

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/30/2017 01:55 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: American Institutes for Research (U411B170034)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	
Sub Total	15	
Selection Criteria		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	30	
Sub Total	30	
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Management	35	
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	16
Sub Total	55	16
Total	100	16

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - EIR - Mid Phase Grants - 3: 84.411B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: American Institutes for Research (U411B170034)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

- (1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project.
- (2) The national significance of the proposed project.
- (3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition.

Strengths:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. In determining the applicant's capacity to scale the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (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.
- (2) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.
- (3) The feasibility of successful replication of the proposed project, if favorable results are obtained, in a variety

Strengths:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan

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

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

(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.

(3) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

(4) The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the applicant beyond the end of the grant.

Strengths:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. In determining the quality of the project evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(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.

(2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.

(3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes.

(4) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components, mediators, and outcomes of the grant-supported intervention, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

Strengths:

- Page 20/e41 outlines a robust plan for providing continuous improvement over the course of the project via formative assessment. Further, the monthly implementation review will help ensure that fidelity to the model is being met before assessing impacts of implementation. This is further strengthened by the description on page 29/e50 that outlines how measurable thresholds for acceptable implementation will be set and utilized.
- The blocked cluster RCT design outlined on page 23/e43 and further described in detail on page 30/e51 will likely allow for a study that meets WWC standards without reservations.
- The proposal has considered potential barriers to implementing a 'clean' research design and outlines way in which those barriers will be addressed as well as plans to overcome issues related to attrition (pages 23-24/e44-45).
- Page 24/e45 and Appendix G.3 clearly outline the power analysis conducted to ensure the sample size is appropriate.
- AIR (notably the staff for whom the CVs are provided) have strong prior experience conducting rigorous evaluation designs.

Weaknesses:

- It's not clear that it would be okay for the lead applicant organization to serve as the external evaluator. Page 18 states: The AIR evaluation team will be separate from AIR's role overseeing the study partners; the evaluation team will have no role in the implementation of MTP-S or the strategy to scale except to provide implementation data as feedback. However, the proposal would benefit from a clearer description of how a firewall between the implementation/operational side and the evaluation side of the project will be ensured.
- Per exhibit 4, the table would benefit from quantifying targets for the outcomes in order to concretely be able to assess whether each outcome has been met. For example, 1.3 states the outcome of having 'Fully trained coaches for each district,' however what it means to be fully trained is not defined. While the measure to be used includes attendance records, no benchmark for attendance to be considered fully trained is delineated.
- Per Exhibit 4, Objective 3, the objectives/outcomes are centered around the implementation of the RCT and not on the outcomes itself that are hoped to be documented via the RCT (i.e. improvements in outcomes). This table should include the goals expected of the project itself.
- Because of the mixed roles across AIR operationally and conducting evaluation, it is difficult to determine the appropriateness of resources devoted specifically to evaluation.

Reader's Score: 16

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: American Institutes for Research (U411B170034)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	0
Sub Total	15	0
Selection Criteria		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	30	0
Sub Total	30	0
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Management	35	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	16
Sub Total	55	16
Total	100	16

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - EIR - Mid Phase Grants - 3: 84.411B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: American Institutes for Research (U411B170034)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

- (1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project.
- (2) The national significance of the proposed project.
- (3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. In determining the applicant's capacity to scale the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (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.
- (2) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.
- (3) The feasibility of successful replication of the proposed project, if favorable results are obtained, in a variety

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan

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

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

(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.

(3) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

(4) The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the applicant beyond the end of the grant.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. In determining the quality of the project evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(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.

(2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.

(3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes.

(4) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components, mediators, and outcomes of the grant-supported intervention, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

Strengths:

The study will address the research questions through a blocked cluster RCT with random assignment of teachers to treatment or control meeting the WWC standard with no reservations (p. 23). Teachers rather than schools will be the unit of analysis and while similar studies have a risk of contamination between treatment and control teachers, this project takes several steps to minimize contamination and attrition. For example, to follow-up on the safeguards against contamination, teachers will be surveyed about sharing information (p. 24). Sample eligibility criteria are documented and attrition is addressed not just statistically but by recruiting volunteers who plan to stay at their schools for the intervention and randomly assigning them as late as possible (p. 25).

