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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Corporation for Public Broadcasting (S295A200004)
Reader #2:   **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	10	10
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	25	23
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	25	25
Quality of Management Plan		
1. Quality of Mgmt Plan	20	20
Quality of Project Evaluation		
1. Quality of Project Eval	20	20
Sub Total	100	98
Total	100	98

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Ready to Learn - 1: 84.295A

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

Applicant: Corporation for Public Broadcasting (S295A200004)

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:**

   (i) The extent to which the proposed project will provide services or otherwise address the needs of students at risk of educational failure.

   (ii) The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.

   (iii) 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.

   Strengths:

   The proposal clearly describes that the proposed services in the project aim to address the needs of students at risk. For example, the proposal makes the argument for building a set of key skills in students to support them ultimately in work. These include functional literacy, critical thinking, collaboration and skills and knowledge for the World of Work. (p. 3-6). The project further states that they will build knowledge of career awareness as well and notes that for children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, a lack of information or exposure to jobs and career prosperity may limit the ability to envision career attainment.

   The project involves the development of alternative strategies for educating children. For example, the project will develop a transmedia approach to building functional literacy and other key skills (p. 7). Moreover, the project will build new engagement models to support intergenerational learning (p. 7). And it is worth mentioning that the evaluation and research proposed for the project has the potential for contributing new knowledge about how children learn from media and media-connected programs. (p. 7).

   The project involves the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project. For example, the project involves an extensive list of advisors who possess the necessary expertise to provide feedback and guidance for the project to maximize the effectiveness of the project, such as ensuring partner advisors have expertise in equity issues. (p. 48-49). In addition, the proposal includes three national partners: US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, National Association for the Education of Young Children and Parents as Teachers. (p. 30-31). The proposal articulates the roles for each of these partners. (p. 30-31). As one example, one of the ways that the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation will support this work is by activating local Chamber staff to partner with stations on the Year One needs assessment and ongoing Learning Neighborhood activities. (p. 30).

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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:**

   (i) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach for meeting statutory purposes and requirements.

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

   (iii) The extent to which the proposed development efforts include adequate quality controls and, as appropriate, repeated testing of products.

   Note: In responding to the Quality of the Project Design selection criterion, an applicant should include a detailed description of its proposal to develop and disseminate media and conduct outreach, as described in section 4643 (a)(1)(B)(i) through (v) of the ESEA.

   Strengths:

   The project represents an exceptional approach for meeting program purposes. For example, the project will develop three new multi-platform series to further support the project's identified key skills in a transmedia environment. (p. 12-14). As part of those learning experiences, the project will also produce connected-multi-level and re-playable games to also support the educational goals of the project (p. 14). And some of these games will specifically target family or intergenerational play. (p. 15). Moreover, the project will develop short-form series that build on successful shows and two podcasts intentionally designed for children and adults to listen to together. (p. 18). These resources are supported by research to inform the choice of the formats. For just one example, the proposal notes 80% of children podcast listeners listen to a podcast more than once, which suggests that they are thoughtful, careful listeners; ideal for an educational experience. (p. 18).

   The goals, objectives and outcomes to be achieved by the project are specific and measurable. For example, the primary long-term goal of the project is to equip young children with key skills and dispositions that lead to success in learning, work and life. (p. 6). In addition, the proposal describes a total of six goals and outcomes that the project hopes to achieve. These goals and outcomes involve both children and families and communities. (p. 8). One example of these is to develop increased capacity in the key skills identified by the project. (p. 8). Also, the logic model that includes these goals and aligns them with the outputs and activities of the project. This further suggests that the proposal is clear in their listing of goals, objectives and outcomes. (appendix d).

   The project's development efforts include adequate quality controls. For example, the proposal states that the applicant has mechanisms in place to ensure accountability, management quality and continuous improvement of management, including an internal, independent inspector general. This role's mission is to mission is to promote the efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity of CPB initiatives and operations by conducting independent and objective audits, investigations, and other reviews. (p. 42-43). In addition, the evaluation plan describes robust formative evaluation strategies to inform the development of the project's resources. (p. e201-e206).

