Northern Humboldt Union High School District (NHUHSD) proposes Literacy Plus (LP) a Mid-phase project to refine and scale The New Teacher Project (TNTP)'s Science of Reading Training (SoRT) for Secondary Educators in 12 rural high schools serving 4,500 students in seven districts in far Northern California. LP will be implemented in partnership with TNPT, The Policy & Research Group (PRG), Century Analytics, Cal Poly Humboldt University, local American Indian tribal partners, and state and national rural education partners.

Professional learning (PL) through Literacy Plus will teach secondary teachers the skills and understanding of teaching reading and literacy to promote reading growth and academic success of students reading below grade level. Using a delayed treatment model that separates eligible students into treatment and control groups in school years 2027-2030, LP will serve and study the change in literacy skills of three cohorts of students each with over 1000 struggling readers. LP teachers, supported by high-impact tutoring, will strengthen students' foundational reading skills while building their reading comprehension and academic vocabulary so they can succeed in history, science and other reading and writing intensive classes and high school in general.

LP addresses the Absolute Priority and both Competitive Preference Priorities. LP is supported by strong evidence and two What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Practice Guides.

| **A. Significance (15 Points)** |
| --- |
| Significance of the project: extent project introduces an innovative approach (15 points) |

Potential National Significance: LP offers an innovative approach by modifying an evidence-based intervention (Science of Reading Training for Secondary Educators) to serve different populations (rural 9th and 10th graders in California Indian Country), combined with a unique composition of various project components (the Initial Adopter and First Follower model and high-impact tutoring) to maximize combined effects.

"A key issue facing students in the U.S. is the lack of preparation to achieve their goals upon graduation from high school; this lack of preparation can lead to college enrollment in remedial courses or a student's realization that they don't have the necessary skills for the jobs they want. Moreover, many do not receive four crucial resources in their education: grade-appropriate assignments, strong instruction, deep engagement, and teachers with high expectations."[1]

[1] TNTP. (2018). The Opportunity Myth: What Students Can Show Us About How School Is Letting Them Down—and How to Fix It. https://tntp.org/tntp_the-opportunity-myth_web/

Without engaging in grade-level, discipline-specific texts and concepts, students fall further behind. In order to deeply engage in grade-appropriate assignments, high school students must be able to read well. In far Northern California, only 38.7% of local 8th graders meet or exceed the ELA standards on the state ELA assessment. This lagging indicator (state assessment data is not available until late October or November) illustrates the need to support students as soon as they arrive in high school. September 2025 Renaissance STAR Reading scores for NHUHSD 9th graders support this; only 26.4% of 405 students are at or above benchmark.

While Gr. 11 state reading scores are higher than Gr. 8 (46.2% vs. 38.7%), NHUHSD district data strongly suggest this is more a function of lower-achieving students leaving comprehensive high schools for alternative education or even dropping out than growth in ability while in high school. These percentages are consistent with the latest NAEP Gr. 12 reading results. The class of 2024 had historically low scores with only 35% of 12th graders proficient in reading.

Focus on 9th and 10th grade: LP focuses on 9th and 10th grade for the following reasons:

(1) Since 2022, regional elementary schools have begun moving towards implementing the science of reading (SoR) approach to literacy instruction. Additionally, California Assembly Bill 1454 requires adopting new evidence-based reading instructional materials and training and provides funding to train elementary teachers to teach reading through evidence-based instruction. Each County Office of Education in the project area is implementing different science of reading-focused trainings and supports for elementary teachers.

(2) As a mid-phase grant, LP must show evidence of impact that meets WWC standards and provide clear guidance for replication. This is not possible in earlier grades because of all the SoR-aligned support being provided. With each school implementing a different approach to SoR, no business as usual comparison is available making evidence of impact difficult or impossible to interpret or replicate.

(3) There is no uniform support for high school teachers. In fact, there is little to no schoolwide literacy PL in partner high schools. Thus, LP has the possibility to show impact in situations where participating teachers are not also being exposed to additional treatments.

(4) Starting in Semester 1 of Gr. 9, students start falling behind their college and career-going peers. It ends when credit deficient 11th graders leave comprehensive high schools. While most

graduate from alternative schools, they are less prepared for college and career than peers who stay and graduate college-ready (as measured by completion of the A-G California University sequence or a Career Technical Education (CTE) pathway).[2] Students who stay in comprehensive high schools take college prep, elective, and CTE classes, participate in clubs and extra-curricular activities, and forge friendships with students and families from different social and socioeconomic groups. After high school, these connections are crucial for students from less-advantaged backgrounds when they pursue work and other opportunities where having community connections are critical; this is especially the case for students in rural far Northern California. College and career readiness is complex, but alternative school students are almost never A-G college-ready or complete a CTE career pathway.[3]

High schools are not responsible for what students were taught or were not taught in K-8; however, that lack of initial responsibility is temporary, and high schools are increasingly responsible for preparing students to succeed after graduation. Student literacy is key to that preparation and success. In conversations with high school English teachers and administrators, these facts help reframe the conversation from perceived blame to an opportunity to help.

Unlike in the early grades with state-adopted curricula, in high school local selection is the norm. In many–if not most–states, districts and schools are reasonably free to choose what they use as instruction materials. The national significance, particularly in smaller and rural districts where curriculum adoption is made at the school or very local level, is that LP is intentionally designed to be curriculum agnostic. Thus, schools do not have to pay for a new curriculum series, which–in times of tight budget–is no small consideration.

Why only focus on English classes? Gr. 9 and 10 English offer the best opportunity to address gaps in student reading ability as they enter high school. All students take Gr. 9 and Gr. 10 English. They do not take World History until Gr. 10 and can delay taking science until Gr. 10 or even 11. The exposure to classes requiring higher levels of reading and writing skills is not uniform for students who are not already on a track to go directly to university.

Working with high school English teachers presents different challenges and opportunities

[2] Rumberger, R. W., & Lim, S. A. (2008). Why students drop out of school: A review of 25 years of research. California Dropout Research Project, University of California, Santa Barbara.
[3] A review of five years of district continuation graduates showed less than 3% met the A-G requirements.

than working with elementary teachers. The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) position statements reveal a philosophical opposition to explicit, systematic instruction models commonly associated with the SoR.[4] High school English teachers are not trained in university or credential programs on how to teach reading. It is assumed students will know how to read when they arrive. Thus, a high school English teacher's job is to find engaging texts, not to teach reading. English teachers want students to succeed, and English is important not only for student success in other courses but also for "incubating the essential skills, knowledges, and understandings to access higher education as well as gainful and rewarding employment."[5]

LP will not seek to implement a new curriculum across entire departments and schools; instead, in each of the 12 schools for this project, LP will start work with one "Initial Adopter" (IA) teaching Gr. 9 English and then a "First Follower" (FF) who will teach Gr. 10 English the next year. LP provides the opportunity for the IA and FF to demonstrate to their colleagues how focusing on building student literacy positively impacts their students. This model builds on the research of Dr. Justin Reich, which establishes that when a small group of early adopter teachers demonstrate the positive impact of new innovations to their colleagues, these innovations can have a greater impact and adoption than when directed by an administrator.[6]

LP meets **Absolute Priority 1** by (a) implementing evidence-based, field-initiated innovations to improve student achievement and attainment for high-need students; and (b) advancing evidence-based literacy instruction.

LP meets the requirements of **Competitive Preference Priority 1**. Northern California is home to California's largest Tribes. As the letters from tribal partners demonstrate, NHUHSD will partner with the sovereign nations of whom approximately 1/6 of our students are members. NHUHSD and the Tribal partners will train and place Tribal Education Agency (TEA) staff in high schools as high impact tutors. TEA leaders will serve on the LP Advisory Committee.

The LP model, infusing effective instruction into existing curricula, also supports CPP 1 as it does not conflict with local control of curricular selection. As noted, LP is curriculum agnostic.

**Competitive Preference Priority 2**: As will be described, LP provides high-impact tutoring.

[4] National Council of Teachers of English. "The Act of Reading: Instructional Foundations and Policy Guidelines." NCTE, 2019. https://ncte.org/statement/the-act-of-reading/
[5] California Association of Teachers of English (CATE). (2023). Resolutions 2023: Resolution on the Impact of English on Everything. Retrieved from https://www.cateweb.org/resolutions-2023/
[6] Reich, J. (2023). Iterate: The Secret to innovation in schools. Jossey-Bass.

**B. Strategy to Scale (up to 35 points).**

(1) Extent there is unmet demand for broader implementation of the project that is aligned with the proposed level of scale. (up to 10 points)

Any discussion of the "unmet demand" for a program like LP requires nuance that considers the reality of rural schools. Rural school districts do not have research offices, and administrators are not often aware of the range of programs that exist outside their districts. Rural high school leaders' daily duties may range from IEP meetings to bus driving. They may not know what LP is, but they know too many students do not read well enough to succeed. The stark need to improve high school reading instruction is the foundation on which the demand rests. Rural educators care passionately about their students, but in far too many cases, they struggle to understand what solutions will work for their students. The opportunity for broader implementation is clear–not just in our region where LP will serve schools in six counties covering 17,544 square miles (larger than eight states)—but in rural high schools nationwide.

