

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/04/2021 08:37 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Education Analytics, Inc. (S411A210003)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	13
Sub Total	15	13
Strategy to Scale		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	20	19
Sub Total	20	19
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	17
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Quality of the Management	20	20
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	
Sub Total	65	37
Total	100	69

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Expansion - 1: 84.411A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Education Analytics, Inc. (S411A210003)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 13

Sub

1. (1) The national significance of the proposed project.

Strengths:

The applicant offers valid evidence of the significance of the proposed project. The proposed project aims to address the lack of literacy proficiency by scaling up in Future Forward (FF), a kindergarten through third grade intervention that delivers research-based high-dosage one-on-one tutoring and family engagement (E18). The applicant supports their assertion with recent and relevant research that indicates that there was a significant percentage of students that lacked reading proficiency both before and after the onset of the COVID pandemic (E18). The applicant also includes research findings that indicate that there is a significant disparity based upon race and socioeconomic status (E19). The proposed project seeks to also address the low level of reading proficiency in the target population by promoting family engagement, which was supported by relevant research. The applicant illustrated that studies found that several parent activities are associated with student academic outcomes, such as parents and their children reading together, checking homework, and parent/teacher communication and partnerships (E28).

Weaknesses:

None found.

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The applicant has offered meaningful evidence indicating that the proposed project with the combination of the two strategies will increase understanding of the problem that increased during the COVID pandemic (E21). The applicant plans to develop a project that improves literacy through high-dosage tutoring and family engagement to address the impact of inconsistent access to instruction, services, and supports (E21).

Weaknesses:

There is a significant amount of research that supports the utilization of one-on-one intensive tutoring to improve student literacy so there is not a substantial probability that the proposed project will significantly increase

Sub

knowledge or understanding of it as an effective strategy. The applicant failed to list the specific types of family engagement activities, their frequency of implementation, and the training that parents will undergo. The absence of these facts does not allow for a clear determination of how much this proposed project will increase knowledge about it as an effective strategy.

Reader's Score:

Strategy to Scale - 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 applicant has clearly identified barriers that may prevent the proposed project from reaching the projected level of scale. The applicant lists the barriers like lack of 1) local school and district capacity for implementation; 2) Fast Forward (FF) organizational capacity to substantially expand beyond current sites and 3) national awareness of FF as a cost-effective evidence-based program (E22-27). The applicant has also matched strategies to each of those identified barriers and offers an explanation on how those strategies will effectively mitigate each barrier. For example; to improve local and school capacity for implementation; the applicant proposes to enter into Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with local school districts to shift program ownership to the school level and build local capacity for implementation through a gradual release model (GRM) facilitated by FF (E22).

Weaknesses:

None found.

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The applicant has identified mechanisms and strategies that they will use to disseminate project information. They will use digital advertising, content marketing, publicity, paid media (i.e., social media, contributed articles, blogs, audio outlets, influencers, news media), both planned and responsive as part of an information dissemination plan (E27). They also state that they will communicate with stakeholders through the establishment of an advisory board (E26).

Weaknesses:

The mechanisms the applicant identified for the dissemination of information are insufficiently narrow. These did not include participation in a regional and national network of similar projects and organizations that offer similar services. The applicant also did not include participation in national conferences or the publication of their findings

Sub

in national/international journals, which are excellent mechanisms for the dissemination of a project of this proposed size and scope.

Reader's Score:

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 there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.**

Strengths:

The applicant has developed a very detailed conceptual framework (Logic Model) that clearly supports the goals and objectives of the proposed project (E95). The applicant also explains how the logic model will guide project implementation and scaling of the proposed project by focusing on four interrelated dimensions of scale: spread, depth, sustainability, and ownership (E27). The quality of the framework is enhanced by the applicant supporting the main components of the proposed project with relevant research findings. For example, the applicant asserts that each of the two proposed services (tutoring & family engagement) has its own educational value, but when utilized in tandem, the probability of improved student outcomes increases (E28).

Weaknesses:

None found.

Reader's Score:

2. **(2) 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 developed a set of four (4) specific goals, which are linked to objectives and outcomes that are clearly specified and measurable (E30-34). The goals are aligned with the overall purpose of the proposed project. The objectives are measurable as evidenced by their language and include changes to both adult and student behavior. For example; the measurable outcomes include targeted personnel and parental participation in addition to measurable student outcomes like improved reading comprehension (E32 & 33).

Weaknesses:

None found.