   Weaknesses:

   The proposal does not make clear what will happen after the first wave of the Learning Neighborhood. Specifically, the proposal does not make evident how the expansion of the Learning Neighborhoods will continue, where and what sort of support will exist after the first phase. For instance, as a key aspect of the project where different educational institutions in a community come together to provide wraparound supports for early learning, it is not clear how the project will carry out expand this work after phase one of the project.

Reader's Score: 23

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:**

   (i) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to further develop and bring to scale the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice, or to work with others to ensure that the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice can be further developed and brought to scale, based on the findings of the proposed project.

   (ii) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.

   Strengths:

   The applicant possesses the capacity to further develop and bring to scale the proposed project. For example, each of the three project partners can support the scale of the project, such as distributing resources through their national networks. One example of this would be NAEYC leveraging its network and platforms to promote wider use of RTL content with families, in daycare facilities and school-based settings. (p. 31). Moreover, the project team's access to PBS KIDS through local stations, connections to other streaming services such as Amazon Prime and the PBS KIDS web site suggests that the applicant has the appropriate capacity to scale this work.

   The products developed in the proposed project will likely have utililty in a variety of settings. For example, the proposal is informed by research on the role of parents and building parents' capacity to support learning. (p. 8-9). For example, the proposal states that guided parent/child playing together leads to important learning gains. (p. 9). Moreover, the previous work in this area by the project team has been successful. For instance, the proposal notes that PBS KIDS content produces extraordinary results that help to narrow the learning gap between children from low-income families and their more advantaged peers (Penuel et al, 2009). (p. 10). Finally, in the midst of the current Covid-19 pandemic, PBS reached 23 million children and parents during at-home learning hours and traffic to PBS education web sites increased 400%. (p. 10). This suggests that with the applicant providing programming and products that are used by a large number of people, the proposed resources have the potential to be accessed and used as well.

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of 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:**

   (i) 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.

   (ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

   (iii) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.

Strengths:

The proposal includes an adequate management plan for achieving the objectives of the project. For example, the proposal lists the key personnel involved in the project and describes the aspect of the project to which they will contribute. (p. 45-47). In addition, the proposal includes a project timeline with project activities, when the project activities will happen and who the lead is for those activities (p. e180-e185). Along with the project timeline, the appendix also includes a deliverable timeline which communicates the sequence of when elements of the project will be accomplished. (p. e180-e185).

The qualifications of the key project personnel are sufficient for carrying out the project and achieving the project's intended goals. For example, the proposal lists the key project staff with a brief summary of their experience (p. 44-48). In addition, the proposal includes the key project personnel's cv's, which further communicate their experience and know-how (appendix b). This includes personnel involved in current Ready to Learn efforts at CPB as well as established experience in developing, producing and distributing children's programming and digital experiences through places like PBS Kids, Nick Jr. and Sesame Workshop.

The proposal conveys the relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project. For instance, the proposal includes a list of the members of the project's different advisory committees (p. 48-49). These committees address various relevant domains of work, such as literacy and children and families. Moreover, the appendix includes brief biographies for each of these advisors. (p. e128-e130). This further describes their relevance to the project. Finally, the proposal includes letters of commitments from partners in the appendix to address the nature of the commitment that each partner will be making (Appendix C). This includes the letters from NAEYC, the Chamber of Commerce Foundation and Parents as Teachers.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of 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:**

    (i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

    (ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide timely guidance for quality assurance.

    (iii) 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 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

    Note: We encourage applicants to review the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook for technical assistance on evaluation: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Handbooks.

