Section A. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROJECT

Project INCLUDE (Intensive iNterventionists as Collaborative Leaders for Urban Diverse Environments) will prepare 32 urban minority scholars to obtain an Education Specialist Degree (EdS) in Special Education to work within schools and their districts to implement data-based individualization (DBI) to provide support of students with persistent and severe learning and behavioral problems that need the most intensive individualized supports. This interdisciplinary Specialist program with support 16 Reading teachers in Special Education certification and 16 Special Education Teachers to receive the Endorsement in Reading along with specialization in Intensive Interventions. The EdS will be fully developed and vetted in collaboration with content experts and district leaders to ensure this high quality program will guarantee improved outcomes for students. This project involves the identification, recruitment, and preparation of urban underrepresented groups to become highly qualified Exceptional Student Education (ESE) collaborative interventionists through interdisciplinary preparation, to work with students with significant learning and/or behavioral problems and their families in an urban high need district. Project Objectives for INCLUDE:

- o To develop, evaluate, and implement an EdS degree in Intensive Interventions for interdisciplinary experts credentialed in both special education and reading.

- o To recruit, retain, and graduate 32 urban minority scholars over five (5) years with a Specialist degree in ESE through financial and non-financial supports.

- o To prepare 32 dynamic and effective interventionists through 36-hours of interdisciplinary coursework and Capstone experiences reflecting current research-based practices on Intensive interventions for students with persistent and severe learning and behavioral needs.

o   To prepare 32 dynamic and effective interventionists in <u>clinical experiences </u>reflecting current research-based practices to improve outcomes for students with persistent and severe learning and behavioral needs.

o   To develop 32 collaborative coaches to deliver <u>professional development</u> to teachers working with students with persistent and severe learning and behavioral needs.

o   To facilitate support for <u>family and community engagement</u> through workshops, conferences, and other school/community events delivered by interdisciplinary collaborators.

o   To prepare scholars as <u>problem-solvers</u> to conduct comprehensive evaluations and interpret data for programmatic purposes.

This purpose will be accomplished through the developing an Education Specialist (EdS) degree program in special education (SE) with a focus on Intensive Interventions for urban diverse environments based upon the intersecting guidelines of the State Adopted Subject Area Competencies in ESE (23rd Edition), Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (2010), Reading Endorsement Competencies (23rd Edition), to support the CEC Special Education Specialist Advanced Preparation Standards (2012) and best practices outlined in the literature for special education leaders with Expertise in Reading.

Project INCLUDE involves collaborations with national and state entities to ensure high quality program innovations. The first collaboration is with The National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII) whose mission is to build district and school capacity to support implementation of data-based individualization in reading, mathematics, and behavior for students with severe and persistent learning and/or behavioral needs. Additionally, as a result of acknowledging that scholars will need specialized training to work within their schools and

with families, this project collaborates with SEDNET, a Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities, which creates and facilitates a network of key stakeholders committed to assisting in the provision of a quality system of care for students with or at-risk of emotional and/or behavioral disabilities. Finally, district educational leaders will be recruited to serve as collaborative faculty, seminar speakers, and/or mentors to ensure that the local districts have a stake in preparing leaders to assist them in meeting SEA and LEA goals to improve outcomes for students with persistent and severe learning problems.

A1. Shortages of personnel who are fully credentialed to serve children with disabilities

Response to Intervention (RTI) models have attracted great attention as an alternative to traditional methods used for identifying students with learning disabilities (Marston, 2005). However, many tiered intervention initiatives have not sufficiently addressed students who need the most intensive needs (Danielson, 2013). Furthermore, students with disabilities are not making adequate progress in their current instructional program. Students with disabilities who present with very low academic achievement, and/or intense behavior problems are considered those who need to most intensive interventions in order to make satisfactory progress. According to Lou Danielson on an archived webinar from NCII (2013), 2.5 million students require intensive academic interventions and 1.5 million students require intensive behavioral interventions. Furthermore, the National Longitudinal Transition Study 2 indicated that 1 out of 3 students with disabilities have a discipline problem. These students require personnel with the knowledge and skills in specialized or advanced preparation to collaboratively design and support focused instruction and intensive individualized interventions to address their needs (Boe et al., 2013; McLeskey & Brownell, 2015). In collaborative work to address such significant needs of students, Response to Intervention (RTI) and Multi- Tiered System of

Support (MTSS) are frameworks developed to integrate instruction, evidence- based interventions, and assessments to address the academic and behavior needs of such students (NCII, 2015). When MTSS is implemented with fidelity by well-trained interventionists, success and improvement in performance occur among students with disabilities, and particularly those requiring intensive interventions due to persistent learning and behavioral problems (Gersten et al., 2012; Vaughn et al., 2015). Mandating effective frameworks are not enough; fidelity which leads to student success is dependent upon professionals who are knowledgeable leaders. Although students with disabilities who have more significant needs may require the combined expertise of professionals, it is often difficult for personnel to work together due to shared understandings about the students they serve. According to Smith (2010), a collaborative interdisciplinary approaches within personnel preparation shows promise in providing scholars with team experiences, similar to those in which they are likely to work once employed.

  A1i: Data that demonstrate a national, State, or regional need for the personnel the applicant proposes to prepare. Nationally, there is a critical and growing need to improve outcomes for students with disabilities who have persistent learning and behavioral problems. In 2013, the National Assessment of Educational Progress reported that academic skills remained similar as to 2011 with 68 percent of fourth graders with disabilities and 62 percent of eighth graders with disabilities lacked basic reading skills. The percentages were similarly high for fourth (45 percent) and eighth graders (64 percent) with disabilities who lacked basic mathematics skills (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). Although effective practices have been developed to address the needs of a wide range of students with disabilities, evidence suggests a limited use of these practices. According to McLeskey and Billingsley (2008), potential contributors to the

limited use of effective research-based practices relate to teacher preparation, professional development, and the nature of research. The lack of well-qualified special education teachers contribute to the research-to-practice gap. State's supply for fully credentialed special education teachers to serve children with disabilities has been unable to meet the demand (Boe, deBettencourt, Rosenberg, Sindelar, & Leko, 2013), particularly in high-need schools where specialized training is most critical. Without great effort to adequately address this problem, the quality of services provided to students would be compromised.

In the 2016-2017 the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE)'s Bureau of Research and Evaluation Report, Special Education was listed as a critical shortage area, with more than 8% of courses taught in ESE were not taught by highly qualified teachers, and ranked within the top seven of all the shortage categories. The 2016 report indicated that over 20% of the vacant teaching positions in Florida are in ESE. With the need for ESE teachers to be well trained to implement effective intensive individualized interventions, coupled with not enough new hires being appropriately certified, funding is critical to support scholars in becoming highly qualified. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2015), About 95 percent of school-age children and youth ages 6–21 who were served under IDEA in 2012–13 were enrolled in regular schools, and the majority of those students, about 60%, participate in general education for more than 80% of the school day (Smith 2012). Unfortunately, not all teachers feel adequately prepared to teach in inclusive settings. Clearly, efforts must be taken to ensure that a sufficient supply of highly effective teachers is available. Crucial to providing support for general education teachers given their increased responsibility to educating students with disabilities, is the special education leader. Attrition rates among special education teachers are higher than their general education peers. New special education teachers are 2.5 times more

likely to leave their positions and attrition in urban areas has been found to be greater than that in suburban or rural areas (Voltz & Collins, 2010).

Need for Special Educators of Color. According to a study reported by the Washington Post (October 10, 2010), minority teachers are critical to student performance for minority students. An estimated 40% of students with disabilities nationwide are from minority backgrounds; whereas only 14% of the special education teaching force is constituted by individuals from similar backgrounds (Voltz & Collins, 2010). Furthermore the Florida Department of Education Website indicated for the 2013 school year, 58.3% of the student population in Florida is of minority background (http://www.fldoe.org/eias/eiaspubs/default.asp). This percentage is even higher for the more urban districts of South Florida with 92% and 75% reported as the percentage of minority students enrolled for Dade and Broward County respectively (Education Information and Accountability Services Report for 2013). In contrast, only 12.3% of Florida ESE teachers were Black and 11.88% were Hispanic, these percentages are higher in Miami-Dade, but not matching the student demographics. In describing the attrition of a minority teaching force, Souto-Manning & Dice (2007) stated that the teacher shortage was due to early departure of teachers as opposed to a low number of people entering teacher preparation programs. They further report that the retention problem was most severe in schools in high poverty areas and with large populations of minority students. These statistics emphasize that a priority needs to be placed on creating a pool of well- prepared, highly qualified teachers of color to work with diverse students (Irizarry, 2007).

Need for Culturally Responsive Preparation

Teacher education programs that incorporate perspectives of teachers from diverse backgrounds into the curriculum as a retention effort as well as prepare teachers to work with minority

students (Souto-Manning & Dice, 2007) can offset the misconceptions of teachers who think in terms of personal frames of references, which include biases. Their intentions and their interpretation of presently occurring experiences may impact what they see and think about people from minority groups (Douglas, et. al., 2008). One major factor contributing to the over-identification of minority students in special education has been the issue of teachers and their biases. Special education teachers committed to working in diverse communities need to develop highly effective knowledge and skills to address the complicated challenges of high poverty schools (Voltz & Collins, 2010).