Demand from rural high schools is limited by barriers including: (1) Access to high quality, intensive literacy PL for high school teachers is constrained by limited funding and availability (local efforts focus on primary teachers). LP will implement comprehensive intensive literacy PL for Gr. 9 and 10 English teachers that includes participation in TNTP's SoRT program; (2) Unlike elementary teachers who teach children skills, high school teachers teach their subject to students. They are primarily English, math, history or other content area teachers and focus on content (i.e. the causes of the American Revolution), not student reading skills or the lack thereof. They work on the assumption students arrive able to read. LP will train two groups of teachers in high-impact, replicable instructional methods they can integrate in their classes and in the later years prepare these teachers to lead PL in their schools and communities to train other secondary teachers; (3) Gr. 9 and 10 English teachers lack time to provide intensive tiered individual or small group literacy instruction to students reading below grade level. LP will recruit, train, and fund High-Impact Tutors to provide intensive literacy supports based on SoR aligned with the SoRT Program. (4) Efforts in early grades to implement the SoR have had to meet teachers steeped in the whole language methodology before helping them recognize there is a better, evidenced-based way; in high schools, English teachers, as discussed in the prior section, need help understanding they can teach high school students how to read, and that the

solution is not pull-out interventions, special education, or high interest literature.

LP is unique in a number of ways beyond the proposed TNTP treatment grounded in SoR. LP was developed and will be led by rural educators, not distant national organizations. Northern Humboldt is over five hours from the nearest metro areas but has over 20 years of experience with federal grants and has participated in three i3 and EIR grants (including its own active Early Phase project). Director [redacted] and Co-Director [redacted] lead NH's EIR grant and are local leaders in the push to implement SoR-based instruction. The LP team has worked extensively with districts across the region. Those established relationships support consistent and smooth communication and access to meet the project and evaluation's needs. LP's rural base, combined with TNTP's capacity and national reach, and Century Analytics and PRG's evaluation expertise is a model to implement an RCT in rural schools across a region bigger than eight states. Its geographic scope, RCT design, evidence-based professional learning and plans to start with willing teachers to first demonstrate effectiveness before going schoolwide provides the ability to replicate implementation and testing in America's 5,000+ rural high schools.

(2) Feasibility of management plan to achieve objectives and goals on time and budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for project tasks. (up to 10 pts)

LP requires leadership, fiscal oversight, clear responsibilities, regular site input and a system to support and monitor staff and student success. NHUHSD has extensive experience leading successful US ED. grants which makes us confident of achieving goals and objectives on time and on budget. The management plan will continue protocols developed for prior grants and projects. Each team member has clearly defined responsibilities which will help them collaborate. LP will be implemented through a cohesive, tiered leadership structure that ensures alignment from consortium oversight to classroom practice. The Project Director and Co-Director provide overall leadership and collaboration with TNTP, PRG, Century Analytics, and schools. The Coordinator builds district systems that sustain high-quality implementation within the MTSS framework. The Program Manager leads site-level work, connecting TNTP PL to daily instruction through observations, feedback, and support. The Literacy Implementation Specialist, working with TNTP, coaches teachers and helps lead High Impact Tutors to ensure evidence-based literacy practices are applied with fidelity. Together, this team maintains

coherence, quality, and sustainability across all levels of implementation.

| **Table 1. Key Staff** | **Responsibilities and Qualifications** |
|---|---|
| Project Director [redacted], NHUHSD | [redacted] will lead the project and working with the Co-Director, convene the leadership and evaluation teams to ensure all implementation activities align with grant goals, timelines, and federal requirements. He will serve as the primary liaison with US ED, external evaluators, and TNTP. He is an 8x federal grant director, has directed, evaluated, or supported 75+ federal, state and foundation projects including a 2010 i3, 2019 and 2023 EIR grant, 2019 School Climate Grant, 2023 Mental Health Demonstration Grant. He supports NH's Homeless, Indian Education, and CTE programs. A trained English teacher he is credentialed and taught history and science in middle and high school. |
| Co-Director [redacted], NHUHSD | [redacted] will share overall leadership with the Director, providing joint oversight of implementation across the consortium. She will focus on the budgetary, instructional, and operational dimensions of LP, ensuring activities at the district and school levels align with the evidence-based design of the grant. She co-leads NHUHSD's current EIR grant, directs the 2023 School-Based Mental Health Grant and leads the 2019-25 School Climate Transformation Grant which served six districts. She has led district MTSS implementation since its inception. She taught mathematics from foundational levels to calculus and is a local leader in math instruction. |
| Principal Investigator [redacted], Century Analytics | [redacted] will serve as Principal Investigator (PI) and will direct and oversee all aspects of the evaluation in collaboration with staff from PRG. He will serve as the point-of-contact with NHUHSD regarding the evaluation. He will lead the development of the evaluation plan and preparation of final reports and manuscripts. He will also ensure the study design meets WWC standards without reservations. [redacted] has over 20 years of experience in conducting rigorous evaluations of education interventions. He provided technical assistance to 15 i3 evaluations and 20 EIR evaluations, and he is certified in the WWC standards, version 5.0. |
| Co-PI [redacted], PRG | [redacted] will serve as Co-PI, be technical lead for all data analytic work, and lead the PRG team of evaluation staff. She will lead development of analysis plans and preparation of findings and support development of the evaluation plan. She will co-author the preparation of final reports and manuscripts. [redacted] 10+ years of experience conducting rigorous evaluations and has served as a lead or senior research analyst on 7 i3/EIR evaluations at PRG. |
| [redacted] TNTP | [redacted] assumes primary responsibility for our partnership with the NHUHSD and execution of the project work as stated in the scope of work. The Partner will manage the relationship with Project Directors for NHUHSD to ensure successful delivery of TNTPs Science of Reading Training for Secondary Educators and provide TNTP team and project oversight. |
| [redacted] Cal Poly Humboldt | [redacted] will teach prospective High Impact Tutors foundations of literacy through an online Cal Poly Humboldt Foundations of Literacy class. She holds an Ed.D. from California State University, Fresno. [redacted] has 20+ years of experience in adolescent and developmental literacy, dyslexia |

| | |
|---|---|
| | intervention, and teacher preparation. A former high school English teacher and literacy coach, she has led state and regional initiatives in reading instruction and tutor training to improve outcomes for struggling high school readers. |

The **Leadership Team** (LT) will meet twice monthly to guide LP, review data and measure progress using goals, objectives and implementation timelines. LT meetings are the platform to guide program implementation and continuous improvement and will provide time to address the data from the evaluation and other feedback to guide and monitor progress.

| **Leadership Team:** |
|---|
| [redacted], Project Director; [redacted], Co-Director; Coordinator, [redacted]; Principal Investigator, [redacted]; PRG co-PI, [redacted]; TNTP Project Lead, [redacted], CPH Lead, [redacted]; CPH |

The **Advisory Committee** will meet quarterly to: (a) review progress, (b) determine how student needs are being addressed, and (c) identify how partners and schools can collaborate

| **Advisory Committee** |
|---|
| Principals and/or superintendents from 5x LP high schools; [redacted], Chair, Cal Poly Humboldt School of Education; [redacted], Education Director, Blue Lake Rancheria; [redacted] Yurok TEA; [redacted], Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation; [redacted], California Indian Education for All, [redacted], California Small School Districts Association |

Please see Appendix J for a Management Timeline.

(3) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project. (up to 5 points)

**TNTP** brings essential expertise in SoR PL and coaching for secondary teachers. With demonstrated success training over 8,000 Tennessee teachers and supporting rural districts nationwide, TNTP provides the curriculum-agnostic, evidence-based approach critical to LP. Their experience adapting PL for rural schools directly addresses project needs. TNTP's multi-year support model, combining intensive summer institutes with ongoing coaching cycles, ensures high-fidelity implementation. Its commitment includes customizing their established secondary literacy framework for rural California, training IAs and FFs, and building sustainable teacher leadership capacity across all 12 participating schools.

**Century Analytics** is an SBA-registered small business established in 2011 by [redacted] that provides services in evaluation, research design, statistics, and reporting. [redacted] has extensive expertise in rigorous evaluation designs, including RCTs and is certified in the WWC standards (v5.0). He has provided technical assistance to15 i3 evaluations and 20 EIR

evaluations. PRG has collaborated with [redacted] on five evaluations since 2012.

**PRG** will conduct an independent evaluation of LP that meets WWC standards without reservations. PRG will design and execute a rigorous RCT across 12 rural schools. PRG has been the independent evaluator for 8 i3/EIR projects. PRG has conducted 23 RCTs, including several multi-site RCTs in diverse settings. PRG will create a data dashboard so NHUHSD can monitor enrollment, implement continuous improvement processes to support fidelity of implementation, and access timely data to support progress monitoring. PRG will manage all IRB protocols, follow open science procedures, and prepare findings for peer-reviewed publication–generating the credible evidence needed to scale LP nationally and inform rural literacy policy.

