



View xForm - Research Review Board (RRB) Submission

New RRB Submission

Data Entry

- Submitted 01/16/2025 1:32 PM ET by Richards, Jennifer Ph.D.

Amendment Summary

RRB Number	2021-1646
Study Title	Understanding Opportunities and Challenges in Teacher Leaders' Facilitation of Professional Learning Communities
Event Type	Modification/Continuing Review defined 01/16/2025
Schools Participating	No answer provided.

Description of Research Activities to Date

We have conducted 20 total interviews with teacher leaders, teachers, and a district leader participating in the PLCs to date and engaged in qualitative, thematic analyses regarding facilitation practices and participants' experiences within teacher-driven PLCs. As the initiative in the district is continuing, we and our district collaborators would like to continue data collection as PLCs culminate this year.

Preliminary Results to Date

Building on our response from last year, we submitted a conference proposal that was accepted to AERA on teacher and teacher leader perspectives on agency in teacher-driven science PLCs. We look forward to expanding and synthesizing our qualitative analyses into a full journal article as we continue to collect data.

Type of Request

Modification

Please select continuing review if no changes have been made to your study protocol. If you plan on proposing a modification AND a continuing review, please select modification, as an approved modification will extend your approval period.

Indicate Proposed Modification Areas

Other

After summarizing your proposed modifications on this page, please update the following pages as appropriate. Please update all aspects of your proposal to reflect your proposed modifications. Any changes made within your proposal will be displayed as tracked changes to your assigned reviewer.

Please provide an overview of any other proposed modifications to your study protocol

Our only modification is removing Ashley Walter as a project team member, as she has moved to a different position.

Optional Attachments - please attach any reports/publications that have been created thus far here.

No answer provided.

Pertinent CPS Documentation

Submitter

Richards, Jennifer Ph.D.

Email: jrichards@northwestern.edu **Mobile:** (443) 794-3192

Overview of Pertinent CPS Documentation

The RRB is composed of members representing various Central Office academic departments as well as the Law Department. The RRB meets quarterly to evaluate new proposals to conduct research. The RRB calendar and deadlines for submissions can be found on the CPS Research Website [here](#). Decisions resulting from the research review process will be communicated to the applicant of the request as well as appropriate CPS staff in accordance with the estimated timelines outlined in the respective RRB calendar. External researchers may not begin any research activities or obtain data for research purposes without first following the procedures outlined in this policy and securing the necessary approvals.

We expect all researchers to be familiar with the guidelines and policies guiding research within the district. Please verify that you have read and acknowledged the following:

External Research Study and Data Policy

✔ I have read and understood the External Research Study and Data Policy

CPS RRB Guidelines

✔ I have read and understood the CPS RRB Guidelines

CPS Equity Framework

✔ I have read and understood the CPS Equity Framework

CPS Volunteer Policy

✔ I have read and understood the CPS Volunteer Policy, including background check requirements

Study Personnel Details

Study Title

Understanding Opportunities and Challenges in Teacher Leaders' Facilitation of Professional Learning Communities

Does your organization participate in a Research Practice Partnership (RPP) with Chicago Public Schools?

Yes

Please select the RPP with which you are affiliated

Northwestern SESP

RPP Point of Contact

Lynn Grabarek, Jana

Email: jana.grabarek@northwestern.edu

Phone:

Current Study Contacts

Please remove Ashley Walter as a project team member.

01/16/2025 • Richards, Jennifer Ph.D. • *Not* Internal

Name	Role
Botello, Andre	District Supporter
Richards, Jennifer Ph.D.	Coordinator
Richards, Jennifer Ph.D.	Principal Investigator
Tekkumru Kisa, Miray	Project Team Member
Walter, Ashley	Project Team Member

Is the Principal Investigator a Student?

No

Is the researcher a CPS Staff Member?

No

Funding and Intervention Information

Is this project contracted by the CPS Board of Education?

No

Is a funding source associated with the proposed research?

No

Select the option that applies to your study

My study will be occurring District-wide

Will this research require any in-person interaction or intervention activities?

No

Will this research require any virtual interaction or intervention activities (Google Meets, Zoom, etc.)?

Yes

Please note that Zoom is not approved for use with CPS Students. Any virtual activities will need to be conducted via Google Meets and safe@cps.edu must be invited to Google Meet. Please adjust virtual methods accordingly. For more information on permitted interactions with students and staff, please visit <https://www.cps.edu/about/policies/acceptable-use-policy/external-volunteers/>.

Please review CPS's Acceptable Use of Technology Guidance (AUP)



Questions about eligibility or appropriate use of communication channels should be directed to the school principal or CPS External Research department. Only CPS-approved communication channels may be used.

Please be aware that virtual interviews involving students may only be conducted via Google Meets. A CPS Staff member must be present for the entire duration of the interview. For more information on CPS' Acceptable Use of Technology policies, please visit <https://www.cps.edu/about/policies/acceptable-use-policy/external-volunteers/>

Please check all of the following that apply to your research protocol:

Interviews

Please outline your protocol for individual interview activities, describing when, where, duration, frequency, and with whom.

We plan to conduct interviews with teacher leaders, teachers participating in PLCs, and district leaders.

For those who consent to participate, we will conduct one-on-one interviews via Google Meet at a time of mutual convenience during the months of May-July (as PLCs culminate for the school year). Our interview guides are attached. Each participant will engage in one 30-45-minute interview, which is also the estimated total time for completion of all study activities.

Does this involve video, audio, or photograph recording?

Yes

Please describe the protocol for audio/video recording

Interviews will be audio recorded so that participants' complete, nuanced responses can be captured for analysis, and potentially used in presentations. Audio recording for analysis purposes is mandatory for participation in the research, but participants will be able to choose whether they allow audio records to be used in presentations.

Please describe how data will be captured and stored securely

To protect participants' privacy interests, we will keep all collected data and information about participation in project activities confidential unless otherwise permitted by the participant on their consent form. Interviews will take place in private Google Meet sessions accessible only by the researcher and participant, which researchers will conduct from private locations. Interviews will be directly recorded on researchers' computers and transferred immediately to a password-protected server for storage, where only trained and authorized individuals who are listed as research personnel for this study will have access. Participants may be identifiable on audio recordings, but recordings will be stored with pseudonyms instead of participants' names. A key linking pseudonyms and participants' names will be stored on the password-protected server in a location separate from the data and will be accessible only by research personnel for this study. No data will be downloaded onto nor stored on research personnel's computers; data will remain and be worked with on the server. Data will be stored for five years after completion of the study, at which time it will be destroyed.

Please attach all study materials corresponding to interview procedures (i.e., consent forms, protocol, recruitment and incentive plans)

Social-Behavoiaral-Consent-CONSENT-582-12.15.2020_TLFacilitation 3.pdf

Consent Forms

Interview Guide_DistrictLeaders.docx

Interview
Protocols

Interview Guide_PLCTeachers.docx

Interview
Protocols

Interview Guide_TeacherLeaders.docx

Interview
Protocols

Recruitment Flier for PLC Teachers_TLFacilitation.docx

Recruitment
Materials

Recruitment Script for Teacher and District
Leaders_TLFacilitation 2.docx
Recruitment Slide for Teacher and District Leaders_TL
Facilitation 2.pptx

Recruitment
Materials
Recruitment
Materials

Will this research require the use or access of existing CPS data?