Research indicates that collectively by sixth grade, students of color trail their white peers by more than two years in reading, mathematics, and writing skills, as measured by standardized achievement tests, and this disparity continues or widens in later school years. Not surprisingly, achievement gaps existed between students in schools with high percentages of low-income students compared to students in schools with low percentages of such students. In 2009 and in all previous assessment years since 1992, the average National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) reading scale scores of White 4th-, 8th-, and 12th-grade students were higher than their Black and Hispanic peers' scores. And the same is true for mathematics, according to National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP, 2011), the mathematics scale scores of White 4th-, 8th-, and 12th-grade students were higher than the scores of their Black and Hispanic peers. In 2013, the scores have remained stable with little to no change. These discrepancies in academics by race eventually play a role in graduation rates, with schools in urban districts often having the lowest graduation rates in the nation. By 2012-2013, the graduation rate for the state of Florida increased to more than 76.1%. However, African-Americans still rank among the lowest of the ethnic groups at 64.4% when compared to other ethnic groups, and for Black males

the rate is a dismal 58.9% (Education Information and Accountability Report for 2012-2013). For Miami Dade County Public Schools, over 4% of the Black student population for 2013-14 school year dropped out, almost double of their White and Hispanic counterparts as reported by FLDOE. For graduations that same year, only 10% of the graduates were Black males.

A1ii: Data that demonstrate the effectiveness of the applicant's personnel preparation program in preparing personnel in special education. In 2008-09, the FLDOE reported that the traditional teacher education programs supplied 63% of the total number of teacher education completers; more than 11% of these teachers are supplied by Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (ICUF) institutions. Florida Memorial University (FMU) is the only Historically Black College or University (HBCU) in South Florida and an ICUF institution that has a longstanding commitment to recruiting and training underrepresented groups to meet the diverse needs of students in the classroom. In the April 19, 2012 edition of the South Florida Times, Florida Memorial University's School of Education (SOE) was acknowledged for "training high quality teachers for nearly a century…[FMU] currently supplies one of every four of South Florida's black teachers."

Since 2004, FMU has offered a Master's Degree in Special Education and in the thirteen years, with 151 graduates, with more than 95% of them remaining in or taking positions in the K-12 classroom in the most diverse, urban school districts. Of these graduates, more than 95% were from minority backgrounds. In the last 5 years, 51 candidates have completed the Masters in ESE, with the typical time of completion being one year (full-time) or 5 semesters (half-time). In an alumni survey distributed to 25 completers in 2015, 12 surveys were returned (48% response rate). Of those responses from returned surveys, 67% received highly effective (highest) ratings, and 25% received effective ratings for their most recent teacher evaluations

(one respondent is in a full-time doctoral program). Ninety-one percent indicated receiving a promotion and/or award since completing our program and one completer entered a doctoral program at the University of Florida in Special Education (ranked 5th in the nation for Special Education). The average number of years of completers providing direct services to students with disabilities was 12.5 years, well beyond the national and state average. FMU has a strong tradition of providing a supportive learning environment to minority teachers in pursuing Master's Degrees to advance their positions in the K-12 environment. In December 2016, 18 scholars graduated with their Masters in ESE and demonstrated the following outcomes: Eighteen full-time employment in ESE across various settings (settings range from inclusive classrooms to hospital bound), 7 different Intensive Interventions Strategies were implemented within the cohort, 9 Different Disabilities Categories were exposed to Intensive Interventions through Teacher Action Research, 48 Students with Varying Exceptionalities participated in the research, and all students experienced positive outcomes on Academics, Communication, or Behavior. For two consecutive years, scholars were invited to present at the annual EBD contacts meeting sponsored by SEDNET. One recent graduate was the 2017 finalist for the CEC Clarissa Hug Teacher of the Year.

FMU's Reading program is state approved for initial certification at the Masters level and has be consistently producing graduates on an annual basis since 2004. Recently, the Florida Department of Education has been issuing Annual Program Performance Reports (APPR) for all state approved initial certification programs (ITPs) that are publicly viewed. These programs are ranked by performance scores. FMU's reading program was ranked 4th among all Reading Programs, 8th overall compared to all ITPs. Both programs offer strength in programming offered by highly qualified faculty that have resulted in strong, highly qualified teachers.

A1ii: Effectiveness of interdisciplinary approaches to the preparation of special education that involve the programs participating in the proposed project. The School of Education is a small college comprised of 9 fulltime faculty. Recently, the school has developed our first dual certification (special education and elementary education) with dual endorsements (ESOL and Reading) degree at the bachelor's level. Through this ongoing collaboration, faculty have agreed on the need of strong content (Reading) with strong pedagogy in working with students with disabilities. Many of the new courses developed for this program will be co-taught and all were co-planned to demonstrate a strong interdisciplinary focus as well as commitment by our faculty.

A2: Personnel demonstrate competencies to provide (a) focused instruction, and (b) intense individualized intervention(s) in an interdisciplinary team-based approach

Florida Memorial University currently provides undergraduate and graduate preparation in ESE, meeting the non-categorical requirements of Florida. FMU has recognized that there are advanced training needs as indicated by teachers. From our recent alumni survey, 100% of respondents indicated a desire for a Specialist degree, but indicated funding would be needed to complete it. The Superintendent of MDCPS (Letter of Support, Appendix D) indicated multi- levels of support by his district, the fourth largest in the nation, for creating a program that would prepare intensive interventionist as collaborative leaders to improve outcomes for students with persistent and severe learning and behavioral problems. In a recent state-level SEDNET (The Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities) directors' meeting hosted at FMU, the regional directors told us that the special education teachers they work with need specialized training beyond a Master's degree, as many teachers already have that degree. Through this project, 16 Reading Certified and 16 highly qualified and state certified ESE

teachers from urban high need schools will work collaboratively through interdisciplinary preparation to help address the critical shortage in ESE through specialized training to serve students with the most intensive needs. Additionally, through collaborative efforts with MDCPS personnel, the project directors will skillfully create a collaborative interdisciplinary focus to support these 32 intensive interventionists to move beyond their own classrooms, through supporting peers, families, and school personnel in the development, implementation, and evaluation of effective practices to improve learning outcomes for all students. ***Focused Instruction-*** Sixteen Reading teachers will receive 15 credit hours of graduate coursework in ESE to prepare them for certification, meeting the state requirements for competencies and skills. Sixteen ESE teachers will receive 15 credit hours of graduate coursework in Reading to prepare them for a State Reading Endorsement. ***Intensive Interventions-*** All 32 scholars will share coursework in 12 credit hours of preparation in Intensive Interventions (Evidence-Based Practices, Reading, Mathematics, and Behavior) that will be collaboratively designed by both content and special education experts. Additionally, all 32 scholars will engage in 9 credit hours of research related courses, one of which is on Data Based Individualizations (DBI). ***Interdisciplinary Team-Based Approach-*** Through the shared courses, collaborative interdisciplinary teams will have critical tasks where they are to design, deliver, evaluate high quality professional developments, intensive intervention plans, program evaluations, and family conferences throughout the seven shared courses.

     A2i. Competencies for special education to ensure delivery of (a) focused instruction, and (b) intense individualized intervention(s) in an interdisciplinary team-based approach. In order to prepare highly qualified intensive interventionists to serve as interdisciplinary collaborative leaders within their respective schools, regions, and districts, the competencies embedded into

this program will be a combination of current national and state adopted standards, skills, and competencies in teaching for general and special education teachers. The following standards and competencies were used: State Adopted Subject Area Competencies in ESE (23rd Edition), Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (2010), State adopted reading endorsement competences (23rd Edition), International Literacy Association Standards 2017, and Council for Exceptional Children's Special Education Specialist Advanced Preparation Standards, and best practices outlined by the National Center on Intensive Interventions (NCII) for students persistent and severe learning and behavioral problems that need the most intensive individualized supports. All the standards, skills, and competencies and their imbedding into proposed program tenets are included in Appendix A for further detail. Competencies and Skills of the previously identified standards included for this program are in Appendix A. Brief sample and proposed Syllabi are in Appendix B to show the professional standards that will be embedded into the proposed program.

The National Center on Intensive Interventions' mission is "to build district and school capacity to support implementation of data-based individualization in reading, mathematics, and behavior for students with severe and persistent learning and/or behavioral needs." They utilize Data-Based Individualization (DBI) as the foundation to determine how to address persistent learning and behavioral problems. DBI is a systematic method for using data to determine when and how to intensify and intervention. Finally, a variety of best practices guidelines and materials will be used to create coursework to ensure a broad base of high quality preparation for Intensive Interventions.

A2ii: Identify the competencies needed by members of interdisciplinary teams that will result in improved outcomes for children with disabilities who have high-intensity needs.

Competencies demonstrated by the scholars for the EdS in Intensive Interventions demonstrating improved outcomes can be found in the Goals and Student Learning Outcomes Competency Matrix included in Appendix A. The SLOs needed for each scholar to demonstrate include:

SLO 1: The Special Education leader will use advocacy skills that are legal and ethical to support high quality instruction for students with disabilities.