Scaling strategies linked to the evaluation include a large, diverse sample that assesses the impact of the program for different groups (p. 13-14). The researchers propose a comprehensive implementation plan that includes data from surveys, logs, interviews, and checklists and will focus on coach selection and training, monitoring, and support. (p. 26-27). Descriptive analyses of the implementation data and qualitative analyses of interviews will address the research questions.

The cost analysis will use the Resource Cost Model and the CostOut tool which the evaluator have used extensively in the past (p. 27) and provides details on personnel and nonpersonnel resources. Classroom measures include published observation protocols with coding schemes and reliability checks (p. 28). Student measures and sample items from all instruments are in the Appendix support face validity. Reported reliabilities for surveys are above .5 as recommended by WWC.EOC and end-of-grade tests will measure student performance and are expected to have sufficient reliability and validity (p. 29).

Primary analyses will be fixed-effect intent-to-treat analyses and the models take into account clustering of lessons within teachers, students within sections, and sections within teachers (p. 23). Appendix G.3 provides technical details about the power analyses including the setting of target MDES. The theory of change (logic model) clearly presents the program components and mediating factors leading to student outcomes (p. 7). For example, the selection and training of coaches and their skills lead to the quality of teacher-student interactions which in turn leads to improved student outcomes of engagement and academic learning.

Weaknesses:

AIR both oversees the project and is also the independent evaluator. They strive to keep the two roles separate and cite previous work they completed for IES using a similar structure (p. 18) but they provide very little detail about how they will keep the two roles separate. In addition, because of the overlap, it is difficult to tease out the actual cost of the evaluation since it appears to be rolled in to the budget overall so it is hard to know if there are adequate resources for the evaluation.

Reader's Score: 16

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: American Institutes for Research (U411B170034)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	13
Sub Total	15	13
Selection Criteria		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	30	30
Sub Total	30	30
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Management	35	32
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
Sub Total	55	32
Total	100	75

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - EIR - Mid Phase Grants - 3: 84.411B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: American Institutes for Research (U411B170034)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

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

(2) The national significance of the proposed project.

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

Strengths:

1.The applicant provides some support for the magnitude of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. They indicate that too many students, those of color and from low-income families as they move through middle and high school are not being successfully prepared for college entrance and completion. In support of their position, they cite a 2016 study of scores from the National Assessment of Education Progress that 48% of Black students scored below basic on the 12th-grade NAEP reading assessment compared with 21% of White students. In addition, support for their problem comes from the Education Trust 2017 reports that young adults from high-income families are more than three times as likely as from low income families to have earned a bachelor's degree by age 24. (p.3)

2.The focus by the applicant on two areas of critical national need: teacher quality and adolescent academic engagement support the magnitude of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. The applicant provides citations that indicated that teachers vary in their effects on students' engagement, achievement and later life outcomes. The scarcity of effective PD programs is frustrating given the potentially large numbers of students who could benefit. The applicant also provides evidence that following students across time reveals that engagement declines during high school.

3.The applicant makes a strong case for the project representing an exceptional PD approach to the priority established for the competition. The applicant asserts that decades of evidence (p.6) on the measurement of classroom interactions and adolescent engagement underlie a part of the MTP-S theory of change. Recent evidence comes from the first MTP-S trial which found that half of MTP-S's total effect on student achievement was mediated by the quality of classroom interactions as measured by using CLASS-S. Also found is the correlation evidence supporting the link between CLASS-S scores and student engagement and between CLASLS-S scores and student achievement. Coupled with the other part of the theory – theory of teacher change which addresses how to get teachers to learn new practices and use them in the classroom. The use of coaches for teachers establishes a supportive non-supervisory relationship coupled with use of evidence based guidelines, are also supports note mentioning.