No

Will this research require the use or access of existing non-CPS data?

No

Study Details

Please select all of the following that will be participating in the study?

Teachers
Other Staff

Has this project been reviewed by an Institutional Review Board (IRB)?

Yes, and it was approved

IRB of Record Name

Northwestern University IRB

IRB Protocol Number

STU00214413

Please attach all of your IRB documentation here (include approval/exemptions letters, IRB study protocol, etc.).

Correspondence_for_STU00214413.pdf

IRB
Letters

HRP-583-TEMPLATE-Social-Behavioral-
Protocol_10102019_TLFacilitation 6.pdf

IRB
Protocol

IRB of Record Primary Contact Email Address

irb@northwestern.edu

Study Overview

Executive Summary or Abstract

Please provide a high-level overview of your study, including a summary of the motivation, design, and implications of the project.

Science teachers from across Chicago Public Schools are leading professional learning communities (PLCs) to guide interested colleagues through continuous learning cycles to improve their instructional practices. The teacher leaders then come together to reflect on their experiences and plan further sessions with support from the high school science specialists in their own PLC.

The purpose of this interview study is to explore teacher leaders' experiences, practices, and perceptions of facilitating PLCs as part of a broader system of district-wide science professional learning. We hope to gain insights on how to best support teacher leaders in balancing being responsive to the ideas and needs of teachers (supporting educator empowerment and locally-relevant learning) while maintaining an intentional focus on equity and high-quality rigorous instruction. We also seek insights from the perspectives of teachers participating in the PLCs and district leaders.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

Please list all research questions and hypotheses associated with this project.

Research questions that guide the study are as follows:

1. What do teacher leaders identify as benefits, challenges, tensions, and needed supports in planning and facilitating PLCs?
2. How do teacher leaders navigate focused responsiveness in their facilitation? Specifically, how do they balance being responsive to the ideas and needs of teachers, with an intentional focus on equity of participation and high-level goals across PLCs?

Purpose and Literature Review

Please provide an overview of the existing research and literature on this subject. What is the contextual history of this subject area and how does this research build upon the body of extant knowledge?

Briefly, the research literature suggests that teacher leader-led PLCs can foster participation, instructional improvement, and systemic capacity. PLCs are designed to sustain work on lines of inquiry that matter to participants (Woodland, 2016) and facilitate active learning closely tied to teachers' contexts (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Further, teacher leadership has been shown to increase teacher and teacher leader motivation and commitment (Mangin, 2016) and promote access to and participation in professional learning through providing both more and more relevant opportunities from teachers' perspectives (NRC, 2014; Wenner & Campbell, 2017).

However, there is much to be learned about the demands of facilitating peers as a teacher leader, particularly with respect to a central tenet of adult learning (e.g., Trotter, 2016) — being responsive to teachers' experiences, ideas, and priorities. At the same time, to cultivate a generative co-learning system across PLCs, it is important to keep equity of participation and shared goals in view. This study will examine how teacher leaders navigate responsiveness to teachers while keeping these foci in view, exploring "focused responsiveness" as a novel facilitation construct, and will contribute to the field's growing understanding of critical supports for teacher leaders from the perspectives of multiple participants (teacher leaders, teachers participating in PLCs, and district leaders).

Information gathered will also inform local CPS efforts by deepening understanding of the system of professional learning available to science teachers throughout the district and supporting the development of additional supports for teacher leaders in the next school year.

Research Activities and Student/Staff Involvement

Please provide an overview of all primary and secondary research activities associated with this study. Please use this space to describe, as thoroughly as possible, all that will be asked of your research subjects (e.g. surveys, focus groups, observations, etc.)

To recruit teacher leaders and district leaders for the study, we will attend an online teacher leader meeting (which occur monthly via Google Meet in the district). We will share a recruitment slide that we will verbally describe and invite teacher leaders and district leaders who are potentially interested to email the PI to discuss next steps.

To recruit teachers participating in PLCs, we will share a recruitment flier that teacher leaders will distribute at one of their PLC meetings, inviting teachers who are potentially interested to email the PI to discuss next steps.

We will follow up with interested participants individually by emailing them the consent form using Northwestern Qualtrics. We will invite potential participants to review the consent form and email or call the PI with any questions they have before deciding whether to participate. If they wish to participate, they will complete the consent form via Northwestern Qualtrics and click "I Agree" to provide a digital record, and we will follow up with them by email to schedule their interview. If they do not wish to participate, they can click "I Disagree" or select X in the corner of their browser to close the window.

For teacher leaders, teachers participating in PLCs, and district leaders who consent to participate, we will conduct one-on-one interviews via Google Meet at a time of mutual convenience during the months of May-July (as PLCs culminate for the school year). Each participant will engage in one 30-45-minute interview, which is also the estimated total time for completion of all study activities. Interviews with teacher leaders will focus on their motivations for becoming teacher leaders, general reflections on their experiences and facilitation in PLCs, experiences/challenges being responsive to teachers and supporting equitable participation, and applications and next steps they see for themselves. Interviews with teachers participating in PLCs will focus on their motivations for joining PLCs, general reflections on their experiences in the PLCs, and applications and next steps they see for themselves. Interviews with district leaders will focus on their motivations for supporting teacher leaders, general reflections on their experiences and hopes for PLCs, and applications and next steps they see for themselves.

Research Methodology and Analytical Technique

Please provide an overview of your research methodology and specific analytical techniques that will be utilized as part of this study.

We will transcribe participants' interviews and use grounded, qualitative methods (Charmaz, 2008) to analyze interview transcripts.

Benefits and Commitment to Equity

Benefit to CPS

Which (if any) of the CPS core values does your research support?

Continuous Learning

Please describe how your project supports each of the core values selected above.

The project most directly supports continuous learning of teachers, teacher leaders, and district leaders as they engage in and seek to support and improve teacher leader-led PLCs.

How does this project support the district broadly?

The proposed study will support CPS' emphases on developing talented and empowered educators and promoting continuous learning. In particular, this research will help shape the development of supports for CPS science teacher leaders moving forward, ultimately contributing to enhanced capacity to lead quality professional learning for science teachers throughout the district.

Please use the table below to list all District CPS Supporters and the role they will have in your study. Use the details box to describe your supporters' title and role in the district. List your primary supporter first.

Please click "save" after each line.

CPS Supporter Email Address	CPS Supporter Details
Botello, Andre	6th-12th Grade Science
Email: abotello2@cps.edu Business: (773) 553-1000	Manager

Link to New Contact Form

User had the option to start a different form here.

Commitment to Equity

In what ways does this project reflect/challenge/progress the district's commitment to equity?

This project reflects a commitment to facilitating meaningful professional learning opportunities for teachers and teacher leaders that meet their dynamic, contextualized desires and needs. By engaging teachers as knowledgeable agents of change, we respect and support teacher empowerment to cultivate inclusive, rich learning with students and communities, and to reduce opportunity disparities in their settings. We position ourselves as learners with and from teachers and district leaders in this work.

