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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Alaska Fairbanks (S411B200007)
Reader #1:   **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	10	10
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	25	23
Sub Total	35	33
Scaling		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Scaling	20	20
Sub Total	20	20
Resources and Quality of Management Plan		
Resources and Quality of Management Plan		
1. Resources and Management	25	25
Sub Total	25	25
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	18
Sub Total	20	18
Total	100	96

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: University of Alaska Fairbanks (S411B200007)

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 factor:

Reader's Score: 10

 Sub

 1. **(1) The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.**

 Strengths:

 The proposed project addresses the areas of teacher quality and retention that rural/remote schools with large populations of Indigenous students encounter. They propose to expand a validated in-person mentoring program known as the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project (ASMP) that has been utilized for 16 years and that presently serves about half of Alaska's 600 districts (pg.3). ASMP provides for in-person mentoring to early career teachers (ECT) and has demonstrated positive effects on student achievement, ECT practice, and retention. The project will evaluate cost-effective ways to scale the validated program to rural/remote communities while maintaining the positive benefits of ASMP. Alaska currently has a turnover rate that is 3.5 times the national rate with higher turnover rates in their rural/remote districts (pg. 3). The applicant cites multiple research studies and that low income and native students in rural/remote areas are more likely to be taught by less experienced and qualified teachers and hope to expand and enhance mentoring to all ECTs with cost-effective delivery methods and a dedicated focus on building SEL through culturally responsive methods (pg.4).

 Weaknesses:

 none 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:

Reader's Score: 23

 Sub

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

   Strengths:

   The applicant has two goals for their project; (1) scale the validated ASMP mentoring model to expand its program reach to additional rural/remote schools in Alaska and, (2) advance the knowledge on how culturally responsive teaching facilitates social emotional learning for students (pg.6). The applicant provides full details of the program objectives, strategies, and outcomes and includes the scaling strategies they will utilize to achieve these goals (pg. 7). They utilize a table format to demonstrate the alignment to their two goals with their proposed activities.

   Weaknesses:

   none noted

   Reader's Score: 10

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

   Strengths:

   The applicant's Theory of Change (TOC) is matched to the program description and details a process to show ASMP mentoring leads to increased ECT confidence, skill development, and retention as well as student social, emotional, and academic regardless of delivery method (in-person or virtual) (p.7). They will support the expanded reach and impact of ASMP to rural/remote schools and maintain program quality and positive impact. They will implement scaling strategies for key parts of the project such as: 1) technology support and regional coordination, 2) building local school/district capacity to support ECTs, 3) creating buy-in from communities and stakeholders, and 4) sharing resources on teacher cultural competence connected to student SEL (p.8).

   Weaknesses:

   none noted

   Reader's Score: 5

3. **(3) The extent to which the proposed activities constitute a coherent, sustained program of research and development in the field, including, as appropriate, a substantial addition to an ongoing line of inquiry.**

   Strengths:

   The applicant is seeking further evidence of its validated ASMP mentoring model in rural/remote settings utilizing a virtual model. The intent of the research is two-fold; (1) determine the efficacy of a virtual mentoring model and (2) is there a demonstrated cost effectiveness to their virtual model (p.9). The proposed activities align directly with the two intents of their research. They will build upon a previous pilot study that showed positive results for the virtual mentoring model (p.10) and indicated further research was needed to determine if it is cost effective.

   Weaknesses:

   none noted

   Reader's Score: 5

4. **(4) 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.**

Sub

Strengths:

The project will determine the cost effectiveness of a virtual mentoring model. If proven cost effective then it will increase the efficiency of staff with regard to time, staff, and money and by adding the enhancement of teacher cultural competency to develop a stable teaching force which will result improved student outcomes (p.13).

Weaknesses:

More detail is needed to understand how the project will provide for a cost reduction.

Reader's Score: 3

Scaling - 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:**

Reader's Score: 20

Sub

1. **(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.**

   #### Strengths:

   The applicant proposes to demonstrate that their ASMP mentoring model can be used successfully not just in the urban settings where it was validated, but also in the rural/remote schools that they aim to reach with this project (p. 13). They identified five barriers to scale that included the geographic locations of their school districts in rural and remote settings, limited stakeholder knowledge of the ASMP model, lack of integration with other state educational initiatives, and the financial issues that come with decreased educational funding (p.16). They detail the four strategies they will use to address these barriers which prevented them previously from reaching the level of scale proposed for this project.

   #### Weaknesses:

   none noted

   Reader's Score: 10

2. **(2) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.**

   #### Strengths:

   The applicant outlines in detail its intent to disseminate information on its project. Their efforts include outreach to local communities, increasing their advocacy activities with state policymakers, and building partnerships with state education entities to build support and consensus for their project (p.17). They will also produce practitioner guides that will be useful to principals and designed to help schools, districts and educators work more effectively with ECTs by highlighting successful strategies and innovations. They will also disseminate their research findings on impact, implementation, and cost-effectiveness through peer-reviewed journals (e.g.,American Educational

Research Journal, Journal of American Indian Education) and professional
conferences (e.g., the American Educational Research Association) (p. 16-17).