SLO 2: The Special Education leader will demonstrate effective decision making to create procedures that respect all individuals and develop and support positive and productive work environments.

SLO 3: The Special Education leader will coordinate educational standards to support access to challenging curriculum for students with exceptionalities.

SLO 4: The Special Education leader will evaluate and plan to improve instructional programs and management systems within the classroom, school, or systems level.

SLO 5: The Special Education leader will design curriculum and instruction to support the use of evidence-based practices, which demonstrates an understanding of the effects of cultural, social and economic diversity of individual development.

SLO 6: The Special Education leader will improve instructional and intervention techniques through research-based behavioral research.

A2iii: Identify the competencies that personnel need to support inclusion of children with disabilities in the least restrictive and natural environments to the maximum extent appropriate. Scholar competencies to support the inclusion of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment are demonstrated by the scholar through the following SLOs:

SLO 7: The Special Education leader will safeguard the legal rights of students, families, and personnel.

SLO 8: The Special Education leader will plan, present, and evaluate professional development that focuses on effective practice to broaden professional knowledge, which includes expertise to support student access to learning.

SLO 9: The Special Education leader will understand the importance and role of collaboration and foster the integration of services for individuals with exceptionalities, which may include resolving conflicts and building consensus to provide services to these students and their families.

SLO 10: The Special Education leader will understand the interactions of language, diversity, culture, and religion and use collaboration, coaching, and/or consultation to enhance opportunities for individuals with exceptionalities.

SLO 11: The Special Education leader will foster an environment that supports instructional improvement through the problem-solving process.

SLO 12: The Special Education leader will design and implement research to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional practices and program goals.

SLO 13: The Special Education leader will apply knowledge and skill at all stages of the evaluation process for student learning of the general education curriculum and individualized IEP goals.

A2iv: Provide the conceptual framework for Project INCLUDE. Project INCLUDE is designed through the combination of professional standards and best practices outlined in the literature for special education. The 4 bodies of standards and competencies that support Project INCLUDE have been crosswalked on a matrix to show the careful linking of all competencies (Appendix A). Project INCLUDE will provide a Specialist Degree in Special Education with a focus on interdisciplinary collaboration for urban school intensive interventionists to provide

effective services to districts, schools and their personnel, and for students with persistent and severe learning and behavior problems. Today's teachers are called upon to have an ever expanding knowledge base and skills that support working within multi-tiered system of supports, including response to intervention (RtI). Current field-based professional development initiatives focus on the existing teachers.

Four key aspects are used to develop the framework for preparing highly qualified Intensive Interventionists to teach students with persistent and severe learning and behavioral problems that need the most intensive individualized supports. These include: (a) creating an environment to support all students, (b) providing high-quality instruction and evidence-based interventions, (c) receiving mentoring support through collaboration and providing coaching through professional development, and (d) establishing a context for problem solving to evaluate programs and services for students with persistent and severe learning and behavior problems. The model depicting INCLUDE's program framework can be found in Appendix A with the Overview of the EdS in Intensive Interventions. Project INCLUDE will provide a Specialist Degree in Special Education with specialized training in Intensive Interventions through interdisciplinary training to special education and reading teachers from urban diverse schools to support their development, implementation, evaluation, and documentation of effective practices for students with persistent and severe learning and behavioral problems that need the most intensive individualized supports. Current field-based professional development initiatives focus on the existing teachers. However, our schools require effective teachers who already acquired this knowledge and skills and can provide development and support for new and existing teachers, both in general and special education.

Supporting Students. Students with learning disabilities continue to drop out of school

at a much higher rate than their non-disabled peers and will need supportive and individualized

services to improve their opportunity for academic success (Cortiella, 2011). Unfortunately,

many tiered intervention initiatives have not sufficiently addressed students with the most

intensive needs (Fuchs, et al, 2008). The highly effective ESE teacher must be trained to work

with students with disabilities in meeting their complex needs (Correa & Wagner, 2011). In a

recent study by Guckert, Mastropieri, and Scruggs (2016), special education teachers often

believe they are using Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs), yet there is a gap within research and

their actual use. Some teachers use more evidence-based practices than others, while other

teachers make modifications that are teacher convenient (not necessarily to benefit the student),

and implementation of research practices with fidelity widely varies among teachers. Preparation

programs need to develop their training programs surrounding candidates' use of High Leverage

Practices (HLPs) to ensure that outcomes for students with disabilities will improve. Windschitl,

Thompson, Braaten, and Stroupe, (2012) define HLPs as teacher engagement in practices that

ultimately support student learning through practices that can be learned and taught, and

implemented once a teacher enters the profession. Four areas of HLPs include: Collaboration,

Assessment, Social/Behavioral, and Instruction (McLeskey & Ziegler, 2015). If outcomes are to

improve for students with disabilities, careful training should occur regarding teachers'

acquisition and use of EBPs and HLPs. Data Based Individualizations (DBI), a systematic

method for using data, offers school personnel opportunities use data to determine when and how

to intensify an intervention within academics or behavior when implementing EBPs and HLPs.

High-quality Instruction and Evidence-Based Intervention. The key to successful

academic instruction is the high quality of the teacher and their use of High Leverage Practices

(McLeskey and Brownell, 2015). To improve the *quality* of instruction, teachers must start by (a)

providing more opportunities for effective practice; and (b) focusing on the most essential

learning needs of the   students (Crawford & Torgesen, 2010). According to the National

Professional Development Center on ASD, evidence-based practices that should be integrated as

part of developing scholars' effective knowledge and skills for working with students with

behavioral issues include prompting, antecedent-based intervention, time delay, reinforcement,

task analysis, discrete trial training, functional behavior analysis, functional communication

training, response interruption/reduction, social narratives, video-modeling. These intensive

interventions if appropriately implemented show promise for improving severe behavioral

problems. Vaughn and Fletcher (2012) indicated that most students with reading difficulties,

especially those in need of intensive individualization, can make academic progress when

provided with (a) more instruction, (b) more intensive and efficient instruction, and (c) extended

opportunities to practice with and without teacher support. Fuchs, Fuchs, Powell, Seethaler,

Cirino, and Fletcher (2008) identified seven principles of effective practice for students with

disabilities in math; these included (a) Instructional explicitness, (b) Instructional design to

minimize the learning challenge, (c) Strong conceptual basis, (d) Drill and practice, (e)

Cumulative review, (f) Motivators to help students regulate their attention and behavior, and (g)

Ongoing progress monitoring. However, no instructional intervention, regardless of quality was

effective for every student. High Leverage Practices for instruction are critical and well

supported by the literature; these include; Identify and prioritize long- and short-term learning

goals, (b) systematically design instruction toward a specific learning goal, (c) adapt curriculum

tasks and materials for specific learning goals, (d) use and explicitly teach strategies to support

learning and independence, and (e) scaffold instruction (McLesky and Zeigler, 2015).

      Collaboration, Coaching, and Mentoring. Collaboration is a High Leverage Practice

critical to the provision of quality services for students with disabilities. Mclesky and Zeigler (2015) identified 3 areas of promise regarding collaboration as an effective practice, these include: interdisciplinary collaboration to increase student success within the general education curriculum, supporting effective meetings with professionals and families, and working with families to support student learning and ensure needed services. Coaching, a form of collaboration, involves directional collaboration where an expert provides individualized support to teachers after training (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010). Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs) are mediated by a variety of factors, which includes teachers' access to relevant knowledge and support of their implementation of the EBP with students (Hudson, Davis, et.al., 2016). Collaborating with successful teachers (experts in training) as well as receiving coaching during the early years of teaching students with disabilities is critical to retaining new teachers (Correa & Wagner, 2011). Teachers receiving specific feedback on the accuracy of implementing new strategies and interventions can improve rates of acquisition and accuracy of use and improve student outcomes (Kretlow, Cooke, & Wood, 2012; Ploessl & Rock, 2012; Scheeler, McKinnon, & Stout, 2012). Special teachers who received professional development and coaching to support their behavioral management of students with intense needs, demonstrated significant improvements in teacher management and student behavior over time, suggest that coaching is an effective tool to improve student outcomes (Pas, Johnson, et. al., 2016). To reinforce the use of evidence-based practices and CRT to support increasingly diverse student populations, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2014) makes CLD learners a priority through three areas relevant to Urban areas: (a) Family and community engagement (particularly the families of minority students), (b) Teacher preparation (onerous on States to demonstrate that low income-minority students are not served disproportionately by uncertified teachers, and (c) Increased

focus on English learners (increased funding to implement and maintain high-quality instruction).

Most educators support the need for quality mentoring programs; furthermore, researchers speculate that quality mentoring may be related to improved student achievement (Washburn-Moses, 2010). Similarly, in a study conducted by Souto-Manning & Dice (2007), collaborative mentoring was highly successful for new teachers. Researchers concluded that it was particularly relevant to teacher educators, as it addressed strategies for mentoring teachers of color who are more vulnerable and held to higher standards in high poverty schools, which have fewer resources. Special Education teachers who valued mentoring opportunities linked it to support specific needs; these include (a) collaborative practices, (2) concerns related to pedagogy, and (3) management of roles (Billingsly, et. al., 2009). Although mentoring is generally seen as a positive support, special education teachers were less likely to report availability of a mentor than general education teachers (Washburn-Moses, 2010).

