U.S. Department of Education
Washington, D.C. 20202-5335

APPLICATION FOR GRANTS UNDER THE

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE): Office of Indian Education (OIE): Indian E

CFDA # 84.299B

PR/Award # S299B250037

Gramts.gov Tracking#: GRANT14415069

OMB No. 1810–0580, Expiration Date: 01/31/2027

Closing Date: May 13, 2025

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

* 1. Type of Submission:	* 2. Type of Application:	* If Revision, select appropriate letter(s):
☐ Preapplication	☒ New	
☒ Application	☐ Continuation	* Other (Specify):
☐ Changed/Corrected Application	☐ Revision	

* 3. Date Received:	4. Applicant Identifier:
05/13/2025	

5a. Federal Entity Identifier:	5b. Federal Award Identifier:

State Use Only:

6. Date Received by State:	7. State Application Identifier:
	North Carolina

8. APPLICANT INFORMATION:

* a. Legal Name:	University of North Carolina at Pembroke
* b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN):	[redacted]
* c. UEI:	KMDFQGPWPK85

d. Address:

* Street1:	ONE UNIVERSITY DRIVE
Street2:	
* City:	PEMBROKE
County/Parish:	North Carolina
* State:	NC: North Carolina
Province:	
* Country:	USA: UNITED STATES
* Zip / Postal Code:	28372-1510

e. Organizational Unit:

Department Name:	Division Name:
School of Education	Academic Affairs

f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:

Prefix:	[redacted]	* First Name:	[redacted]
Middle Name:			
* Last Name:	[redacted]		
Suffix:			

Title:	Sponsored Programs Specialist
Organizational Affiliation:	
* Telephone Number:	[redacted]
Fax Number:	
* Email:	[redacted]

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

*** 9. Type of Applicant 1: Select Applicant Type:**

H: Public/State Controlled Institution of Higher Education

Type of Applicant 2: Select Applicant Type:

Type of Applicant 3: Select Applicant Type:

* Other (specify):

*** 10. Name of Federal Agency:**

Department of Education

11. Assistance Listing Number:

84.299

Assistance Listing Title:

Indian Education -- Special Programs for Indian Children

*** 12. Funding Opportunity Number:**

ED-GRANTS-011725-002

* Title:

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE): Office of Indian Education (OIE): Indian Education Discretionary Grants Program: Professional Development Program (PD) Training Grants, Assistance Listing Number (ALN) 84.299B

13. Competition Identification Number:

Title:

14. Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.):

Add Attachment | Delete Attachment | View Attachment

*** 15. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project:**

Project FIELD: First Indigenous Educational Leadership Development

Attach supporting documents as specified in agency instructions.

Add Attachments | Delete Attachments | View Attachments

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

16. Congressional Districts Of:

* a. Applicant: NC-008 | * b. Program/Project: NC-008

Attach an additional list of Program/Project Congressional Districts if needed.

Add Attachment | Delete Attachment | View Attachment

17. Proposed Project:

* a. Start Date: 10/01/2025 | * b. End Date: 09/30/2030

18. Estimated Funding ($):

* a. Federal	1,318,394.00
* b. Applicant	0.00
* c. State	0.00
* d. Local	0.00
* e. Other	0.00
* f. Program Income	0.00
* g. TOTAL	1,318,394.00

*** 19. Is Application Subject to Review By State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?**

☐ a. This application was made available to the State under the Executive Order 12372 Process for review on .

☒ b. Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review.

☐ c. Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.

*** 20. Is the Applicant Delinquent On Any Federal Debt? (If "Yes," provide explanation in attachment.)**

☐ Yes ☒ No

If "Yes", provide explanation and attach

Add Attachment | Delete Attachment | View Attachment

21. *By signing this application, I certify (1) to the statements contained in the list of certifications and (2) that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances** and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 18, Section 1001)**

☒ ** I AGREE

** The list of certifications and assurances, or an internet site where you may obtain this list, is contained in the announcement or agency specific instructions.

Authorized Representative:

Prefix: [redacted] | * First Name: [redacted]

Middle Name:

* Last Name: [redacted]

Suffix:

* Title: Director of Sponsored Research and Programs

* Telephone Number: [redacted] | Fax Number:

* Email: [redacted]

* Signature of Authorized Representative: [redacted] | * Date Signed: 05/13/2025

Tracking Number:GRANT14415069 Funding Opportunity Number:ED-GRANTS-011725-002 Received Date:May 13, 2025 02:34:09 PM EDT

Abstract

The University of North Carolina at Pembroke (UNCP) will implement the **First Indigenous Educational Leadership Development (FIELD) pre-service administrator** project to recruit, retain, and support 18 participants enrolled in the Educational Leadership School Administration program, and is designed to improve the quality of preparation services and leadership development to program participants. Project FIELD will provide financial support for American Indian (AI) students to: (1) attain a Master of School Administration degree (MSA) or an Add-on in School Administration; (2) acquire principal licensure; and (3) complete two years of administration successfully. The purpose of the program is to address the shortage of AI administrators in public school districts that have a significant AI student population and to improve the first two years of administrative experience of newly certified AI administrators. Project FIELD partners include: The Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina (LTNC) and Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Public Schools of Robeson County (PSRC), Halifax County Schools, Hoke County Schools, Scotland County Schools, and Warren County Schools; ImaginED Partners and Two Feathers Consulting. The Project will provide training, cultural enrichment activities, and a comprehensive mentoring and induction support program, increasing the number of highly qualified AI administrators in districts with a high proportion of AI students. The project outlines the rigorous recruitment process and ongoing support provided to participants that will allow them to work in high needs schools, leading to improved educational outcomes for AI students. Collaboration with partnering school districts will ensure that participants will find qualifying jobs within twelve months of completion and meet payback requirements.