Strengths:

The proposal includes evaluation methods that use objective performance measures that are clearly related to the project outcomes. For example, the project itself identified objective performance measures that guide the project (p. e327-e333). In addition, the evaluation plan identifies more specific objective measures that are used to guide the evaluation and

assess the impact of the project. These include, for example, caregiver surveys and computational thinking assessments (p. e216-e218). In addition to these quantitative measures, the evaluation plan also calls for the collection of qualitative data, such as focus group interviews. This suggests that the evaluation can provide a comprehensive description of the project's potential impact.

In addition, the proposal describes formative evaluation methods that will provide timely feedback for the project. For example, the proposal states that iterative, formative evaluation will take place to inform the design and development of new resources (p. e201). The methods will align with production schedules in this effort. (p. e201). More specifically the evaluation plan describes the formative strategies for each of the resources. For example, the proposal highlights that interactive media will be tested through PBS KIDS playtesting program and involve 20-30 children engaged in short form testing (p. e201-e202). Also, implementation and context studies will be carried out to inform effective scaling of the project (p. e202-e206).

The proposal communicates evaluation methods that can produce evidence of effectiveness that would meet WWC standards. For instance, the proposal states that the evaluation team will conduct two randomized controlled trials that assess the impact of "Wombats!" on children's learning related to critical thinking, computational thinking, flexible thinking and task persistence (p. e216). A second RCT assesses the impact of "Liza Loops" on children's learning related to critical thinking, computational thinking, and communication and collaboration skills. (p. e216). In both cases, children will be assigned to the treatment group or the control group and establish baseline equivalence based on the computational thinking pre-test. (p. e216).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: **20**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/22/2020 09:00 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Corporation for Public Broadcasting (S295A200004)
Reader #3: **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	10	8
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	25	22
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	25	25
Quality of Management Plan		
1. Quality of Mgmt Plan	20	20
Quality of Project Evaluation		
1. Quality of Project Eval	20	19
Sub Total	100	94
Total	100	94

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Ready to Learn - 1: 84.295A

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

Applicant: Corporation for Public Broadcasting (S295A200004)

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:**

   (i) The extent to which the proposed project will provide services or otherwise address the needs of students at risk of educational failure.

   (ii) The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.

   (iii) 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.

   Strengths:

   The project will effectively address the needs of students at risk of educational failure. Based on current global economy and technological innovations there is a national need to equip children with cognitive and non-cognitive skills that are necessary and valued in the workforce. The proposed project will provide services designed to guide children in functional literacy, critical thinking, collaboration, and World of Work skills (pages 3-6).

   The applicant proposed a strategy of expanding young children's thoughts about their opportunities through exposure to jobs and careers and cited research on the value of broadening this perspective while they are young (pages 4-6). The proposed project includes a plan for developing promising new strategies to build on those currently available that will provide young children with programming to improve functional literacy, critical thinking, collaboration, and world of skills through developmentally appropriate strategies and incorporates intergenerational learning (pages 1-6).

   The applicant provided letters of support that included specific plans for collaborating to maximize the effectiveness of project services from a variety of high-capacity organizations that are well-aligned with the proposed project. Its partnerships with the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, National Association for the Education of Young Children, and Parents as Teachers will strengthen the proposed project by providing national exposure through prominent organizations (pages 30-35, Appendix C).

   Weaknesses:

   The applicant only provided general national needs for children from disadvantaged backgrounds(pages 6-8). It did not clarify the needs in pilot Learning Neighborhoods or provide needs assessments for those areas (page 35).

Reader's Score: 8

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:**

(i) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach for meeting statutory purposes and requirements.

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

(iii) The extent to which the proposed development efforts include adequate quality controls and, as appropriate, repeated testing of products.

Note: In responding to the Quality of the Project Design selection criterion, an applicant should include a detailed description of its proposal to develop and disseminate media and conduct outreach, as described in section 4643 (a)(1)(B)(i) through (v) of the ESEA.

