

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/07/2017 01:53 PM

## Technical Review

**Applicant:** National Math and Science Initiative (U423A170060)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	40	40
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	15
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	25	24
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	18
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Promoting Diversity in the Educator Workforce</b>		
1. CPP 1	5	3
<b>Support for Personalized Learning Environments</b>		
1. CPP 2	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>103</b>

# Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - Supporting Effective Educator Development - 7: 84.423A

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

Applicant: National Math and Science Initiative (U423A170060)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

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

(2) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.

(3) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services.

(4) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are focused on those with greatest needs.

(5) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.

### Strengths:

The proposal presents an exceptional approach to the priority by improving teacher effectiveness in AP courses and its college readiness program (p. 4). The proposal describes the components of the professional development as including a summer institute, online support, as well as a mentor to provide ongoing support for the teachers learning about implementing the college readiness program (p. 11-12). To carry out the project, there will be a partnership with two LEAs: Clayton County Public Schools and DeKalb Public Schools (p. 13). These LEAs will serve a high concentration of students in poverty to ensure that the project is focused on the students with the highest needs (p. 14). In addition to framing this need with respect to poverty, the students of these two districts are not taking or passing AP exams at a high rate. In addition, the letters of support convey the level of commitment on the part of the partnering LEAs (p. 68-69).

### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 40

### Selection Criteria - Significance

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

(1) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project, especially improvements in teaching and Student Achievement.

(2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits.

(3) The potential for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing program of the agency or organization at the end of the grant.

**(4) The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies.**

**Strengths:**

The proposal makes a strong argument, based on previous research, as to the value of the AP college readiness program of having a substantial impact on students (p. 17-20). For this particular project, there are intended student impact goals. For example, there is a goal of increasing by 70%, in the first year, students' qualifying scores in AP math, and science and English. (p. 23). The costs associated with the project appears to be reasonable considering the number of teachers and students reached—equating to \$15k per teacher and \$800 per student (p. 21). The proposal notes that this work is building on previous college readiness work that NMSI has engaged in (p. 22). As this builds upon previous work and the proposal demonstrates that NMSI has been able to successfully raise funds for this work, there is a high likelihood that the work will continue beyond the term of the grant. The proposal describes a variety of ways in which the project will be disseminated by the lead organization as well as by the evaluators. This includes publishing articles, presenting at conferences, and promoting the work through web sites.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, 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.**

**Strengths:**

The proposal provides specific goals, objectives, and outcomes for the project (p. 23-25). These goals and objectives are measurable and convey the level of impact that the project aims to accomplish with specific attention to the data that will be used to measure the impacts (p. 23-25). The proposal provides a list of activities to be carried out through the project and situates those activities within a timeline to communicate the sequence in which they will be accomplished (p. 25-27). In addition, the management plan allocates responsibility to particular teams for carrying out the activities and denotes the milestones that indicate when an activity is complete. The project design has also created opportunities for providing frequent feedback for project improvement. For instance, the evaluation plan includes feedback opportunities for the project from West Coast Analytics. Also, a project compliance committee will be formed and will meet monthly to assess and respond to the implementation of the overall project.

**Weaknesses:**

The proposal did not include anticipated gains for all of their goals and objectives. For example, when stating that the teachers will increase in their knowledge of instructional strategies, the proposal does not make clear by how much (p. 24).

### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

(2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on Relevant Outcomes.

(3) 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 with reservations.

Note: Applicants may wish to review the following technical assistance resources on evaluation: (1) WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook 3.0: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Handbooks>; and (2) "Technical Assistance Materials for Conducting Rigorous Impact Evaluations" to the list of evaluation resources: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/projects/evaluationTA.asp>; and (3) IES/NCEE Technical Methods papers: [http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/tech\\_methods/](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/tech_methods/). In addition, applicants may view two optional webinar recordings that were hosted by the Institute of Education Sciences. The first webinar discussed strategies for designing and executing well-designed Quasi-Experimental Design Studies and is available at: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Multimedia.aspx?sid=23>. The second webinar focused on more rigorous evaluation designs, discussing strategies for designing and executing studies that meet WWC evidence standards without reservations. This webinar is available at: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Multimedia.aspx?sid=18>.

