

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/29/2019 10:17 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Indianapolis (U411B190018)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	15
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	25	25
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	20	20
<b>Adequacy of Resources/Quality of Management Plan</b>		
1. Resources/Management Plan	20	14
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	74
<b>Total</b>	100	74

# Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - EIR Mid Phase - 2: 84.411B

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

Applicant: University of Indianapolis (U411B190018)

## Questions

### 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 potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.

(2) 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.

### Strengths:

The applicant presents a proposed project to increase knowledge of educational problems and strategies to increase educational opportunities for high need students. The applicant proposes to enhance the Early College (EC) model especially in rural areas that is based on the principle that academic rigor and the opportunity to save time and money are powerful motivators for students to work hard and meet serious academic challenges. EC is effective at improving students' non-cognitive abilities, enhancing engagement, and mitigating effects of poverty. EC students are more likely to graduate HS, enroll in college, and earn a degree, regardless of gender, race/ethnicity, family income, prior achievement, and First Generation College status as found in citations provided by the applicant. The EC model is based on eight Core Principles build on existing strategies to provide concrete guidance for high schools to implement EC. E20

The applicant makes a strong case that there is an unmet demand for the practice especially for high need students who benefit from having access to a more rigorous curriculum and a chance to complete a two-year college program while attending high school. In support of their position, the applicant provides citations that the workplace is shifting from industrial technology platforms and changing the workforce skills needed. Post-recession jobs (2008) are primarily professional and managerial and require some postsecondary education which the applicant plans to provide. Those industries producing the most jobs include technology, healthcare, finance, education and government and the for the most part require postsecondary credentials which is the basic main purpose of the applicant's proposal. Rural students, as cited by the applicant who attend high school, are most effected by what is happening in the changing job markets surrounding their communities which have lost job opportunities to other environs. E25

### Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 15

### 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 goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.**

**(2) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.**

**Strengths:**

The goals objectives and outcomes are clearly specified and measurable. The applicant presents three major goals in support of their project: increase students' college readiness and postsecondary acceptance; increase students' career readiness and opportunities; and increase efficiencies to build capacity for RECN schools. Objectives, activities and outcomes are enumerated and cover a broad spectrum to ensure outcomes are accomplished. Concrete outcomes are derived from the objectives. For example, for goal 1, objective C states: At least 50% of EC graduates, earn associate degrees, technical certificates, and/or general education cores; and D states that: At least 95% of EC students graduate high school on time. The applicant provides additional narrative that supports project outcomes such as those found under goal 2 that provide early exposure to many career options available; including the formation of Education-Workforce Partnerships. E27

The applicant's conceptual framework underlying the proposed research and project is strong. The applicant provides a logic model for their conceptual framework that encompasses Program Activities (School Support Activities, Network Support Activities), Mediating Factors (Early College Core Principles with Career Readiness Focus, Sustainable Rural Early College Practices, and Outcomes that are comprehensive and detail specific. This includes outcomes that support sustainability and scale with increased ECs in Indiana and more teachers credentialed to teach dual credit courses. The applicant's conceptual framework is organized with strong ideas which capture what they propose in real terms. The applicant's conceptual framework is organized with strong ideas which capture what they propose in real terms. E29

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score: 25**

**Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale**

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

**(1) 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.**

**(2) The extent to which the proposed project will increase efficiency in the use of time, staff, money, or other resources in order to improve results and increase productivity.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant identifies barriers that prevented the applicant in the past from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application. Two barriers are discussed that prevent the scaling of EC in IN, especially in rural High Schools. There are an inadequate number of high school teachers credentialed to teach DC courses and without that certification it jeopardizes the existence of Early College High School programs. (ECHS). The state of Indiana in 2014 increased requirements for adjunct faculty and staff who teach DC courses which has had a devastating effect for DC offerings and

expansions. The state did grant a five-year extension so teachers have until 2022 to earn master's degrees in content areas or 18 credit hours in content areas, in addition to a master's in education. Financial incentives that were offered by school districts are no longer in affect and financial incentives are needed to encourage teachers to earn the necessary graduate credits to teach DC courses. The second barrier evolves around funding as CELL (Center for Excellence in Leadership and Training) has not been able to definitively quantify funding needed to create, implement and sustain EC's. e31

