milestones, from award to completion;

e) **Implement Fiscal Management Protocol** – MCDC's Finance Office will establish a system of accounting / cost management / reporting to promote efficient expenditure of funds;

f) **Implement Action Model** – Project Director, Advisory Board and Evaluation Team will develop/ revise action model to link project components to *LIFE2* Timeline, ensuring completion of all elements;

g) **Implement Goods / Services Management Protocol** – MCDC will implement protocol to procure goods / services and manage acquisitions in compliance with applicable regulations;

h) **Implement Evaluation Plan** – Project Director, Advisory Board and Evaluation Team will sustain ongoing evaluation to promote continuous project improvement.

i) **Disseminate Results** – Project Director, evaluators and grant personnel will present outcomes, data and progress to stakeholders and the public through reports, School Board presentations and outreach to increase transparency and engage the community in education.

j) **Sustain Programs** – MCDC, grant administrators and Advisory Board members will initiate a sustainability plan – from award through end of grant– to sustain *LIFE2* beyond federal funding.

(5) Personnel: MCDC will hire a team of highly-qualified educators to manage implementation of the three-year project. Management will be a collaborative effort guided by the following key personnel equipped with

the skills, knowledge and expertise to successfully implement *LIFE2*:

LIFE2 PERSONNEL	
Qualifications	**Primary Responsibilities / Duties**
Advisory Board: Planning Task Force will Transition to Ongoing Role	
• Comprised of *LIFE2* district Superintendents, school leaders, teachers, HCMS managers, union leaders, new members as recruited by grant personnel.	• Conduct quarterly oversight meetings to provide feedback to Project Director. • Ensure diversity of perspectives shape project to better meet identified needs. • Utilize evaluation data to strengthen weaknesses and promote improvement. • Conduct Budget/Equity/Sustainability sub-Committee meetings and supports. • Coordinate sustainability efforts to ensure lasting impact of project.
Professional Learning Teams: Existing Educators	
• Comprised of *LIFE2* district Chief Academic Officers, Curriculum Specialists, Professional Development Coordinators, Teachers, Content Area and School Administrators.	• Research evidence-based professional learning opportunities aligned to Problems of Practice and create a draft menu of educator choices. • Solicit feedback from teachers to prioritize PL needs across grade levels. • Seek feedback from administrators to prioritize meaningful PL options. • Create final menu of PL options for teachers and administrators.
Project Director: 1.0 FTE – To Be Hired	
• Master of Education or Higher. • Administrator Certification. • 10+ years in PK – 12 education. • Grant management experience. • Experience with professional growth initiatives / HCMS / PBCS efforts. • Transformational leadership	• Manage daily implementation of *LIFE2* and two Tiers of Support. • Coordinate Advisory Board and oversee sub-committee meetings. • Supervise grant staff and coordinate partnerships. • Oversee HCMS and PBCS systemic improvements. • Oversee educator quality supports and manage recruitment of participants. • Manage fiscal resources to ensure efficient expenditure of funds. • Coordinate Dissemination Plan and sustainability / replication efforts.
Professional Learning Specialist: 1.0 FTE – To Be Hired	
• Master of Education or Higher. • 10+ years in PK – 12 education. • Computer programming skills. • Ability to build capacity/drive change. • Experience designing / implementing professional development initiatives.	• Liaison between school districts and grant partners. • Design professional development, micro-credentials and badging. • Ensure requirements are met for National Board Certification. • Align course offerings with individualized learning plans. • Develop database to track units of professional learning for educators. • Ensure programming components are implemented with fidelity
LIFE2 Achievement Specialists for Grades K-6 and Grades 7-12: 2.0 FTE – To Be Hired	
• Master of Education. • Administrator Certification. • 10+ years in PK – 12 education. • Experience coordinating professional growth programs. • Ability to build capacity/drive change.	• Assess professional growth needs for appropriate grade levels. • Align professional development to educator evaluation systems. • Manage principal and teacher coaching initiatives. • Manage Principal Network and New Teacher Network. • Collaborate with educators to maintain Professional Growth Plans. • Manage Career Ladder initiatives and recruit participants.
Administrative Assistant to Project Director: 1.0 FTE – To Be Hired	
• Bachelor of Education preferred. • 5+ years in PK – 12 education. • Clerical / organizational skills. • Program implementation experience.	• Direct support to Project Director and Professional Learning Specialist. • Coordinate internal grant work, ensure execution of contracts and LEA MOUs. • Coordinate logistics for all meetings; maintain LEA/partner relationships. • Schedule and manage logistics around micro-credentialing & badging.