Reflect on the district's equity framework as well as the following: As a researcher, what is my privilege / bias when it comes to this question? Am I assuming that Black and brown students will inherently perform poorly? Have I consulted those whose communities I want to research? Is the research designed with the holistic humanity of the people I am researching in mind? Do I perceive the communities I want to research as allies, or as research subjects? Am I interrogating / challenging policies and systems that may be contributing to inequities? Will this project create an undue burden on the communities I am seeking to research?

How are your research activities accessible to individuals with disabilities?

We promote access by conducting research activities remotely and being responsive to participants' schedules and needs.

Are your research activities translated into languages other than English as appropriate for the community?

To our knowledge all teachers, teacher leaders, and district leaders who are eligible to participate in the study are fluent in English; if we learn otherwise, we will provide translations.

How will you share your research findings with the population(s) you are studying?

We will generate shareable insights across interviews to share with district leaders. We would also be happy to present and discuss thematic research findings with teacher leaders as desired and useful.

Research Activities

Start Date of Recruitment

04/01/2025

End Date of Recruitment

05/31/2025

Please provide the date that you will begin primary data collection

04/07/2025

Please provide the end date of primary data collection

07/31/2025

Please provide the date that you will begin analysis

04/08/2025

Please provide the end date of analysis

09/30/2025

Please provide the approximate date that you will finalize your research report.

05/30/2026

Description of Deliverable/Final Product (i.e., academic/journal article, white paper, memo, report)

We anticipate creating a report back to CPS and a journal article.

Will any portion of this research, including recruitment or consent, take place during or in any way interfere with standard activities?

Yes

With very few exceptions, research procedures cannot be carried out during or in any way interfere with standard activities, including instruction time or professional development sessions.

Please describe what specific school/district activities will be interrupted and how.

A few minutes of professional learning will be used to introduce the study and recruitment process.

Please justify the proposed interruption of standard instruction time or required classroom activities.

Introducing the study during professional learning allows for questions if potential participants have them.

Will this study involve study subject randomization or a control group?

No

Will your research employ study-subject deception or non-disclosure?

No

Will this research involve Product Testing?

No

Will this research involve collection of biological samples or biometric data?

No

Does this research involve other research procedures not described previously?

No

Is this research tied to a standard or novel curriculum, teaching or other program, staff professional development training or program, or other non-research activity or activities?

Yes

Please describe

The PLCs are a professional development initiative occurring in and facilitated by the district.

Has the curriculum, program, PD, etc. already been approved by the district?

Yes

Please list the contact information for internal CPS supporter.

Andre Botello, abotello2@cps.edu

Does this study involve the use of educational technology (including survey tools, video conference platforms, and third party websites. See note for add'l details)?

Yes

Please be aware that under The Student Online Personal Protection Act, SOPPA (105 ILCS 85/), any platform students interact with must be compliant with current data security and student privacy regulations. Please note that this definition includes online survey tools such as Qualtrics. Please use the following website to check if your proposed platform is complaint with SOPPA: <https://cps.app.learnplatform.com/new/public/tools>

Please describe the use of educational technology as part of this study

Interviews will occur via Google Meet.

Is the described educational technology a CPS SOPPA operator?

Yes

Please use the following website to check if your proposed platform is complaint with SOPPA: <https://cps.app.learnplatform.com/new/public/tools>

Study Population

Will you be submitting a secondary Data Request?

No

Study Subject Inclusion Criteria

The inclusion criterion is that participants are currently serving as teacher leaders of PLCs, teachers participating in PLCs, or district leaders supporting teacher leaders in CPS.

If the research involves more than one study subject population (e.g. students, parents, teachers, staff), please individually detail the inclusion criteria for each.

Study Subject Exclusion Criteria

None.

If the research involves more than one study subject population, please individually detail the inclusion criteria for each

Please select all special populations that may be targeted for your study

No answer provided.

Describe the potential direct and/or indirect benefits for all detailed research procedures and populations

Participants may benefit from having an opportunity to process and reflect on their experiences participating in and/or supporting PLCs. Potential benefits more broadly include deeper understandings of teacher leaders' experiences and perceptions in the field and enhanced supports for teacher leaders.

Describe the anticipated potential risks, however minimal, associated with the detailed research procedures and subject populations

Participants may feel uncomfortable being audio recorded, and several interview questions may be sensitive in nature (particularly questions that invite discussion of challenges in being responsive or supporting equitable participation in PLCs). We will assure participants that they may choose not to answer any interview question they do not wish to answer. A breach of confidentiality is a possible risk that we will seek to minimize through our data collection, storage, and access processes (as described in a prior question) and through de-identifying data when sharing results beyond the research team; we will pay particular attention to potential identifiers in responses to more sensitive questions to redact details that could impact anonymity.

How will the identified risks for all research procedures and subject populations be minimized and/or mitigated to the greatest extent possible?

See above.

What procedures will you use in the event that research questions/processes produce observable stress/distress in subjects?

We will reassure participants that they may choose not to answer any interview question they do not wish to answer, and they may choose to stop participating in the study at any time.

Will you compensate study subjects?

Yes

Detail the proposed compensation (monetary and/or non-monetary) for each research procedure and population

Each participant will receive a \$50 gift card by email upon completion of their interview.

Student incentives must be appropriate, equitable, and reasonable in amount. All staff incentives are limited to \$50 or less in a given year. Any amount in excess will require the secondary employment form to be completed by staff participants, or otherwise have the amount allocated to the school.

Describe when and where study subjects will be compensated and detail the mechanisms that will be in place to ensure study subject privacy when distributing compensation.

Gift cards will be sent by email individually to participants.

Describe the compensation schedule for participants that withdraw from the research or that are withdrawn from the research by the study team.

Participants will receive a gift card if they complete the interview (even if they choose not to answer some questions). If they withdraw from the study altogether, they will not receive a gift card.

Study Recruitment

Outline every aspect of the recruitment process for teacher participants.

To recruit teacher leaders for the study, we will attend an online teacher leader meeting (which occur monthly via Google Meet in the district). We will share a recruitment slide that we will verbally describe and invite teacher leaders who are potentially interested to email the PI to discuss next steps.

To recruit teachers participating in PLCs, we will share a recruitment flier that teacher leaders will distribute at one of their PLC meetings, inviting teachers who are potentially interested to email the PI to discuss next steps.

Outline every aspect of the recruitment process for non-teacher staff participants.

To recruit district leaders for the study, we will attend an online teacher leader meeting (which occur monthly via Google Meet in the district). We will share a recruitment slide that we will verbally describe and invite district leaders who are potentially interested to email the PI to discuss next steps.

Please attach all recruitment materials not attached elsewhere (Optional).

No answer provided.

Please attach all consent/assent forms associated with this study not already attached elsewhere (Optional).

No answer provided.

Identify study team members who will recruit subjects.

Jennifer Richards

Will this research involve screening procedures

No

Compliance

FERPA

For more information on FERPA, click here.

Is any aspect of this research subject to FERPA?

No

ISSRA

For more information on ISSRA, click here.

Is any aspect of this research subject to ISSRA?

No

PPRA

For more information on PPRA, click here.

Is any aspect of this research subject to PPRA?

No

Permission, Confidentiality, and Security

Attach a draft of the permission letter that will be sent to school Principals

No answer provided.

Please note that Principals have final authority over what happens in their schools.

How will you protect the privacy of prospective research subjects? Please detail how study subject privacy will be protected during recruitment, screening, consent, and all research procedures. Provide an accounting for all applicable research procedures and study populations.

