

## Abstract

**Project Title:** Empowering Teacher Learning (ETL) in Western NC, **Early Phase**

**Priorities:** The proposal meets Absolute Priority 1 (demonstrates a rationale), Absolute Priority 3 (teacher-directed professional learning), and Competitive Preference Priority 2 (partnership with a state educational agency).

**Total number of schools served by the project:** 20

**Total number of teachers served by the project:** 500

**Total number of students served by the project:** 9,760

**Grade levels served by the project:** grades 6-8

**Definition of high-need students:** students attending schools with >50% students receiving free and reduced-price lunch (economically disadvantaged) and a rural locale code of 41, 42, or 43.

**Description:** Appalachian State University, in partnership with 20 middle schools in western North Carolina and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), the designated state educational agency, proposes a stipend-based teacher-directed professional learning system to replace 100% of the annual professional development required to achieve state licensure renewal. Building upon an NCDPI micro-credentialing work group implemented in 2016, ETL will create a transformative environment for teacher professional learning through a comprehensive framework that replaces traditional professional development seat time with competency-based micro-credentialing. ETL improves upon the quality of traditional PD in that it is differentiated to each teachers' classroom needs, requires teachers to demonstrate competency through knowledge gained, and ensures implementation of practices learned through micro-credentials.

**Project Outcomes:** The ETL project has short-, mid-, and long term outcomes with research questions focused on: 1) implementation fidelity of the intervention; 2) teachers' instructional practices; 3) teachers' self-efficacy ; 4) students' social-emotional learning; and 5) students' academic achievement. The ETL project includes three progressive studies to monitor implementation, formative evaluation, and summative impact. The research design is a cluster **Randomized Control Trial** that aims to meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations. ETL will result in a replicable and scalable model to improve teacher professional learning practices. **Partner Organizations:** National Council for Community & Education Partnerships (external evaluator), Digital Promise, Carolina Demography, NCDPI, and the ETL Advisory Board (see management plan for full list of organizational affiliations).