• Previous grant experience a plus.	• Gather and prepare data for evaluators and recordkeeping for audit.
Administrative Assistant to Improvement Specialists: 1.0 FTE – To Be Hired	
• Bachelor of Education preferred. • 5+ years in PK – 12 education. • Clerical / organizational skills. • Program implementation experience. • Previous grant experience a plus.	• Direct support to K-6 and 7-12 Achievement Specialists. • Coordinate internal grant work, ensure execution of contracts and LEA MOUs. • Coordinate logistics for all meetings; maintain LEA/partner relationships. • Schedule and manage logistics around micro-credentialing & badging. • Gather and prepare data for evaluators and recordkeeping for audit.
Leadership Coaches – To Be Provided by The Institute for Organizational Coherence	
IOC will provide Leadership Coaches for both the superintendents and principals in the district. We will partner with *Chiefs for Change* to provide coaches to the superintendents. The Chiefs for Change are a national group of superintendents who have successfully led large-scale transformation. We will also provide Leadership Coaches to principals. Our Leadership Coaches for facilitating building level transformation will be instructional leaders who have 5 or more years of experience significantly improving student achievement in high priority schools. Our Leadership Coaches will provide Blended Coaching, model evaluation and feedback protocols that improve stakeholder performance and teach leaders how to use Improvement Science to facilitate deep learning and create cycles of Improvement to raise student achievement. **(Tiered Capacity Building: Superintendents and Principals)**	
Virtual Instructional Coaches – To Be Provided by The Center at Voorhees and IOC	
AAEE will focus its targeted assistance on building capacity to support and significantly improve teacher efficacy for teachers with more than 3 years experience. AAEE will provide side-by-side coaching; modeling; conduct lesson studies; provide critical feedback and assist teachers in incorporating feedback to improve their effectiveness and impact student achievement. AAEE will assist teachers in translating professional learning into high-impact and high-yield classroom practices. **(Tiered Capacity Building: Teachers with more than 3 years experience)**	
New Teacher Mentors – To Be Provided by The New Teacher Project	
The New Teacher Project will focus its targeted assistance on teachers new to the profession in their first three years (0-3) of teaching to equip them with the skills needed to facilitate deep learning and raise student achievement. The New Teacher Project will facilitate a system of support for new teacher induction. TNTP will provide on-going support for new teachers: side-by-side coaching; modeling; conducting lesson studies; providing critical feedback and assisting teachers in incorporating feedback to improve new teacher effectiveness and help them build capacity in raising student achievement. **(Tier Capacity Building: New Teachers with 3 years or less experience)**	
Teacher CORPS – To Be Provided by Midlands Community Development Corporation	
In an effort to diversify the educator pipeline, MCDC will actively market, recruit and incentivize teachers who: 1) are members of an underrepresented minority group, meet the qualifications for alternative certification in the State of South Carolina and would be willing to serve in one of the two districts in our communities; or 2) have certification in a shortage area as defined by the State of South Carolina and are willing to serve in high-needs schools (e.g. math, science, computer science, STEM, world languages, etc.). MCDC will create a Teachers CORPS to address the severe teacher shortage in South Carolina that will impact our districts, comprised of individuals from state and local governments and other industries who wish to pursue teaching but have not received certification and to attract teachers from other states..	

(6) Timeline: Coordination of Tiers of Support by grant managers will ensure delivery of high-quality services in accordance with an extensive Timeline and Logic Model. Grant managers, the Advisory Board and evaluators will monitor progress to ensure fidelity with the project design and to assess milestones.

