

**U.S. Department of Education - EDCAPS  
G5-Technical Review Form (New)**

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/18/2016 03:42 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: National Writing Project (U411A160004)

Reader #1: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	10	10
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy	35	35
<b>Quality of the Project Design &amp; Management Plan</b>		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	35	32
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices</b>		
1. CPP 1	5	5
<b>Total</b>	105	82

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - i3 Scale-Up - 1: 84.411A

Reader #1: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: National Writing Project (U411A160004)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance. In determining the significance, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (34 CFR 75.210)

(2) The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies. (34 CFR 75.210)

(3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. (34 CFR 75.210)

### Strengths:

Convincing evidence of the need for instructional strategies that would improve student writing, particularly source-based, argument writing, was provided on pages 4 through 8. Improved writing will better prepare students for "first-year college composition courses as well as new state standards." (p. 8)

The program to be expanded has had previous success in a variety of settings with a variety of student demographics. "CRWP was developed and tested in 44 diverse, rural districts in 10 states" which included a large number of low-socioeconomic students and racial minorities. (p. 9)

The applicant states the PD for CRWP is exceptional because of its adherence to research-based features. (p. 6) These include content focus, active learning, coherence, sufficient duration, and collective participation. Use of these features supports the argument that the project provides an exceptional approach to this need.

### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

This criterion was thoroughly discussed and my score reflects my professional assessment of this section.

Reader's Score: 10

### Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. The Secretary considers the project quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factor:

(1) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates there is unmet demand for the process, product, strategy or practice that will enable the applicant to reach the level of scale that is proposed in the

application. (34 CFR 75.210)

**(2) The extent to which the applicant will use grant funds to address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale proposed in the application. (2013 i3 NFP)**

**Strengths:**

The applicant cites survey results from “a nationally representative sample” indicate a moderate to high need for professional development for instructional strategies focused on writing. (p. 13) Additionally, research is also cited regarding the lack of challenging writing opportunities for students, which underscores the need for an emphasis on quality writing instruction and demonstration opportunities at all levels.

A barrier to the use of more challenging materials with students is the lack of them. Part of the proposal’s outcomes will be the creation of new resources written specifically for “evidence-based opinion writing.” (p. 15) This alleviates the burden on the teacher to create quality materials. (pp. 20, 21)

Lack of fidelity will be addressed through a certifying process for the teacher-leaders as well as a process to review resources created or adapted to ensure worthiness of use. (p. 22)

Study of the project will “analyze impacts of one- and two-year versions” (p. 25) of the program. Should the shortened version be successful, use of it would reduce the overall cost of program implementation, which is also a barrier.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 35**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design & Management Plan**

**1. The Secretary considers the project quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factor:**

**(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (34 CFR 75.210)**

**(2) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. (34 CFR 75.210)**

**(3) The clarity and coherence of the applicant’s multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan to operate the project at a national or regional level (as defined in this notice) during the project period. (2013 i3 NFP)**

**(4) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (34 CFR 75.210)**

**Strengths:**

Goals and outcomes 3 and 4, in Exhibit 4, are numerical totals that will be reached through the life of the project. The objectives in Exhibit 5 each have corresponding evidence indicators which will indicate whether or not the objective was achieved.

National Writing Project has extensive experience with this type of project through not only years, but also locations. Project sites for NWP are in all 50 states which also means that the project has connections with universities to assist with

training and coordination of the activities proposed here.

The timeline and accompanying description of the teams and their members (pp. 29-34) as well as a detailed budget narrative (pp. e184-e194) indicate a thorough consideration of the necessary requirements for scaling up.

A plan for feedback and continuous improvement is given in general terms on pages 36-38. Information provided includes the provision for “structured questions” for reporting implementation as well as focused feedback discussions. The project also has the Using Sources Tool which will “track the development of students’ argument and opinion writing skills” to guide PD and classroom practice. (p. 37)

**Weaknesses:**

The outcomes for goals 1 and 2 in Exhibit 4 (p. 25) each state that they “will on average perform higher than students in control districts”. Performance can be higher, but not significant, so the outcomes should be stated more specifically.

