

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/06/2021 03:49 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: DuPage Regional Office of Education #19 (S411B210036)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	15
Sub Total	15	15
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	12
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Quality of the Management	20	20
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	
Sub Total	65	32
Priority Questions		
CPP1		
Computer Science		
1. Computer Science	5	
Sub Total	5	
Total	105	66

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Mid-Phase - 1: 84.411B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: DuPage Regional Office of Education #19 (S411B210036)

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: 15

Sub

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

Strengths:

This proposed project aims to explore whether the ways principals lead and organize schools can influence student outcomes. The narrative points out that principal influence accounts for one-quarter of the school-level variation in student achievement, and that the impact of principal leadership is greatest in schools with the greatest academic needs (pp. e24-25). This is a noted strength, as it demonstrates the potential for the research and increased knowledge from the project to have a significant impact on outcomes for schools beyond the project participants. The application proposes working with 130 schools, 70,000 students, at all grade levels K-12. Additionally, more than half of the sites will be rural locations (Abstract p. e17). These are noted strengths, because the project will measure outcomes from diverse implementation sites that will lead to outcomes that are applicable to more schools with varying needs and contexts. The narrative describes this as a replicable model that can be used to inform state and national policy (p. e21) and proposes the addition of new sites within one state which is designed to influence state policy in ways that will sustain the work of supporting school leaders. Overall, this proposal has the potential to be a nationally significant project by adding to the knowledge base on strategies to improve school leadership and ultimately student outcomes.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses 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 narrative notes a lack of empirical studies involving school leaders, particularly research on leaders from rural schools (p. e23). The application does describe the existing evidence base for this work, noting two studies which demonstrated significant impact on student learning in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. The project team describes a previous EIR Early Phase project and describe it as successful (p. e21). This is a noted strength, as it demonstrates the existing evidence that the strategy can lead to improved student outcomes and warrants additional research. Additionally, the proposal notes five specific ways of expanding evidence and contributing to the field of knowledge, including examining embedded professional development for school leaders and increasing

Sub

understanding of the role of the principal as an organizational leader (p. e23-24). Finally, project strategies and a rationale for developing new knowledge are clearly explained (p. e24-e25). The proposal does an excellent job of demonstrating how the project will seek to increase knowledge and our understanding of effective strategies for school leadership.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

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:

Four barriers to scale are identified and discussed in the application. The first relates to the logistical challenge of bringing school leader participants together when they are widely separated geographically. The project proposes the use of a hybrid model of coaching and training online and in-person to address this challenge (p. e26). The use of technology is a noted strength, because it clearly addresses the challenge of travel for participants, but also creates a model with digital resources that is supportive of future replication. Other challenges discussed are tensions between the needs for standardized and personalized coaching approaches, the lack of capacity and high turnover of leaders in participating schools, and lack of financial resources for professional development (p. e26-e29). These are strengths as each of the challenges highlighted is addressed by a mitigation strategy that is both reasonable and clearly reduces the barrier to improve the likelihood of the project being able to reach scale.

Weaknesses:

The discussion of the shift to greater reliance on state funding and support to sustain this program is a weakness as it does not propose a clear capacity-building approach that makes the project more cost-effective. Under the proposed solution for shifting expenses to state funding, it is not clear how the funding would emerge without being shifted from supporting another educational program or need, possibly leaving a deficit elsewhere in the school. (p. e26-e29) The lack of a clear strategy to address the costs of the program beyond seeking the money elsewhere is a noted weakness.