Potentially interested participants will reach out to the PI individually and directly to express interest, and the entire consent process will also occur individually as described earlier. To protect participants' privacy interests, we will keep all collected data and information about participation in project activities confidential unless otherwise permitted by the participant on their consent form. Interviews will take place in private Google Meet sessions accessible only by the researcher and participant, which researchers will conduct from private locations.

Describe the data confidentiality or security provisions that will be in place for all research data.

Interviews will be directly recorded on researchers' computers and transferred immediately to a password-protected server for storage, where only trained and authorized individuals who are listed as research personnel for this study will have access. A key linking pseudonyms and participants' names will be stored on the password-protected server in a location separate from the data and will be accessible only by research personnel for this study. No data will be downloaded onto nor stored on research personnel's computers; data will remain and be worked with on the server.

How will you store participant data?

With direct identifiers

These details must be included in all applicable consent forms

List the identifiers that will be stored and explain if identifiers will be deleted at a later date

Participants may be identifiable on audio recordings, but recordings will be stored with pseudonyms instead of participants' names. Since voices are potentially identifiable, the identifiers will be deleted when the data is deleted.

Will you keep participants' contact information on file after the data have been collected?

No

Will you share individual-level data with other researchers or practitioners beyond the designated key research personnel?

No

What will you do with the data once the research has been completed (choose all that apply)?

Retain data for three years or longer post-completion, then destroy it

Please note that the district discourages storing study data for longer than three years after study completion.

Please describe the purpose for which you will be storing data after the conclusion of the study. Also, explain the planned duration (i.e. how long) you will retain data

At times during the (often lengthy) publication process it is necessary to revisit data, so data will be stored for five years after completion of the study, at which time it will be destroyed.

Attachments

Please attach all miscellaneous attachments

No answer provided.

If you are resubmitting your protocol following initial review, please attach your response letter here.

Are there any additional finalized contracts or agreements associated with this research that have not been attached elsewhere as part of this application (e.g. CPS Data Authorization Agreements)?

No

Are there any pending (i.e. not yet signed by both parties) contracts or agreements associated with this research that have not been attached elsewhere as part of this application?

No

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements

Please acknowledge the following:

- ✓ All parts of this submission are accurate, complete, consistent, and clear.
- ✓ I have accurately and completely described all intended human subjects research procedures and the populations with whom they will be carried out.
- ✓ I have attached all study materials, including, but not limited to, all materials that will be given to, sent to, read to, or otherwise used with all prospective study subject populations.
- ✓ This submission adhere to all CPS policies and guidance as outlined in the link below
<https://www.cps.edu/about/district-data/conduct-primary-research/>
- ✓ I have accurately identified all personnel who will be involved in this study.
- ✓ I acknowledge that any/all changes required by the CPS RRB in the course of its review of this submission will be reported to my IRB of record during the entire lifetime of this study.
- ✓ I attest that I will work with my IRB of record to address any concerns raised in the review of this submission.
- ✓ I attest that all of the research procedures detailed in this submission have been carried out with prospective IRB review and approval.
- ✓ I agree to comply with all background check and volunteer procedures required of my study, per the official CPS Volunteer Policy (link provided below):
<https://policy.cps.edu/download.aspx?ID=272>

Submission Date

04/26/2023

Load CR/Mod into IRBManager
- Submitted 01/16/2025 1:32 PM ET by System, The

CR/Mod Processing

- Submitted 01/30/2025 2:59 PM ET by Corson, Adam

CR/Mod Processing

Ready for Review

Approve

Approval Date

01/30/2025

Approval Period (in number of months)

12

Existing Background Check Level

Level I

Existing Background Check Justification

Interactions with Staff

Does background check level need to be updated?

No

Notes for Letter

No answer provided.

RRB Meeting Date for Notification

03/07/2025

Current School Sites

No answer provided.

School Sites Chosen Within Data Entry

School Contacts for Sites Chosen

No answer provided.

Are the Supplementary Sites the same?

True

Administrative Reviewer

Corson, Adam

Email: ACorson1@cps.edu

Phone:

Load Approved Modifications

- Submitted 01/30/2025 2:59 PM ET by System, The

Determination Letter Finalization**- Submitted 01/30/2025 3:53 PM ET by Corson, Adam****Review Generated Letter and Confirm Before Sending****RRB #**

2021-1646

Study Title

Understanding Opportunities and Challenges in Teacher Leaders' Facilitation of Professional Learning Communities

Principal Investigator

Richards, Jennifer Ph.D.

Email: jrichards@northwestern.edu**Mobile:** (443) 794-3192**Determination Letter**

In some cases you may see other determination letters attached by the submitter. However, only the generated determination letter will be sent in the decision email.

Name	Type	Date	This determination letter will be automatically attached to an email being sent to the principal investigator.
RRB#2021-1646-Jennifer Richards, Ph.D. 2025-01-30.docx	Determination Letter	01/30/2025	

Please use the link below, click on the Attachments link on the left side of the page if you need to upload an edited version of the above letter.

Modification/Continuing Review defined 01/16/2025

Output Background Check Level

N/A

Additional Attachments to Decision Email*No answer provided.*

Notes for Determination Email

No answer provided.

Study Site Contact Background Check Expirations

Name	Role	Background Check Expiration
Botello, Andre	District Supporter	Missing
Richards, Jennifer Ph.D.	Coordinator	Missing
Richards, Jennifer Ph.D.	Principal Investigator	Missing
Tekkumru Kisa, Miray	Project Team Member	Missing
Walter, Ashley	Project Team Member	Missing

Please use the text box above to indicate the background check level required or any other pertinent information.

Level I

Background Check Level Justification

Interactions with Staff

Other Notes in Letter

N/A

Consent to Participate in Research

Page 1 of 4

Title of Research Study: *Understanding Opportunities and Challenges in Teacher Leaders' Facilitation of Professional Learning Communities*

Principal Investigator: *Jennifer Richards*

Supported By: This research is supported by Northwestern University.

Key Information about this research study:

The following is a short summary of this study to help you decide whether to be a part of this study. Information that is more detailed is explained later on in this form.

- The purpose of this study is to explore teacher leaders' experiences, practices, and perceptions of facilitating professional learning communities (PLCs) as part of a broader system of professional learning in a district.
- You will be asked to engage in an audio-recorded interview.
- We expect that you will be in this research study for one 30-45-minute interview.
- The primary potential risk of participation is discomfort with being audio recorded.
- The main benefit of being in this study is having an opportunity to process and reflect on your experiences participating in and/or supporting PLCs.

Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?

We are asking you to take part in this research study because you are currently serving as a teacher leader of a PLC, teacher participating in a PLC, or district leader supporting teacher leaders in Chicago Public Schools (CPS).

How many people will be in this study?

We expect about 50 people will be in this research study.

What should I know about participating in a research study?

- Someone will explain the research study to you.
- Whether or not you take part is up to you.
- You can choose not to take part.
- You can agree to take part and later change your mind.
- Your decision will not be held against you.
- You can ask all the questions you want before you decide.
- You do not have to answer any question you do not want to answer.

What happens if I say, "Yes, I want to be in this research"?