**Reader's Score: 32**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation**

**1. The Secretary considers the project quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factor:**

**(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project’s effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations. (34 CFR 75.210)**

**(2) The clarity and importance of the key questions to be addressed by the project evaluation, and the appropriateness of the methods for how each question will be addressed. (2013 i3 NFP)**

**(3) The extent to which the evaluation will study the project at the proposed level of scale, including, where appropriate, generating information about potential differential effectiveness of the project in diverse settings and for diverse student population groups. (2013 i3 NFP)**

**(4) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions. (2013 i3 NFP)**

**(5) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of the project, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation. (2013 i3 NFP)**

**(6) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively. (2013 i3 NFP)**

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score: 0**

## Priority Questions

### Competitive Preference Priority - Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices

1. Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that enable broad adoption of effective practices. An application proposing to address this priority must, as part of its application:

(a) Identify the practice or practices that the application proposes to prepare for broad adoption, including formalizing the practice (i.e., establish and define key elements of the practice), codifying (i.e., develop a guide or tools to support the dissemination of information on key elements of the practice), and explaining why there is a need for formalization and codification.

(b) Evaluate different forms of the practice to identify the critical components of the practice that are crucial to its success and sustainability, including the adaptability of critical components to different teaching and learning environments and to diverse learners.

(c) Provide a coherent and comprehensive plan for developing materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that other entities would need in order to implement the practice effectively and with fidelity.

(d) Commit to assessing the replicability and adaptability of the practice by supporting the implementation of the practice in a variety of locations during the project period using the materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that were developed for the i3-supported practice.

#### Strengths:

The application meets all four criteria required for Competitive Preference Priority 1 because the project will not only formalize the components of CRWP and create resources and tools for future use, but also implement the program in ten additional states, beyond the validation study, to determine the model's adaptability to various state requirements.

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/18/2016 03:42 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/15/2016 02:57 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: National Writing Project (U411A160004)

Reader #2: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	10	0
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy	35	0
<b>Quality of the Project Design &amp; Management Plan</b>		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	35	0
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	15
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices</b>		
1. CPP 1	5	0
<b>Total</b>	105	15

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - i3 Scale-Up - 1: 84.411A

Reader #2: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: National Writing Project (U411A160004)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance. In determining the significance, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (34 CFR 75.210)

(2) The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies. (34 CFR 75.210)

(3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. (34 CFR 75.210)

#### Strengths:

N/A

#### Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

### Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. The Secretary considers the project quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factor:

(1) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates there is unmet demand for the process, product, strategy or practice that will enable the applicant to reach the level of scale that is proposed in the application. (34 CFR 75.210)

(2) The extent to which the applicant will use grant funds to address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale proposed in the application. (2013 i3 NFP)

#### Strengths:

N/A

#### Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

#### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design & Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the project quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factor:

(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (34 CFR 75.210)

(2) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. (34 CFR 75.210)

(3) The clarity and coherence of the applicant's multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan to operate the project at a national or regional level (as defined in this notice) during the project period. (2013 i3 NFP)

(4) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (34 CFR 75.210)

#### Strengths:

N/A

#### Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

#### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the project quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factor:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations. (34 CFR 75.210)

(2) The clarity and importance of the key questions to be addressed by the project evaluation, and the appropriateness of the methods for how each question will be addressed. (2013 i3 NFP)

(3) The extent to which the evaluation will study the project at the proposed level of scale, including, where appropriate, generating information about potential differential effectiveness of the project in diverse settings and for diverse student population groups. (2013 i3 NFP)

(4) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions. (2013 i3 NFP)

(5) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of the project, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation. (2013 i3 NFP)

(6) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively. (2013 i3 NFP)