Weaknesses:

1.The applicant's narrative language support for the magnitude for this project's priorities is not adequately presented. Citations are limited in terms of the discussion of the range of categories of high needs students that fall into multiple categories such as other minorities, homeless, SWD, ELL, those involved with the juvenile justice system and those facing student retention issues. Providing additional citations that support the reasons for middle school and high school drop-outs and lack of persistence, as well as the difficulty of transforming lower performing schools over time, are

warranted based on demographic and economic factors available to support the project's priorities.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. In determining the applicant's capacity to scale the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(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.

(2) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.

(3) The feasibility of successful replication of the proposed project, if favorable results are obtained, in a variety

Strengths:

1.The applicant demonstrates there is unmet demand for the practice that will enable the applicant to reach the level of scale that is proposed in the application. As supported by the applicant, scalable, effective PD programs are in demand and instructional coaching programs are especially recognized for providing support that is more individualized, personalized and contextualized than traditional programs. (p.9) The need for scalable, effective coaching is high in rural schools where it is more difficult and MTP-S can fill this void. The project includes 223 schools of which 18 are rural and 184 urban and defined by their states as high poverty and high minority.

2.The applicant identifies a specific strategy that addresses particular barriers that prevent the applicant from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application. The applicant discusses that the prevention of scale-up of MTP-S is its dependence on an outside consulting firm to serve as coach to teachers in many districts. The applicant indicates that school district prefer to use their own staff or known local consultants instead of firms they are not that familiar with. To overcome that barrier, staff from the districts will be trained to serve as MTP-S coaches. Another barrier discussed is the school district's choice of staff to serve as coaches and their effectiveness once trained. Their responses to the barriers are an authentic approach to project implementation. The applicant provides responses to barriers in support of their project. (p.11)

3.The applicant accounts for the feasibility of a successful replication. Should the research project have an impact, there will be manuals and other materials to support the roles of the CF, coaches and teachers. The manuals will reflect lessons learned from the project; including lessons about challenges associated with particular settings and populations; and there will be a support network for existing and first time users of MTP-S. A website contains the MTP-S online resources, which now includes hundreds of videotaped segments of classroom interaction corresponding to the different dimensions of the CLASS-S and independently coded as exemplifying high quality web screenshots as exemplified in the appendix exhibits. The challenges for implementation across the many districts and settings will also be documented and available. (p.13)

Weaknesses:

none noted

Reader's Score: 30

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan**1. In determining the quality of the proposed project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

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

(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.

(3) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

(4) The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the applicant beyond the end of the grant.

Strengths:

1. The goals, objectives and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. The overall goal is to test and refine a strategy for scaling MTP'S in diverse settings that serve high-need students and build a network to support continued scaling. The supporting measures are found on their Exhibit 4 in clear and detailed language. This reviewer is especially impressed with measure outcomes that are evaluated using not just surveys and attendance records, but those provided by outcomes at a level of "fidelity of implementation (FOI)". (This is a term that means adherence to both the proper execution of the specific practices and the effective coordination of all the practices as they are intended to be combined.) The applicant provides Exhibit 6 which lists those responsible organizations that will evaluate teacher PD interventions including the number of districts and schools. Four objectives are listed with multiple strategies, outcomes and measures and represent a comprehensive detail specific approach to this section. (p.15)

2. The management plan is adequate to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget with defined timelines. The applicant, in support, provides an Organization Chart, which highlights the chain of command and reporting relationships between the key project partners. The applicant clearly defines the role of its partners with responsibility to support school districts to recruit and select coaches who will be trained, implement MTP-S, and participate in all data collections. The applicant's exhibit entitled, Group Responsible, Time Frame and Milestones for Each Strategy, provides additional evidence of a clearly presented management plan to achieve objectives.

