

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/19/2019 11:12 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Seminole County Public Schools (U411C190273)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	13
Sub Total	20	13
Total	20	13

Technical Review Form

Panel #8 - EIR Early Phase Tier 2 - 3: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Seminole County Public Schools (U411C190273)

Questions

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 with or 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 evaluation plan is based on a quasi-experimental design with matching to establish baseline equivalency (pg. 17). The applicant provided the details related to how baseline equivalency will be established by including variables contributing to non-equivalence in statistical models examining treatment effects (pg. 19). The applicant appropriately will be utilizing two propensity models to evaluate which is providing the strongest baseline equivalence, to ensure they will meet WWC with reservations requirement for demonstrating acceptable baseline equivalency. The key evaluation questions which will guide the impact and implementation evaluations were provided (pg., 17). The questions are appropriate based on the stated project goals, hence, aligned with the provided logic model. The sample size and minimal detectable effect size information was provided, therefore, it was clear that the impact study would be adequately powered at .80 with a minimal detectable effect size (MDES) (pg. 20). The type of quantitative analysis for the impact question was also provided, hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) (pg., 20). This information is important to determine if an appropriate method will be used to address the nested nature of the data: students-in-classrooms, classrooms-in-schools. HLM as a statistical analysis models nested data, hence, appropriate. The applicant outlined the strategies which will be used to provide guidance for replication in other settings. Overall, the applicant will provide research reports based on qualitative and quantitative data associated with all key aspects of the project (pg. 21). These reports will provide the necessary detailed information associated with the implementation fidelity measures, lessons learned, and highlighting strategies to use for suitable replication (pg. 21). The plan clearly articulates the key project components, mediators and outcomes. The key project components are provided in the logic model. Appropriate moderators are discussed on (pg. 24). The applicant will determine mediator variables by developing mediation models to determine the variable(s) mediating the relationship associated with the outcome oral language skills, this is acceptable (pg. 25).

Weaknesses:

There were some weaknesses identified with the evaluation section. The applicant will be using hierarchical linear modeling for the impact analyses, but the student and school-level models were not provided, hence, there was no discussion on which variables will be fixed versus random at level-1 and level-2. This information would have strengthened the evaluation section. The applicant did not specify a-priori measurable thresholds for acceptable

implementation, or more importantly how these thresholds for acceptable implementation were determined. The applicant discusses a fidelity checklist, but this checklist was not provided (pg. 23). Without this information, the appropriateness of the checklist to provide fidelity of implementation cannot be assessed. The applicant's information related to reliability and validity were not provided. Without this information, there is no way to determine if the measures are measuring the appropriate construct (outcome) of interest, and more importantly whether or not these measures are reliable and valid, hence, there is concern regarding the confidence in what they have purported to have measured. The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes was not met.

Reader's Score: 13

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Seminole County Public Schools (U411C190273)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	14
Sub Total	20	14
Total	20	14

Technical Review Form

Panel #8 - EIR Early Phase Tier 2 - 3: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Seminole County Public Schools (U411C190273)

Questions

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 with or 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 intends to hire an external evaluator (page 16) which should limit bias of the evaluation. The applicant intends to conduct an impact study with a quasi-experimental design that, if well implemented, will produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards with reservations (page 17). In addition, the applicant intends to conduct an implementation study using mixed methods in order to inform continuous improvement and replication in other settings (page 17). The applicant clearly defined what the evaluation question are for both the impact and implementation study with the associated project goals (page 17).

The impact study will use a matched comparison group from each year of the study. The applicant intends to use propensity score matching to match students in similar comparison schools that are not implementing the program during each of the four years. The applicant clearly indicates that the students will be matched at baseline using data collected in the spring the year before including prior achievement and attendance, and student characteristics. In addition, school characteristics will be use as well (page 18). The applicant clearly indicates which factors it intends to match students on, which allows for the evaluation to be replicable. In addition, the factors and methods of matching will ensure that the treatment and control groups are similar prior to implementing the program.

The applicant also intends to have a higher sample size for the comparison group which will minimize contamination bias and maximize the sample size. This will help to have sufficient power in the study (pages 19-20).

The project team will meet at least every three months to review progress on the evaluation and discuss informal feedback (page 21). The external evaluation will create at least three brief reports of the findings for external audiences that will share information about the project implementation and outcomes. This will provide guidance to external sites on how the project can be replicated.

The applicant intends to use student outcome data that will be collected in the spring of each year from 2020 to 2024. The applicant indicate that these measures include widely used assessments with evidence of reliability and validity (page 22) and therefore, the methods of evaluation should provide valid and reliable outcomes through the use of a series of two-

level hierarchical linear models (page 20).

Weaknesses:

The evaluation will include qualitative data which will include observations, interviews and focus groups of all stakeholder groups (page 22). The applicant states that surveys and other qualitative evaluation instruments will be based on existing tools with evidence of reliability and validity (page 22). However, there is no discussion about the triangulation of the data and it is unclear if the applicant discusses whether or not there will be inter-rater reliability, therefore it cannot be said with certainty that these measures will be valid and reliable.

While page 23 indicates that a composite fidelity index will be used as a mediator, the applicant does not discuss the rationale or any other mediators. A list of variables that could impact the results of the stated research questions are necessary so that the analyses could control for these external factors, such as socioeconomic status. In addition, the applicant has not indicated clear measurable thresholds for acceptable implementation.

Reader's Score: 14

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