

# Advanced Credentialing System

## District Partnership

### Memorandum of Understanding

The Kentucky Association of School Superintendents and the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) are partnering to create, pilot and evaluate an Advanced Credentialing System for school principals. The initiative is being funded by a three-year, \$11 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education through the Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) grant program.

The state pilot will also include several school districts that have volunteered to participate. This memorandum of understanding sets forth the expectations for NISL and the pilot districts.

#### Overview

There is compelling research that suggests that a critical component to a high-performing school is a strong school principal. The ultimate goal of this initiative is to create a system that results in a strong principal in every school by utilizing an Advanced Credentialing System. Specifically, this pilot project sets out to:

1. Design an advanced credentialing system that is supported by a career ladder and aligned professional development system.
2. Pilot the system in partnership with the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents and school districts that have volunteered to participate.
3. Conduct a “gold standard” evaluation of the pilot, in partnership with the RAND Corporation, to document the impact of the system on principal leadership, schools and student learning as well as to provide feedback to implement future improvements to the system.
4. Build capacity at the state and district level to fully implement the Advanced Credentialing System after the grant period is over.

#### NISL’s Commitments

NISL is the grantee and has overall responsibility to manage the project. NISL commits to deliver the following to the District before the end of this project (9/30/18):

1. District principals who meet the criteria to be distinguished principals will receive intense, high-quality training and support to play their role as facilitator and/or coach on this project.
2. District principals who meet the criteria to participate in this project will be provided the opportunity to complete the Executive Development Program for School Leaders (EDP). To facilitate the completion of the randomized controlled trial, half of these principals will be assigned to the treatment group and receive

the EDP during 2016-17 and half will be assigned to the control group and receive the EDP after the research study is over (summer of 2018). NISL will provide facilitation and the EDP curriculum for the treatment group and the EDP curriculum and the training for local facilitators to deliver the EDP to the control group at the end of the evaluation period.

3. District principals in the treatment group or those selected as distinguished principals will have the opportunity to complete up to three leadership institutes during the project – Leadership for Parent and Community Engagement, Leadership for Students with Disabilities, and Leadership for English Language Learners. District principals in the control group will have the opportunity to complete the same institutes after the research study is over. NISL will provide facilitation and materials for the treatment group until local capacity to facilitate these institutes is established (and then materials only) and materials only for the control group so they can be trained at the end of the evaluation period.
4. For each distinguished principal that the District provides to the project, NISL will provide the District with at least three “free seats” for participation in the EDP. These free seats can be provided to new principals in your District, assistant principals, lead teachers or district staff and can be used after the research study is over. NISL will provide the EDP curriculum for these cohorts.
5. NISL will provide the training for and put in place a support system whereby all of the District’s “full treatment” principals will receive high-quality coaching from NISL-trained district coaches. This will result in about a third or half of your principals receiving coaching for a two-year period.
6. Upon request, NISL will provide the District with technical support on how best to utilize the advanced credentialing system to improve student-learning results.

Overall, NISL will provide the District with free materials and services that are valued at \$15,000 to \$30,000 per participating school. The District’s participation also provides it with the opportunity to be involved in an important pilot initiative, allowing it to organize itself earlier to take full advantage of the new advanced credentialing system.

### **District Commitments**

The District has agreed to join the advanced credentialing system pilot project. This will entitle the District to receive the benefits of the services provided above. In return, the District commits to the following:

1. Create a plan to implement the advanced credentialing system in your District after the state pilot is completed and proven successful.
2. Fully participate in the RAND evaluation, including the randomized controlled trial. Participation by the District means three things:
  - a. Allow RAND to conduct a lottery of all participating principals to determine principals’ assignment to the full treatment, partial treatment, and control groups. Principals selected as part of the control group delay their participation in the EDP until the end of the research study.

- b. RAND will obtain all data possible from the state Department of Education to reduce burden on districts. But where the state does not have the following data, RAND may request these categories of data from the district:
      - i. Principal contact information to be provided by March 1, 2016.
      - ii. School-level characteristics such as school ID, average attendance, and average student demographics by March 1, 2016.
      - iii. In summers 2016, 2017 and 2018 student-level achievement and behavioral data for school years 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18.
      - iv. Teacher contact information to be provided by March 1, 2018.
    - c. Allow RAND to contact some participating principals and teachers to voluntarily complete surveys (up to 30 minutes once per year) and/or to participate in interviews (up to 60 minutes once per year). RAND will seek to minimize the burden on participants, will inform them that their participation is voluntary and their answers will not be shared outside the study or have consequences for their employment.
  3. Require your principals selected as treatment or distinguished principals to attend all required professional development programs.
  4. Require the District principals selected as distinguished principals to perform their coaching of other principals (12-16 hours per month). Every effort will be made to match distinguished principals to other principals within your district. However, in a few cases, we anticipate that they will need to coach principals outside of your District.
  5. Require the distinguished principals in your district who are not selected to be coaches to facilitate training programs for cohorts of principals in your region.
  6. Exclude principals from the experiment that are likely to leave the District, change schools or be promoted during the project period.

School District Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Superintendent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Superintendent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

SEED Grantee: National Institute for School Leadership  
(A program of Criterion Education, LLC)

Chief Executive Officer: Jason S. Dougal

CEO Signature: \_\_\_\_\_