California’s Common Core Standards
Improving Teacher Quality (ITQ) State Grants Program
Evaluation Plan Proposal

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1. Evaluation Background

In 2011, the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) ran a competition funded under the federal Improving Teacher Quality (ITQ) State Grants Program for professional development aimed at helping California teachers understand and strengthen their content knowledge in preparation for implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CPEC, 2012). Fifteen grantees, representing California’s eleven geographic regions (minimally composed of a partnership between a school or department of education within an Institute of Higher Education (IHE), a school or division of arts and sciences within an IHE and a high needs Local Education Agency (LEA) and a California County Office of Education) were awarded roughly $250,000 each to meet this goal. With an initial state investment of nearly $3.5 million in this initiative and ultimate goal of increasing student achievement across the state, an evaluation of the initiative’s progress towards stated objectives and effectiveness is imperative.

1.1 Policy Context

The issue of misaligned educational standards in the United States has drawn much attention from educators, researchers and legislators over the past several decades. Research in education, economics, and public policy highlight the gap between U.S. high school graduation requirements and the actual knowledge and skills needed to succeed in postsecondary education and the workforce. The Common Core State Standards Initiative, sponsored jointly by the National Governor’s Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers, was developed in 2009 as a response to this problem (Flores, 2012). The purpose of the Common Core
Standards initiative is to bring into alignment the current diverse range of K-12 content standards across states in mathematics and English-language arts (NGA & CCSSO, 2010). As of May 2012, three US territories and 45 states, including California on August 2, 2010, have adopted the Common Core Standards (NGA & CCSSO, 2012).

Benefits of a comprehensive evaluation of the CPEC grant initiative include: 1) a researched-based appraisal of the way each local partner approached the charge of increasing teacher capacity in relation to the Common Core Standards, 2) an assessment of the outcomes and effectiveness of the grant initiative and 3) formative feedback aimed at improving future iterations of the project effort.

1.2 Relevant Literature

A teacher’s content knowledge greatly impacts their classroom practice ultimately affecting, either positively or negatively, student learning outcomes (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Yet research has shown that traditionally, the bulk of a teacher’s interactions are on issues of materials, discipline and problems of individual students and not on acquisition of new knowledge or skills (Elmore, 2000). The professional development offered by CPEC grant recipients is an opportunity to strategically strengthen the content knowledge of California teacher’s in preparation for implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The tension negotiating new content acquisition and current classroom instructional practices is often difficult for teachers to resolve (Sherin, 2002) and, to be effective, must be situated in current research on teacher learning and best practices for professional development implementation.
1.2.1 Effective Professional Development

Research shows that the quality of professional development is enhanced if framed within a particular context and definable problems that resonate with the intended learners (Coburn, 2006). It must also encourage collaborative group inquiry (Gallimore et al., 2009). Successful professional development providers plan for potential conflict among participants involved in these processes understanding that that conflict is central to community building, particularly when norms and beliefs are challenged (Achinstein, 2001). The establishment of collaborative norms and the use of protocols have been found to be useful in negotiating such conflict and facilitating productive group problem solving and inquiry processes (Nelson et al., 2008).

1.2.2 Teacher Learning

Teachers learn best when treated as professional peers. Instead of lecturing or utilizing an acquisition metaphor of the teacher-learner as a passive receiver of information, a participation metaphor or collective-learning strategy is widely recognized as best practice for delivering effective professional development to teachers (Sfard, 1998, OECD, 2011). Following this approach, teachers learn most effectively through community engagement and active participation in practice, discourse and activity. Research by Putman and Borko (2000) in which cognition is described as situated, social and a distributed activity reinforce the claim that effective adult professional development must include participatory structures. Effective professional development providers utilize multiple stances based on their learning goals and the needs of the audiences they are addressing. Examples of some of these stances may include a
coaching stance focusing on activities to increase awareness and broaden perspectives with the teacher maintained as the primary source of information, a collaborative stance in which ideas are co-developed or a consulting stance, in which solutions may be suggested if requested (Lipton & Wellman, 2007).

1.2.3 Changing Practice

For lasting change in teacher practice to occur following professional development, teachers must engage in on-going personal “experimentation,” described as integrating and continually reconsidering their existing knowledge in relation to the new knowledge, following the professional development exposure (Franke et al., 2001). Willingness (or resistance) to engage in such “experimentation” is influenced by several factors including: 1) the congruence of the new idea or knowledge with the teacher’s preexisting beliefs, 2) the degree of intensity and persuasiveness of the new information and 3) the degree of voluntariness teachers felt when asked to integrate the new knowledge into their practice (Coburn, 2004). Teacher learning groups, called “Professional Learning Communities” (PLCs) have been shown to be effective in mediating the circumstances that support sustainable changes in teacher practice (Wood, 2007). Educators involved in PLCs often share goals of implementing their new learning which enhances the potential for professional development activities to influence teacher practice as opportunities for peer collaboration and public practice are increased (Wood, 2007).
2. Guiding Evaluation Questions

The targeted core questions and subquestions guiding this evaluation as well as the proposed methodological method for addressing each are represented in Figure 1. For further details describing the alignment of the guiding evaluation questions with the evaluation requirements of the ITQ grant initiative, see Appendix A: Evaluation Question Alignment.