**Cal Poly Humboldt** provides essential teacher preparation and evidence-based literacy expertise to train the High-Impact Tutors (HIT). The Liberal Studies/Elementary Education program offers a course in Developmental Literacy (LSEE 211); through this course, CPH trains future educators in SoR practices, assessment strategies, and targeted interventions for struggling readers including those with dyslexia. HITs in the immediate area of CPH will take LSEE 211 to be employed as HITs. To serve more distant tutors, CPH will offer the class online each autumn to build a tutor pipeline across the LP region. The online class will be geared towards supporting secondary students. This grounding in the SoR is essential to HITs having the foundational knowledge to support students with guidance from the IAs, FFs, and CPH. The NH Literacy Implementation Specialist will directly support the HITs in their sites.

| **Educational Partners** |
|---|
| **Consortium School District Partners**: Del Norte County USD, Fall River USD, Fortuna Union HSD, Klamath Trinity Joint USD, Round Valley USD, Trinity Alps USD, Yreka Union HSD |
| **American Indian Organization Partners:** Blue Lake Rancheria, Round Valley Indian Tribes, Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation, Yurok Tribe |
| **Rural Education Partners**: California Small School District Association, National Rural Education Association |

Our **school partners** not only provide the IAs and FFs, they also provide a varied set of rural high schools in which to conduct the study. Signed letters of support establish LP schools' willingness to partner and work to demonstrate an evidence-based path to building high school students' literacy as part of a replicable, more broadly applicable model.

Our **tribal partners** are education leaders in our communities, particularly schools located

on tribal lands and those privileged to serve high numbers of American Indian students and families. The TEAs will help lead LP and offer another avenue to disseminate findings from LP–particularly regarding American Indian students.

**Rural education partners**: The California Small School Districts Association will share findings through member communications, professional learning forums, policy advocacy in Sacramento, and resource distribution to its member districts serving 35% of California students. The National Rural Education Association will facilitate dissemination through its annual National Forum to Advance Rural Education, practitioner publications, policy dialogue with federal and state leaders, peer learning networks, and engagement with the research community to ensure the project contributes to effective rural education practices nationwide.

(4) Quality of plan to deliver project services more efficiently at scale and maintain effectiveness. (up to 5 points)

Despite its geographic scope, LP actually starts small by intentionally identifying teachers willing to serve as IAs to demonstrate the positive impact on students. Because it starts small, instead of starting with whole school or whole academic department reform, LP has the capacity to be brought quickly to scale across more schools, and over the course of 2–3 years, be implemented across high school English departments. In rural and many other schools, building teacher consensus is critical to the success of initiatives.

LP plots a course that provides the scale needed for an RCT and a national model by working with IA's willing and committed to implementation with fidelity. This prevents a situation where LP would exert significant time and energy getting entire departments of teachers to implement the program. This is particularly relevant because many English teaches are told by their professional organization that the only way to teach students who don't read well is providing high interest texts. We stipulate that all the practice guides and research studies in the world won't impact rural high school teacher behavior as much as one and then two of their colleagues working evidenced-based magic in their English classroom. Teaching students how to read and write, and then telling colleagues in the break room and at local events about the doable and replicable way they are teaching students is how willingness to change is developed.

The IA and FF model, as well as the fact that the LP is curriculum agnostic allows for

quicker adoption and implementation because schools and departments do not need to reach consensus, adopt curriculum, and all agree to move forward. Once the IAs and FFs become adept in SoRT they can serve as the in-person coaches and mentors and use TNTP's online resources to support their colleagues' study and implementation of SoRT.

(5) Quality of mechanisms to broadly disseminate project information and resources to support further development, adaptation, or replication by other entities to implement project components in additional settings or with other populations. (up to 5 points)

Numerous strategies will help us widely disseminate our findings. LP's rural focus will fill a gap in the literature, as there's limited research on scaling evidence-based literacy interventions in rural high schools. Our partnership with local TEAs and California Indian Education for All will be critical for disseminating findings about American Indian student outcomes in particular and students in general. There are 574 federally recognized Indian tribes in the US with 109 in California alone. Their network provides the opportunity to share LP's findings nationwide. Our dissemination will also reach administrators, researchers, and policymakers to guide future efforts in preparing high school students for college and career readiness.

We will disseminate in journal articles and research publications (e.g., Journal for Literacy Research, The Reading Teacher, Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, Reading Research Quarterly). The research findings have the potential to make important contributions to addressing literacy achievement of rural high-need high school students. Century Analytics and PRG have expertise in rigorous evaluation and academic publication in peer-reviewed journals. TNTP brings credibility as a nationally recognized organization with research capacity. Publications can reach SEAs, rural education associations, and policymakers who influence rural school funding and programs. We will also create research briefs that will be available through the TNTP website and PRG's website. All research reports will be submitted to ERIC, and all publications and products, including our final evaluation report and the PL resources we develop, will be 508-compliant, openly licensed, and made publicly available.

Research findings will emphasize what is learned from the implementation fidelity research and about addressing the barriers to scaling SoR and high-impact tutoring to address the literacy needs of high school students reading below grade level. The implementation study and scale-up evaluation will allow us to identify features and conditions necessary for sustainability and

replication, and these features will be shared broadly via our dissemination plan.

Sharing our findings at regional and national conferences (e.g., regional meetings of the NCTE, Council on English Leadership national convention) and through the National Rural Education Association and the Small School Districts Association will provide targeted dissemination through rural-specific organizations.

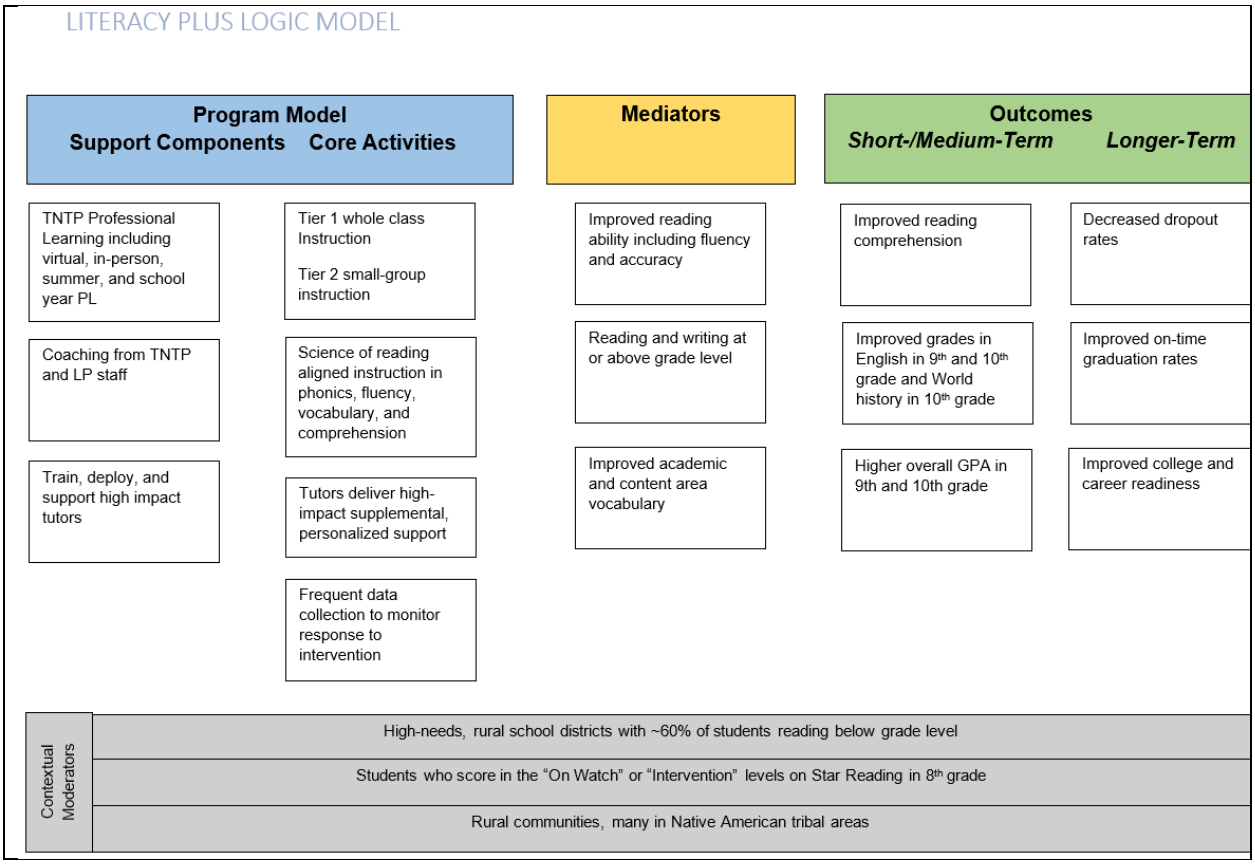
Results from the formative implementation evaluation (e.g., fidelity of implementation, dosage of activities, evaluation of strategies to address barriers to scale) will be shared with all partners to help disseminate information on what is working and where improvements are needed. Through the partnerships in the project and their networks, the sharing of these formative findings will allow us to build a community of educators and administrators working to improve adolescent literacy to support sustainability in our partner districts and scale-up in other rural districts serving high-needs high school students.

**C. Quality of the Project Design (up to 20 points).**

(1) The quality of the logic model or other conceptual framework underlying the proposed project, including how inputs are related to outcomes. (up to 15 points)

The conceptual framework of Literacy Plus is represented in the logic model (see p.13). The support components (including evidence-based PL and coaching) and core activities taking place in the IA and FF classrooms are the foundation of program implementation. They lead to the mediators, which are student level (e.g., reading and writing at grade level and improved academic vocabulary). Collectively these lead to the desired short, medium and longer-term student outcomes (improved reading comprehension, improved GPAs, decreased drop outs, increased graduation rates, and increased career and college readiness).