#### Strengths:

The evaluation will be carried out by an external firm identified in the proposal (p. 61). The evaluation plan includes evaluation questions to be addressed, which are tied to the goals of the project (p. 30-31).

The proposal states that the evaluation plan will utilize confirmatory factor analysis to validate the constructs used in the investigation (p. 75-77). The evaluation includes a component aimed at monitoring implementation (p. 37). In turn, the evaluation plan notes that formative feedback will be offered to the project team (p. 37). The evaluation plan includes a quasi experimental design to ascertain the impact of the program (p. 30). This approach meets the WWC standards with reservations.

#### Weaknesses:

Although the project design states that the project aims to impact AP English, the evaluation plan does not make clear how AP English course attendance or performance will be evaluated.

### Priority Questions

#### Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity in the Educator Workforce

1. Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that are designed to address both of the following priority areas:

(a) Providing educator development activities designed to improve cultural competency and responsiveness skills that contribute to an inclusive school culture; and

(b) Improving the recruitment, support, and retention of educators from diverse backgrounds.

Applicants must respond to both of the priority areas in order to receive the maximum available points under this

**Strengths:**

The curriculum that the teachers will engage with intends to embody cultural responsiveness and be connected to the daily lives of students (p. 10). The LEAs have been chosen, in part, because the teacher work force largely reflects the racial makeup of the students it serves.

**Weaknesses:**

The proposal states that the project provides training, and systems and curricular materials to individualize learning for all students (p. 5). This also includes online curricular resources that the project will provide aimed at helping facilitate students' personalized learning (p. 8).

**Reader's Score:** 3

**Competitive Preference Priority - Support for Personalized Learning Environments**

- 1. Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that are designed to support teachers, principals, or other School Leaders implementing personalized learning environments in their classrooms or in classrooms in their schools, using data to inform their instruction, and increasing students' engagement, voice, and choice in their learning. Projects may support educators' implementation of college and career ready strategies such as project based learning, competency based education, or blended learning.**

**Strengths:**

The proposal states that the project provides training, systems and curricular materials to individualize learning for all students. (p. 5). This also includes online curricular resources that the project will provide aimed at helping facilitate students' personalized learning (p. 8).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score:** 3

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## Technical Review

**Applicant:** National Math and Science Initiative (U423A170060)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	40	40
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	15
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	25	24
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	18
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Promoting Diversity in the Educator Workforce</b>		
1. CPP 1	5	3
<b>Support for Personalized Learning Environments</b>		
1. CPP 2	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>103</b>

# Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - Supporting Effective Educator Development - 7: 84.423A

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

Applicant: National Math and Science Initiative (U423A170060)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

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

(2) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.

(3) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services.

(4) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are focused on those with greatest needs.

(5) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.

### Strengths:

The project is designed to increase the number of students taking and qualifying for an AP math, science, and English exam through the National Match and Science Institute, Inc. (NMSI) Learning Management System (LMS) (p.7). The LMS provides support for teachers (i.e., preparation, professional development, and ongoing support). The Educative Curricular Resources framework which will rely on the teacher's agency, planning and adaptations to meet the needs of students (p.10). Students' support consists of study sessions, classroom equipment, and AP exam fee subsidies (p. 8). The school receives support through, a performance analysis, and detailed curricula. An NSMI program manager is assigned to each school to regularly communicate with the Designated Administrator at each school through email, phone, and video-conference (p .9). 8-9). Teachers will participate in a four-day Summer Institute for orientation to the components of the LMS and the framework of the system with further interaction with NMSI happening virtually. Training will implement a progressive model moving from examination of curricular resources to the development of their own materials. Cohorts will be led by an Advanced Placement teacher/consultant (p. 11). Teachers will upload teaching videos to gain feedback on their classroom performance from cohort leaders as well as peers, and idea sharing will be conducted through discussion boards (p. 12). In order to ensure the project is meeting the needs of the population, student demographic data was provided to indicate that 77 percent are eligible for free and reduced lunch and 93 percent were identified as non-white (p. 14).

### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 40



## Selection Criteria - Significance

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

(1) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project, especially improvements in teaching and Student Achievement.

(2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits.

(3) The potential for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing program of the agency or organization at the end of the grant.

(4) The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies.