LIFE2 IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE (10/1/21 – 9/30/24)	
KEY: Advisory Board (AB); Project Director (PD); Achievement Specialists (AS); Professional Learning Specialist (PS); Instructional Coaches (IC); Principal Coaches (PC); New Teacher Mentors (NM); Evaluation Team (ET); Human Capital Management System (HCMS); Educator Evaluation (EE); Performance-Based Compensation System (PBCS); Teachers (T); Principals (P); District Administrators (DA); Grant Partners (GP)	
ONGOING: Quarterly Advisory Board Meetings, Quarterly Advisory Board Committee Meetings; Implement Tiers of Support; Professional Development; Effectiveness Evaluations, Monthly Evaluation Conference Calls; Data Collection and Analysis; Dissemination of Results; Sustainability of Effective Project Components	
Year One	
Quarter 1 (Oct - Dec) & Quarter 2 (Jan - Mar)	**Quarter 3 (Apr - June) & Quarter 4 (July - Sept)**
• Hire Project Director & Initiate *LIFE2* (PD) • Convene Advisory Board; review grant (PD,AB) • Launch Budget/Equity/Sustainability sub-Committees (AB) • Initiate Professional Growth Plans (PD,DA,AS,PLS,P,T) • Plan Micro-Credential and Badging options (PD,EL,P,T) • Schedule Professional Development, PLCs (PD,AS,PLS) • Launch / sustain leadership/instructional coaching (PC,IC) • Develop evaluation tools / collect baseline data (ET) • Recruit Career Ladder participants (PD,AS,P,T) • Recruit non-traditional candidates (MCDC)	• Complete Educator Effectiveness Evals (DA,P,T) • Conduct New Teacher, Principal *Forums* (PC,IC,NM) • Finish Year 1 activities / evaluate data (PD,AS,ET) • Distribute Performance-Based Comp (DA,PD,HCMS) • Recruit Coaches/Mentor Teachers, Interns (AS,PLS) • Offer Micro-Credentials / Badging study (AS,PLS,T,P) • Submit Y1 APR to Fed Program Officer (ET,PD) • Plan and organize Year 2 programs (All) • Inform stakeholders of Year 1 results (PD) • Launch Career Ladder initiatives (PD,AS,PLS,P,T)
Year 1: Primary Benchmarks / Milestones Aligned to Objectives	
• Tier 1: Use HCMS Audit results to fill gaps in programs and increase objectivity / credibility of systems. • Tier 2: Use Educator Quality results to improve educator support systems and professional learning strategies.	
Year Two	
• Launch new year of HCMS and EE (PD,DA,AS,PLS,P,T) • Conduct observations and feedback (DA,P,PC,IC) • Sustain Professional Growth Plans (AS,PLS,P,T) • Continue leadership/instructional coaching (PC,IC) • Schedule/offer Professional Development (PD,AS,PLS,P) • Offer Principal, New Teacher *Forums* (MT,PC,AS,GP) • Offer Micro-Credentials / Badging study (AS,PSL,GP,T,P) • Continue Career Ladder initiatives (PD,AS,P,T)	• Finish Year 2 activities / evaluate data (PD,T,ET) • Complete annual educator evaluations (PD,DA,P,T) • Distribute Performance-Based Comp (HCMS) • Recruit Career Ladder participants (AS,DA,P,T) • Submit Y2 APR to Fed Program Officer (ET,PD) • Plan and organize Year 3 programs (All) • Continue Sustainability discussions (AB, PD,DA,P, T) • Inform stakeholders of Year 2 results (PD)
Year 2: Primary Benchmarks / Milestones Aligned to Objectives	
• Tier 1: Districts will fully utilize new/updated *Talent Systems* to align educator and student data to HCMS decisions. • Tier 2: Professional Growth Plans will link educators to professional learning and supports aligned to individual needs.	
Year Three	
• Launch new year of HCMS and EE (PD,DA,AS,CL,P,T) • Conduct observations and feedback (PD,DA,P,PC,IC) • Sustain Professional Growth Plans (AS,PLS,P,T) • Continue leadership/instructional coaching (PC,IC) • Schedule/offer Professional Development (PD,AS,P) • Offer Principal, New Teacher *Forums* (MT,PC,GP) • Offer Micro-Credentials / Badging study (AS,T,P) • Continue Career Ladder initiatives (PD,AS,P,T)	• Finish Year 3 activities / evaluate data (PD,T,ET) • Complete annual educator evaluations (PD,DA,P,T) • Distribute Performance-Based Comp (HCMS) • Recruit Career Ladder participants (AS,DA,P,T) • Submit Y3 Final APR to Program Officer (ET,PD) • Plan and organize sustainability programs (All) • Promote replication / scale up efforts (AB,PD,DA) • Inform stakeholders of project results (AB,PD)

Year 3: Primary Benchmarks / Milestones Aligned to Objectives
• Tier 1: HCMS systems will measure a redistribution of diverse educators in high-need schools.
• Tier 2: Professional Growth Plans will measure improvement and career advancement among educators.