Over three years the IAs and FFs will complete TNTP's SoRT for Secondary Educators enhanced to meet the needs of rural high school English teachers. SoRT is built on the premise that literacy is not just a subject area, but the foundation for success in all subjects. SoRT aligns with two WWC Practice Guides: *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4–9* (2022), and *Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively* (2016, Revised 2019). After mastering these practices, in the final year of the project the IAs and FFs will begin working with their fellow English (and other) teachers to train them in SoRT.




As part of the consortium's EIR project, teachers will strengthen and align their classroom literacy practices using a tiered intervention model informed by the principles of a Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS). While teachers may vary in their experience with MTSS-aligned instruction, all will implement consistent, evidence-based approaches for delivering core, targeted, and intensive literacy instruction. The model emphasizes systematic progress monitoring, collaborative data review, and shared professional learning, ensuring that each teacher uses data to provide the level of instructional support needed for students to achieve grade-level reading proficiency.

At Tier 1, teachers will deliver explicit, systematic whole-class instruction grounded in the science of reading, integrating instruction in phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Teaching will employ research-based strategies such as direct explanation and modeling, guided practice with immediate feedback, and cumulative review to promote mastery and long-term retention. Lessons will incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, ensuring multiple means of engagement, representation and

expression so that all students can access rigorous literacy instruction within the general education classroom.[7]

Students identified through the use of progress monitoring tools as needing supplemental support will receive Tier 2 targeted interventions in small groups. These sessions will utilize structured literacy routines to strengthen comprehension and application of reading strategies. High-Impact Tutors (HITs), trained in evidence-based literacy methods, will collaborate with classroom teachers to reinforce instruction through scaffolded practice and targeted feedback. Intervention groups will be fluid and data-driven, with progress reviewed every 4-6 weeks to adjust instructional focus, duration, or intensity as needed.[8]

For students demonstrating persistent reading challenges despite tier 2 intervention, Tier 3 intensive supports will provide individualized instruction based on diagnostic assessment data. These sessions will focus on strengthening decoding, word recognition, and vocabulary through structured, sequential, and cumulative literacy practices. Tier 3 instruction will occur in very small groups or one-on-one settings, emphasizing extended practice, immediate corrective feedback, and close progress monitoring.

**Three Support Components**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| TNTP Professional Learning: Teachers participate in ongoing, evidence-based, job-embedded PL. Teachers will learn how to provide tiered literacy instruction in their own classrooms. | In-class coaching for teachers: In-person modeling of tiered instruction by TNTP & LP staff, and in-person and virtual coaching supports teacher uptake of evidence-based practices in their own rooms. | High-Impact Tutoring: Trained tutors, supported by CPH and LP staff and guided by class-room teachers provide direct tutoring and literacy building activities to students in the LP classrooms. |

The design of LP's professional development model follows the Center for Public Education's **Five Principles of Effective Professional Development:**[9]

- **Principle 1:** The duration of professional development must be significant and ongoing to allow time for teachers to learn a new strategy and grapple with the implementation problem.
- **Principle 2:** There must be support for a teacher during the implementation state that addresses the specific challenges of changing classroom practice.
- **Principle 3:** Teacher's initial exposure to a concept should be active and varied so they

[7] Archer, A., & Hughes, C. (2011). Explicit instruction: Effective and efficient teaching. Guilford Press.
[8] Vaughn, S., et al. (2019). Effective interventions for students with reading difficulties. Guilford Press.
[9] Gulamhussein, A. (2013). Teaching the teachers: Effective professional development in an era of high stakes accountability. Center for Public Education.

participate in experiencing the new practice first hand.

- **Principle 4:** Modeling is highly effective in helping teachers understand a new practice.
- **Principle 5:** The content presented to teachers should not be generic but specific to their grade level or content needs.

"Research on teacher professional development reveals that while teachers may learn new practices, they rarely apply them to their work."[10] "The one-time workshop assumes the only challenge facing teachers is a lack of knowledge of effective teaching practices and when that knowledge gap is corrected, teachers will be able to change…It turns out teachers' greatest challenge comes when they attempt to implement newly learned methods in the classroom."[11] Michael Fullan states, "The area of greatest struggle is not in *learning* a new skill but in *implementing* it, something referred to as the 'implementation dip.'"[12] Research shows mastering a new teaching skill takes 20 or more separate instances of practice.[13] Teachers' *beliefs* about teaching change only *after* they see success with students.[14] If teachers do not feel successful or see their students succeed they revert to previous methods.

To nurture teachers' belief "their" students can do what is being taught, LP includes three (or more) yearly in-person coaching cycles (from TNTP and PL staff) where theories learned in PL are modeled in the teacher's classroom by the coach. Coaching cycles provide personalized support, build foundational knowledge of the SoR, literacy shifts and standards, high-leverage instructional practices, and internalization structures that support effective implementation. Coaching during this phase will include co-planning, lesson modeling, and feedback cycles centered on delivering rigorous, grade-level instruction that is accessible for all learners. This modeling and gradual release method is built on research on teacher mentoring and coaching.[15]

Both IAs and FFs will participate in 3 years of SoRT PL including in-class coaching. SoRT

[10] Germuth, Amy A. (2018). Professional Development that Changes Teaching and Improves Learning. Journal of Interdisciplinary Teacher Leadership (JoITL) Vol. 2 Issue 1 December 2018.
[11] Allison Gulamhussein, *Teaching the Teachers: Effective Professional Development in an Era of High Stakes Accountability.* Alexandria: Center for Public Education. 2013.
[12] Michael Fullan, *Leading in a Culture of Change.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 2004.
[13] Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers, *Student Achievement through Staff Development*. Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. 2002.
[14] Thomas R. Guskey, "Professional Development and Teacher Change," *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice* 8, no. 3: 381-391. 2002.
[15] Knight, J. (2007). Instructional Coaching: A Partnership Approach to Improving Instruction. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
Knight, J. (2018). The Impact Cycle: What Instructional Coaches Should Do to Foster Powerful Improvements in Teaching. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

provides a comprehensive literacy approach that goes beyond isolated reading instruction and includes writing, speaking, listening, and language development across all content areas. This is particularly important in departmentalized high schools.

Year One of SoRT focuses on understanding the foundational components of the SoR and best instructional practice in high school literacy. In Year Two, teachers will study learning and application of evidence-based strategies within an MTSS, use assessments and data, and apply their foundational knowledge to support the 9th and 10th graders in the treatment groups. In Year Three, teachers will strengthen current instructional practices based in the SoR while building and practicing teachers' capacity to be literacy leaders on their campuses.

In SoRT, teachers will learn key principles of phonological awareness, phonics instruction, decoding, and fluency, as well as the elements of language comprehension and access to complex text which is critical to success in informational text-heavy classes like science and history. Even in math classes, reading comprehension is critical.[16] Students with higher levels of reading comprehension are more successful in solving math word problems and interpreting symbolic representations, as they both rely on language processing and higher-order reasoning. Core literacy skills, especially vocabulary and comprehension, directly support the development of mathematical understanding and problem-solving strategies. Strengthening reading proficiency is a critical, evidence-based strategy for boosting overall mathematics performance.[17]

Alignment with the Five Principles of Effective PD and other PL research: After each in-person session, teachers will have deliverables including a finalized plan for a unit/module with clearly identified goals including knowledge and skills students are developing. A finalized plan for formative assessments in that unit/module that scaffold towards mastery of the end of unit/module summative assessment. As noted, these deliverables will be reinforced by in-class and virtual coaching and mentoring from TNTP and PL staff.

[16] Valenzuela, Ma. Elaine Mirondo, et al. "Students' Skills in Mathematical Word Problems and Their Reading Comprehension Level: Basis for Intervention Program (June 2023)." International Journal of Science and Research Archive, vol. 11, no. 2, 2024, pp. 1189-97, doi:10.30574/ijsra.2024.11.2.0543.
[17] Snow, C.E., & Biancarosa, G. (2021). Adolescent Literacy: A Position Paper of the International Literacy Association. Newark, DE: International Literacy Association.

| Table 2. Support for Initial Adopters and First Followers from TNTP | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2026** | **2027** | **2028** | **2029** | **2030** | |
| | **2026-27 SY** | **2027-28 SY** | **2028-29 SY** | **2029-30 SY** | |
| | **Pilot Year** | **Implementation Year One** | **Implementation Year Two** | **Implementation Year Three** | IAs & FFs coach other teachers in their schools |
| Initial Adopter PL and pilot in classrooms | | Initial Adopter PL, coaching and support | Initial Adopter PL, coaching and support | IAs begin coaching FFs with TNTP guidance | |
| | | First Follower PL and pilot in classrooms | First Follower PL, coaching and support | First Follower PL, coaching and support | |

**Year One Timeline**

**Group**: Initial Adopters (2026), First Followers (2027)

| Timeline | Professional Learning | Coaching (Individual) |
|---|---|---|
| Late Spring (April/May) | **1-day virtual orientation/kickoff** | |
| Summer Intensive (July/August) | **4-day in-person Summer Intensive:** Build foundational learning around the Science of Reading | **Meet your coach, set coaching goals** |
| September | Virtual Professional Learning 1 (90 mins) | Individual Virtual Coaching Session 1 (60) |
| October | **In-person Professional Learning Session 1 (6 hours)** | **Individual In-Person Coaching Session 1 (4 hours)** |
| November | Virtual Professional Learning 2 (90 mins) | Individual Virtual Coaching Session 2 (60) |
| December | Virtual Professional Learning 3 (90 mins) | Individual Virtual Coaching Session 3 (60) |
| January | **In-person Professional Learning Session 2 (6 hours)** | **Individual In-Person Coaching Session 2 (4 hours)** |
| February | Virtual Professional Learning 4 (90 mins) | Individual Virtual Coaching Session 4 (60) |
| March | Virtual Professional Learning 5 (90 mins) | Individual Virtual Coaching Session 5 (60) |
| April | **In-person Professional Learning Session 3 (6 hours)** | **Individual In-Person Coaching Session 3 (4 hours)** |
| May | Virtual Professional Learning 6 (90 mins) | Individual Virtual Coaching Session 6 (60) |

*Please see the Appendix for the TNTP timelines in following years.