**Strengths:**

The proposed evaluation plan describes a cluster randomized control trial with more than one unit of analysis (p.38) which reduces the risk of confounding factors. Randomization is blocked to assist with establishing equivalent intervention and comparison groups (p.39). The measures proposed are valid and reliable (p.44). A randomized controlled trial with equivalent groups and valid/reliable measures is needed to meet the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards without reservations. The proposal includes a plan to address potential attrition (p. 42), which suggests thoughtfulness concerning attrition. The intended sample includes 16 states covering multiple regions within the country (Appendix). A multilevel nested model is proposed to analyze the data (p. 46-47) which is appropriate since this data is nested. The evaluation intends to collect qualitative data and triangulate the results with the quantitative findings (p.48). This will strengthen the evaluators' ability to interpret results and draw conclusions. A measurable threshold for acceptable implementation is discussed (p.48). The key components and outcomes are clearly stated, and aligned with the program design (p. 39). The minimum detectable effect size is noted and the proposed sample size is sufficient (p. 47). An experienced independent evaluator has been identified (p. 49 & Appendix). The budget amount set aside for the evaluation is significant and seems sufficient to carry out the evaluation activities (p. 49).

**Weaknesses:**

There were a few weaknesses in the evaluation plan. The proposed project does not report an anticipated attrition rate. Low attrition is essential in meeting WWC standards without reservations. There is also no information provided concerning the demography of the districts and the individual schools within each district. Based on this, the diversity of the sample is unknown. Because of this, it is not clear that a subgroup analysis assessing the differential effectiveness for diverse groups is possible. The sampling plan for qualitative data (e.g., interviews), is not reported. The sampling plan is needed to assess the appropriateness of the method. While some detail is provided concerning the analysis and use of qualitative data (p.48), additional information concerning the coding process and interrater reliability is needed to determine credibility of analysis. Lastly, the evaluation only identifies two lead evaluators, some information concerning the size of the evaluation team and the general credentials of the remaining team members is needed to fully assess the sufficiency of the evaluation resources. The proposed evaluation would require more than a two member evaluation team.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**Priority Questions****Competitive Preference Priority - Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices**

**1. Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that enable broad adoption of effective practices. An application proposing to address this priority must, as part of its application:**

**(a) Identify the practice or practices that the application proposes to prepare for broad adoption, including formalizing the practice (i.e., establish and define key elements of the practice), codifying (i.e., develop a guide or tools to support the dissemination of information on key elements of the practice), and explaining why there is a need for formalization and codification.**

**(b) Evaluate different forms of the practice to identify the critical components of the practice that are crucial to its success and sustainability, including the adaptability of critical components to different teaching and learning environments and to diverse learners.**

**(c) Provide a coherent and comprehensive plan for developing materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that other entities would need in order to implement the practice effectively and with fidelity.**

**(d) Commit to assessing the replicability and adaptability of the practice by supporting the implementation of the practice in a variety of locations during the project period using the materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that were developed for the i3-supported practice.**

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score:**     **0**

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**Status:**           Submitted

**Last Updated:**   08/15/2016 02:57 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/11/2016 01:10 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: National Writing Project (U411A160004)

Reader #3: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	10	0
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy	35	0
<b>Quality of the Project Design &amp; Management Plan</b>		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	35	0
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	15
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices</b>		
1. CPP 1	5	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>15</b>

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - i3 Scale-Up - 1: 84.411A

Reader #3: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: National Writing Project (U411A160004)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance. In determining the significance, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (34 CFR 75.210)

(2) The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies. (34 CFR 75.210)

(3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. (34 CFR 75.210)

#### Strengths:

N/A

#### Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

### Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. The Secretary considers the project quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factor:

(1) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates there is unmet demand for the process, product, strategy or practice that will enable the applicant to reach the level of scale that is proposed in the application. (34 CFR 75.210)

(2) The extent to which the applicant will use grant funds to address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale proposed in the application. (2013 i3 NFP)

#### Strengths:

N/A

#### Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

#### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design & Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the project quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factor:

(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (34 CFR 75.210)

(2) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. (34 CFR 75.210)

(3) The clarity and coherence of the applicant's multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan to operate the project at a national or regional level (as defined in this notice) during the project period. (2013 i3 NFP)

(4) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (34 CFR 75.210)

#### Strengths:

N/A

#### Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

#### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the project quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factor:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations. (34 CFR 75.210)

(2) The clarity and importance of the key questions to be addressed by the project evaluation, and the appropriateness of the methods for how each question will be addressed. (2013 i3 NFP)

(3) The extent to which the evaluation will study the project at the proposed level of scale, including, where appropriate, generating information about potential differential effectiveness of the project in diverse settings and for diverse student population groups. (2013 i3 NFP)

(4) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions. (2013 i3 NFP)

(5) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of the project, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation. (2013 i3 NFP)

(6) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively. (2013 i3 NFP)

**Strengths:**

The project has stated an intention to contract with SRI Education to provide the external evaluation. The external evaluation will be led by well-qualified professionals with financial commitments of approximately \$3.7 million for evaluation activities. These resources should be sufficient to carry out the project evaluation effectively.

