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SECTION A: SIGNIFICANCE

The Learning While Leading (LWL) project addresses *Absolute Priority #1* (demonstrates a rationale) and *#2* (field-initiated innovation), as well as *Competitive Preference Priority #2* (addressing the impact of COVID-19) and *#3* (promoting equity and access).

(1) Promising New Strategies That Build On Existing Strategies

LWL builds upon lessons learned from previous work on a successful US Department of Education (ED)-funded School Leadership Program grant – Illinois Partnerships Advancing Rigorous Training (IL-PART). LWL represents an improved model that is an exceptional approach for increasing the number of highly effective principals who positively impact student achievement. The project design is informed by an evidence-based intervention *that has demonstrated a statistically significant positive impact on student math and reading scores* in a quasi-experimental study conducted by RAND that met What Works Clearinghouse’s (WWC) *Moderate Evidence Standards*.¹ While the RAND study involved a national sample of large districts, LWL proposes to test the intervention in a mixed sample that includes a majority of rural schools along with high need/hard to staff schools in large districts. The project will address the challenge of filling leadership vacancies in hard-to-staff schools with highly effective leaders. LWL will serve approximately *25,000 students, of which >51% will be located in rural areas that are disproportionately underserved by these types of innovative projects*. The remainder of participants will come from high-need schools in medium or large districts.

Quality school leadership is a key component of any reform effort directed at improving student achievement as research has proven that school performance is positively linked to the quality of the school’s leadership.² While it has been widely accepted that instructional quality is the single

¹ Gates, Hamilton, Martorell, Burkhauser, Heaton, Pierson, Baird, Vuollo, Li, Lavery, Harvey, Gu, 2014

² Leithwood, et al. 2004; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2010; Seashore Louis, et al. 2010; Tshannen-Moran, 2004

most important school-based factor leading to student achievement,³ scaling high-quality instruction schoolwide does not happen without a highly-effective principal.⁴ Research concluded that principals have an important impact on student learning - independent of all other factors affecting achievement.⁵ *Principals' influence accounts for about one-quarter of school-level variation in student achievement*,⁶ and the principal's impact is greatest in schools with the greatest needs.⁷ Principals' knowledge, skills, and actions can have a profound impact on: 1) recruitment, development, and retention of effective teachers; 2) equitable resource allocation; 3) teacher working conditions; 4) school climate and culture; and 5) the continuous improvement process.⁸ However, none of this happens by accident.⁹

Evidence-Based Professional Development to Support Educators in Underserved Schools

The 2014 qualifying study by RAND formed the foundation for LWL, which is designed to increase the effectiveness of school leaders in rural and/or high-need schools through an intervention that includes: 1) selective recruitment; 2) training on crucial leadership actions (e.g. establishing effective teacher teams, developing a culture of inquiry, creating conditions for schoolwide instructional improvement, distributed leadership, etc.); 3) job-embedded, one-on-one coaching supports; 4) support for completion of action research; and 5) placement, induction, and on-going, job-embedded supports as a new principal. See ***Appendix J*** for how LWL project mirrors evidence-based model, which differs substantially from traditional professional development.

³ Darling-Hammond, 2000

⁴ Bryke, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000; Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003; Witziers, Bosker, Kruger, 2003

⁵ Fuller & Hollingsworth, 2014

⁶ Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Waters, Marzano & McNulty 2003

⁷ Leithwood, et al. 2004; Hallinger & Heck 1998

⁸ Clifford, Behrstock-Sherratt & Fettes, 2012; Darling-Hammond, et al., 2007; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000; Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano, et al., 2005; Murphy, J., 2006; Pounder, Ogawa, Adams, 1995

⁹ Bryke, et al., 2010, Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000; Leithwood, et al. 2004; Waters, et al. 2003; Witziers, et al. 2003

Building On the Existing ROE Structures for Successful Implementation – Due to the scope and reach of ROEs involved in project, LWL has great potential to be implemented with fidelity and be sustained and scaled beyond the grant. Rather than exacerbate the fragmentation and redundancy that currently exists with professional development provided to school leaders, LWL will build upon existing regional structures to create a comprehensive statewide system of support. Planning with the end in mind, LWL was intentionally designed to: 1) align with ROE mission to support districts/ schools in their region; and 2) create a statewide system to establish a robust pipeline of school leaders. ROEs are legislatively created LEAs that supervise and support all districts in their regional boundary area. Their responsibilities, outlined in state statute and operationalized through administrative rules,¹⁰ are directly aligned to goals of LWL. The six ROEs involved in LWL were strategically selected as each serve as a *Leadership Hub* for their Educational Service Area. Collectively, the six ROE that form the consortium involved in LWL can provide supports to every district in the state. (See ***Appendix F*** for map of participating ROEs and service areas).

Competitive Priority #2: LWL will address the impact of COVID-19 on underserved students and educators by providing participating principals with research-based training and on-site support for facilitating collaboration within teacher teams focused on fully understanding student learning gaps and developing responsive strategies that improve instruction and accelerate learning. LWL will integrate this work in three ways: 1) providing training to all LWL aspiring principals with our *Unfinished Teaching and Learning: Gap Identification* module and resources; 2) providing training and support for participants to conduct *Cycles of Inquiry*; and 3) supporting completion of an action project that LWL participants conduct with a teacher team, applying COI process to address an identified learning gap in ELA or Math as a result of COVID-19. (See ***Appendix K*** for details.)

¹⁰ IL Public Act 86-98 and 105 ILCS 5

Competitive Priority #3: LWL participants will complete the research-based Leadership for Equity (LFE) Micro-Credential (MC) program during their first year as new principal. The LFE MC program was developed in a partnership with CSEP, DuPage ROE, Tennessee Department of Education, and BloomBoard. The LFE MC is an advanced credential program that requires participants to complete five micro-credentials in total, that include completing tasks such as conducting an equity audit and developing a school-wide improvement plan focused on equity and adequacy in student access to educational resources. (See *Appendix L* for more details.)

(2) Mechanisms to Broadly Disseminate and Inform Replication

Results from LWL have *great potential to be disseminated, replicated, and scaled* through the application of two key strategies: 1) aligning to state policy initiatives; and 2) capitalizing on our partners' mechanisms for disseminating lessons-learned, best-practices, and results.