Reader's Score:

3. **(3) 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.**

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant has designed a project that will somewhat effectively address the needs of the target population. The primary focus of the proposed project is to improve literacy through supplemental tutoring and enhanced family engagement (E35). The applicant aims to address the learning needs of underserved students in primarily rural communities (E36). The proposed project will aim to build positive relationships with families through a variety of communication and educational structures, including text updates, newsletters, phone calls, home visits, and family events (E36). The design outlines that the proposed project will develop activities and support for families to extend FF lessons at home; and provide support and resources for shared read aloud, letter identification, and other types (E32).

Weaknesses:

The applicant fails to sufficiently indicate what specific family engagement training activities will be implemented and how the proposed project will engage in the training of family (parents) to support the literacy instruction of their children.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

- 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 applicant has clearly depicted their capacity to effectively bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level. The applicant has listed several personnel who have previous relevant and appropriate experience implementing the FF project (E38). The applicant has also indicated that they will create another position (Director of Implementation) whose primary responsibility will be leading the expansion of the proposed project to a national level (E38).

Weaknesses:

None found.

Reader's Score:

- 2. (2) 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:

The applicant has developed a comprehensive timeline, which effectively illustrates how the proposed project will be implemented. The timeline includes milestones with time frames as well as the key personnel positions responsible for the implementation of the activity (E39-46). The activities are aligned to the project goals and objectives which increases the likelihood that the project will be completed on time and within budget. For example, the timeline lists activities such as recruitment and training in the earlier years of the grant period (E39); development of a rubric for formative evaluation (E40), and reporting outcomes (E45) in the later years.

Weaknesses:

None found.

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The applicant offers clear evidence that the costs outlined in the proposed project budget are reasonable in relation to the objective, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. The applicant has based its projected cost on the expenditures allocated during its implementation of a prior Mid-Phase EIR (Education Innovation and Research) grant (E46). These figures inform their planning for the costs of expanding the program and are directly aligned with FF's stated objectives.

Weaknesses:

None found.

Reader's Score:

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:

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 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Sub

Reader's Score:

2. (2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

3. (3) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/04/2021 08:37 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/04/2021 01:33 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Education Analytics, Inc. (S411A210003)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	
Sub Total	15	
Strategy to Scale		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	20	
Sub Total	20	
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Quality of the Management	20	
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	20
Sub Total	65	20
Total	100	20

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Expansion - 1: 84.411A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Education Analytics, Inc. (S411A210003)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score:

Sub

1. (1) The national significance of the proposed project.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Strategy to Scale - 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:

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:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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:

Sub

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Sub

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

- 3. (3) 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:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

- 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:

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:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

- 2. (2) 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:

Sub

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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: 20

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 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

Strengths:

The evaluation is designed to meet What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards without reservations through its use of a multi-site randomized controlled trial (e47). Within each school site, students will be assigned randomly to study conditions within each grade (e48). Multiple outcomes will be used to test the impact of the project, including student attendance, the Star reading assessment, and other reading assessments administered locally (e51-52). All the measures have sufficient face validity and evidence of reliability (e52). There is an estimated 10 percent attrition within the year and close to 25 percent across years, based on previous studies (e51). Several strategies are discussed to ensure that attrition is minimized, including consenting students and collecting baseline data prior to assignment (e48). In addition, districts will be given a stipend to assist with data collection (e52) and several districts have already submitted letters of support (example e79). Data will be collected for baseline equivalence and will be used to check randomization (e49). Re-randomization will occur if group differences on the Star assessments are greater than a 0.05 effect size. Students with missing outcome data will be excluded from impact analyses and missing baseline data will be replaced with dummy variable replacement, both of which are acceptable approaches (e51). The power analysis provides a reasonable minimum detectable effect-size and is based on reasonable assumptions (e52). Three-level hierarchical linear modeling, with students nested within grade levels within schools, will be used to estimate treatment effects for the primary impact questions which will account for site-level effects. The models will include a set of strong covariates, including baseline achievement and student demographics (e49).

