

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/18/2016 03:31 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Spurwink Services, Inc. (U411A160001)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	10	10
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy	35	34
Quality of the Project Design & Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	35	26
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices		
1. CPP 1	5	5
Total	105	75

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Spurwink Services, Inc. (U411A160001)

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:

Evidence of the research is provided and cites the need for improved high school education that encourages high school completion for all students, including those of color. (page 4). Additionally, evidence is provided that demonstrates that high schools are difficult to reform. (p. 5)

The project strategy involves the expansion of a whole-school reform model (BARR) that has met “WWC standards for evidence” of “increasing student achievement in schools with high 9th grade failure rates.” (p. 6) Additional supportive evidence for BARR is given on page 7.

BARR is an exceptional approach because the components for whole-school change rely on current staff who will create the culture shifts that encourage relationships among “school staff, between staff and students, and among students.” (p. 9)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

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:

Evidence for an unmet demand includes the “waitlist of schools because of the high level of interest” during the i3 validation study. (p. 11)

The urgent need for an effective approach to the improvement of low-performing schools is clear since results from SIG funded low-performing schools show that 1/3 of the schools “showed a decline in achievement as they received funding and implemented reforms.” (p. 5)

The BARR model includes training for the entire staff. By doing this, staff turnover, which is a barrier to implementation, is decreased. (p. 12) The proposal formally identifies six barriers on pages 13 – 22. The relationship between the barriers and solutions is clearly displayed in Figure 1 on page 15. This BARR Scale-Up Logic Model summarizes the descriptions provided on the pages. All barriers for scaling up will be directly addressed through the use of grant funds.

Weaknesses:

Five regional hubs will be created (p. 11) but information about the numbers to be served is not shared.

Reader's Score: 34

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:

Descriptive information about the professional development to be provided is a strength of the plan. (pp. 24-26) The application identifies current project personnel and their responsibilities as well as those needing to be hired. (p. 34) An organizational chart and communication structure describe the relationships between the staff. (pp. 30-32)

The feedback and continuous improvement plan is clear and demonstrates commitment to this aspect of the project. (p. 37 and Appendix J8)

Weaknesses:

The proposal does not include measurable goals. The objectives and outcomes are listed on pages 23 – 27, but none, other than possibly the scale-up numbers to be achieved under Objective 1, have been written in measurable terms.

Table 3 (p. 35) provides general information about the timeline but lacks the detail to ensure the implementation plan has been thoroughly developed.

Reader's Score: 26

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 project will be implemented in a variety of locations in order to determine the adaptability of the model to variations in student demographics, school locations, and faculty.

A plan for the development of materials, a toolkit, or other supports that would allow implementation expansion, are not included in this project; however, on page 37, the applicant refers to the BARR manual as well as mentioning tools that “will assist the schools to make necessary adjustments to ensure successful BARR implementation.”

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: **5**

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/16/2016 11:53 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Spurwink Services, Inc. (U411A160001)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	10	0
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy	35	0
Quality of the Project Design & Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	35	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	18
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices		
1. CPP 1	5	0
Total	105	18

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Spurwink Services, Inc. (U411A160001)

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 is strong overall. The proposal describes a randomized control trial with more than one unit of analysis (p. 23 & 40) which reduces the risk of confounding factors. The evaluation plan also includes an examination of baseline equivalence on school characteristics prior to intervention (p.41). Based on previous program implementation and upcoming program enthusiasm, low attrition is anticipated (p. 41). Additionally, despite the anticipation of low attrition, oversampling is planned to account for potential attrition (p. 41). Both a randomized controlled trial with equivalent intervention and control groups with low attrition (or a plan to address attrition), are needed to meet the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards without reservations. The ACCUPLACER measure used to assess a student outcome (i.e., achievement) is described as “widely used and nationally validated” (p. 44). Moreover, there is an extensive implementation monitoring system and support structure proposed (p. 25-26 & 37). The unlimited virtual coaching (p. 25-26), weekly meetings (p.31), external fidelity assessment (p.47), and fidelity index (p. 48) strengthen the likelihood of acceptable implementation. The evaluation intends to include five regions; with school districts in urban, rural, and suburban communities (p. 42). Furthermore, the selected schools within each district demonstrate diversity with substantial amounts of minority students, low income students, and ELL students. The large, broad, and diverse sample allows for subgroup analyses which could reveal differential effectiveness for diverse groups. The minimal detectable effect size is reported and the sample size selected is sufficient (p. 41). A three-level nested model is proposed to analyze the data (p. 45) which is appropriate since this data is nested. The key components and outcomes are clearly stated, and aligned with the program design (p. 38-40). An experienced and highly trained independent evaluation team has been identified (p. 49-50). The budget amount set aside for the evaluation is significant and seems sufficient to carry out the evaluation activities (p. 35).

