

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/13/2021 07:25 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Pittsburgh (S411C210036)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	20	0
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	30	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	50	0
<b>Resources &amp; Management Plan</b>		
<b>Resources &amp; Management Plan</b>		
1. Resources & Manag. Plan	25	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	25	0
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	25	23
<b>Sub Total</b>	25	23
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>CPP1</b>		
<b>CPP1</b>		
1. CPP1	5	
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	
<b>CPP2</b>		
<b>CPP2</b>		
1. CPP2	5	
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	
<b>CPP3</b>		
<b>CPP3</b>		
1. CPP3	5	
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	
<b>Total</b>	115	23

# Technical Review Form

Panel #14 - EIR Early Phase - 14: 84.411C

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

Applicant: University of Pittsburgh (S411C210036)

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

2. The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies.

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

**Strengths:**

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:**

- 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:**

#### **Resources & Management Plan - Resources & Management Plan**

- 1. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources and the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources and quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**Reader's Score: 0**

**Sub**

- 1. 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:**

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:**

- 2. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.**

**Strengths:**

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:**

- 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:**

- 4. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation 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 with or without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in this notice).

**Strengths:**

Strengths: The applicant proposes a rigorous and well thought out Randomized Control Trial (RCT) to evaluate the impact of the proposed Just Discipline Project (JDP). The proposed evaluation design (pages e32-e37), if well implemented, should produce reliable evidence about JDP's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards without reservations. The application demonstrates thoughtful consideration of potential threats to the study's internal validity (e.g., attrition, selection bias, and nonresponse to surveys) and proffers practical strategies for mitigation. For example, the applicant assumes a 20% attrition (due to nonresponse) at the individual level and proposes to mitigate this threat by staggering data collection to reduce burden, offering incentives for survey completion, and following up with non-respondents (page e35). These are practical and logical strategies that should help enhance teacher and student survey response rates.

In line with WWC standards, the applicant clearly demonstrates that:

- The proposed cluster randomization is appropriate and logical for the context of the proposed study where 15 schools will be randomly assigned to receive intervention and the other 15 schools will receive intervention later (pages e32-33).
- The power analysis is adequate and the sample size is sufficient for eliciting the minimum detectable effect size (pages e36 & e122-e123).
- The evaluation team has the expertise and experience to implement the RCT successfully (pages e42-e103). In addition, the evaluation team is external to the project implementation team (and school district)—this will enhance objectivity in the planned formative and summative assessments (page e27).
- The plan to implement JDP in two phases is very logical, as lessons learned from the pilot study in Phase 1 will provide data to improve and refine the implementation of the proposed RCT in Phase 2 (page e32).
- Data collection tools and measures are reliable (with reliability indices ranging from .74 to .91) and in alignment with the program outcomes (pages e34 and e121).
- The planned analytical approaches align with the program's conceptual model and best practices in educational research (pages e123-e126). For example, the logic model (page e106) indicates sequential relationships among expected outcomes, and the planned analysis includes estimation of these hypothesized mediated and moderated relationships (pages e123-e126). In addition, the applicant proposes to conduct multilevel modeling to analyze student and teacher outcome data—this analytical approach is very appropriate for cluster designs with nesting data structures (e.g., students and teachers are nested within schools, page e36).

**Weaknesses:**

None

Reader's Score: 15

2. (2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

**Strengths:**

The applicant proposes a feasible and appropriate plan for providing performance feedback and periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes (pages e31-e32). The planned formative assessments (guided by the logic model and program's objectives) combined with the proposed iterative revisions to implementation procedures should contribute to continuous program improvement. The proposed monthly meetings, learning sessions, and professional development opportunities should facilitate feedback and

**Sub**

implementation fidelity and enhance assessment of the extent to which the JDP is achieving the intended outcomes.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not demonstrate if (and how) the proposed implementation fidelity study and program feedback and improvement plan would incorporate cultural responsiveness. Indeed, the applicant does not demonstrate that the evaluation plan would embed elements of culturally responsive evaluation. The applicant states that the proposed intervention is situated within Critical Race Theory and other cultural theoretical lenses (e19-e20), but does not include any research questions or implementation questions targeting teacher/student/administrators' views on the extent to which the JDP program addresses racial disparities in student discipline within the school district (or at least in the intervention schools).