(A) NEED FOR PROJECT

Project First Indigenous Educational Leadership Development (FIELD) will provide supportive services to 18 students in The University of North Carolina at Pembroke's (UNCP) Educational Leadership School Administration (ELSA) program. As a Native American-Serving Non-Tribal Institution (NASNTI), UNCP is a historically unique and ethnically diverse institution of higher education in southeastern North Carolina (NC) (Nealy, 2008). In fact, the institution "was founded in 1887 as the State Normal School for Indians in response to a petition from tribal communities in the area to establish an institution to train American Indian teachers" (Rochat, 2015, p. 3) *and has been designated* as "North Carolina's Historically American Indian University" (SL2005-153 HB 371, 2005). Until 1953, UNCP was the only state-supported college for American Indians in the nation. Following the U.S. Supreme Court desegregation ruling (1954), the college opened admission to all students regardless of race.

UNCP currently serves 7,674 students, of which 2,237 are graduate students. Over 29% are first-generation college students, approximately one-third are non-traditional in age, and over 50% come from rural counties in NC. Thirty-four percent of students are African American; 12% are American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN); 2% are Asian/Pacific Islander; 10% are Hispanic/Latino; 6% are Multiracial; and 37% are White (University of North Carolina at Pembroke, 2024a). Further, 52% of students are Pell Grant eligible with 70% of students receiving financial aid, demonstrating the widespread financial need of the institution's student body. A substantial number of students have competing demands for their time, including work (Frantz, 2021; Pedrilli et al., 2014). Higher education institutions that provide a supportive system for students including financial support and mentorship programs experience increased

retention and academic success, particularly among non-traditional college students (Hanover Research, 2018) of which many UNCP students are.

Robeson County, located in southeastern NC and home to UNCP, is an economically depressed county due to a decline in the agricultural economy, the loss of textile and tobacco industries, and the devastating impact of flooding in both 2016 and 2018. Robeson County is comprised of 41.6% American Indians; 23.6% African Americans; 23.1% Whites; and 11.1% Hispanics/Latinos. In 2024, Robeson County's poverty rate was 27.7% compared to the state average of 12.8% and the unemployment rate is 4.7% (North Carolina Department of Commerce, 2024). In 2023, Robeson County's median household income was $40,318 compared to the state median of $68,610 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2024*).* Robeson, Hoke, and Scotland counties receive Low Wealth Supplemental funding and are classified by the NC Department of Commerce (NCDC, 2024) as Tier 1-the highest level of economic need. Consistently high unemployment and poverty rates plague Robeson and surrounding counties and make the pursuit of education a struggle, with only 78.9% of persons age 25 years and older holding a high school diploma and 14.6% holding a bachelor's degree, compared to state averages of 89.7% and 34.7% respectively (U.S. Census Bureau, 2024). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2022), AIs comprised only 1.1% of the total fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions in NC.

To lessen financial barriers and increase enrollment of aspiring American Indian (AI) school leaders, Project FIELD will provide financial support to students who enroll in UNCP's ELSA program. The project's structure will include pre-service mentorship and induction services to ensure academic success, equip students to work in high needs schools, and improve educational outcomes for AI students. Collectively, these supports will help reduce financial

barriers while increasing enrollment, retention, and subsequent employment in the field of education within a region serving a high AI population.

As of the 2022-2023 academic year, the total enrollment of AI students in NC schools was 15,865, of which 12,538 were enrolled in 19 school districts receiving funding through the Title VI Indian Education Act (IEA) of 1972 (North Carolina State Advisory Council on Indian Education (SACIE), 2024). In NC, the program serves approximately 11,300 AI American Indian students in grades K-12, making it one of the largest Title VI programs in the U.S. (Public Schools of Robeson County, n.d.). During the 2023-2024 school year, 7,671 (37.3%) students identified as AI in Robeson County Schools (PSRC), one of the largest enrollments in NC.

AI students perform significantly less than other student groups across the state. According to the SACIE (2024), only 36.2% of AI students in NC were proficient in reading, and just 38.9% were proficient in math on End-of-Grade assessments. Further, only 27.7% of AI students were proficient in Math I, compared to the state average of 48.1%, highlighting a stark gap in achievement. The statewide four-year high school graduation rate for AI students dropped to 80.3%, nearly 10 percentage points below White students (89.9%), and well below the state average of 86.5% (SACIE, 2024). According to SACIE, “The dropout rate for American Indian students in 2022-23 was 2.18 percent, which is higher than that of their White (1.38%) peers” (p. 22). These results reflect the underperformance of AI students across the state of NC.