Table 1: Guiding Evaluation Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Evaluation Questions</th>
<th>Evaluation Subquestions</th>
<th>Proposed Research Methodology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What is the scope of this project in California?</td>
<td>What proportion of the state’s teacher workforce in high needs LEAs are reached?</td>
<td>District Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What subject areas are being reached by this initiative?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What grade levels are being reached by this initiative?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What are the strategies grantees are using to improve teachers’ ability to meet the Common Core Standards?</td>
<td>To what extent do the strategies and practices vary across districts?</td>
<td>PD Provider Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What are some of the more or less promising strategies and practices?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent are promising strategies and practices context dependent?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What barriers do grantees face in implementing professional development activities?</td>
<td>Do partners have adequate resources?</td>
<td>PD Provider Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do partners have adequate technical assistance?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there other aspects of local capacity that limit implementation?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 4. How has the initiative impacted teacher knowledge and practices after one year? | To what extent have teachers’ beliefs about their ability to teach their subject area changed?  
To what extent have teachers’ instructional practices changed?  
To what extent do teachers believe the professional development can be implemented in their own classrooms? | Teacher Surveys, Interviews |
|---|---|---|
| 5. How are the partners interacting under this initiative and what facilitates or inhibits successful interaction? | To what extent are local grantees interacting with and benefiting from the A&D consulting services?  
To what extent are local grantees interacting with and benefiting from the education department within the partner IHE?  
To what extent are local grantees interacting with and benefiting from the arts and science unit within the partner IHE? | Interviews with Grantees and Partners |
| 6. What internal measurements/systems of inquiry are built into the program to measure the evidence of the grant’s successful implementation and outcomes? | To what extent do the systems vary across districts?  
What are some of the more or less promising systems?  
To what extent are promising systems context dependent?  
What factors make these systems more or less likely to be sustained long-term? | District and Program Surveys |
3. Approach/Methodology

3.1 Mixed Method Evaluation

The goal of this proposed evaluation is to assess projects funded under the federal Improving Teacher Quality (ITQ) State Grants Program from two different types of data – quantitative data based largely on cross-section surveys and qualitative data gathered primarily through semi-structured interviews. This goal is best achieved by using a mixed method approach which John Creswell and Vicki Plano Clark (2011) label a multiphase design. The multiphase design is recognized as a mixed method design intended to obtain different but complimentary data on the same policy area of interest. In the multiphase design, and in terms of how we propose to carry out this evaluation, one approach does not take priority over the other. We will consider the findings from our qualitative and quantitative analyses evenly because both approaches and their associated data will inform our evaluation question from complementary perspectives.

The parallel approach for our evaluation contains strands of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, which will converge when we reach the interpretation stage of the evaluation. While the two strands of evaluation research will proceed concurrently, the quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis occur independent of each other. In the following three sections, we outline the specific data components of each strand and then discuss further how we propose to mix the two strands at the interpretation stage of the evaluation.
3.2. Evaluation Component: Quantitative Data

3.2.1 Survey Design Approach

A primary goal of the quantitative strand of the evaluation is to obtain information about of each of the grantee projects’ basic design, for purposes of description and comparison (See Table 1: Q1 & Q6). Another objective is to obtain information about the impact of ITQ grant-sponsored professional development on teacher knowledge about the Common Core Standards as well as their classroom practice (Table 1: Q4). Survey research is designed to “describe specific characteristics of a large group of persons, objects, or institutions,” and as such, is an appropriate method through which to examine these questions (Jaeger, 1988, p 449).

Surveys will be administered in two separate phases of the evaluation, to two separate participant groups. The goal in Phase I will be to collect descriptive information from district administrators from each grantee project, regarding implementation details of their ITQ grant. Once we have more information about the design of the professional development projects, the goal for the Phase II survey will be to collect data on beliefs and teaching practices of teachers who have and have not participated in professional development through the ITQ grant program. Collection of this survey data across all fifteen projects will allow for comparison of these variables between teachers from differing grantee regions, schools, subject areas, and a variety of other criteria.

A. Sample Selection

The target population for the Phase I survey are district and program administrators who oversee and work directly with the implementation of each
ITQ grant project. At this stage, we are unsure how many people fall into this category; however we anticipate that the number will be relatively small (e.g. two to three people per project). Thus we plan to administer this survey to all district and program administrators who are directly involved with the grant in order to obtain the most complete picture of all grant programs.