Why meet in person for SoRT PL? Particularly considering the most distant teachers are over four hours from NHUHSD. Experience and research support the decision to start with in-person PL and then use virtual meetings and coaching in recognition of the size of our region.

Connection is critical to learning and coaching, and the most effective way to ensure

connections between coaches and teachers is time spent together. Before the pandemic nearly all PL was in person. In 2020, it caused us to switch a US ED History and Civics National Activities project NHUHSD helped lead to online Saturday meetings. But only after we had met in person multiple times. What we found was attendance increased slightly and because the teachers already knew each other and the leaders Zoom provided a platform for people to collaborate without having to drive up to two hours each way. Since then, we've successfully used a blended model in a project serving teachers statewide. Our experience is supported by a World Bank study that found 85% of effective programs included an initial period of face-to-face training for several days.[18] A study from the Learning Policy Institute documented effective programs that used an initial intensive in-person workshop followed by ongoing virtual support.[19]

**High Impact Tutoring (HIT)**

Because the LP region is so large, prospective HITs must come from each school's local community. Schools and partners will help recruit prospective HITs to be trained. Depending on staff capacity, LP's tribal partners will have the option of identifying a TEA employee to be trained and work 20 hours a week as a HIT where they would serve all students in the LP classes (allowable because tutoring would be EIR funded). This potential collaboration could help create a path to sustainability as both the TEA and schools would share the cost. As described in the budget narrative, funding is provided for 20 hours of HIT per week in LP schools.

Prospective HITs will take LSEE 211: Developmental Literacy, which provides a comprehensive introduction to the SoR, literacy development, the role of informational text and literature as an instruction tool. HITs are introduced to formal and informal assessment practices, and intervention strategies that target the needs of struggling readers. The coursework emphasizes the SoR, grounding future HITs in evidence-based practices that support effective literacy instruction. HITs in the course will participate in a clinical practice experience in LP schools, where they work directly with Gr. 9 and 10 students experiencing reading challenges. Students will apply what they learn in class by delivering targeted interventions. In Clinical

[18] Popova, A., Evans, D. K., Breeding, M. E., & Arancibia, V. (2022). Teacher Professional Development around the World: The Gap between Evidence and Practice. The World Bank Research Observer, 37(1), 107-136.
[19] Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). Effective Teacher Professional Development. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

Practice, they will develop and practice skills including working with teachers to adapt lessons for struggling readers and building foundational skills through science of reading practices.

The greatest barrier to tutoring, regardless of quality, is consistent access to students. Too often, students most in need of individualized support are least likely to voluntarily partake in tutoring outside of class time.[20] For this reason, LP brings the tutors to the students in English class where they will get to know their tutor in class, which will increase the likelihood students take advantage of out of class tutoring.

Another benefit of in-class tutors is the more-knowledgeable instructor (the teacher) will guide the HIT so the tutor can focus on providing tiered, teacher-identified supports to students, guided by progress monitoring using Star Reading and other data.

*A blueprint for scaling tutoring across public schools,* a meta-study of research on high-impact tutoring, identified four components of Successful High-Impact Tutoring.[21]

1. Well-Trained, Consistent Tutors with Strong Relationships
2. High Dosage and Frequency
3. Small Group Size (1-4 Students)
4. High-Quality, Aligned Instructional Materials

LP's high impact tutoring model addresses all four components. In the Cal Poly Humboldt class HITs will study the foundations of reading. They will be trained and coached by [redacted] and the LP Literacy Implementation Specialist and receive daily guidance from the LP teachers. Tutors will provide tiered individual or small group tutoring daily. Pairing HITs with the LP teachers will help ensure their efforts align with the class curriculum and tutors focus on addressing missed concepts and skills critical to accessing current and upcoming content.

LP's tutoring training and support model is informed by the Texas Education Agency High Impact Tutoring Toolkit and Center for American Progress' Scaling Up High-Dosage Tutoring.[22]

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[20] Robinson, C. D., Bisht, B., & Loeb, S. (2025). The inequity of opt-in educational resources and an intervention to increase equitable access. *Educational Researcher*, *54*(3), 341–354. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X251331518

[21] Kraft, M. A., & Falken, G. T. (2022). A blueprint for scaling tutoring across public schools (EdWorkingPaper No. 22-653). Brown University Annenberg Institute. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED625876.pdf

[22] Texas Education Agency. High Impact Tutoring Toolkit. 2021, tea.texas.gov/academics/learning-support-and-programs/high-impact-tutoring-toolkit.pdf.
Demby, Keisha, and Michael J. Petrilli. "Scaling Up High-Dosage Tutoring Is Crucial to Students' Academic Success." Center for American Progress, 31 Jan. 2024, www.americanprogress.org/article/scaling-up-high-dosage-tutoring-is-crucial-to-students-academic-success/

HITs will work 20 hours weekly at each school so they can attend every LP class with the option, depending on the school to provide additional tutoring during study hall or other times.

(2) Extent goals, objectives, and outcomes are clearly specified, measurable, and ambitious yet achievable within project period, and aligned with purpose of the grant program. (up to 5 pts)

Literacy Plus has established four specific, measurable, and ambitious yet achievable goals aligned with the EIR program's purpose of scaling evidence-based innovations to improve outcomes for high-need students.

**Goal 1** adapts and delivers TNTP's Science of Reading PL for rural high school English teachers, measurable through program completion, teacher participation in four-day summer and three-day school-year workshops, and documented coaching.

**Goal 2** improves reading comprehension for LP treatment students by a statistically significant margin versus control students, serving approximately 1,000 students across three cohorts. Measurability includes screening 90% of Gr. 8 students, random assignment, Star Reading assessments, and tracking English and history grades and GPA.

**Goal 3** develops capacity to train, deploy, and support High-Impact Tutors (HITs), measured through training plan completion with Cal Poly Humboldt, tutor recruitment and training, and documented tutoring activities in 90% of LP classrooms.

**Goal 4** ensures sustainability by training IAs and FFs as literacy coaches, expanding LP to all Gr. 9 and 10 classes, and disseminating findings through partners including TNTP, PRG, California Small School District Association, and National Rural Education Association.

These goals support rigorous evaluation while building sustainable capacity beyond the grant.

| **Goal 1. Update, align and deliver TNTP Science of Reading Professional Learning program for rural high school English teachers.** | |
|---|---|
| *Objectives* | *Outputs and Outcomes* |
| **Obj. 1.1.** Update/align the TNTP SoR LP program by aligning the content and training process to the needs of LP teachers, and incorporate Star Reading. | **1.1** TNTP SoR professional learning plan and supports prepared for Summer 2026 teacher workshop.<br>**1.1** PL includes support for Star Reading |
| **Obj. 1.2.** Finalize recruitment of IA teachers in the LP schools. | **1.2.a.** MOUs with pilot districts.<br>**1.2.b.** Finalize IA teachers |
| **Obj. 1.3.** Hold summer 4-day teacher workshops. | **1.3.** All IA (and starting 2027 FF) complete summer workshop. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Obj. 1.4.** Provide ongoing, job-embedded Professional Learning during the school year to participants. | **1.4.a.** TNTP staff visit participants' classrooms 3x yearly to model, coach and support implementation.<br>**1.4.a.** TNTP staff provide monthly virtual coaching and support |
| **Obj. 1.5.** Gather data and feedback from LP teachers and schools. | **1.3.** Identify improvements to TNTP SoR LP program based on data and feedback |
| **Obj. 1.4.** Incorporate data and feedback into TNTP SoR PL program. | **1.4.a.** Finalize program for evaluation use.<br>**1.4.b.** Make available online. |
| **Goal 2. Improve LP treatment students reading comprehension and success in reading-intensive classes by a statistically significant margin vs. control students.** | |
| **Objective 2.1.** Identify LP eligible Gr. 8 students using Star Reading in February of Gr. 8 year. | **2.1.** Assess at least 90% of all Gr. 8 students in feeder schools to LP high schools. |
| **Objective 2.2.** Randomly assign LP eligible students into Gr. 9 or Gr. 10 groups. | **2.2.** Students are assigned to LP or Business as Usual Gr. 9 and Gr. 10 classes. |
| **Objective 2.3.** Re-assess LP students in 9th and 10th grade using Star Reading to track reading progress. | **2.3.** Assess students 2x yearly to measure change in reading comprehension. |
| **Objective 2.4**. Demonstrate effects of LP on reading comprehension | **2.3** Impact of LP (compared with BAU) on: Star Reading, English and history grades**,** and GPA |
| **Goal 3. Develop capacity to train, deploy and support High Impact Tutors (HIT) to provide high impact tutoring aligned with evidence-based reading practices.** | |
| **Objective 3.1.** LP staff develop HIT training plan with Cal Poly Humboldt (CPH). | **3.1.** HIT Training plan developed for Autumn 2026 online class. |
| **Objective 3.2.** Work with partner schools, Tribes and Cal Poly Humboldt to identify and recruit potential HITs. | **3.2.** HIT candidates participate in CPH Foundations of Literacy class and 10 hours HIT training from LP staff. |
| **Objective 3.3.** Participating teachers are trained to support and utilize HITs starting with Spring 2027 in-class pilot. | **3.3.** Teachers support HITs in the LP classrooms to directly serve students in pilot and then implementation years. |
| **Objective 3.4.** Evaluators and LP team track and assess activities HITs deliver to treatment group students. | **3.4.** HITs increasingly deliver evidence-based supports to LP students. |
| **Goal 4. Develop and implement a plan to sustain and scale Literacy Plus.** | |
| **Objective 4.1.** Build district and school capacity for sustaining use of evidence-based literacy practices. | **4.1.a.** Train all IA and FF teachers as literacy experts/coaches to professionally develop the remaining teachers in their English departments in the TNTP SoR protocols.<br>**4.1.b.** Train site and district administrators to support and expand LP |
| **Objective 4.2.** Districts expand LP classes | **4.2**. Districts expand LP to all 9th and 10th grade classes. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Objective 4.3.** Finalize guides of LP protocols in print and digital formats. | **4.3.** TNTP and evaluators publish, market, and disseminates LP findings and program info. |
| **Objective 4.4**. Disseminate LP findings and protocols. | **4.4**. TNTP, evaluators and California Small School District Association disseminate findings |
| **Objective 4.5.** Further refine the LP model to increase affordability and scalability. | **4.5.** Based on evaluation, identify necessary and optional components of LP. |