As reflected in the most recent EOG and EOC testing data across multiple counties with high AI student populations, AI students continue to face significant academic disparities. In Robeson County, home to the Lumbee Tribe, according to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2024a), only 30.8% of AI students achieved grade-level proficiency in reading (Grades 3–8), compared to 50.1% statewide. Math proficiency was 40.3%, while high

school Math I was significantly lower at 18.6%, compared to the state average of 37%. These trends repeat in Hoke County, another Lumbee center, where only 6.3% of Native students passed Math I and 27.9% met reading proficiency standards, and in Scotland County, AI students, primarily Lumbee, demonstrated a slight increase in reading (35.6%) and science (46%), but Math I proficiency remained low (14.9%). However, they exceeded the state average in English II (64.9%), indicating an opportunity to build on language arts strengths. Halifax and Warren Counties, home to many Haliwa-Saponi students, also illustrated academic disparities. In Halifax, 23.2% of AI students were proficient in reading, and 12.5% in math, both far below state averages. In Warren County, reading proficiency for Native students was 36.6%, while math proficiency reached 43.9%, which is closer to the state average but still reflects a gap. The existing achievement gaps highlight the importance of investing in principal pipelines that incorporate culturally responsive leadership and evidence-based practices to address these gaps. Project FIELD will support AI educators in pursuing a Master of School Administration (MSA) degree, aiming to develop aspiring school leaders in Robeson, Hoke, Scotland, Halifax, and Warren Counties who can improve educational outcomes for AI students.

Strong instructional leadership is second only to teaching in its influence on student learning (Glickman et al., 2023). Instructional leaders understand the curriculum and provide the necessary support to build capacity among faculty, leading to a positive learning involvement and improved quality in students' educational experience. Although minority students comprise most of the student population, there continues to be a gap in student-teacher, teacher-administrator diversity (Glickman et al. 2023; Hrabowski & Sanders, 2015), making cultural responsiveness a difficult feat. "Qualitative research further suggests that students of color perceive teachers that share their cultural backgrounds as more accessible and caring, and their

instructional practices as more engaging" (Hrabowski & Sanders, 2015, p. 102). Research indicates a growing need for AI educators who can serve as role models for AI students, help improve schooling experiences and subsequently promote academic achievement. As most UNCP graduates reside in one of the five adjacent counties, Project FIELD will address the recruitment and retention of AI administrators serving in high poverty schools. Most project graduates will seek employment in their home communities in Robeson, Hoke, and Scotland counties. Additionally, the online model of the ELSA program at UNCP also provides an important opportunity to expand outreach efforts to include Halifax and Warren counties, which also serve a significant AI population, primarily from the Haliwa-Saponi Tribe.

Of the 2,478 principals employed across the state of NC during the 2023-24 school year, only 33 (1.3%) were AI (NCDPI, 2024b). Seventeen of the AI principals worked in PSRC. Similarly, only 50 (1.48%) of the 3,358 assistant principals (AP) across the state of NC were AI. Tables 1 and 2 display the number of principals and assistant principals, by ethnicity, in targeted districts with high proportions of AI students, as of 2023-2024.

Table 1. *Principal and Assistant Principal Demographics and AI Student Population*

LEA	American Indian Principal Percentage	American Indian Assistant Principal Percentage	Total American Indian Student Population
Halifax	9.10%	0%	139 (6.7%)
Hoke	12.50%	10%	604 (7%)
Robeson	44.70%	44.7%	7,671 (37.3%)
Scotland	20%	18.2%	826 (15.3%)
Warren	0%	0%	89 (5.5%)

Note: Adapted from NCDPI Statistical Profile http://apps.schools.nc.gov/ords/f?p=145:15:::NO:::

Despite the high proportion of AI students in these districts, there is a significant gap in AI representation in school leadership roles (see Table 1). Statewide, only 1% of principals and fewer than 2% of APs are AI, despite AI students making up a significant percentage of the school-age population in southeastern NC. While 44% of principals in PSRC are AI, surrounding counties like Hoke and Scotland report 0–20% AI leadership, even in schools serving large populations of AI students. Compounding these challenges, rural school districts in UNCP's service region struggle to recruit and retain school administrators due to low salary supplements, limited housing options, high teacher and administrator turnover, limited resources, and large numbers of disadvantaged and low performing students. Turnover has been found to be much higher in schools with a high minority population (Levin & Bradley, 2019).

Schools with a high percentage of AI students have fewer experienced principals and higher turnover rates —conditions linked to lower academic outcomes (Bastian & Fuller, 2023). As noted in Table 2, most principals have less than three years of experience, indicating a need for induction support. From September 2022 to September 2023, the percentage of principals leaving NC public schools was 16.1%, and in 2021-2022, the statewide principal turnover rate was 17.5%, compared to 12.5% and 10.4% the previous two years (Education Policy Initiative at Carolina (EPIC), 2024*)*. Ninety-nine principals in low performing schools left the school but remained in the same LEA; 35 left the LEA but remained in the state; 45 left the state; and 59 principals moved from a low-performing school (NCDPI, 2025).