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.**

Sub

Strengths:

Three specific strategies for dissemination and replication are discussed (p. e29), specifically alignment with state policy initiatives, building regional capacity, and leveraging partner dissemination networks. The discussion related to the alignment of the project with state policies and regional education organizations demonstrates evidence of planned strategies to sustain and replicate the project within the state beyond the grant period (p. e30-e31). A commitment to sharing findings from the evaluation with the greater educational community, including through state and national conferences and partner organizations is provided (p. e31-e32). Additionally, a communication consultant and web designer will be added to the team to develop a more robust online dissemination approach (p. e32). The proposal clearly demonstrates multiple strategies and a commitment of project resources to ensure that the study outcomes is disseminated to encourage further development and replication.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

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: 12

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 theory underlying this project explores how an integrated leadership system can result in significant increases in student learning. The mechanism for achieving this system is enabling principals to establish strong professional learning communities with collective responsibility (p. e33). The proposal details a rationale for the professional development and coaching models, which specifically demonstrates ways in which the proposed approach differs from more traditional approaches (p. e33-e36). A project logic model is included (p. e206) that clearly demonstrates each element of the design and shows how they are linked to one another to create a coherent approach. The strong conceptual framework demonstrates an approach that is grounded in research, and therefore is more likely to achieve the intended outcomes of ultimately improving student achievement.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses 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 application includes a very clear and detailed chart showing project goals, objectives, strategies, measures, and anticipated outcomes. The goals and objectives address the impact of training, coaching, tools and resources on instructional quality and student outcomes. Additionally, most of the outcomes are measurable and specific

Sub

targets are provided. These are noted strengths, as they demonstrates a plan for the project to measure the success in relation to the project goals for improved leadership and student learning outcomes. (p. e37-e38)

Weaknesses:

The second project goal to develop highly effective principals in partnering schools that improve instructional quality does not have a clear, measurable outcome. This is a weakness because the outcomes and measures listed are all related to implementation, such as how much training is provided and participant satisfaction. No direct outcome measure is provided that would show an impact of a highly effective principal on improved instructional quality. Additionally, it is noted that the second evaluation research question does collect survey responses from teachers, but the evaluation does not specifically address if the survey will collect explicit information on instructional quality. The lack of detail about how the project will measure this goal with a tool is a noted weakness, because it is not clear if the evaluation will gather a data set to inform if the goal was achieved. (p. e37-e38)

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 narrative addresses the potential of this project to provide principals with tools, resources, and knowledge needed to implement instructional improvement efforts that specifically meet the needs of the school's teachers and students. The application also describes the value participants placed on the coaching resources as they responded to the uncertainty and changing landscape resulting from COVID-19 (p. e39). The inclusion of the coaching strategy with flexible resources and tools is a strength because it demonstrates a commitment to meeting the individual needs of each principal so that they can experience success and ultimately support the improvement of student learning outcomes.

Weaknesses:

The application does not clearly address or describe the specific needs of school leaders within the state. This is a weakness of the proposal because it is not clear if the project has the appropriate mechanisms in place to determine the needs of this targeted population of school leaders. For example, the proposal does not identify a tool or strategy for identifying the needs of principals, nor does the proposal describe how the project will personalize coaching supports. It is not clear what differentiated coaching and supports are available to the target population, or how many principals require this intensive intervention to improve the instructional capacity of their teachers. The lack of detail about the needs of the targeted population creates a challenge to determine if the project meets those needs. (p. e39).

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

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 successfully managed an EIR early-phase grant, demonstrating the capacity to manage large-scale federal grants. An organizational chart is provided, and the roles and responsibilities of key personnel are clearly described. The project team roles described include fiscal, administrative, and grant management responsibilities. Additionally, the partners are addressed, and the roles and responsibilities of key partner personnel are also included. These specific elements demonstrates a comprehensive project management plan that demonstrates expertise and a strong likelihood of achieving the proposed project. (p. e40-e43)

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses 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:

A clear description of the management and sustainability plans are provided, reflecting an understanding and commitment to complete the project on time and within budget. A timeline chart listing clear milestones and responsible parties for all aspects of the project is provided (p. e44-e45). The milestones are specific and clearly defined, which is a noted strength because it demonstrates a clear plan for achieving and assessing the success of the project over the full grant period.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses 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.**

Strengths:

The cost of the project described in the narrative is reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance. Additionally, the budget narrative is clear and descriptive (p. e231-e235). This is a strength of the proposal, as it demonstrates that the appropriate resources are in place to achieve the grant at the scale proposed. Finally, the proposal includes a clear and specific narrative that shows how all costs are calculated, including a discussion of in-kind cost. At scale this work will impact 130 schools and 70,000 students at a calculated cost of \$84.38 per student (p. e46-e47). This is a reasonable cost that is aligned with both the strategies to improve school leadership, and the potential for improvement in student learning outcomes at scale.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses 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:

Weaknesses:

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:

Priority Questions

CPP1 - Computer Science

1. Projects designed to improve student achievement or other educational outcomes in computer science (as defined in this notice). These projects must address the following priority area:

Expanding access to and participation in rigorous computer science coursework for traditionally underrepresented students such as racial or ethnic minorities, women, students in communities served by rural local educational agencies (as defined in this notice), children or students with disabilities (as defined in this notice), or low-income individuals (as defined under section 312(g) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended).

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: DuPage Regional Office of Education #19 (S411B210036)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	15
Sub Total	15	15
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	13
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Quality of the Management	20	20
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	0
Sub Total	65	33
Priority Questions		
CPP1		
Computer Science		
1. Computer Science	5	
Sub Total	5	
Total	105	67

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Mid-Phase - 1: 84.411B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: DuPage Regional Office of Education #19 (S411B210036)

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: 15

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant proposes to scale the existing program, Partners to Lead (PTL), to a new group of schools that includes both rural and high-need schools in the targeted population. (p. e20) This project has national significance because results from this new project, Partners to Lead Scaled (PTL2), has the potential to inform a broad representation of schools that come from various areas and serve students of diverse needs. (p. e21)

The use of American Institutes for Research (AIR) as part of the evaluation team is a strength because the partners have extensive experience with both evaluation and dissemination of strategies for K-12 education. The presence of this partnership demonstrates a strong potential that the study will yield outcomes that can inform future expansion and replication. (p. e22)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are 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 project focuses on developing principal leadership practices that contribute to improved instructional quality. Additionally, the project plans to offer professional development to K-12 principals to promote the creation of a school culture of inquiry using distributed leadership practices. This is a strength because the greater field has a clear need to build understanding on how principals can lead and organize schools in ways that routinely improve outcomes for students. (p. e23-e24) The investigation includes measuring clear strategies for principal training, and determining the impact on student outcomes to inform future principal training and professional learning.

The targeted population for the project will include rural and high-need schools. This is a strength because these schools not only have the need for expertise and resources, but have been traditionally under-represented in competitive grant competitions and in multi-year rigorous research studies. The inclusion of these schools creates

Sub

an opportunity to build the research base on the effectiveness of principal training strategies for rural and high-needs schools, which has the potential to increase future replication of the project beyond the grant period. (p. e24)

This project uses instructional leadership teams (ILT) for improvement of instruction and will also create training materials for these teams. This is a strength of the proposal because it addresses the need for the training materials, but it also has the potential to increase understanding about how the instructional leadership team may impact classroom instruction. (p. e24)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are noted.

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 notes that scaling this project presents logistical challenges because the schools are spread across the state. To address this barrier, the project proposes to use multiple formats for delivering principal training and coaching. This is a strength because the virtual and regional in-person training decreases travel to make the coordination and creation of professional learning communities for principals across school sites more likely. (p. e25)

Additionally, the proposal describes the lack of capacity and/or high turnover of district leaders as a barrier that results in inconsistent support for school implementation. The project team plans to address this by building the capacity of the regional offices of education. This is a strength because the solution utilizes the existing state education infrastructure to provide schools and educators consistent support for the project. The solution is more likely to be sustainable, as it uses existing organizational structures in K-12. (p. e27)

The project proposes that funding barriers will be addressed in multiple ways. For example, the project will capitalize on the routines and processes for data collection, data reporting, fiscal management, training schedules, and other logistics that were previously established with partners in the early phase of the project. This is a strength because the project has the potential to save time and money by using existing solutions, and build upon previous lessons learned to lead an effective grant implementation. (p. e27)