Weaknesses:

none noted

Reader's Score: 10

Resources and Quality of Management Plan - Resources and 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:**

Reader's Score: 25

1. **(1) 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.**

Strengths:

The applicant provides comprehensive details of the staff and organization that will guide the project. They have established three project implementation teams who will be responsible for executing the project goals and objectives. An implementation team will oversee day-today
logistics and execution of the project. A technology team will provide oversight and support for the technology users in the project, and an evaluation learning team will provide oversight and be responsible for executing all learning and evaluation activities (p.18).

Weaknesses:

none noted

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The applicant will utilize funding to scale up a proven program by an additional 400 ECT Teachers – 200 a year for two years. The proposed mentoring program will increase capacity to address persistent issues of teacher turnover, low academic performance and high achievement gaps of Alaska Native students. The applicant reports that by utilizing virtual resources it will allow the program to be available to 400 additional ECT teachers and 7500 students in rural/remote settings that serve primarily Alaska Native Communities in a cost-effective way (p.20). The applicant summarizes that the project has the potential to provide long-term benefits to the Alaska education system and its students.

Weaknesses:

none noted

Reader's Score: 5

3. **(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.**

Strengths:

The applicant intends to build a portfolio of revenue sources that will include having districts shoulder 40% of the costs either through cost sharing or a fee-for-service structure, 40% from state funding, and 20% from grant funds. They hope that the virtual model will save upwards of 30% of the current costs of the ASMP mentoring model and that the previous mentioned funding streams will sustain the project beyond the grant (p.20-21).

Weaknesses:

none noted

Reader's Score: 5

4. **(4) 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.**

Strengths:

They provide the details of the key personnel and include an organizational chart to demonstrate how they will achieve the objectives of their project (p.19). The project staff includes administrators, researchers, mentoring practitioners, technology staff, and cultural knowledge holders and this staffing is adequate based on the project description.

Weaknesses:

none noted

Reader's Score: 5

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:**

Reader's Score: 18

1. **(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).**

   Strengths:

   To meet the WWC group design standards without reservations, the applicant will conduct a multisite cluster randomized control design to assign schools within each district to either virtual or in-person mentoring across two cohorts of ECTs. The utilization of the random assignment of schools as clusters will minimize the potential treatment contamination between ECTs within the same schools and will control for mentor effects across the two conditions (virtual and in-person) (p.23-24).

   Weaknesses:

   none noted

   Reader's Score: 10

2. **(2) 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 designed to determine progress and outcomes for the four program objectives. They detail in chart form how each objective will be assessed. They list the evaluation components and describe the study design as well. They pose the questions to be answered to address the impact of the mentoring, and they identify the moderators and mediators (p.21).

   Weaknesses:

   The applicant does not address what their measurable threshold for acceptable implementation is. They did not address fully how they will make comparison between virtual and in person in their evaluation plan.

   Reader's Score: 3

3. **(3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes.**

   Strengths:

   The evaluation plan is designed to yield data that will allow for the determination of the reliability and validity of the study. They will utilize an outside evaluator. Their analyses will focus on the overall impact of ASMP mentoring on ECT retention, student SEL and achievement, as well as differential moderator effects on ECTs, students and schools with different characteristics (p.28).

Sub

Weaknesses:

none noted

"This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria."

Reader's Score:　　　**5**

Status:　　　Submitted

Last Updated:　　07/31/2020 10:22 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Alaska Fairbanks (S411B200007)
Reader #2:   **********

		Points Possible	**Points Scored**
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Significance			
1. Significance		10	8
Quality of Project Design			
1. Quality of Project Design		25	17
	Sub Total	35	25
Scaling			
Strategy to Scale			
1. Scaling		20	11
	Sub Total	20	11
Resources and Quality of Management Plan			
Resources and Quality of Management Plan			
1. Resources and Management		25	20
	Sub Total	25	20
Selection Criteria			
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		20	18
	Sub Total	20	18
	Total	100	74

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - FY20 EIR MId Phase - 2: 84.411B

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

Applicant: University of Alaska Fairbanks (S411B200007)

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 factor:

Reader's Score: 8

   Sub

1. **(1) The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.**

   Strengths:

The proposal adequately documents the potential of this project to need to address the need for mentoring for new Alaskan teachers, low rates of student achievement, and financial need. Specifically in relation to new Alaskan teachers, the proposal documents that: a large percent of new teachers come from outside Alaska and therefore may not understand rural Alaskan and Alaskan Native culture (p. 20); teacher turnover in Alaska significantly exceeds the national average (p. 20); and an even greater rate of teacher turnover is experienced in Alaska's remote communities (Table A.1, p. 139).

Additionally, the proposal adequately documents that the number of new teachers eligible to participate in the mentoring program exceeds available resources statewide but particularly in rural areas, and that the number of trained mentors available to serve the program is not adequate to meet needs. (Table A.3, p. 139). Specifically in relation to student achievement, the proposal documents that the number of schools identified for improvement disproportionately come from rural areas. The proposal summarizes student scores on state assessments and demonstrates that American Indians/Native Alaskans, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities score below the state average (p. 21; Table A.2, p. 139).