State Policy Alignment and Influence of LWL – In an effort to scale, project staff and partners will work with Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and education stakeholders to improve existing state-funded leadership programs and policies and inform new ones. LWL supports align with statewide priorities identified in ISBE's *Strategic Action Plan* under *Goal 1: Strategy 1.3: "Increase supports for schools identified with the greatest need through ISBE's partnerships with the ROEs"* and *Goal 3: Strategy 3.1.4 "Retain educators by providing coaching and mentoring, teacher leadership opportunities, principal preparation support, and access to high-quality professional development."*¹¹ LWL also aligns with the strategic plan of new Department of District and School Leadership (DDSL) at ISBE to support diverse and rural aspiring leaders and existing leadership. The LWL project will: 1) leverage a statewide consortium of ROEs located in each of the state's six service areas that will support DDSL; and 2) connect Performance Standards for Principal Coaching (developed through our previous work – see *Appendix M*) with ISBE's efforts to secure annual appropriations for state's new

¹¹ ISBE, 2021

principal mentoring and induction program. LWL will leverage strong relationships with Governor's P-20 Council, which develops state policy and practice recommendations. Expectations of partnerships are outlined in Letters of Support from ISBE's Director of DDSL, Executive Director of IEA, Director of Statewide Regional Offices of Education, Director of Statewide Rural School Association, and Director of Advance Illinois. The longstanding relationships ROEs and CSEP have with policymakers and leaders in state government, professional associations, and teachers' unions, speaks to the project's ability to engage stakeholders in collaborative efforts to disseminate our work to improve state and local policies and secure public funding to sustain, replicate, and scale LWL.

A common barrier to successful replication is the inability to articulate the key elements required for success.¹² Our partners at CSEP will conduct a qualitative research study that will *identify and richly describe the invariable elements that define the project*, and the invariable elements that allow for customization. That work will provide a nuanced understanding of how contextual factors like location, size, etc. impact implementation. The quantitative study by WestEd will provide evidence of impact from successful implementation and provide further insight in terms of whether impact varied among different types or sizes of schools. That information will be useful to those wishing to replicate LWL.

LWL Dissemination Plan - In order to reach researchers, practitioners, and policy makers, LWL staff will present project design and finding at a variety of forums including *state conferences* (e.g. IL Supts. Assoc, IL Education Assoc, IL Human Resource Dir. Conference, State ESSA Conference, etc.), and *national conferences* (e.g. National Rural Ed Assoc, AERA, NASSP, NAESP, Learning Forward, etc.). LWL will capitalize on partner networks, including Governor's P-20 Council, monthly superintendent meetings held regionally, and distribution networks from AIRSS, IEA, and other key partners. *Research briefs and articles* will inform program improvements or new policy formation and dissemination will target rural, suburban, and urban outlets. We will capitalize on WestEd, CSEP, ROE and

¹² RPS, 1994; Uvin & Miller, 1996

other project partner’s *social media outlets* for more frequent news stories about project implementation to promote practices and impact on school leaders/schools. Working with LWL partners, LWL will reach all corners of the state, as well as a national audience. To support replication and scaling, LWL will *create professional designed project materials* and work with a communications consultant to develop targeted dissemination pieces for practitioners and policymakers. We will also build *a robust public facing section of the LWL website* to establish a strong web presence with ample resources.

SECTION B: PROJECT DESIGN

(1) Conceptual Framework and Alignment with Activities

LWL exceeds the evidence requirement (Demonstrates a Rationale) for this competition, by grounding the proposed project in research conducted by RAND (2014) that was *reviewed by a WWC research panel that determined it demonstrated moderate evidence* (Tier 2) of effectiveness in terms of increased math and reading scores for students in the treatment group vs. the control group.¹³ At the lower grade levels, achievement gains were found to be up to 1.3 percentile points higher in both math and reading. At the high school level, students gained up to 3 percentile points more in reading. The intervention involved high-quality professional development for school leaders from the aspiring through the novice principal phase. It combined training with on-going, job-embedded coaching and supports for application activities that provided participants with authentic opportunities to lead teachers in instructional improvement efforts. (See *Appendix N* – Evidence Form describing the research findings and population overlap.)

LWL was designed around the same principles that led to significant learning gains documented in the RAND study and from lessons learned on a previous project (IL-PART).¹⁴ The timing of this proposal could not be better as districts across the nation are anticipating a shortage of principal

¹³ Gates, Hamilton, Martorell, Burkhauser, Heaton, Pierson, Baird, Vuollo, Li, Lavery, Harvey, Gu, 2014

¹⁴ Clifford, et al. 2019

candidates for vacancies rooted in the changing nature of the job,¹⁵ aging workforce,¹⁶ and stress-related impact of the pandemic.¹⁷ Professional demands on principals are swelling as their role shifts from manager to instructional leader.¹⁸ Those challenges exacerbate the struggle rural high-need schools face recruiting and retaining quality principal candidates.¹⁹

Because research has demonstrated the impact principals can have as “powerful multipliers of effective practice,”²⁰ policy makers and district leaders have begun relying more heavily on training, coaching, or induction supports to ensure new principals are capable of leading schools. Each of those strategies independently have demonstrated varying degrees of success.²¹ LWL is a research-based approach that provides support across the development continuum in a more cohesive manner. It aims to support aspiring principals through intensive training, coaching, and leadership activities, continuing services through their transition as a new principal. LWL addresses shortages in rural and hard-to-staff schools by intentionally collaborating with districts to identify and pair aspiring school leaders with schools that have anticipated principal vacancies.²² By aligning to known vacancies, aspiring leaders will move into principal positions immediately upon successful completion of their pre-service LWL training, addressing one of the known challenges to principal effectiveness: Researchers have found there is an extensive gap in time between completion of a preparation program and when an aspiring leader becomes a principal.²³ The typical career path requires an educator to serve as assistant principal (AP) before being hired as a principal. The underlying assumption is that the AP position naturally provides extended time for

¹⁵ Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, 2005

¹⁶ Gates et al. 2016

¹⁷ Maxwell, 2020

¹⁸ Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2013; Leithwood, Azah, Harris, Slater & Jantzi, 2014; Pollock & Hauseman, 2015; Rousmaniere 2007

¹⁹ Rosborg, 2013.

²⁰ Manna, 2015, p 15

²¹ Illinois School Leader Taskforce, 2008, Davis et al. 2005; Levine 2005; Hess & Kelly 2005

²² One criterion for district participation in LWL requires host sites to anticipate a principal vacancy within a one-year period.