The applicant's model will increase efficiency in the use of time, staff, and money and other resources in order to improve results and increase productivity. The EC model is a flexible, easily replicated model in any setting and with varied student populations, which targets student populations such as first generation college students, free and reduced lunch students, ELL, and students of color who have not considered themselves college material. The desire is to replicate the RECN model with more rural high schools, plus adding urban schools to help improve student outcomes using existing network format and practices to scale this accelerated EC implementation. This project creates a collaborate effort for rural education. The RECN is a project that is designed for both sustainability and for scaling. The lead agency will also develop a scaling plan to the existing established national networks. E32

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score: 20**

**Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources/Quality of Management Plan**

**1. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources and the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources and quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**(1) 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.**

**(2) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) working directly, or through partners, during the grant period.**

**(3) The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support.**

**(4) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.**

**Strengths:**

1. The applicant provides a chart which they indicate is a management plan (e45, e46, e47, e48). This chart also contains components of the time line and objectives. The applicant designates key personnel in this chart that are responsible for identified activities. For example, an activity: 1.3 Implement wraparound student supports, is the responsibility of the school staff. Table A-Key Personnel does provide the position and the different teams that have overall management for the project. Teams include Project Leadership Team, Project Support Team and Project Evaluation Team. The applicant does provide a narrative description of each key person and the role they play on a respective team. e34

2. The applicant provides the experience and education levels of key personnel involved in the project including their roles and responsibilities clearly for project implementation. Appendix B contains detailed resumes for key staff members in

leadership roles. E33

3. The applicant provides information for continued support of the project after federal funding end including the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support. This includes the ability of RECN which is designed so that EC implementation in schools that join the project in subsequent years is faster and more effective, based on lessons learned Year's 1-2. This will also expedite the tier 3 schools joining the network and as they indicate, as tools are created, strategies tested and feedback collected, CELL will use lessons learned about sequencing and training content to help other rural IN settings. CELL plans to use RECN's framework to create other EC networks for schools regionally located; with specific populations such as urban, ELL and/or with a STEM focus. During both the summer of 2022 and 2023, CELL will convene a conference for IN high schools and their IHE partners; and policymakers and workforce development staff to showcase RECN schools and project outcomes. The second conference will be open to attendees from outside IN. e37

4. The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the potential significance of the proposed project are substantiated by the applicant. The applicant provides for the actual cost per student rather than the entire project budget. The grants to school portion of funding is a relevant aspect for determining reasonable cost. Those grants total \$3,000,000 over five years and when divided by 3,725 students, the cost per student is approximately \$805. The applicant's take on overall costs even when the project costs overall are added in, approximately \$1,000 per student is still a reasonable cost. This is especially valid when further divided by two to four years of cohorts participating in RECN. The costs are investment costs that serve as initial startup costs as CELL builds EC capacity in IN. The outcome is a better and more trained workforce. E38

**Weaknesses:**

1.The applicant's management plan is embedded in the goal chart and limits this reader's depth of understanding relating to the communication and coordination of the responsible parties for project implementation and accountability. Using for example " PL" in this Exhibit to mean Project Leadership Team, does not in itself pinpoint the person/title who has responsibility for the particular effort. E45

2.The applicant does not provide specific information on their capacity in terms of financial resources and or history of similar projects and/or outcomes. E33

**Reader's Score: 14**

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

**1. The Secretary considers the quality of 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, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in this notice).**

**(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 project components,**

mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

**Strengths:**

-

**Weaknesses:**

-

**Reader's Score:** 0

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 05/29/2019 10:17 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/29/2019 09:00 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Indianapolis (U411B190018)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	15
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	25	25
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	20	20
<b>Adequacy of Resources/Quality of Management Plan</b>		
1. Resources/Management Plan	20	17
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	77
<b>Total</b>	100	77



# Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - EIR Mid Phase - 2: 84.411B

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

Applicant: University of Indianapolis (U411B190018)

## Questions

### 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 potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.

(2) 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.