Finally, the barrier of funding will be addressed through the use of materials that were developed in the previous Partners to Lead (PLT) which the applicant estimates will save over 23% per participating school. This is a strength because it exemplifies how this project is reducing costs for replication, which may make future expansion more feasible for additional schools and state partners. (p. e28)

Weaknesses:

The applicant proposes to address the barrier of financial costs for implementation through the identification of potential state and local policy connections that could provide future funding from the state education budget. The concern with this approach is that the state education budget source does not address the root cause of overall expense for the implementation of Partners to Lead Scaled (PLT2). This is a noted weakness, as it does not appear the project has a clear strategy to address the reduction of costs to make project scaling more likely at the conclusion of the grant. (p. e27)

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 proposal seeks to evaluate the essential elements of the project, while also evaluating those strategies that are personalized to the school site. The inclusion of these secondary personalized strategies are commonly difficult to articulate, and can impact future replication potential. The project plans to conduct quantitative and qualitative research to provide rich descriptions of these elements, an understanding of how contextual factors, like location and size, affect implementation, as well as the impact of these elements on student learning outcomes. The inclusion of essential and personalized strategies is a noted strength of the proposal, as it demonstrates how the project team plans to gather data that will be used for dissemination to improve the likelihood for future replication success. (p. e29-e30)

The strategies for the dissemination of results are diverse. For example, the project plans to present at conferences. The project team has identified specific organizations to target for presentations, such as Association of Illinois Rural and Small Schools and National Rural Education. This is a noted strength, as it demonstrates a clear plan to present at specific locations, which increases the likelihood of success. (p. e30-e31)

Another dissemination effort involves using the reach of project partners to share outcomes from the study. This is a strength because partner organizations, such as American Institutes for Research (AIR), have a demonstrated national network of research, policymakers and practitioners to increase the likelihood of expansion or replication. (p. e31)

Finally, the regional offices of education are another partner who will assist with dissemination of the results. This is a strength because these offices have existing connections and partnerships with schools across the entire state, which increases the likelihood that schools beyond the project will seek to adopt and replicate the successful strategies. (p. e31)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are noted.

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: 13

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 framework for the Partners to Lead Scaled (PLT2) project is built on a previous study with moderate effectiveness. (p. e31) The applicant cites research supporting this qualifying study, which reports success with on-going, cohesive training as well as embedded coaching and engagement of teacher teams. The framework is a strength of the proposal because it demonstrates a clear research base to inform the selection of strategies that are likely to improve student learning outcomes. (p. e31-e33)

The applicant includes a logic model on page e205. This illustration shares how the components of the project will work together along with the inputs and expected outputs. The logic model is a strength of the proposal, as it demonstrates a clear rationale for how the project plans to achieve improved student outcomes.

The applicant includes charts (Tables 1 and 2 on pages e33-e35) that contrast typical professional development and principal coaching models with the proposed PLT2 approach. This comparison is a noted strength for the proposal because it clearly demonstrates how the proposed project differs from traditional and/or typical approaches and will add to the overall understanding of the field.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are 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 chart on pages e36 through e37 provides a description of the two overarching goals of the project along with objectives and measurable targets. This proposal clearly describes the rationale for activities and aligns those with outcomes that have corresponding measures with an identified measurement tool. For example, for Activity 2.2.2 (p. e37) the proposal describes the justification for conducting the principal and instructional learning team meetings. Additionally, the next column lists the measurement tool, which is the instructional leadership team (ILT) meeting log with a target that 90% of the ILTs meet 2 hours per month. This example demonstrates the specificity that is included, and is a noted strength of the project because it clearly details how the project will measure the success of the strategies in relation to the goals.