The project proposes a valid and tested measure of student writing ability (p.42-43) that includes checks of inter-rater reliability.

The evaluation plan includes a discussion of power to detect experiential differences with an estimated minimum detectable effect size of .20 (p.46).

The proposed use of a hierarchical linear model using student-level pre-treatment data as covariate is appropriate to assess the impact on student source-based argument writing (p.46).

The evaluation questions are appropriate for the design of the study and align with the project goals and objectives at the proposed level of scale and include exploratory analyses aimed at assessing differential effectiveness in diverse student populations (subgroups including girls, students of color, and low-socioeconomic status students) (p.47). In addition, the study design reaching into sixteen states will allow potential to assess program effectiveness in diverse settings.

The inclusion of detailed descriptions of instruments used to measure the outcomes associated with each are thorough (p. 42-46), including discussions of instrument validity and reliability, where appropriate.

**Weaknesses:**

The planned evaluation proposes that methods will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations. The cluster-randomized trial would fulfill this requirement, but the lack of assurance of low overall and differential attrition would negate the "without reservations" distinction.

The proposed analysis of impacts on teacher outcomes includes utilizing outcomes of surveys and teacher logs using a "similar methodology to that used to analyze student level outcomes" (p. 47). The description states an intention on "using log data" to "nest the multiple log estimates within teacher within district. Binary outcomes will be estimated using a hierarchical model with logit function." There is no description provided on how the data from the logs will be configured or assigned binary values making a determination of the appropriateness of this method difficult.

No measurable thresholds for acceptable implementation are provided.

No assurances are provided on what would keep teachers assigned in the control group from accessing program materials available freely through the open community (p. 19).

It is unclear how the evaluation team will gain access to the control school data, and no incentive is provided for control schools, and particularly teachers, to comply with data collection measures.

The application does not describe the principals and teachers who will be interviewed, how many will be interviewed, or how this sample will be obtained. In addition, no analysis plan for interview data is provided.

The application contains no information on the number of schools within the sample districts which also does not provide assurances of diversity within the schools.

**Reader's Score: 15**

## Priority Questions

### Competitive Preference Priority - Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices

1. Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that enable broad adoption of effective practices. An application proposing to address this priority must, as part of its application:

(a) Identify the practice or practices that the application proposes to prepare for broad adoption, including formalizing the practice (i.e., establish and define key elements of the practice), codifying (i.e., develop a guide or tools to support the dissemination of information on key elements of the practice), and explaining why there is a need for formalization and codification.

(b) Evaluate different forms of the practice to identify the critical components of the practice that are crucial to its success and sustainability, including the adaptability of critical components to different teaching and learning environments and to diverse learners.

(c) Provide a coherent and comprehensive plan for developing materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that other entities would need in order to implement the practice effectively and with fidelity.

(d) Commit to assessing the replicability and adaptability of the practice by supporting the implementation of the practice in a variety of locations during the project period using the materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that were developed for the i3-supported practice.

#### Strengths:

N/A

#### Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 08/11/2016 01:10 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/17/2016 02:33 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: National Writing Project (U411A160004)

Reader #4: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	10	7
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy	35	35
<b>Quality of the Project Design &amp; Management Plan</b>		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	35	35
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices</b>		
1. CPP 1	5	5
<b>Total</b>	105	82

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - i3 Scale-Up - 1: 84.411A

Reader #4: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: National Writing Project (U411A160004)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance. In determining the significance, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (34 CFR 75.210)

(2) The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies. (34 CFR 75.210)

(3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. (34 CFR 75.210)

### Strengths:

a) This proposal sets forth three arguments regarding the magnitude and severity of writing performance for the target population:

First - the applicant argues that writing is a gatekeeper for post-secondary entry and success in college and career. For this argument, several sources are cited (ACT 2016, National Commission on Writing, 2003, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011). The applicant further points out that nearly a third of first year college students enroll in either English or mathematics remediation courses that students must pass prior to entering credit-bearing courses. The statement is made that the long range impact of this is especially true of low-income students. Pe20

Second - the applicant states, writing results in secondary schools remain weak, particularly in rural schools.