Problem-solving Context. When teachers work together in supported contexts, student learning is maximized and teachers feel professionally supported. The MTSS model of Florida uses a 4-step problem solving model process to ensure appropriate actions regarding student support. The MTSS project's goal is to provide a framework for educational leadership comprised of those leadership skills and practices contributing to successful and sustained system reform leading to improved instructional practices and student outcomes (MTSS Presentation to Administrators, 2011). Imperative to implementing best practice for all students in urban, high poverty schools is effective special education understanding and implementing MTSS with all school personnel and providing high quality instruction through collaboration and mentoring of personnel, within a problem-solving context.

Conclusion in addressing the priority. Our nation's high poverty communities have the most difficulty attracting and retaining qualified teachers, and consequently, ESE teachers for students with persistent and severe learning and behavioral problems who need the most intensive individualized supports. These teachers may not always be well prepared, and often are expected to provide leadership and consultation to their more seasoned general education peers. Letters of support, to document the need for these high quality ESE teacher-leaders of students with persistent and severe learning and behavioral problems that need the most intensive individualized supports, have been provided by the Florida Department of Education, and our neighboring school district, demonstrating our SEA and LEA collaborative effort (Appendix D). Each group documents the need for high quality ESE teachers as Collaborative Leaders for Intensive Interventions. Additionally, a support letter from CEEDAR and NCII documenting their ongoing training and support to us in the preparation of teachers to work with students with persistent and severe learning and behavioral problems that need the most intensive individualized supports is also in Appendix D. The need to attract and retain ESE teachers is vital to students who need them most.

Section B. QUALITY OF PROJECT SERVICES.

Project INCLUDE proposes to develop two cohorts of Florida state-certified, highly qualified graduate scholars: 16 reading teachers to be certified in the area of Exceptional Student Education and 16 ESE teachers to receive the reading endorsement. Additionally, all 32 scholars will receive Level 3 micro-credentialing in learning strategies, badging and credential as an Apple Teacher, and become a certificate holder in Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) USA First Aider Training.

The quality of Project INCLUDE is achieved by (i) recruiting and retaining high-quality

scholars, (ii) rigorous evidence-based practices to prepare scholars for identified competencies, (iii) providing sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to   prepare scholars, and (iv) collaboration with appropriate partners. As supported in Focus Area B,   year one of the project will focus on program development for a newly approved EdS in Special Education. FMU has approved the development of the EdS and requires collaboration with the   community (LEA) stakeholders to ensure the program will meet the need of community.

B1: Planning activities for new collaborative program

Florida Memorial University's School of Education (SOE) is comprised of collegial and highly collaborative faculty. There are two approved graduate programs offered in the SOE. The newly approved EdS has a leadership focus and because of our work with the LEA and SEA (namely SEDNET), there is a need for specialized interventionists to work with students who have persistent and severe learning needs. The reading faculty and ESE faculty will prepare the ESE and Reading teachers respectively in core content and then collectively they will engage in 7 additional courses for interdisciplinary training. In order to accomplish the redesign of this EdS program, two semesters of planning with be required to collaborate with SOE faculty, district experts, our potential partnering school, and outside experts (NCII, Math Interventionist, SIM trainer). See Table 1 for planning activities, outcomes, and timeline.

B2: Recruitment of high quality scholars

Florida Memorial University (FMU) practices a policy of nondiscrimination in employment and admission. We will work with the Office of Student Services in identifying potential scholars and distribute information to personnel who work with students with disabilities. Specific activities follow:

B2i. Selection Criteria to identify high-quality Scholars. FMU works closely with the

school districts to identify the most appropriate scholars for this program. FMU applies rigorous standards for entry into their graduate programs. Scholars will meet the minimum criteria which includes: (1) hold a Masters Degree and certification in either ESE or Reading, (2) currently teach or provide services to students in ESE (a minimum of 3 years of successful teaching experience in ESE) or as a Reading Coach or Intensive Reading Teacher, (3) hold an English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) endorsement, (4) recommended by their principal or supervisor as demonstrating benefit from specialized training, (5) successful   interview and impromptu writing sample, and (6) meet graduate program admission criteria. Additionally, we will be giving priority points for teachers who have been rated by their administrator as "highly effective" for consecutive evaluation periods. See Admission Rubric in Appendix A.

   B2ii: Recruitment strategies to attract high-quality applicants. The cornerstone of Project INCLUDE is to identify, recruit, and prepare urban underrepresented groups to become ESE Intensive Interventionists through interdisciplinary coursework to work with students with persistent and severe learning and behavioral problems from urban areas. The target population for Project INCLUDE is scholars who already hold a Master's Degree in ESE or Reading and holds certification in ESE or Reading respectively; and who has a documented record for providing highly effective services (or potential to do so) to students with persistent and severe learning and behavioral problems. Primarily, we will target highly effective teachers who are currently teaching in ESE or Reading classrooms or serving as an ESE support facilitator or Reading Coach and serve students with intensive academic and behavioral needs. Well over 90% of the students enrolled at FMU reside in local communities and come from minority backgrounds. Recruitment strategies include the following:

   Local School District Relationships. FMU is strategically located in northern Dade

County, which allows our graduates to apply for teaching position in two of the five largest school districts in the nation. FMU has a long-standing relationship with the district that allows us to send e-mail announcements to teachers, send flyers through school mail or through the teachers' union, and set up recruitment tables at area schools or events. Announcements for our recruitment will be distributed to the district ESE office as well as principal meetings to allow for district and administrative input.

Alumni and ESE Leader's Recommendations. The best recruitment effort made on behalf of FMU's graduate programs is the recommendations made by our program completers. With well over 200 minority teachers with Master's degrees in ESE or Reading from our programs, most of our potential scholars learn about FMU by the positive recommendations of alumni. With the importance of preparing high quality teachers in ESE for high need urban schools, we will rely heavily upon our stakeholders from the local schools and district offices as well as our former graduates to nominate a competitive and high quality pool of applicants. Additionally, our potential pool will likely be comprised by many of those who received their Master's Degree at FMU.

B2iii: The approach to support scholars to complete the program. Project INCLUDE is committed to utilizing a   Job-Driven Checklist that includes seven important features that are an essential part of job- driven training (https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/skills_report.pdf). Scholars, who all will be full-time school district employees will be supported in their progress towards completing their program, while successfully maintaining their employment responsibilities. Two courses each semester, half-time status allows for thorough integration of learning without being overwhelming. The courses are two nights a week, starting at 6:00 p.m. to allow enough time to

complete work and travel to the institution. The courses will end at 8:30 p.m. to allow scholars time to get home and prepare for the work day. In order to provide quality experiences, scholars will need time, throughout a 15-week semester, to process information and complete their assignments and projects as demonstration of their acquisition of program goals, which will be reflected in their electronic portfolio.

B2iv: Mentoring and support to complete program. Project INCLUDE will provide 100% tuition support for urban individuals from underrepresented groups accepted into the program. The program will provide these scholars with the knowledge and skills that are needed to further their knowledge in ESE and Reading, particularly in serving students with severe and persistent learning and behavior problems. In addition, graduate scholars with or without disabilities will be academically supported through our Academic Resource Center (ARC), Writing Center, the Computerized Academic Skills Laboratory, and specialized workshops based on graduate student need (i.e., APA workshops, GRE preparation courses, preparation for state certification exams). Each scholar will be provided a faculty advisor who will meet with the scholar during each semester to advise and support the scholar's progression through the program. Additionally, the scholar will be assigned a recommended and successful district leader as a model mentor (as part of the developed **C**adre of **U**rban **L**eader **E**xemplars) to establish a supportive, professional relationship in meeting the demands of leadership within the school or district setting. This mentor will serve as a contributor along with the advisor and committee within the scholar's capstone research project in the design, implementation, analysis, and interpreting of the research project to demonstrate effective implementation and/or evaluation of programming to support in the systematic implementation and use of data to determine early learning outcomes, student achievement, or growth in student achievement in order to evaluate the effectiveness of services

provided to students with disabilities.

B3: Reflects current research and evidence-based practices and is designed to prepare

scholars in the identified competencies

Project INCLUDE will provide interdisciplinary content and clinical based experiences

for the scholar to develop the implementation, evaluation, documentation, and reporting on the

effectiveness of data-based   individualizations. Content gained in this program will be based on

specific use of the tools within NCII's available resources, which reports on Academic Progress

Monitoring (APM), Academic Interventions (AI), and Behavioral Progress Monitoring (BPM).

The APM tool chart is set up in three tabs, Psychometric Standards, Progress Monitoring

Standards, and Data-based Individualization Standards and include ratings on the technical rigor

of the tool. These tools, particularly those with rigor will be explored in their implementation

with students with significant learning problems. The AI tool chart presents information about

studies that have been conducted about academic intervention programs. Scholars will review

this body of literature, synthesize it, and report on conclusions of effective practices. The BPM

tool chart presents information about behavioral progress monitoring tools. These tools will be

utilized as meaningful resources to select, implement, evaluate, and document the effectiveness

of intensive   interventions to students. Vaughn, et. al., (2012) indicated that research-based

interventions can   improve comprehension and word identification; however, persistent problems

still exist when attempting to make enough gains for grade level achievement.