Weaknesses:

The second goal for the project includes an intent to improve the instructional quality occurring at the principal's school site. The objective, outcome, and stated activities for this goal focus on the implementation of the project, as opposed to a measure and tools related to evaluating improvement in classroom instruction. Additionally, the evaluation section does not clearly address how instructional quality will be assessed, so the project measurement of this goal is not clear. This is a weakness, because it is not clear how the project will ultimately measure the effectiveness of the principal strategies as they relate to improved instructional quality in the classroom. (p. e36-e37)

Sub

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 establishes the need for professional development and resources in rural areas and for high needs, hard-to-staff schools while limiting travel and supporting leadership. (p. e24) The proposal plans to meet the needs of the schools and principals through a partnership with the regional offices of education to both limit travel and support schools. This is a strength of the proposal, as it seeks to build upon existing relationships in rural regions to reduce travel and the likelihood of attrition among participating leaders.

The proposal describes how the professional development for the principals and instructional learning teams (ILTs) is specific to their needs. The personalization of the content is a noted strength because principals and ILTs will obtain the knowledge and skills necessary to implement instructional improvement efforts that align with the specific needs of their school and teachers. (p. e38)

Weaknesses:

The proposal states that the professional development will consider each principal's individual strengths and areas for development, along with the specific context of their school. (p. e38) However, the proposal does not describe how this data will be collected, nor does it clearly describe how the professional development will be customized for each principal's and school's needs. The lack of detail related to both data collection and the plan to personalize content is a weakness, because it is not clear if the project has a set of actions that will be feasible and successful in alignment with project goals. (p. e38)

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 resumes for key project personnel, evaluation and data team members, key partners and regional school district staff are provided and begin on page e56. The resumes indicate strong experience and knowledge across all personnel related to education and principal professional learning. The expertise of the project personnel is a strength for this project, because it demonstrates the team has the knowledge to successfully deliver the PLT2 project.

The resumes for the regional grant coordinators have been included and indicate the level of experience and competence that is expected for the position. (p. e41) Additionally, the applicant proposes district technical

Sub

assistance to be provided at .5 FTE for three of the regions. This is a strength because it supplements the expertise of existing staff with the additional support that is specific to the goals of the professional learning for the project. This design is a strength because it allows the project to draw upon existing relationships in the region, while ensuring there is sufficient expertise for principal support. (p. e41)

The proposal includes a specific plan for fiscal oversight. Dr. Dotson has experience with grants and has the education and training in supporting nonprofit organizations. This individual's inclusion is a strength of the project, as it creates a clear plan for management of the financial resources to achieve the intended project outcomes. (p. e40 and e151-e155)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are 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 proposal includes table 4 (p. e43-e44) which shows activities with timeline periods that are typically in six month periods. In several instances, a specific number of meeting sessions is designated, such as the coordinators' meetings which will occur throughout the year at twice per month. These designations are a strength in the management plan because it clearly presents the expectation and allows the project a mechanism to measure success.

Additionally, the proposal includes a detailed management chart on pages e43 and e44 that frequently includes an individual responsible for the proposed activity. For example, on page e44, the Partners to Lead (PLT) coordinators and Regional Offices of Education (ROEs) are responsible for the monthly principal training and/or networking sessions. Noting the project has designated a PLT Coordinator for each region, the activity has a clear individual that will ultimately have responsibility for the completion of the activity. This is a strength of the management plan because the accountability for project activities is clear which leads to a higher likelihood of success.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are 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.**

Strengths:

The applicant cites research that discusses the overall financial cost of teachers that change schools or leave the profession. The project has the potential to reduce the likelihood of insufficient support from the principal, which is cited as the primary reason that teachers leave the profession or change schools. This is a noted strength of the proposal because it demonstrates how the proposal has a potential to reduce overall costs at the school in response to the implementation of the program. (p. e46)

Additionally, the proposal notes in-kind funds, through salary waivers, to be donated to the project. This is a strength because it allows federal grant funds to stretch further so the project can serve additional schools and

Sub

principals. (p. e233 and e234)

The applicant states that approximately 70,000 students will be served at a cost of \$84.38 per student. (p. e45) The cost per student is a strength because it is a low amount given the impact that students will receive during the grant period as well as the potential impact on future teachers and students.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are 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: 0

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:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

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:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

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:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score:

Priority Questions

CPP1 - Computer Science

1. **Projects designed to improve student achievement or other educational outcomes in computer science (as defined in this notice). These projects must address the following priority area: Expanding access to and participation in rigorous computer science coursework for traditionally underrepresented students such as racial or ethnic minorities, women, students in communities served by rural local educational agencies (as defined in this notice), children or students with disabilities (as defined in this notice), or low-income individuals (as defined under section 312(g) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended).**

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/06/2021 04:26 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/09/2021 10:05 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: DuPage Regional Office of Education #19 (S411B210036)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	0
Sub Total	15	0
Strategy to Scale		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	20	0
Sub Total	20	0
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	0
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Quality of the Management	20	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	23
Sub Total	65	23
Priority Questions		
CPP1		
Computer Science		
1. Computer Science	5	
Sub Total	5	
Total	105	23

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Mid-Phase - 1: 84.411B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: DuPage Regional Office of Education #19 (S411B210036)

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: 0

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: 0

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: 0

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: 0

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: 23

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 follows a blocked school-level randomized controlled trial design to examine the impact of the Partners to Lead - Scaled (PTL2) program on student achievement, school culture, and leadership (p. e47). The applicant proposes to use the intent-to-treat sample to minimize the chance of attrition. This is appropriate as the measures for student and school outcomes come from state-required standardized assessments (p. e210-e211) and reporting on an annual state-wide survey (p. e211). The survey demonstrates reliability (p. e50). Additionally, there are no concerns related to confounding factors. These design considerations allow the proposed project to meet What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards without reservations. This is a noted strength because it demonstrates an evaluation design and methodology that may produce outcomes that are sound and able to inform future replication of the model.

Weaknesses:

The minimum detectable effect size (MDES) for school-level outcomes is projected at 0.55, which may be too high for the proposed sample to achieve (e49). Additionally, the applicant needs to clarify if RQ2, which seeks to establish the impact of PTL2 on schoolwide culture and instructional leadership quality, is a primary outcome (e47). If the project team intends this school improvement to be a primary outcome, the study needs more schools to ensure sufficient statistical power to detect program impact on schools. The lack of detail on the role of this outcome is a noted weakness because it is not clear if the project has a sufficient sample to measure success.

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:

The applicant describes the intent to report findings from the implementation study in both a formative and summative manner. For example, the implementation study outcomes will be used to inform program staff formatively during the project period (p. e51-52). This is a noted strength, as it demonstrates how a single data set can inform both continuous feedback for the project implementation, as well as informing future opportunities for replication beyond the grant period. Additionally, the proposed cost analysis provides information about the program effectiveness in relation to student achievement and program implementation (p. e51). This is a strength which will help future school districts to decide on the financial viability to adopt the program.

Weaknesses:

No weakness is noted.

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 applicant clearly describes project components, outcomes, and thresholds for implementation. Additionally, the proposal articulates the analysis and use of program implementation as well as outcome measures. These details demonstrate a sound methodology for data analysis that, if well implemented, will lead to accurate outcomes. (e46-e52)

The key project components for principals include training, coaching, network meetings, and the engagement of Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs), as stated in the logic model (p. e205). The key project components for ILTs include training, meetings, and member application of learning. This is a noted strength of the proposal, as it clearly identifies the key project components and aligns those efforts to create a rationale that clearly aligns with the intended project outcome.

Table D1 on page e214 suggests mediators as measured by teacher responses to the state's annual survey and employment data. Additionally, the table also includes measurable thresholds for program components, including the commitment from the superintendent and principal, attendance for training and coaching, the problem of practice identification, and participant engagement to the Cycles of Inquiry (COI). These are a noted strength because it demonstrates a clear measure to determine how program participation may affect evaluation outcomes.

The measures of outcomes are articulated on pages e210 to e211, which include state assessment on English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics, English language proficiency scores from a standardized test for English language learners, and a state annual survey administered to teachers and students above 4th grade. The outcomes are based on validated instruments and are clearly aligned with the goals of the project, which are noted strengths.

