SEED +2 Renewal Technical Review Form

US Department of Education

Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) Grant Review
2020 SEED
Application Technical Review Form
(CFDA 84.423A)

Applicant: Board of Trustees of Illinois University	Application Number U423A170 0036

Summary Ratings		
	Maximum Points	Score
A. Quality of Evaluation Plan	25	25
B. Quality of the Project Design	25	25
C. Strategy to Scale	25	25
D. Adequacy of Resources	25	25
Selection Criteria Total Score	**100**	100
Overall Application Impression (Required):		

The applicant has submitted a strong application for continuation of funding. The applicant has addressed the project selection criteria with pertinent data and description. The applicant, however, has not provided page numbers for the proposal and the table numbers are not sequential. The applicant has provided an extraordinary evaluation plan and has demonstrated the potential for a successful replication of project components, and the project can be sustained by the strength of the partnerships that the project has created.

A. Quality of Project Evaluation (up to 25 points)

The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies.

(2) 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.

(Maximum Points 25)   Reader's Score: __25__

Strengths:

1) The applicant has provided a strong evaluation plan for assessing the aspect of micro credentials that includes appropriate methods or evaluation. The strength of the evaluation lies in the involvement of the research, evaluation and validation American Institutes for Research (AIR) involvement and clear identification of evaluators and support. The evaluation includes the use of a quasi-experimental design to compare schools participating and not participating in the project. The applicant has discussed the limitations of absence of data such as student impact data only observable in year 4. The applicant seeks to continue the impact and implementation analysis in subsequent years, especially in the context of the current pandemic. In Table I, the applicant has provided an extensive evaluation timeline that includes both setting of evaluation, collection of data and data analysis.

2) The project evaluation plan proposes the use of quasi experimental design which is recommended by the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards with reservations. The applicant has discussed the impact and fidelity implementation analysis. In Table # 5, the applicant has provided a thorough discussion of the four goals and aligned outcome measures. For example, the goal of high-quality micro-credentials has two aligned objectives, two clear targets and two objective measures. Moreover, the applicant has discussed clearly the methods of evaluation analysis such as statistical analysis of impact minimum detectable effect size, baseline equivalence testing and the lead in qualitative analysis. The applicant has provided details of data sources and is planning to expand the evaluation study by adding the study of the principal learning conditions study.

Weaknesses:

1) & 2) No weaknesses noted.

B. Project Design (25 points).

The Secretary considers the quality of the proposed project design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the design for implementing and evaluating the proposed project will result in information to guide possible replication of project activities or strategies, including information about the effectiveness of the approach or strategies employed by the project.

(2) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.

(Maximum Points 25)   Reader's Score: __25__

Strengths:

1) The applicant has adequately indicated that the project has provided promising results and may potentially guide future replication. The findings of the qualifying project evaluation have demonstrated that the leadership framework has significant gains in English Language Arts and Mathematics. In this context, the project lead staff has identified five specific strategies to guide replication and support sustainability. Strategies such as creation of an operational manual/toolkit, establish a research-based set of performance standards and principal coaches a development of series of micro-credentials. The strength of the project findings that the high-quality and rigorous natures of the Leadership for Equity Micro-Credential have been recognized and the state includes a designation of completion on an educator's license.

2) The applicant has provided an adequate discussion of the project strategies to build capacity and yield results. The applicant has provided four clear working strategies for this criterion. For example, the applicant will use the component of the participation in COVID-19 crisis response to assist the participating partners in development of just-in-time crisis training and tool development that is provided as open-sourced. Similarly, the project will work with the partners to develop a fee for service model that will scale key program elements to non-participating schools.

Weaknesses:

1) & 2) No weaknesses.

C. Strategy to Scale (up to 25 points).

The Secretary considers the strategy to scale for the proposed project. In determining the strategy to scale for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The feasibility of successful replication of the proposed project, if favorable results are obtained, in a variety of settings and with a variety of populations.