Specifically in relation to funding, the proposal adequately documents that funding, as reflected in the gap between the financial resources needed to mentor all new teachers and available financial resources, has fallen short annually since 2014-15 (Table A.3, p. 140).

   Weaknesses:

The section addressing the potential of this project to address problems noted above (pp. 21-22) deals with generalities in the field of teaching and nationally; it does not address Alaska specifically.

   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:**

Reader's Score: 17

Sub

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

   Strengths:

   Goals and objectives align (pp. 21 – 22). Strategies, outcomes, and measures align well (pp. 21 – 22).

   Weaknesses:

   Goal One (p. 22) The applicant describes   in a manner that makes the outcome the scaling of the project; it would seem, rather, that the desired outcome is that the project serves x number of additional schools/teachers. It would then seem that cost-effectiveness would be another goal. Goal Two (p. 22) presumes that culturally responsive teaching in this project will facilitate SEL; from a research perspective, it might be better to word the goal as advancing knowledge about the effect of culturally responsive teaching on SEL.

   Objective 1.1 (p. 22) seeks to determine cost-effectiveness and efficacy via different delivery methods; a stronger objective would be to compare the cost-effectiveness and efficacy via different delivery methods. This is a weakness because it presumes cost-effectiveness; when studying a phenomenon, one is wiser to avoid a prior assumptions.

   Strategy 2.4.3 (p. 22) is weak because it is unclear; "mediational analyses" needs to be expanded and should include a verb to explain what will be done.

   Reader's Score: 6

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

   Strengths:

   The Theory of Change (pp. 24-25; Figure 1) is logical and fits the proposed goals and outcomes.

   Weaknesses:

   The theoretical framework supporting the implementation of the mentoring program (p. 26) references research on mentoring and the ASMP program but does not provide a theoretical framework; such a framework might address the theory of mentoring reflected in the program or the theory of teacher professional learning that guides the activities of the program.

   Reader's Score: 4

3. **(3) The extent to which the proposed activities constitute a coherent, sustained program of research and development in the field, including, as appropriate, a substantial addition to an ongoing line of inquiry.**

Strengths:

The application adequately demonstrates a sustained program of research by building upon a previous i3 grant as well as a pilot study of virtual mentoring.

Weaknesses:

The application is weak because it fails to look at the effects of in-person or virtual mentoring on the mentor. There could be vastly different experiences for the mentors, including the increased travel for mentors, that could affect mentor retention, commitment, time management, and other factors that might be considered in comparing the two delivery approaches. The plan omits a significant factor in the implementation of the program.

Reader's Score: 4

4. **(4) 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 program adequately increases efficiency in use of time, staff, and money by including virtual mentoring.

Weaknesses:

It appears that many large meetings, of project directors and program partners, as well as NTC training and an annual conference (p. 156) will be in-person, incurring significant travel costs. One might consider some virtual meetings to increase efficiency.

Further, the explanation of how the strategies for overcoming barriers to scale will increase efficiency in time, staff, and money (p. 33) is general; more details are needed to explain the claim.

Reader's Score: 3

Scaling - 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:**

Reader's Score: 11

Sub

1. **(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.**

Strengths:

The proposal addresses several barriers to scale and plans for addressing them, including: reaching remote/rural areas (pp. 30-31); building capacities of schools to support new teachers (pp. 31-32); strengthening support from local communities, policymakers, and state education agencies (pp. 32 – 33); and sharing resources on teacher cultural competence and student SEL with schools, even those not participating in the project (p. 33).

Sub

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not adequately explain how sharing resources on teacher cultural competence and student SEL with schools, even those not participating in the project (p. 33), addresses a barrier.

Reader's Score: 7

2. **(2) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.**

Strengths:

The proposal adequately indicates intentions to share findings with internal partners (p. 33) and external audiences (p. 34).

Weaknesses:

The details of the practitioner-focused product (p. 34) is general; more details are needed, such as the format it will have, the method of dissemination, and the basis for the content. The report is weak because it omits details about dissemination to further development or replication.

Reader's Score: 4

Resources and Quality of Management Plan - Resources and 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:**

Reader's Score: 20

Sub

1. **(1) 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.**

Strengths:

The application includes plans for an advisory team made up of representatives of various stakeholder groups (p. 34). Personnel and their roles are identified (p. 35) and lines of authority are established (p. 36). The university has extensive grant experience (p. 36). Technology experts are available and already familiar with the mentoring program (p. 36). An established, experienced evaluation group will be used (p. 37). Project leads appear to have extensive grant management experience and other personnel are experienced in the areas to which they will be assigned.

Weaknesses:

MOU's with district partners are mentioned (p. 37) The proposal is inadequate in sharing copies of MOUs from these partners.9

Reader's Score: 9

2. **(2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and**

potential significance of the proposed project.

Strengths:

The budget clearly lays out costs and most justifications are clear and reasonable (p. 55ff).