According to Reichow (2012), Early Intensive Behavioral Interventions (EIBI) can be a

powerful intervention to promote large gains in adaptive behavior for many young children with

ASDs. Although the average effects of EIBI appear to be strong and robust, EIBI is not effective

for all children with ASDs. Denton (2013) reviewed research interventions effects compared to

those typically received as school-based intervention and found that students who received the research intervention made significantly better growth. With consultation from NCII through AIR, the Cadre of Urban Leaders Exemplars (CULE), MTSS, and Interdisciplinary Collaboration with the Reading program, Project INCLUDE will be developed to include the latest research-based interventions that show the most promise to make academic and behavioral gains for students with persistent and severe learning problems.

Scholars will learn and demonstrate their understanding of the state adopted MTSS model, which represents the integration of RtI for academics and RtI for behavior into a unified model of service delivery that recognizes the reciprocal influence academic performance and social/emotional/behavior performance has on each other (Algozzine, Wang & Violette, 2011; **http://www.florida-rti.org**). Furthermore, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework that addresses the primary barrier to fostering expert learners within instructional environments, which is inflexible, "one-size-fits-all" curricula, (UDL Guidelines, 2011) and will be part of the graduate scholar's experience as part of the curriculum classes. The UDL framework, developed by CAST presents three main branches of guidelines to emphasize a flexible curriculum to be accessible for students of diverse abilities. These guidelines include providing multiple means of; (a) representation, (b) action and expression, and (c) engagement (Courey, Tappe, Sikder, LePage, 2012). This acquired knowledge and skills will be utilized through scholar demonstration to evaluate student learning and behavioral outcomes in order to improve services to students with severe and persistent learning and/or behavioral problems.

B3i: Incorporate current research and evidence-based practices that improve outcomes for children with disabilities. In the syllabi activities, research experiences, and professional demonstrations   are required of scholars to show careful understanding and ability to implement

research-based strategies in the educational setting as well as assist other school personnel to

develop their understanding and use of these strategies for intensive individualization for

students with severe and persistent learning and behavior problems. All the courses will be

designed to embed the CEC, ESE, FELE, ESOL, IRA, and FEAP competencies throughout the

program and to emphasize best practice research for the specific area. For instance, one course

will be proposed on Intensive Interventions for Behavior, where scholars will be able to

demonstrate their implementation of school-wide Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) to support

the research that PBS results in increased academic engaged time, enhanced academic outcomes,

and the reduction of behavioral infractions that impede the learning environment (Algozzine &

Algozzine, 2007; Horner et al., 2009; Lassen, Steele, & Sailor, 2006). Scholars will lead others

in the implementation of research-based instructional practices, such as data-based

individualizations as well as leading others in the development of these practices to support all

students within the inclusive classroom (Friend and Cook, 2016). As indicated above, this

program will provide intensive instruction of best practices for high quality delivery of services

in Special Education with the   development of specific skills to enable the scholar to deliver

intensive interventions to students with persistent and severe learning and behavior problems and

assist the stakeholders from the local school district (administrators, teachers, and families) to

collaboratively work together through interdisciplinary teams to improve academic and

behavioral outcomes for students.

  In addition to the ESE and Reading courses, the scholars will have an expectation to

develop their skills as researchers. Research expectations are embedded throughout the program

in all courses where scholars review best practice research, analyze it, synthesize, and evaluate

it, and report their findings in a professional manner. Three courses in research will be proposed

to develop scholars' educational research skills, which will allow them to understand importance of collecting, evaluating and reporting of learner outcomes and learning gains, particularly for those students who require to most intensive services as well as evaluate programs and services offered to students with disabilities. The first course proposed involves research design in DBI and Single Subject data analysis, which will support the scholars grasping of data based utilizations and using that evaluation data accurately and effectively. The program culminates in the Capstone research course that allows scholars to demonstrate their skills as researchers. The culminating research project is an opportunity to develop an original research project, related to intensive interventions and their demonstrated effectiveness, for a school or district to understand the value of the research-based interventions. As part of the Capstone research course, scholars will conduct original research within their school or district setting and report the research at FMU's annual Graduate Research Conference that is open to the public. These scholars will develop a research proposal that is approved by their building administrator, CULE mentor and faculty advisor to ensure commitment to the project and the implementation of data-based individualizations. Additionally, all scholars will submit these research projects as proposals to appropriate state venues, such as the annual state Council for Exceptional Children conference. It is imperative that these ESE Intensive Interventionists see themselves as contributors to the field of special education, in general, and to the knowledge of their special and general education peers.

B3ii: Use current research and evidence-based professional development practices for adult learners. As a result of working with the support of the SEA, LEA, state discretionary projects, and national technical centers, the professional development offered to scholars reflect the most current standards and competencies. The embedded competencies throughout the

program and within clinical field experiences will reflect the national and state expectations for a

highly qualified   teacher-leader in ESE and Reading who is well trained in implementing

intensive interventions. Capstone seminars   will be offered to program scholars, where highly

effective ESE teachers and Reading coaches, Intervention experts, and experts from the district

will be invited to share current and future best practices   in serving ESE students with persistent

and severe learning and behavior problems. The advisory team for Project INCLUDE will

review innovation configurations as well as evaluation reports from scholars,   mentors, and

seminars, and advise recommendations for program changes. The Advisory Team will be

comprised of stakeholders (district leaders, ESE teachers, reading coaches, parent of a student

with disability, individual with a disability, alumni, etc.) as well as program participants to

provide a variety of input related to current trends and best practices. Not only will scholars

learn their vital role in effective implementation   and support of MTSS through state resources

like the Blue Print for FLDOE Tier III for Behavior

http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/Tier3Blueprint.pdf, they will receive

professional development through Florida Diagnostic and   Learning Resources System (FDLRS,

*www.**fdlrs**.org*) which provides diagnostic, instructional, and technology support services to

district exceptional education programs and families of students with   disabilities. Another state

resource utilized as part of the innovative preparation of these leaders is   *CPALMS*

*(www.**cpalms**.org),* an online toolbox of information, vetted resources, and interactive tools   that

helps educators effectively implement Common Core Standards (Florida Standards). Florida is

rich in educational resources, and yet, rarely are educators knowledgeable or well trained in how

to utilize these effective and free tools and resources. Each scholar will be trained and receive a

level 3 credential in Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) Learning Strategies from Kansas

University through local trainers. Additionally, all scholars will participate in Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) USA First Aider Training offered through the Director of SEDNET to ensure all scholars have breadth and depth of training in addressing the complex needs of all students they encounter.

B4: Quality, intensity, and duration of training

Project INCLUDE will provide a high quality program of study that will culminate in a Specialist degree, with a focus in Intensive Interventions to provide interdisciplinary collaboration to support ESE students with persistent and severe learning and behavior problems and provide professional development through coaching to their school and district. The program requires 36-credit hours, and an additional 75-hours of clinical practice, which is embedded throughout courses and will culminate in the Capstone Research Course. FMU Faculty, CULE mentors, and District Leaders (referred as to Collaborative Faculty) will be teaching the courses and all have terminal degrees and are teaching courses consistent with their areas of discipline. Formats for the ESE and Reading program courses include lecture, class discussion, student presentations, group activities, papers, projects, guest speakers, role plays, hybrid coursework, online courses, discussion boards, and the use of media.

The School of Education has a wide range of media services available including equipment and supplies and electronic classrooms, with Smartboards that can be used to illustrate the use of computers and other technology in teaching, assessing, and training. Several rooms, including our Graduate Students Classrooms are equipped with an Apple TV to support a more interactive learning environment. In addition, FMU uses Blackboard as part of a campus-supported teaching tool. Furthermore, in order to accommodate the full-time working teacher, much of the lecture information, will utilize Power Point with voice overlay, that can be accessed

at home at a time convenient to the scholar, to limit the number of face to face hours required by class time. During the planning phase, online course offerings will be considered as well as hybrid formats.

      Courses. Project INCLUDE will propose twelve courses that will lead to an EdS in Exceptional Student Education for Intensive Interventions. Four courses proposed will be related to ESE, specifically addressing Academic and Behavioral Intensive Interventions and Evidence Based Practices. Five courses (ESE or Reading) will be delivered to scholars according to their need for certification. Reading scholars will take the five ESE foundational courses and ESE scholars will take the five reading courses needed for the endorsement. The last three courses are related to educational research and include an advanced research course in DBI and Single Subject, one course in Program Evaluation, with the final Capstone Courses being the culminating research course. Additionally, scholars will participate in 75-hours of clinical experiences that is embedded throughout key courses and in the Capstone Seminar. All of the courses and the practicum will have a combination of standards and competencies embedded within them. The proposed EdS program framework, which will be designed collaboratively through FMU faculty, consulting experts, District Collaborative Faculty, and other stakeholders is located in Appendix A to demonstrate an initial commitment to a well- constructed program that will require significant review and vetting by FMU's shared stakeholders. The coursework will designed for two-nights a week for two courses, 2.5-hour blocks of time, for 15-weeks. Two cohorts, each in a six semester program, will comprise the 15 semester (5-year) grant period. See Table 2 (Appendix A).