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

(Maximum Points 25)   Reader's Score: __25__

Strengths:

1) The applicant has provided an effective understanding of the successful replication of the proposed project in diverse settings. The applicant project that has partnered with four ROEs are spread across a wide variety of settings and locations such as rural settings, suburban areas, and large towns. The applicant demographic breakdown shows that the current project itself serves schools across grades, low incomes, minorities and religious schools. One interesting aspect of the school diversity was addressing school needs for small schools or schools with limited staff. The applicant also seeks to scale by developing two sets of micro-credentials: coaching principals and social emotional learning for school leaders. The strength of the project replication in a variety of settings is the study of the flexible/variable aspects that can be tailored to specific contexts.

2) The applicant has indicated an effective plan for dissemination of project studies. The applicant has discussed both internal and external dissemination of the project information. The applicant will open source their training materials, tools and protocols. Moreover, the applicant will also create artifacts that include project goals, objectives, measures, activities, targets, and a logic model along with external evaluation reports. The applicant will also develop a manual/toolkit of resources necessary to deliver training and coaching support. The applicant has also engaged staff from BloomBoard to enable educator advancement and reach a national audience. The applicant will also produce research summaries, policy briefs and journal articles.

Weaknesses:

1) & 2) No weaknesses noted.

D. Adequacy of Resources (up to 25 points).

The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources, the Secretary considers the following factors:

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

(2) The potential for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing program of the agency or organization at the end of Federal funding.

(Maximum Points 25)   Reader's Score: __25__

Strengths:

1) The applicant has successfully discussed a strong sustainability plan. The applicant sustainability plan has eight clear strategies. Sustainability is achieved through strategies such as integration into operational structures of the partners, additional grant funding, new principal mentoring act appropriate, high quality support services provided through a fee-for-service model, demonstrate positive impact by the project to qualify for state evidence-based funding, micro-credentials maintained on an online platform, and connection to state policy improvements. The applicant already has activities in the pipeline for sustainability. For example, two of the partners are currently developing grant proposals seeking funding to support various elements, and the project directors will continue to provide development support to seek matching funds.

2) The applicant has successfully demonstrated the incorporation of project purposes, activities or benefits into the state regional offices of education. The applicant in a table has listed a clear alignment of the project components and operational system components for the offices. For example, the project component of the alternative schooling and supports for early childhood, the project will address the issue of supporting traditionally underserved schools and students by including such schools in the project and qualitatively explore their experience to further explore the generalizability of the project's impact. The strength of the applicant plan for incorporation of the

project activities is in the strong interest of the participants and a collaborative approach and concrete deliverables that act as an incentive for their continued participation.

Weaknesses:

1) & 2) No weaknesses noted.

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Applicant: **Illinois State University**	Application Number U423A170 0 **36**

Summary Ratings		
	Maximum Points	Score
A. Quality of Evaluation Plan	25	25
B. Quality of the Project Design	25	25
C. Strategy to Scale	25	25
D. Adequacy of Resources	25	25
Selection Criteria Total Score	**100**	100

Overall Application Impression (Required):

Overall, the proposal is well written. The narrative is clear, concise, and demonstrates a well-supported statement of the problem the project will address. The proposal clearly explains the entire project, especially the criteria relative to the design and adequacy of resources.

A. Quality of Project Evaluation (up to 25 points)

The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies.

(2) 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.

(Maximum Points 25)   Reader's Score: ___25____

Strengths:

(1) The applicant presents detailed methods of evaluation that provides for examining the effectiveness of the project's implementation strategies. For example, the applicant will implement an impact study that meets What Works Clearinghouse criteria with reservations. The study will involve the use of a quasi-experimental design to compare outcomes at schools participating in the project. The evaluation will also include a new principal learning conditions study task to examine the relationship between school/district conditions and principal professional development engagement. (pp. 11, 12).

(2) The proposal outlines detailed methods of evaluation that include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project. As indicated in the narrative, for example, the evaluation methodology will be guided by four research measurable questions. Evaluation data will be collected and analyzed from coaching logs. The evaluation process will also involve analyzing and reporting attendance rates for cycles of inquiry training sessions and regional network meetings as well as analyzing survey data to identify features supporting or inhibiting program implementation (p. 13).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

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B. Project Design (25 points).

The Secretary considers the quality of the proposed project design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the design for implementing and evaluating the proposed project will result in information to guide possible replication of project activities or strategies, including information about the effectiveness of the approach or strategies employed by the project.