### Strengths:

(1) The applicant details the potential contribution of the proposed Rural Early College Network (RECN) project to increasing knowledge and understanding of how Early College (EC) improves success for high-need students in post-secondary and career readiness. The applicant cites multiple studies which show that EC is effective at improving students' non-cognitive abilities, as well as enhancing engagement, improving high school graduation rates and college enrollment regardless of gender, race/ethnicity, family income, prior achievement, and first-generation college-going status. The RECN project has national significance because it will address these issues, using a network of mentor and mentee rural high schools and providing training, technical assistance, and coaching. Key features of RECN for rural locales will include infusing rigorous college and career readiness; utilizing flexibility with various pathways for completion; and creating partners in K-12, post-secondary, and businesses to develop a school to work continuum. Through RECN, these practices will be shared statewide, and will make significant contributions to understanding educational problems rural communities face in improving graduation rates, post -secondary attainment, and career readiness for high needs students (pp. e 20 -23).

(2) The applicant clearly describes how there is unmet demand for the Rural Early College Network (RECN) that will enable the applicant to reach the level of scale that is proposed in the application. The applicant provides convincing data which shows the current demand for workers with post-secondary credentials increases urgency for high schools to produce post-secondary-going graduates with skills and motivation to succeed. For example, by 2020, 65% of all jobs will require post-secondary education; yet, only 39.6% of citizens 25 or older hold a post-secondary degree (p.e 24). Clearly, educational attainment is linked closely to individual success and national economic health; and EC high schools are a viable method to support and accelerate students through credentialing that lead to high-wage, high demand careers and/or additional education. Rural schools struggle with unstable student populations; difficulty recruiting and retaining teachers and staff, which can significantly reduce students' academic and co-curricular opportunities. Rural students often share attributes of under-served populations with high poverty and first-generation college-going status. The Rural Early College Network (RECN) can address these unmet needs by providing ongoing training, coaching, and mentoring; assistance with curriculum updates; support retaining teachers; and strategies for preparing students for post-secondary education and careers (pp. e 24-26).

**Weaknesses:**

- (1) None noted
- (2) None noted

**Reader's Score: 15**

**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 goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.**
- (2) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.**

**Strengths:**

(1) The applicant presents clearly specified and measurable goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project (pp. e 45-48). For each goal, the applicant provides clearly specified objectives with appropriate performance measures; focused activities which clearly link to the goals and objectives; a realistic timeline which shows both anticipated start and end times; a description of measures to gauge progress; and feasible outcomes which include a mixture of outcomes that are measurable within the grant period and those that will be achieved by the program following the grant period. For example, goal one is to increase college readiness and enrollment for students in RECN schools; and the objective is at least 50% of EC graduates earn associate degrees, technical certificates, and/or general educ. Cores. Activities will include provide high quality PD for RECN teachers on rigorous instruction and CCR (C); implementing wraparound student supports (SS); and implementing frequent, intentional advising by counselors, teachers, and leaders to keep students on track (SS). These project components provide a solid foundation which will support the likely success of the proposed project.

(2) The applicant provides a concise logic model (pp. e 29-30; e 133) which offers a solid conceptual framework underlying the proposed Rural Early College Network (RECN) project. The logic model embodies the RECN conceptual framework. Key components include implementation activities which incorporate both school support and network support; mediating factors such as career readiness; and sustainability and scale outcomes. The logic model provides a clear snapshot of the project implementation and evaluation.

**Weaknesses:**

- (1) None noted
- (2) None noted

**Reader's Score: 25**

## Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

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

(1) 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.

(2) The extent to which the proposed project will increase efficiency in the use of time, staff, money, or other resources in order to improve results and increase productivity.