**Reader's Score: 3**

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

**Strengths:**

The proposed project, if implemented as described in the proposal, has the potential to make significant contributions to research and best practices for implementing restorative practices, in conjunction with socioemotional learning, to promote positive school climate. The study also has the potential to enhance understanding of how restorative practices and socioemotional learning can improve school and student outcomes. In particular, the study has the potential to contribute to existing literature on the direct and indirect effects of restorative practices on student academic outcomes, especially in limited-resource schools (pages e19, e38).

The application clearly demonstrates that the project team has the experience, expertise, and network to facilitate the dissemination and distribution of the program (pages e42-e103). The proposed mechanisms for distribution (e.g., restorative practitioner handbook, social media outlets, manuals, policy briefs, and peer reviewed publications) are feasible and appropriate for disseminating program components, program outcomes, and results to promote adoption and replicability (with fidelity) in other contexts (page e19). The distribution audiences and strategies discussed (on pages e116-e118) are appropriate for ensuring the dissemination of lessons learned from the project implementation to relevant stakeholders.

**Weaknesses:**

None

**Reader's Score: 5**

**Priority Questions**

**CPP1 - CPP1**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: Computer Science (up to 5 points).**

**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:**

**CPP2 - CPP2**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Innovative Approaches to Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Underserved Students and Educators (up to 5 points).**

Projects designed to address the needs of underserved students and educators most impacted by COVID-19 through...[refer to the NIA for the full list of potential projects]

**Strengths:**

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:**

**CPP3 - CPP3**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 3: Promoting Equity and Adequacy in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 5 points).**

Projects designed to promote equity in access to critical resources for underserved students in prekindergarten through grade 12 through one or more of the following...[refer to the NIA for the full set of potential projects]

**Strengths:**

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:**

---

**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 10/13/2021 07:25 PM



Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/14/2021 03:07 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Pittsburgh (S411C210036)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	20	20
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	30	29
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Resources &amp; Management Plan</b>		
<b>Resources &amp; Management Plan</b>		
1. Resources & Manag. Plan	25	24
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	25	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>CPP1</b>		
<b>CPP1</b>		
1. CPP1	5	
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>CPP2</b>		
<b>CPP2</b>		
1. CPP2	5	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>CPP3</b>		
<b>CPP3</b>		
1. CPP3	5	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>83</b>

# Technical Review Form

Panel #14 - EIR Early Phase - 14: 84.411C

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

Applicant: University of Pittsburgh (S411C210036)

## 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: 20

#### Sub

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

#### Strengths:

The Just Discipline Project uniquely brings together promising practices in social emotional learning and restorative justice, aiming to redress extant racial and ethnic inequities in schools (primarily described on pp. e16-e19). It focuses on disciplinary practices, which literature well-establishes as participating in and perpetuating racial disparities in schools. It embraces new and potentially impactful strategies such as training student leaders in restorative justice. The Just Discipline intervention is timely, important, and addresses a clear and pressing need in the United States, namely racial disparities in Education. The applicants present preliminary data evidencing the potential of the intervention (p. e15), thus warranting a larger implementation effort to continue to both improve the intervention, develop materials for dissemination, and study its efficacy.

#### Weaknesses:

None.

Reader's Score: 15

2. The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies.

#### Strengths:

The dissemination plan is thorough and includes quick sharing of findings with participating schools, development of multiple resources shared through multiple venues (e.g., online resource center, publications in practitioner journals), and academic conferences. The final six months of the project is dedicated solely to dissemination (pp. e19 and Appendix J2).

#### Weaknesses:

None.

Reader's Score: 5

## 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: 29

### Sub

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 theoretical framework draws on literatures from Legal Socialization Theory, Critical Race Theory, Restorative Justice, Relational Culture Theory, and social emotional learning (pp. e19-e20; Appendix G). How these theories and concepts inform the Just Discipline model is complex and ambitious, but very clear.

#### Weaknesses:

None.