(2) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.

(Maximum Points 25)   Reader's Score: ___25____

Strengths:

(1) Multiple approaches for implementing and evaluating the proposed project that will result in information to guide possible replication of the project's activities and strategies are demonstrated. As indicated on page 19, for example, the design approaches include but are not limited to the following:
- building upon an evidence-based strategy aimed at increasing the instructional leadership capacity of participating principals;
- implementing five specific strategies to guide replication and support sustainability. One of the strategies for example is Develop a series of micro-credentials. that include training, resources, skill-building activities, and competency-based assessments for principal coaches;
- using renewal funds to develop the project's materials into a comprehensive manual/toolkit to support sustainability and replication; and
- using renewal funds to maximize impact by continuing on-going training and coaching supports in all participating schools.

(2) Sound evidence that the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance is well demonstrated. Examples of the project's capacity-building efforts include specific strategies such as institutionalizing a project-wide professional development design team; participation in statewide policy efforts to secure sustainable public funding; and developing a fee-for-service model (p. 20). Other capacity-building efforts the project anticipate will yield results involve providing evidence of effective development strategies for school leaders through qualitative and quantitative research reports and articles, and policy briefs and journal articles and policy briefs that can be accessed by other entities (p. 21)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

C. Strategy to Scale (up to 25 points).

The Secretary considers the strategy to scale for the proposed project. In determining the strategy to scale for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The feasibility of successful replication of the proposed project, if favorable results are obtained, in a variety of settings and with a variety of populations.

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

(Maximum Points 25)   Reader's Score: ___25____

Strengths:

(1) The proposal thoroughly demonstrates the feasibility of successful replication of the proposed project, if favorable results are obtained, in a variety of settings and with a variety of populations. On page 22, for example, the state's Regional Office of Education Regional will continue to serve as a venue for dissemination of the project's interventions statewide as well as a valuable political partner for state policy action. The applicant has also broached the possibility of interventions being viewed as research-based and being offered as a part of the state's system of differentiated supports and accountability for schools that fall on the state designation list is another example (pp. 23, 24).

(2) The proposal includes sound mechanisms that will be used to broadly disseminate information on its project to support further development or replication. Examples of the applicant's dissemination efforts include:
- the development of a manual/toolkit of resources necessary to deliver training and coaching support;
- a website with extensive project information will be maintained by its Regional Office of Education partners; and
- project staff and partners collaborating with educational entities in other states in the development of a series of micro-credentials for principals and district leaders (pp. 24, 25).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

D. Adequacy of Resources (up to 25 points).

The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources, the Secretary considers the following factors:

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

(2) The potential for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing program of the agency or organization at the end of Federal funding.

(Maximum Points 25)   Reader's Score: ___25____

Strengths:

(1) Through several approaches, the proposal demonstrates the potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support. As noted on page 27, for example, the renewal proposal includes support letters provided by each of the partnering Regional Offices of Education that indicate their commitment to sustain the training and coaching components of the project. In addition, several district and school leaders have expressed interest in gaining access to the project's training and support services, with several offering to pay for those services (p. 28).

(2) The potential for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing program of the agency or organization at the end of Federal funding is clearly demonstrated. As indicated in the narrative, for example, the primary activities of the project are the development of training materials, tools, resources, and protocols that provide both coaches and principals with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully implement a cycle of inquiry approach that increases student learning (p. 30). The following are additional examples of how the applicant proposes to incorporate the project's purpose beyond Federal funding. Regional partners have agreed to cover any project-related travel or material expenses in years four and five of the project. The Center for the Study of Education Policy staff will be writing additional proposals to secure additional matching support for the project that may include additional expenses for travel, materials, and other resources (pp. 35, 36).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

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Summary Ratings		
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A. Quality of Evaluation Plan	25	25
B. Quality of the Project Design	25	25
C. Strategy to Scale	25	25
D. Adequacy of Resources	25	25
Selection Criteria Total Score	**100**	100

Overall Application Impression (Required):

The project clearly articulates a theory of change for building capacity of educational leaders to support instructional improvement. The proposal also clearly communicates the value of the partnerships and the connections to work outside of this project (such as micro credential work linked to Tennessee) that further shows this project can have great impact.

