

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/13/2017 03:40 PM

Technical Review

Applicant: Western Michigan University (U423A170077)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	40	34
Significance		
1. Significance	15	14
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	25	22
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	18
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Promoting Diversity in the Educator Workforce		
1. CPP 1	5	5
Support for Personalized Learning Environments		
1. CPP 2	3	3
Total	108	96

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - Supporting Effective Educator Development - 9: 84.423A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Western Michigan University (U423A170077)

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 will focus on providing leaders with professional development (PD) and experiences that most leadership programs lack. Participants will benefit from training and support for a term of 2.5 years (p.2). Strategies are based on research studies aligned to how school leaders support best practices. A focus on prioritizing tasks is highlighted as being key to school improvement. There is a belief that most leaders leave due to many of the demands that come with supervision, instructional support, and paperwork. Assisting leaders with balance will create opportunities to focus on the right work, without burning out leaders with potential. Mastering the strategies to balance the work involved in transforming a school will be of benefit to all stakeholders. Coaches will be in place to assist in building capacity at the school level, sharing the load of the work. This will make the project appealing to school leaders.

A series of meetings and training will take place to develop and monitor school plans. All stakeholders will be able to give input and reflect on the process. Time has been carved for schools to collaborate with mentors and those involved in the project design. Leaders working in high-needs schools will be selected for this project, making them perfect candidates to support with balance.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear why the project will last 2.5 years instead of 3 full years. Additionally, there is no information in regards to whether or not leaders will choose to participate or be assigned to the project. While balance seems like a great aspect to focus on, there are many challenges that come with leading a turnaround school. Delegating tasks and shared leadership could potentially be areas of focus as well.

Reader's Score: 34

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:

All professional development offerings for leaders appear to be intense and targeted to strengthen school leadership. Leaders will attend a variety of workshops for 2.5 years focused on leadership development. This is particularly important when it comes to turnaround schools. There are many demands focused on generating data that professional development often gets overlooked, neglecting the leaders who need it the most. Turning around a low-performing school requires special knowledge, and the PD suggested appears to address the needs. Diverse schools will be selected, including rural, urban, and small (p. 22). By selecting a variety of schools, data will reflect the needs and challenges of diverse groups. Leaders will have the opportunity to target their school's specific needs, aligning the training to their school's demographics (p. 24). At this time, senior leadership is in full support of this project, understanding the need for supports to be in place.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear how the staff will relate to the diverse needs of their schools. Trying to compare and share strategies could be difficult when schools have different needs.

Reader's Score: 14

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:

Schools selected for the project will benefit from a \$20,000 budget for development and renewal of activities (p. 17). Districts will be expected to match the contribution. If used well, this incentive could support schools in their efforts towards transformation. Central office will be able to attend professional learning offerings. This could prove to be an opportunity to build bridges between district administration and leaders. Often times, there is a lack of communication or understanding of the challenges at the school level. Allowing for central office personnel to participate in the offerings will send a message of unity and buy-in from all angles. Plan provides a clear timeline for execution of activities and

strategies and measurable outcomes.

Weaknesses:

A concern will be that school budgets are often approved on a yearly basis by the school board. It is not clear if the school district has approved this aspect of the project at this time. There is not a plan on next steps in case central office staff does not attend.

Reader's Score: 22

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/. 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:

Upon completion of cohorts, data will be collected and analyzed. Two phases are proposed with post-tests to describe outcomes (p.41). The project will use a control group and experimental group to measure the effect of the program. It is understood that at the end of every cohort, principals are expected to implement the strategies learned in respect to leadership, culture, and student academic achievement (p. 45) and how these align. Focusing on culture is extremely important if the team wants to address academic achievement. Their proposal is focused on key things a transformational leader should practice. Having leaders work together for such a long time will assist in developing a strong group of people who engage in rich and meaningful discussions centered around learning.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear what will occur if a new principal comes in, what cohort they will be part of, and the expectations for continuing the project.

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:

The project is focused on growing principals and aspiring principals. It also focuses on the culture of the school and providing administrators with strategies to improve it. HIL project and Coaching teams will work together to identify and recruit diverse leaders.

Weaknesses:

None Noted

Reader's Score: **5**

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:

Project intends to establish an individualized learning environment.

Weaknesses:

None Noted.

Reader's Score: **3**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/13/2017 03:40 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/07/2017 01:48 PM

Technical Review

Applicant: Western Michigan University (U423A170077)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	40	40
Significance		
1. Significance	15	15
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	25	22
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	20
 Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Promoting Diversity in the Educator Workforce		
1. CPP 1	5	4
Support for Personalized Learning Environments		
1. CPP 2	3	3
Total	108	104

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - Supporting Effective Educator Development - 9: 84.423A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Western Michigan University (U423A170077)

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 well-designed presenting a conceptual framework that is founded on successful projects. The High-Impact Leadership for School Renewal (HIL) will provide training supports for principals and future principals using a multitude of learning modalities applying a systemic approach and support for school renewal strategies. Participants will receive individualized supports from onsite facilitating coaches. Sufficient structures are in place to expand the existing project to support principals in becoming highly effective and to increase the pool of potential principals. The project design addresses all of the sub criteria requirements with exceptional expertise and promise for successful implementation.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are 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

use the information or strategies.