      B4i: The components will support scholars' acquisition of competencies through the shared coursework, group assignments, and coordinated clinical experiences. Project

INCLUDE is centered on progressive development of competencies and skills for ESE Interventionists. The program is designed for the full-time working professional and allows two years to complete a comprehensive program through interdisciplinary training in ESE and Reading with rich experiences that will support the scholar in developing effective skills for serving as ESE or Reading Interventionists for students through the implementation, evaluation, and documentation of intensive interventions for students with persistent and severe learning and behavioral problems.

Scholars will progress in their ESE and Reading competencies, which will be tightly interwoven throughout the coursework. Each course is intended to develop scholars' skills in ESE and Reading competencies and provide them with a culminating research project that allows them to demonstrate effective teaching in proposing how to advance the knowledge and skills of other school personnel through training. Their Capstone research project is centered on their implementation of research based practices in their school setting and in demonstrating high quality services to students with persistent and severe learning and behavior problems. Scholars will have a demonstrated plan of action with the provision of data as evidence of their ability to produce high quality interdisciplinary services within their school environment. The program will culminate with comprehensive exams, both oral and written and reviewed by the scholar's committee members, along with the defense of their Capstone Research.

B4ii: The components for the interdisciplinary portions of the proposed project will be integrated. FMU has a standing collaborative relationship with our local school district to establish *a Cadre of Urban Leader Exemplars* (CULE) (see Appendix D for letter of support). FMU will rely on the district and school principals to nominate effective teacher leaders, within the school, that have demonstrated positive learning and behavioral outcomes for students with

disabilities. The purpose of the clinical experiences and Capstone research experiences is for scholars to demonstrate their effective practices for working with students with intensive needs and to demonstrate their implementation and support of other teachers' implementation of data-based individualizations. Scholars will be matched with their interdisciplinary peers (reading and ESE) in the designing and delivering of PD activities, Intensive Intervention protocols, coaching of teachers from our cooperating school. Additionally, they will work in interdisciplinary teams as they design, implement, and evaluate program evaluations for their schools.

B4iii: Ongoing guidance and feedback to program scholars. Mentoring is a critical component to the sustaining of high quality teaching in Special Education. The beginning of the mentoring experience provided to Project INCLUDE scholars will take place during the second year of the program. Scholars will have the opportunity to work with a district nominated effective teacher (mentor), with Project INCLUDE faculty, through interdisciplinary teams where they will work collaboratively to provide intensive interventions for students with persistent and severe learning and behavioral problems. Once the scholar demonstrates competence in implementing, evaluating, and documenting the improvements, the scholar will be supported by their mentoring teams in their coaching of other teachers to implement, evaluate and document intensive interventions for students with severe learning and behavioral needs. Proximity of work environments, similarity of working roles, school setting, and individual characteristics will be considered when making matches.

B4iv: Ongoing induction opportunities and mentoring support to graduates. Upon completion of the program, the mentoring will continue to allow the ESE Interventionist to garner ongoing support as they implement best practices in their schools. A shell in Blackboard will be maintained for a venue to support the mentoring process and will be available for a

minimum of six years (one year beyond the scope of this grant), allowing for two years of mentoring for the final cohort. Mentors and mentees will be granted access to provide helpful information and resources, participate in discussion boards and chats, and learn about upcoming events as related to continued skill development through professional development opportunities offered through FMU. Mentoring logs will be maintained by the mentor and retained as part of documentation required for the mentor stipend.

B5: Forming Collaborative Partnerships

Partnerships are an important part of Project INCLUDE and essential in providing high quality instructional and field experiences. Partnerships have been formed with both high-need, high-poverty, and low-performing schools, interdisciplinary collaboration across departments at FMU, state discretionary projects, and a national technical center.

B5i: Partnering with high-need, high-poverty, low-performing, schools. Schools that surround FMU are high poverty, low performing schools, many of which may be designated as low or underperforming schools, such as in Opa Locka and Miami Gardens. FMU has strong support from the government officials and works closely with these communities, as well as is an active supporter as a "friend" of the United Teachers of Dade (UTD). The Superintendent of MDCPS has been to our events on campus, invited greater collaboration, and has provided a strong commitment to this project through his letter of support. The Specialist Credential is in demand by teachers and valued by the district as they offer a financial supplement ranging between $5,150.-$6,180. (See support letter from MDCPS in Appendix D). Part of our partnerships with districts will be with parents and families of students with intensive needs. With our partner school(s), scholars through mentoring support will design parent workshops or conferences to assist them in understanding their student's needs and how to support them.

Sample resources that may be helpful to parents are included among many of the resources utilized by the proposed project. These include: parent resources guide to Intensive Interventions and parent guide to MTSS.

B5ii: Partnerships with other departments. FMU's School of Education has a long history of collaboration and the design of interdisciplinary training of Reading and ESE teachers to become Specialists in Intensive Interventions was born out of ongoing collaborations over the past few years. The Reading and ESE graduate faculty already teacher research courses to other majors besides their major programs and share in the collaborative support of their Master candidates designing and implementing action research. The EdS will allow for ongoing collaborative designing, delivering, and evaluation to be shared by the program faculty, along with district experts, and outside experts. The budget supports all 5 co-directors in the planning and delivery of Project INCLUDE.

B6: Project use of technology

According to Price (2011) students with significant learning and behavior problems can make academic gains while using the iPad or interactive e-book over text books. According to a special CNN update on May 15, 2012, Apple's touchscreen tablet quickly emerged as the overwhelming market leader, which the user can interact with, with a single touch. Proloquo2Go was the first real augmented communication app, released first for iPhones in 2009. Students with significant learning problems can use AAC, or augmentative and alternative communication, which is a series of interventions used to help children with severe communication disorders communicate. Besides using supported online learning platforms as part of the education process, scholars will learn to use electronic tablets and their promise for data collection tools, for instructional support, and as communication devices for students with

significant learning and behavior problems. Our project staff have recently attended training to learn about one-to-one learning environments and intend to use all electronic texts and resources to streamline information with the use of electronic tablets.

B7: Scholar's use of technology

As part of scholar training, they will receive iPads for their personal learning device as well as a teaching and data collection tool. All scholars will be supported in the classes to work toward becoming credentialed as an Apple Teacher through the earning of 8 badges related to Apps. Several of the courses will embed the discovery of content related Apps and well as demonstration of how to use and implement those Apps as part of teaching and intervention support. The goal is for scholar's to demonstrate how a tablet can support their collection of intervention data along with their teaching to support students learning through alternate formats. General technology used in professional developments and presentations is a minimal expectation for scholars.

B8: Use of Technical Center Resources

FMU already has an existing training relationship with the MTSS project (see letter of support for another funded project), which is an evidence-based model of schooling that uses data-based problem-solving to integrate academic and behavioral instruction and intervention. Additionally, INCLUDE has an established collaboration with The National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII) whose mission is to build district and school capacity to support implementation of data-based individualization in reading, mathematics, and behavior for students with severe and persistent learning and/or behavioral needs. The CEEDAR center has a current agreement on another project and provides consultation in appropriate use on online tools, such as the innovation configurations to increase the quality of this program

innovation. Additionally, they have agreed to provide non- published tools and resources as appropriate given the innovations needed for the program. These partnerships will allow for innovative designs in developing high-quality curriculum, experiences, applications, and mentoring.

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Section C: QUALITY OF PROJECT EVALUATION

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In order to assess the quality of the Project INCLUDE (Intensive iNterventionists as Collaborative Leaders for Urban Diverse Environments), the Evaluation Plan will consist of a mixed methods approach, focused on both the (a) management functions of the project and (b) the progress of the scholars. Assessment will track program implementation (formative evaluation) to facilitate timely feedback to the management team enabling continuing project improvement. Summative evaluation will track attainment of project goals and objectives along with a longitudinal study of the percentage of project scholars completing the program and working in the area for which they were trained upon program completion.

(i): The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project. Project INCLUDE evaluation plan (Appendix A) demonstrates how the project components will be implemented and how the objectives and outcomes will be analyzed. The evaluation results will also provide information on the project's impact. Each component of the project will be evaluated to determine adequacy of process and to provide feedback to our faculty, project staff, district and school partners, and scholar candidates.

(ii). **The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes, including scholar competencies, to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measureable**. Project INCLUDE evaluation plan has been developed with a set of measurable

outcomes and objectives including those associated with scholar competencies. The scholars will be evaluated with respect to the four broad competency areas of the project: (1) interdisciplinary experts (2) clinical interventionists (3) collaborators and (4) problem solvers. The information to be collected as part of the evaluation will be used to evaluate the extent to which scholars acquire the core competencies; the impact of the competencies on the services provided by the scholars; and the overall quality of the project. The specific measurable goals and their alignment with project objectives are in the Evaluation Plan.