A. Quality of Project Evaluation (up to 25 points)

The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies.

(2) 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.

<div align="center">(Maximum Points 25)   Reader's Score: ___25____</div>

Strengths:

The proposal describes evaluation methods that will enable the project to examine the effectiveness of the project. This is articulated specifically in two different approaches. First, the project proposes to continue the impact and implementation analysis. (p. 12-14). This will notably help understand the impact since some performance data will be unavailable because of COVID-19. The second is a principal learning conditions study that will examine the relationship between school/district conditions and principal professional development engagement (p. 14-15).

The proposal articulates objective performance measures that relate to the intended outcomes for the project. These measures call for both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a holistic picture of the project's impact. For example, the project includes four goals for the project (p. 38-42). These goals are aligned with objectives and targets, to further specific the goals. And each objective is aligned with a measure. (p. 38-42). These measures are objective and directly address the goals of the project.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

B. Project Design (25 points).

The Secretary considers the quality of the proposed project design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the design for implementing and evaluating the proposed project will result in information to guide possible replication of project activities or strategies, including information about the effectiveness of the approach or strategies employed by the project.

(2) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.   25 points

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Strengths:

The proposal presents a project design that will result in information that could guide replication. For example, the quantitative analyses enable the project to understand issues of significance and variation through their analysis (p. 17-19). In addition, the project is implemented in a number of public elementary, middle and high schools with comparable schools identified in order to ascertain the relationship between the program implementation and outcomes. (p. 18). Also, the project has identified five strategies to guide replication (p.18-20). These include identification of the non-negotiable aspects of the intervention, to name one example. (p. 18).

The proposal also lists several strategies to build capacity and yield results through this project. These include institutionalizing a project-wide professional development design team, participation in statewide policy efforts to secure sustainable public funding, participation in COVID-19 crisis response, and the development of a fee for service model. (p. 19-21). These strategies, as well as the existing work of the evaluators, shows capacity building strategies for the project.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

C. Strategy to Scale (up to 25 points).

The Secretary considers the strategy to scale for the proposed project. In determining the strategy to scale for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The feasibility of successful replication of the proposed project, if favorable results are obtained, in a variety of settings and with a variety of populations.

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

(Maximum Points 25)   Reader's Score: __25_____

Strengths:

The proposal communicates that with successful results, it will be feasible to replicate this work. For example, the regional offices of education that serve as partners were selected to ensure that the work is aligned with state policies and guidelines for supporting educational leaders as well as providing a variety of settings and locations. (p. 22). Thus the participating schools are located in rural settings, suburban areas and large towns, which further suggests that this work is being implemented with a variety of populations. Also, the proposal notes that by engaging regional offices of education rather than school districts, a model is being developed for replication since some high-need school districts will not have the capacity to support this work (p. 23).

To broadly disseminate this work, the proposal shares several strategies. First, the project seeks to make training materials, tools and protocols freely available as much as possible. (p. 24). Plus, a toolkit of resources necessary to deliver training and coaching support will be developed with the renewal funds. (p. 24). Moreover, the development of microcredentials serve as an additional means for communicating this work.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

D. Adequacy of Resources (up to 25 points).

The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources, the Secretary considers the following factors:

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

(2) The potential for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing program of the agency or organization at the end of Federal funding.

(Maximum Points 25)   Reader's Score: _____25___

Strengths:

The proposal demonstrates commitments from partner organizations that suggest that the work can continue beyond the term of the grant. For example, regional offices of education in the state have committed as partners for this project (p. 28). Moreover, two of the regional offices of education are developing grant proposals to provide additional support to this work (p. 28). In addition, the microcredentials developed for this project will be maintained beyond the grant funding by partner, Bloomboard (p. 29).

The proposal clearly articulates how the project activities and benefits are incorporated by partner organizations to ensure that these benefits can continue. For example, the proposal makes this direct connection in a table (p. 31-32). As an example, the proposal demonstrates that training provided by the project has been approved by the state for continuing education hours. Coaching is carried out by trained former administrators. (p. 31). Moreover, the cycles of inquiry approach provides education leaders with a framework for continuing to support instructional improvement. (p. 32).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.