Weaknesses:

Two budget items that may be excessive are: 1. The need for extensive travel to meetings and conferences (p. 156), when the program is arranging for virtual connectivity for mentoring; and 2. The need to fund NWEA MAP testing when the State of Alaska has its own student assessment and reporting system (p. 139; p. 158).

Reader's Score: 3

3. **(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.**

Strengths:

The proposal includes the organization's intended efforts to increase funding from local school districts, the state legislature, and other grantors. The proposal adequately describes possible other grants for which the program might apply.

Weaknesses:

The proposal is weak in failing to explain how the program might receive state funding in the future when such funding was eliminated in 2016-17 and has not been revived (p. 139).

Reader's Score: 3

4. **(4) 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.**

Strengths:

A timeline lays out the project's activities over five years (p. 39; p. 138), and the timeline includes scaling and sustaining as well as management and implementation. Responsibilities of personnel are defined. The budget appears to address all needs.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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:**

Reader's Score: 18

    Sub

1. **(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).**

   Strengths:

   The multisite cluster randomized control design (p. 40) appears consist with WWC standards. The compatibility of treatment groups will be assessed (p. 41). The data collection timeline seems appropriate (p. 42). Tools to assess outcomes are standardized pp. 41-43).

   Weaknesses:

   None noted.

   Reader's Score: 10

2. **(2) 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 adequately includes assessment of key project components such as ECT retention, student achievement, and student SEL (pp. 42-43) as well as mediators and moderators (p. 43). The evaluation plan includes collection of data on the implementation of the program (p. 45), cost-effectiveness of virtual mentoring (p. 46), and the scaling strategy (p. 47).

   Weaknesses:

   It appears that no data will be collected regarding the mentors, such as their experiences of virtual and in-person mentoring, barriers to their success, effectiveness of training, use of time, etc. This appears to be a missed opportunity.

   Reader's Score: 3

3. **(3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes.**

   Strengths:

   The methods of evaluation include the use of a variety of standardized and observational tools, power analyses, and threshold coding.

   Weaknesses:

   None noted.

   This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria.

   Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/30/2020 06:27 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Alaska Fairbanks (S411B200007)
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
	Sub Total	35	30
Scaling			
Strategy to Scale			
1. Scaling		20	14
	Sub Total	20	14
Resources and Quality of Management Plan			
Resources and Quality of Management Plan			
1. Resources and Management		25	21
	Sub Total	25	21
Selection Criteria			
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		20	17
	Sub Total	20	17
	Total	100	82

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: University of Alaska Fairbanks (S411B200007)

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 factor:

Reader's Score: 8

    Sub

1. **(1) The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.**

   Strengths:

   The program effectively addresses identified barriers for students and ECTs in Alaska. Knowledge and understanding of effective strategies for delivering a mentoring program will be investigated. This information can contribute to understanding the relationships between culturally competent teaching and student SEL and academic achievement in a specific population (p. 18).

   Weaknesses:

   The increase in knowledge is moderate. The literature includes considerable measurement of mentoring and online mentoring programs (p.169); however, this program will be measured in context, which provides a unique opportunity to develop knowledge. At the same time, its strength is its weakness: Measuring effects in context limits generalizability.

   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:

Reader's Score: 22

    Sub

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

Strengths:

The goals and objectives and specified and measurable: For example, goals include the scaling of ASMP mentoring to rural and remote regions and advance knowledge on the relationship between culturally responsive teaching and SEL within the context of rural/remote communities serving Alaska Native students. Scaling to save costs and expand reach, advancing knowledge on the relationship between culturally responsive teaching and social emotional learning in a specific context are specific and measurable. (p. 23)

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The needs of the specific population can be addressed. Students in remote regions are in need to additional culturally competent teachers in light of turnover and lack of professional development opportunities; ECTs in those areas are disadvantaged by the lack of professional development in accessible formats. (p.22).

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 5

3. **(3) The extent to which the proposed activities constitute a coherent, sustained program of research and development in the field, including, as appropriate, a substantial addition to an ongoing line of inquiry.**

Strengths:

The program will contribute to the ongoing research related to mentoring in context. (p. 22). One strength is that the program can expand research on the effectiveness of such a program in rural/remote communities.

Weaknesses:

The contribution seems moderate but not substantial. While a strength of the proposal is in its focus on a specific region/community, the weakness is that it will likely not be generalizable

Reader's Score: 3

4. **(4) 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 program effectively leverages technology to potentially reduce costs associated with travel to remote areas, which is a potential benefit to cost savings. (p. 23)

Weaknesses:

Additional specificity is needed in this area. While it can assumed that online professional development will save time and money (p. 23), for example, that information is not quantified in the proposal. It would have been helpful to see a hypothesized savings.

Sub

    Reader's Score: **4**

Scaling - 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:**

Reader's Score: **14**

    Sub

1. **(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.**

   Strengths:

   The use of the online mentoring program and regional liaisons address this criterion. The program has established clear guidelines for scaling, acknowledging that scaling the program is complex (p. 23). This choice is a strength because it does improve access and equity for ECT who are often left isolated in their practice (p. 22).