²³ Clifford, Bonsu, Brown-Sims, Olivar, Liu, and Yang, 2019

more development opportunities that serve to further prepare APs for the principal role. Yet, research indicates this is a false assumption, absent a great deal of intention and planning.²⁴

LWL strives to disrupt the typical career path of transitioning from teacher to AP and from AP to principal that silos each phase of the developmental continuum. That path has occasionally been circumvented by educators that temporarily leave their local districts to take on their first principalships in smaller or hard-to-staff schools. Those positions are plentiful because rural schools in the US outnumber those located in large urban cities and suburbs.²⁵ Yet, many of those schools are classified as hard to staff due to lack of resources, geographic isolation, and inability to offer competitive wages. For those reasons, rural schools often face challenges filling leadership vacancies and retaining effective principals.²⁶ Inexperienced, newly hired principals are often left to learn on the job with little support in those low-resourced districts.²⁷ That alternative career path is problematic for the aspiring principal,²⁸ and the rural school as viewing a rural principal position as “temporary” perpetuates the high turnover rate in rural areas at a time when high-quality leaders are badly needed. A recent study found that half of new principals quit their jobs within three years,²⁹ and rural principals were significantly more likely to exit the profession altogether.³⁰ Data from NCES consistently indicates that principal turnover in rural schools is higher than the national average and more disruptive as rural schools lack administrative structures and resources to build effective succession strategies.³¹

²⁴ Lim & Pollack, 2019; and Searby, Browne-Ferrigno, Wang, 2016

²⁵ Chen, 2011; NCES, 2019; Frontline Research & Learning Institute, 2018; One third of all public schools in the US are located in rural areas, and nearly one in five students (over 10 million in total) attend rural schools.

²⁶ Howley & Pendarvis, 2002; Natkin, Cooper, Alborano, Padilla & Ghosh, 2003; Provasnik, Ramani, Coleman, Gilbertson, Herring & Xie, 2007

²⁷ Provasnik et al. 2007

²⁸ Renihan and Noonan (2012) found that rural principals spend considerably more time on administrative tasks and less time leading instructional improvement efforts.

²⁹ School Leaders Network (2018)

³⁰ Goldring, Tale & O’Rear (2018)

³¹ Pendola & Fuller (2018), and Arnold, Newman, Gaddy, & Dean, 2005

To address challenges posed by current principal pathways, LWL will bridge the gap between the aspiring and novice phases and focus on-going supports with increasing leadership competency in areas most consequential to improving teaching and learning. As represented in the ***LWL Logic Model (Appendix G)***, the project enhances district talent management systems by building a replicable vacancy strategy with targeted recruitment, support, and retention strategies. LWL recruits high-potential aspiring leaders and provides them with on-going training and coaching designed to provide them with important experience leading teacher teams that positively impact teaching and learning. LWL then supports the aspiring leader through the transition to principal, providing high-quality, one-on-one, job-embedded coaching to ensure the participant is successful with engaging teachers in the critical work of establishing routines focused on improving instructional quality through development of responsive strategies.

LWL provides a minimum of two years of support to participants. In year one, aspiring principals participate in training to ***engage teachers in Cycles of Inquiry*** and are supported with ***on-site coaching*** to apply new learning through job-embedded application activities. During pre-service year, the aspiring principal identifies a teacher team they will work with to conduct an ***Action Research Project focused on a priority learning challenge in ELA or math as a result of COVID-19***. Through the action research, the participant will apply new learning and demonstrate the impact of their improvement efforts. In year two, the participant transitions to a principal position where LWL ***continues to provide on-site, job-embedded coaching aimed at assisting the new principal with establishing a schoolwide system of teacher teams that promotes engagement in instructional improvement routines***. New principals will also be provided ***competency-based training focused on equity through a validated equity-focused micro-credential series that requires completion of an equity audit and development of an improvement plan to address any inequitable findings***. (See ***Appendix M – Leadership for Equity MC.***) All LWL training materials

have been designed by experienced project partners and will be delivered locally by ROE staff that know specific needs and strengths of leaders and schools in their area.

(2) Specified and Measurable Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes

Table #1: LWL Goals, Objectives, Targets/Outcomes, and Measures

GOAL 1: ASPIRING PRINCIPAL PHASE - LWL will prepare a group of aspiring principals to effectively engage teacher teams in instructional improvements that lead to improved student learning.
OBJECTIVE 1.1: Aspiring school leaders will be selected from a rigorous recruitment and selection process to participate in the project.
OBJECTIVE 1.2: Participants will be provided with an evidence-based professional development program (including group training/ peer network meetings, and one-on-one coaching support).
OBJECTIVE 1.3: Participants will work with a group of teachers to complete a year-long action research project aimed at improving instructional and learning.
OUTCOME/TARGETS 1.1: (Years 1-2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% aspiring leaders will be selected for participation through a rigorous process involving input from the ROE and District partners • 80% of participants will serve schools w/ concentrations of high-need students (GPRA) • 51% or more of participants will be working in qualifying rural schools
OUTCOME/TARGETS 1.2: (Years 2-3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% of participants will complete the IL teacher performance evaluation training course • 90% of participants residents will participate in bi-monthly leadership coaching sessions • 90% of participants will complete LWL training/networking • 90% of LWL aspiring leader will be “satisfied” or “highly satisfied” with quality of LWL professional learning experiences and coaching
OUTCOME/TARGETS 1.3: (Year 2-3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% of participants will work with teacher team to complete action research project focused on an identified learning gap in ELA or Math as a result of COVID-19 • 60% of teachers on teams lead by participants will report improved working conditions • Students in participating schools will demonstrate positive learning gains in math and ELA outcomes.
MEASURES: Student scores on local assessments in ELA and Math; Number of participants who complete IL Teacher Performance Evaluation training; Number of participants who complete ELA or math action research projects and provide documentation of results; Coach logs; Vital signs survey of teacher team activities; Training attendance tracking data; Teacher responses on CALL survey; Interviews with participating aspiring leaders.
GOAL 2: New Principal Phase – Through support by LWL, new principals will be highly-effective in engaging teacher teams in instructional improvements efforts that result in improved student learning.
OBJECTIVE 2.1: Participants who successfully complete the aspiring leaders phase of the LWL project will be hired as new principals in rural and/or hard to staff schools (Year 3-5).
OUTCOME/TARGETS 2.1: (Year 3-5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of aspiring leaders will be hired as new principals • 60 % of aspiring leaders will be hired as new principals in rural or hard to staff schools
OBJECTIVE 2.2: Participants who are hired as new principals continue to participate in LWL PD
OUTCOME/TARGETS 2.2: (Year 3-5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% of LWL aspiring leaders hired as new principals will continue with on-going coaching; • 80% of LWL aspiring leaders hired as new principals will continue to participate in on-going training/ networking provided by project; • 70% of LWL aspiring leaders hired as new principals will complete LFE MCs and/or project training