### Strengths:

Results of several research studies cited demonstrated the likeliness of college readiness programs increasing number of students taking AP exams, students receiving a qualifying score on AP exams, and their performance in college, freshman GPA (pp. 15-19). Cost appear to be reasonable to the number of persons to be served (p. 13 & Budget Narrative). A previous project enabled NMSI to replicate the college readings program in a total of ten regional hubs. This project will further expand the Atlanta regional hub (p. 22). The project will be disseminated in technical reports, on the NMSI website, and at national conferences and in peer-reviewed publications (e.g., AERA, NCME) to provide information to universities who are interested in increasing teacher effectiveness. A policy brief will be disseminated to a broader audience who could champion the work of NMSI but are not familiar with education research (pp. 22-23).

### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

## Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, 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.

### Strengths:

The project application has clear goals and objectives with criterion measures, when appropriate, and includes long term outcomes (pp. 23-24). Milestones are clear with a timeline for each activity (pp. 25-27). Responsibilities of the management team are clearly described (p. 27). Formative, benchmark, and annual summative data will be collected and analyzed throughout the project. Semi-annual updates will be made to the data to reflect feedback from key partners, stakeholders, and participants (pp. 27-28). The Grant Compliance Committee of NMSI meets monthly to assess financial and programmatic compliance. It will approve and improve the grant implementation plan assess metrics, develop action plans for improvement and communicate implementation Advanced placement English were included in the goals of the project, but were not evident in the project evaluation (pp. 30-38).

**Weaknesses:**

Not all outcomes include a measurement criterion (pp. 23-24).

**Reader's Score: 24**

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

1. The Secretary considers the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

(2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on Relevant Outcomes.

(3) 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 with reservations.

**Note:** Applicants may wish to review the following technical assistance resources on evaluation: (1) WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook 3.0: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Handbooks>; and (2) "Technical Assistance Materials for Conducting Rigorous Impact Evaluations" to the list of evaluation resources: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/projects/evaluationTA.asp>; and (3) IES/NCEE Technical Methods papers: [http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/tech\\_methods/](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/tech_methods/). In addition, applicants may view two optional webinar recordings that were hosted by the Institute of Education Sciences. The first webinar discussed strategies for designing and executing well-designed Quasi-Experimental Design Studies and is available at: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Multimedia.aspx?sid=23>. The second webinar focused on more rigorous evaluation designs, discussing strategies for designing and executing studies that meet WWC evidence standards without reservations. This webinar is available at: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Multimedia.aspx?sid=18>.

**Strengths:**

This project is designed to determine the effects of the College Readiness Program on student outcomes. The study consists of two parts: (a) a comparative interrupted time series analysis using a quasi-experimental design, and (b) fidelity of implementation of college readiness program and factors that may be related to successful implementation (p. 30). A detailed description of the evaluation procedures showed that the methods would provide valid and reliable performance data (pp. 36-38). The methods of evaluation produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations (p. 2).

**Weaknesses:**

Advanced placement English were included in the goals of the project, but were not evident in the project evaluation (pp. 30-38).

**Reader's Score: 18**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity in the Educator Workforce**

1. Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that are designed to address both of the following priority areas:

(a) Providing educator development activities designed to improve cultural competency and responsiveness skills that contribute to an inclusive school culture; and

(b) Improving the recruitment, support, and retention of educators from diverse backgrounds.

Applicants must respond to both of the priority areas in order to receive the maximum available points under this competitive preference priority.

**Strengths:**

Teachers participating in the project are based upon the schools chosen to participate. Both school systems from which the participating schools are chosen have recruited a teacher workforce that is largely reflective of the student population, with the exception that white teachers are overrepresented (p. 2).

**Weaknesses:**

The project application states that through NMSI, school culture will be transformed over three years (pp. 1 & 24); however, these statements are the only information in regard to school culture. The application does include any information concerning cultural competency and responsiveness skills that will contribute to the school culture.

Reader's Score: 3

**Competitive Preference Priority - Support for Personalized Learning Environments**

1. Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that are designed to support teachers, principals, or other School Leaders implementing personalized learning environments in their classrooms or in classrooms in their schools, using data to inform their instruction, and increasing students' engagement, voice, and choice in their learning. Projects may support educators' implementation of college and career ready strategies such as project based learning, competency based education, or blended learning.