   Weaknesses:

   One barrier includes engaging legislators, but the details of this approach are unclear. What, specifically, will be done differently to reduce this barrier? Additionally, the plans for sharing resources on teacher cultural competence connected to student SEL (p. 33) is fairly loose and without specificity.

       Reader's Score: **7**

2. **(2) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.**

   Strengths:

   One strength is in leveraging standard academic dissemination technique: Journals and academic conferences are appropriate methods for sharing the results of academic inquiry. This is a strength because it integrates the data into the academic discourse (p. 34).

   Weaknesses:

   Dissemination plans are general: More specificity is needed here to help advance knowledge. More details about the details of the practitioner product would be helpful to better understand how the results of the program would be shared (p. 34).

       Reader's Score: **7**

Resources and Quality of Management Plan - Resources and 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:**

Reader's Score: 21

Sub

1. **(1) 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.**

   Strengths:

   Personnel are qualified through academic and experiential credentials. The PI has a PhD with a focus in culturally competent instruction and has held relevant professional positions, including oversight of the mentoring program. Other associated personnel are highly qualified in terms of the content area.

   Weaknesses:

   While the personnel involved and well qualified within the content area, the plan for disseminating information via academic channels may be challenging without previous academic publication experience (Appendix B).

   Reader's Score: 8

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

   Strengths:

   Given the complexity of travel to sites, the costs seem reasonable. This is a strength because while the proposal is aiming to save costs by leveraging technology but also acknowledges that some face-to-face interaction will be required (p. 20).

   Weaknesses:

   None

   Reader's Score: 5

3. **(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.**

   Strengths:

   The program can likely save considerable money if the online mentoring program is successful. Schools can further support the program beyond the grant period, ideally, and the OGCA Executive Director has committed support in Appendix G. This support is a strength in the application.

   Weaknesses:

   No funds for future delivery are actually in-hand. The plans include pursuing state funding through advocacy (p. 38), but given the trajectory of educational support and spending on the state level creates an additional barrier.

   Reader's Score: 3

4. **(4) 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.**

Sub

Strengths:

All objectives and goals are clear and manageable. Within the grant period, work can be completed as articulated. A strength of the proposal is that the timeline is clearly articulated (p. 39).

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 5

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:**

Reader's Score: 17

Sub

1. **(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).**

Strengths:

The program is based on an existing evidence-based program, and the use of mixed-methods will provide ample opportunity for data analysis P. 43). Previous evidence upon which the program is based, as listed in Form ED, are in line with WWC handbook standards and are replicated in this proposal.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 10

2. **(2) 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:

Key indicators and outcomes are listed in Appendix G, with clear threshold data illuminated. Thresholds have been validated using an implementation fidelity tool, which is a strength (Appendix I).

Weaknesses:

Justifications for variance (p. 44) are not clearly supported with previous research. Additional articulation in this area would strengthen the proposal.

Reader's Score: 3

3. **(3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes.**

Sub

Strengths:

Data analysis plans appear sound and in line with evaluation of previous similar programs. The use of qualitative data, in particular, will help researchers establish the potential for future funding based on stakeholder feedback/view of the program. Strengths also include conducting mediatory analysis of indirect effects of the program on teacher retention, student SEL, and academic achievement (p. 45).

Weaknesses:

Some additional information about the use of semi-structured interviews would be helpful in this proposal. Articulating the approach for statistical analysis is helpful (p. 45), but additional articulation of the approach for qualitative data collection is necessary (p.46). It is unclear how qualitative data will be coded and analyzed.

This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria.

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/30/2020 02:37 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Alaska Fairbanks (S411B200007)
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
	Sub Total	35	30
Scaling			
Strategy to Scale			
1. Scaling		20	14
	Sub Total	20	14
Resources and Quality of Management Plan			
Resources and Quality of Management Plan			
1. Resources and Management		25	18
	Sub Total	25	18
Selection Criteria			
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		20	12
	Sub Total	20	12
	Total	100	74

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: University of Alaska Fairbanks (S411B200007)

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 factor:**

Reader's Score: 8

> **Sub**

> 1. **(1) The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.**
>
>   **Strengths:**
>
>   The proposal provides a strong plan for testing a potentially more cost-effective means to deliver teacher mentoring, develop approaches to scale and sustain programming, and advance knowledge of how strengthening culturally responsive teaching facilitates student social emotional learning (p18), all of which have potential to inform development and implementation of teacher mentoring in other settings. Anticipated outcomes increased teacher retention, improved student achievement outcomes, and improved student social-emotional learning outcomes are well linked to proposed strategies and align with needs in Alaska and elsewhere.
>
>   **Weaknesses:**
>
>   The proposed "adaptive approach to scaling" (p22) is not elaborated. Providing a better understanding of how mentoring interventions could be adapted to accommodate differences in resources, contexts, and capacities of rural schools would be substantial contribution. Additional information about prior evidence on the impact of ASMP on teacher retention would strengthen the rationale for the potential contribution of the project.