Strengths:

The proposed project meets the statutory purposes and requirements for Ready to Learn, because it includes a plan to create television and digital media content, to distribute it nationally through public television, to disseminate information about this media, and to research the effectiveness of its educational programs and outreach (pages 10-41). The applicant provided comprehensive information about its specific plans for each element of the project, including new multi-platform series, gaming experiences, and podcasts.

The applicant's plans to bundle content in a "Learn Together" Hub are likely to increase usage of the newly-developed media by making it user-friendly (pages 26-27).

The applicant provided strategic activities, such as activities that will develop the four Key Skills (functional literacy, critical thinking, collaboration, and World of Work skills and knowledge. The activities are age appropriate for children from 2 to 8 and will provide them opportunities to develop those critical skills. The applicant included general goals and outcomes that are well-aligned with the proposed project(pages 7-8).

The proposed project incorporates a plan for repeated testing of products (page 23). This will provide adequate quality control measures and inform any needed project modifications.

Weaknesses:

The project's goals and outcomes are not clearly specified and measurable (pages 7-8). For example, the two outcomes listed include "Young learners will…develop increased Functional Literacy, Critical Thinking, Collaboration, and World of Work Skills and Knowledge" and "Families…will contribute to increased learning gains in children as the result of intergenerational learning experiences." It will be difficult to determine if goals and outcomes have been achieved without a measurement.

Reader's Score: 22

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:**

   (i) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to further develop and bring to scale the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice, or to work with others to ensure that the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice can be further developed and brought to scale, based on the findings of the proposed project.

(ii) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.

Strengths:

The applicant is likely to bring the proposed project to scale, because it has identified qualified personnel and organizations to implement it. It has successful experience implementing similar projects that are likely to enrich this one. The applicant's partnerships are further strengthened because of its history and clearly defined roles for working with the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, National Association for the Education of Young Children, and Parents as Teachers (pages 30-33).

The applicant described effective plans to extend the reach and impact of the proposed project through "Learn Together" resources for adults to use with children (pages 15-29). This will help ensure that the products produced will be used effectively in a variety of other settings as described by the applicant (pages 24-27).

The applicant plans to use Learning Neighborhoods to mesh virtual learning with physical interactions (pages 28-29). The applicant plans to use events for families, parents and teachers. This is likely to increase the project's impact and meet children's developmental needs.

The applicant has a sound plan to bring the proposed project to scale. The Project Team's relationships with Apple, Google, Amazon, and YouTubeKids will help ensure nationwide distribution. Its plan for marketing, market research, and comprehensive public relations will be an effective method of scalability and are geared to its target audience of young children and their families (pages 32-33).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of 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:**

   (i) 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.

   (ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

   (iii) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.

Strengths:

The applicant provided a clear timeline for the proposed project with key activities and deliverables to be conducted each quarter, differentiating work on television episodes, media, and games and identifying which individual would take the lead in accomplishing it(page 50, Appendix F). It included key facets of the proposed project and its evaluation. ,. This will help guide the project and help ensure activities are conducted during the planned timeframe.

The proposed project includes clearly defined responsibilities and qualifications for project personnel and contractors (pages 44-48, Budget Narrative). The project team consists of two organizations that share a common purpose, have a

history of working together, and a current Memorandum of Understanding (pages 9-10, 42-43, Appendix C). The applicant has identified organizations and individuals to participate on an Advisory Board who appear to be well-qualified with the ability to guide the proposed project (pages 48-49). This will help ensure that the project is completed as designed.

The proposed project involves several partners selected to ensure its successful implementation and included letters of support that clearly delineated what they will provide to the project (pages 30-35, Appendix C). These national organizations will be able to provide significant contributions to the project that will help ensure its success.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: **20**

Selection Criteria - Quality of 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:**

   (i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

   (ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide timely guidance for quality assurance.

   (iii) 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 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

   Note: We encourage applicants to review the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook for technical assistance on evaluation: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Handbooks.