The target population for the Phase II survey are teachers who have participated in professional development through an ITQ grant project. As with our Phase I survey, we are unsure how many teachers will participate in each grant project, but we plan to obtain that information from the Phase I survey. Once we have a clearer understanding of the selection process and number of teacher participants, we will be able to design our sampling frame for Phase II. If each grant project has a small number of participants, we would administer the survey to all teachers. However if we find that each project serves a large number of participants, we would then use a stratified sampling strategy to identify a random sample of teachers from each grant project. We will also select a group of teachers who have not participated in any CCS professional development to serve as a control group. If all teachers in an ITQ grant school are required to participate in professional development, then the control group participants would be selected from schools in similar districts which did not receive an ITQ grant. However if only a small percentage of teachers in each school are participating in the professional development, we will then recruit non-participant teachers from the same school to serve as the control group.
B. Instrument Design

We propose using a Tailored Design Method to create the survey instruments for this evaluation. Tailored Design refers to a process of constructing and administering surveys that “take into account features of the survey situation, and that have as their goal the overall reduction of survey error” (Dillman, 2000, p. 4). Currently, we plan to administer both the district administrator and teacher surveys electronically, as we believe that both groups will be most receptive to this mode of administration. Given their busy schedules, and assuming that most of them have access to some form of mobile technology, both district administrators and teachers will be more likely to complete a survey at a time and place that is most convenient for them. It is also likely that a paper survey would get forgotten or misplaced among the other paperwork that they must attend to. Therefore, we propose to administer electronic surveys, with the ultimate goal of achieving the highest response rate. If however, during the piloting process we discover that another mode would be preferable (e.g. paper or phone interview), we will then modify our strategy accordingly.

C. Pilot Study

Both surveys will be piloted with comparable populations located near the evaluation team headquarters in Los Angeles. While resources do not allow for a full-scale pilot study, we will administer pretest both surveys to with a small group of respondents and follow up with a short focus group in order to refine
survey administration procedures and instrument items (Dillman, 2000; Berends, 2006).

D. Survey Administration

Once the surveys have been piloted, the district administrator surveys will be administered during Phase I of the evaluation. Due to the small number of potential administrative participants for the fifteen grant recipients, the administrative population will be used (Gay et al., 2012). Teacher surveys will be administered during Phase II to the aforementioned groups. A detailed description of administration procedures is outlined in the timeline below.

E. Data Analysis

Survey item responses will be combined into a scale based on correlations between the key survey questions of interest and analyzed using Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient, factor analysis, and Rasch Rating Scale analysis (Berends, 2006).

3.2.2 Survey Data Collection Timeline

We briefly outline our survey data collection timeline here. Section 4, which outlines our work plan, contains more details about this process.

August 2012

- Phase I survey instrument will be developed and pilot-tested with local administrators who are not affiliated with the grant
District administrators for each grant project will be identified and contacted by e-mail and phone to request their participation in the survey.

September 2012

- Phase I survey will be administered to all identified district administrators
- Survey results will be compiled, analyzed, and used to develop Phase II survey

October 2012 - April 2013

- Preliminary Phase II survey instrument will be developed and modified throughout the year, based on findings from Phase 1 survey as well as qualitative data
- A list of all teachers who have participated in ITQ grant-sponsored professional development will be compiled for each grant project
- Control group of teachers will be identified, based on structure of the grantee projects

April 2013

- All treatment and control group teachers will be contacted by e-mail to request their participation in the survey
- Phase II survey instrument will be finalized and pilot-tested with local teachers who are not affiliated with the grant
- Phase II survey will be sent by email link to all identified treatment and control group teachers

May 2013

- Reminder emails will be sent to all teachers
- Survey results will be compiled for analysis with qualitative data

3.2.3 Secondary Data Analysis

We plan to position our survey data within the broader demographic, financial, and policy contexts of the eleven California County Superintendents Educational Services Association.
(CCSESA) districts in the state. Much of this data is available through the California Department of Education Division of Data and Statistics. Fortunately, our efforts to collect this data will be facilitated by the Division’s inclusion of CCSESA regions within their records. In other words, we will be able to pull data for each CCSESA region and match it to the corresponding grantee. We will also be able to collect district and school-level data for each grantee and link those data to survey responses.

By combining existing secondary data with the primary data we will collect, we can provide a more complex analysis of survey findings (Kiecolt & Nathan, 1985). Our goal of linking contextual data to survey data is not to infer statistical relationships between certain variables of interest in this evaluation (i.e. a grantee’s level of state funding and the grantee’s outcomes after one year). Rather, we use secondary data from the Department of Education to contextualize the survey results of the evaluation questions that focus on the scope of the ITQ grants in California. In a practical sense, obtaining secondary data from the Department of Education will increase efficiency by utilizing data from survey respondents that is already available elsewhere.

Table 2 contains a representation of the type of data we intend to collect from the Department of Education:

Table 2: Possible variables collected from Dept. of Education for secondary data analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCSESA</td>
<td>Percent of Title I funding as total expenditures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Size of student population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of urban school districts and schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| District   | Number of students
|            | Number of students eligible for free and reduced lunch
|            | Number of ELL students
|            | Race/ethnicity percentages
|            | Migrant population in district                                            |
| School     | Number of students in school
|            | Number of students on free and reduced lunch
|            | Number of ELL students
|            | Race/ethnicity percentages
|            | Number of board certified teachers in school
|            | Number of teachers teaching in their endorsement/credential
|            | Average years of teaching experience
|            | Number of teachers with emergency credential/provisional status
|            | Amount of Title I funding                                                 |

This list of variables is not exhaustive; upon completion of the surveys we plan to collect additional data from the Department of Education based on survey responses that identify possible data points which may further contextualize survey responses.