3. The applicant provides for the adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. The feedback mechanisms are designed to bring about fast modifications to program based on need. For example, during a monthly implementation review meeting, the consultant may report that all coaches attended the biweekly coaching quality meeting, but only half were engaged. The review team could decide that the CF should use the biweekly one on one cycle reviews to clarify expectations and ask each disengaged coach amount making the biweekly coaching quality meetings more engaging. (p.21) Exhibit 8 Routines for Using Feedback is presented with a designated column called Feedback Data Sources to further enhance feedback. The applicant provides sufficient detail for this criteria as it regards the adequacy of procedures.

4. The applicant provides sufficient details for planning for the incorporation of project purposes beyond the end of the grant. The major partners see this work aligned to their mission. They see this according to the applicant as a way to use the outcomes for future implementations and another partner sees the advantages of being able to assist states and districts identify scalable effective PD that can be integrated into a coherent system of teacher support. The benefit is that school districts will have trained, experienced, local MTP-S coaches and resources earmarked for teacher PD that can support the project. Teachers trained on the process can have an impact on new classes of students. The lead

agency plans to seek funds through foundations for support for delivery of MTP-S via the scaling strategy to the control teachers in each cohort. (p.22)

Weaknesses:

2 The applicant does not provide for any full time 1.0 staff in a key leadership coordination role for the implementation of the proposed project. The four major key personnel together total 1.05 Full Time Equivalent. With several component activities, with a large geographic area to cover and several involved school districts, project leadership does not appear adequate to carry out project objectives and outcomes. (Budget Narrative)

Reader's Score: 32

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. In determining the quality of the project evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (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.
- (2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.
- (3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes.
- (4) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components, mediators, and outcomes of the grant-supported intervention, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

Strengths:

na

Weaknesses:

na

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 05/30/2017 03:21 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/02/2017 07:03 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: American Institutes for Research (U411B170034)

Reader #4: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	13
Sub Total	15	13
Selection Criteria		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	30	27
Sub Total	30	27
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Management	35	30
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
Sub Total	55	30
Total	100	70

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - EIR - Mid Phase Grants - 3: 84.411B

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: American Institutes for Research (U411B170034)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

- (1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project.
- (2) The national significance of the proposed project.
- (3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition.

Strengths:

Severity and national significance: Research supports (p. 3) that students in America are not prepared for college when they leave high school, principally low income students and students of color. Inequity in academic readiness between white and black students as well as between low-income and rich- income families is a severe and national problem. Progress have been made for example the gap in math and in Reading Language Arts has been reduced for elementary students but for the past 25 years, the gap for 17 years old has remained the same, particularly for students of color. Teachers who teach low-income students in grades 6-12 are poorly prepared to address the needs of the student population they teach. In RELA, for example, nothing is in place to address the reading skills of low-achievers, not only with decoding but also with comprehension and teachers are not prepared to teach reading at this age level. Add to that, research shows that student engagement and motivation are in decline and 50 % of students are not committed to learning. Low engagement of students triggers other future problems like drop-out, depressions, delinquency and more. The program addresses two areas of critical national need: teacher quality and adolescent academic engagement through teacher professional development.

Exceptional approach: The study is based on two theories of change: theory of student change and how classroom practices and interactions affect student outcomes and the theory of teacher change which encourage teachers to try new practices in their classrooms. The model used is the coaching design process that establishes a supportive relationship between coaches and teachers, target classroom interventions and build a constant feedback for improvement through collaboration, while, at the same time, building teachers' progressive independence. Using technology and coaching as support to improve classroom practices, student engagement and student achievement is interesting because it has the potential to reach more teachers, even those in secluded areas and to be cost effective.

Weaknesses:

The problem of interactions in the classroom teacher-student and student-student is not a new problem and other programs exist which links these interactions to student engagement. (Danielson's model of Framework for Teaching). Some of these programs though might be costlier or might not have the capability to reach teachers in rural environment.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. In determining the applicant's capacity to scale the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

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- (2) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.
- (3) The feasibility of successful replication of the proposed project, if favorable results are obtained, in a variety

Strengths:

The project is a continuation of a study done with middle school teachers in 12 schools in rural and small town districts. A second study is being done in parallel with high school students in high challenging urban districts. The goal of this 3rd study is to test the strategy for scaling the program in different settings by selecting and training local staff as coaches while providing monitoring and support. The professional development will target teacher quality improvement and interventions to increase student engagement.