> **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:**

Reader's Score: 22

> **Sub**

> 1. **(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.**

Sub

Strengths:

Goals, objectives, and outcomes are clearly specified. Goal 1 ("expansion") is to scale ASMP to expand reach to rural/remote schools and has three objectives: (1) determine efficacy and cost effectiveness of virtual and in-person ASMP mentoring, (2) create and implement a scaling plan, and (3) increase ASMP sustainability. Goal 2 ("enhancement") is to advance knowledge about how culturally responsive teaching facilitates SEL and has one associated objective: examine how enhanced teacher cultural competence facilitates student sense of belonging, recognition, and identify as a learner) are identified (pp23-24). Table 1 (p23) lists Strategies for each objective area and each has clearly-specified and measurable outcomes, which are elaborated in the theory of change (Figure 1, p25) and description of measures in Section E.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

Proposed activities are well aligned with needs to: support all early career teachers in Alaska (p20); support teachers who are ill-equipped to deal with the remote environment and cultural differences in rural communities (p20); reduce teacher turnover, which is highest in rural communities (p21); address challenges to student learning in rural/remote schools where state assessment scores are low and dropout is high among AI/AN students (p21); address the challenge of high costs associated with supporting early career teachers in rural/remote settings (p21); and support the development of high-quality teachers in rural schools where teachers tend to be less qualified and experienced (p22). Needs are well-substantiated (e.g., p139)

Weaknesses:

Additional information about the social and emotional learning needs among Alaska students should be provided. Little detail is provided about the ASMP virtual delivery method, the extent to which it will differ from the in-person approach, and differences in expected effects, if any.

Reader's Score: 4

3. **(3) The extent to which the proposed activities constitute a coherent, sustained program of research and development in the field, including, as appropriate, a substantial addition to an ongoing line of inquiry.**

Strengths:

Proposed activities continue to develop and conduct research on a mentoring intervention with evidence of effectiveness. Better understanding the effects on students of improving teacher cultural competence and developing resources to support teacher cultural competence are substantial contributions. The context in Alaska is a good setting for these activities because of the need for teachers familiar with the remote environment and cultural differences (p20) and proposed activities build on strong theory.

Weaknesses:

The plan to examine the virtual versus in-person delivery approaches (pp26-27), which is the focus of the efficacy study, could be improved by elaboration of the virtual model and additional discussion about expected differences between the two delivery approaches.

Sub

> **Reader's Score:** 4

4. **(4) 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:

   Virtual delivery has great potential to improve cost-effectiveness by reducing travel costs, while achieving similar effects (p26).

   Weaknesses:

   Clear justification for the anticipated 30% reduction in cost (p38) is not provided.

> **Reader's Score:** 4

Scaling - 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:**

Reader's Score: 14

> **Sub**

1. **(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.**

   Strengths:

   Five barriers to scale are identified (p30) all of which appear to compromise the ability to scale the intervention. Strategies to address each are also specified (p31).

   Weaknesses:

   The strategy of engaging state partners (p32) is underdeveloped. The goals/purposes of this engagement and how it differs from prior engagement are not clearly specified.

> **Reader's Score:** 8

2. **(2) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.**

   Strengths:

   Two practitioner products and dissemination via peer-reviewed journal are proposed (p34). These are effective ways to reach relevant audiences.

   Weaknesses:

   Additional information is needed about what will be disseminated and how this information is intended to be used. It is not clear how dissemination activities will support further development or replication. Collectively, the co-PIs have limited experience publishing in peer-reviewed journals (pp55-68), which may compromise their ability to successfully publish results from the proposed study.

Sub

Reader's Score: 6

Resources and Quality of Management Plan - Resources and 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:**

Reader's Score: 18

Sub

1. **(1) 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.**

   Strengths:

   The applicant has proposed key staff with direct experience with the mentoring program and substantial related experience and expertise. The structures for project administration and oversight are well conceptualized. District relationships also appear strong. The external evaluation partner organization appears to have strong capacity (pp34-36).

   Weaknesses:

   While Littlebear and coPIs have extensive experience with ASMP and grant management, they collectively have few publications in peer-reviewed venues. Conner has more, but they focus on science education (p57). This may limit potential for dissemination. The evaluation lead, McKnight (p78), does not seem to have experience with a large-scale RCT. Evaluation team members Rotermund and Hong have been a part of large-scale RCTs, but do not appear to have led one.

   Reader's Score: 7

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

   Strengths:

   Funding will be used to serve 400 early career teachers and 7500 students
   The long-term benefit associated with future implementation of more cost-effective mentoring also has the potential to reduce costs beyond the life of the grant (p37).

   Weaknesses:

   Proposed costs are not contextualized within historical or typical costs for mentoring (or other possible ways to meet project goals), which would provide a stronger argument for the reasonableness of costs (p37).

   Reader's Score: 4

3. **(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.**

Sub

Strengths:

A plan for continued support is presented, including district cost-sharing, state funding, and grant funding (p38). Identification of potential multiple sources is a strength.

Weaknesses:

Additional information about interest/feasibility among districts for future cost-sharing and the reasons for declining state funds would be helpful to better understand the potential for continued support and commitment of relevant entities (p37-38).