## D. Quality of the Project Evaluation or Other Evidence-Building (up to 30 points).

NHUHSD will partner with Century Analytics and PRG to conduct an **independent evaluation** of the impact, fidelity of implementation, strategies to scale up, and cost effectiveness of the LP intervention in high school English courses. The LP intervention uses SoR aligned instruction in phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension and high-impact tutoring which have been shown to have Tier 1 Strong Evidence (Vaughn et al, 2007).

(1) Extent evaluation methods will, if well implemented, produce evidence of effectiveness of project on relevant outcomes that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations, as described in What Works Clearinghouse Handbooks. (up to 15 pts)

The evaluation will meet WWC standards without reservations and will address the following research questions:

| **Table 3. Research and Evaluation Questions** | | **Data Sources** |
|---|---|---|
| Confirmatory Impact | 1) What is the impact of LP on Gr. 9 students' reading comprehension at the end of 9th grade (as measured by STAR Reading scale score) as compared to Gr. 9 students offered business as usual (BAU) 9th grade English? | STAR Reading Assessment EOY 9th grade |
| | 2) What is the impact of the LP intervention on Gr. 9 students' end of year course grade in 9th grade English as compared to Gr. 9 students offered BAU Gr. 9 English? | EOY 9th grade English course performance |
| | 3) What is the impact of the LP intervention on Gr. 9 students' grade point average (GPA) at the end of 9th grade as compared to Gr. 9 students offered BAU 9th grade English? | EOY 9th grade GPA |
| Exploratory Impact (*long term, initial exposure*) | 4) For students who took LP in 9th grade, what is the long-term impact of the LP intervention on students' GPA at the end of 10th grade (one year after exposure) as compared to students who took BAU 9th grade English? | EOY 10th grade GPA |
| | 5) For students who took LP in 9th grade, what is the long-term impact of the LP intervention on students' World History grade at the end of Gr, 10 (one year after exposure) as compared to students who took BAU 9th grade English? | EOY 10th grade World History grade |
| Exploratory Impact | 6) What is the impact of LP delivered in 10th grade English on Gr. 10 students' Reading Comprehension at the end of | STAR Reading Assessment |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (*delayed exposure*) | 10th grade as compared to students offered business as usual (BAU) 10th grade English? | EOY 10th grade |
| | 7) What is the impact of LP delivered in 10th grader English on Gr. 10 students' GPA at the end of 10th grade as compared to students offered BAU 10th grade English? | EOY 10th grade GPA |
| Mediation and Moderation of Impact | 8) How do the impacts of being assigned to receive the LP intervention vary for different student subgroups (e.g., struggling readers, English learners, IEPs, low socio-economic status, Native American students) and/or school contexts (setting, size, dropout rate, etc.)? | Student-level administrative records<br>CADOE school-level profiles |
| | 9) How is the impact of LP on student reading comprehension mediated by teacher fidelity and/or quality of implementation, and how is the impact of LP on student grades mediated by student reading comprehension? | STAR Reading Assessment Fidelity monitoring logs |
| Implement-ation, Scaling, and Cost | 10) To what extent were the key components of the LP intervention implemented with fidelity during each year of implementation? | Fidelity monitoring logs |
| | 11) What were the barriers and facilitators of implementation for the LP intervention? | Instructor/coach interviews/focus groups |
| | 12) To what extent did the LP intervention and project achieve its scale-up goals for each scale-up strategy? | Grantee and program records |
| | 13) What was the cost of implementing the LP intervention in Gr. 9 and 10 classrooms? | Program cost records |

The impact study is designed to meet WWC standards without reservations.[23] We propose three groups of impact research questions that aim to comprehensively examine the effect of LP among 9th and 10th graders. Research Questions (RQ) 1, 2 and 3 will examine confirmatory outcomes (reading comprehension, English course performance, and GPA at the end of one year of exposure to LP in 9th grade). RQs 4 and 5 will examine the long-term (one-year later) effect on academic achievement by comparing GPA and World History grades at the end of 10th grade. RQs 6 and 7 will examine the effect of delayed exposure to LP by comparing outcomes for students who were randomly assigned to receive BAU in 9th grade and LP in 10th grade against a group of students who received BAU in both 9th and 10th grade. Taken together, this study will provide a comprehensive examination of the impact of LP in high school English courses on literacy skills and academic achievement. Additional evaluation questions will examine the moderating and mediating influences of LP impact (RQs 8 and 9), the degree to which LP was

What Works Clearinghouse. (2022). *Procedures Handbook (Version 5.0).* Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

implemented as intended with fidelity (RQ 10), the barriers and facilitators to implementation fidelity (RQ 11), the degree to which NHUHSD was able to effectively achieve its scaling strategy (RQ 12), and the cost of implementing LP in high school English classes (RQ 13). **Findings from the evaluation will have practical implications for local and state-wide policy decisions to better serve high-needs high school students who are struggling to read at grade level, decrease the likelihood of dropping out of high school, increase chances for on-time graduation, and increase college and career readiness.**

**Random Assignment.** The evaluation team will implement a student-level RCT that will estimate the intent-to-treat impact of being randomized to receive the LP intervention (treatment) or business as usual English instruction (control). Three cohorts of students will be randomly assigned to one of three study groups: (1) an initial treatment group that will be assigned to receive LP English in 9th grade; (2) a delayed treatment group that will receive BAU English in 9th grade and LP English in 10th grade; and (3) a no treatment control group that will receive BAU English in both 9th and 10th grade (see Table 4 below).

| **Table 4. Implementation Schedule** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Random Assignment Group** | **9th Grade English** | **10th Grade English** |
| Initial Treatment | LP 9th Grade English | BAU 10th Grade English |
| Delayed Treatment | BAU 9th grade English | LP 10th Grade English |
| No Treatment (Control) | BAU 9th grade English | BAU 10th grade English |

Student-level random assignment will occur in the spring preceding each school year of implementation (Spring ‘27 for SY27/28; Spring ‘28 for SY28/29, and Spring ‘29 for SY29/30). See ***Appendix J-3*** for a detailed evaluation timeline. Incoming Gr. 9 students who meet the eligibility criteria (discussed below) will be randomly assigned by the evaluators, and the roster of students randomized by the evaluator will be returned to the study high schools each spring so that high school staff can complete students’ course scheduling for the following school year; the Evaluation Team will request the class rosters again at the start of the school year to confirm appropriate placement into the LP or BAU classes. Eligibility criteria for inclusion in the study include: (1) scoring in the "intervention” or “on watch” performance categories on the 8th grade Renaissance Learning STAR Reading assessment, a comprehensive computer adaptive test of reading abilities and comprehension skills. Students scoring between the 10th and 24th percentile

on national norms on STAR Reading are categorized as "intervention" and those scoring between the 25th and 39th percentile are considered "on watch." These students are most likely to benefit from receiving the LP intervention because students scoring below the 10th percentile are most likely not placed in regular English classes, and students scoring at or above the 40th percentile are reading at or above grade level. (2) Students who participate in special day or severe special day classes are ineligible for inclusion in randomization and in the analytic sample. Randomization will be blocked by study school and cohort.