Table 2. *Principal Experience (2023-24)*

LEA Name	0-3 Years	4-10 Years	10+ Years
Halifax	72.7%	9.1%	18.2%
Hoke	56.3%	31.3%	12.5%
Robeson	52.6%	18.4%	28.9%

Scotland	70.0%	30.0%	0.0%
Warren	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%
NC State Average	45.2%	36.0%	18.7%

Note: Adapted from NCDPI, 2025

More than 40 principal and AP vacancies are anticipated in the next two to three years within UNCP's service region. As noted in Table 2, 52.6% of principals in PSRC have less than three years' experience with similar conditions in the neighboring counties of Hoke (56.3%) and Scotland (70%). Higher poverty school districts have fewer experienced teachers and administrators, receive less resources and support, and have higher attrition rates (Oakes et al., 2021). To address high turnover rates and lack of experience among administrators, Project FIELD will provide pre-service training focused on transformational leadership practices and also provide individual assistance and induction support to ensure degree completion and successful first year experience as school administrators. The inclusion of tribal and LEA partners will help to ensure this project reflects community needs and leverages established relationships to promote sustainability and impact.

(B) QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN

(1) Project FIELD is applying under the **Absolute Priority 2 - Preservice Administrator Training** and **Competitive Preference Priority 2** - Consortium Applicants: A consortium of eligible entities whose lead is non-tribal that (a) meets the requirements of 34 CFR Sections 75.127 through 75.129 and includes an Indian tribe (i.e., the Lumbee Tribe of NC and the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe), Indian organization, or Indian IHE and (b) is not eligible to receive a preference under **Competitive Preference Priority 1**. Project FIELD will recruit and retain AI students majoring in Educational Leadership - School Administration (ELSA) with the

intent of becoming administrators in their communities. The following goals outline the priorities that will guide the design, implementation, and evaluation of the proposed project.

GOAL 1: Increase the number of highly qualified AI administrators in counties with a high AI student population (Robeson, Hoke, Scotland, Halifax, and Warren counties) through enrollment in Project FIELD, graduation from the Master of School Administration program or completion of the School Administration Certificate Licensure program, and completion of state (NC) licensure requirements.

Objective 1. Project FIELD will recruit, train, and graduate 18 AI pre-service administrators completing all requirements for North Carolina Principal Licensure no later than May 2029.

Outcomes: The initial group of 9 participants will be enrolled by January 2026, with 9 additional participants enrolled by January 2027, for a total enrollment of 18 students. The first cohort will complete training and licensure requirements by June 2027, with the final cohort completing no later than June 2029.

Activities: Implement awareness and recruitment activities to identify and enroll eligible students through a strategic collaborative approach with partnering districts; conduct individual and group advisement sessions; review academic progress and monitor completion of degree and/or licensure requirements; provide AI student-related professional development sessions; conduct individual and group advisement sessions; conduct payback sessions; provide financial assistance and academic support.

Associated Measures: Enrollment data; final grades; feedback from advisement/mentor and professional development sessions; development of MSA licensure portfolio; MSA graduate rates and principal licensure data.

GOAL 2: Provide mentoring support for pre-service administrators engaged in the Transformative Leadership Academy (TLA) and provide job placement assistance in collaboration with partnering districts to ensure high-quality school leadership.

***Objective 2*:** Project FIELD will assign each participant a mentor during pre-service training to engage with professional development workshops and the summer TLA utilizing a framework for designing Communities of Practice (CoP) and continuous improvement principles.

Outcomes: Project FIELD participants will complete monthly workshops and the summer TLA developing a CoP with each cohort, strengthening skills in culturally responsive systems of learning and innovative leadership practices to support employment and service payback.

Activities: Professional development sessions utilizing a Transformative School Leader's (TSL) framework for capacity-building; provide professional development services on CoP providing targeted capacity-building support; culturally responsive leadership and community engagement; identification of problems of practice and co-creation of an authentic learning experience through action research; workshops to assist participants with job placement; support participants' growth opportunities through conferences and membership in professional organizations.

***Associated Measures*:** Workshop attendance, evaluations, and virtual coaching logs; student response data; mixed-methods data collection from participants and from virtual coaching and mentoring sessions for continuous improvement; development and implementation of action research projects; record of mentoring sessions and contacts with mentors; website activity and feedback from partnering school districts; conference attendance and feedback; percentage of participants involved in a professional organizations.

GOAL 3: Improve the first two years of administrative experience of newly licensed AI administrators through a comprehensive mentoring and induction plan.

***Objective 3.1*:** Project FIELD participants will support participants in obtaining employment in a qualifying district within 12 months of completing preservice training.

Outcome: Increase in the number of highly qualified AI administrators in partnering districts.

***Activities*:** Develop and administer a comprehensive survey targeting school districts and their leadership team to identify the qualities, skills, and characteristics that districts prioritize in effective school leaders; school district partnerships to support hiring qualified participants; professional development sessions utilizing TLS and mentoring activities utilizing the CoP framework; provide professional development services and job placement assistance; create individual Educational Leadership Personal Development Plans (ELPDP) to outline goals and progress; development of induction plans.

***Associated Measures*:** Number of induction plans developed; frequency of PD/PC meetings during the first two years as an administrator; number and frequency of administrator action plans developed; survey responses from participants; participant discussion data through a virtual coaching and mentoring platform; completion of 360 Evaluation utilizing the NC Standards for School Executives; development of ELPDP; placement rates of participants and employer feedback; assess participant knowledge of leadership specific to district/LEA high priority needs and AI students; payback system participant records.

Objective 3.2 Project FIELD will provide each participant with an induction mentor during the first two years as an administrator to build leadership capacity.

***Outcome*:** Improved first years' experience and retention of newly licensed AI administrators and increased retention; improved outcomes of AI students.