You will participate in a one-on-one interview with a member of the research team via Google Meet. The interview will take approximately 30-45 minutes and will take place at a time of mutual convenience during the months of May-July (as PLCs culminate for the school year).

Interviews will focus on your motivations, general reflections on your experiences in PLCs, and applications and next steps you see for yourself. Teacher and district leaders' interviews will also

Consent to Participate in Research

Page 2 of 4

focus on facilitation, such as experiences and challenges being responsive to teachers and supporting equitable participation.

Interviews will be audio recorded for analysis purposes, and audio recording is required for participation in the research. You may also give us permission to use audio recordings for public presentations later in the consent process, though this part is optional.

Will being in this study help me in any way?

We cannot promise any benefits to you or others from your taking part in this research. However, possible benefits include having an opportunity to process and reflect on your experiences participating in and/or supporting PLCs. Broader potential benefits include deeper understandings of teacher leaders' experiences and perceptions in the field and enhanced supports for teacher leaders.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?

You may feel uncomfortable being audio recorded, and several interview questions may be sensitive in nature (particularly questions that invite discussions of challenges in being responsive or supporting equitable participation in PLCs). You may choose not to answer any interview question that you do not wish to answer. A possible risk for any research is that confidentiality could be compromised – that is, that people outside the study might get hold of confidential study information. We will do everything we can to minimize this risk, as described in more detail later in this form, and we will pay particular attention to potential identifiers in responses to more sensitive questions to redact details that could impact anonymity.

What happens if I do not want to be in this research, or I change my mind later?

Participation in research is voluntary. You can decide to participate or not to participate. If you do not want to be in this study or withdraw from the study at any point, your decision will not affect your relationship with Northwestern University.

You can leave the research at any time and it will not be held against you.

If you decide to withdraw from this study, the researchers will ask you if information already collected from you can be used.

How will the researchers protect my information?

To keep your information secure and confidential, we will keep all collected data and information about your participation in project activities confidential unless otherwise permitted by you on this consent form. Interviews will take place in private Google Meet sessions accessible only by you and the researcher, which researchers will conduct from private locations. Interviews will be directly recorded on researchers' computers and transferred immediately to a password-protected server for storage, where only trained and authorized individuals who are listed as research personnel for this study will have access. You may be identifiable on audio recordings, but we will store recordings with a pseudonym instead of your name and store the key linking pseudonyms and names separate from the rest of the research data.

Consent to Participate in Research

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Who will have access to the information collected during this research study?

Efforts will be made to limit the use and disclosure of your personal information, including research study records, to people who have a need to review this information. We cannot promise complete secrecy.

There are reasons why information about you may be used or seen by other people beyond the research team during or after this study. Examples include:

- University officials, government officials, study funders, auditors, and the Institutional Review Board may need access to the study information to make sure the study is done in a safe and appropriate manner.
- Collaborating researchers at other institutions who are involved with this study.

How might the information collected in this study be shared in the future?

We will keep the information we collect about you during this research study for study recordkeeping for five years after completion of the study, at which time it will be destroyed. Your name and other information that can directly identify you will be stored securely and separately from the rest of the research information we collect from you.

De-identified data from this study may be shared with the research community, with journals in which study results are published, and with databases and data repositories used for research. We will remove or code any personal information that could directly identify you before the study data are shared. Despite these measures, we cannot guarantee anonymity of your personal data.

The results of this study could be shared in articles and presentations, but will not include any information that identifies you unless you give permission for use of information that identifies you in articles and presentations.

We may share general themes from the study with colleagues in the CPS Central Office. We will not share any quotes or examples, even with identifying information removed, unless you give permission for us to do so.

Will I be paid or given anything for taking part in this study?

You will receive a \$50 gift card by email for your participation in this study upon completion of your interview.

Who can I talk to?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, you can contact the Principal Investigator Jennifer Richards at (847) 467-4994 or jrichards@northwestern.edu.

This research has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board ("IRB") – an IRB is a committee that protects the rights of people who participate in research studies. You may contact the IRB by phone at (312) 503-9338 or by email at irb@northwestern.edu if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your rights as a research participant.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Consent to Participate in Research

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If you want a copy of this consent for your records, you can print it from the screen.

If you cannot print the consent and would like a copy for your records, contact the Principal Investigator with the contact information above.

If you wish to participate, please complete the following items and click the "I Agree" button.

If you do not wish to participate in this study, please select "I Disagree" or select X in the corner of your browser.

Your name: _____

Your email address: _____

Optional Elements:

The following research activities are optional, meaning that you do not have to agree to them in order to participate in the research study. Please indicate your willingness to participate in these optional activities by selecting "I agree" or "I disagree" next to each activity.

I agree I disagree

_____ _____ The researcher may use audio recordings of me in scholarly presentations or publications when hearing my voice might serve to help others understand the research. I may be identifiable as part of this activity, though the researcher will remove names and other personal information from audio recordings before they are used in this way.

_____ _____ The researcher may share direct quotes or examples, with identifying information removed, from my interview with colleagues in the CPS Central Office when they would help shape practice or policy. While these will be de-identified, I realize colleagues may be able to infer my identity based on their local, contextual knowledge.

INTERVIEW GUIDE: DISTRICT LEADERS

Study: Understanding Opportunities and Challenges in Teacher Leaders' Facilitation of Professional Learning Communities, STU00214413

Each district leader interview will be 30-45 minutes in length and semi-structured, including the following questions with flexibility in order and follow-up based on how interviewees respond.

General reflections/motivations

1. What made you want to support teacher leader-led PLCs in the district?
2. What kinds of things did you consider in planning the teacher leader PLC sessions?
 - a. Do you think your considerations changed over time? If so, how?
3. What positive experiences have you had while planning or facilitating the teacher leader PLC sessions?
4. Have you experienced any tensions and/or challenges while planning or facilitating the teacher leader PLC sessions? If so, can you describe them?
5. What has surprised you most about supporting teacher leaders in facilitating their PLCs?
 - a. Is there anything you wish you would have known ahead of time?

Facilitation and responsiveness

6. Ideally, what would you hope for the conversations and work with peers that occur in a PLC to look or sound like?
 - a. How do PLCs like this feel similar to or different from other kinds of professional learning?
7. Ideally, what would you hope for teacher leaders' facilitation of PLCs to look or sound like?
 - a. Why do you think that kind of facilitation is important?
 - b. What do you think teacher leaders need in order to engage in that kind of facilitation?
8. *[if not yet discussed]* Why do you think it's important to be responsive to teachers' interests and needs in professional learning?

Applications/next steps

9. Has co-leading the teacher leader PLC made you think differently about your own practice? If so, in what ways?
 - a. Have you made changes in your facilitation of other professional learning as a result of co-leading the PLC?
10. Has co-leading the teacher leader PLC changed your perception of yourself as a leader, or your approach to leadership? If so, in what ways?
11. What do you see as next steps for yourself in this work?
12. If you were to pitch to a colleague that they lead a PLC, what would you tell them?
 - a. *[prompt if not discussed]* What would you highlight as benefits of leading a PLC?
 - b. *[prompt if not discussed]* What would you highlight as barriers that they might encounter in leading a PLC?
13. What are your hopes for teacher leadership and PLCs over the next two years?

- a. *[prompt if not discussed]* What would you like for these initiatives to look like in two years?
- b. *[prompt if not discussed]* What impacts do you hope for them to make?