**Strengths:**

Quest homework system, which is a part of NMSI's Learning Management System, provides a user-friendly formative assessment system that will allow teachers to customize their instruction and homework assignments toward a student's individual learning needs (p. 5). Within the system, there are also activities which students can review content using skill-based lessons. Through these lessons, students facilitate their own learning (p. 5).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 3

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 08/07/2017 01:08 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/07/2017 01:11 PM

## Technical Review

**Applicant:** National Math and Science Initiative (U423A170060)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	40	40
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	15
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	25	24
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	19
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Promoting Diversity in the Educator Workforce</b>		
1. CPP 1	5	3
<b>Support for Personalized Learning Environments</b>		
1. CPP 2	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>104</b>

# Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - Supporting Effective Educator Development - 7: 84.423A

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

Applicant: National Math and Science Initiative (U423A170060)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

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

(2) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.

(3) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services.

(4) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are focused on those with greatest needs.

(5) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.

### Strengths:

The National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI), proposes, the DRIVE College Readiness Program Project (CRP), to improve teacher effectiveness in 20 high schools in Georgia. CRP's purpose is to increase academic intensity, increase access to rigorous courses, and improve student achievement, especially among traditionally underrepresented and high-need students, by increasing teacher effectiveness in both curricular and pedagogical domains (p1).

The exceptional approach is documented by four studies referenced in the proposal's Evidence Form, representing well designed, well-implemented research studies that present solid evidence of the effectiveness of CRP, from impact on immediate outcomes related to AP, to postsecondary results, to longer-term lifelong impacts (p2, Attachment).

Grovetown High School, part of NMSI's College Readiness Program in 2014, resulting in 206 qualifying scores across the high school, had an overall 142 percent increase in qualifying scores (p7).

CRP's teacher support is defined as preparation, professional development, and ongoing support (p8, Figure 3). This includes a four-day AP Summer Institute that will provide a two-day training in the fall, a spring training and mock exam reading in addition to mentoring, to provide curricular help, pacing guidance, and instructional feedback (p11).

Collaboration will include work with school leaders to determine priority areas that can equip and empower teachers to continue to implement lessons learned beyond the grant period and teachers who will be a part of shaping the development of their curricula (p12).

For the target population, the applicant anticipates 20 of the 33 high schools (42,187 students) in the two high needs districts will participate. Overall, 85% are Title 1 Schools, 77% of the students are eligible for free and reduced lunch (FRL), and 93% identify as non-white (p14, Table 2).

### Weaknesses:

No noted weaknesses.

### Selection Criteria - Significance

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

(1) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project, especially improvements in teaching and Student Achievement.

(2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits.

(3) The potential for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing program of the agency or organization at the end of the grant.

(4) The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies.

#### Strengths:

Implementation of CRP is associated with increased percentages of high school students taking AP exams and increased percentages of students scoring 3 or higher on these exams (p16). Data from the College Board shows the increase in qualifying scores after one year of CRP implementation in six cohorts of NMSI partner schools (2009–2014) was 68% compared with the average national increase of 6.8% over the same time (p1).

The CRP is shown to improve teacher effectiveness as measured by qualifying score earning rates on AP tests (p6). The benefits of CRP financial awards that induce students to reach for higher standards continued in post-secondary education (p9). AP students will have an opportunity to earn \$100 for each qualifying score earned on an AP exam (Budget).

The goal of NMSI's regional hub strategy is to establish a CRP presence within a targeted geography (p22).

Results are observed by, and disseminated to, three Georgia university partners who are interested in the increasing teacher effectiveness in rigorous, high school coursework across Georgia and the country (p22).

Project results from the evaluation will be disseminated through the NMSI and the West Coast Analytistics (WCA) websites, regular conferences and workshops, and peer-reviewed publications (p22)

#### Weaknesses:

No noted weaknesses.

### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, 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.

**Strengths:**

Expected Outcomes of the project are clearly specified and include: student enrollment in AP courses, particularly among traditionally underrepresented populations, will increase by at least 80% in the first year and 140% over three years; students' qualifying scores in AP math, science, and English will increase by at least 70% after the first year of CRP, and at least 125% over the three-year grant period; teachers will increase knowledge and use of content and effective instructional learned in NMSI trainings in their classrooms; and schools will facilitate expanded access to AP courses and prioritize student success (p23, 24).