OBJECTIVE 2.3: Participants will work with their ILTs/teacher teams to implement an action-research-based process aimed at improving instructional and learning.
OUTCOME/TARGETS 2.3: (Year 3-5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of LWL principals will be retained in initial school placement for two years at statistically significant higher rates, in comparison to other similar schools with new principals. • 80% of schools led by LWL principals will have formalized distributed leadership structure that includes an ILT and teacher teams in place that will oversee math and ELA instruction in the school. • 90% of ILTs in schools led by LWL principals will implement action research for instructional improvements in ELA and math.
OBJECTIVE 2.4: New principals participating in LWL will establish school conditions that support instructional improvements leading to improved student learning.
OUTCOME/TARGETS 2.4: (Year 3-5) (Impact Study) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CALL schoolwide teacher survey indicates ILT/teacher teams have statistically significant, greater distributed leadership responsibility for instructional improvement. • 5 Essentials schoolwide teacher survey data indicates statistically significant, positive differences in school culture in comparison to other similar schools. • 5 Essentials schoolwide teacher survey data indicates statistically significant, positive differences in instructional leadership quality in comparison to other similar schools. • ELA and math statewide student test scores show statistically significant difference in schoolwide scores for schools that hired LWL principals versus comparison schools.
MEASURES: Student scores on state assessments in ELA and Math; Bloom Board record of MC completion; Coach log data; Training attendance tracking data; Vital signs survey of ILT/teacher team activities; CALL teacher responses (impact study); 5 Essentials Survey (impact study); Teacher and administrator employment data; and annual principal survey & interviews with participating principals.

(3) Responsiveness to the Target Population

LWL is built on a strong research base and our previous experience with pre- and in-service professional development for school leaders. The project represents a comprehensive effort by a *consortium of six rural and suburban partners, including: six ROEs located in each of the state's educational service areas, 40 participating public schools, several research and professional organizations, ISBE and the Governor's P-20 Education Council.*³² Established by the state to provide support to local districts according to identified needs, ROEs routinely provide a menu of trainings for a variety of leadership roles in K-12 education. LWL will capitalize on that existing service delivery system and the relationships ROE staff have with districts and schools in their area. Those relationships provide contextual understanding that enables the project to respond to the specific needs of our target population. At the same time, LWL aims to build the capacity of ROE

³² Each partner and their roles and responsibilities within the project is outline in Section C of the proposal.

staff to develop more cohesive and comprehensive approaches to professional development that can provide a continuum of support for educators throughout their career. As with previous projects, *all training materials and resources have been or will be designed in-house through a PD Design Team comprised of representatives from partnering ROEs, each of whom has vast experience designing and delivering high-quality professional learning.* (See *Appendix O* for a snapshot of LWL materials currently available.) Through LWL activities, ROEs will not only address the current needs of participating districts but will ultimately share lessons learned from the project to build a robust and responsive pipeline of effective leaders that can meet the needs of rural and high-need schools. LWL specifically addresses the challenges those districts face, such as difficulty recruiting highly trained school leaders, lack the capacity to identify and grow their own high potential school leaders, and low retention rates of highly effective principals.³³

Because all participating schools are located in Illinois, *training and activities can be tailored to meet the specific needs of Illinois schools.* LWL’s partnership with ISBE and P-20 Council also demonstrates our intentional efforts to align LWL to initiatives and priorities supported by the state. Through this collaboration, LWL will harness the collective talent and resources of each region to fully address local differences that may otherwise create barriers to implementation. This also allows partners to more directly support local needs involving educator supply and demand.

SECTION C: MANAGEMENT PLAN

(1) Responsibilities, Timelines, and Milestones Aligned to the Budget

LWL is *designed to achieve project objectives on time and within budget and will be led by Project Directors and staff with extensive experience managing and successfully completing projects of this size and scope.* LWL will be housed at ROE #17 in Bloomington, located in the central part of state. LWL staff will utilize insight gained through the successful IL-PART project on how

³³ The leadership challenges in rural and high-need schools were outlined and cited in Section B 1) of this proposal.

to manage and coordinate efforts from partners geographically spread throughout Illinois. LWL will benefit from partner ROEs and leadership coaches that have previous experience leading schools and/or districts with a proven track record of increasing student learning. LWL appropriately aligns grant resources to most crucial components of the project, including: 50% on training, coaching, and other direct supports, 21% on the external evaluation (quantitative and qualitative studies), and 29% on project staff and financial management of the grant. Each of the ROE partners have committed a significant amount of in-kind support in the form of staff time and effort (see *Appendix H* – Matching Funds). The detailed budget narrative indicates how specifically LWL will allocate funds annually to complete the proposed activities, support implementation with fidelity, and meet/exceed the project’s goals and objectives.

Relying on what has worked well with past federal projects, the following key strategies will be employed to ensure the LWL project progresses on time and within budget:

1. Building upon existing trusting relationships among partners that were founded on regular and open communication aimed at meeting local needs and achieving common goals;
2. Identifying variable and invariable elements of the model to ensure fidelity in a wide variety of settings located in all areas of the state;
3. Determining cost projections and staffing needs up front to ensure adequate and equitable resource allocation;
4. Focusing from the beginning on building the capacity of partner organizations to sustain the work beyond the life of the grant;
5. Developing multiple networks, mechanisms, and platforms for partners to communicate and collaborate within and across regions; and,
6. Enacting a rigorous continuous improvement process that values feedback from all partners and participants, and includes data and information from the external evaluation.

Table 2 below outlines milestones and the project’s timeline aligned to the LWL intervention, external evaluation, and continuous improvement process. Information about key personnel and partner responsibilities can be found in the section that follows Table 2.

Table 2: LWL Timeline & Milestones

	Readiness	Aspiring	New	Cont	
	Y1-2022	Y2-2023	Y3- 2024	Y4-2025	Y5-2026
Milestones	Spr I	Spr I	Spr I	Spr I	Spr I
<i>Readiness for Implementation</i>					