### Strengths:

(1) The applicant identifies specific strategies that address several barriers that have prevented scaling of EC in targeted rural high schools. The first barrier is that high-need students may access Early College (EC) services and supports at lower rates than non-underrepresented students. The solution is that RECN specifically targets high-need students for inclusion in EC services and supports. The second barrier is that high-need students may not have access to suitable career and college readiness opportunities such as internships and campus visits. The solution is that RECN schools will include intentional engagement with local businesses to develop internship and Work-Based Learning opportunities and will develop and implement a four-year sequence of college visits. The third barrier is that students with intellectual disabilities may struggle to handle the rigor of dual credit instruction. The solution is that students with intellectual disabilities who are members of the EC target population will be eligible to participate in dual credit EC courses and are provided with the supports specified in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). The fourth barrier is that parents of low socio-economic status cannot participate in grant activities because of work schedules and/or lack of access to baby sitters and transportation. The solution is that schools will work with parents to either find more convenient times to offer parent engagement events and/or make arrangements for carpooling and/or childcare at the school. The fifth barrier is the increased rigor of dual credit instruction may contribute to achievement gaps between student subgroups. The solution is that RECN targets high-need students to provide them with intentional academic, social, and emotional supports aimed at minimizing achievement gaps. In addition to these barriers, the applicant describes the inadequate supply of teachers is a twofold barrier. First there is a shortage of credentialed teachers to teach dual credit courses because of the recent increase in state requirements for adjunct faculty and high school staff who teach these courses. Secondly, financial incentives are needed to encourage teachers to earn the necessary graduate credits to teach dual credit courses. To ensure that targeted schools have qualified staff, the proposed project will include funding for tuition support and/or salary schedule incentives. Funding needed to implement and sustain EC programs, despite limited grant funds is also a barrier. The applicant will address this barrier by studying how RECN schools spend their allotted funding and determining the amount of funding essential to launch and sustain ECHS (pp. e 30-e 31).

(2) The applicant describes how the proposed project will increase efficiency in the use of time, staff, money, or other resources in order to improve results and increase productivity. The applicant describes how the EC is a flexible model which is replicable in many settings and with a variety of student populations. network format and practices to scale this accelerated EC implementation. The applicant details how the RECN will utilize a network framework and mentor-mentee approach to accelerate EC implementation; incorporate work-based learning; embrace local economic development; and establish a collaborative for rural education to support and sustain RECN and other projects. These practices will likely increase efficiency and enhance both to sustainability and scaling (p. e 31-33).

### Weaknesses:

(1) None noted

(2) None noted

### Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources/Quality of Management Plan

1. **The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources and the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources and quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**
  - (1) **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.**
  - (2) **The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) working directly, or through partners, during the grant period.**
  - (3) **The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support.**
  - (4) **The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.**

#### Strengths:

- (1) The applicant provides an adequate management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget. The applicant well describes clearly defined responsibilities of key project personnel (pp. e 34-35), including the project leadership team (project director), the project support team (director of communications), and the project evaluation team (evaluator). In addition, the applicant presents resumes which detail the qualifications and experiences of key project personnel (Appendix B) which further ensures that qualified and experienced individuals will be responsible for the successful implementation of project activities. The applicant provides a year-to-year timeline and clearly describes feasible milestones for accomplishing project tasks (pp. e 35-36).
- (2) The applicant describes qualified personnel who guide the implementation of the proposed project including a description of key project personnel's contributions to the project, including time commitments. (pp. e 33-35). The lead organization will be the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning (CELL) at the University of Indianapolis. The applicant will establish a Rural Early College Network (RECN) to help rural schools implement the Early College (EC) model with fidelity. Partnerships with local businesses will help update curriculum, develop work-based learning (WBL) activities, and Work Ethics Certificates (WEC) requirements (p. e 16; e 33-35).
- (3) The applicant describes the potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support. The applicant provides letters of support from partners as evidence of continued support of the project after Federal funding ends (Appendix C). The applicant plans to use RECN's framework to create other EC networks for schools regionally located; use data from RECN in its advocacy efforts with legislators and external funders to gain support for further EC expansion; will disseminate information on RECN during the project and at its conclusion; serve on several ICHE, DWD, and state committees to provide RECN updates at these meetings and EWIN events. convene a conference for partners, policymakers, and workforce development staff to showcase RECN schools and project outcomes; contribute articles to scholarly journals and other media about RECN; and present at state and national conferences (pp. e 36-37). These strategies will likely support the applicant in making improvements and refinements to existing materials, training, and outreach to support sustainability.
- (4) The applicant's budget of \$7,963,436.00 (p. e 6) appears reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. The proposed budget will serve a total of 3,725 high-need students in grades 9-12 in rural schools. Adequate allocations are provided for planned activities such as intentional counseling and