Armed with this secondary data our goal is to provide a broad survey of the various contexts in which the ITQ grants were awarded. As such, we will not make any sort of causal claims between variables gathered from secondary data sources and our outcomes of interest collected from surveys, interviews, or observations. Rather, we simply seek to use this secondary data as a way to provide richer insight into the environment in which these grants were awarded and carried out.

### 3.3 Evaluation Component: Qualitative Data

#### 3.3.1 Case Study Approach

In order to provide the most comprehensive and multi-dimensional view of the range of ITQ grant projects, a qualitative component is also essential to the evaluation design. Key
objectives of the qualitative strand are to provide in-depth overviews of a variety of strategies that grantees have utilized to prepare teachers to implement the Common Core Standards (Table 1: Q2), uncover some of the barriers to implementation (Table 1: Q3), describe the impact that grant-sponsored professional development has had on teacher practice and beliefs (Table 1: Q4), and describe the nature of interactions between various partners in the grant initiative (Table 1: Q5). Given that budget and time restraints prevent us from obtaining extensive qualitative data from all fifteen grant projects, we propose a two-phase multisite case study approach, where we identify a number of purposefully-selected grantee sites to explore in greater depth (Merriam, 1998).

Case study approaches most often use a purposive sampling approach, in which a researcher selects information-rich cases “from which the most can be learned” (Merriam, 1998, p. 61). Our multiphase evaluation affords us the opportunity to purposefully choose six cases in which we will comprehensively collect interview and observational data. Upon completing Phase I of our evaluation, we will review our preliminary findings to determine the six grantees which provide the greatest variation on our outcomes of interest. We limit our data collection to six not for philosophical reasons but rather for budgetary purposes; we are confident that six cases will provide us a diverse set of cases from which to draw inferences within and across the six grant projects we study.

3.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

In order to gain a more complete and accurate view of our case study sites, we will use multiple data gathering techniques to obtain a variety of information and allow for triangulation of data (Merriam, 1998). The first phase of the qualitative strand will involve conducting semi-
structured interviews with district and university leaders at all grant sites, in order to complement the survey data on program structure, goals, and content. We feel it is important to spend time at each site to develop a complex picture of each grant project, as most of them will vary significantly from each other. Once this interview data has been analyzed in conjunction with the survey findings, a smaller group of select cases will be identified for further study.

In Phase II of the evaluation, we plan to interview several distinct groups of people who are involved with the selected grant sites. These groups include teachers who are participating in grant-sponsored professional development, professional development providers, and the A&D consultants. We will refer to our primary evaluation questions in mind, as well as preliminary findings from the Phase 1 quantitative and qualitative data in order to design the interview protocols. One semi-structured interview will be conducted with each participant, lasting between 45 minutes to 90 minutes each. All interviews will be recorded and transcribed for later analysis. Through these interviews we plan to gain detailed descriptions of promising program strategies, implementation challenges, and perceptions of what is being learned and gained through these grant initiatives.

3.3.3 Document Collection

In Phase II, we will review documents from the selected grantee sites to supplement our survey and interview data. Specifically, we will analyze original RFP grants, recruitment and training materials, strategic plans or other planning documents, as well as existing evaluation reports and supporting documentation. Together, these documents will provide additional information on program design and goals, professional development content, and administrative structure, which we can use to triangulate with other data sources.
3.3.4 Participant and Program Observations

It would be difficult to assess the impact of grant-sponsored professional development on teacher practice without actually observing instruction as it takes place. Therefore, during our Phase II site visits we will conduct observations of teachers who have participated in grant-sponsored professional development, providing instruction on a subject on which they have received training. In these observations we will focus on gathering examples of instructional practice, as well as noting interactions between the teacher and students (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995).

We also plan to observe professional development sessions in order to see what the teachers are learning and how they interact with professional development providers. All observation notes will be transcribed and used for later data analysis.

3.3.5 Qualitative Data Analysis

The process of data analysis will involve the review of compiling interview transcripts, observation notes and documents, in order to provide a detailed description of each site as well as and identify broad themes of program impact (Creswell, 2003). All data sources will be initially coded (Merriam, 1998) using QSR NVivo software. Through secondary analysis, analytic coding will be applied to the topic codes to identify themes, subthemes and subcategory patterns (Merriam, 1998; Richards & Morse, 2007).
3.4 Discussion

In general, a multiphase mixed method evaluation merges the results from the two independent strands after the analysis stage. We plan to first merge the results of our analysis, guided by the questions connected to that respective strand of data, and then interpret our findings within a framework of two questions at the center of this evaluation:

1. What are program grantees doing with their grants to improve teacher workforce capacity?
2. What effects, if any, on teacher knowledge and ultimately student learning can be attributed to the grant initiative?

The end result provides opportunities to examine where the qualitative and quantitative findings converge and diverge from each other.