   Strengths:

   The applicant plans to use a well-qualified external evaluator (Appendix H). This will help ensure an unbiased assessment of the impact of the proposed project.

   The applicant identified objective performance measures in the evaluation plan based on programming planned for children and for families and communities (page 37). The evaluation plan includes specific quantitative and qualitative measures for each program element to determine the project's impact on children (Appendix H pages 6-22). This will provide important information on project outcomes.

   The evaluation plan uses formative research during the proposed project to support development of the project by assessing content design and usability, implementation and context, and analyzing data (pages 35-36, Appendix H pages 4-5). This is likely to provide vital information for determining any needed project modifications during development.

   The evaluation is likely to provide important data, because it begins with a landscape analysis, continues with formative research and data analysis, and includes a plan for summative research on the impact of the proposed project (Appendix H). The evaluation for the proposed project is likely to produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that will meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations, because it uses random assignment, includes a plan for attrition, identified an appropriate level of minimum detectable effect size, and included a thorough plan for analyzing data (pages 36-41, Appendix H).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not include a plan to measure fidelity of implementation in its evaluation (pages 33-41). It will be difficult to determine the impact of the proposed project without knowing if it has been implemented as designed.

Reader's Score: **19**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/22/2020 08:54 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Corporation for Public Broadcasting (S295A200004)
Reader #4:   **********

	Points Possible	**Points Scored**
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	10	8
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	25	22
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	25	25
Quality of Management Plan		
1. Quality of Mgmt Plan	20	19
Quality of Project Evaluation		
1. Quality of Project Eval	20	19
Sub Total	100	93
Total	100	93

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Ready to Learn - 1: 84.295A

Reader #4:   `**********`

Applicant: `Corporation for Public Broadcasting (S295A200004)`

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:**

   (i) The extent to which the proposed project will provide services or otherwise address the needs of students at risk of educational failure.

   (ii) The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.

   (iii) 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.

   Strengths:

   (Aiii) CPB-PBS have had a long track record of success with this grant and have assembled a high capacity, national team of established and new but experienced partners who bring expertise in media production, learning sciences, national outreach, and research. These partners have the potential to maximize the effectiveness of the project by ensuring that draft assets are designed to optimize learning thanks to experienced content creators and input from expert advisors. Skilled third-party researchers are poised to assess content to test the assumptions of the content teams. And staff skilled with outreach and distribution are ready to ensure final versions of content are disseminated widely.

   (Ai) Not only will CPB-PBS meet the grant requirements of targeting low-income children ages 2-8, but they are going to great lengths to make assets accessible to and tested on a wide range of at-risk learners. As discussed below, the Learning Neighborhoods outreach program is structured to focus heavily on the majority of America's economically disadvantaged youth.

   (Aii) In terms of innovation, the Learning Neighborhoods initiative is a smart, research-based strategy that nicely extends CPB-PBS's increasingly community-based approach to outreach. CPB-PBS has shifted over the years from encouraging stations to hold one-off events, to partnering with respected child-directed organizations, to now potentially being even more immersed in the community. These unprecedently deep community partnerships have the potential to increase awareness of proposed assets and create immersive environments where learning is extended and reinforced well beyond the confines of any screen.

   (Ai) CPB-PBS establish the importance of instilling career readiness in at-risk youth through exposure to many careers and the support of critical thinking, functional literacy, and collaboration skills.

   (Aii) The "hybrid video + game experiment" described on pg 4, and the two podcasts are two of the most innovative and exciting components of the proposal. Both assets are atypical additions to a public media portfolio and have the potential to be appealing and impactful. The podcasts in particular have the potential to engage both parents and children.