wrap-around supports to prepare targeted students for success in post-secondary education and careers (p. e 38).

**Weaknesses:**

(1) None noted

(2) More information is needed to describe the role of partners in bringing the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level. More details are needed to describe the management capacity in garnering financial and other resources needed to bring the proposed project to scale.

(3) None noted

(4) None noted

**Reader's Score: 17**

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

1. The Secretary considers the quality of 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, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in this notice).

(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 project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 05/29/2019 09:00 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/30/2019 11:12 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Indianapolis (U411B190018)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	15
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	25	25
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	20	17
<b>Adequacy of Resources/Quality of Management Plan</b>		
1. Resources/Management Plan	20	20
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	77
<b>Total</b>	100	77

# Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - EIR Mid Phase - 2: 84.411B

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

Applicant: University of Indianapolis (U411B190018)

## Questions

### 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 potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.

(2) 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.

### Strengths:

- The applicant includes statistical data that demonstrates the impact that Early College access has on college graduation, at-risk students, credit earnings, and financial savings (e22-e23). This data is relevant because Early College students are from traditionally underserved populations and typically less likely to succeed in postsecondary experiences.
- As noted by the applicant, this project has national significance because it will address the need for Early Colleges in rural communities (e20).
- Early College's expansion to rural high schools helps to ensure that rigorous college and career readiness courses are provided to students in rural areas, that the postsecondary success for high-need students is accelerated, and that work-based learning and training occurs. (e23-e24)
- Early College High Schools support and accelerate students' readiness for "high-wage, high-demand careers, and/or additional education. Rural areas were drastically impacted by the recession because as job opportunities declined, people left the areas. This project will provide the resources, coaching, and professional development necessary to ensure postsecondary success for rural students (e25).

### Weaknesses:

None noted

Reader's Score: 15

### 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 goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.

(2) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.

**Strengths:**

- The project design—mentee or Tier I high school and formation of initial Rural Early College Network—fosters participating rural high schools implementing the model with fidelity (e25).
- The Project Leadership Team will meet “several times a year and each summer to set annual goals, plan project activities, and review data for project monitoring” (e25)
- The management plan (e45-e48) clearly identifies the objectives, activities, timeline, measures, outcomes, and persons responsible for each goal.
- Within goal one, the applicant implements a variety of strategies to support students and staff. Strategies for students include wraparound supports, intentional advising, and staff monitoring. Staff will receive PD, coaching, and mentoring (e27 ). These wraparound supports will provide high-quality, research-based instruction and intervention based on individual learners’ academic, social, and behavioral needs which are identified through screening and progress monitoring. Implemented with fidelity, wraparound supports will have a positive impact on student achievement. As it relates to the professional development received by staff, when an investment is made in the professional development of teachers, a variety of positive outcomes within the classroom and across the entire school are produced. Effective implementation of wraparound supports will spark behavioral, emotional, and mental health improvements in almost all aspects of a youth’s life. Wraparound supports will make services and supports family-driven and youth-guided.
- Within goal two, the applicant will expose students to and increase staff and family awareness of career options using a variety of methods—business and industry tours, career fairs, manufacturing days, local workforce partnerships, and work based learning activities (e27-e28).
- Network meetings will enable will aid schools with marketing, parent engagement, communication, and problem solving.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted

**Reader's Score: 25**

**Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale**

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

**(1) 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.**

**(2) The extent to which the proposed project will increase efficiency in the use of time, staff, money, or other resources in order to improve results and increase productivity.**

**Strengths:**

- The applicant will provide financial for tuition support to earn advanced degrees necessary to be credentialed to teach DC courses and/or salary incentives for those who have advanced degrees (e30).
- The applicant has identified strategies to accelerate a school’s endorsement achievement—technical assistance, coaching, and networking with peer schools (e32).
- At the end of the project, participating schools will have a 1 ) well-established EC program, 2) credentialed DC teachers, 3) RECN meetings fostering trust, relationships, and mutual learning, and 4) sustainability plan created with mentor (e32-e33). A study released by The American Institutes for Research shows that students who attend early-college high schools are more likely than are their peers to graduate, enroll in college, and earn an associate degree. The development of a sustainability plan is a crucial part of securing the future of the EC model. The sustainability plan will anticipate future challenges and develop proactive steps to be taken in the here and now.



**Weaknesses:**

- Although the applicant identified funding of Early College implementation in rural schools as a barrier, the applicant did not identify a specific strategy to address the barrier (e30-e31). Research shows that America's rural schools face many of the same challenges that urban schools do but the solutions for those problems are far different for rural districts than urban districts. Poverty, the achievement gap, teacher recruitment and retention within rural schools greatly impact the work done within these schools. The applicant needs to proactively identify strategies to confront these longstanding issues.

**Reader's Score:** 17

**Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources/Quality of Management Plan**

**1. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources and the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources and quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**(1) 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.**

**(2) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) working directly, or through partners, during the grant period.**

**(3) The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support.**

**(4) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.**

**Strengths:**

- The management plan (e45-e48) clearly identifies the objectives, activities, timeline, measures, outcomes, and persons responsible for each goal.
- The Budget Narrative (e149-e166) clearly identifies total budget expenditures and the total budget match for the five-year period. Expenses are described in detail.
- The function of key personnel is aligned with the work of the project and the percentage of time allotted for each personnel member is reasonable and realistically aligned to the individual's responsibilities (e33-e35).
- The project's activities, milestones, persons responsible, and timeframes are adequate for accomplishing project tasks (e35-e36).
- Project performance feedback will be gathered via observations, school site visits, annual surveys, and administrative data. This information will help the Project Leadership Team to set goals and plan activities for the upcoming year (e35).
- The project features numerous ways in which it intends to accelerate Early College implementation. The applicant will use data from the project to advocate to gain legislative support to expand Early Colleges. Additionally, it will disseminate information during the project and at its conclusion. The applicant will organize a conference to showcase schools and distribute marketing materials. As far as publications, the applicant will write news articles, contribute articles to scholarly journals, and present at state and national conferences (e37). The conferences and publications will allow others to get motivated and excited about EC programming. Furthermore, it will provide a forum in which partakers can stay current in the field and get latest findings, theories, and research related to EC programming.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted

**Reader's Score: 20**

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

1. The Secretary considers the quality of 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, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in this notice).

(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 project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

**Strengths:**

n/a

**Weaknesses:**

n/a

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 05/30/2019 11:12 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/30/2019 10:58 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Indianapolis (U411B190018)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	0
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	25	0
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	20	0
<b>Adequacy of Resources/Quality of Management Plan</b>		
1. Resources/Management Plan	20	0
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	13
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	13
<b>Total</b>	100	13

# Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - EIR Mid Phase - 2: 84.411B

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

Applicant: University of Indianapolis (U411B190018)

## Questions

### 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 potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.

(2) 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.

#### Strengths:

na

#### Weaknesses:

na

Reader's Score: 0

### 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 goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.

(2) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.

#### Strengths:

na

#### Weaknesses:

na

Reader's Score: 0

### Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

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

(1) 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.

(2) The extent to which the proposed project will increase efficiency in the use of time, staff, money, or other resources in order to improve results and increase productivity.