(7) Feedback: *LIFE2* is designed to engage multiple partners and solicit feedback from stakeholders to ensure diverse perspectives influence project quality and sufficient data is available to facilitate objective process and outcome evaluation (see *Project Design*):

Participants	*LIFE2* Feedback Mechanisms
Advisory Board	Convene quarterly meetings / committee meetings to monitor implementation / expenditures; Review evaluation data to assess magnitude of results and significance of outcomes; Review / update *LIFE2* Timeline and Logic Model to facilitate project completion.
Project Director	Coordinate and attend quarterly Advisory Board meetings to guide progress; Participate in monthly Evaluator progress monitoring conference calls; Conduct quarterly data review to monitor results compared to goal / objectives / outcomes; Share evaluation results with Advisory Board and stakeholders and solicit input.
Evaluation Team	Oversee qualitative and quantitative data collection efforts from participants; Conduct quarterly data review to monitor results compared to goal / objectives / outcomes; Conduct monthly progress monitoring conference calls with Project Director; Conduct focus groups / site visits to ensure fidelity with Logic Model / Timeline.
Educators	Serve as members of *LIFE2* Advisory Board and attend quarterly meetings; Complete annual surveys to provide operational / project quality feedback; Participate in Evaluator site visits / focus groups to provide operational feedback.
Partners / Coaches	Serve as members of *LIFE2* Advisory Board and attend quarterly meetings; Complete annual surveys to provide operational / project quality feedback; Participate in Evaluator site visits / focus groups to provide operational feedback.

(8) Engaging Under-Represented Groups: The Midlands Community Development Corporation, The Center of Excellence for Educator Performance and Innovation, and The Institute for Organizational Coherence will engage as many stakeholders as possible in the implementation and decision-making process impacting *LIFE2* and participating schools to broaden support for reform efforts and increase engagement in education. MCDC and *LIFE2* partners will recruit stakeholders from traditionally-underrepresented groups to serve on the Advisory Board, planning teams and sub-committees – persons of color; persons from non-English speaking households; persons of poverty, special education representatives and persons with disabilities – to learn firsthand about the ever-changing needs of under-represented communities. Our two, rural districts seek to hire and retain a diverse workforce and are uniquely positioned to amplify initiatives through new teacher recruitment that connects *LIFE2* districts with partner universities serving the state of South Carolina (Voorhees College, Claflin University, University of South Carolina, South Carolina State University…). Targeted

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recruitment at partner area institutions of higher education with diverse student enrollment and respected educator preparatory colleges / programs will ensure students in *LIFE2* schools learn from the best-trained faculty and learn in schools whose educators reflect the rich diversity of our communities. Meaningful engagement of members from traditionally under-represented groups served by our schools will ensure grant management and implementation align to the priorities/needs of communities impacted by *LIFE2* reform efforts.

(D) ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES

Midlands Community Development Corporation will leverage diverse district and partner resources to implement a *Teacher and School Leader* grant project that promises lasting, positive results for Midlands communities that will extend beyond the grant period. *LIFE2* districts have a history of sustaining grant-funded initiatives beyond initial funding and will collaborate with partners and realign district resources to sustain effective elements of *LIFE2* beyond federal support, building long-term capacity to raise student achievement and promote positive systemic change in teaching and learning in rural South Carolina school districts.

(i) Likelihood that proposed project will result in system change or improvement.

MCDC and *LIFE2* consortium partners will implement a comprehensive *TSL* project to increase the quality of teaching and learning in high-needs schools, increase equitable access to education and raise student achievement. *LIFE2* will launch and sustain two Tiers of Support – Tier 1: Comprehensive HCMS and Tier 2: Educator Quality Supports – to promote positive and lasting systems changes that improve outcomes for schools, educators and students. Strategies to promote systems change / improvement include:

LIFE2: Short-Term Systemic Improvement	
Tier 1: Comprehensive HCMS	**Tier 2: Educator Quality Supports**
• Review by MCDC and *LIFE2* partners will identify strengths and weaknesses in current efforts and prioritize improvement strategies. • Expanded *Talent Management* platforms will improve linkages between educator effectiveness data and HCMS decision-making. • Revised / expanded PBCS will increase educator motivation to improve practice.	• Educator Quality Supports review by stakeholders will identify strengths and weaknesses in current efforts. • Principal Network will increase supports for school leaders. • Instructional Coaching will connect educators in need of improvement with specialists to elevate practice. • Professional development will increase district and school leadership and classroom competencies. • Career Ladder will provide growth opportunities.
LIFE2: Mid-Term Systemic Improvement	
Tier 1: Comprehensive HCMS	**Tier 2: Educator Quality Supports**
• Strengthened human capital management systems will increase equity in employment opportunities. • Performance-based compensation will facilitate	• Professional Growth Plans will increase transparency in educator improvement expectations. • Instructional Coaching will improve teacher quality.

| redistribution of educators across district schools. | • Principal Coaching will improve fidelity to educator evaluation system models. |
| • Decreased bias and increased fidelity to educator evaluation systems will increase credibility of effectiveness data and educator ratings. | • Career Ladder will increase number of educators with the skills to fill school / instructional leadership roles. |

LIFE2: Long-Term Systemic Improvement	
Tier 1: Comprehensive HCMS	**Tier 2: Educator Quality Supports**
• Improved HCMS systems will increase equity in human capital management in district schools.	• Professional Growth Plans will increase transparency in educator improvement expectations.
• Data-driven HCMS will increase equity in learning by ensuring students have access to effective educators.	• Improved instructional practices will increase student academic outcomes.
• Sustainable PBCS will increase educator accountability for student performance outcomes.	• Strong leadership will elevate expectations in high-needs schools and increase supports for underserved students.
• Consistent data management strategies will increase objectivity in educator evaluation systems.	• Increased equity will close achievement gaps distinguishing racial / socio-economic student groups.

(ii) Building local capacity to provide, improve, expand services that address needs of target population.

Implementation of *LIFE2* will provide MCDC and consortium partners with the resources to improve human capital management systems and strengthen educator quality supports. *LIFE2* will build district, school and educator capacity to meet the needs of Calhoun and Orangeburg students enrolled in 28 high-need schools:

LIFE2: Building Capacity to Meet Needs	
Need 1: Districts lack resources to consistently implement effectiveness-based HCMS's across all schools.	
Tier 1: Comprehensive HCMS	**Tier 2: Educator Quality Supports**
• Districts will implement multiple, robust talent management and software systems to streamline the operation of their Human Capital Management Systems and increase transparency / efficiency in decision-making.	• Districts will connect HCMSs with Educator Quality systems through *Talent Mgmt* platforms to ensure professional growth is connected to HCMS supports that impact employment / compensation decisions.
Need 2: Districts lack sufficient capacity to objectively evaluate educator effectiveness across all schools.	
Tier 1: Comprehensive HCMS	**Tier 2: Educator Quality Supports**
• Central administrators and school leaders responsible for conducting educator evaluations will complete Improvement Science training to ensure objective implementation of Danielson Model educator evaluation protocols and promote inter-rater reliability.	• Increased objectivity, rigor and fidelity to the Danielson Model and *SC Evaluation System* approved by the South Carolina Department of Education will increase alignment between educator growth needs and educator effectiveness ratings and will result in improved student achievement.
Need 3: Districts lack a process to connect educators with supports that increase effectiveness.	
Tier 1: Comprehensive HCMS	**Tier 2: Educator Quality Supports**
• Talent management / HCMS platforms will track educator performance ratings and the results of educator evaluations to provide data to shape district-wide professional development priorities that improve student achievement.	• Professional Growth Plans and Educator Portfolios maintained through *Talent Mgmt* will help educators identify professional learning that addresses individual needs to increase overall effectiveness of educators.

Need 4: Districts lack strategies and resources to meet local and South Carolina state equity plans.	
Tier 1: Comprehensive HCMS	**Tier 2: Educator Quality Supports**
• Performance-based compensation system that incentivizes placement and retention of *Exemplary* educators in highest-need (Level 1) schools will increase likelihood students enrolled in highest-need schools are taught by highest-performing educators; thereby increasing equitable access to high-quality programs that align with equity plans.	• Extensive professional development and Career Ladder strategies will nurture growth of educators and increase the overall quality of leadership / instructional practice in all schools, with emphasis on raising achievement in highest-need schools to increase equitable access for highest-need students, in line with local and South Carolina equity plans.