**The evaluation will be sufficiently powered.** The evaluation sample will consist of three groups of students: initial treatment group, delayed treatment group, and no treatment control group (see Table 4 above). Random assignment will occur in the spring prior to each implementation year in order accommodate the scheduling of students in 9th grade English classes. The probability of randomization will differ based on the school's incoming 9th grade population. At the largest study high schools (Arcata, Del Norte, Fortuna and Ukiah), students will be randomized to one of the three possible treatment groups at a 1:1:1 ratio (initial treatment, delayed treatment, and no treatment control). Whereas at the smaller high schools (Hoopa Valley, McKinleyville, Fall River, Burney, Trinity, Round Valley, Yreka), students will be randomly assigned into the initial treatment or delayed treatment group at a 1:1 ratio, with no students selected into the no treatment control group as these smaller schools have insufficient numbers of eligible students to populate the no treatment control group. As a result, the sample size for the exploratory research questions (RQ 4-7) will be smaller than the confirmatory research questions (RQ 1, 2, and 3). We provide the sample sizes for each confirmatory and exploratory research question below.

| **Table 5. Study Samples** | **RQs 1 and 2 (All Cohorts)** | **RQs 3 and 4 (Cohorts 1 & 2)** | **RQs 5 and 6 (Cohorts 1& 2)** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Initial Treatment | Treatment | Treatment | N/A (excluded) |
| Delayed Treatment | Control | N/A (excluded) | Treatment |
| No Treatment (Control) | Control | Control | Control |
| **Randomized Sample** | **3,243** | **2,007** | **2,007** |
| **Estimated Analytic Sample** | **2,592** | **1,606** | **1,606** |
| **Estimated MDES** | **0.07** | **0.09** | **0.09** |

We estimate a 20% attrition rate given randomization will occur in the spring prior to

students' 9th grade year. Based on this attrition rate and assumptions detailed in ***Appendix J-2***, we estimate the confirmatory study will yield a minimal detectable effect size **(MDES) of approximately 0.07** (Hedges' g) on student-level outcomes. The exploratory study, which is designed to further explore the potential impact of LP in 10th grade and on long-term outcomes, is not designed to have the same statistical power as the confirmatory study. Even so, the MDES for the exploratory study is estimated to be 0.09 (Hedges' g), which is at the smaller end of a medium effect size for an educational intervention[24] and is within the ranges of effect sizes documented by the WWC's Practice Guide that aligns with the intervention.[25]

**Outcome Measures.** Outcome data will be collected from two data sources: (1) the Renaissance STAR Reading assessment and (2) student administrative records from participating study high schools. The STAR Reading Assessment from Renaissance Learning is a valid and reliable measure [alpha = .96; Renaissance Learning, 2020; Renaissance Learning, 2025] and considered an independent measure for reading comprehension by the WWC. Star Reading is a computer adaptive test that adjusts its difficulty by selecting assessment items based on students' performance on previously answered items. Students reading below grade level are spared the frustration of receiving items that are too difficult, and the items administered at their level help ensure a valid measure of their ability. In other words, the test does not have floor or ceiling effects. As a computer adaptive test, Star Reading is efficient, taking 15-20 minutes to administer, thus increasing the response rate for data collection. Star Reading will be used as the screening tool for identifying eligible incoming 9th graders who perform at the Intervention or On Watch levels, and will be used as the baseline measure of the outcome (see analytic approach below) and the primary outcome measure for RQ 1 and 6. Students will complete the screening assessment in the late winter of their 8th grade year. Star Reading is broadly used in the participating districts as an interim assessment (i.e., fall, winter, spring). Assessment scores will be collected from participating schools in early spring each year to conduct eligibility screening and random assignment. At the beginning and end of the 9th grade year (all cohorts) and 10th grade (cohorts 1 and 2), we will ask teachers to administer the STAR Reading assessment to all

[24] Kraft, M. A. (2019). Interpreting Effect Sizes of Education Interventions. EdWorkingPaper No. 19-10. *Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University*.
[25] Vaughn, et al. (2022). *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4–9* (WWC 2022007).

participants as a baseline measure. When administered in California, the assessment provides an overall score on Reading Comprehension and subtest scores on the following domains based on California state standards: 1) key ideas and details; 2) craft and structure; 3) ranged of reading and level of text complexity; 4) integration of knowledge and ideas; and 5) vocabulary acquisition and use.

Besides STAR Reading Assessments, we will request student-level administrative records from participating study high schools to collect additional demographic (e.g., race/ethnicity, sex, IEP, ELL, socioeconomic) data, 8th grade baseline data (state test scores in ELA and math), and outcome data for Gr. 9 English course grade and Gr. 9 and 10 GPA (RQs 2, 3, and 4) and Gr. 10 World History grades (RQ 5). Academic records will be requested by PRG from all partner schools; data-sharing agreements with all study schools and/or LEAs will be formalized prior to collecting any academic records in Year 1. Data collection procedures will be identical for all study conditions.

**Analytic Approach.** The effects of LP will be estimated within an intent-to-treat framework so that the contrast under investigation is the effect of the offer to participate in LP relative to the offer to participate in the BAU control condition. Impact estimates will be produced using a single level linear regression model where student-level post-intervention outcome measures will be regressed on a treatment indicator and relevant individual-level covariate and blocking variables (school by cohort blocks), including the baseline measure of the outcome. Analyses after one year of exposure in 9th grade will be confirmatory and will compare initial treatment students against the pooled sample of delayed treatment and no treatment control students. Statistical significance will be inferred at $p < .05$, using a two-tailed test. See ***Appendix J-2*** for additional details of the benchmark analytic model specification.

We will conduct diagnostics on the baseline sample as a means of monitoring the verification of randomization procedures; to monitor the quality of the random assignment and data collection procedures, PRG will conduct a model-based approach to **baseline equivalence testing** on demographic and baseline outcome data after each cohort is enrolled (randomized sample). We will also conduct baseline diagnostics on the analytic samples (those who have provided outcome data) at the end of data collection for each cohort to monitor sample loss

(**overall attrition**) and for imbalance (**differential attrition**) between study groups, and baseline equivalence will be estimated for the final analytic sample for each outcome. We will monitor students' completion of the outcome measure and ensure that teachers in both the treatment group and the control group administer the outcome assessment to as many students in their classes as possible, with makeup assessments given to students who are absent on the day(s) of testing. Regardless of whether baseline equivalence is achieved on the final analytic sample (SMD below 0.05) or falls within the zone of statistical adjustment (SMD 0.06 to 0.25), we will include the baseline outcome and covariates in the impact analytic models. Missing outcome data will not be imputed (any students with missing outcome data will be counted toward attrition); missing covariate and baseline data will be imputed using dummy variable adjustment, as permitted by the WWC 5.0 (Puma et al, 2009). If well implemented and the study meets the threshold for low attrition, this evaluation will meet WWC standards without reservation and will provide findings that meet Tier 1 strong evidence of effectiveness (see ***Appendix J-2*** for methods to address *high* attrition).

(2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing and potential implementation in other settings. (up to 5 points)

Guidance on effective strategies for replication will be accomplished through open science documentation of all study activities, detailed examination of impact moderators and mediators, examination and documentation of the BAU experience, and a cost study that will document the comparative cost of implementing LP in 9th and 10th grade English courses. This information will allow researchers and practitioners to better understand the conditions under which the LP program is effective and for whom.

**Open Science Best Practices.** Replication is necessary to confirm or disconfirm prior research and essential to build a valid evidence base. We will follow ***open science*** guidance provided by NSF/IES to carefully document our study plans and findings to ensure that other researchers can effectively replicate our study and practitioners can implement LP in other settings.[26] Our comprehensive research design and methods will be ***pre-registered*** on the

[26] The National Science Foundation and The Institute of Education Sciences. (2018, November 28). *Companion guidelines on replication & reproducibility in education research: A supplement to the common guidelines for education research and development.* https://nsf.gov/pubs/2019/nsf19022/nsf19022.pdf

Registry of Efficacy and Effectiveness Studies (REES) in Year 1, prior to any randomization or data collection. At the end of the project, the evaluation team will make all findings ***publicly-available*** on the PRG website and through an existing data and study repository, such as the Education Resource Information Center (ERIC). NHUHSD will also provide detailed implementation protocols, guidebooks, measures of implementation fidelity, and training, to ensure that LP can be replicated in high schools in other regions.

**Moderation and Mediation.** In addition to estimating average treatment effects, we will examine whether LP's effects vary across students and schools by conducting exploratory analyses of the differential impacts of LP across school, teacher, and student subgroups (RQ 8). The proposed project will serve numerous high-need schools that vary in size, community characteristics, and faculty and student populations. This diverse evaluation sample will help generate information that can guide other rural high-need schools and districts in both whether and how to implement LP. Examples of moderators to examine include school setting, size, and administrator support, teacher certification and experience working with struggling readers, student demographics (race/ethnicity, sex, IEP, ELL, socioeconomic) and baseline reading proficiency. These moderation analyses will be conducted using the same regression model described above, but with the addition of a series of interaction terms that are the product of the treatment indicator and a dichotomous indicator of each relevant characteristic. Separate models will be run for separate characteristics to improve interpretation of results. We will also conduct mediation analyses to assess the degree to which quality of implementation mediates the impact on student outcomes (RQ 9). Our hypothesis is that the intensive literacy instruction provided via LP will increase the likelihood students are reading at grade level and will improve their reading comprehension and vocabulary, and these improvements will then result in improvements in grades in English, grades in World History, and overall GPA. We will implement structural equation modeling to test this hypothesis.

**Treatment Contrast.** LP's proposed intensive literacy instruction and high-impact tutoring differs greatly from Gr. 9 and 10 BAU English instruction. This large difference between RC and the control group (i.e., treatment contrast) will likely drive large differences in outcomes. To support future replication efforts our design facilitates documenting the BAU condition, the LP

condition, and the treatment contrast because each study school will include both treatment classrooms and control classrooms in 9th grade and 10th grade. Key features of interventions, including the control condition (e.g., duration, dosage, etc.) are often missing or poorly described in evaluation reports and these descriptions are needed to understand the treatment contrast (i.e., what is different between treatment and BAU), and this contrast influences interpretation of a program's efficacy and replicability of impact findings ).[27]

**Cost Evaluation.** Finally, the evaluation team will perform a **cost analysis**, documenting the costs of implementing LP in 9th and 10th grade English courses overall, and per student. We will use the "Ingredients Method," by identifying and valuing the resources required to implement the program.[28] We will leverage the IES cost analysis tool kit.[29] Upon completion of the impact evaluation, the evaluation team will use the effect sizes to conduct Cost Effectiveness Analysis.