Reader's Score: 15

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

#### Strengths:

The project goals, objectives, and outcomes are clearly described with identified targets and measures (pp. e21-e22). The inclusion of interviews and focus groups to gather social validity (e.g., feasibility, perceptions) information to inform the development and implementation of the Just Discipline Project is a particular strength (Table 5, p. e33).

#### Weaknesses:

None.

Reader's Score: 5

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 project identifies a clear need to redress racial inequities in schools, particularly with respect to disciplinary practices. The applicants describe the participating district and its schools as under-resourced and provide demographic data to show the district serves high percentages of minority and economically disadvantaged students (p. e15; p. e114 Appendix J, Table A2). The proposed project is a whole-school intervention that trains students, teachers, and other staff in restorative justice and social emotional learning practices. It is therefore well-positioned to positively impact school climate and decrease racial and other biases that innervate disciplinary systems and produce inequitable outcomes.

**Sub**

**Weaknesses:**

The particular activities and milestones of the Just Discipline Project are not detailed (pp. e21-e22, e29). The applicants do not detail their plans for the trainings, coaching, facilitating circles, and other activities.

**Reader's Score: 9**

**Resources & Management Plan - Resources & Management Plan**

- 1. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources and the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources and quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**Reader's Score: 24**

**Sub**

- 1. 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 includes clear timelines, milestones, and actionable goals, which appear to be well-resourced. For example, the management and evaluation plans are well-funded with increasing annual budgets for the evaluation as appropriate in Years 2 and 3 (p. e131-e134; p. e141-e146). The project team and interventionist roles are clearly delineated (pp. e27-e30). The project team will meet monthly both with school stakeholders and the external evaluators to ensure the project is meeting its milestones and objectives.

**Weaknesses:**

Given the complexity and intensity of the intervention implementation and development, monthly meetings with Project Director Wang may be insufficient to ensuring the project's success (p. e28).

**Reader's Score: 9**

- 2. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.**

**Strengths:**

The project personnel clearly have the background, training, and expertise to carry-out the project (pp. e27-e28, e42-e103). Project Director Wang is an expert in school-wide interventions, Co-Project Director Huguley is expert in restorative practices and racial academic disparities, and Co-Investigator McGuire, who will oversee the implementation design has extensive expertise in supporting students experiencing trauma. The Directors and Co-Investigator all have distinguished careers with many years of experience conducting intervention studies in schools. Co-Project Director Huguley is currently Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the University of Pittsburgh. The evaluation team includes experts in restorative practices, randomized controlled trial designs and statistical analysis and who are WWC certified on the most recent group design standards.

**Weaknesses:**

None.

**Reader's Score: 5**

Sub

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

**Strengths:**

The costs for this project are reasonable and warranted given the scope of the intervention (delivered in a total of 30 schools, including control schools) and the thoroughness of the evaluation (pp. e30, e143-e147). Some project costs will be covered by matching funds from the University of Pittsburgh and the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. Budgeting school, teacher, and student incentives for participating is noted as a particular strength, increasing the likelihood of ongoing participation in implementation and research activities (pp. e136-137).

**Weaknesses:**

None.

**Reader's Score: 5**

- 4. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.**

**Strengths:**

The process for gathering and incorporating ongoing feedback includes assessments and other data collection from the school and the formative evaluation to inform the implementation. It also includes training implementers in improvement science and holding monthly meetings with principals and other school stakeholders to monitor progress and discuss avenues for continuously improving Just Discipline Project approaches (p. e31-32). The embeddedness of ongoing improvement of the Just Discipline Project is a particular strength -- efforts to continually evaluate, improve, and update the intervention are both part of its ongoing development and integral to its implementation.

**Weaknesses:**

None.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation**

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**Reader's Score: 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 with or without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in this notice).**

**Strengths:**

Sub

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:**

2. (2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

**Strengths:**

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:**

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

**Strengths:**

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:**

### Priority Questions

#### CPP1 - CPP1

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: Computer Science (up to 5 points).