Need 5: Districts lack short-term resources needed to integrate systems change disrupted by COVID-19.	
Tier 1: Comprehensive HCMS	**Tier 2: Educator Quality Supports**
• Evidence-based HCMS protocols will help districts ensure all students have equal access to high-quality educators and programs needed to jumpstart learning impacted by COVID-19 school closures extending more than a year.	• Extensive professional development will include Social and Emotional Learning instructional strategies to help high-need youth cope with and overcome the trauma of COVID-19 and other social stresses, exacerbated over 17 months.

Dissemination Plan: *LIFE2* consortium partners will implement a Dissemination Plan to share products, lessons learned, best practices, implementation guides, outcomes, research and effective strategies. Dissemination of results will maximize the impact of federal investment in *LIFE2* by promoting scalability of effective practices to additional schools and replication of strategies in districts, schools and learning environments beyond the boundaries of our two South Carolina districts. The *LIFE2* Dissemination Plan will include strategies that increase the likelihood of replication on a much broader scale:

- The Center at Voorhees will launch a website to share project services/products/strategies/outcomes.

- Evaluation results will be shared on the *LIFE2* website, presented at conferences and / or highlighted through education publications to inform the field of advances in knowledge, innovation and practice.

- Grant managers will participate in media reporting efforts to inform the field of *LIFE2* innovations.

- Partners will publish White Papers on the *LIFE2* website to share solutions to problems of practice.

- Partners will share progress, events and research via district and project-specific social media tools.

- Marketing materials designed to recruit internal participants and candidates will be posted on the *LIFE2* website to promote replication of recruitment strategies and disseminate project elements.

- Membership in multiple school / administrator / educator professional organizations and networks will connect *LIFE2* districts to regional PK – 12 schools to facilitate sharing of strategies and outcomes.

- Partners will host *LIFE2* Replication workshops during Year 3 of the grant and invite broad regional stakeholders to attend to gain familiarity with the initiative / assess suitability of replication.

- *LIFE2* will inform public of successes, challenges and best practices to broaden impact of project.

- Partners will hold a statewide *Promising Practices Summit and Convening* in Year 3 of the grant to share lessons learned using HCMS, PBCS and Virtual Networks to solve problems of practice.

LIFE2 **Project Matching Resources:** Voorhees College, Orangeburg County School District and Calhoun County School District have pledged more than is needed to meet the required 50% non-federal match. Matching resources will expand the impact of federal *TSL* funds. Among diverse match contributions, district resources will fund a core team of Coaches at each school to elevate instructional quality and support expanded Instructional Coaching effort. The demonstrated ability of our districts to sustain educator quality supports without federal funds confirms the level of commitment the district has for this vital initiative. Through capacity building efforts aligned to needs, dissemination of effective strategies and the leveraging of non-federal matching resources, districts will ensure lasting impact of *LIFE2*, meet the needs of schools, educators and students, promote sustainability and increase positive outcomes by scaling effective practices and catalyzing replication of services to expand the reach of federal dollars to this important and innovative project.

(iii) Resources to operate project beyond length of grant, including multi-year financial/operating model and plan; demonstrated commitment of partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders.

Midlands Community Development Corporation will efficiently manage *TSL* funds to maximize impact of limited grant resources. Upon completion of the grant, *LIFE2* partners will sustain the project to ensure federal investment in programs benefits students, families, schools and communities for many years. Strategies include: (a) Multi-Year Plan; (b) Partner Commitment; (c) Stakeholder Support and (d) Sustainable Practices. **(a) Multi-Year Operating / Financial Plan:** Our two *LIFE2* districts will assume responsibility for operational costs of programming when funding ends in 2024. For our districts, it is the **start-up** costs that prevent them from developing and operating the programs described in the *Project Design*. MCDC will pursue sustainable practices during the grant period and evaluate components to identify practices worthy of replication in additional district schools and prioritize practices to sustain beyond the grant period. The *LIFE2* multi-year operating and financial plan includes:

LIFE2 **Multi-Year Plan of Operation** (see *Management Plan* for *LIFE2* Timeline)
LIFE2 **Year 1 (2021-22)** – Conduct review of HCMS / Educator Quality Supports; Launch Tier 1 program elements; Launch Tier 2 program elements; initiate ongoing evaluation of *LIFE2*; Convene Advisory Board and Advisory Board sub-committees: Sustainability Committee, Budget Committee and Equity Committee.
LIFE2 **Year 2 (2022-23)** – Adjust practices / improve systems based on review findings; Continue / refine Tier 1 program elements; Continue / refine Tier 2 program elements; continue ongoing evaluation of *LIFE2*; Continue Advisory Board and Advisory sub-committees: Sustainability, Budget and Equity Committees.
LIFE2 **Year 3 (2023-24)** – Continue / refine Tier 1 program elements; Continue / refine Tier 2 program elements; continue ongoing evaluation of *LIFE2*; Implement Dissemination Plan to promote replication of effective practices;

Continue Advisory Board and sub-committees; prioritize *LIFE2* elements to sustain beyond grant; Continue Advisory Board Budget Committee – identify non-federal funding sources to fund *LIFE2* programs and institutionalize performance-based compensation systems; Continue Advisory Equity Committee; Seek funds to expand support. ___*Post-LIFE2* **Plan (2024-beyond)**___ – Continue HCMS strategies; Continue distribution of performance-based compensation to *Exemplary* educators; Continue Retention Incentives for educators serving high-need schools; Sustain professional development options / *LIFE2* professional development model to elevate educator effectiveness aligned to Professional Growth Plans; Sustain Career Ladders at sustainable capacity; Seek additional grant funds to support continuation, replication and improvement in additional schools, at a larger scale.

LIFE2 **Multi-Year Financial Planning Procedure**
MCDC and the Advisory Board will gather stakeholder feedback, via surveys, regarding all components of the HCMS and Educator Support System to develop a multi-year financial projection to sustain *LIFE2*. Data regarding project and component impact is critical when projecting costs; MCDC will begin collecting and analyzing data after the project is launched across all schools. After collecting stakeholder and evaluation data, MCDC will develop a data-informed Multi-Year Financial Plan aligned to four principles: **Objective Source and Structure of the Foundational Data** – Through use of the *LIFE2* budget structure, planners will determine the level of granularity needed to support sustainability decision-making. **Assessment of Variables that will Drive Future Revenue / Expenses** – District leaders will assess changing conditions impacting district funding to identify variables and their impact on future financial outcomes. **Creation of Accessible Outputs Clear to Diverse Stakeholders** – District leaders / Finance Officers will support projections with tabular and graphical data to improve stakeholder understanding of future funding projections. **Simulate and Track Changes** – District leaders and Finance Officers will catalogue scenarios and record changes to projected variables to generate multiple Financial Plan Projections adjusted for variation in assumptions. Partners will use *LIFE2* data to project a well-constructed and documented forecast to support sustainability planning, scalability of project elements to additional schools and replicability of the project in learning environments beyond the boundaries of our two, rural South Carolina districts. Objective and consistent data collection from diverse stakeholders will ensure the *LIFE2* Multi-Year Financial Plan is both reasonable and attainable.

(b) Partner Commitment: *LIFE2* will be a collaborative effort linking district, school and partner resources to achieve the goal and objectives of the project. Key project personnel, partners and resources will contribute to the success and sustainability of *LIFE2* as outlined in the following chart:

*LIFE2***: Diverse Partner Contributions / Support**	
Partner	**Implementation Role / Contribution**
Voorhees College	Voorhees College will continue long-term support of teachers and administrators serving *LIFE2* district schools by offering access to teacher and administrator workshops, online professional learning modules and coaching designed to help educators raise student achievement and implement research-based educator evaluation systems with fidelity to models.
South Carolina Association of Educational Administrators	Experts from SCAEA will provide external coaching to district and school administrators / principals in the completion of educator effectiveness evaluations; Coaching will provide secondary "shadow" observations of educator effectiveness to promote long-term inter-rater reliability of evaluations and raise educator confidence in the objectivity of effectiveness outcomes.