Strengths:

5. The applicant demonstrates a sufficient non-federal funds match to meet grant requirements. The project will work with 600 principals and aspiring principals over 6 years. The proposal includes 150 schools with over 68,000 students. Grant funding is sought to partner with 15 intermediate or educational service agency districts to develop the leadership capacity. Power Analysis demonstrates the potential impact on student achievement. (Appendix H) The applicant illustrates that the Seven LCL Dimensions represent current knowledge from research and best practice. (Table. 1 pg. 3-5) Seven Dimension of Learning-Centered Leadership (LCL) was developed with 11 million dollars from the US Department of Education and the Wallace Foundation. The applicant has sufficient experience and expertise to execute a grant of this magnitude. LCL was tested in two funded projects. Research shows an ongoing positive commitment to solving the problems of leadership training.

Schools served demonstrate high needs. Data presented shows that the proposed schools slated for services exceed that average for Free and Reduced Lunch, Students with Disabilities, and minority composition. Data also shows lower performance in ELA and math. The proposal is strengthened by providing a crosswalk between the Seven LCL Dimensions and the Three Michigan Approved Administrator Evaluation Systems. (Appendix G) The crosswalk will support leaders in understanding the connections to strategies and daily work. The crosswalk bring a greater practicality to the work that must be done.

The applicant indicates that dissemination of the findings will be in both print and multi-media. The instruments developed in the studies are shared. The applicant provides an example of how past studies have been disseminated. The magnitude of the dissemination is strong and will benefit schools with Michigan and has the potential to go beyond those borders.

Weaknesses:

None 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 management team demonstrates prior experience and success in working with similar grant objectives and magnitude. The management team profiles indicate sufficient experience and expertise to accomplish grant objectives. The management plan is detailed with sufficient timelines to complete the activities. There is a feedback loop that will assist in continuous improvement and keep the project on track. Consequently, the project implementation has a great potential for success.

Weaknesses:

While the applicant presents a strong management plan, measureable outcomes are not clearly provided.

Reader's Score: 22

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/. 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 project evaluation will collect both qualitative and quantitative data. There are four mechanisms for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement. This feedback will provide both summative and formative data to guide the project. Evaluation will be conducted by [REDACTED] and his team at University of Kentucky. The evaluation will be consistent with the program delivery, using a randomized, time-delayed design aligned with the project design. Adequate funding is allocated to successfully carry out the proposed evaluation.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 20

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:

The applicant sufficiently addresses Competitive Preference Priority 1: Promoting Diversity in the Educator Workplace. Evidence of this is clearly outlined in the proposal, "One of the Seven LCL Dimensions is "high, cohesive and culturally relevant expectations for all students." This Dimension focuses on the leaders' responsibility to improve cultural competency and responsiveness skills that contribute to an inclusive school culture. Coaches will work with the school teams to examine the ways in which teachers make learning relevant for all students. Additionally, the coaches will assist the school teams in assessing staff, student, and parent feedback on the state of inclusiveness and cultural responsiveness for the school.

Finally, the entire school renewal approach and process used in the project systematically assesses the school's contextual and situational factors, taking those factors into account for achieving integrity in the renewal work."

Weaknesses:

The applicant is not specific regarding what they will do with district and ISD/ESA leaders to initiate more targeted recruitment practices and to increase diversity overall. (pg. 46-48)

Reader's Score: 4

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 applicant sufficiently addresses Competitive Preference Priority 2: Support for Personalized Learning Environment. The project will help participants develop renewal activities to establish individualized learning environments. They will engage participants to profile individual students via the "data-informed decision-making" dimension, to set individualized expectations via the dimension of "High, cohesive and culturally relevant expectations for all students," and to construct individualized learning experience via the "coherent curricular programs" dimension. Project participants will then engage the school staff in a similar effort to establish individualized learning environment as a school-wide renewal activity.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/07/2017 01:48 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/04/2017 02:00 PM

Technical Review

Applicant: Western Michigan University (U423A170077)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	40	35
Significance		
1. Significance	15	15
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	25	22
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	20
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Promoting Diversity in the Educator Workforce		
1. CPP 1	5	4
Support for Personalized Learning Environments		
1. CPP 2	3	3
Total	108	99

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - Supporting Effective Educator Development - 9: 84.423A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Western Michigan University (U423A170077)