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:**

#### CPP2 - CPP2

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Innovative Approaches to Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Underserved Students and Educators (up to 5 points).**

**Projects designed to address the needs of underserved students and educators most impacted by COVID-19 through...[refer to the NIA for the full list of potential projects]**

**Strengths:**

Data showing that the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted students in the Cleveland school district (e.g., instructional time, remote instruction) is provided (p. e15). The intervention itself relies on mutual respectful collaboration with key stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers, administration) and provides educators with professional development and resources to enact trauma-informed care practices.

**Weaknesses:**

None.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**CPP3 - CPP3**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 3: Promoting Equity and Adequacy in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 5 points).**

**Projects designed to promote equity in access to critical resources for underserved students in prekindergarten through grade 12 through one or more of the following...[refer to the NIA for the full set of potential projects]**

**Strengths:**

The project is well designed to redress racial inequities in disciplinary practices in schools through a restorative practice, whole-school reform effort. It is also well-designed to address implicit and explicit bias by fostering a relational and socially emotionally attuned climate for students and teachers (pp. e14-e16).

**Weaknesses:**

None.

**Reader's Score: 5**

---

**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 10/14/2021 03:07 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/15/2021 05:48 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Pittsburgh (S411C210036)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	20	20
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	30	30
<b>Sub Total</b>	50	50
<b>Resources &amp; Management Plan</b>		
<b>Resources &amp; Management Plan</b>		
1. Resources & Manag. Plan	25	25
<b>Sub Total</b>	25	25
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	25	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	25	0
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>CPP1</b>		
<b>CPP1</b>		
1. CPP1	5	
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	
<b>CPP2</b>		
<b>CPP2</b>		
1. CPP2	5	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	5
<b>CPP3</b>		
<b>CPP3</b>		
1. CPP3	5	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	5
<b>Total</b>	115	85



# Technical Review Form

Panel #14 - EIR Early Phase - 14: 84.411C

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

Applicant: University of Pittsburgh (S411C210036)

## 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: 20

#### Sub

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

#### Strengths:

The applicant identified that the proposed project involves presenting new strategies that will improve and build on existing strategies (e 14). For example, the applicant detailed implementing, evaluating, and refining the Just Discipline Project (JDP) model in Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) using a school-wide restorative practice program designed to improve students' academic achievement (e 14). It was noted that this model is an innovative approach that situates restorative practices (RPs) in socioemotional learning (SEL) and relational climate frameworks that will focus on addressing issues of equity, culture, and bias in the school community (e 14). It was also noted that the applicant hopes to accomplish this by creating a fair, inclusive climate, narrowing racial disparities in school disciplinary practices, fostering socioemotional competencies, and reducing the use of the exclusionary discipline (e 14).

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 15

2. The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies.

#### Strengths:

The applicant detailed extensive ways the proposed project will disseminate and enable others to use the information and strategies (e 19). It was noted that the applicant would directly communicate with principals and teachers in participating schools and immediately apply lessons learned during implementation (e 19). The applicant identified producing replicable manuals, videos, policy briefs, and hands-on guidance that includes leadership strategies, circle-keeping, RPs, and SEL strategies (e 19). It was noted that an online resource center will be developed that will include blogs, how-to guides, articles, and insights gleaned during the implementation process (e 19). The applicant also proposed sharing results in peer-reviewed journals, on social media, and at

**Sub**

professional conferences (e 19).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were noted.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**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: 30**

**Sub**

- 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 adequately identified the use of three theories in producing the conceptual framework (e 19). The Legal Socialization Theory, Critical Race Theory, and Relational Culture Theory are the researched theories projected to increase connectedness between students and school-based adults (e 20). It was noted that the Just Discipline Project model will produce empathy, communication, and belonging (e 20). It was noted that using the combinations of theories, RPs have the potential to eliminate racially disparage school discipline (e 20).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were noted.

**Reader's Score: 15**

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

**Strengths:**

The identified goals, objectives, and outcomes appear to be clearly specified and measurable (e 21-22). For example, goal #4 is to improve teachers' ecological understanding of student behaviors, socioemotional and cultural competence, and ability to implement RPs in response to disciplinary infractions (e 21). The applicant noted providing teachers training in managing student misbehaviors, promoting positive behaviors, and building positive teacher-student relations (e 22). The outcome was projected to increase teachers' efficacy in managing student behaviors, promoting positive behaviors, and building student-teacher relationships by 20% annually (e 22).

