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Executive Summary of

Regional Leadership Academies Cost-Effectiveness Framework

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REGIONAL LEADERSHIP ACADEMIES COST-EFFECTIVENESS FRAMEWORK

Executive Summary

Overview

The North Carolina Race to the Top plan for ensuring equitable distribution of high-quality teachers and leaders includes development of Regional Leadership Academies (RLAs) that will “increasing the number of principals qualified to lead transformational change in low-performing schools in both rural and urban areas.” The RLAs are to be “approved for certifying principals” and will “provide a new model for the preparation, early career support, and continuous professional development of school leaders.” To prepare to address questions about post-RttT sustainability of the RLAs, evaluators created a framework for completing a cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA) of these programs that will address: (a) whether the targeted outcomes of the RLAs outweigh the added costs associated with them, relative to traditional school administration preparation programs that do not specifically or exclusively prepare leaders for low-performing school settings; and (b) whether the RLAs are cost-effective relative to alternative programs that serve the same or similar purposes.

Selection of Comparison Programs

The Evaluation Team selected three large in-state Master’s of School Administration programs (Appalachian State University, the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and East Carolina University’s program), along with the North Carolina Principal Fellows Program, for the first comparison, and two independent programs (the New Leaders for New Schools program and the Aspiring Principals Program [APP] at the New York City Leadership Academy [NYCLA]) for the second comparison.

Measures of Cost-Effectiveness

Proposed measures of cost-effectiveness include both short- and long-term measures. Short-term measures will track (a) whether successful participants or program completers became certified or licensed to serve as principals and (b) growth over time in key areas of leadership knowledge and expertise. Long-term measures will track (c) whether participants become principals, (d) whether those who become principals stay in high-need schools, (e) school performance gains that parallel program matriculant school leadership, and (f) teacher retention levels at schools led by program completers.

A Plan for the Cost-Effectiveness Analysis

- *Step 1:* Collect expenditure data from each of the RLAs.
- *Step 2:* Separate ongoing costs from start-up costs and non-essential costs.
- *Step 3:* Conduct twice-yearly surveys with RLA matriculants as they move through the programs and into NC schools.

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- *Step 4:* Contact comparison programs and solicit their cooperation around cost data collection and program participant outcomes.
- *Step 5:* Report in 2014 on short-term CEA findings and prepare a proposal based on these findings for continuing evaluation activities through at least 2017.

Short-term findings are projected for 2014. These findings will serve as the basis for seeking support to extend CEA efforts beyond NC RttT funding, to at least 2017.

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