Third - Writing tends to be neglected in K-12 education. The applicant provided evidence to support this statement (RAND survey, Opfer, Kaufman, & Thompson, 2016). (p e21)

b) This proposal demonstrates the College Ready Writers Program (CRWP) alternatives to existing strategies as follows; a two-year sequence, employing research-based professional development, focused on content, active learning, a coherent structure of sufficient duration, and cooperative participation. Instructional resources can be used as designed or modified to meet student needs.

### Weaknesses:

a) The First argument for the Magnitude and Severity of low performance in writing and the case for the number of students needing to take remedial college courses is hampered by missing data which demonstrates the proportion of entering freshmen who are either from rural schools or are low-income (p e20) and are required to take a remedial English program or a remedial mathematics program.

b) To support the second issue of magnitude and severity, NAEP data is cited indicating that 27% of 8th and 12th grade students were proficient or better in writing while 24% of rural students at the 8th and 12th grade levels were

proficient or better in writing. No information was provided to make it clear that this difference is statistically meaningful. (p e20-21)

c) The proposal tends to focus on what has resulted from past practice to demonstrate an exceptional approach to priorities rather than how the project will go forward with its approach and therefore be exceptional

This criterion was thoroughly discussed and my score reflects my professional assessment of this section.

**Reader's Score:** 7

### **Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale**

**1. The Secretary considers the project quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factor:**

**(1) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates there is unmet demand for the process, product, strategy or practice that will enable the applicant to reach the level of scale that is proposed in the application. (34 CFR 75.210)**

**(2) The extent to which the applicant will use grant funds to address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale proposed in the application. (2013 i3 NFP)**

#### **Strengths:**

a) The applicant cites research by RAND to demonstrate there is an unmet demand for supporting writing instruction, such as writing-focused instructional materials and assignments. The Writing Trust reported that only 9% of middle school assignments that they reviewed required multiple paragraph writing. (p e13) This implies a need for professional development in writing instruction.

b) This proposal identifies three barriers to implementation to scale and describes how i3 funds will be used address these barriers.

Barrier One is Access to Professional Development and High Quality Materials. The applicant states that i3 funds will be used to develop and expand teacher leadership capacity, as well as refine and develop curricular materials and formative assessment tools. P e36-37

Barrier Two is Fidelity of Implementation. For this barrier, i3 funds will be used to ensure that CRWP tools and materials are accessible to all appropriate parties. This will be a web-based process. (p e38)

Barrier Three is Cost of Services, for rural districts. In this case, i3 funds will be used to support the cost of professional development. The intent is to cut the per student cost by almost half. (p e40)

#### **Weaknesses:**

None Noted

**Reader's Score:** 35

### **Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design & Management Plan**

**1. The Secretary considers the project quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factor:**

**(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (34 CFR 75.210)**

**(2) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. (34 CFR 75.210)**

**(3) The clarity and coherence of the applicant's multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan to operate the project at a national or regional level (as defined in this notice) during the project period. (2013 i3 NFP)**

**(4) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (34 CFR 75.210)**

**Strengths:**

a)The goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the National Writing Project are clear, specific, and measurable. (p e41-43)

b)The management plan identifies three phases for achieving the objectives of the proposed project. These are 1) Codification of Resources and Expansion of Teacher Leadership Capacity, 2) Replication and Expansion of CRWP and 3) Broad Dissemination. The plan appears to be specific enough to assure completion on time and within budget. Clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks are included in the plan.

c)The multi-year financial and operating model and the accompanying plan project operation is detailed and well organized. P e 50-52 and appendix 9.

d)Procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement include team meetings which will address issues that are common across sites as well as specific local issues. There will also be a twice a year review by leadership that will review professional development monitoring data. Leadership will also collect anecdotal data regarding classroom implementation and assessment practices. SRI International, the proposed project evaluator, will provide feedback