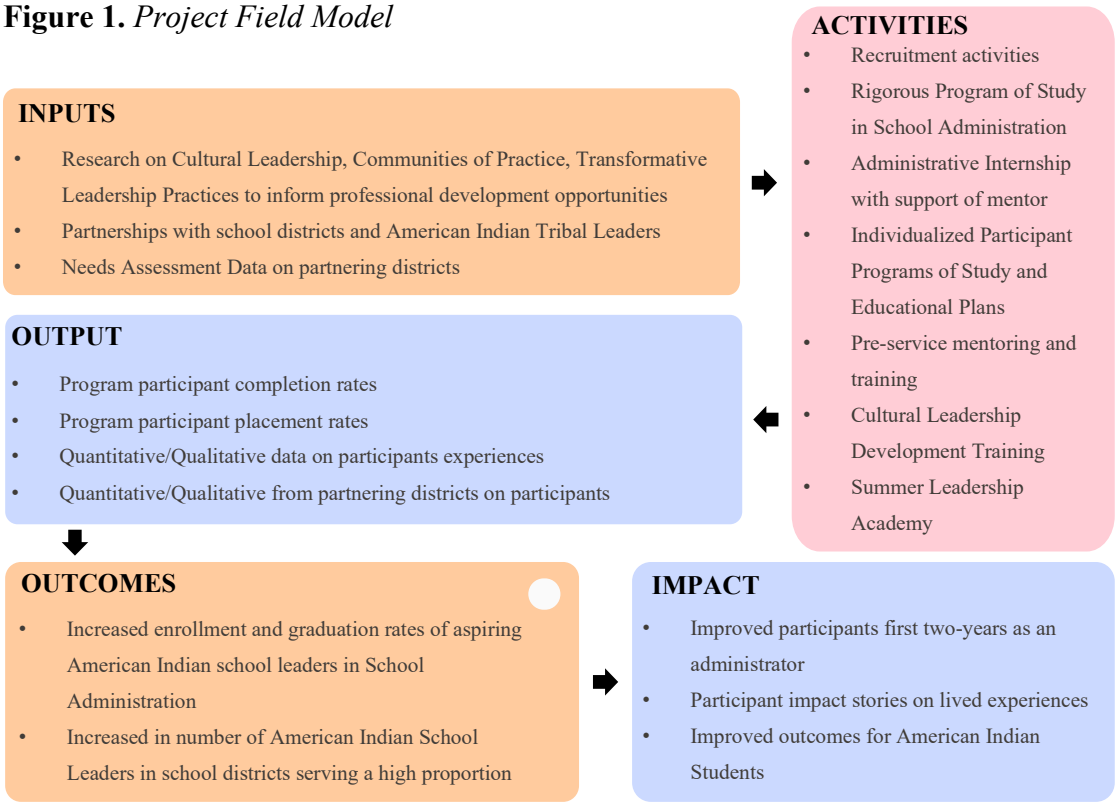
***Activities*:** Familiarize novice administrators with policies, procedures, support services, and resources for school success through workshops and induction activities aligned with school

district and AI student needs through a comprehensive mentoring program; virtual and on-site mentoring/coaching sessions; professional development workshops (CoP); participation in conferences and membership in organizations.

***Associated Measures*:** Number of induction plans developed; records of participant contacts with mentors, PD/ PC; induction service-based satisfaction surveys with participants; placement rates of participants; review of participants' ELPDP; data collected on the impact of induction program on administrator satisfaction and retention rates; mixed-methods research plan to collect data from participants and partnering districts for continuous improvement on induction services; collect feedback from employers regarding administrative performance of project participants; records of participant contacts with mentors, PD/ PC; application of practices in leadership roles; conference attendance and feedback; percentage involved in a professional organization.

Project FIELD has four performance measures: (1) 18 AI School Administration students will be enrolled in Project FIELD; (2) 18 AI School Administration students will receive financial and academic support for their successful matriculation toward earning a Master's Degree in School Administration or completion of the School Administration Certificate Licensure program; (3) 18 AI School Administration students will receive financial and academic support for their successful completion of NC principal licensure; and (4) 18 first-year AI administrators will be employed, within twelve months of program completion, in school districts that have a significant population of AI students. Figure 1 depicts the project design.

Figure 1. *Project Field Model*



(2) The PD will implement awareness and recruitment activities to identify and enroll eligible students. Recruitment activities include articles in local newspapers and *UNCP Campus News* and social media platforms. Announcements will be posted on bulletin boards, displayed electronically across the UNCP campus, and distributed to all members of the Council on Educator Preparation Programs (CEPP), and School of Education (SOE) faculty. The PD will also work collaboratively with UNCP's Graduate School recruitment specialist and will make presentations during fall 2025 semester meetings of the CEPP, the SOE, the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) that house licensure programs, and the Graduate School. During October 2025, presentations will be made to partnering district leadership teams and/or Board of Education meetings. Presentations will also be made during a tribal council meeting and at regional community colleges. Announcements will be sent to the campus-wide student listserv and placed

on the SOE website and social media platforms. Former AI graduates of UNCP's SOE who are serving as teachers in partnering districts will also be contacted.