The new approach to teacher development has created interest and 5 districts from 4 states regrouping rural, suburban and urban schools with a high percentage of high-need students have volunteered to participate. The interest has also allowed the creation of a pool of teachers from different settings for recruitment. To encourage replicability and to respond to districts demand, outsider coaches will train district and school staff to serve as coach in the first stage of the project. The training method address some barriers: for example, professional development is needed everywhere even more so in rural districts. Some schools live in isolation and using an online method can help more schools get what they need. Add to that, the coaching program can create teacher motivation by the support it provides and encourage them to stay longer in the high-need schools.

This method using online support with a goal to form coaches at the district level has the potential for replication.

Weaknesses:

The program is based on the use of technology and some teachers might not be tech savvy. The program does not address training differentiation. This can represent a problem in district with a large majority of older teachers or migrant population who have not been exposed to technology earlier. Applicants are clear about the number of interested districts but do not explain why these districts are interested. They are counting on administrators from these five districts to advertise their program and on their national network to identify potential for participation. This part is not developed clearly.

Reader's Score: 27

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan

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

- (1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.
- (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.
- (3) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.
- (4) The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the applicant beyond the end of the grant.

Strengths:

The six-steps process for each coaching cycle is presented on p. 5: teacher videotapes their class, then coach analyses the video and provides feedback to teacher. Teacher and coach then define an action plan to improve classroom interactions, Teacher implements action plan with coach support.

The theory of change is explained in detail p. 7: roles of the district, coach, teachers as well as teacher outcomes and student outcomes.

Objectives, strategies, outcomes and measures are presented on p. 15 and are based on 4 objectives that show preparation, procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement during and beyond the end of the grant.

On p. 20, the table shows responsibilities, time frame and milestones for each of the 4 objectives.

Four sets of data will be recorded for adequacy of the procedure for ensuring feedback: classroom observation videos will give feedback on teacher outcomes. Student academic performance will be evaluated through end of year grade testing in math and RELA. Student engagement will be evaluated from student survey and level of implementation will be monitored through coaches' input using implementation checklists and teacher surveys.

The organizational chart on p. 17 help also to understand the responsibility of each group and the relationship between the grant applicants/ project Management team and the districts and schools.

The program is on 2 year-cohort and will follow the progress of 3 cohorts during 4 years and they will use feedback for improvement from one cohort to the other.

Weaknesses:

Most of the program is on the teacher's shoulder and might not be followed through (work being added to the daily task). This will impact the potential of this program to be continued after the end of the grant.

Teacher will videotape 30 minutes of his instruction: Implementation might not be followed (lack of technology competency) which will need extra-training that has not been planned.

Reader's Score: 30

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. In determining the quality of the project evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(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.

(2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.

(3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes.

(4) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components, mediators, and outcomes of the grant-supported intervention, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/02/2017 07:03 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/02/2017 12:15 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: American Institutes for Research (U411B170034)

Reader #5: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	14
Sub Total	15	14
Selection Criteria		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	30	30
Sub Total	30	30
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Management	35	35
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	
Sub Total	55	35
Total	100	79

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - EIR - Mid Phase Grants - 3: 84.411B

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: American Institutes for Research (U411B170034)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

- (1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project.
- (2) The national significance of the proposed project.
- (3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition.

Strengths:

The applicant provides a clear description of the overall problem (page 3). Applicant states that there are many high needs students, particularly students of color and students from low-income families who move through middle and high school without being sufficiently prepared for college (page 3).

The 2016 scores on the National Assessment of Education Progress has confirmed the above statement - 48% of Black students scored below basic on the 12th-grade NAEP reading assessment while 21% of White students score below basics. Other identified challenges include: 45% of children whose parent did not graduate high school scored below basic compare to 19% for children of college graduates (page 3). High needs students enroll in remedial classes when they enter a 2 or 4 year colleges or may drop out (page 3).