Weaknesses:

The analysis methodology that will be used to address mediators is lacking clear detail to understand how the evaluation will address these variables. (e214) This is a noted weakness, as it is not clear if the evaluation team will use appropriate analysis methodology to achieve expected outcomes. Additionally, the employment data from the state Board of Education is not described to allow for a clear understanding of its use to inform the outcomes of the

Sub

project. (e214).

Reader's Score:

Priority Questions

CPP1 - Computer Science

1. **Projects designed to improve student achievement or other educational outcomes in computer science (as defined in this notice). These projects must address the following priority area: Expanding access to and participation in rigorous computer science coursework for traditionally underrepresented students such as racial or ethnic minorities, women, students in communities served by rural local educational agencies (as defined in this notice), children or students with disabilities (as defined in this notice), or low-income individuals (as defined under section 312(g) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended).**

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/09/2021 10:05 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/09/2021 12:00 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: DuPage Regional Office of Education #19 (S411B210036)

Reader #4: *****

	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	23
Sub Total	65	23
Priority Questions		
CPP1		
Computer Science		
1. Computer Science	5	
Sub Total	5	
Total	105	23

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Mid-Phase - 1: 84.411B

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: DuPage Regional Office of Education #19 (S411B210036)

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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:

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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:

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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.

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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:

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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:

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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 proposed evaluation is a cluster-level randomized controlled trial (RCT) where schools randomly assigned to condition. This design can allow for the highest possible What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Meets Standards without Reservations rating to be achieved (pages e47-48). This is a noted strength of the evaluation design, as it would lead to evidence-based outcomes to inform future community practice.

Additionally, the proposed student-level outcomes are standardized assessments that have face validity, do not appear to be overaligned with either study condition, and the assessments will be administered in the same manner for both conditions (page e50). There do not appear to be confounds that would affect WWC rating. These are noted strengths and demonstrate potential to achieve the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations.

Finally, the proposed evaluation uses an intent-to-treat framework and administrative student-level data to answer the primary research question. Therefore, attrition is unlikely to be a factor affecting WWC rating (page e210).

Weaknesses:

If it is determined that there is high attrition based on WWC criteria, a pre-test must be included for each eligible outcome in order to evaluate baseline equivalence of the study conditions. The proposal indicates baseline equivalence will be evaluated using baseline measures (page e48 and e210) but does not clearly specify the

Sub

proposed measures. The evaluation team may use the spring data from the prior school year (page e50), but it is not clearly stated and calls into question the presence of a pre-identified eligible baseline assessment. The lack of detail related to this data collection and planning for attrition is a noted weakness, as it has the potential to affect the final WWC rating.

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 plans to include moderators of program impact such as student race, ethnicity, gender, school grade band, and urbanicity to explore program strengths and limitations (page e49). Specifically, research question 3 will use quantitative and qualitative data to describe implementation across diverse student populations, school contexts, and school leader experience (page e50). This a strength that will provide stakeholders information that can inform future implementation and replication.

Additionally, the evaluation plans to conduct a cost-analysis to account for direct and indirect total program cost, cost per treatment principal and treatment student, as well as variation in costs due to distance from training site (page e50-51). A cost-effectiveness ratio will be created using total program cost with program effectiveness. This level of detail in cost analysis is a noted strength that will provide information to help stakeholders determine feasibility of implementation from a budgetary standpoint.

Weaknesses:

No noted weakness.

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 proposal describes the key components of the study and the outcomes are well aligned and described (page e47 and e212-214). The alignment demonstrates a clear coherence for the evaluation elements and the analysis of project outcomes in support of the improved student learning outcomes.

The program has established thresholds for fidelity for all program components including principal participation in Cycles of Inquiry (COI) training, principal participation in coaching sessions, problem of practice identification, and COI engagement (page e213-214). The expectations are clear and measurable, which is a noted strength as it allows the evaluation team to determine the role of implementation in the achievement of outcomes.

Weaknesses:

No noted weakness.

Reader's Score:

Priority Questions

CPP1 - Computer Science

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Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/09/2021 12:00 PM