Harvard University Strategic Data Project	Fellows who complete the Harvard University Strategic Data Project program are connected to a robust Professional Learning Community of peers that provides support, shares best practices, promotes innovation and elevates the practice of data analysis and data management; frequent PLC events convene outstanding data specialists connected through common training and professional growth experiences to sustain learning and improvement – Harvard University provides partner districts with access to diverse, rich, extensive resources that will extend positive outcomes.
Darden Curry Partnership for Leaders	Like the Harvard Data Project, sustained relationships with Darden personnel will help district and school leaders conduct internal quality checks and identify opportunities for growth to catalyze a system of continuous improvement and evolution in programs that reflect changing needs.
Institutions of Higher Education	Districts will continue / strengthen partnerships with Institutions of Higher Education to ensure a steady stream of high-quality applicants prepared to fill vacancies in schools – partnerships with IHEs (Voorhees College, Claflin University, U of South Carolina, South Carolina State) will contribute to efforts to recruit / retain traditionally under-represented groups in PK – 12 education.
EduShift, Inc.	EduShift will conduct a thorough and objective evaluation of *LIFE2*; during the project and beyond, EduShift is committed to providing technical support to facilitate internal assessment of programs and technical assistance in the review of evaluation data to promote systems change, capacity building and the internal knowledge and competency needed to interpret data.

(c) Stakeholder Support: During Year 3 of *LIFE2*, MCDC and The Center at Voorhees will implement a *K – 12 Survey* to gather feedback. Grant managers will engage stakeholders in independent assessment of project quality to identify meaningful components across diverse stakeholder perspectives. Data will be aggregated to generate districtwide results and disaggregated by stakeholders (teachers, non-classroom instructional professionals, assistant principals, principals, central district administrators, etc.) to compare feedback across groups. Results will be shared with district administrators and will be used in the identification of sustainable services and practices suitable for replication in other settings. Survey results will help inform sustainability planning, Advisory Board Sustainability sub-Committee efforts and influence long-term Financial Plans designed to institutionalize impactful *LIFE2* strategies worthy of continuation.

(d) Sustainable Practices: *LIFE2* was designed to facilitate sustainability and replicability. While many project elements have substantial startup costs, most components have minimal continuation expenses that will be met by well-planned district and school budgets. Sustainable practices will ensure initiatives meet the future needs of schools, educators and students. Sustainability strategies include:

LIFE2 Sustainability Strategies	
HCMS Supports	Upon completion of grant, HCMSs will become institutionalized in LIFE2 districts, eliminating the need for Project Director, Achievement & Professional Specialists and Administrative Assistants. Districts will gain the capacity to implement a fully-reconfigured, data-driven HCMS, districtwide,

	beyond the grant period, that will fully inform human capital decisions. Investment in technology hardware and software is a start-up expense of *LIFE2*; ongoing costs for software and maintenance will be absorbed by newly-reconfigured HCMS Departments. Investment in technology-based evaluation strategies reduces long-term expense of disposable materials through use of digital evaluation, teaching and learning tools. Districts will work with union/HR partners to revamp traditional salary schedules and reallocate dollars to fund an effectiveness compensation system.
Educator Quality Supports	Districts will realign Title I, II, III and IV funds to support evaluation / data-driven professional development to sustain grant-funded strategies and Professional Growth Plans. Planning Task Force selected strategies with manageable long-term costs – primary expenses for *MCDC, The Center at Voorhees, National Board, Harvard University, et al* are initial professional development costs with minimal long-term sustainability costs. Travel expenses beyond grant period are negligible – most travel costs associated with start-up professional development; continuing education to maintain skills available through on-line platforms at little cost to schools/educators.
Partnerships	The Advisory Board will work to ensure that districts and their schools are linked to community partners whose resources enhance the depth and capacity of support options.

Midlands Community Development Corporation, The Center of Excellence for Educator Preparation and Innovation on the campus of Voorhees College and The Institute for Organizational Coherence, in collaboration with education specialists, Calhoun County School District and Orangeburg County School District – two, rural, high-poverty, low performing school districts – will engage outstanding instructional and leadership models, partners, pedagogy experts, professional learning providers and vendor resources to improve teacher effectiveness, enhance learning in *LIFE2* schools and promote achievement of all goals and objectives. Efforts during the grant period will position our 28 schools to leverage expertise, facilities and stakeholder support to sustain and replicate *LIFE2*. Our Consortium is excited for the opportunity and looks forward to launching program components on the way to LEVERAGING INNOVATION FOR EDUCATOR EXCELLENCE!