A letter will be sent to participating districts requesting recommendations for AI teacher leaders eligible to enroll in the ELSA program. Interested applicants will be invited to attend one of three in-person and virtual information sessions. Participants must satisfy the UNCP graduate admissions process for the ELSA program in addition to submitting recommendation letters from a partnering district superintendent and a principal supervisor, as well as a personal interview with the PD to learn about the applicant's leadership experience and desire to serve as an administrator. Once potential program participants have been identified, the PD/PC will contact eligible applicants requesting documentation of AI identity. Additionally, in collaboration with the Graduate Office, we will confer with the Assistant Director for Financial Aid to ascertain financial eligibility, and, as applicable, employment and dependent care information.

Participants must express a strong desire and commitment to becoming and remain an administrator in a school with significant AI student enrollment. Applicants must attend an in-depth orientation session conducted by the PD/PC to complete enrollment forms and receive program information packets. Sessions will also be held to discuss the payback agreement and service requirements. At the end of each payback meeting, students will be required to review the agreement they signed upon entry into the project acknowledging that their continued participation is tied to satisfactory academic progress and that they understand the payback responsibilities following training or dropping out of the program. This rigorous recruitment process, networking opportunities, preservice training and support to develop highly qualified leaders lessen the chance of participants dropping out or being dismissed from the program and ensures the success of participants obtaining employment within 12 months after graduation.

Additionally, the program's combination of online and in-person field experiences provides flexibility in learning for non-traditional students.

(3) Project FIELD will provide high quality mentoring and internship experiences for participants. In addition to the support of the ELSA Faculty, PD, and PC, participants will be assigned an active principal/administrator mentor familiar with the expectations of the partnering districts. This process will allow participants to learn from an experienced administrator about successful instructional leadership strategies to support capacity building. Participants will learn about the school culture and learning environment in collaboration with their mentor, through data analysis sessions and professional development opportunities, engagement with the TLA, and through implementation of an Action Research Project aligned with a school-based need. Participants will learn how to engage students, enhance student learning through culturally responsive leadership, and create a positive school climate and working conditions for teachers, which will lead to increased retention. In addition to the summer TLA, virtual coaching sessions will be held to build skills using the framework and research proven processes for continuous improvement and CoP. During the internship, participants, guided by their host supervisor, mentor, and UNCP ELSA faculty, will implement action research projects. Virtual support will be designed for growth and reflection and to help participants grow their practice in leading innovations and continuous improvement, as well as to feel prepared for the transition to the principalship/assistant principalship/administrative role.

Following completion of a master's degree in School Administration or the School Administration certificate and NC state licensure, the PD/PC will verify that program graduates are pursuing employment in a school district that has a significant population of AI students. Once employed, the PD/PC will verify that the graduates are working in an administrative

capacity and are meeting state requirements for administrators. During regularly scheduled on-site school visits, the PD/PC will verify that program graduates are attending all required school and district level meetings. The PD/PC will also verify that each graduate has been assigned a mentor as part of induction services in collaboration with the Lumbee Tribe and Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, and that the mentor is providing consistent support and induction services. Once the new administrative assignment has begun, the PD/PC will schedule a joint conference with the program graduate, induction mentor, and other school personnel as necessary, to discuss the progression of the graduate's first two years as an administrator. Novice administrators will receive ongoing support and professional development during the two-year induction period, meeting with their cohort, mentor, PC, and PD. The PD/PC will also verify that graduates have submitted required employment information to the USDOE Payback System.

Project FIELD's PD/PC will foster partnerships and relationships with appropriate entities (e.g., organizations providing educational services to AI students, LEAs, Tribal Organizations) and develop programs that meet their employment needs through networking, professional conferences and regional job fairs, and relevant postings of employment-related information on the CEPP Blog, via e-mail, etc.

(C) QUALITY OF PROJECT SERVICES

(1) UNCP's MSA Program is designed for education professionals who seek exceptional opportunities for leadership development, professional networking, and learning the knowledge base and latest advancements in education – in a format designed to meet the challenging professional and personal schedules of educators. The program's online format and in-school internship experience provides not only the flexibility of technology-assisted learning, but also an enriching and invaluable educational environment for adult learners. Students engage in a

rigorous program of study, field experience, and are mentored by experienced educators who build real world experience and life-long professional relationships. The MSA program is designed to prepare administrative leaders for executive leadership in various settings, including elementary and secondary schools and district offices.

The conceptual framework for Project FIELD is built around five domains, which include: Strategic Leadership, Instructional Leadership, Organizational Leadership, Political Leadership, and Managerial Leadership. Pre-service training will expand on this conceptual framework by providing professional development services in Culturally Responsive Leadership to ensure program participants have equitable access to effective teachers, learning opportunities, academic and social support, and other resources necessary for success. Participants will work hands-on throughout the program, building on real world experiences. Collaborating with pre-service mentors will give aspiring leaders the opportunity to develop lasting relationships with exceptional educational leaders and extend classroom theory to applied experiences as an administrator. The program of study consists of 36 semester hours for the MSA and 24 for the School Administration Certificate leading to NC principal licensure. The program is designed as an accelerated model and is designed for professionals in education who seek exceptional opportunities for leadership development, professional networking, and learning the knowledge base and latest advancements in education. Courses are designed as terms, allowing students to complete up to 12 credit hours per semester in addition to a year-long internship experience under the direct supervision of an experienced school principal. Project FIELD's PD/PC will assist participants in developing a plan of study to meet their individual needs. The MSA program has over 90% completion rate, further indicating participants will be successful in completing graduation and licensure requirements. A Program of Study is provided below.