**Strengths:**

na

**Weaknesses:**

na

**Reader's Score: 0**

### Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources/Quality of Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources and the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources and quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) 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.

(2) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) working directly, or through partners, during the grant period.

(3) The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support.

(4) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.

**Strengths:**

na

**Weaknesses:**

na

**Reader's Score: 0**

### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of 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, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in this notice).

(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 project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

#### **Strengths:**

The applicant presented a comprehensive evaluation design for the proposed high school intervention. If well implemented, the evaluation method is likely to produce evidence that meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards for the following reasons:

1. The evaluation follows a student-level randomized control trial (RCT) design to compare outcomes of students selected through a lottery to Early Career programs in participating schools and that of students in the business-as-usual condition in these schools.
2. The research questions, well aligned with the program logic model, cover program impact, implementation and scalability.
3. The power calculation suggests the sample has a reasonable chance of detecting the target size of effect.
4. The applicant proposed data from multiple sources to measure implementation fidelity and program outcomes, including primary data collected from survey, interviews and observations, as well as secondary data from the state. The applicant articulated the relevance of these data to the program outcomes and all these data seem to have face validity.
5. The fidelity of implementation table in the appendix (p. e147) is clear and informative. It covers all key components of the program input in the logic model and sets a reasonable threshold for each component.

#### **Weaknesses:**

The evaluation plan can be strengthened in the following ways:

1. The applicant needs to clearly describe the process to form the student sample and address the potential crossover of students in the treatment and control condition within schools during the course of the study, which will contaminate the random assignment. The table on page 21 is confusing as there is no explanation of how cohort is defined and how each group is followed.
2. The applicant needs to better articulate the timing of student data collection and analysis, so the evaluation activities are aligned with the budget. The outcomes described on page 25 show that all the measures are for 9th and 10th graders, but the budget for the evaluation covers 5 years. It would be helpful to explain why cohorts are not followed through high school years to examine the long-term outcomes.
3. It is not clear how primary data, data from survey and site visit, will be analyzed or used in the evaluation.
4. The evaluation plan can be better organized to closely align evaluation activities with research questions and the headings of each section. For example, the first research question is about impact on student outcomes, but text in this section is about the sample and design. Similarly, the section on implementation study, separate from the discussion of fidelity of implementation, is plugged under E2 but does not articulate how it will inform the generation of guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication.

**Reader's Score:** 13

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 05/30/2019 10:58 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/29/2019 09:46 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Indianapolis (U411B190018)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	0
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	25	0
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	20	0
<b>Adequacy of Resources/Quality of Management Plan</b>		
1. Resources/Management Plan	20	0
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	13
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	13
<b>Total</b>	100	13



# Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - EIR Mid Phase - 2: 84.411B

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

Applicant: University of Indianapolis (U411B190018)

## Questions

### 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 potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.

(2) 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.

#### Strengths:

NA

#### Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

### 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 goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.

(2) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.

#### Strengths:

NA

#### Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

### Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

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

(1) 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.

(2) The extent to which the proposed project will increase efficiency in the use of time, staff, money, or other resources in order to improve results and increase productivity.

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

Reader's Score: 0

### Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources/Quality of Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources and the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources and quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) 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.

(2) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) working directly, or through partners, during the grant period.

(3) The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support.

(4) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

Reader's Score: 0

### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of 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, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in this notice).

(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 project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

#### **Strengths:**

The evidence of effectiveness produced by this evaluation may meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations. The design is an individual level randomized controlled trial or RCT (see page e39). Student-level attrition is likely to be low due to all measures being collected in the regular course of educational activities and statewide data available from administrative units (see pages e40, e42, and e43). The risk of non-response from individuals is minimized due to a study design that maintains cohorts within the assigned treatment condition across years (see page e39), and the evaluation team will gather assessments/measurements from administrative units of the participating LEAs and state department of education. The sample size (15 schools, 750 treatment and 375 control students) are adequate and statistical power is estimated (see page e40) to identify significant differences as small as 0.17 standard deviations for 9th grade student outcome and 0.25 MDES for 10th grade outcomes. Key moderators are being gathered for both the treatment and control groups (prior academic performance, gender, race/ethnicity, and social-economic status. This project evaluation may produce defensible answers to key research questions.