Project planning - develop selection criteria, finalize training timelines and content for coaches and participants)	X	X								
Recruit, identify, and select treatment sites & identify matching comparison sites		X								
Secure commitments from aspiring leaders		X								
Hire and train LWL Coaches		X	X							
Readiness work with coaches, districts, and aspiring leader participants to clarify expectations, plan for action research projects, and onboard teacher teams		X	X							
Develop project evaluation instruments, tools, and the reporting system for the continuous improvement	X	X	X							
<i>On-Going Activities</i>										
Monthly Coaches mtgs./trainings				X	X	X	X			
Bi-weekly coaching sessions w/aspiring & new				X	X	X	X			
COI Action Research Project ILT Mtgs (2/mo) (Aspiring)				X	X					
COI Action Research Projects Weekly Teacher Team Mtgs. (Aspiring)				X	X					
Meetings of the ILTs (New & Continuing Principal) (2/mo)						X	X	X	X	
Monthly meetings of teacher teams (New & Continuing Principal Year)						X	X	X	X	
Monthly aspiring principal assessment of action research review				X	X					
New principal transition/induction coaching & other supports						X				
LFE Micro-credential begin & completion						X	X	X		
Continuing principal group coaching/networking									X	X
Monthly LWL PD Design Team mtgs.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
District Support Network Meetings		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Regional Advisory Committee Mtgs.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Project Advisory Committee Mtgs.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<i>Data Collection & Analysis</i>										
School demographic & performance data			X	X	X	X	X	X		
Working Conditions & 5 Essentials Survey			X		X		X		X	
Student assessments			X	X	X	X	X			
Aspiring principal job seeking behaviors					X		X			
Principal hiring					X		X			
Annual aspiring principal surveys					X					
Annual aspiring principal interviews					X					
Annual new/continuing principal surveys							X		X	
Annual new/continuing principal interviews							X		X	
Annual partner interviews										
Quarterly Formative Evaluation Reports for Continuous Improvement			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Annual Evaluation Reports		X		X		X		X		X
Final Evaluation Report										X

(2) Qualifications of Key Project Personnel and Partners

LWL will be housed at ROE #17, whose staff demonstrate extensive experience responding to needs of education leaders. LWL will be led by *two experienced Co-Directors*: [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], both of whom have proven track records of managing projects of this size and scope. As ROE #17's Assistant Regional Superintendent, [REDACTED] supports and supervises 30 public school districts that include 100+ schools serving roughly 36,600 students in four counties. Having previously served as a successful district and school leader, [REDACTED] brings a valuable practitioner voice informed by K-12 experience in both high-need urban and remote rural settings.

[REDACTED] has served as Project Director on five US ED grants (3 SLP, 1 SEED, and 1 EIR totaling \$33.6M). Each of those projects remained on time and within budget. (*Appendix P* provides an overview of federal grants and involved partners). [REDACTED] also served as district and school leader. She and *LWL Professional Development* [REDACTED] worked together at Chicago Public Schools' Office of Principal Preparation and Development when RAND researchers conducted the study that provides a foundation for the LWL project intervention.

Other key personnel represent a variety of roles at partner organizations and were chosen based on previous success developing and/or supervising school leaders in pre-service and/or in-service. *A team of evaluation experts from WestEd and ISU* brings extensive experience in quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method research. *In total, 16 key project personnel and 14 other leaders in partner organizations demonstrate the extensive capacity LWL has to meet project milestones and goals.* Critical to the success of LWL will also be the existing role ROEs have in state policy collaborations with ISBE, IBHE, and the Governor's Office.

Table 3: Key LWL Key Project and Partner Personnel: Roles & Responsibilities

Name	Affiliation	Background	Time	Role in LWL
Key Personnel - Fiscal Agent				

	ROE #17	Current Asst. Regional Supt.; Former teacher, principal, and administrator;	50%	LWL Project Co-Director
	ROE #17	Elected Regional Sup.; former ROE PD Director; EdD in Ed. Adm. & Policy	In kind	Fiscal Agent, and serves on the Project Advisory Committee
	ROE #17	Business manager with HR, finance, and teaching experience	25%	Business Manager
	ROE #17	Currently serves as the Assistant to the Regional Superintendent	25%	Finance Clerk
Key Personnel – ROE Partners				
	DuPage ROE	Project Director; former teacher, principal, district administrator, and researcher & technical assist. provider; PhD in Education Policy	25%	LWL Project Co-Director
	DuPage ROE	Assist. Regional Superintendent; Served as an auditor for ISBE; CSBO, MBA, an EdD in Organizational Leadership	>10%	Technical assistance – financial regulations
	DuPage ROE	Financial Manager; experience with budget and federal regulations; licensed CSBO with an MBA	25%	Technical assistance – financial management
	DuPage ROE	PD Specialist for LEAD Project; former teacher, principal, and district admin with extensive improvement experience	25%	Professional Dev. Director
	Rural & Sm. School Assoc	Statewide org. to ensure LWL responds to rural schools' needs	>10%	Consultant –Contributions identified in letter of support
	ISBE	ISBE - Consultant with the Office of District and School Leadership	>10%	Technical assistance – state policy alignment
LWL Coaches	Each ROE	Coaches will be selected based on specific criteria established according to job description and hiring protocol	50%	Provide coaching to principals and support for engagement of ILT members
	ROE #28	Former rural teacher, principal, and superintendent; EdD in Ed. Admin.	>10%	Micro-Credential Specialist
External Evaluation - Key Personnel				
	WestEd	Director of Ed Leadership with extensive experience involving research on educator effectiveness; PhD - Ed Leadership & Policy Analysis	Project based	Principal Investigator, Conducting Quasi-Experimental Impact Study on LWL
	WestEd	Research Associate with previous experience involving impact analysis; certified in WWC Design Standards	Project based	Research Associate Conducting Quasi-Experimental Impact Study on LWL
	CSEP	Senior Policy Analyst - Director on EIR, SEED, and SLP grants; Gov. appointed to the IL P-20 Council; PhD in Ed Org. & Leadership	25%	Technical Assistance with state policy alignment; Qualitative research team member
	CSEP	Senior Policy Analyst - Director on SEED grant; extensive experience as research methodologist; PhD in Educational Psychology	25%	Principal Investigator, Conducting Qualitative Project Evaluation that will provide formative data for continuous improvement process
	CSEP	Grant Manager; experience with budget and federal regulations; Six Sigma Black Belt	20%	Data Manager

In-Kind Supports and Collaboration Commitment from Partner ROEs and Policymakers				
Appendix B list of ROE Personnel Involved	ROEs #1, #17, #19, #21, #28 and #50	Elected Regional Superintendents, Assistant Regional Superintendents, and/or LEAD Project Coordinators	In kind	Oversee and coordinates area school participation in LWL; serve on PAC; facilitates RAC, provides in-kind contributions.
ISBE staff	State Board of Ed	Staff collaborating on scaling and sustaining LWL by leveraging state resources and seeking public funding	In kind	Collaborative role identified in letter of support
IEA Staff	Teacher's Union	Statewide staff serving policy roles, collaboration with P-20 Council	In kind	Collaborative role identified in letter of support
Advance Illinois	Advance Illinois	State advocacy support & alignment of work with broader policy agenda	In kind	Collaborative role identified in letter of support

Relationships built through previous work mitigates challenges to collaboration and reduces delays that can occur in the initial phase of project rollout. To maximize the impact of LWL partnerships, *ROEs have formalized their expectations and responsibilities in Memoranda of Understanding.*

(See *Appendix B* for resumes, *Appendix C* for Letters of Support and MOUs that include commitments of in-kind contributions, and *Appendix Q* for the LWL Organizational Chart.)

