

1. Scope and Approach

Describe the scope and approach of the proposed work. This should be a narrative description of the principal results the investment would achieve and how those results relate to the problem described above (rather than a list of outcomes and outputs.) Note: You will provide a list of outcomes and outputs in the Results Framework.

The Lastinger Center will approach this work from a synergistic pursuit of three activities which are key to implementing effective data-driven reform:

1. **Analyzing Targeted Data** – to provide as much useful information as possible, without hampering analysis or overwhelming users. This is one of the great challenges of a world hungry for “Big Data,” where the ability to access large quantities of data often results in inactivity or ineffective use. In order to use data in a targeted and focused way, it is essential to define the scope of analysis and connect each data category to a specific purpose.
2. **Accessing National and Local Perspectives**—The usefulness of data is directly correlated to the quality of its analysis. In the case of utilizing data to drive statewide initiatives, this means understanding the national implications of findings while interpreting them through state and local lenses. For example, it is difficult to interpret Florida kindergarten readiness data, without taking into account the fact that the assessments used have changed almost annually for the last 10 years. Therefore, it is important to collaborate with trusted, well-connected local and national experts who can interpret and disseminate data in a way that is relevant and applicable to state educational leadership.
3. **Partnering with Education Leadership**—The MLI data collected will provide crucial information to the Gates Foundation as it gauges the efficacy of its current and historical efforts around education reform. It will also provide key impact data that will guide future investments. There is an additional opportunity to leverage the study by supporting it with targeted qualitative data gleaned through interviews, focus groups and public meetings. By engaging statewide educational leaders in this interactive collection and analysis process, qualitative responses can further support the local interpretation of the MLI data, and use it in real-time to co-design new educational initiatives and policies. This partnership with education leaders has the potential to rapidly increase the Foundation’s impact beyond its investment in MLI and could be crucial for understanding its impact throughout the state of Florida.

As needed, describe why you believe the approach would lead to the desired results. Reference related work, existing evidence from evaluations or systematic reviews, and/or relevant experience, etc.

The University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning is a key Gates Foundation partner in the improvement of educational systems. It also has a deep investment and history with improving teaching

and learning both nationally and throughout the state of Florida. Over the past 14 years, the UF Lastinger Center has grown to become an innovation incubator with a portfolio of over \$27 million in public and private investments. The Center's work spans the nation and has also made international impact. The majority the UF Lastinger Center's work focuses on Florida, offering a unique perspective on the state's educational system throughout all 67 counties. Accordingly, the Center is known as a trusted connector and leader among the various players working to improve teaching and learning across the state. The Center's depth and breadth of knowledge in Florida make it an effective potential partner in the implementation of the MLI survey and the analysis of data.

At the national level, the UF Lastinger Center has been a central contributor to the Gates Foundation's countrywide professional development conversation. For example, UF Lastinger Center representatives are members of the **National Professional Development Braintrust**, which is focused on collecting research data on professional development and making policy recommendations.

The UF Lastinger Center is also engaged at the state and local levels to guide educational system improvements across Florida. For example, **The Florida Professional Development Redesign Committee** has been convened by Commissioner Pam Stewart and facilitated by FLDOE, the UF Lastinger Center, and an external partner, Collective Invention. This Committee enables principals, professional development directors, and teachers from across the state to experience various approaches to professional development in other industries throughout different regions of the country. Additionally, **The Florida Teacher Leadership Fellowship** was launched in March 2016 through a partnership between the UF Lastinger Center and the Center for Teaching Quality. This Fellowship offers teachers the opportunity to form a community focused on 1) improving the quality of standards-based classroom teaching; 2) documenting the impacts of professional learning on teacher and student growth; and 3) promoting teacher voice and leadership within and across schools and districts.

The UF Lastinger Center has led several other comprehensive evaluation studies which have led to substantial reform efforts, funding opportunities and policy changes to improve both educational outcomes and the health and well-being of children. One of these efforts was a large scale, state-wide evaluation of Florida's Early Childhood Professional Development System. This study (1) organized the extensive feedback from across the state into a coherent summary of the state's professional development system, (2) identified overarching issues that Florida's Office of Early Learning needed to address as it took next steps in professional development systems building, (3) developed actionable recommendations for how Florida's Office of Early Learning could take bold steps forward in building a cutting edge professional development system for early childhood professionals in the state of Florida, and now (4) provided the blueprint for a cutting-edge professional learning system which has already supported over 3,000 practitioners in its first year. Another study the UF Lastinger Center conducted in Collier County, led to the

identification of health concerns and ultimately improvements in healthcare, and a state of the art healthcare center for the most vulnerable children in that community and the surrounding communities.

These examples are evidence of the UF Lastinger Center's ability to draw upon its existing network of leaders throughout the state to undertake a co-design process that could enhance the MLI data set and analysis, while also using it in the near-term to inform statewide policy and practice. The Center's position as a thought leader and key disseminator can also ensure that the implications for the knowledge gained through the MLI study reflect Florida's individual approach to educational policy and also relate it to the national context.

These engagements also illustrate the UF Lastinger Center's ability to connect across many of the Gates Foundation's efforts to advance educational reform in Florida. As the MLI is implemented in Florida and data is collected from representative statewide samples, there is an opportunity to customize a section of the survey to inform the direction of state-specific efforts and leverage other ongoing research efforts undertaken by the National Professional Development Braintrust. This Florida data collection could offer an opportunity to collect items of interest to their efforts to gather information among Florida educators, and potentially in additional states beyond Florida in subsequent data collections elsewhere. This opportunity not only provides educational leaders with invaluable data to understand the impact of current and past initiatives, but also offers an understanding of the landscape necessary to promote the co-design of future initiatives with teachers and educational leaders statewide.