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 strength of the project design was evident from recruitment of aspiring and practicing principals to developing leadership capacity of all participants to lead in 150 high-need schools. The High-Impact Leadership for School Renewal (HIL) project deftly balanced research-based approaches with the practical aspects of school leadership. The HIL proposal presents a research base of a proven program and the added benefit of an existing collaboration with high-need school districts and two state-wide initiatives. For example, the project targets both practicing and aspiring principals, and the project is based on a conceptual framework. This framework is comprehensive in recruiting and retaining school leaders and improving principal effectiveness in the areas of improving student achievement, school culture, administrative functions, and school climate. Two elements that appear to bridge the research aspect to the practical aspects of school leadership is the strong focus on coaching of the participants -- which will enable more immediate feedback to participants -- and the Learning Communities. These seem especially salient since the project seeks to empower principals to prioritize, align, monitor, and adapt in ways that fit their schools, a.k.a. high integrity and fidelity of implementation (p. 7).

Weaknesses:

On p. 17, the proposal alludes to the reality that central office staff sometimes represent the impediments of principals' ability to implement and sustain best practices. Further, the project proposes that central staff will be invited to participate in workshop and coaching activities. It is unclear, however, how these central office staff members will be identified without suggesting that they are part of the problem. In addition, the project proposes \$20,000 per participating school as an incentive for the participants. While the idea of an incentive is practical, the lack of guidelines beyond the fiscal policies of the schools, seems short-sighted for the impact this money might have to amplify the training of the principals or related aspects of implementing goals of the project.

Reader's Score: 35

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 significance of this project is evident in the intended outcomes that involve 150 practicing and 450 aspiring principals in 150 high-need schools. The comprehensive nature of the project also contributes to the significance of this project. It includes the previously mentioned practicing and aspiring principals, coaches who will mentor the participants, other stakeholders of the schools, and learning communities. The project is based upon research that will expedite timely and effective implementation by future schools. The costs of the project at \$119/student per year are reasonable for the scope of the project activities, and the results will be disseminated via networks between and among the applicant and partners (i.e. Michigan Department of Education, school administrator associations in Michigan).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted in the Significance section of the proposal.

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 Management Plan was presented in a logical and succinct fashion. Further, the plan delineated what activities would be done when, and by whom (Tables 8 and 9). The project personnel possess the necessary experience and education to fulfill the roles and responsibilities associated with the project. The application also includes a project delivery system and management process that illustrates how the project personnel will interact with the school systems, coaches, and current/aspiring principals in achieving the school renewal initiative (p. 35). The application includes a 36-month timeline

that presents the actions and milestones for the treatment of the first Cohort A and the control group Cohort B. The applicant provides four mechanisms to ensure feedback and continuous improvement as the project gets underway and includes feedback from participants, data from the control and comparison groups after 30 months, data on the cooperation of the project, formative and summative evaluations, and feedback from the identified partners and stakeholders.

Weaknesses:

The objectives provided on p. 32 and in Table 7 were not consistently specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound. Elements of these characteristics of well-written objectives appeared in tables and narratives of this section, but were not succinctly presented as the project objectives.

Reader's Score: 22

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/. 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 application's evaluation plan met or exceeded each of the criteria of the project guidelines. Performance feedback loops are delineated across four mechanisms, including an evaluation of participants as they complete each module; data analysis from the first cohort at the end of the first 30 months; results related to the operation of the project; formative and summative evaluations in their aggregated forms to the participants, school districts, the Michigan Department of Education, and the sponsoring agency; and feedback loops that include the additional partners on this project. Instrumentation on two of the instruments (i.e. Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education, School Process and Culture) have been vetted for both validity and reliability. The third instrument, M-STEP, has not released public information regarding reliability, but a personal communication with project personnel indicate reliabilities at 0.8-0.9.

One of the distinguishing elements of this evaluation plan is the development of the treatment and control groups, as well as results from two treatment phases of the project. The latter illustrates the method that the Institute for Education Sciences refers to as random assignment coupled with a staggered roll-out of a program. The data will be longitudinal and hierarchical. The scope of this data will be comprehensive and identify critical elements for future research and/or replication of the project in other districts. These elements contributed to a robust evaluation plan.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted in the evaluation plan of the application.

Reader's Score: 20

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:

The HIL project embeds the promotion of diversity in the educator workforce in one of its project design dimensions: "high cohesive and culturally relevant expectations for all students." The design of this project is such that coaching, workshops, and evaluations will identify and subsequently track participants' progress or lack thereof on this dimension.

Weaknesses:

The applicant articulates the desire to diversify the principal pipeline, but does not prefer any specifics other than articulating a commitment to working with school districts to "initiate more targeted recruitment practices." No other innovative or research-based components were provided with regard to recruitment.

Reader's Score: 4

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:

Through the "data-informed decision-making dimension of the project design," the project will teach principals and aspiring principals how to set individualized expectations and how to construct individualized learning experiences. Coaches will assist in the training and support of the participants in successful implementation of these elements of the project.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted on Competitive Priority #2.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/04/2017 02:00 PM