   Weaknesses:

   (Aii) The two new shows seem less unique and trailblazing than the average PBS show funded by RTL. In terms of curricular focus, they are reminiscent of comparatively older shows like Doc McStuffins, Noddy, My Friends Tigger & Pooh, and others. Like Wombats and Liza Loops, these existing shows also are fairly realistic, feature characters who

regularly engage in problem solving and critical thinking, and highlight a small number of real-world careers. Doc McStuffins made headlines about a decade ago for featuring a female Black/African American aspiring physician, who shares surface similarities with female Black/African aspiring inventor Liza.

(Aii) Although the "hybrid video + game experiment" proposed here is very unique for public media (only the second feature along these lines to ever be developed by PBS), these kinds of play-along apps have been popular for Nick Jr and Disney Junior for a while. A content or feature analysis exploring what the rival networks do and do not do well in this terrain could be a fruitful addition to the research agenda (if that has not already been conducted).

Reader's Score: 8

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:**

   (i) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach for meeting statutory purposes and requirements.

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

   (iii) The extent to which the proposed development efforts include adequate quality controls and, as appropriate, repeated testing of products.

   Note: In responding to the Quality of the Project Design selection criterion, an applicant should include a detailed description of its proposal to develop and disseminate media and conduct outreach, as described in section 4643 (a)(1)(B)(i) through (v) of the ESEA.

   Strengths:

   (Bi and Bii) CPB-PBS have put together an ambitious plan covering a variety of media assets (terrific breadth and depth) and outreach initiatives, which nonetheless seems feasible – an exceptional approach for meeting the statutory purposes and requirements. The team is also very exact in their vision for how many assets they intend to build across platforms.
   •   Although the three new children's properties are the flashiest components of the proposal, it is smart to leverage Molly of Denali (which might already have affinity among children) and Reading Rainbow (which might appeal to parents for nostalgia reasons) for complementary learning outcomes.
   •   As mentioned above, the "hybrid video + game experiment" and podcasts plans are excellent additions to the planned portfolio. The latter product in particular has the potential to be very engaging for families.
   •   Including text messaging as a means to deliver outreach content is clever and supported by the literature as a relatively effective and well-liked communication method.

   (Biii) As described in the Quality of the Project Evaluation review below, the evaluation team is committed to providing robust and continuous quantitative and qualitative research as a means of quality control for the television and digital media content, and outreach assets. They will adhere to a timeline aligned with production goals. Formative research activities include observations, interviews, surveys, expert reviews, and data analytics reviews.
   (Bii) Pg. 7-8 contain a thorough series of fairly specific and measurable learning goals for both children (e.g., exposure to workforce opportunities, development of functional literacy, critical thinking, collaboration, and world of work skills) and adults (e.g., knowledgeable about supporting children's learning in target domains). Each of the main skill areas targeted across the initiative – functional literacy, critical thinking, collaboration, and "world of work" skills – are clearly operationalized on pg 3 and 20-21. As described in more detail below, the evaluation team intends to formally measure how well the initiative addresses both adult- and child-centric learning goals.

Weaknesses:

(Bi) The two already commissioned properties, particularly Wombats, seem to focus more on critical thinking skills than exposure to the "world of work". Although the former skills do fall under the team's stated learning objectives, the stated goals of the proposal read as if these should be more secondary learning outcomes.

(Bi and Bii) The vision for voice agents is underspecified. It is not clear exactly what the team intends to build, what the learning goals will be, and how this will enhance the overall proposed portfolio. It also is unclear exactly how widely such agents are used among young children – that is, the potential reach of this initiative.

(Bi and Bii) The outreach plans for year 2+ are not spelled out.

Reader's Score: 22

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:**

    (i) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to further develop and bring to scale the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice, or to work with others to ensure that the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice can be further developed and brought to scale, based on the findings of the proposed project.

    (ii) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.