Following this basic structure of the multiphase evaluation design, we illustrate the phases of our evaluation in Appendix B. The parallel nature of the evaluation is represented in the first two phases, parallel data collection and parallel data analysis. In these phases of the evaluation, the quantitative strand and the qualitative strand proceed concurrently. The solid arrows represent the process by which the evaluation progresses. After the analysis stage, the results of each strand are merged. In Appendix B we represent the merged results by posing the two broad questions guiding this evaluation. We also represent in the analysis phase, with dashed arrows, how the questions we have developed for this evaluation inform the analysis of each strand and the subsequent consideration of our merged results.
In the interpretation stage of this process we have two objectives in considering the merged analysis of the qualitative and quantitative strands. First, where do findings converge and diverge from each other? This question is at the center of a mixed methods evaluation. The purpose of our evaluation’s mixed methods approach is to uncover complementary perspectives related to the evaluation of projects funded under the ITQ grants that are distinct but simultaneously inform the same overarching questions about improving teacher workforce capacity and affecting teacher knowledge and student learning.

As with any type of evaluation, our proposed approach presents possible challenges. First, with its two independent strands of data collection and analysis, our evaluation runs the risk of producing evaluative findings that are not in perfect harmony with each other. In other words, the independent nature of the two strands in this study may result in findings that are not only divergent but incongruous. This risk is intuitive because our evaluation intends to examine an inaugural grant program for which no prior evaluation exists.

Another challenge inherent in our proposed mixed method evaluation is the sampling strategy for the qualitative strand. Our purposeful sampling strategy for qualitative data depends on our choice of grantees. While we are confident that our sampling choice will be methodologically sound, a critic could charge that our findings are not broadly representative of ITQ grantees in California. As we will discuss in our final report, however, our qualitative data is intended to answer questions related to the complexity of grantees’ program and implementation strategies, not necessarily provide a survey of all statewide characteristics related to ITQ grants. This possible critique of our sampling strategy, like the possibility of contradictory findings, in no way impedes a robust and rigorous evaluation. Rather, we bring light to these concerns to acknowledge our understanding of the complexity surrounding the ITQ grants’ implementation
and effects in California; we propose our mixed method evaluation to intentionally capture multiple dimensions of this complexity.

The mixed methods evaluation we propose mixes the findings from parallel quantitative and qualitative strands to bring complementary benefits and nonintersecting limitations to the evaluation questions we present here. We consider the quantitative strand to have three strengths that distinguish it from the qualitative strand: 1) the survey instrument will be administered widely across the state, which enables us to compare certain variables across all programs; 2) quantitative data will provide measurements of key outcomes in accordance with federal reporting requirements for the ITQ grant; and 3) the nature of the secondary data we will use requires very little data collection effort relative to collecting primary data. Likewise, the qualitative strand provides three distinct benefits to the study: 1) an intentional focus on collecting data from certain grantees allows us to delve deeply into the dynamics around their use and implementation of the ITQ grant; 2) the nature of the semi-structured interviews allows for flexibility in examining the beliefs and practices of various stakeholders of interest; and 3) qualitative data collection allows us to capture complex relationships among stakeholders that are of particular interest to CPEC.

4. Work Plan

This section briefly describes each of the tasks the evaluation team will carry out during the mixed methods evaluation of the ITQ grant program. We visually represent this work plan with a Gantt chart found in Appendix C.
4.1 Preliminary Phase I (August 2012)

During this phase, the evaluation team will develop and pilot the administrator survey using local administrators not affiliated with an ITQ grant. This will allow the team to refine the survey in order to field it with participating administrators in Phase I. During this phase the research team will also determine which district administrators to contact and will begin contacting them through email and/or phone to request participation in the survey.

4.2 Phase I (September 2012)

Phase I of this evaluation will gather both quantitative and qualitative information across all the grantees to attain a broad overview of the programs funded through the ITQ grant. This information will be both analyzed for the evaluation, and will help to inform the purposeful sampling of Phase II of this evaluation.

Quantitative Strand

The evaluation team will collect secondary data through the California Department of Education Division of Data and Statistics. Using DOE’s online DataQuest system, the evaluation team will collect relevant data around accountability (e.g. API, AYP), test data, enrollment, graduates, dropouts, course enrollments, staffing, and data regarding English learners. This data will help to contextualize each of the districts receiving ITQ funds, as well as the schools within the districts, and will allow the team to carry out purposeful sampling for later phases of the evaluation research.
During Phase I, the research team will also collect survey data from district administrators across the grantee districts. These surveys will consist of descriptive information detailing the ‘reach’ of the program within the district. Therefore, the survey will uncover how many teachers are receiving the professional development training through the university partnerships, as well as at what grade levels and in which subject areas. Collection of this type of data will give the research team a broad overview of who is receiving services and how those services are distributed within the system. Since each district gets a fair amount of autonomy in deciding how the ITQ funds are used, this initial data collection will inform one of the primary RFP question from CPEC, which is to understand the reach of this particular program, as well as how the individual districts chose to use their funds.

This quantitative phase will help the research team understand the variation in programs at a descriptive level. The research team recognizes that they need to take the first portion of the evaluation to get an overview of the various programs, in order to more purposefully move into later phases of analysis. The initial data gathering is essential for informing the course of the rest of the evaluation.

*Qualitative Strand*

Paired with the initial quantitative information gathering, the research team will simultaneously carry out initial qualitative information gathering in Phase I. The research team will conduct semi-structured interviews with district administrators and partner university personnel in all of the school districts receiving grants. These interviews will elucidate how exactly the various partners envision the program operating, and will allow the evaluation team
to assess the level of agreement across these partners. We will also begin to preliminarily collect relevant documents for analysis.