In order to close the academic achievement gap, the applicant is proposing interventions to improve the academic achievement for the high needs students – (page 3). The interventions are exceptional approach the priorities because it addresses two areas of critical national need: teacher quality and adolescent academic engagement.

The applicant provides a clear demonstration of the use of up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice. The first study that focused primarily on middle school teachers and was conducted in 12 schools in rural and small town districts (page 2).

The applicant is proposing to scale MyTeachingPartner-Secondary (MTP-S)—the proposed project is significant because it can improve teacher classroom practice through professional development and student engagement, thus improving student achievement. Teacher quality is seen by researchers and policymakers as a potential lever on student achievement (page 2)

Weaknesses:

The applicant fails to include data showing academic improvement from the first Study on middle school teachers. Citations are limited in terms of the distinction of the range of categories.

The applicant fails to provide an additional citation for middle and high school dropout rate.

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. In determining the applicant's capacity to scale the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(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.

(2) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.

(3) The feasibility of successful replication of the proposed project, if favorable results are obtained, in a variety

Strengths:

The applicant provides a clear description of the target population and need for reading intervention as indicated (page 1). The applicant clearly define the barriers to meet the targeted pollution and he strategies to use to address the challenges. A significant share of the Districts is already invested as resources in teacher PD—at least 5% of the annual budget (page 9). To meet the mandate of the Districts, Every Student Succeeds Act, they must use research based program that are proven to work (page 9).

One of the barriers of MTP-S is its dependence on centralized staff because Districts prefer to use their own staff or trusted. Teachstone will train staff from each SDP to serve as MTP-S coaches to address the challenge (page 10). To implement the strategies, there is a need of a Central Facilitator who will be selecting the coaches who can implement the coaching process and adhere to the core principles of the MTP-S (page 10). The Coaching model include the following: Train Coaches - 5-day, in-person training which includes 2-day training on rating classroom practice using the CLASS-S and 3 days on the MTP-S coaching model; Conduct Teacher Orientation - in-person visit by the CF to lead the half-day Orientation to ensure teacher buy in; Monitor and Support Coaches—Fidelity of Coaching - CF conducts a "cycle review" with each coach once every 2 weeks using GoToMeeting (page 11) ; Monitor and Support Coaches (Ongoing Needs-Based Training) - biweekly team meetings lead by the CF allowing teachers to engage in reflection in a supportive, group context (pag12).

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 30

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan

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

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

(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.

(3) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

(4) The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the applicant beyond the end of the grant.

Strengths:

The applicant outlines a management plan that is sufficient to guide the implementation and operation of the project (pages 15-17). Objectives and associated activities are specified, along with person(s) responsible, a timeframe for completion of activities, and milestones for accomplishing tasks. The applicant listed four objectives: Implement strategy to scale while continuously using feedback and fidelity data for project improvement; Implement MTP-S while continuously using feedback and fidelity data for project improvement; Conduct an RCT to test the impact of MTP-S provided by trained local coaches on (a) the quality of classroom interactions and (b) student outcomes; Develop sample and infrastructure for continued scaling of MTP-S (pages 15- 16).

The project is designed to ensure feedback and continuous improvement. Procedures will include: a Monthly implementation review meeting just after the launch of Cohort 1 and the Biweekly coaching quality meeting (page 21). Applicant includes the Routines for Using Feedback (Exhibit 8) that include Meeting Name and Frequency (When Active); Participants; Feedback Data Sources and Strategies to be improved (page 21). Applicant states that the first cohort will be used to improve the second cohort.

AIR will continue to pursue opportunities to build partnerships to scale, refine, and test teacher PD for high-need students. Therefore, the project's benefits will continue into the future through the partners, who each see the work as aligned to their mission beyond the duration of the project.

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 35

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. In determining the quality of the project evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (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.
- (2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.
- (3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes.
- (4) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components, mediators, and outcomes of the grant-supported intervention, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted
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