Master of School Administration Program of Study

Start Date: Spring Semester 2026		Fall Semester 2026	
Term	**Course Name**	**Term**	**Course Name**
I	EDN5660: Applied Educational Research	**V**	EDNL5910: Educational Leadership-Internship Part I
	EDNL5700: Introduction to Educational Leadership	**VI**	EDNL5920: Educational Leadership-Internship Part II
II	EDNL5800: Supervision & Instructional Leadership*		EDNL5880: Leading School Improvement & Organizational Change*
	EDNL5850: Curriculum Leadership*		
Summer Terms 2026			**Spring Semester 2027**
Term	**Course Name**	**Term**	**Course Name**
III	EDNL5860: Legal Aspects of Educational Leadership*	**VII**	EDNL5930: Educational Leadership-Internship Part III
IV	EDNL5730: School Based Management*	**VIII**	EDNL5940: Educational Leadership-Internship Part IV
	EDNL 5030: Engaging our Families, Schools, and Communities *		

To create a pool of highly qualified AI school leaders, pre-service training during the Educational Leadership Internship and Seminar, mentoring, and induction services will provide rigorous activities that are relevant to working in highly populated AI schools. Research suggests the importance of coordinating pre-service programs and training with in-service induction and support (California County Superintendents Educational Services Association CCSESA, 2016; Wallace Foundation, 2016). Project FIELD will provide a high-quality internship and mentoring experience to allow aspiring administrators to be exposed to real-world problems before becoming an administrator (Gray et al., 2007). This builds leadership capacity to serve as the instructional leader of a school that focuses on improving teaching and learning and building capacity in others. The TLA provided through project partner, ImaginED, will allow participants

to dive deeper and employ a capacity-building framework that includes utilizing CoP as a mechanism for providing targeted capacity-building support. Through our partnership with ImaginED, the project will have team members who have created and employed a unique framework for implementing CoPs effectively. A CoP is defined by Wenger-Trayner (2015) as "groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (para 4). The goal is to build deeper networks of educational personnel to share knowledge and resources to facilitate problem solving characterized by innovative solutions, planning implementation, cultivating collaborative cultures, and deepening learning through pedagogical partnerships.

Leveraging adult learning principles, the project's approach to CoPs will include providing thoughtful framing, skilled facilitation, and a safe and inclusive, information-rich environment designed to foster collective learning, knowledge exchange, and problem-solving. Collective participation over time to improve practice is consistent with the social aspects of adult learning (Yoon et al., 2007). In these CoPs, participants will share successes, seek advice, explore solutions to common challenges, interact with experts, expand their knowledge, and gain greater understanding through meaningful and productive connections.

The primary domain of CoPs is a foundational understanding of both implementation research and practice as it pertains to creating effective leaders. While the specific practices or strategies within a CoP are decided with participants based on needs, scope, and sequence of compelling topics, based on knowledge of needs in the field, sessions include principles and strategies for instructional leadership, crucial conversations, exemplifying executive presence, skill vs. will, exceptional children best practices, managerial leadership, effective PLCs, and the MTSS framework. The CoP framework will be presented to FIELD participants within the first

few months of starting their coursework. Initial sessions will focus on relationship building within the cohorts as well as with their newly assigned mentors. Once relationships are established and the framework and purpose of a CoP has been taught, participants will feel the power of an effective CoP. Monthly CoP sessions will highlight a professional development topic to be determined by participant needs as well as in alignment with UNCP coursework. Each CoP session will end with a "Practice Clinic" that is aligned to the topic of the session. Practice Clinics include facilitators modeling instructional or facilitation strategies, followed by participant practice sessions, ensuring hands-on application and skill development.

(2) According to Backor and Gordon (2015), the development of knowledge of culture must begin with understanding one's own culture. AI cultures are unique and should be appreciated and acknowledged in all aspects of schooling. Students from lower-socioeconomic and minority groups are often viewed as not caring about education when, in fact, many of them are taught that their culture has no value and are acting out as a coping strategy (as cited by Glickman, et al., 2023). Therefore, it is critical for school leaders who serve AI students to lead through a cultural lens. Project FIELD will support the development of cultural knowledge and understanding of AI students' needs through its work with Two Feathers Consulting, led by Dr. Susan Faircloth, an expert in culturally responsive leadership and education. According to Morgan (2009), it is critically important for AI students to attend schools where teachers and leaders understand and appreciate their Indigenous language and culture. Jacobs and Reyhner (2002) also assert Al students should be taught by those "who [can] prepare them to move comfortably among different cultures while valuing the unique cultural assumptions of their home, community, and heritage" (p. 5). While the ELSA program at UNCP affords students the opportunity to learn various aspects of school leadership, Project FIELD will provide critical

supplemental cultural leadership training that will infuse AI culture into the work of future administrators to ensure the success of AI students. The experience in the ELSA classroom coupled with Project FIELD's preservice and induction services will prepare participants to successfully navigate administrative challenges.