Sub

Weaknesses:

The comparison condition is business-as-usual (e48) within each school. Given the within school randomization design that requires some students to wait long periods of time for services, it is important to understand whether the delayed business-as-usual students might receive additional support while waiting and how this might impact the business-as-usual condition. For instance, there could be some parents frustrated by being in the delayed group which prompts them to seek additional tutoring. This application might be strengthened by describing the business-as-usual condition. It is not clear how the local assessments will be placed on a common metric, since not all sites use the same assessments (e52) and it may be possible that some sites change assessments during the course of the evaluation study. Given the delay to years four and five of the project for serving students, it is possible that there will be high differential attrition in the sample in year two. The use of replacement students for attrited students is offered as a strategy (e51). Students who join the school will be consented and reading assessed prior to random assignment to either the fall or spring treatment conditions in year two and considered replacements for those students who change schools. Doing so allows all new students to receive the intervention but may introduce error in the estimation of the longitudinal treatment effects. This application might be strengthened with a discussion of how the replacement students will be included in the analyses. While all students will eventually receive the intervention, the probability of being assigned to a specific contrast group differs for some students (e48) and the analysis and power discussions do not include any planned adjustments for the different assignment probabilities.

Reader's Score:

2. (2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.

Strengths:

The evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies using multiple sources of implementation data collection: observations, surveys, and interviews (e53). Data collection is designed to build an understanding of the conditions in schools that facilitate and inhibit successful implementation and scaling up based on the perspective of principals, school staff, and families (e53). Data collection will come from 30 schools in at least five diverse states with varying numbers of high-need schools (e34). This diversity will allow for understanding the effectiveness of the intervention in multiple settings if sites are chosen carefully. Both qualitative data (interviews and surveys) and quantitative data (student characteristics) will be used to in developing the replication guidance (e53). The use of the differential impact analyses to assess the extent to which the intervention is more impactful for certain student subgroups or under different school and program conditions will help to triangulate the results of the findings from the qualitative data collections (e48).

Weaknesses:

This application might be strengthened by including information on the final planned composition of the study sample in the largest locations to demonstrate that a diverse sample of schools will be selected from the diverse set of states.

Reader's Score:

3. (3) 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 is aligned to the key project components and short-term and long-term outcomes specified in the project's logic model (e95). The logic model specifies the key mediators that they hypothesize will contribute to achieving the mid-term and long-term outcomes. Fidelity of implementation data will be used to understand whether the intervention is more impactful for students who received the program as intended (e48). The project clearly identifies the key project components: the tutoring students receive, and the contacts made to families (e54). Successful implementation thresholds are provided at the student/family level and at the school level, as well as an

Sub

overall project-level threshold (e54). All thresholds are measurable and appropriate. The research questions are aligned to the project goals and include both confirmatory impact questions and exploratory contrasts to contribute to the understanding of differential impacts (e48).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/04/2021 01:33 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/04/2021 01:14 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Education Analytics, Inc. (S411A210003)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	
Sub Total	15	
Strategy to Scale		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	20	
Sub Total	20	
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Quality of the Management	20	
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	17
Sub Total	65	17
Total	100	17

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Expansion - 1: 84.411A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Education Analytics, Inc. (S411A210003)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score:

Sub

1. (1) The national significance of the proposed project.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Strategy to Scale - 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:

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:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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:

Sub

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Sub

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

- 3. (3) 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:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

- 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:

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:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

- 2. (2) 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:

Sub

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

Strengths:

Some of 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. For example, the utilization of hierarchical linear modeling is appropriate for students nested within classrooms, within schools (e54). Analysis using this technique can provide statistically valid impact assessment including an examination of the effects of moderating/mediating variables.

The two primary research questions (e53) address expected outcomes of the activities described in proposal. The analyses of the data addressing these questions are likely to inform the logic model and provide insight into the effectiveness of the intervention.

The annual evaluator reporting (e59) can provide feedback to implementers regarding the fidelity of project implementation and interim outcomes. This information can be used to improve projects inputs and enhance positive outcomes.

The applicant provides for an analysis of any potential differences between non-consenting and consenting participants for pre-treatment differences that can affect outcomes(e57).

Weaknesses:

It is not clear from the narrative provided by the applicant if the districts/schools included in the study are truly randomly selected. The content of the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) that is required for participation is not specified (e25, e30, e33, e34). The narrative further identifies perspective schools that appear to already be

Sub

pre-selected or currently participating in Future Forward or related interventions (e22-e23, e85-e103). This non-random inclusion process and possible previous experience of schools with tutor/family involvement can introduce selection bias into the research model and threaten the validity of outcome findings.

The comparability of across district/state assessments of reading ability (e57) is not described by the applicant. The applicant does not assure that the randomly selected schools will use the listed instruments. If schools/districts are pre-selected there is no analysis to show how different assessment tools will be treated to make comparisons between student outcomes across states.