Since it would be too time consuming and costly to interview all participants across all grantee districts, focusing on those in leadership positions will allow the researchers to get a sense of the operation of each separate district. The evaluation team will then use this descriptive qualitative information to inform the selection of sites where more in depth interviewing and information gathering is warranted.

4.3 Preliminary Phase II (October 2012-April 2013)

The survey instrument for Phase II, which assesses teachers’ gains from the ITQ sponsored professional development, will be developed during this phase. The survey design will be responsive to the stated goals the district administrators identified in Phase I of the design. Prior to moving on to Phase II, the instrument will have been field tested with local teachers who are not involved with the evaluation, in either the treatment or control group. Additionally, a list of all teachers who have participated in ITQ grant-sponsored professional development will be compiled for each grant project, allowing the team to create its sampling frame. Further, if needed during this phase the control group will be identified. A control group is needed if participation in the ITQ grant professional development is universal, or near universal in the particular district.
4.4 Phase II (May-June 2013)

Phase II of the evaluation will include more in-depth information gathering of both quantitative and qualitative data.

**Quantitative Strand**

The evaluation team will carry out cross-sectional surveys of teachers who received professional development through the ITQ grant, and will also collect data from teachers in similar district who did not receive ITQ grants to serve as a control group (if needed). The data will consist of self-reports of teaching attitudes and behaviors. This survey will examine teacher perspectives on teaching practice and allow the evaluation team to discover whether there is evidence that the ITQ funded professional development activities influenced teacher practice. The surveys will be sent to teachers through email, allowing them to access the survey when convenient.

**Qualitative Strand**

The evaluation team will carry out semi-structure interviews of PD providers, A&D consultants, and teachers at selected school districts. The districts selected will be purposefully sampled based on information collected during Phase I, in order to have diversity in locality (urban/rural), socioeconomic composition (poor/non-poor), as well as program focus (elementary/secondary, math/science v. literacy). The interviews will take place within the school sites and will be audio recorded in order to allow for transcription. Classroom and professional development training observations will also take place in this phase. Finally, this phase will also include document collection as needed.
4.4 Phase III (July-August 2013)

Phase III will consist of data analysis and the merging of qualitative and quantitative results. During this phase researchers will analyze data in order to make inferences about what the programs are doing to improve teacher workforce capacity, and what effects if any on teacher knowledge can be attributed to the grant initiative. This phase will take approximately 2 months and culminate in a preliminary briefing for CPEC staff. The preliminary briefing will contain the findings from the evaluation, but will not include the final report. This allows the CPEC to ask for clarification or additional questions that the evaluation team will respond to in Phase IV.

4.5 Phase IV (September-December 2013)

During Phase IV, the evaluation team will create the continuation evaluation design memo, outlining the ways the evaluation could continue for another year. Further, Phase IV will culminate in a written comprehensive final report, being cognizant of feedback received in Phase III. The report will include a wide-circulation summary suitable for sharing with various audiences. Upon release of this report, the evaluation team will conduct a final briefing for CPEC staff and other mutually agreed upon state-level audiences.
5. Project Schedule and Deliverables

The project schedule and deliverables schedule, as outlined in Section 4 and Appendix C, will be monitored by the project’s principal investigator in partnership with the other staff involved with this evaluation. There are, however, several potential factors which deserve consideration prior to project initiation that may affect (and possibly hinder) a successful conclusion of the evaluation proposed here. The first of these considerations is cooperation from the grant recipients, each of which have a vested interest in the outcome. All projects are eligible to exercise a Year 2 option pending sufficiently meeting Year 1 objectives and the conclusions of the external audit may impact such decisions. As such, care must be taken to identify and avoid potential informant bias. Triangulation of all data informing evaluation conclusions is thus imperative. In addition, due to the perceived “high stakes” nature of the external evaluation, there may be resentment of what may be viewed as unrequested oversight by team. Every effort will be made to alleviate such concerns by reassuring the Grantees that the evaluation is looking for trends in data and is not influenced by singular events or individuals observed.

A second consideration is potential complications in the internal relations of the four mandatory Grantee partners. Evaluators will take special note to document award distribution including percentage allocation decision making around access between partners.

Finally, part of the mandatory Grantee partners include a “high needs” LEA defined as having at least 10,000 or 20% of its students below the federal poverty line or have a “high” (undefined percentage) of teachers teaching out of endorsement or holding emergency or temporary certification. This discrepancy in definition must be considered when making generalizability claims based on any evaluation. Examples of questions that must be negotiated
include the influence of teaching students of poverty may affect a teachers’ belief in student achievement potential, thus affecting the effectiveness of a professional development program. The strategies that work with one particular population of students are not necessarily generalizable to others. How does being under-licensed (or arguably, under prepared due to the lack of basic content knowledge by being out of endorsement or lacking fundamental training in both pedagogical and instructional strategies being emergency, provisional or temporary certified) affect a participant’s professional development experience? Prior to generalizing the evaluation results of a specific program, the specific context of the educators and the students they teach must be considered.
6. References


7. Management Addendum

7.1 Staff Qualifications and Duties

As outlined in the this proposal and the budget outlined in the following section, we propose to carry out this evaluation with one senior staff person, one mid-level staff person, two junior staff people, and one hourly employ. In this section we outline each staff person’s qualifications, responsibilities, and intended contribution to the evaluation. These positions presume that this evaluation, if accepted, would be housed in the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at the University of California Los Angeles.

