



Leading Educators Response to Louisiana's Request for Information

1. Partner Background

a. Organization name

Leading Educators

b. Summarize your organization's mission and its connection to Louisiana's plan for struggling schools

Leading Educators' mission is to advance teachers' leadership skills and opportunities, building a national movement to ensure all students have the opportunity to succeed in school and life. Leading Educators' work already impacts thousands of students in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, and our customized and responsive partnerships have the potential to shape district-level strategy and build school-level instructional leadership capacity throughout Louisiana.

2. Evidence of Track Record of Student and School Outcomes

a. In any format, please illustrate your organization's track record in dramatically improving schools or systems of schools and/or radically increasing outcomes for targeted subgroups of students.

Leading Educators serves over 700 teacher leaders, who support 2,920 teachers and 72,950 students. In May 2015, the RAND corporation released the first external evaluation of the Leading Educators program. This study was one of the first rigorous evaluations of the impact of teacher leadership and professional development for mid-career teachers. The long-term report will demonstrate our impact more definitively, but the early report offers an exciting preview:

- Consistent leadership skill growth across all regions, cohorts, teacher demographics, and years experience teaching.
- As much as a 10 point increase in percentile rank in student achievement in some subjects and regions.
- 10-29% increase in rate of retention at high-poverty schools.
- In Louisiana, even the most conservative estimate of the impact of Fellows on student achievement is equivalent to a 10 percentage point gain.
- Similar growth in mathematics achievement was observed among teachers who received mentoring support from a Leading Educators participant. These findings suggest that having a Leading Educators Fellow as a mentor could result in a 2 or 3 percentile gain for students within a single year.

Leading Educators also evaluates its programs internally against a range of measures. In 2016, Leading Educators Fellows closed one-third of the achievement gap in reading between the students they serve and national attainment of college readiness benchmarks. In math, Fellows closed one-quarter of the achievement gap between the students they serve and national attainment of college readiness benchmarks.

3. Your Organization's Model

a. How will you differentiate your services to meet the unique needs of schools and districts in Louisiana?

Leading Educators begins its partnerships with a collaborative, district level assessment to ensure that subsequent programming addresses unique opportunities and challenges locally. Following the assessment phase, Leading Educators works with district and school level leaders to make sure the enabling conditions for transformative student outcomes are in place. Once the conditions (e.g. content teams and teacher leader role clarity) are in place, Leading Educators delivers its core programming and additional supports that are scaffolded to the needs and existing initiatives of the district.

Louisiana's commitment to prepare every student to earn a post-secondary degree hinges on its focus on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). CCSS have demanded that we change our practice to meet the needs of schools, their teachers, and their students. In response, Leading Educators has built out researched-based content strands and staffed our programs with content experts to support school teams while meeting them where they are in this shift.

Leading Educators core programming includes content across four modules:

School-level **Enabling Conditions** includes assessment and training to ensure that schools are on the way to building a strong foundation for effective distributed leadership. In this module, schools define role clarity, content teaming structures, scheduling and release time, elements of a learning culture, and other conditions for success.

The **Cycles of Professional Learning** module provides training and support for teacher leaders and school leaders to learn how to plan, lead, and measure the impact of job-embedded, standards aligned professional learning focused on building the capacity of vertical content teacher teams. Throughout the year, teacher leaders reflect on evidence to identify what is working and what additional learning needs still exist for teachers and students on their teams.

The **Leading for Equity** module is based on our belief that all of our work is in service of building equitable schools. In this module school leadership teams receive explicit support that helps them identify their roles and build the skills necessary to work for equity. This includes examining their own identities, unpacking biases, and responding to bias by facilitating learning conversations about equity with their peers.

The **Foundations of Common Core** module builds foundational knowledge in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Disciplinary Literacy in order for teacher leaders to drive rigorous content forward in their classrooms and the classrooms of teachers they lead.

Additionally, Leading Educators provides supports that are differentiated to the needs of the district, including leadership coaching to school based leadership teams, leadership and management training, principal support, and program evaluation and assessment.

b. What are the attributes of your ideal partner school or district?

Leading Educators looks for four attributes in its partners:

- 1) A commitment to educational equity and serving a majority of students who qualify for free and reduced meals.
- 2) A dedicated point of contact who sits on or has access to a district level instructional leadership team.
- 3) Willingness to set up the policies and structures that enable our programs to have significant positive impact on students, such as creation of content-specific teacher teams and allowing for collaboration time among those teams.

4) Adoption of Common Core-aligned, rigorous state standards.

c. Describe your experience working with other third party providers to support coherent school and district improvement.

We know that struggling schools often have a multiple of competing instructional priorities and commitments of staff time. To maximize program effectiveness and efficiency, Leading Educators often works with other providers toward a comprehensive human capital and school turnaround strategy. Recently, Leading Educators partnered with TNTP to holistically address the teacher talent pipeline in Detroit, with TNTP recruiting and training new teachers and Leading Educators supporting mentor teachers. Our organizations aligned on curricular language as well as scheduling of workshops and principal commitments, so that all teachers and leaders in participating schools had a seamless experience. Leading Educators makes every effort to similarly align with other providers in each of its regional programs.

Nationally, Leading Educators has partnered with Student Achievement Partners – a key organization in writing the CCSS – to develop our Common Core content, and we have partnered with Unbounded for staff development.

d. What support from the state, district or school partners would enhance your success in Louisiana?

The support that would enhance Leading Educators' success in Louisiana looks very much like the list of ideal partner attributes in 3b. The willingness to engage actively in a districtwide assessment that would result in setting up the enabling conditions for program implementation and commitment to providing a dedicated district instructional leader to this partnership would be critical in ensuring success of this work. Additionally, access to anonymous, student-level, teacher-linked data would be key in allowing us to evaluate the impact of the partnership.

To ensure this work is systemic and leads to far reaching change, Leading Educators would engage with the state department to set goals and monitor the progress of the partnership. Leading Educators is in the process of building a state toolkit that will be a resource for Louisiana and other states in driving policy around distributed leadership and systems of professional learning.