The applicant identifies a relative high rate of attrition for students (e56). Within the school year and across school year, attrition is estimated at a total of 35%. The applicant proposes the use of “dummy variable” replacement for missing baseline data, however this method is not appropriate for schools that are not randomly selected (Institute of Educational Science, National Center for Education Evaluation) (e57). This proposed activity could result in biased data.

Reader's Score:

2. (2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.

Strengths:

The applicant proposes implementation in rural settings in multiple states across the mid-west and south (e22-24). The focus on rural areas creates the potential for replication of effective strategies in rural schools in other regions of the country.

Weaknesses:

The generalizability of the findings secured by the applicant are suspect due to several factors. For example, the exclusion of English Learners (ELs) and students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) (e53), which increases the likelihood that the regions identified for inclusion are likely to yield disproportionate sampling of white/minority students. Other factors that could limit the generalizability of findings is the inclusion in the study of schools with possible previous project involvement, limitations regarding evaluative sampling and instrumentation, and the omission of critical intervening variables that could explain outcomes (e.g., ethnicity, family income, tutor/family support provider characteristics, school size, etc.). These conditions limit the applicability of the findings to other school settings.

The applicant does not include in their discussion the operationalization of intervening variables regarding teacher, tutor, or family support providers, which are described as mediators (e60). Also, these mediators are not included in logic model (e107). These omissions may indicate a lack of information for completing an evaluative model that includes intervening impacts on outcomes.

The methodology and instrumentation for the evaluative surveys and interviews described by the applicant (e58) are not sufficient to determine their validity and reliability. The proposal does not provide the methodology for how an unbiased sample of participant feedback will be collected and does not provide evidence for the content validity of the survey instrument or nature of interview protocols. In addition, a defined rubric for establishing which schools in the study are characterized as potential “full release” or “developing capacity” is not provided. This lack of methodological information calls into question the usefulness of these activities in accurately interpreting the data obtained.

The applicant's description of the role and resources allocated to the external evaluation/evaluator are limited to the point where the efficacy of the evaluative activities is questionable. For example, ongoing formative evaluation contacts with the evaluator are not described and formative evaluation is assigned to the project director (e46), feedback from the evaluator appears to be limited to annual reports (e46), no budget detail regarding the funding of the evaluation activities could be located, and the applicant presents the evaluation as a one-person activity (e52). These limitations and lack of detail regarding the evaluator brings into question the adequacy of the resources that can be applied to carrying out an effective evaluation.

Sub

The applicant describes a fully implemented Focus Forward school (e59-e60) in terms of student and family participation in project activities. However, information about how these criteria will be applied to the analysis of the data and at what level (e.g., student/school) is lacking. The usefulness of the participation data in understanding the outcomes of the proposed activities cannot be determined from the information presented.

Reader's Score:

- 3. **(3) 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 assessment of implementation fidelity (e55-e56) on project outcomes is established by the applicant and are related to student and family interactions with Future Forward staff and activities. The treatment-on-treated modeling (e56) also has the potential to be an effective approach in integrating the fidelity measures impact into the analysis model and identifying its relative impact on outcomes.

Weaknesses:

That applicant states that the evaluator will publish papers regarding the outcomes of the implementation of the proposed activities (e59). However, the evaluator is not mentioned in any other dissemination context (e49, e51-e52). Most dissemination activities are described as the responsibility of the project director without reference to collaboration with the evaluator. This condition can create participant bias in discussion/dissemination of research findings.

Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/04/2021 01:14 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/04/2021 12:49 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Education Analytics, Inc. (S411A210003)

Reader #4: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	13
Sub Total	15	13
Strategy to Scale		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	20	19
Sub Total	20	19
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	18
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Quality of the Management	20	20
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	
Sub Total	65	38
Total	100	70

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Expansion - 1: 84.411A

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: Education Analytics, Inc. (S411A210003)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 13

Sub

1. (1) The national significance of the proposed project.

Strengths:

The applicant includes strong justification for the proposed project and how it will have a potentially significant impact on reading in the K-3 grades (p. e20). The inclusion of national statistics from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessment (p. e18) and demographic statistics from the Office of the Civil Rights (p. e19) supports the national implications of the reading problems that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. The work across numerous, diverse states will produce results that will apply to education on a national level (p. e.20).