(3) Reasonable Costs Aligned to Objectives, Design, and Potential Significance

LWL is a cost-effective way to increase educator effectiveness and improve teaching and learning schoolwide (**Objective 1 and 2**). LWL benefits from previous capacity-building and material development efforts completed through the IL-PART project (a \$4M federal grant). Project Directors engaged in a comprehensive cost model review of IL-PART, applying an analogous method for cost estimating, to ensure the improved *project service costs were both reasonable and sustainable*. LWL will take important pieces of IL-PART to scale, while making significant improvements to the model based on lessons learned and evidence from emerging research. The improved LWL project will *impact roughly 25,000 students,*³⁴ *at an average annual cost of \$25.28 per student.*³⁵ Providing on-going, job-embedded training and coaching supports designed to address anticipated vacancies is *not only cost effective, it also reduces the fragmentation and*

³⁴ A minimum of 51% of participating school will qualify as rural, with the remaining coming from hard to staff schools.

³⁵ Not including the qualitative or quantitative research studies.

redundancy in service delivery that is commonly experienced by educators who face preparation programs and districts working in silos – each focusing their efforts on a single development phase while ignoring the interconnection between the two.³⁶ The LWL Project Advisory Committee will collaborate to identify additional efficiencies that can support the long-term sustainability of the project. The timing of LWL is ideal, as it provides a mechanism and resources for collaboration between visionary ROE leaders and thoughtful District Superintendents that will be maximized by alignment to other funding streams such as ESSER funding aimed at accelerating learning.

LWL represents a massive return on investment because school leaders have a profound impact on student outcomes. A recent meta-analysis revealed that increasing school leadership effectiveness by one standard deviation could lead to a ten-percentile point gain in student achievement³⁷ and “the positive impact of principal effectiveness on teacher outcomes are even greater in disadvantaged schools.”³⁸ Therefore, *developing a highly effective principal may be the most powerful and cost-effective method to improve schools*, because there is no evidence of a low-performing school ever being turned around absent the intervention of a powerful leader.³⁹ Ineffective principals can certainly be replaced. But students and districts paying a steep price for that, as student achievement decreases significantly in the year following a principal’s departure.⁴⁰ Hiring and onboarding a new principal costs districts on average \$75,000.⁴¹ With large numbers of principals anticipated to retire in the coming years,⁴² now is the time to focus on building a strong and responsive leadership pipeline with well-training and highly-competent leaders that have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to provide strong instructional environments.

(4) Adequacy of Procedures for Feedback and Continuous Improvement

³⁶ Haller, 2016

³⁷ Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003

³⁸ Grissom, 2011

³⁹ Leithwood, et al. 2004

⁴⁰ Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom & Anderson. 2010

⁴¹ Beteille, T., Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2011; Johnson, 2005

⁴² Maxwell, L.A. (2020)

LWL includes systems of support for formative evaluation data and feedback to be regularly used to inform continuous improvement. Similar structures have been utilized with previous projects with LWL partners that provided insight into necessary modifications to processes and resource allocation, while ensuring integrity of original project design and research study.

Table 4: LWL System of Feedback Loops in Inform Continuous Improvement

Structure	Purpose
<i>LWL Advisory Committee</i>	Meets bi-annually to engage all LWL partners in data review, determining the need for any mid-course corrections, and planning next steps; the key focus is on fidelity of implementation and sustainability of the project beyond the life of the grant.
<i>LWL PD Design Team</i>	Design team for all LWL training and coaching material, including training for principal mentors and project coaches, and LWL aspiring and new principals. Meets bi-monthly, with day-long meetings every other month and a planning retreat each summer.
<i>LWL Regional Advisory Committees (RAC)</i>	Each RAC will meet twice each year. RACs will be made up of regional representatives of professional organizations (principals association, superintendents association, higher education, teachers union, district superintendents, human resource directors, etc.) and will act as a repository of data/information/research and connector to districts/schools by bringing together all regional partners that provide supports to educators, in an effort to maximize resources and provide differentiated supports based on specific local needs. Data from LWL and other sources will frame meeting agendas and strategies.
<i>LWL Coaches Meetings</i>	LWL coaches will meet monthly for training and support. WestEd and ISU evaluation staff will present at trainings to share data and other related information helpful to their work with LWL aspiring and new principals.
<i>LWL District Support Meetings</i>	District support meetings will be held 3 times a year with districts that have LWL participants. Evaluation data will be shared at these meetings to update district officials on progress and guide conversations regarding future supports that may be needed.
<i>ROE Coordinator Meetings</i>	LWL staff and ROE coordinators will connect monthly through a virtual platform to collaborate and participate in a shared decision-making process designed to attend to logistics of project activities and to address the necessary tension between standardization and customization of supports designed to ensure project success.
<i>LWL Staff Calls</i>	Project Directors will lead LWL staff in weekly meetings to monitor fidelity of implementation and address challenges/barriers to project implementation. Work will be tracked on spreadsheet with progress indicators/activities monitored using data platform.
<i>LWL Staff and Evaluators Meetings</i>	LWL staff will meet weekly via zoom with WestEd and ISU staff to launch the project. In PY2, will move to bi-monthly meetings to monitor fidelity of implementation, plan for upcoming communications, and identify any project modifications needed.

See **Appendix R** for information on continuous improvement feedback loops built into LWL.

SECTION D: PROJECT EVALUATION

(1) Methods of Evaluation Meet WWC Standards with Reservations

WestEd and CSEP will rigorously, independently study LWL implementation and impact across 40 Illinois-based public schools (51% will be rural). *The research design uses valid and reliable*

*measures and industry-standard analytic methods, which ensure the study will meet What Works Clearinghouse Standards, version 4.1, with reservations.*⁴³ The research design employs the George W. Bush Institute (2017) methodology for studying effects of principal preparation, a study designed and implemented by the proposed principal investigator.

The LWL evaluation includes formative and summative components that align with LWL logic model (see *Appendix G*) and project timeline (**found in Table 2 of this proposal**). The formative evaluation component provides timely data for program implementation improvement, with a focus on documenting implementation cost and variation by school demographics, location, and type in Years 2-5 (see details in *Appendix R*). The summative component describes impact of hiring LWL principals on school culture, distributed leadership, and student performance in ELA and math.

Table 5 below summarizes the evaluation study research questions and data. The research team will describe and explain implementation and impact with quantitative and qualitative methods.