Weaknesses:

There are a small number of questions or concerns for this evaluation plan. The nonacademic outcome measure (i.e., Mindsets, Essential Skills, and Habits (MESH)) is described as valid and reliable, but it is not clear that this measure is valid and reliable for the subgroups. To meet WWC standards without reservations, all measures need to be valid and reliable for the subgroups. Also, one of the research questions (p. 39 & 45) suggests a subgroup analysis of students with an IEP. However, the percentage of students with an IEP within each district/school is not reported. It is not clear that this analysis is feasible or appropriate for the sample. Lastly, the qualitative analysis plan is described but is missing information concerning the plan to assess interrater reliability and an expected reliability threshold (p. 48).

Reader's Score: 18

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**

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Spurwink Services, Inc. (U411A160001)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	10	0
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy	35	0
Quality of the Project Design & Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	35	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	18
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices		
1. CPP 1	5	0
Total	105	18

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Spurwink Services, Inc. (U411A160001)

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 established a contractual commitment with AIR to provide the external evaluation. The external evaluation will be led by well-qualified professionals with financial commitments of approximately \$5 million for evaluation activities. These resources should be sufficient to carry out the project evaluation effectively.

In addition, the external evaluator has committed \$250,000 of private sector matching funds to the project (p.37), suggesting an investment that solidifies their commitment and motivation to providing a high-quality evaluation.

The proposed impact study is designed with a randomized controlled trial that will, if implemented as proposed, have the potential to produce evidence of effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations. This assurance includes an assumption of low rates of overall and differential attrition with an accompanying relevant discussion of the reasonableness of that assumption (p. 41).

The evaluation plan includes a discussion of power to detect experiential differences for the primary impact analysis with an estimated minimum detectable effect size of .14 (p.41-42).

The applicant proposes a wide-scale placement of the experiment in locations that span six states and 66 study schools, which has the potential to generate information at the proposed level of scale regarding the differential effectiveness of the project in diverse settings and for diverse student populations, including specific research subgroup questions 3 and 4 (p. 39, 45-46).

The proposed evaluation includes detailed descriptions of domains, outcome measures, data sources (Appendix J) that inform the evaluation questions, and a Logic Model (p. 15-16) that is designed to address the six scale-up challenges noted (p.43-44).

The plan proposes to define thresholds for scale-up measures that will be designed and articulated (p.44).

Weaknesses:

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

The validity of the proposed non-academic and school climate measure (p. 46-47) has not been established. In addition, the evaluation includes a plan to utilize "a team of expert coders" on p. 48, but no discussion is provided regarding expected reliability among multiple coders.

No measurable thresholds for acceptable implementation are provided. The note on the bottom of p. 47 does acknowledge that these will be developed.

The application includes a discussion of the proposed analytic approach, stating it will be a three-level nested model (p. 45) with students nested in schools that are nested in regions, but no model is actually given. For example, one common type of model for this would be a hierarchical linear regression model. Simply stating that there will be a prediction model but not revealing it weakens the application.

Reader's Score: 18

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

Status: Submitted
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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/18/2016 01:55 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Spurwink Services, Inc. (U411A160001)

Reader #4: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	10	8
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy	35	30
Quality of the Project Design & Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	35	30
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices		
1. CPP 1	5	5
Total	105	73

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: Spurwink Services, Inc. (U411A160001)

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 addresses the well-known problems in American public education of too many students leaving school before graduation. Race and class continue to be the best predictors of student achievement along with the culture that exists in many low-performing schools which are not supportive of student learning. (P e22-23)

b) This proposal provides a solid and clear description of Spurwink's BARR approach as a powerful teaching practice (P e23-24).

Weaknesses:

a) On Pages e24-25 the applicant describes in broad brush strokes the effectiveness of the BARR model. Use of specific examples of success would have made this section more meaningful and clear.

b) While this proposal provides a good description of the BARR approach, there is not a satisfactory explanation of what makes this approach different or sets it apart from existing programs that may have the same elements.