(iii). **The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project**.

The objectivity of the evaluation plan is ensured through the use of an external evaluator, who will provide an independent assessment of the performance measures to assist with determining whether the project goals and outcomes are met. *Outcome Evaluation*. The outcome evaluation will assess the project goals and objectives effectiveness, magnitude, or satisfaction impact (see Logic Model). The external evaluation team will work with project directors to ensure that within each goal (or outcome), one or more key measureable objectives (see Evaluation Plan) are identified and regularly assessed. These objectives will explain the change (increase, decrease, improve, etc.) that the project seeks and that will be measured as evidence of progress towards the respective outcome (see Logic Model). Key objectives will be reviewed in both short-term (changes the project expects to see); intermediate (changes the project wants to see); and in the long-term (changes the project hopes to see). Using multiple performance measures, as well as utilizing a mixed-methods (qualitative and quantitative) approach whenever possible, allows the evaluation team to compare and confirm findings from multiple sources, thus providing a more comprehensive representation of the project's efforts. Project INCLUDE

will utilize technical resources from the CEEDAR Center to insure that the Educational

Specialist degree is developed using CEC Certification Standards including Data-Based

Individualization content and curriculum. The CEEDAR center utilizes the innovation

configuration (IC) matrix. Some planning data questions: *Does the EdS level course syllabi meet

the IC criteria for appropriate CRT content? Does the workshops and conferences being

developed meet the IC criteria for appropriate CRT practices and strategies?* Implementation

data will be collected and reviewed at project team meetings.   Periodic measurement of

quantitative program objectives will be reported and discussed at quarterly leadership team

meetings to continually assess progress toward meeting expected outcomes. Some

implementation data questions: *"What were the implementation barriers and how were they

over come?" "What professional development features contributed to parents, family, and

community members increased engagement with ESE students?" "To what extent are teacher

candidates using evidenced-based interventions in their classrooms?" "What issues are school

personnel confronting that project INCLUDE can provide assistance through professional

development?"*

Outcome data will consist of scholar practitioners' completing the EdS in Special

Education with certification. Information will be collected on scholar practitioners' perceptions

of their ability to teach students with the most severe and persistent academic and behavior

needs, changes in the academic/social performance of students under the guidance of the scholar

practitioners completing the program of study, and determining the quantifiable effect the

professional development activities has had on students with disabilities, their parents, family,

and community. Some process data questions: *"To what extent does the project improve

students with disabilities' achievement and other outcomes?" "To what extent does the project*

increase parental relationships with school personnel to support students with disabilities who have high-intensity needs?" "To what extent does the project impact school personnel perception and commitment in servicing students with disabilities who have high-intensity needs and their parents?" This multi-prong approach will be guided by research questions and numerous measures that will examine scholar practitioners, school personnel, students, parents, family, community members, and other stakeholders' changes of the effects of the project. The evaluation therefore will use a wide array of measures and information sources for collecting analyzing quality of program operations and intended outcomes. This multi-faceted convergence of evidence technique will yield quantitative and qualitative data that will be credible and useful in decision-making with regard to project INCLUDE program quality. This broad-based approach to evaluation also eliminates the threat of bias associated with mono-method assessments. The evaluation plan will allow project staff to measure project success over the five year grant period to answer questions such as the following: *How prepared are scholar practitioners with regard to implementing evidence based intensive intervention instructional practices for students with high-intensity needs?"*

Scholar practitioners preparedness to implement intensive intervention evidenced based practices as a measure of systemic education reform in partnering schools, a self-assessment inventory, Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) will be adapted and administered that focuses on indicators of implementation. *How successful has been the professional development component of project INCLUDE in increasing the ability to support the improvement of academic performance and results for students with disabilities?"* To assess professional development activities, the Guskey Professional Development Evaluation Model will be used. *How successful has the project INCLUDE been in providing support to scholar practitioners*

through the sharing of successful instructional practices and resources to improve outcomes for students with the most severe and persistent academic and behavior needs in their daily teaching? Anecdotal information will be collected through focus groups and self-reports using a trend analysis that clusters substantial trends. *How successful has the project INCLUDE been as a means for promoting the use of data-based individualized instruction as an evidenced-based practice to improve the instruction of students with disabilities?*

(iv): The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback.

The project team will work collaboratively with project stakeholders to use data as decision-making tools that will guide us through project progression toward achieving the intended outcomes. The proposed evaluation plan is designed to yield information that gauges program effectiveness in accordance with the grant requirements and within the context of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) performance measures. Project INCLUDE will report on the GPRA/OSEP Program performance measures on an annual basis. Data from these indicators will be used to inform federal officials and INCLUDE stakeholders on the accomplishments of the project. The Evaluation Plan demonstrates the project's alignment with the government performance measures with its goals and objectives (see Evaluation Plan). *Formative*. The external evaluator will work closely with project staff and the PIs to ensure that program components and activities are being delivered as proposed. Feedback loops will be instituted to monitor implementation of the program, address challenges as they occur, and modify program elements as necessary to meet the grant goals. All data will be presented objectively, with project improvements in mind, but also with an independent external perspective that can be useful to those deeply involved in the project's day-to-day activities. The

project directors and external evaluator will analyze the data regularly and use the information to improve project services and provide feedback to scholars on their present performance. This information will be disseminated to the Advisory Team to obtain objective, ongoing, and broad based perspectives on the quality of the project. *Summative.* The summary reports will include documentation of project implementation status in relation to goals and objectives aligned with measures and results for ongoing performance feedback. The process evaluation will highlight success in adhering to scheduled timelines and outcomes, note any deficiencies, and problem-solving methods used to resolve them. Directors will communicate results of the ongoing evaluation and submit annual data to OSEP in required annual performance reports linking project objectives with GPRA, program, and project performance measures. Formative and summative evaluation data and resulting program revisions will be included in the annual performance reports. Appropriate data will also be inputted annually in the Personnel Development Scholar Data Report Web site.

Section D. QUALITY OF PROJECT PERSONNEL, MANAGEMENT PLAN, AND RESOURCES

Qualifications of key project personnel

All key personnel have a variety of experiences and expertise that qualify them in the various roles within Project INCLUDE. Their vitae can be found in Appendix C to expound on their many qualifications and work-related experiences. **Tamar F. Riley, PhD** holds Masters and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in special education from the University of Florida (UF). While at UF, Dr. Riley worked for 3-years on an OSEP funded research grant with an urban school to offer extensive professional development to teachers. Dr. Riley was a faculty member at The University of Alabama (UA) for four years in the Department of Interdisciplinary Teacher

Education program teaching in both the undergraduate and graduate programs. Dr. Riley has been at FMU for fourteen years, is an Associate tenured professor and serves the Director of Innovations in Learning, Education, Assessment, & Design (ILEAD) for faculty development in a Career Pathways Initiative funded by UNCF. She has been heavily involved in working with the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) in program improvement and evaluation for FMU. Dr. Riley recently was appointed by the Commissioner of Education, Pam Stewart to serve on the State Advisory Committee for ESE as the Institutions for Higher Education representative. Additionally, she coordinates collaborative efforts between FMU and SEDNET (a state discretionary project addressing needs of students who have Emotional and/or behavioral disorders). She has previously served as a co-director for an OSEP personnel preparation grant from 2005-2010 and currently co-directs a leadership personnel grant in its final year and a personnel preparation grant from OSEP. She has extensive experience in working with teachers on research-based instructional strategies to improve the academic success of students with disabilities. As grant co-director, she will devote 20% of her time to management of the project. Dr. Riley currently has grant commitments of 29% for year 1 of this proposed project on Project PLEEASE H325D120054 and Project SIAIMESE- H325K140402. Year 2 her commitment will be 15% on Project SIAIMESE. **Annamaria Jerome-Raja Ed.D,** Associate Professor of Special Education in the School of Education graduated from FIU (Florida International University) with a doctorate in Exceptional Student Education under the leadership sponsored program funded by OSEP. Dr. Jerome-Raja is a minority (Asian-American) professional who has worked with student with disabilities at various capacities abroad. Her interest areas are computer assisted education, instructional strategies, classroom management, and behavioral interventions. Her experiences include training teachers on the implementation of Active Student Response

strategies in inclusive classrooms, behavioral intervention, and working with students on how to use instructional strategies via explicit instruction. She currently teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in special education,   educational research and action research. Dr. Jerome is the Coordinator of the Special Education program at FMU and currently co-directs a leadership personnel grant from OSEP and a personnel preparation grant from OSEP. As the grant co-director she will devote 15% of her time to manage the grant. Dr. Jerome currently has grant commitments of 33% for Year 1 of this proposed project on Project PLEEASE H325D120054 and Project SIAIMESE- H325K140402. Year 2 her commitment will be 15% on Project SIAIMESE. **Yvonne Campbell Ph.D,** is a native of South Africa. She earned her PhD in Teaching and Learning, with Specialization in Reading, and her MEd in Counseling (Marriage and Family Therapy), both from the University of Miami. In South Africa she earned a BA Honors in Psychology from the University of Pretoria, and a BA in Psychology & Afrikaans from Vista University. She is an Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Education Programs at Florida Memorial University (FMU). A certified K-12 Reading Teacher (with the ESOL Endorsement), Dr. Campbell is a former Intensive Reading Teacher, Reading Department Chair, and Reading Coach in the public school systems of Broward and Miami-Dade counties. Dr. Campbell is the evaluator of a 5-year $1.25 million personnel preparation grant, that was approved and funded (September 2012) by the U.S. Department of Education, through the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. Dr. Campbell serves on the Community Learning Partnership of Greater Miami Shores, Teacher Professional Development Sub-Committee and on the editorial boards of Teachers on the Cutting Edge and the Florida Reading Journal. Her research interests include instructional strategies for students at risk of reading (and writing) failure, teacher preparation and development with an emphasis on culturally responsive

pedagogy, collaborative learning, and hybrid- and online learning. Her current research focuses on effective writing instruction in the middle school classroom. Dr. Campbell will devote 10% of her time to the administration of the project during the academic school year and the summer.