Through implementation of open science principles, use of moderation and mediation analyses, thorough description of the treatment contrast, and breakdown of cost, this evaluation will provide local decision-makers with the critical information they need to decide if implementing LP in their settings would likely be beneficial to their students who struggle to read at grade level in 9th and 10th grade.

(3) Quality of evaluation for measuring implementation fidelity, including thresholds for acceptable implementation, to inform how implementation is associated with outcomes. (5 pts)

**Formative Evaluation.** In addition to documenting the impact study, a formative implementation evaluation will assess adherence to LP's logic model, dosage of PL and high-impact tutoring, quality of implementation, and contextual factors, including the control group (BAU) experiences. To ensure the evaluation is replicable, we will periodically measure the fidelity of the LP program to document activities implemented under each treatment arm (initial treatment, delayed treatment, no treatment). Measures of fidelity (described below) will be

[27] Hoffmann TC, Glasziou PP, Boutron I, Milne R, Perera R, Moher D, Altman DG, Barbour V, Macdonald H, Johnston M, Lamb SE, Dixon-Woods M, McCulloch P, Wyatt JC, Chan AW, Michie S. (2014). Better reporting of interventions: template for intervention description and replication (TIDieR) checklist and guide. *BMJ*. doi: 10.1136/bmj.g1687.

[28] For descriptions of the Ingredients Method, see Levin, H. M., McEwan, P. J., Belfield, C., Bowden, A. B., & Shand, R. (2017). Economic Evaluation in Education: Cost-Effectiveness and Benefit-Cost Analysis, Third Edition. Washington, D.C.: SAGE Publications, Inc. https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/economicevaluation-in-education/book245161#contents.

[29] Institute of Education Sciences. (2020). *Cost analysis: A toolkit.* https://ies.ed.gov/seer/pdf/IES_Cost_Analysis_Starter_Kit_V1.pdf.

analyzed and reported to NHUHSD semiannually at the end of fall and spring semesters as formative feedback, including the identification of barriers and facilitators to fidelity of implementation. This implementation and fidelity data collection will allow PRG to assess variation in how LP works in practice, interpret the efficacy of the intervention, provide feedback for program improvement, and identify features and conditions necessary for sustainability and replication. Additionally, PRG will develop a web-based **dashboard** for NHUHSD to track implementation and share ongoing, real-time monitoring for the purpose of continuous quality improvement during bi-weekly calls-in between semiannual reporting. Graphical indicators of implementation data will allow NHUHSD to track progress towards programmatic performance measures throughout the grant period. PRG, Century Analytics, NHUHSD, and TNTP will meet twice monthly to discuss any challenges identified in implementation and talk through potential strategies for improving program fidelity.

PRG will triangulate these implementation data to understand and explain the variation in implementation to provide NHUHSD – and the field – with greater understanding of the conditions and supports (e.g., frequency and dosage of tutoring, scheduling and administrator support) necessary for successful program implementation. Formative Implementation Evaluation elements, data used to assess each element, frequency of data collection, and responsible parties are described in the ***Formative Evaluation Summary Table in Appendix J-4***.

**Thresholds for Acceptable Implementation.** RQs 10 and 11 address implementation fidelity and barriers to implementation. PRG will collect indicators of implementation fidelity and assess the fidelity of LP implementation in all treatment classrooms during SY27/28, SY28/29, and SY29/30. As shown in the logic model, the support components include TNTP Professional Learning (PL) including virtual, in-person, summer, and school year PL (Support Component 1), coaching from TNTP and LP staff (Support Component 2), and training, deploying, and supporting High-Impact Tutors (Support Component 3). Fidelity of implementation will also be assessed for tutors who deliver supplemental, personalized support (Direct Component 3) and frequent data collection to monitor response to intervention (Direct Component 4). Table 6 presents each component being measured, the threshold for acceptable implementation, and the data source(s) used to assess adequate fidelity. Thresholds are

established in collaboration with NHUHSD, TNTP, and the Evaluation Team.

| Table 6. Intervention Component | Description | Threshold for Acceptable Implementation | Data Source(s) |
|---|---|---|---|
| TNTP Professional Learning including virtual and in-person instruction and PL during summer and school year | Teachers engage in online learning six times during the school year for 90-minute PL sessions. | 90% of participating teachers complete both the virtual and in-person instruction and all days of PL | Enrollment, attendance, and completion data from TNTP site coordinators |
| | Teachers attend scheduled sessions, complete related learning modules, and participate in practice work during sessions. | | |
| | Teachers engage in four-day summer PL and three-day school year PL. | | |
| Coaching from TNTP and LP staff | Teachers are observed, coached, and debriefed by TNTP staff 9x/year (3 in-person, 6 virtual)<br>Teachers collaborate with LP staff to implement tiered instruction strategies aligned with the school's MTSS | 90% of teachers observed in-person 3x/year and virtually 6x/year. | Coach logs collected at the end of every semester of implementation; observation logs collected at the end of every semester of implementation |
| Train, deploy, and support high impact tutors | Each LP class has a trained tutor to provide high-impact tutoring | 90% of LP classes have a devoted high-impact tutor | Site coordinator implementation log |
| Tutors deliver supplemental, personalized support | High-Impact Tutors will deliver supplemental, personalized support using evidence-based practices to reinforce these foundational skills through structured literacy approaches | 90% of LP classes, provide every student one hour of tutoring and four hours of small group instruction | Tutor logs collected at the end of every semester of implementation |
| Frequent data collection to monitor response to intervention | Frequent data collection used to monitor response to intervention with adjustments in supports made based on progress monitoring data every 4-6 weeks or sooner. | Data collected at least once every 6 weeks in 90% of participating LP classes. | Tutor logs collected at the end of every semester of implementation |

Coaches' logs, surveys and interviews with site coordinators, and tutor logs will also be used to collect additional data to allow reporting of the facilitators and barriers to implementation and guidance on which components of the Literacy Plus program are suitable for replication or testing in other high school settings or other grades levels in secondary schools. These data will

also allow for the exploration of the relationship between implementation fidelity and student outcomes, thus offering information supporting future effective replication.

(4) Extent the design for implementing and evaluating the project results in information to guide possible replication of project activities or strategies, including valid and reliable information about effectiveness of the approach or strategies employed by the project. (up to 5 pts)

The implementation evaluation will also assess challenges and successes in scaling up. The project team has identified four barriers to providing intensive literacy instruction to Gr. 9 and 10 students not yet reading at grade level. These barriers are those we've encountered in our work with high-needs and low-performing students who enter high school unprepared for the curriculum at that level. For each barrier, the team has identified a strategy to address that barrier, and for each strategy we have set goals for implementing at scale and thresholds the evaluation team can use to assess whether the strategies are successful in addressing the identified barriers (Table 7). Identifying these barriers, assessing whether our strategies to address these barriers are effective, and reporting whether goals were met will provide vital information to anyone seeking to replicate the LP program. In addition, the final evaluation report will include discussion of the success of the project's scaling strategies, which will prove valuable to anyone considering scaling up the program in a similar context.

| **Table 7. Barrier** | **Strategy** | **Goal** | **Threshold** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Need for high-quality intensive literacy instruction in 9th and 10th grade for high-needs, low-performing students | Implement TNTP's intensive literacy instruction (Science of Reading) & high impact tutoring | At least 3,000 9th and 10th grade students receive the LP program | 2,700 9th and 10th grade students receive the LP program |
| Limited PL opportunities for intensive literacy instruction for HS English teachers | Provide for teacher participation in the TNTP's Science of Reading program and coaching | At least one 9th and one 10th grade teacher trained at each site complete the program | 90% of LP classes taught by a teacher who completed the program |
| Content area teachers in high school (e.g., English, math, history) not trained in how to build foundational reading skills | Train teachers in high-impact, replicable instructional methods they can integrate into content area classes | At least 2 trained teachers in each high school prepared to lead PL in their own schools and communities to train other secondary teachers | 90% of participating schools have 2 trained content area teachers to lead PL |
| Need for and limited funding to provide tutoring additional | Recruit, train, and fund high impact tutors to provide intensive | At least one tutor trained and supporting each LP classroom | 90% of LP classroom supported by a trained tutor |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| literacy support in 9th and 10th grade regular English classrooms. | literacy supports based on the science of reading as implemented according to TNTP Science of Reading Program | | |
| Administrative and human resources to support sustainability | Assign LP Project Director and Co-Director | LP Project Director employed at 0.6 FTE, Co-Director at 0.4 FTE | LP Project Director hired within first 6 months. |

Implementation data from a variety of sources (e.g., coach, teacher, and tutor surveys, school leader interviews, and teacher implementation logs, TNTP enrollment and completion data) will help provide data on the effectiveness of the scaling strategies in each of the participating schools and districts (RQs 12 & 13); these data will also be used to refine the implementation strategies and supporting resources to facilitate sustainability of the intervention.