Reader's Score: 8

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

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) This application has set an ambitious goal of implementation in five (5) regional hubs that involve California, Main/Massachusetts, Minnesota, Tennessee, and Texas. Currently the project is present in nine states (North Carolina, Florida, Kentucky, California, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Main, Texas, and Pennsylvania. Four of the (5) regional hubs California, Maine, Minnesota, and Texas are to be located in states in which the project currently operates. (Pe30)

2) Barriers to Implementation:

Barrier 1: Regional Awareness/Expansion:

Solution: Expand into five regional hubs. (P e32) As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, an understanding of the relationship of the process in states that are currently supporting BARR and are identified as housing the five regional hubs should better support support implementation in new sites.

Barrier 3: Capacity to Train and Support Staff:

Solution: Hire new regional hub staff. Using existing BARR staff to train new staff from within the region they are expected to serve should be cost effective and an effective way to gain community support.

Barrier 4: Tools to Support Fidelity of Implementation:

Solution: New technology tools. (P e39) The expansion of coaching practices through the use of videos and a web-based platform should be sufficient to support the fidelity of BARR implementation.

Barrier 6: Sustainability of BARR Model Within Schools:

Solution: Regional BARR staff to facilitate into local context Pe40-41.

Weaknesses:

a) Information regarding what changes have occurred as a result of the project's operation in those states where it is currently in operation would be helpful in clarifying the unmet demand requirement. (p e30)

b) Barriers:

Barrier 2: Cost of Services: Establish Multiple Regional Funding Sources. (P e37) At least four private foundations in each of the five regions are proposed as sources of funding, however, there is no indication of who these foundations might be or the role they may be expected to play beyond providing funding.

Barrier 5: Sustainability of BARR Infrastructure:

Solution: Strengthen BARR Center P e39-e40. The expressed dedication of the Spurwink and BARR staffs is commendable as is the awareness of the need for marketing; however, the lack of explicit ideas regarding additional short and long-term funding is of concern.

Barrier 6: Sustainability of BARR Model Within Schools:

Solution: Regional BARR staff to facilitate into local context Pe40-41. While it is essential that a project that is located in multiple states and school districts understand and work within the local context, outside of regional training's, community meetings, and a professional learning community of BARR leaders, there seems to be little planning or specificity to address the grassroots of both the education community and the parent community.

Reader's Score: 30

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 this proposed project are clearly specified. (p e46-e51)
- b) The financial and operating model and accompanying plan to operate the project are described in Appendix J7 (per student cost estimate) and the budget narrative e321-e330. These are adequate.
- c) The plan provides a good description of the responsibilities of project staff. (p e51-52)

Weaknesses:

- a) While the goals, objectives, and outcomes are clear, measurement of these elements is not sufficiently addressed as shown in the chart on Pages e42 – 43, as well as the accompanying narrative Pages e42– 46.
- b) The management plan in Appendix J8 provides the objectives, related milestones, tasks, and timelines. Timelines listed in Appendix J8 are broad and not very specific. Appendix J8 refers the reader to the BARR implementation manual Pages 17-26 for a description of roles for school site coordinators, key staff roles, and timelines. This manual was not included in the application.
- c) The procedures for ensuring feedback and the opportunity for continuous improvement are sparse and it does not provide enough detail regarding how this process will function.

Reader's Score: 30

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 project meets all four sub criteria by identifying practices, evaluating different forms of practice, offering a coherent and comprehensive plan, and assessing adaptability of the plan. Examples include:

a) This proposal provides clear description of Spurwink's BARR approach as a powerful teaching practice (P e23-

- 24).
- b) The financial and operating model for the project as described in the budget narrative e321-e330 are clear.
- c) The plan provides a good description of the responsibilities of project staff. (p e51-52)

Weaknesses:

None noted

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/18/2016 01:55 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/19/2016 02:56 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Spurwink Services, Inc. (U411A160001)

Reader #5: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	10	9
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy	35	32
Quality of the Project Design & Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	35	30
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practices		
1. CPP 1	5	5
Total	105	76

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: Spurwink Services, Inc. (U411A160001)

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) The Spurwink model called Building Assets Reducing Risks model is a data-driven strategy to improve climate and academics in high schools. This program was developed in response to high school problems that affect dropout rates, poor school culture, student attendance, and not meeting the needs of students (page e22-23). Further studies show that race and class are the most reliable predictors of student academic achievement (page e23). BARR targets ninth graders since it is such a critical year in the life of students. Retention rates are higher for ninth graders and students who fall behind in that year have lower graduation rates (page e23).