**Weaknesses:**

None Noted

**Reader's Score: 35**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation**

**1. The Secretary considers the project quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factor:**

**(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations. (34 CFR 75.210)**

**(2) The clarity and importance of the key questions to be addressed by the project evaluation, and the appropriateness of the methods for how each question will be addressed. (2013 i3 NFP)**

**(3) The extent to which the evaluation will study the project at the proposed level of scale, including, where appropriate, generating information about potential differential effectiveness of the project in diverse settings and for diverse student population groups. (2013 i3 NFP)**

**(4) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions. (2013 i3 NFP)**

**(5) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of the project, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation. (2013 i3 NFP)**

(6) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively. (2013 i3 NFP)

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:** 0

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices**

1. Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that enable broad adoption of effective practices. An application proposing to address this priority must, as part of its application:

(a) Identify the practice or practices that the application proposes to prepare for broad adoption, including formalizing the practice (i.e., establish and define key elements of the practice), codifying (i.e., develop a guide or tools to support the dissemination of information on key elements of the practice), and explaining why there is a need for formalization and codification.

(b) Evaluate different forms of the practice to identify the critical components of the practice that are crucial to its success and sustainability, including the adaptability of critical components to different teaching and learning environments and to diverse learners.

(c) Provide a coherent and comprehensive plan for developing materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that other entities would need in order to implement the practice effectively and with fidelity.

(d) Commit to assessing the replicability and adaptability of the practice by supporting the implementation of the practice in a variety of locations during the project period using the materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that were developed for the i3-supported practice.

**Strengths:**

This application met each of the four sub criteria required by identifying practices such as increasing writing assignments in schools, with an emphasis on increasing the focus of writing assignments (p e29), offering a coherent and comprehensive plan through the use of professional development to improve writing.

**Weaknesses:**

None Noted

**Reader's Score:** 5

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 08/17/2016 02:33 PM



Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/17/2016 06:27 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: National Writing Project (U411A160004)

Reader #5: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	10	10
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy	35	35
<b>Quality of the Project Design &amp; Management Plan</b>		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	35	31
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices</b>		
1. CPP 1	5	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>81</b>

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - i3 Scale-Up - 1: 84.411A

Reader #5: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: National Writing Project (U411A160004)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance. In determining the significance, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (34 CFR 75.210)

(2) The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies. (34 CFR 75.210)

(3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. (34 CFR 75.210)

### Strengths:

1) Rural schools are underserved in many areas of education. Professional development opportunities, lack of quality teachers, funding problems, and staffing issues are just a few of the problems rural schools face. The National Writing Project wants to target these schools to improve writing for those student populations (Page 3). A case is made on pages 4 and 5, that students with poor writing skills limit college success, especially students from low-income and rural schools. With new standards and international benchmarked assessments, there is a great need to help teachers with writing instruction (page 5).

2) The validation grant discussed on page 1 provided statistically significant positive results on three attributes of student argument writing—content, structure, and stance. Source-based argument writing is critical to the new college and career ready standards and assessments (Page 3). Professional development is a critical component of the program which is designed to support teachers in using nonfiction sources, understanding multiple points of view, development of claims, and using evidence to support arguments (Page 6). The program is designed to meet college and career ready standards (page 8). The program has been validated in rural communities with high-poverty and minority populations (page 9).

3) The National Writing Project will expand the program to more rural schools. They will provide professional development for these underserved schools. Instructional and formative assessment resources from them will support their program targeted at grades 4-6 teachers (page 2). The professional development program is a 2-year sequence (page 7). It leads to a “micro-credentialing” of teachers going through the program (page 11). Close reading is an important part of the skills taught (page 11).

### Weaknesses:

None Noted by Reviewer

This criterion was thoroughly discussed and my score reflects my professional assessment of this section.

**Reader's Score: 10**

### **Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale**

**1. The Secretary considers the project quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factor:**

**(1) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates there is unmet demand for the process, product, strategy or practice that will enable the applicant to reach the level of scale that is proposed in the application. (34 CFR 75.210)**

**(2) The extent to which the applicant will use grant funds to address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale proposed in the application. (2013 i3 NFP)**

#### **Strengths:**

1) As discussed on page 13, studies show that there is a market demand for common core-based writing programs and professional development. They go on to state that there is also a lack of writing-focused instructional materials.