The evaluation plan provides some information on generating and sharing key information regarding implementation and useful in supporting replication efforts (see pages e41, e42, and e45-48). Using key moderators (listed page e42) at the school level and the student level, the evaluation plan should be poised to provide useful information on how program efforts impact subgroups differentially. Other key components of the evaluation plan provide detailed information on barriers to implementation (fidelity rubric page e136-e143). The fidelity rubric is of a high quality and will be valuable in replication efforts.

All outcome data elements are succinctly, described in a general manner on pages e43. All measures are appropriate for their purpose. The core outcome data include college readiness assessment (PSAT) scores, credit counts and attendance outcomes. Credits earned and attendance should each be error-free measures. Likewise, the implementation measures are simple counts and percentages, all of which are reflected in the fidelity rubric page e136-e143. Reliability should be adequate for outcome and implementation measures.

The measures used in this evaluation design are appropriate for their purpose, likely measured with minimal error, and unlikely to be diminished by non-response, missing data, or attrition. Several conditions for making valid inferences are present.

On page e147 of the application, authors succinctly share key project components in Appendix H Fidelity Implementation Table. Additional detailed information is also available starting on page e133 where the logic model describes key project components. At the bottom of page e43 and top of page e44 of the application, authors loosely describe the relationship between program actions as mediators of student outcomes. On page e43 of the application, authors provide a comprehensive listing of outcomes and the strategies and how outcomes will be measured. The programs strategies are logically linked to anticipated outcomes and proposed measures are appropriate for their purpose. On page e147 of the application, authors clearly describe the measurable thresholds for acceptable implementation. Key components with threshold statements are included and are rigorous but attainable. This evaluation plan also has a well-developed implementation classification rubric that yields a score of low, moderate, or high fidelity (rubric available page e136). All

materials are high quality.

**Weaknesses:**

There is no explicit statement regarding how individuals that join a school after random assignment of students has been completed are to be included in (or excluded from) the analytic sample. An Intent-to-Treat protocol is mentioned on page e40, but this does not address the concern over late-joiners.

Guidance on how outcome data will be analyzed is lacking and therefore replication efforts are negatively impacted. It is challenging to understand, trust, or validate findings when the mechanism by which raw outcome information will be analyzed and judged is not evident in the application. Success criteria for associated research questions are not operationalized/evident in this application. Others will find it very difficult to replicate findings given this lack of specificity in how program outcomes are to be evaluated.

The actual parameterization of statistical models is not provided. Without the actual parameterization of statistical models, it is challenging to assess how outcome data will be analyzed and therefore what the decision criteria for program effectiveness will be or what inferences will be supported. This lack of specificity regarding program outcomes weakens the ability of a reviewer to assess the likelihood of making valid inferences. At the end of a major data gathering/generating exercise, it is the evaluation of data via a statistical model that leads to operationalized outcomes from which inferences are drawn. It is unclear what these operationalized outcomes, or related decision criteria, are given the information in this application.

Additional mediators, such as a measure of student connections to peers, adults, or passions and interests while in school, (as an example) are not considered in this application. If there are positive impacts on student outcomes, how are we sure that the specific supports and interventions utilized are causing the impact as opposed to an increased level of "student connection" to peers, adults, and/or interests/passions that occurred due to the heightened interest others are displaying in a student's academic pathway? Perhaps alternative supports and interventions (not selected by the current program) would have had similar positive impacts on short and mid-term outcomes. It may not be the specific supports and interventions that drive positive change, but rather the heightened sense of "connection" that students feel when others take the time to care about them as individuals and display this through observable action such as the current program's supports and actions. Therefore "student connections" may be a mediator that could/should be considered when modeling impacts of specific supports and interventions.

**Reader's Score:** 13

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 05/29/2019 09:46 AM