Weaknesses:

None noted

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The proposed project will provide many opportunities to increase knowledge regarding significant problems across the nation (p. e21). For example, the project proposes high dosage tutoring combined with family engagement as a strategy to impact reading with students which will provide evidence of impact for future research (p. e21). In addition, the project will address concerns regarding learning loss which will provide evidence of effective strategies that can be used by other educators (p. e20).

Weaknesses:

The term family engagement is poorly operationalized in the work being done. For example, the proposal notes a variety of engagement strategies will be used to build on student development and to assist with student advocacy (p. e20) but there is no information on what those would be.

Reader's Score:

Strategy to Scale - 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 proposal includes detailed barriers drawn from experience with the intervention program in previous implementation projects (p. e22) and proposes targeted strategies necessary to improve the impact of the program (p. e23). For example, based on previous experience with the Milwaukee Public Schools, implementation was not successful as the district staff did not take ownership of the project (p. e22). To address this issue in future implementation cycles, the project proposes a strategy of involvement and engagement from the beginning of the project with the district to fully integrate the project (p. e23), which is an effective manner of building the necessary buy-in for this type of project. The Logic Model (p. e95) provides an excellent process for using the methods proposed for moving the intervention to scale, with detailed flow lines that would serve to guide the implementation process.

Weaknesses:

None noted

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The proposed development of engagement and dissemination plans is a useful way of addressing an identified barrier of lack of dissemination as well as providing support for future research into literacy interventions (p. e26). The connection of specific stakeholder groups to unique dissemination plans is an effective means of targeting future users (p. e27). For example, groups of educators or caregivers will focus dissemination plans to their groups using tools shared among the full project (p. e27), which will allow for customization of the message.

Weaknesses:

The dissemination plan lacks participation in national conferences or research publications to share results with research colleagues which would allow for a much broader reach (p. e27).

Reader's Score:

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: 18

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant includes a clear framework for the implementation of the proposed project (p. e27). The framework provides details regarding each element of the scale model supported by research to guide practice (p. e27 & e95). The connection between academic interventions and family engagement strategies will produce longer lasting results that are reinforced through the home (p. e28). For example, not only will tutoring be provided through the intervention but the family will be involved which their cited research notes could have an impact on student achievement (p. e28).

Weaknesses:

None noted

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The goals, objectives and outcomes of the project are clearly developed and connected to the work and each other (p. e31). The project includes broad goals that are aligned to measurable objectives that are measured at the formative and summative level. For example, Goal 3 regarding implementation includes several objectives, one of which is to review parent contact and participation data which will be measured by 4 performance measures and an overall program outcome regarding fidelity (p. e33). Each of these elements is well connected, comprehensive and measurable. The objectives include changes to both adult behavior and student behavior (p. e33), targeted personnel and reading comprehension.

Weaknesses:

None noted

Reader's Score:

- 3. (3) 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 proposal clearly outlines how the project will address the needs of the targeted students by utilizing research-based activities such as tutoring and family engagement (p. e36). For example, the targeted high needs students will benefit from the strong family engagement component of the intervention which has been shown to be effective with these types of students (p. e36). The previous experience of the applicants in the implementation of similar programs will help to guide the participants and increase the impact of the project (p. e35).

Weaknesses:

The proposal lacks details related to what family engagement training activities will look like in the project (p. e36). For example, it is unclear when parents will be trained in the specific strategies or approaches required to address

Sub

student learning and tutoring.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

- 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 staff identified to direct the activities outlined in the project are clearly qualified and have sufficient experience to execute the interventions and manage the grant (p. e38). For example, the four key personnel identified to lead the project have specific experience with previous iterations of the program and will leverage that experience to effectively manage the project (p. e38). The matching funds and planned grant funds are sufficient to bring the project to scale (p. e247).

Weaknesses:

None noted

Reader's Score:

- 2. (2) 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 management plan included in the grant is clearly developed and includes the responsibilities, timelines and milestones of the project (p. e41). The breakdown of the plan to address each goal and objective separately provides clarity to the implementation plan and will serve as a guide to those doing the work (p. e42).

Weaknesses:

None noted

Reader's Score:

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

Sub

Strengths:

The budget includes all of the required elements and outlines clearly most of the activities that will be conducted in the project (p. e256). The costs for salaries, travel and activities are reasonable and align to the goals and objectives in the application (p. e255). The budget assumptions appear to be reasonable as they were based on previous experience with large scale grant programs (p. e46)

Weaknesses:

None noted

Reader's Score:

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:

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 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score:

2. (2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score:

3. (3) 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.

Sub

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted

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