Denise Callwood-Brathwaite, PhD was born and raised in the Caribbean island of St. Thomas. She has an undergraduate degree in Communication Disorders, Master and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in special education from the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) and University of Miami (UM), respectively. Her area of specialization within special education is instruction, assessment, and evaluation of students with disabilities. She has prior teaching experience in resource room settings for the emotionally disturbed, learning disabled, and mentally retarded. Dr. Callwood-Brathwaite was recruited from UM to develop the undergraduate ESE program at FMU. While completing her dissertation and teaching full-time, she was able to single-handedly receive program approval from the State of Florida for the new special education program in under a year's time and SACS accreditation shortly thereafter. Dr. Callwood-Brathwaite teaches both in the undergraduate and graduate programs at FMU. She has collaborated with neighboring public and private schools to provide professional services and understand how to better meet the needs of children with disabilities in urban schools. She is familiar with the faculty, curriculum, program organization, and services at FMU, as well as the personnel and schools in M-DCPS. Additionally, she has served as a member of the Educational Excellence School Advisory Council at one school. As one of the co-principal investigators, she will devote 7.5% of her time (in kind) to the administration of the project during the academic school year and the summer. **Idriss Abdoulaye, PhD** is a Black male born and raised in Ghana (West Africa). He holds a Masters in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and a Doctorate in Reading both from the University of Arizona. His area of

specialization is diagnosis and remediation of reading disabilities. He was the Coordinator of the

Reading Program and Director of the Reading Clinic at FMU from 2004 to 2012. Before joining

the FMU faculty in 2004, he held positions in the School of Education at the University of

Arizona. Dr. Abdoulaye teaches courses in Assessment of students with reading disabilities,

teaching students with reading disabilities, and Practicum in Clinical reading. Since the project

includes a reading endorsement, it was necessary to involve an expert in the area of reading

disabilities. Dr. Abdoulaye will devote 7.5% (in kind) of his time to the administration of the

project during the academic school year and the summer.

Program Management Plan and Responsibilities of Key Personnel

Of primary importance to this project is the maintenance of the integrity of the program design.

A major function of management will be to ensure that the objectives of the project are met not

only in a timely and financially responsible manner, but also with efficiency through ongoing

evaluation. The management processes necessary for efficient administration of the   project

include (a) financial management; (b) faculty, staff, and mentor appointment and supervision; (c)

office management; (d) program development (e) hiring consultants (f) scheduling of courses,

clinical experiences, and   workshops/seminars; (e) student advisement; (g) faculty, mentor, and

student professional development; (h) program evaluation; and (i) communication/dissemination

efforts. As the project director Dr. Riley will serve as the major contact with the funding agency.

She will also be responsible for hiring of the consultants, as well as handling the admission and

matriculation of program scholars. As project co-director, Dr. Jerome-Raja will be responsible

for managing personnel as well as managing the budget and assuring that the project maintains

its timeline and meets its objectives Dr. Abdoulaye, Dr. Campbell, and Dr. Callwood will be

responsible for the recruitment of graduate scholars and conduct of the practicum sites, which

will occur in our neighboring schools.

Program Management Plan

In order to ensure the smooth management of the project the project personnel will establish clear communication via e-mail and bi-monthly meetings. The specific objectives and activities associated with the processes will provide guidelines for the overall management of the project as well as the specific responsibilities of all project personnel. Table 3 (see Appendix A) details project objectives, activities, and timelines along with person(s) responsible for ensuring that they are met. The plan is dynamic in that activities and documentation are ongoing and interconnected.

Ensuring Feedback and Continuous Improvement

Dr. Riley, Dr. Jerome-Raja, and Dr. Campbell will be involved on a daily basis with maintenance of records and the compilation of materials that may be required as part of the program. Dr. Riley will consult with Advisory Team members and also the key stakeholders in the field of special education. The Advisory Team will meet face-to-face and/or via technology every semester to provide consistent feedback to the project and to guide and monitor progress. Drs. Riley and Jerome-Raja will participate in special professional meetings and conferences at the local, state, and/or national levels to disseminate project information, provide appropriate professional development, and deliver reports. The scholars will be required to evaluate each course and its instructor throughout the program as well as incorporate their reflections into electronic portfolios, which are maintained throughout all their experiences in the program. They will be surveyed and interviewed continuously throughout the project duration in order to adjust experiences in services for students with persistent and severe learning and behavior problems. During periodic seminars, focus groups will be conducted to obtain feedback from the

scholars. Additionally, each scholar will undergo an exit interview upon the completion of the program. The evaluator will be involved with the data collection for formative and summative evaluation. Feedback received, data gathered, and recommendations made will be documented in the reports submitted to OSEP.

Time Commitments of Project Personnel

The time commitments of key personnel were carefully considered. Overall, Dr. Riley will commit .20 FTE, Dr. Jerome-Raja will commit .15 FTE, Dr. Campbell will commit .15 FTE and Drs. Callwood-Brathwaite and Abdoulaye will commit .075 FTE (in kind) throughout the duration of the project (See person loading chart in Appendix A).

Adequacy of Support

Florida Memorial University (FMU) is one of the oldest academic centers in Florida. Because the University is located in one of Miami's largest urban areas, over 90% of the students enrolled at the University reside in these same communities. The University's ethnic breakdown of students is 92% Black, 6% Hispanic, and 2% other. The average enrollment each semester is about 1,600 – 1,900 students, with most graduate students being enrolled in the School of Education. FMU is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the School of Education's initial certification programs are also approved by the State of Florida.

The Nathan W. Collier Library provides resources and instructional materials to the University community in support of the mission, goals and objectives. The Library's administration and staff adhere to the American Library Association (ALA) Guidelines and Standards for Colleges and continuously assess its resources to determine compliance and comparative standings among its peer institutions. The library subscribes to over 50 databases,

most of which are full-text, thus providing the academic community with thousands of scholarly journals, newspaper articles, indices, abstracts and other resources. Online access to the print and electronic library collection is available through the Millennium Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC), which is one of the main components of the Library's Integrated System by Innovative Interfaces.

The institution has appropriate and up-to date computer resources, instructional materials and equipment, and physical facilities. Over 20 computer laboratories for students are available across campus, two of which are located in the FMU/FIU Building, the location of the School of Education. Almost 100% the classrooms across campus have been modernized with Smart Board Technology geared towards improving student learning. The classrooms used for the graduate classes are spacious and are equipped with start-of-the-art media equipment that includes computers, printers, LCD projectors, document cameras and surround sound audio enhancements. Each room is outfitted with secured and reliable wireless internet access that allows both the students and faculty to access online learning resources such as the schools Blackboard platform. Blackboard technology allows the institution to enrich the teaching-learning experience by providing a platform for faculty to engage, instruct and assess students in a more effective and efficient manner.

The Student Development Center provides students with counseling and mental health services. It encourages and enhances the personal, professional, social, career, and academic growth of students through effective and comprehensive psychological services. The center conducts variety events/activities in support of student engagement, expand programming and services, and publicize mental health and wellness events and activities. Additionally, FMU has opened a new multi-million dollar sports complex and gymnasium that will house brand new

equipment and offer free workout classes that are available to all students.

Adequacy of Budget and Reasonableness of Costs

Project INCLUDE will serve two cohort groups for a total of 32 students. Each scholar will be

provided with a comprehensive support system that includes tuition, books, and fees,   including

graduation fees. Each scholar will be able to attend state and local level conferences.

Membership fees for Council of Exception Children (CEC) and relevant subdivisions as well as

the International Literacy Association (ILA) will also be provided for in the budget. Certification

exam fees will also be provided. Technological devices (electronic tablets) will also be budgeted

to be purchased for the scholars. At the end of the funding period, it is expected that 32 highly

qualified interventionists will graduate to provide effective special education services to students

with persistent and severe learning and behavior problems through intensive interventions.

Additionally, parents and students with persistent and severe learning and behavior problems

will reap the benefits of having these scholars who will provide instructional training on

innovative research based methods and strategies for implementing intensive interventions.

The budget is reasonable and supports the students directly. The total percentage of the budget

amount allocated directly to students is **69%** over the funding period, as it only requests

expenses that are necessary and keeps project expenses to a minimum.