Reader's Score: 3

4. **(4) 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.**

Strengths:

The project management plan is clearly defined with clear roles for key staff and structures to manage leadership, stakeholder input, implementation, technology support, and evaluation (pp 35-36). The project timeline also clearly identifies milestones for completing tasks (p39).

Weaknesses:

Many activities are proposed for Year 1, including project startup; recruitment of districts, schools, and mentors; data collection instrument development and pilot testing; Institutional Review Board, district, and/or approvals, and development of resources and supports for the virtual platform (P39). Because this is a substantial scope of work, it may not be possible to successfully recruit and randomly assign schools by the second quarter of Year 1 and begin data collection the subsequent fall.

Reader's Score: 4

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:**

Reader's Score: 12

Sub

1. **(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).**

Strengths:

The evaluation plan reflects a good understanding of WWC standards and includes appropriate research questions, measures, samples, and plans for analysis (pp 40-44).

Sub

Weaknesses:

There is a disconnect between the power analysis (p44) and the primary impact question (p40). The question is focused on the difference between virtual and in-person delivery. The proposal suggests that virtual delivery offers a more cost-effective version of the ASMP which is otherwise essentially the same as the in-person approach. If this is the case, one would expect little or no impact of the delivery method on teacher and student outcomes. The estimated minimum detectible effect sizes associated with teacher and student outcomes are .20 and .18, respectively, which are more in line with what could be expected if the ASMP were compared to a business-as-usual condition. No justification for the sufficiency of these MDESs is provided. My larger concern, though, is that the study is not sufficiently powered to detect the primary impact. An alternative conceptualization where each delivery method is compared to a business as usual condition may better suit the evaluation questions.

Reader's Score: 3

2. **(2) 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:

Key project components (qualified mentors, mentoring support for early career teachers, and support for schools) are clearly identified, along with thresholds for acceptable implementation, and an approach for implementation coding (pp 45 and 143). Mediators, moderators, and outcomes are clearly specified, and associated analysis plans are clearly described (pp 41-43).

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 5

3. **(3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes.**

Strengths:

Outcome measures are relevant and well justified. Established measures of student SEL and achievement are proposed which have evidence of reliability and validity (pp 41 and 144).

Weaknesses:

Teacher retention measures draw upon state and district records, and reports of teachers and mentors (p42). Additional information about the nature and quality of these data should be provided to assure the reader that they are reliable and valid data sources.

This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria."

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/31/2020 12:03 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Alaska Fairbanks (S411B200007)
Reader #5: **********

		Points Possible	**Points Scored**
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Significance			
1. Significance		10	9
Quality of Project Design			
1. Quality of Project Design		25	23
	Sub Total	35	32
Scaling			
Strategy to Scale			
1. Scaling		20	19
	Sub Total	20	19
Resources and Quality of Management Plan			
Resources and Quality of Management Plan			
1. Resources and Management		25	24
	Sub Total	25	24
Selection Criteria			
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		20	18
	Sub Total	20	18
	Total	100	93

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: University of Alaska Fairbanks (S411B200007)

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 factor:

Reader's Score: **9**

    Sub

1. **(1) The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.**

    Strengths:

The application for the most part provides detail to illustrate that the proposed project would likely make a significant contribution to increase knowledge or understanding of education problems. It refers to conducing a trial of an early career teacher (ECT) mentoring project that is based on a state model that satisfies Absolute Priority 1 (moderate evidence, with sources cited). The application provides statistics about the need to be addressed: a lack of ECT mentoring affecting 600 ECTs and 9,500 students (including those in rural areas) among schools across Alaska; the application states that the ECT mentoring project is designed to help resolve these problems (pp. 19-22).

    Weaknesses:

The application does not provide adequate detail to the extent which rural/remote schools vary significantly in access to resources, economic systems, and cultures, in necessitating an adaptive approach to scaling (p. 22).

    Reader's Score: **9**

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:

Reader's Score: **23**

    Sub

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

Sub

Strengths:

The application provides project goals, objectives, and outcomes that are clearly specified and measureable; it includes a table (Table 1) that summarizes 2 goals and 4 objectives, along with detailed descriptions of several corresponding outcomes and measures (pp. 23-24).

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 10

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

   Strengths:

   The design of the proposed project is appropriate to and will successfully address the needs of the target population, as the goals and objectives pertain to the problem that the application indicated needed to be met: a lack of ECT mentoring, especially among rural schools with Alaska Native students (pp. 23-24).

   Weaknesses:

   None

   Reader's Score: 5

3. **(3) The extent to which the proposed activities constitute a coherent, sustained program of research and development in the field, including, as appropriate, a substantial addition to an ongoing line of inquiry.**

   Strengths:

   The application provides adequate detail to illustrate that the proposed activities constitute a coherent, sustained program of research and development in the field: The application provides a description of a theory of change that provides a coherent conceptual framework for the project; it is summarized in Figure 1. It includes various components ranging from ECT mentoring elements and delivery, to ECT outcomes, to student outcomes, which offer significant subject matter for a sustained program of research and development in the field (pp. 24-25).