(3) As noted in the ***Need for Project,*** in 2023, the statewide principal turnover rate in NC was 16.1% (Education Policy Initiative at Carolina, EPIC, 2024*),* with 45% of principals having less than three years of experience. The PD, PC and mentors will provide training sessions for participants to assist with the development of CVs, applications, interviewing skills, and "how to" techniques, in addition to networking opportunities at job fairs. We are fortunate to have the support of Hoke, Robeson, Scotland, Halifax, and Warren Counties to offer our participants an administrative position upon completion of Project FIELD. Based on rigorous preservice training and induction services, participants will be sought out to fill vacancies in schools with a high AI enrollment. This support helps to ensure participants will meet their service obligations by obtaining employment within 12 months of completing training.

In designing the Transformative Leadership Academy (TLA), Project FIELD will develop and administer a comprehensive survey to partnering school districts and their leadership teams. This survey will identify the qualities, skills, and characteristics that districts prioritize in effective school leaders. In addition to gathering valuable data, this process will actively engage districts, fostering their commitment and support for the program and participants. By aligning the program with the needs of future employers, this collaboration ensures that program participants are well-prepared to meet the leadership expectations of their communities. The TLA Summer Institute is structured around the North Carolina Standards for School Executives and Performance Measures to provide participants with targeted, high-impact

leadership development necessary to be successful upon the first day as a school administrator. During the institute, participants will be actively engaged in building plans and support structures for a case study school with a high population of AI students. Activities will be designed to cultivate expertise in key leadership domains while preparing participants to meet state standards and expectations. An outline of the proposed activities is provided below:

- Day 1 Strategic & Micro Political Leadership: Introduce participants to a case study school to contextualize strategic decision-making. Literacy data dive, leveraging tools such as NC Star School Improvement System, and Educator Value Added System-academic student performance measures to drive academic progress. Practical insights on literacy and communication strategies aligned with state standards for school improvement.
- Day 2 Instructional Leadership: Explore principles of effective Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), emphasizing their role in fostering collaboration and accountability. Walkthroughs and feedback methodologies to enhance teaching practices and ensure alignment with state instructional leadership expectations.
- Day 3 Instructional Leadership: Build on instructional strategies by examining Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Introduce the Principal Playbook, and resources tailored to state standards.
- Day 4 Human Resource & Managerial Leadership: Essential competencies for managing teams and organizational resources effectively. Topics include navigating crucial conversations, understanding the balance of Will vs. Skill, mastering delegation techniques, creating master schedules, and managing school budgets. These activities align with state standards for managerial excellence in school leadership.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BUDGET INFORMATION
NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS

OMB Number: 1894-0008
Expiration Date: 08/31/2026

Name of Institution/Organization

University of North Carolina at Pembroke

Applicants requesting funding for only one year should complete the column under "Project Year 1." Applicants requesting funding for multi-year grants should complete all applicable columns. Please read all instructions before completing form.

SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FUNDS

Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Project Year 5 (e)	Project Year 6 (f)	Project Year 7 (g)	Total (h)
1. Personnel	39,701.00	47,759.00	49,192.00	50,667.00	52,187.00			239,506.00
2. Fringe Benefits	21,792.00	27,366.00	27,877.00	28,404.00	28,946.00			134,385.00
3. Travel	11,616.00	26,635.00	26,635.00	7,437.00	1,422.00			73,745.00
4. Equipment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00			0.00
5. Supplies	8,743.00	6,500.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00			21,243.00
6. Contractual	87,248.00	95,348.00	59,778.00	20,000.00	20,000.00			282,374.00
7. Construction	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00			0.00
8. Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00			0.00
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	169,100.00	203,608.00	165,482.00	108,508.00	104,555.00			751,253.00
10. Indirect Costs*	13,528.00	16,289.00	13,239.00	8,681.00	8,364.00			60,101.00
11. Training Stipends	123,525.00	229,670.00	146,645.00	3,600.00	3,600.00			507,040.00
12. Total Costs (lines 9-11)	306,153.00	449,567.00	325,366.00	120,789.00	116,519.00			1,318,394.00

Indirect Cost Information** ***(To Be Completed by Your Business Office): If you are requesting reimbursement for indirect costs on line 10, please answer the following questions:

(1) Do you have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal government? ☒ Yes ☐ No

(2) If yes, please provide the following information:

Period Covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: From: 07/01/2021 To: 06/30/2025 (mm/dd/yyyy)

Approving Federal agency: ☐ ED ☒ Other (please specify): US Department of Health and Human Services

The Indirect Cost Rate is 65.00 %.

(3) If this is your first Federal grant, and you do not have an approved indirect cost rate agreement, are not a State, Local government or Indian Tribe, and are not funded under a training rate program or a restricted rate program, do you want to use the de minimis rate of 10% of MTDC? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, you must comply with the requirements of 2 CFR § 200.414(f).

(4) If you do not have an approved indirect cost rate agreement, do you want to use the temporary rate of 10% of budgeted salaries and wages?

☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, you must submit a proposed indirect cost rate agreement within 90 days after the date your grant is awarded, as required by 34 CFR § 75.560.

(5) For Restricted Rate Programs (check one) -- Are you using a restricted indirect cost rate that:

☐ Is included in your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement? Or, ☐ Complies with 34 CFR 76.564(c)(2)? The Restricted Indirect Cost Rate is ____ %.

(6) For Training Rate Programs (check one) -- Are you using a rate that:

☒ Is based on the training rate of 8 percent of MTDC (See EDGAR § 75.562(c)(4))? Or, ☐ Is included in your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, because it is lower than the training rate of 8 percent of MTDC (See EDGAR § 75.562(c)(4))?