Table 5. Alignment of Research Questions with LWL Programmatic Outcomes and Data Sources

Outcomes	Research Questions (RQs)	Data Sources
IMPACT STUDY (Quasi-Experimental Design) *		
Student Outcomes Associated with Hiring LWL Principals		
Student achievement	RQ1: What is the impact of hiring an LWL principal on schoolwide student achievement in mathematics and ELA? <i>Sub-question:</i> Did observed effects differ across students with different characteristics, school location and school types?	Student-level Illinois standardized test scores in mathematics and reading with student demographic data for treatment and comparison schools in school years 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25, 2025-26. ⁴⁴
Educator Outcomes Associated with Hiring LWL Principals		
School culture	RQ2: What is the impact of hiring an LWL principal on school culture? <i>Sub-question:</i> Did observed effects differ across school location and school types?	Teacher response to Illinois' <i>5Essentials</i> statewide school culture survey data for treatment and comparison schools in school years 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25, 2025-26. WestEd will use a CITS analysis.

⁴³ Institute of Education Sciences, 2020

⁴⁴ Illinois has student demographics and academic performance data for School Years 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19. Illinois has student demographics data for 2019-20, but the state cancelled student testing in 2019-20, due to COVID-19. To establish performance trend and baseline equivalency, we will request four years of pre-intervention student performance data. Only schools with established performance histories for that period will be included in treatment or comparison conditions.

Outcomes	Research Questions (RQs)	Data Sources
School leadership	RQ3: What is the impact of hiring an LWL principal on school leadership quality? <i>Sub-question:</i> Did observed effects differ across school location and school types?	Teacher response to Illinois' <i>5Essentials</i> statewide school culture survey data for treatment and comparison schools in school years 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25, 2025-26. WestEd will use a difference-in-difference analysis.
	RQ4: What is the impact of hiring an LWL principal on school leadership distribution and action research engagement? <i>Sub-question:</i> Did observed effects differ across school location and school types?	Teacher response to the Comprehensive Assessment on Leadership for Learning (CALL) survey for treatment schools in school years 2024-25, 2025-26. CALL results compared to baseline condition for treatment schools.
Educator retention	RQ5: Are LWL principals more likely to be retained in schools of first placement after preparation and in the profession after two years? <i>Sub-question:</i> Did effects differ for principals with different characteristics, school location or school type? <i>Sub-question:</i> Why do LWL principals and other, similar new principals stay or leave their schools?	District educator-level employment data linked to school with educator demographics school years 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25, 2025-26. Interviews with LWL principals and other new principals about retention and departure factors.
IMPLEMENTATION STUDY		
Program completion	RQ6: Are LWL principals completing the program and seeking positions, as principal, in schools upon graduation? <i>Sub-question:</i> Does program completion and professional motivation differ by LWL principal characteristics, school location, school type or LWL participation? <i>Sub-question:</i> What factors contribute to LWL program completion and professional motivation to become principals?	LWL on-track-to-completion, participation, and completion records for 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25. Annual LWL principal survey for 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25. Annual interviews with LWL principals that complete/do not complete the program and that intend to pursue/do not pursue principal positions.
Program implementation	RQ7: To what extent was LWL implemented with fidelity? <i>Sub-question:</i> What factors facilitated or inhibited program implementation? <i>Sub-question:</i> Are LWL experiences configured differently based upon school level or location?	LWL sign-in/sign-out data for workshops and network meetings; LWL online documents (e.g., meeting agendas, video modules); Online coaching logs; Annual LWL principal survey; Annual LWL supervisor survey; Annual phone interviews with LWL participants and host principals; Semi-annual LWL design conference focus group.
Program accessibility, utility, and satisfaction	RQ8: How satisfying, accessible, and useful is the LWL to participants? <i>Sub-question:</i> What are the supports and barriers to accessing and using LWL content and technology?	End-of-session participant surveys: Annual LWL principal survey; Annual phone interviews with LWL participants

Outcomes	Research Questions (RQs)	Data Sources
Program costs	RQ9: What is the total cost of LWL implementation, cost per principal and cost per student? <i>Sub-question:</i> Do costs vary by school location?	McLean County ROE financial records; ISBE school grade band, student demographics, staffing data; federal school urbanicity and location data.

The researchers selected objective, validated measures to assess project impacts. The measures for the impact evaluation are not over-aligned with the intervention and include standardized test scores, state and district administrative records, and reliable, validated survey measures:

- **Student ELA and mathematics achievement scores.** We will use student-level Illinois Assessment of Readiness standardized test scores for elementary and middle schools and student-level SAT test scores in high schools.⁴⁵
- **5 Essentials** school culture survey will be used as a medial impact measure. The 5 Essentials survey is administered annually to all teachers within schools by ISBE and includes an instructional leadership construct.⁴⁶ Survey data for treatment and comparison schools will be used. The survey displays Rasch individual reliabilities on subscales between 0.64 and 0.92, and school reliabilities between 0.55 and 0.88.
- **Comprehensive Assessment of Leadership for Learning (CALL)** school distributed leadership survey will be used as a medial impact measure.⁴⁷ The CALL survey will be annually administered (pre- and post-test) to teachers within treatment schools to gauge schoolwide engagement in improvement processes and engagement in data-driven improvement cycles, which are taught to LWL principals. The survey displays Rasch school reliabilities on subscales between .62 and .87 (Halverson, Kelley & Dikkers, 2010).
- **Educator retention**, specifically for administrators, will be measured by using district administrative records, as routinely collected by school districts, and reported to ISBE.

For student achievement, WestEd will evaluate LWL impact *using a Comparative Interruptive Time Series (CITS) design, which is among the strongest quasi-experimental designs for causal inference.*⁴⁸ Recent methodological studies have demonstrated that CITS designs can produce valid inferences about the effectiveness of a school-level interventions.⁴⁹ The CITS design is preferred for this study because random assignment of LWL completers to new schools is not feasible, due to school district choice. In a CITS design, levels (“Are test scores high or low?”) and trends (“Are

⁴⁵ Beginning in 2016, all Illinois public school students in Grade 11 were required to complete the SAT for state and federal accountability.