NMSI has overseen \$300 million in public-private funds with previous success in implementing large-scale grants. Since 2007 the applicant has had a large annual operating budget (p25). The project has commitments from both participating school districts to use existing non-federal resources to cover the required match (p29).

TABLE 4 Key Activities and Milestones also lists responsible parties and timelines (p25-27).

NMSI's project leaders have experience managing large projects (p27).

To enable continuous improvement, the project will use formative, benchmark, and annual summative data from participating schools (p28).

NMSI surveys AP teachers and mentor teachers at least twice annually to assess a wide range of measures (p28).

**Weaknesses:**

Some of the outcomes did not have a specific numeric objective; they only specified terms such as "increase".

**Reader's Score: 24**

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

**1. The Secretary considers the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.**

**(2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on Relevant Outcomes.**

**(3) 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 with reservations.**

**Note: Applicants may wish to review the following technical assistance resources on evaluation: (1) WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook 3.0: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Handbooks>; and (2) "Technical Assistance Materials for Conducting Rigorous Impact Evaluations" to the list of evaluation resources: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/projects/evaluationTA.asp>; and (3) IES/NCEE Technical Methods papers: [http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/tech\\_methods/](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/tech_methods/). In addition, applicants may view two optional webinar recordings that were hosted by the Institute of Education Sciences. The first webinar discussed strategies for designing and executing well-designed Quasi-Experimental Design Studies and is available at: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Multimedia.aspx?sid=23>. The second webinar focused on more rigorous evaluation designs, discussing strategies for designing and executing studies that meet WWC evidence standards without reservations. This webinar is available at: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Multimedia.aspx?sid=18>.**

**Strengths:**

The evaluation plan is designed to explore the impact CRP will have on selected student outcomes and evaluate the fidelity of implementation and examine factors that may be associated with successful implementation (p30).

The study is a quasi-experimental design. Selected student outcomes will be compared before and after treatment implemented between treatment schools and comparison schools, and were selected using propensity score matching techniques (p30). Although the evaluation did not specifically say it produced evidence that would meet WWC standards, the methods are consistent with those standards.

The three goals of the implementation evaluation are to provide formative feedback on

CRP implementation, measure implementation fidelity, and describe the contrast between the treatment and comparison

schools (p37).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant approximates 35 to 100 students per high school will take STEM related AP courses across Grade 11 and Grade 12 and their research is based on that, but AP English is also offered (p36, 10) and not evaluated.

**Reader's Score: 19**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity in the Educator Workforce**

1. Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that are designed to address both of the following priority areas:

(a) Providing educator development activities designed to improve cultural competency and responsiveness skills that contribute to an inclusive school culture; and

(b) Improving the recruitment, support, and retention of educators from diverse backgrounds.

Applicants must respond to both of the priority areas in order to receive the maximum available points under this competitive preference priority.

**Strengths:**

Clayton and DeKalb County Public Schools have recruited a teacher workforce that is largely reflective of the student population, with the exception that white teachers are slightly overrepresented in both districts (Table 1, p2).

Since both participating districts have a diverse educator workforce, the DRIVE CRP Project will contribute to teacher retention by providing support for AP teachers (p4).

**Weaknesses:**

Although NMSI proposes that school culture in partner LEAs will be dramatically altered to encourage and support high academic achievement among all students (p24), there is no evidence of professional development activities designed to improve cultural competency and responsiveness skills.

**Reader's Score: 3**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Support for Personalized Learning Environments**

1. Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that are designed to support teachers, principals, or other School Leaders implementing personalized learning environments in their classrooms or in classrooms in their schools, using data to inform their instruction, and increasing students' engagement, voice, and choice in their learning. Projects may support educators' implementation of college and career ready strategies such as project based learning, competency based education, or blended learning.

**Strengths:**

The Quest homework system is an extensive knowledge bank providing a user-friendly, formative assessment system that allows teachers to customize their instruction and homework assignments toward a student's individual learning needs (p5).

There are specific student supports that directly facilitate personalized learning through NMSI's Learning Management System (LMS). Using learning blocks within the LMS, students will facilitate their own learning by seeing relevant examples of the content/skill in their everyday lives (p5).



**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score:** 3

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 08/07/2017 01:11 PM