2) The project uses a number of strategies as a basis for whole-school improvement—focus on the whole student, professional development, their own curriculum, creation of cohorts of students, regular meetings with cohort teacher teams, and Risk Review meetings to leverage community/school and parent resources (page e24). Conceptually, the program works with current staff members and serves all students in a school (page e27). It turns around low-performing schools by combining student asset building, frequent analysis of data, and teacher collaboration to improve student success e 26). A key is the formation of ninth grade cohorts with teacher teams. This grouping is designed to promote relationships, solve problems, and improve academic achievement (page e27). Teachers meet to discuss academic issues but also life skills, student communication issues, and personal goals (page 136). Tools, forms and scoring rubrics are in Appendix J9. The study on page 169 shows how the school climate has improved with better student/staff and staff/staff relationships.

3) In their Validation grant, this approach to school improvement has been successful (Appendix J1, e24). Research described on page e24 has shown statistically significant gains in math and reading scores; increased credit accumulation; reductions in academic achievement gaps (page 169); and improved graduation rates. This approach has been shown to be achievable by providing a structure, resources, and training to at-risk schools.

Weaknesses:

As with any reform effort, resistance by school staff members is expected. There was no discussion on how the program deals with this problem. Issues with teacher teams also can be problematic. More details on how the program works with staff members on these problems would be appropriate.

Reader's Score: 9

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) Because this model has been shown to be effective in high schools (which have few whole-school improvement models) it can be selected by the lowest 5% of ESSA targeted schools (page 29). Because the interest for this model was high, a waitlist had to be created during the Validation grant (page 30). They expect regional hubs to be a catalyst for further deployment of the project. They note on page e30 that at one high school, initial adoption eventually spread to all the other high schools in that district. BARR has shown that regional-level work facilitates change, aligns resources, and promotes buy-in and sustainability.

2) BARR has noted six barriers to scale up: regional expansion, cost of service, capacity to train and support staff, tools to support fidelity of implementation, sustainability of the BARR infrastructure, and sustainability of the BARR model within schools (page e32). These barriers are shown in the Scale-up logic model on pages e33-34. Along with the barrier, they list the activities, output, short-term outcomes, and long-term impacts. Regional hubs will be created around the country. A local coach/trainer will be hired to support each group of ten schools in a region (page e35). Appendix J3 shows that BARR schools that meet certain criteria will be noted as a School of Academic Excellence and become a regional demonstration site (page e37). Barrier 4 on page e39 will be addressed using technology for video coaching, best practices, and communications between sites. A web-based data collection system will also be built to streamline a current labor-intensive task.

Weaknesses:

2) The cost of service barrier is lacking in details of creating multiple regional funding sources (page e37). The narrative says at least four private foundations and business partnerships will be established with no further discussion on how that will happen.

Reader's Score: 32

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 scale-up goals have the project objects and project outcomes listed (page e42). The BARR Logic model as shown in Appendix J5 gives a nice overview of this approach to school reform. It makes sense, incorporates many school reform tools and tools to support student emotional learning.

2) The management plan coordinates activities between the major partners-Spurwink, Hazelden, and the American Institutes for Research (pages e47-48). A communications structure on page 51 shows the flow of information and how often meetings will occur.

3) A Financial and Operating Model Chart on page e55 summarizes funding and the services or materials for the implementing schools.

Weaknesses:

1) Some of the project outcomes are general in nature and how the outcome will be measured is not detailed – Sixty-six schools will implement the BARR model with fidelity. This outcome lacks the measurement tool (page e42). How schools will be chosen for the project is unclear (page e42).

2) The organizational chart on page e49 is said to identify key roles in implementation but it only shows how the staff relationships would exist. The management plan narrative is disjointed. Although described in detail in the appendix J8, one clear chart or section with the responsibilities, timelines, and milestones would have improved this section.

4) The feedback and continuous improvement sections are very sparse (page e56). The establishment of a formalized continuous improvement cycle is not documented.

Reader's Score: 30

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.

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(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 applicant meets all the criteria for the Competitive Preference Priority. Spurwink proposes to use its validated Building Assets Reducing Risks model to improve student achievement in high schools. The program is targeted at ninth graders by creating a school within a school approach to support this crucial time for students. The professional development, support, and tools created can be implemented in many types of schools across the country. It fills a need in regard to school improvement models for high school.

Weaknesses:

None Noted.

Reader's Score: **5**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/19/2016 02:56 PM