**Senior Staff: Ruby Donner**

The senior staff person, Ruby Donner, will serve as the principle investigator (PI) for this evaluation. This individual has demonstrated ability in the areas of qualitative, quantitative, mixed method research, and program evaluation. The individual’s ability serve as PI is well established by 1) scholarly and professional publications, 2) professional and academic employment, and 3) previous evaluation work in education-related fields. Dr. Donner holds a Ph.D. in Public Policy from the University of Washington with a BA in Psychology from the University of Chicago and an MA in Teaching from Stanford University.

Dr. Donner will dedicate 40 percent of one FTE to broad management and oversight of the Common Core Grant Initiative Evaluation with a focus on evaluation design, project management, and communication with CPEC representatives and other external stakeholders. Dr. Donner is a tenured faculty member at the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at the University of California Los Angeles with a joint appointment in the Luskin School of Public Affairs.
**Mid-Level Staff: Henry Bennett**

One mid-level staff person will oversee evaluation design, monitoring and oversight of the data collection and analysis process, and writing reports and briefings. The mid-level staff person, Dr. Henry Bennett, presently focuses on the science of learning and the design of educational learning environments. His current work includes a study of a school reform initiative using a quasi-experimental evaluation design, as well as a study on after-school programs for first-through fifth-graders. He holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of California, Los Angeles and a BA in Human Development from Bowdoin College.

Dr. Bennett will dedicate 40 percent of one FTE position to the Common Core Grant Initiative Evaluation. He is a tenured faculty member at the University of Southern California Rossier School of Education and also holds appointments at the university’s Center for Cognitive Technology and Center for Outcomes Research and Evaluation.

**Junior Staff: Two Post-Doctoral Positions**

Two junior staff positions will be responsible for project management, data collection, transcription, data analysis, and other research duties as needed. The junior staff positions will be filled by Ph.D. students who have recently earned their doctorate in either education, public policy, sociology, or another related field. Demonstrated ability in qualitative, quantitative, mixed method research, and program evaluation is a requirement for this post-doc position. Ideal candidates will also have an established track record of conference paper presentations and or scholarly journal publications. Individuals with prior professional K-12 will also be strongly preferred for this post-doctoral position.
Dr. Donner and Dr. Bennett have advisees and recent graduates of their program who are interested and willing to apply for these program positions. The two junior staff positions will each dedicated 50 percent of a 1.5 FTE position to this evaluation. Extensive travel will be expected of these positions.

**Hourly Employee**

One hourly employee will be hired six months prior to the completion date of this evaluation. The hourly employee will be responsible for editing reports, creating communication pieces for stakeholders, and other administrative tasks as needed. A bachelor’s degree, demonstrated writing skills, and some professional experience with education policy are the preferred qualification for this position.
7. Proposed Budget

Table 7.1: Survey Data Collection

Survey Collection
($15/respondent)

(Pilot)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Type</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrator Survey – 30 survey</td>
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<td>$450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Survey – 60 surveys</td>
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<td>$900</td>
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</table>

(Phase I)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Type</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrator Survey – avg. 5/project site</td>
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<td>$1,950</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(Phase II)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Type</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Surveys, Program Effects – avg. 25/project site</td>
<td></td>
<td>$4,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Surveys, Control Group – avg. 25/project site</td>
<td></td>
<td>$4,875</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey Subtotal $13,050

Survey Administration Costs (300% of Survey Costs) $39,150

Survey Total Cost $52,200
Table 7.2: Site Visit Data Collection

Site Visits
($1,200/person + $100/per day, per site, per person)

(Phase I)

- Introductory Site Visit – 15 sites/3 researchers, 3 days per site
  $140,400

(Phase II)

- Comprehensive Site Visit – 6 sites/3 researchers, 5 days per site
  $30,600

Site Visits Total Cost
$171,000

Table 7.3: Total Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey Total</td>
<td>$52,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Visits Total</td>
<td>$171,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Data Collection Total Cost
$223,200
Table 7.4: Analysis and Administrative Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>18-Month Salary</th>
<th>FTE</th>
<th>% on project</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>$ 252,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>$ 100,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Level</td>
<td>$ 144,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>$ 57,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>$  72,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>$  72,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hourly</td>
<td>$12/hour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$  5,760</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Analysis and Administrative Total Cost $ 236,160