Sub

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were noted.

**Reader's Score: 5**

- 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 applicant's proposed design is appropriate to meet the needs of the targeted population (e 15). The applicant proposed implementing Just Discipline Project within the CMSD schools for 6th through 8th-grade classrooms in 32 schools (e 15). It was noted that CMSD is an under-resourced urban district serving minority students with 90% of the students eligible for free lunch, 65% of students who identify as Black, and 20% of students who identify as Latinx.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Resources & Management Plan - Resources & Management Plan**

- 1. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources and the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources and quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**Reader's Score: 25**

Sub

- 1. 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 applicant presented a management plan that included clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks (e 28-29). For example, the training of teachers, staff, and student leaders in facilitating circles will be completed by the University of Pittsburgh and CMSD during the months of Jan-June of 2022. Also, it was noted that the University of Pittsburgh will revise the JDP Implementation Guide to incorporate lessons learned during the project's first 6 months (e 29). The applicant proposes to conduct focus groups/interviews in pilot schools and prepare consent/ascent forms in July-Aug 2023 (e 29).

Sub

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**2. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.**

**Strengths:**

The identified key personnel have extensive experience in collaborative relationships and experience working with urban school districts to improve school climate and student achievement (e 27). For example, the applicant noted that the University of Pittsburgh in partnership with CMSD will oversee all aspects of the project, including recruiting and retaining school partners, hiring RPCs, and overseeing the continuous improvement process (e 27). The proposed project director is a leading scholar in school-wide interventions and school climate reform (e 27). The project manager has 15 years of experience working with under-resourced school districts (e 28).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were noted.

**Reader's Score: 5**

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

**Strengths:**

The project's cost appears to be reasonable for the proposed objectives, design, and significance. For example, the estimated cost is \$208 per student, excluding evaluation costs (e 30). It was also noted that research suggests that academic and socioemotional benefits will extend beyond the life of the grant (e 30). It was noted that training teachers to be more effective at managing students' behaviors will benefit future cohorts of students (e 30).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were noted.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**4. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.**

**Strengths:**

It was clearly detailed that the logic model and drafted objectives will be used to guide implementation, planning, evaluation, and communication (e 31). The applicant identified that principals and stakeholders will engage in continuous learning through monthly professional development opportunities (e 31). It was also specified that the team will meet monthly to set goals and objectives, review data, discuss challenges, and adjust the model when needed (e 31).

Sub

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were noted.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation**

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**Reader's Score: 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 with or without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in this notice).**

**Strengths:**

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:**

2. **(2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.**

**Strengths:**

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:**

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

**Strengths:**

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:**

## Priority Questions

### CPP1 - CPP1

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: Computer Science (up to 5 points).**

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:**

### CPP2 - CPP2

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Innovative Approaches to Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Underserved Students and Educators (up to 5 points).**

Projects designed to address the needs of underserved students and educators most impacted by COVID-19 through...[refer to the NIA for the full list of potential projects]

**Strengths:**

The applicant provided extensive and comprehensive details about the project's design to assist students affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (e 15). For example, it was identified that the targeted district's students lost 70% of in-person instruction, and 29% of students did not consistently participate in remote instruction during the schools' closures. Through using a rigorous randomized control trial (RCT), the applicant proposed to implement Just Discipline Project in an under-resourced district, evaluate its efficacy and develop tools to support high-quality dissemination and ongoing program fidelity (e15).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were noted.

**Reader's Score: 5**

### CPP3 - CPP3

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 3: Promoting Equity and Adequacy in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 5 points).**

Projects designed to promote equity in access to critical resources for underserved students in prekindergarten through grade 12 through one or more of the following...[refer to the NIA for the full set of potential projects]

**Strengths:**

The applicant seeks to promote equity and adequacy in student success by strengthening interpersonal relationships, emphasizing SEL, raising cultural competency, and using Restorative Practices instead of punitive measures (e 14). Just Discipline Project's proposal is designed to create a more positive, equitable school climate for students and staff, to reduce exclusionary disciplinary practices and racial disparities (e 14). The applicant projects that through establishing and implementing Just Discipline Project within targeted schools, the efficacy of RPs in fostering equity, inclusion, and SEL in schools will result in positive outcomes (e 14).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were noted.

