

Education Innovation and Research Program (EIR) Project Abstract

Applicant Name: Northern Humboldt Union High School District

Project Title: Literacy Plus

Type of Grant Requested: (select one) Mid-Phase Expansion

Absolute Priorities the Project Addresses: (select all that apply)

Absolute Priority 1-- Field-Initiated Innovations: Promoting Evidence-Based Literacy

Competitive Preference Priorities the Project Addresses: (select all that apply)

Competitive Preference Priority 1— Returning Education to the States

Competitive Preference Priority 2— Education Choice (High-Impact Tutoring)

Total number of students to be served by the project: Over 1,000 will be directly served

Grade level(s) to be served by the project: Gr. 9 and 10

Definition of high-need students: Rural, low income, receiving Special Education services

Brief description of project activities: Literacy Plus adapts and scales The New Teacher Project's Science of Reading Training for rural high school English teachers in 12 schools serving 4,500 students across far Northern California. Using an Initial Adopter/First Follower model, the project provides intensive professional learning, coaching, and high-impact tutoring to improve reading comprehension for struggling 9th and 10th graders. Implementation includes partnerships with tribal education agencies and rigorous RCT evaluation meeting WWC standards without reservations.

Summary of project objectives and expected outcomes: Literacy Plus will deliver Science of Reading (SoR) professional learning to 24 secondary teachers and train high-impact tutors to support over 1,000 struggling 9th and 10th grade readers. Expected outcomes include statistically significant improvements in reading comprehension as compared to control group students, English course grades, and GPA compared to business-as-usual students. The project will build sustainable capacity by developing teacher-leaders who can scale evidence-based literacy instruction schoolwide and share findings statewide through partner networks.

Summary of how the project is innovative: LP innovates by adapting evidence-based SoR training for rural high schools, using an Initial Adopter/First Follower teacher-led model rather than top-down mandates, integrating high-impact tutoring within English classes, partnering with Tribal Education Agencies, and remaining curriculum-agnostic to support scalability and local educational control.

Other studies related to the proposed project: Related EIR-funded literacy projects include WestEd's Reading Apprenticeship for Academic Literacy Learning (RA4ALL) mid-phase grant and Strategic Education Research Partnership's STARI expansion grant, both targeting secondary struggling readers. University of Chicago's Structured Literacy RCT evaluates high-dosage tutoring for high schoolers using Wilson Reading System. Additional relevant research includes reciprocal reading interventions in secondary schools and morphology instruction for adolescent readers, establishing evidence base for explicit literacy instruction with older students.

Proposed implementation sites: Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Shasta, Siskiyou and Trinity Counties in far northern California

Organizations partnering with this project: The New Teacher Project, The Policy & Research Group, Cal Poly Humboldt School of Education, The Yurok Tribe, Blue Lake Rancheria, Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation, California Indian Education for All, California Small School Districts Association, National Rural Education Association.