Table 7.5: Total Costs

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection Cost</td>
<td>$ 223,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis and Administrative Cost</td>
<td>$ 236,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8% Project Overhead</td>
<td>$  40,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Cost $ 499,360
## Proposed Evaluation Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Survey</th>
<th><strong>1. What is the scope of this project in California?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. What proportion of the state’s teacher workforce in high needs LEAs are reached?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. What subject areas are being reached by this initiative?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. What grade levels are being reached by this initiative?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD Provider Interviews</td>
<td><strong>2. What are the strategies grantees are using to improve teachers’ ability to meet the Common Core Standards?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. To what extent do the strategies and practices vary across districts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. What are some of the more or less promising strategies and practices?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. To what extent are promising strategies and practices context dependent?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD Provider Interviews</td>
<td><strong>3. What barriers do grantees face in implementing professional development activities?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Do partners have adequate resources?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Do partners have adequate technical assistance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Are there other aspects of local capacity that limit implementation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Surveys, Interviews</td>
<td><strong>4. How has the initiative impacted teacher knowledge and practices after one year?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. To what extent have teachers’ beliefs about their ability to teach their subject area changed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. To what extent have teachers’ instructional practices changed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. To what extent do teachers believe the professional development can be implemented in their own classrooms?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews with Grantees and Partners</td>
<td><strong>5. How are the partners interacting under this initiative and what facilitates or inhibits successful interaction?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. To what extent are local grantees interacting with and benefiting from the A&amp;D consulting services?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. To what extent are local grantees interacting with and benefiting from the education department within the partner IHE?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. To what extent are local grantees interacting with and benefiting from the arts and science unit within the partner IHE?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District and Program Surveys</td>
<td><strong>6. What internal measurements/systems of inquiry are built into the program to measure the evidence of the grant’s successful implementation and outcomes?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. To what extent do the systems vary across districts?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. What are some of the more or less promising systems?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. To what extent are promising systems context dependent?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. What factors make these systems more or less likely to be sustained long-term?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## RFP Questions (Question numbers from RFP)

| A1) Across grantees, what significant variations in approach are supported under these grants, and to what extent are the variations promising? |
| A4) To what extent and in what ways are partners implementing the proposed professional development activities? What barriers to implementation exist and what is being done to address these barriers? |
| A2) Do the partners have adequate resources, technical assistance, and other aspects of local capacity to implement the grant as anticipated? |
| B1) What effects do these grants have on teacher knowledge in the relevant areas of the curriculum? |
| B2) To what extent are these projects supporting high-quality professional development? |
| A3) How are partners interacting under this grant initiative, and what facilitates or inhibits the successful interaction among them? |
| C1) In what ways are local grantees interacting with and benefiting from the A&D consulting support services? What issues, if any, have arisen? |
| C2) To what extent does information available to the grantees from any source perform a useful formative function? |
| C3) In what specific ways is the evaluator seeking, and able to, contribute to the current or future operation of grant-funded professional development activities in each site? |
| A5) What systems are in place to consider or document the success of each project, and will these systems develop the requisite evidence to guide further project operations? |
| B4) Over longer periods of time, what feasible evaluation designs can best track the effects of the grant’s investments? |
| B5) What evidence supports or refutes the claim that this investment of Title II funds has been a worthwhile contribution to the overall goals of NCLB and the state’s efforts to improve education locally? |
Appendix B: Evaluation Approach Diagram

**Quantitative Data**
*Cross-Sectional Surveys:*
District Administrators
Teachers
*Secondary Sources:*
District and School Characteristics

**Qualitative Data**
*Semi-Structured Interviews:*
PD Providers, Teachers, A&D Consultants, and Grantees
*Document Collection:*
PD Materials; Teacher Evaluations

**Quantitative Analysis**
Descriptive Statistics

**Qualitative Analysis**
Content Analysis

**Questions**
What is the scope of this project in California?
How has the initiative impacted teacher knowledge and practices after one year?
What internal measurements/systems of inquiry are built into the program to measure the evidence of the grant’s successful implementation and outcomes?

**Merge Results**
*What are program grantees doing with their grants to improve teacher workforce capacity?*
*What effects, if any, on teacher knowledge and ultimately student learning can be attributed to the grant initiative?*

**Questions**
What are the strategies grantees are using to improve teachers’ ability to meet the Common Core Standards?
What barriers do grantees face in implementing professional development activities?
How has the initiative impacted teacher knowledge and practices after one year?
How are the partners interacting under this initiative and what facilitates or inhibits successful interaction?

**Interpretation of Merged Results**
Appendix C: Project Timeline Gantt Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Phase I</td>
<td>Develop Pilot Survey</td>
<td>8/12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-Phase I</td>
<td>Outreach to District Administrators</td>
<td>9/12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase I</td>
<td>Survey Data Collection</td>
<td>9/12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase I</td>
<td>Interview Data Collection</td>
<td>10/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase I</td>
<td>Secondary Data Collection (Dept. of Education)</td>
<td>11/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase II</td>
<td>Survey Data Collection</td>
<td>12/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase II</td>
<td>Interview Data Collection + Teacher Observations</td>
<td>12/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase II</td>
<td>Document Collection</td>
<td>1/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase III</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>2/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase III</td>
<td>Preliminary Report to CPEC</td>
<td>3/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase IV</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>4/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase IV</td>
<td>Report Composition</td>
<td>5/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase IV</td>
<td>Final Briefing to CPEC</td>
<td>6/13</td>
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