INTERVIEW GUIDE: PLC TEACHERS

Study: Understanding Opportunities and Challenges in Teacher Leaders' Facilitation of Professional Learning Communities, STU00214413

Each PLC teacher interview will be 30-45 minutes in length and semi-structured, including the following questions with flexibility in order and follow-up based on how interviewees respond.

General reflections/motivations

1. What made you decide to join a PLC this year?
2. What positive experiences have you had while participating in the PLC?
3. Have you experienced any tensions and/or challenges while participating in the PLC? If so, can you describe them?
4. What has surprised you most about participating in the PLC?
 - a. Is there anything you wish you would have known ahead of time?
5. What supports have you found to be most useful for participating in the PLC?
 - a. Least useful?
 - b. *[if interviewee asks for clarification: supports like readings, Google Drive templates...]*

Facilitation and responsiveness

6. How would you describe the conversations and work with peers that occurred in the PLC?
 - a. What does that look or sound like, in practice?
7. How would you describe the role of the PLC facilitator?
 - a. What does that look or sound like, in practice?
8. How do PLCs like this feel similar to and different from other kinds of professional learning?
9. In what ways were your knowledge, experiences, or interests taken up in the work of the PLC?
 - a. *[prompt if not discussed]* Can you provide an example or two?
 - b. What do you think helped make that happen?
10. *[if not yet discussed]* Why do you think it's important to be responsive to teachers' interests and needs in professional learning?

Applications/next steps

11. Has participating in the PLC made you think differently about your own practice? If so, in what ways?
 - a. Have you made changes in your classroom instruction as a result of participating in the PLC?
12. How would you describe what your PLC learned together?
13. Have you seen impacts on students' learning or experiences that you think may be linked to the work of the PLC? If so, what?
14. What do you see as next steps for yourself in this work?
15. If you were to pitch to a colleague that they join a PLC, what would you tell them?

- a. *[prompt if not discussed]* What would you highlight as benefits of joining a PLC?
- b. *[prompt if not discussed]* What would you highlight as barriers that they might encounter in joining a PLC?

INTERVIEW GUIDE: TEACHER LEADERS

Study: Understanding Opportunities and Challenges in Teacher Leaders' Facilitation of Professional Learning Communities, STU00214413

Each teacher leader interview will be 30-45 minutes in length and semi-structured, including the following questions with flexibility in order and follow-up based on how interviewees respond.

General reflections/motivations

1. What made you want to take on the responsibility of leading colleagues in a PLC?
2. What kinds of things did you consider in planning your PLC sessions?
 - a. Do you think your considerations changed over time? If so, how?
3. What positive experiences have you had while planning or facilitating your PLC sessions?
4. Have you experienced any tensions and/or challenges while planning or facilitating your PLC sessions? If so, can you describe them?
5. What has surprised you most about facilitating adult learners?
 - a. Is there anything you wish you would have known ahead of time?
6. What supports for the work have you found to be most useful?
 - a. Least useful?
 - b. *[prompt if not discussed]* How did participating in the teacher leader PLC support you? How could it have supported you better?
 - c. *[if interviewee asks for clarification: supports like readings, PLC sessions with other teacher leaders, Google Drive templates...]*

Facilitation and responsiveness

7. How would you describe the conversations and work with peers that occurred in the PLC?
 - a. What does that look or sound like, in practice?
8. How would you describe your facilitation as a teacher leader?
 - a. What does that look or sound like, in practice?
 - b. Why do you take that approach?
 - c. Do you think your approach changed over time? If so, how and why?
9. How do PLCs like this feel similar to and different from other kinds of professional learning?
10. Can you share an example where you felt like you were able to be responsive to teachers in the PLC?
 - a. What do you think helped make that happen?
11. Can you share an example where you felt like you were *not* able to be responsive?
 - a. What was going on there?
12. *[if not yet discussed]* Can you share an example where you felt there may have been a conflict between the direction you had planned and where participants wanted to go?
 - a. How did you navigate this?
13. *[if not yet discussed]* In what ways did the PLC take up teachers' knowledge, experiences, or interests?

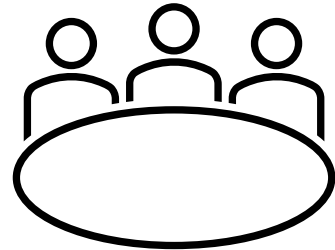
- a. *[prompt if not discussed]* Can you provide an example or two?
- 14. *[if not yet discussed]* Why do you think it's important to be responsive to teachers' interests and needs in professional learning?
- 15. To what degree is promoting equitable participation central to your facilitation?
 - a. What do you do to promote equitable participation during PLC sessions?
 - b. Do you experience any challenges? If so, what are they?

Applications/next steps

- 16. Has leading a PLC made you think differently about your own practice? If so, in what ways?
 - a. Have you made changes in your classroom instruction as a result of leading the PLC?
- 17. How would you describe what your PLC learned together?
- 18. Have you seen impacts on students' learning or experiences that you think may be linked to the work of the PLC? If so, what?
- 19. Has leading a PLC changed your perception of yourself as a leader, or your approach to leadership? If so, in what ways?
- 20. What do you see as next steps for yourself in this work?
 - a. What opportunities do you see this experience opening up for you in terms of leadership in your school, the district, or elsewhere, if any?
- 21. If you were to pitch to a colleague that they lead a PLC, what would you tell them?
 - a. *[prompt if not discussed]* What would you highlight as benefits of leading a PLC?
 - b. *[prompt if not discussed]* What would you highlight as barriers that they might encounter in leading a PLC?

Opportunity to Participate in a Research Study!

Researchers at Northwestern University are interested in learning more about your experiences participating in professional learning communities this year, including both opportunities and challenges. As a teacher engaging in a PLC, you are invited to participate.



What's Involved

Participating in the study is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate, you will:

- Engage in one 30-45-minute audio-recorded interview via Google Meet
- Receive a \$50 gift card for your participation

If you think you might be interested, please email Jennifer Richards at jrichards@northwestern.edu to discuss next steps!

RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Study: Understanding Opportunities and Challenges in Teacher Leaders' Facilitation of Professional Learning Communities, STU00214413

Hi all, thanks for giving us a bit of time this evening to share an opportunity to participate in a research study at Northwestern University. My name is Jen Richards, and we are interested in learning more about your experiences, practices, and perceptions as teacher and district leaders who are facilitating professional learning communities this year. We'd like to understand more about both opportunities and challenges you experienced in doing so.

Participating in the research study is completely voluntary. If you do choose to participate, you'll engage in one 30-45-minute audio-recorded interview with myself or a research colleague via Google Meet at a time of mutual convenience over the next few months, and you'll receive a \$50 gift card for your participation.

If you think you might be interested in participating, please email me at jrichards@northwestern.edu, linked on the slide, to discuss next steps — thanks!

Unable to add 'Recruitment Slide for Teacher and District Leaders_TL Facilitation
2.pptx' inline in PDF.

Automatic conversion of this type not currently supported.

Attached to PDF instead.