2) The program is designed to fill gaps by providing instructional writing materials linked to new standards (page 15). These materials are designed to support teacher in writing instruction by adapting and integrating those elements into existing curriculum (page 16). To address access to high quality materials and professional development, the College Ready Writing Project will expand the regional teacher network. They will develop and credential teacher leaders, develop a national networked improvement community, and retool the data collection system (page 22). Close monitoring of the implementation will occur to establish the fidelity of the program (page 23). The project will cut the cost of the program in half, use web-based professional development, and attempt to create school proximity-based professional development/support communities (page 24).

#### **Weaknesses:**

None Noted.

**Reader's Score: 35**

### **Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design & Management Plan**

**1. The Secretary considers the project quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factor:**

**(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (34 CFR 75.210)**

**(2) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. (34 CFR 75.210)**

**(3) The clarity and coherence of the applicant's multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan to operate the project at a national or regional level (as defined in this notice) during the project period. (2013 i3 NFP)**

**(4) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (34 CFR 75.210)**

**Strengths:**

- 1) The goals, outside of student achievement, are clear and articulated (pages 25-27). The National Writing Project has a long track record of experience with professional development to improve student writing (page 27).
- 2) The timeline is detailed with tasks, responsible teams, and times noted (page 29).
- 4) Procedures developed during the validation grant will be used for feedback and the continuous improvement program (page 36). They include monthly meetings and an annual review of narrative reports & proposed plans. A Using Sources Tool will be used to gather student information (page 37). The national leadership will also use briefing from SRI to provide data on strategies used in the program (page 37).

**Weaknesses:**

- 1) Academic goals are very general in terms of outcomes (page 25). Broad measurement terms use used such as "...students in treatment districts will on average perform higher than students in control districts..." The specific tools to measure student outcomes would have been appropriate.
- 2) A more detailed description of how the Using Sources Tool is used to improve the program would have improved this application.
- 3) The description of the financial aspect of the operating model lack details (page 35). Examples of the financial tools developed for local sites would be of help in describing this section of the proposal (page 35).

**Reader's Score: 31**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation**

**1. The Secretary considers the project quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factor:**

**(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations. (34 CFR 75.210)**

**(2) The clarity and importance of the key questions to be addressed by the project evaluation, and the appropriateness of the methods for how each question will be addressed. (2013 i3 NFP)**

**(3) The extent to which the evaluation will study the project at the proposed level of scale, including, where appropriate, generating information about potential differential effectiveness of the project in diverse settings and for diverse student population groups. (2013 i3 NFP)**

**(4) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a**

proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions. (2013 i3 NFP)

(5) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of the project, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation. (2013 i3 NFP)

(6) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively. (2013 i3 NFP)

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score: 0**

#### **Priority Questions**

##### **Competitive Preference Priority - Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices**

**1. Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that enable broad adoption of effective practices. An application proposing to address this priority must, as part of its application:**

**(a) Identify the practice or practices that the application proposes to prepare for broad adoption, including formalizing the practice (i.e., establish and define key elements of the practice), codifying (i.e., develop a guide or tools to support the dissemination of information on key elements of the practice), and explaining why there is a need for formalization and codification.**

**(b) Evaluate different forms of the practice to identify the critical components of the practice that are crucial to its success and sustainability, including the adaptability of critical components to different teaching and learning environments and to diverse learners.**

**(c) Provide a coherent and comprehensive plan for developing materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that other entities would need in order to implement the practice effectively and with fidelity.**

**(d) Commit to assessing the replicability and adaptability of the practice by supporting the implementation of the practice in a variety of locations during the project period using the materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that were developed for the i3-supported practice.**

**Strengths:**

The Writers Project will meet all four of the sub criterion for this Competitive Preference Priority. It will develop tools and resources for teachers. It will expand to 10 states. It is a project that meets a demand especially in light of new academic standards.

**Weaknesses:**

None Noted.

**Reader's Score:** 5

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 08/17/2016 06:27 PM