**Reader's Score:**     **5**

---

**Status:**           Submitted  
**Last Updated:**   10/15/2021 05:48 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/14/2021 10:53 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Pittsburgh (S411C210036)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	20	0
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	30	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	50	0
<b>Resources &amp; Management Plan</b>		
<b>Resources &amp; Management Plan</b>		
1. Resources & Manag. Plan	25	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	25	0
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	25	23
<b>Sub Total</b>	25	23
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>CPP1</b>		
<b>CPP1</b>		
1. CPP1	5	
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	
<b>CPP2</b>		
<b>CPP2</b>		
1. CPP2	5	
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	
<b>CPP3</b>		
<b>CPP3</b>		
1. CPP3	5	
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	
<b>Total</b>	115	23



# Technical Review Form

Panel #14 - EIR Early Phase - 14: 84.411C

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

Applicant: University of Pittsburgh (S411C210036)

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

2. The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies.

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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:

#### Resources & Management Plan - Resources & Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources and the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources and quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 0

Sub

1. 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:**

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:**

2. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

**Strengths:**

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:**

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:**

4. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation 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 with or without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in this notice).**

**Strengths:**

The applicant clearly documents a randomized control trial design that meets the Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations, including a 2-year project implementation with 15 treatment schools and 15 control schools (page e32).

The applicant presents detailed tables of the project phases and timelines, research questions and data sources, and impact specific survey measures with reliability estimates (pages e32, e33, e121).

The applicant clearly discusses power analyses that account for school and student/teacher level attrition with appropriate tests and levels of significance, as well as a detailed explanation of the variability of assumptions regarding estimates of covariates and outcomes (page e122).

The applicant clearly presents the regression analysis models for both continuous and binary outcomes, as well as details the components of each of the models. There is a clear description of the model adjustments for differential impact analyses and the mediation analysis (pages e123-e125).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted

**Reader's Score: 15**

- 2. (2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant clearly describes their plans for conducting a formative evaluation to examine project implementation, to assess progress towards achieving project goals, and to provide iterative feedback for continuous improvement (page e37). Feedback from the Phase 1 pilot study and from the two years of project implementation will be used to generate and assess feedback (pages e36, e37).

The applicant provides a detailed timeline of evaluation activities and milestones on a monthly basis for each year and phase of the project (pages e127-e128).

**Weaknesses:**

The evaluation timeline delineates the administration of student and teacher surveys between March and May of the end of each project year, but it is not clear if all 8 of the student and teacher survey instruments listed on page 121 will be administered during this time frame (page e127).

There was no specific discussion about the professional development and training components of the project, how often they will take place, and how the outcomes will be evaluated (pages e32-e38).

**Reader's Score: 3**

Sub

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

**Strengths:**

The project has the strong potential to provide evidence-based insights into how Restorative Practices and discipline reform can impact academic achievement and improve student and teacher outcomes regarding disciplinary practices (page e38).

The project utilizes a mixed methods approach of effective strategies that incorporates quantitative and qualitative data to measure project implementation improvements and achievement outcomes, as well as to support continuous feedback, positively engage local school staff, and promote data dissemination through various channels (page e38).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted

**Reader's Score: 5**

**Priority Questions**

**CPP1 - CPP1**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: Computer Science (up to 5 points).**

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:**

**CPP2 - CPP2**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Innovative Approaches to Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Underserved Students and Educators (up to 5 points).**

Projects designed to address the needs of underserved students and educators most impacted by COVID-19 through...[refer to the NIA for the full list of potential projects]

**Strengths:**

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:**

**CPP3 - CPP3**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 3: Promoting Equity and Adequacy in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 5 points).**

**Projects designed to promote equity in access to critical resources for underserved students in prekindergarten through grade 12 through one or more of the following...[refer to the NIA for the full set of potential projects]**

**Strengths:**

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:**

---

**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 10/14/2021 10:53 PM