    Strengths:

    (Cii) CPB-PBS's national reach across both television and digital is unmatched among public media providers (see pg. 10, 15, and 33), suggesting a high probability of success in scaling this project to reach audiences on a national scale. They already reach tens of millions of children through multiple linear television stations, internally owned streaming platforms, and third-party platforms like their YouTube channel. It therefore seems likely that their plans to add newly created broadcast and short form series to these existing channels will be highly effective in ensuring national distribution and scaling. Likewise, given that they already reach 2 million children through their gaming app and 6 million children online, they will likely see success in scaling by adding newly created digital assets to those existing platforms. Their outreach plan in year 1 also is already poised to target "more than half of the nation's 13 million children living in poverty" (Children's Dense Fund, 2019, as cited on pg. 29).

    (Cii) The fact that CPB-PBS has committed to making content available "free of charge" (p. 32) also has the potential to aid scaling by making resources accessible to all families, including those who are economically disadvantaged.

    (Ci) The fact that PBS KIDS has already commissioned two shows, has a specific and proven vision for an RFP process for the third, is already well-staffed, and has finished recruiting so many key partners (including the first cohort of stations to participate in the Learning Neighborhood initiative) should really allow the team to hit the ground running.

    (Cii) The team is committed to making its content widely accessible for a variety of populations / use in a variety of settings:
    •   The project demonstrates an extraordinary commitment to accessibility and UDL – a strategy informed by expert-review.
    •   Making assets available in both English and Spanish should likewise ensure wide reach.
    •   The diversity of the Liza Loops cast may be relatable and encouraging to diverse learners, promoting strong

learning via identification, perceived similarity, and the like.

• Digital games will be accessible offline, allowing lower-income families without consistent Internet access to engage in seamless play.

(Cii) The breadth of the "Marketing & Awareness Building" plan in the appendix is very impressive and thorough, and seems poised to raise national awareness to aid with scaling. Plans include press coverage, communications embedded in widely used PBS platforms and distributed through PBS communications, paid online advertisements, toolkits for stations, promotional events, and more. It is especially great that this communication plan covers not only media and outreach but research as well.

(Cii) Independently, the EDC-led evaluation team has a strong track record for striving to disseminate research findings to a wide audience.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of 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:**

   (i) 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.

   (ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

   (iii) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.

   Strengths:

   (Di, ii, and iii) As alluded to above, CPB-PBS have assembled a large, highly-qualified, and committed set of organizational partners and advisory panel of experts. The collective team is national in scope. Most if not all key roles within the various partner organizations are filled, such that CPB-PBS would be ready to begin executing on project goals immediately if awarded the grant. Pages 42-44 outline a clear plan for the division of labor and inter-organizational communication.

   (Dii) Additionally CPB-PBS has already secured a very impressive roster of outreach partners: 12 intentionally-chosen stations to spearhead the first wave of Learning Neighborhoods + 3 major national partners. The Chamber of Commerce Foundation a particularly noteworthy partner in light of the proposal focus.

   (Di) Both the budget (as presented in the budget statement) and timeline on pg. 50 / Appendix F are very detailed and cover all five program requirements. The timeline provides a year-by-year accounting of anticipated milestones and major activities covering all five program areas. The amount of time each activity is anticipated to take seems reasonable. Similarly, the budget seems thorough and sensible, covering the year-by-year expenses of CPB and PBS and their external contractors (e.g., curriculum advisors, national outreach partners, etc.), as well as the evaluation team and their consultants (e.g., transcription professionals) and sub-contract recipients.

   (Dii) The inclusion of a DEI statement in a proposal of this nature is very progressive.

Weaknesses:

(Di) There is a little bit of ambiguity around the role the national outreach partners (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, NAEYC, and Parents as Teachers) will play in the long-term CPB-PBS outreach strategy. Although the proposal lists 3-4 ways the team will work with each partner, the language here is vaguer and with roles/responsibilities less clearly defined relative to discussions of other teams or individuals. For example, the proposal states that the Chamber of Commerce Foundation will provide "expertise and thought leadership" and Parents as Teachers will "collaborate to implement and distribute … resources".