APPROVAL OF NEW STUDY

DATE: February 16, 2021

TO: Dr. Jennifer Richards
FROM: Office of the IRB

DETERMINATION DATE: 2/16/2021
APPROVAL DATE: 2/16/2021
EXPIRATION DATE: (not applicable)

The Northwestern University IRB reviewed and approved the submission described below:

Type of Submission:	Initial Study
Review Level:	Expedited
Expedited Category:	- (6) Voice, video, digital, or image recordings - (7) Behavioral research/social science methods
Title of Study:	Understanding Opportunities and Challenges in Teacher Leaders' Facilitation of Professional Learning Communities
Principal Investigator:	Jennifer Richards
IRB ID:	STU00214413
Funding Source:	Name: Baxter International Inc., Grant Office ID: SP0037908, Funding Source ID: Letter 2/27/17
Grant ID:	SP0037908;
IND, IDE, or HDE:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TL Facilitation Interview Guide, Category: Interview; • TL Facilitation Consent Form, Category: Consent Form; • TL Facilitation Recruitment Script, Category: Recruitment Materials; • TL Facilitation Recruitment Slide, Category: Recruitment Materials; • TL Facilitation Protocol, Category: IRB Protocol;
Special Determination(s):	Waiver of consent documentation;
Unaffiliated External Site(s) that rely on NU IRB:	none

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Northwestern University (NU) Investigator Manual ([HRP-103](#)), which can be found by navigating to the policy section of the IRB website. Additionally, as Principal Investigator (PI) of this research study, you are expected to adhere to the investigator responsibilities outlined in the "What are my obligations as Investigator in order to conduct Human Research" section of the Investigator Manual ([HRP-103](#)).

If your study is a clinical trial, there are additional requirements including trial registration and results reporting on ClinicalTrials.gov. Federally-funded clinical trials are also required to post one IRB approved consent form, used during enrollment, on a publicly available federal website such as ClinicalTrials.gov. Please visit the [clinical trials page](#) on the IRB website for more information. If you would like an account created or need other assistance with ClinicalTrials.gov, please email clinicaltrials.gov@northwestern.edu.

No CR: An annual continuing review is not required for this project. The study team must still submit: modifications for project changes; RNIs (reportable new information); and a Continuing Review to close the project when it ends (for guidance on when a project can be closed, see [GUIDANCE on Study Closure – HRP-1901](#)).

NU IRB approval does not constitute or guarantee institutional approval and/or support. Investigators and study team members must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, as well as NU Policies and Procedures, which may include obtaining approval for your research activities from other individuals or entities.

For IRB-related questions, please consult the NU IRB website at <http://irb.northwestern.edu>. For general research questions, please consult the NU Office for Research website at www.research.northwestern.edu.

Additionally, please note that the analyst who you worked with during the initial review and approval of your study is not the analyst that is responsible for the review of any subsequent modifications, continuing reviews, or RNIs. As such, please direct any further questions about modifications, continuing reviews, or RNIs to the analyst assigned to the subsequent submission.

STUDY TITLE:

Understanding Opportunities and Challenges in Teacher Leaders' Facilitation of Professional Learning Communities

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

Name: Jennifer Richards
Department: SESP

CO-INVESTIGATORS:

Name: Ashley Walter
Department: SESP

STUDENT INVESTIGATOR (complete this section only if the project is student-initiated):

N/A

VERSION DATE:

March 28, 2024

Check any **applicable** boxes in the table below – you will be asked for further detail on these topics later in the protocol form:

Indicate Vulnerable Population(s) to be Enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Children (you must complete Appendix A in addition to this protocol document if you plan to enroll children) <input type="checkbox"/> Cognitively Impaired Adults <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnant Women (IF the research activities will affect the pregnancy or the fetus) <input type="checkbox"/> Prisoners (or other detained/paroled individuals)
International Research (check this box if you will collect data from individuals located outside the United States)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research involving external collaborators (some research activities will be carried out by individuals not employed by Northwestern or NU affiliates)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Research has U.S. Federal	

government funding via direct award or a sub-award (e.g., NIH, NSF, other federal agencies or departments)	<input type="checkbox"/>
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1.0 Purpose and rationale of the study:

The purpose of the present study is to explore teacher leaders' experiences, practices, and perceptions of facilitating professional learning communities (PLCs) as part of a broader system of professional learning in a district. Research questions that guide the study include:

1. What do teacher leaders identify as benefits, challenges, tensions, and needed supports in planning and facilitating PLCs?
2. How do teacher leaders navigate *focused responsiveness* in their facilitation? Specifically, how do they balance being responsive to the ideas and needs of teachers, with an intentional focus on equity of participation and high-level goals across PLCs?

We will conduct interviews with current teacher leaders, teachers participating in PLCs, and district leaders supporting teacher leaders that will provide insights into both of the above research questions.

Briefly, the research literature suggests that teacher leader-led PLCs can foster participation, instructional improvement, and systemic capacity. PLCs are designed to sustain work on lines of inquiry that matter to participants (Woodland, 2016) and facilitate active learning closely tied to teachers' contexts (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Further, teacher leadership has been shown to increase teacher and teacher leader motivation and commitment (Mangin, 2016) and promote access to and participation in professional learning through providing both more and more relevant opportunities from teachers' perspectives (NRC, 2014; Wenner & Campbell, 2017).

However, there is much to be learned about the demands of facilitating peers as a teacher leader, particularly with respect to a central tenet of adult learning (e.g., Trotter, 2016) — being responsive to teachers' experiences, ideas, and priorities. At the same time, to cultivate a generative co-learning system across PLCs, it is important to keep equity of participation and shared goals in view. This study will examine how teacher leaders navigate *responsiveness* to teachers while keeping these *foci* in view, exploring "focused responsiveness" as a novel facilitation construct, and will contribute to the field's growing understanding of critical supports for teacher leaders.

2.0 Enrollment Criteria (who can be in your study and who would not be eligible to participate in your study):

The inclusion criterion is that participants are currently serving as teacher leaders of PLCs, teachers participating in PLCs, or district leaders supporting teacher leaders in our partner district, Chicago Public Schools (CPS).

3.0 Sample Size:

We anticipate up to 50 teacher leaders, teachers, and/or district leaders may participate in the study, given current numbers in the district.

4.0 Recruitment and Screening Methods:

To recruit teacher leaders and district leaders for the study, we will attend an online teacher leader meeting (which occur monthly via Google Meet in the district). We will share a recruitment slide that we will verbally describe (see attached recruitment materials) and invite teacher leaders and district leaders who are potentially interested to email the PI to discuss next steps.

To recruit teachers participating in PLCs, we will share a recruitment flier (see attached recruitment materials) that teacher leaders will distribute at one of their PLC meetings, inviting teachers who are potentially interested to email the PI to discuss next steps.

Since the meetings described above are specific to the eligible study populations, there will be no additional screening activities.

5.0 Research Locations:

Research procedures will take place online via the Google Meet platform. We will obtain approval from CPS prior to project implementation; no research activities will take place without obtaining approval from CPS' RRB.

6.0 Multi-site Research (research that involves external collaborating institutions and individuals):

This study involves collaboration between researchers at Northwestern University and a researcher at RAND Corporation. Northwestern University will carry out recruitment, consent, data collection, and data analysis with identifiable data. Our collaborator at RAND, Miray Tekkumru Kisa, will carry out data analysis (qualitative analysis) with identifiable data, but no research activities will take place at the relying site until a separate modification for this is submitted for IRB approval. Northwestern University will be the IRB of Record for RAND Corporation.