⁴⁶ <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/5E-survey-manual-2016-17.pdf>

⁴⁷ <https://www.leadershipforlearning.org/>

⁴⁸ Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002; St. Clair, Cook, & Hallberg, 2014

⁴⁹ Hallberg, Williams, & Swanlund, 2015; Jacob, Somers, Zhu, & Bloom, 2016

test scores increasing or decreasing?”) in outcomes (e.g., student achievement, teacher retention) are tracked over time. The CITS analysis examines whether there is a break in trends in LWL schools after the implementation of the intervention, controlling for other observable changes in the school. To guard against the possibility that this break in trend is unrelated to the intervention but is instead the result of changes in district policies, economic conditions, or other unobserved factors that are not controlled for in the statistical model, the evaluation team will examine whether there is a break in trends in non-LWL (business as usual) schools over the same time period. Any difference between the break in trends in LWL schools (if any) and the break in trends in non-LWL schools (if any) provides an estimate of the effect of the intervention. Since new principal hiring represents a break to any school,⁵⁰ the study compares similar schools hiring a new LWL and non-LWL principal. Details on CITS design and analytic approach are included in *Appendix S*.

Using student demographic and school type data, WestEd will establish baseline equivalence between intervention and business-as-usual schools. Working closely with LWL administrators to recruit 40 LWL participants and Illinois public schools within 6 regions of the state (5 have a large percentage of rural schools), the researchers will track completion and hiring of 40 LWL participants that WestEd will then match with 120 business-as-usual schools. Schools will be “hard matched” on state and school type based on closeness of fit on student ELA and math proficiency rates, urbanicity (rural or non-rural), enrollment, and percentages of students that are English learners (EL), disabled, non-White, and qualify for subsidized meals. After comparison schools have been selected, WestEd will confirm that *baseline differences in student achievement between the treatment and comparison groups, measured in standardized effect size units, are less than 0.25*. The study design has sufficient statistical power to detect the LWL effect on outcomes. If 90% of LWL principals are hired as principals in new schools upon graduation, *the minimum*

⁵⁰ Grissom, Egalite & Lindsay, 2021

detectable effect size (MDES) for student-level outcomes (achievement and attendance) is 0.11, the MDES for teacher-level outcomes (school culture and teacher retention) is 0.21, and the MDES for principal- or school-level outcomes is 0.59. For impact on school culture and instructional leadership by LWL, WestEd will explore 5Essentials survey data using a difference-in-difference comparative analysis. Details on the power analysis, with MDESs at different rates of school attrition, are included in *Appendix S*.

(2) Methods Providing Performance Feedback for Progress Monitoring

RQs 6 through 9 provide program performance feedback and periodic progress assessment toward intended goals. Formative feedback and reporting are aligned with project activities (see *Appendix R*). Research questions and analytic methods describe and explain program implementation progress, dosage across diverse educator contexts to inform the impact analysis, and timely feedback for continuous improvement. Qualitative and quantitative implementation data will be collected from all LWL participants and partners in Year 2-5. Interview subjects will be sampled based on responses to survey items (e.g., completers/non-completers, job seekers/non-seekers). **Data sources are listed in Table 5 and formative data collection activities in Table 6.**

Table 6. Formative Evaluation Data-Collection Activities for LWL

Data Source	Description	Analysis
Implementation Evaluation (Descriptive Design)		
LWL training/network attendance (RQ7)	Electronic participant sign-in and sign-out for LWL synchronous sessions and asynchronous content sessions. <i>Collected from all participants.</i>	Descriptive statistical analysis
Leadership coaching completion (RQ7)	LWL coaches and LWL host principals will document date, start time, end time, mentoring goals, and mentoring session content for each session with a resident via online mentor log. <i>Collected from all coaches and host principals each month.</i>	Descriptive statistical analysis
LWL implementation documents (RQ7)	LWL curriculum documents, session meeting agendas, & documents that describe content, cadence, & timeline.	Descriptive qualitative analysis
End of session online participant survey (RQ7)	Online survey on content accessibility, quality, and utility that is required for completion at the end of each LWL session. <i>Collected from all participants.</i>	Descriptive statistical analysis

Annual LWL participant survey (RQ7)	Annual survey on overall content accessibility, quality, and utility. <i>Collected from all participants.</i>	Descriptive statistical analysis
Principal and teacher interviews (sub-questions for RQs 6, 7, 8)	60-minute, semi-structured phone interviews will be used to explain variation in implementation fidelity and progress to program benchmarks (RQ8) and supports/barriers to LWL access and content use. Ten LWL participants will be annually interviewed and selected upon responses to annual LWL participant survey.	Qualitative analysis
Program administrator and coach interviews (sub-questions 7,8)	60-minute, telephone interviews with five LWL coaches and program administrators will explain variation in implementation fidelity and progress toward program benchmarks. Interviewees will be purposefully selected for information about program implementation and program supports/barriers.	Qualitative analysis

The study includes a cost analysis (RQ 9) that describes the direct and indirect cost per principal, per school, and per student. Costs are incurred by ROE 17 and partner ROEs to deliver and administer this project including administration (e.g., staff, materials, etc.), financial supports for school-level implementation and other frontline services (e.g., coaching costs, etc.). In addition to aggregating cost across the program, the cost analysis will examine cost differences by school location, school type, and other factors (e.g., variation in implementation fidelity).

WestEd will examine budget reporting documents to determine total direct and indirect costs using the “ingredients” method for apportioning program costs from within budget line items.⁵² WestEd will consult with ROE 17 and partners on current budget line items and financial definitions to formulate a budget data request and provide reporting forms to districts in order to conduct the cost analysis and reduce variation in cost reporting across organizations.

(3) Contribution to Increased Understanding of Effective Educational Strategies.

The study contributes to literature on principal preparation/professional development programs by describing LWL implementation costs, configuration, and impact across different school types. The study contributes to understanding the components, cost, and effects of new principal support services that “bridge” pre- and in-service career phases. Currently, only three principal preparation and eleven principal professional development studies meet WWC criteria with or without

reservations.⁵¹ Two studies examine impact of a field-based learning “bridging” professional learning models that University Council of Education Administration and other organizations consider important for principal development. The LWL study is policy-salient for Illinois, which is among only a handful of states that have passed policy that mandate intensive principal internships. However, Illinois has not systematically identified or described emergent models, or examined policy impacts, particularly in light of an anticipated shortage of school leaders⁵² and the inadequate preparation provided by general administrative programs that existed before the changes to policy.⁵³

Finally, the RAND (2014), Bush Institute (2017), and Steiner et al. (2021) studies all occurred in the context of large urban school districts, and intervention configurations/findings are thus situated there. The proposed study employs similar, rigorous methods as the previous studies referenced, but *it tests a “bridged” pre- and in-service professional learning model and examines implementation cost, configurations, variation, and impact across a diverse set of school types and locations, including rural and suburban schools.*

⁵¹ George W. Bush Institute, 2017

⁵² Rosborg, 2013

⁵³ Hunt, Haller, Hood, Kincaid, 2019