(Diii) Although CPB-PBS present an impressive roster of platforms that air PBS content (e.g., Amazon), it would have been nice to have seen more of a substantiation behind the assertion that those "strong relationships […] ensure PBS KIDS series and apps are easy to find and access". Put differently, there was not strong evidence that the platforms/services listed in the narrative were committed to the success of this project.

Reader's Score: 19

Selection Criteria - Quality of 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:**

   (i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

   (ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide timely guidance for quality assurance.

   (iii) 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 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

   Note: We encourage applicants to review the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook for technical assistance on evaluation: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Handbooks.

   Strengths:

   (Ei and Eiii) There is a clear plan for landscape/needs assessment research, implementation/context studies, formative assessment/data analytics that will inform product creation (timely quality assurance), and summative/efficacy studies (including two studies that unequivocally align to WWC criteria). These activities will leverage a mix of qualitative and cutting-edge quantitative techniques and are backed by incredibly detailed and thoughtful research plans.

   (Ei) It is admirable that the evaluation team plans to recruit children with disabilities to participate in all phases of research, in addition to broader aims to recruit diverse samples of low-income, target-age children.

   (Ei) The landscape analysis is a somewhat unique addition to the research portfolio that will likely provide valuable information that will be relevant to both the project team and wider audiences, gathering a general understanding about how diverse stakeholders support young children's functional literacy, critical thinking, collaboration, and workforce readiness skills – with or without leveraging screen media.

   (Ei and Eii) The breadth of the qualitative and quantitative formative research is commendable. Formative research includes a traditional suite of observations, interviews, surveys, and expert reviews covering the television series, short-form video series, podcasts, interactive media, and educator/parent resources. More novel large-scale and small-scale analytics research work will focus on optimal game mechanics. The evaluation team intends to purposefully align these

activities with production timeline to ensure timely guidance for quality assurance.

(Eiii) The two WWC-aligned RCTs are exemplary in their design. As appropriate given the intergenerational goals of this proposal, both studies will include samples of both children and parents. Additionally, the researchers plan to engage in random assignment at the family-level and have conducted power calculations to determine reasonable sample sizes, accounting for small but probable study attrition. They team has thoughtfully considered many study-related details, including how long interventions will last, what specific stimuli do and do make sense to be featured in each study, which analyses to run, and how to account for any potential baseline differences. To ensure the richest possible insights, they plan to supplement traditional study measures with data analytics. They also plan to pilot each RCT to revise protocols as needed.

(Ei) As mentioned above, the EDC-led evaluation team is a leader in this space in terms of efforts to disseminate findings, and it is admirable that they intend to continue to do so if CPB-PBS is awarded this grant. The plan to pre-register studies is also a trendsetting move promoting research transparency/integrity.

Weaknesses:

(Ei) While the evaluation team has taken great steps towards beginning to identify relevant and objective assessments, the Flanker Task and Social Skills Improvement Scale do not perfectly align to the intended program outcomes. The former is an assessment of inhibition, not problem solving/computational thinking, and the latter is not a test of functional literacy.

(Eii) The evaluation team might be able to provide more timely feedback to production if they leverage any data coming in in their learning analytics research, rather than exclusively relying on "RCT" data.

(Ei) A few minor stylistic and methodological notes:
•   There is a slight mismatch between the RQs in Implementation Study 1, which are fairly descriptive in nature, and the plan to examine pre/post survey change, which is a more outcomes-centric approach. See pg. 6 of the research plan.
•   "A/B testing" is more typical terminology for the kind of experiments described on pgs 11-15 than "RCT". The term "RCT" might be confusing for reviewers on the lookout for WWC-aligned studies.
•   Two "large-scale analytics RCTs" may not be enough to address all the outlined research questions.
•   For the efficacy studies, the evaluation team may wish to provide dosage recommendations and test whether outcomes vary as a function of actual (not intended) dosage.

Reader's Score: 19

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