NISL has extensive experience delivering its innovative leadership development approach to K-12 education leaders in urban, suburban and rural districts, often in support of high-need schools with substantial numbers of high-need students. All NISL offerings are built on the same conceptual framework as NISL's research-proven Executive Development Program (EDP). In a recent RAND Corporation report, (Herman et al., 2017) NISL's EDP is singled out for its positive impact on student achievement based on studies that meet criteria for evidence under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). A report by the George W. Bush Institute (2016) finds that NISL's EDP is the only leadership development program that meets ESSA's standards of evidence, with independent studies showing improved student achievement in both English language arts and mathematics. Notably, NISL is the only organization recognized in both of those reports for evidence of effectiveness in leadership development (Rothman, 2017). A white paper by Robert Rothman on school interventions under ESSA summarizing the RAND report and the Bush Institute reports are attached in Appendix B to establish ESSA Evidence Tier. Please see Appendix C for NISL's Evaluation Approach and alignment with Guskey's Five Levels of Professional Development Evaluation.

Multiple third-party evaluations of the EDP show the program's direct link to statistically significant student achievement gains. In Pennsylvania, where NISL has worked with eight regional offices to deliver the EDP as part of Level-II licensure and has trained over 150 district superintendents through its Superintendent Academy, researchers compared student achievement results in 101 schools led by EDP graduates to results in demographically similar schools. In NISL schools, students achieved proficiency more quickly than peers in comparison schools. Researchers calculated that 1,225 more students achieved proficiency in ELA after NISL's intervention, and 1,089 more students achieved proficiency in math during the same time frame in NISL schools. Researchers concluded: "The results of this study represent highly promising evidence that the NISL Executive Development Program for School Leaders results in statistically significant, substantial, and sustained improvements in student performance in reading and mathematics. …This is particularly noteworthy given that the program is highly cost-effective" (Nunnery, Yen & Ross, 2011).

An evaluation on NISL's work in Massachusetts focused on 20 high-need districts (e.g., Boston, Springfield, Fall River, Lowell) and 38 elementary, middle and K–8 schools with an average free-and-reduced-price lunch rate of 70 percent. In the scientifically rigorous study, researchers found that schools led by EDP graduates increased student achievement in both English language arts (ELA) and math more quickly than comparison schools. The effect size was .14 in math and .11 in ELA. Researchers concluded: "When it is considered such effect sizes apply to an entire school … the educational value to individual schools and to multiple schools state-wide is obvious" (Nunnery et al., 2011).