7.0 International Research (where data collection will occur outside the United States and U.S. territories, including online activities)

N/A

8.0 Procedures Involved:

Please check the boxes for all applicable data collection procedures you plan to use:

- ☒ One-on-one interviews
- ☐ Focus Groups
- ☐ Questionnaires/surveys
- ☐ Analysis of secondary data (medical record data, educational records, government or private sector datasets, etc.)
- ☐ Ethnographic observation
- ☐ Physiological measurements (e.g., EEG, EKG, MRI)
- ☐ Biospecimen collection (saliva samples, blood draws, hair samples, etc.)
- ☐ Mobile applications/data collection devices (e.g., Fitbits, actigraphs, etc.)
- ☐ Behavioral decisionmaking tasks (e.g., puzzles, interactive games, etc.)
- ☐ Physical activities such as walking and other forms of exercise
- ☐ Other procedures (briefly list types of procedures here if not covered by the check-boxes above): _____

Once all requisite approvals are obtained, we will recruit potential participants by attending the next scheduled online teacher leader meeting and sharing the recruitment flier with teacher leaders to distribute at their next PLC meetings. We will follow up with interested participants individually by emailing them the consent form and engaging in the consent process described in Section 11.

For teacher leaders, teachers participating in PLCs, and district leaders who consent to participate, we will conduct one-on-one interviews via Google Meet at a time of mutual convenience during the months of May-July (as PLCs culminate for the school year). Our interview guides are attached. Each participant will engage in one 30-45-minute interview, which is also the estimated total time for completion of all study activities. Interviews with teacher leaders will focus on their motivations for becoming teacher leaders, general reflections on their experiences and facilitation in PLCs, experiences/challenges being responsive to teachers and supporting equitable participation, and applications and next steps they see for themselves. Interviews with teachers participating in PLCs will focus on their motivations for joining PLCs, general reflections on their experiences in the PLCs, and applications and next steps they see for themselves. Interviews with district leaders will focus on their motivations for

supporting teacher leaders, general reflections on their experiences and hopes for PLCs, and applications and next steps they see for themselves.

9.0 Research with Vulnerable Populations (if children are the ONLY vulnerable population you plan to enroll, do NOT complete this section – instead fill out Appendix A)

N/A

10.0 Incomplete Disclosure or Deception:

N/A

11.0 Consent Process:

Given continuing online/remote work practices, we plan to obtain informed consent online following the online consent procedure as specified in Northwestern's consent form template. Potential participants who express potential interest in participating will be emailed the consent form using Northwestern Qualtrics. We will invite potential participants to review the consent form and email or call the PI with any questions they have before deciding whether to participate. If they wish to participate, they will complete the consent form via Northwestern Qualtrics and click "I Agree" to provide a digital record, and we will follow up with them by email to schedule their interview. If they do not wish to participate, they can click "I Disagree" or select X in the corner of their browser to close the window.

12.0 Waiver of Participant Signature on Consent Form:

We are requesting a waiver of participants' signatures on consent forms because we are conducting the consent process and data collection entirely online.

13.0 Waivers and Alterations of Consent Information:

N/A

14.0 Financial Compensation:

Each participant will receive a \$50 gift card by email upon completion of their interview.

15.0 Audio/Video Recording/Photography

Interviews will be audio recorded so that participants' complete, nuanced responses can be captured for analysis, and potentially used in presentations. Audio recording for analysis purposes is mandatory for participation in the research, but participants will be able to choose whether they allow audio records to be used in presentations.

Audio records will be stored on a password-protected server, and only trained and authorized individuals who are listed as research personnel for this study will have access. This includes our collaborator at RAND, Miray Tekkumru Kisa. Audio records will not be downloaded onto nor stored on research personnel's computers; data will remain and be worked with on the server. Recordings will be stored for five years after completion of the study, at which time it will be destroyed.

16.0 Potential Benefits of this Research:

Participants may benefit from having an opportunity to process and reflect on their experiences participating in and/or supporting PLCs. Potential benefits more broadly include deeper understandings of teacher leaders' experiences and perceptions in the field and enhanced supports for teacher leaders.

17.0 Potential Risks to Participants:

Participants may feel uncomfortable being audio recorded, and several interview questions may be sensitive in nature (particularly questions that invite discussion of challenges in being responsive or supporting equitable participation in PLCs). We will assure participants that they may choose not to answer any interview question they do not wish to answer. A breach of confidentiality is a possible risk that we will seek to minimize as described in Section 18 and through de-identifying data when sharing results beyond the research team; we will pay particular attention to potential identifiers in responses to more sensitive questions to redact details that could impact anonymity.

18.0 Provisions to Protect Participant Privacy and Data Confidentiality:

To protect participants' privacy interests, we will keep all collected data and information about participation in project activities confidential unless otherwise permitted by the participant on their consent form. Interviews will take place in private Google Meet sessions accessible only by the researcher and participant, which researchers will conduct from private locations. Interviews will be directly recorded on researchers' computers and transferred immediately to a password-protected server for storage, where only trained and authorized individuals who are listed as research personnel for this study will have access. This includes our collaborator at RAND, Miray Tekkumru Kisa. Participants may be identifiable on audio recordings, but recordings will be stored with pseudonyms instead of participants' names. A key linking pseudonyms and participants' names will be stored on the password-protected server in a location separate from the

data and will be accessible only by research personnel for this study. No data will be downloaded onto nor stored on research personnel's computers; data will remain and be worked with on the server. Data will be stored for five years after completion of the study, at which time it will be destroyed.

19.0 Data Monitoring Plan to Ensure the Safety of Participants:

N/A

20.0 Long-term Data and Specimen Storage and Sharing:

Data will be stored for five years after completion of the study on the password-protected server, but we do not plan to share the data for future research studies nor place the data in a repository or database.

21.0 Qualifications of Research Team to Conduct the Research:

The PI and the collaborator at RAND have expertise and experience in facilitating and studying professional learning and qualitative research methods. The co-investigator has expertise and experience in district partnership work and qualitative data collection.



42 W. Madison | 2nd Floor | Chicago, IL 60602
Telephone: (773) 553-4444
Fax: (773) 553-2421

01/30/2025

Jennifer Richards, Ph.D.

Dear Dr. Richards,

Thank you for your interest in conducting research in The Chicago Public Schools. The Research Review Board has reviewed your Modification proposal 01/16/2025 for research, titled: Understanding Opportunities and Challenges in Teacher Leaders' Facilitation of Professional Learning Communities.

The Research Review Board has completed the review of your Modification proposal and has approved your request to conduct this research. Although your study is approved, school principals have final authority over activities that are allowed to take place in the school. If data collection continues beyond a year from this approval, please complete the Modification & Continuing Review Process Form through IRBManager.

Please note the following--

Background Check Level Required: Level I

Other Notes: Interactions with Staff

Upon completion of the research study, a copy of the final report or summary of the results must be provided to the Research Review Board. The Board reserves the right to use the information in the research report or summary for planning, solicitation or grants, and staff development.

Please note that your study has been assigned Project ID #2021-1646. If you have any questions, please contact our office by email at research@cps.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah Dickson".

Sarah Dickson
Co-Chair, Research Review Board