   Weaknesses:

   None

   Reader's Score: 5

4. **(4) 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 application partially provides detail to illustrate that the proposed project will increase efficiency in the use of time, staff, or other resources in order to improve results and increase productivity. For instance, for Goal 1-Objective 1, the application refers to a strategy of conducting of a cost-analysis of scaling strategies, which includes identification of strategies with the highest cost-benefit of its mentoring model, from which to base scaling on (p. 24).

Weaknesses:

The application partially leaves out detail regarding the extent to which the proposed project will increase efficiency in the use of time, money, and other resources in order to improve results and increase productivity. For instance, it does not provide adequate detail regarding whether the costs incurred by required virtual training and on-demand technology support would offset anticipated savings in travel costs related to virtual ECT mentoring delivery (p. 27).

Reader's Score: 3

Scaling - 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:**

Reader's Score: 19

Sub

1. **(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.**

Strengths:

The application clearly identifies 4 strategies that address up to 5 barriers to reaching the level of scale proposed. For instance, to address geographic isolation of many rural areas in Alaska, such as being inaccessible by car, the proposed project would implement technology support and regional STARR liaisons (pp. 30-33).

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 10

2. **(2) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.**

Strengths:

The application for the most part identifies several mechanisms that would be used to broadly disseminate information about the project to support further development/replication. For instance, the application refers to a sharing the project's research findings through peer-reviewed journals, such as the American Educational Research Journal (p. 34).

Weaknesses:

The application does not provide sufficient detail as to the extent of disseminating a principal's guide to mentoring practice related to the project; no detail as to the communication medium (print, electronic…) and timeline (p. 34).

Reader's Score: 9

Resources and Quality of Management Plan - Resources and 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:**

Reader's Score: 24

Sub

1. **(1) 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.**

   Strengths:

   The application for the most part provides detail that illustrates the applicant's capacity to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level. The application refers to the applicant as being a land, sea, and space grant institution with extensive experience managing federal grants such as NSF and Department of Education; this level of experience shows for the most part capacity to bring the proposed project to scale on a national/regional level (p. 36).

   Weaknesses:

   The application partially leaves out detail as to its capacity to bring the proposed project to scale on a national/regional level when factoring in its past experience with U.S. Department of Education (DOE) grants/contracts. The application does not describe what type of DOE projects/contracts the applicant has past experience with, so as to more fully understand how such experience contributes to capacity to scale the proposed project (p. 36).

   Reader's Score: 9

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

   Strengths:

   The costs generally are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. The scaling strategies of the proposed project are geared toward establishing a cost effective ECT mentoring program (p. 37).

   Weaknesses:

   None

   Reader's Score: 5

3. **(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.**

   Strengths:

   The application provides adequate detail to illustrate the potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends. The application projects the percent distribution of non-Federal funding (fee-for-service, state, and private foundation); also, it provides descriptions of each (pp. 37-38).

Sub

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 5

4. **(4) 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.**

Strengths:

The application clearly provides detail to demonstrate that the management plan is adequate to achieve the objectives of the proposed project, on time and within budget. For instance, the application specifies key staff, roles, and teams, e.g., Table 3; and a project timeline, e.g., Figure 3 (pp. 34-39).

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 5

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:**

Reader's Score: 18

Sub

1. **(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).**

Strengths:

The application for the most part provides detail to illustrate that the evaluation methods would, if well implemented, produce evidence about project effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations. For instance, the application states that the evaluation would entail the use of a multisite cluster randomized control design, to assign schools within each district to either virtual or in-person mentoring across two ECT cohorts. Moreover, this would minimize bias, such as controlling for mentor effects between virtual and in-person mentoring (pp. 40-41).

Weaknesses:

The application does not provide enough detail as to the extent of bias being minimized by using a multisite cluster randomized control design; no detail as to whether or not there is anything else beyond minimizing treatment contamination between ECTs in the same schools and controlling for mentor effects across virtual/in-person conditions (pp. 40-41).

Reader's Score: 9

2. **(2) 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 application evaluation plan clearly articulates the key project components, mediators, and outcomes, plus an acceptable implementation threshold. For instance, for evaluating the impact of virtual versus in-person ECT mentoring delivery, the application highlights ECT retention, as well as student achievement and SEL as outcomes Also, it highlights a series of mediators and moderators corresponding to the aforementioned outcomes, whereby data collection would occur based on ECT cohorts over 3 school years. This is summarized in Table 4 (pp. 40-43).

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 5

3. **(3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes.**

Strengths:

The application for the most part provides adequate detail to demonstrate that overall the evaluation methods will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes. For instance, to ensure the validity in measuring cultural competence (to enhance ECT mentoring for the rural and Alaska Native communities that would be served), the application describes 4 cases studies that would be conducted; these will include focus groups with students, community members, and parents. Also, the assessment in general would use mixed methods and several data sources (pp. 40-41, 47).

Weaknesses:

The application does not provide adequate detail as to what extent any particular data collection tools would be used in the case studies (p. 47).

"This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria."

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/31/2020 09:41 AM