

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/13/2021 08:18 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Transcend Inc. (S411C210073)

Reader #1: *****

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

Technical Review Form

Panel #12 - EIR Early Phase - 12: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Transcend Inc. (S411C210073)

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:

Referencing two relevant WWC review protocols (p.e42) related to eligible outcome measures demonstrates a solid understanding of the metrics that could be used to meet WWC standards. Their use of a quasi-experimental design is a sound, realistic approach to obtaining comparison data from other similar schools in each of the large, urban districts. (p.e42) The applicant provides a thorough discussion of the processes for limiting the risk of bias due to joiners, establishing baseline equivalence of treatment and control groups, and ensuring data collection instruments (e.g., Panorama surveys) meet WWC validity and reliability criteria. (p.e43) For example, the reliability coefficients exceed WWC standards, and concurrent validity of these measures was established during the Student Well Being Model (SWBM) pilot in 2019-20 in DC Public Schools (DCPS). (on p.e97) The research personnel from SRI who will be conducting the independent evaluation possess strong expertise in Hierarchical linear modeling and quasi-experimental research designs, which provides convincing evidence the evaluation will be well implemented. (p. e72-p.e75) For example, standardizing test scores using state mean and standard deviations at each grade level and at each site is a solid approach that will maximize their sample size, improving the likelihood of detecting an effect (p. e100).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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 presents a strong plan for measuring implementation fidelity, which should provide important information on progress toward outcomes. (p.e45 & e103) The plan for site visits that includes interviews with several stakeholder groups across 16 of the 20 treatment schools will provide a comprehensive source of qualitative and quantitative implementation data on which to base performance feedback, allowing for program modifications where needed. (p.e14) The plan to model quantitative outcome data at the end of the first and second years of the 3-year intervention will also provide valuable data to periodically assess progress. (p.e47)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The applicant presents a compelling argument about the potential contribution to understanding of issues related to the implementation of schoolwide SEL interventions and includes detailed examples of where current efforts have fallen short. (p.e25) The proposed plan for piloting and designing the process in the first year with one school, Van Ness Elementary, then expanding to additional pilot schools allows the applicant to contribute a focused

Sub

understanding of the issues and strategies included in SWBM. (p. e23, e28)

Weaknesses:

Throughout the narrative, the applicant refers to SWBM as a school redesign process (p.e20, e25, e47), and describes a model or approach that bundles together multiple interventions and strategies (e.g., CARE, Boost, Family Circles, etc.). As such, it may be difficult to contribute increased knowledge or understanding of the issues addressed by each component individually, the degree of overlap, and the effectiveness of individual strategies contained within the overall model.

Reader's Score: 3

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:

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Last Updated: 10/13/2021 08:18 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/12/2021 11:25 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Transcend Inc. (S411C210073)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	13
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	26
Sub Total	50	39
Resources & Management Plan		
Resources & Management Plan		
1. Resources & Manag. Plan	25	24
Sub Total	25	24
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	0
Sub Total	25	0
Priority Questions		
CPP1		
CPP1		
1. CPP1	5	
Sub Total	5	
CPP2		
CPP2		
1. CPP2	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
CPP3		
CPP3		
1. CPP3	5	3
Sub Total	5	3
Total	115	71

Technical Review Form

Panel #12 - EIR Early Phase - 12: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Transcend Inc. (S411C210073)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 13

Sub

1. 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 clearly articulates a focus on SEL and provides a discussion of students' needs as well as how current practices are not effectively meeting those needs (e 23-e25).

The applicant indicates that the project will employ and build upon practices discussed in the IES Practice Guide focused on behavior and SEL, which is a strong resource for promising strategies (e26).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not clearly indicate how the proposed project will build on existing strategies (e26-27) or how evidence of how those existing strategies demonstrates their effectiveness for use in the project.

The applicant indicates that the student well-being model (SWBM) is research-based but does not provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate the promise of its effectiveness (e25).

Additional empirical evidence is needed to demonstrate the promise of the strategies that will be utilized in this project. Such evidence is needed to ensure that the project is employing research-based practices that show promise (e25-28).

Reader's Score: 9

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 has an existing framework for an open-source website where they post resources that is already used by a large group of people. The applicant indicates that this will be one way to disseminate information from the project, and this is a strength of the dissemination plan (e27-e28).

Sub

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide sufficient or specific information about additional sources for dissemination, including professional conferences, journal articles, teacher presentations, etc. (e27-e28). There is a need for multiple methods of dissemination specifically related to this project to ensure that the information about the project reaches those who need the information and to ensure that others are able to use the strategies as well as diverse audiences.

Reader's Score: 4

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: 26

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 lays out a 4-phase framework for the work of the project (e30). These four phases provide a clear conceptual framework for the design of the project and clearly lay out what will be done throughout the course of the project.

The logic model clearly articulates the conceptual framework for the project, including all four phases and connects it to specific activities that will be conducted as part of the grant. The logic model also connects the framework to specific outcomes and project activities (e91).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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 applicant lays out a 4-phase framework for the work of the project (e30). These four phases provide a clear conceptual framework for the design of the project and clearly lay out what will be done throughout the course of the project.

The logic model clearly articulates the conceptual framework for the project, including all four phases and connects it to specific activities that will be conducted as part of the grant. The logic model also connects the framework to specific outcomes and project activities (e91).

Sub

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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 clearly defines who the target population is and identifies methods for how the project will attempt to address their needs (e33-e34).

Weaknesses:

There is a lack of clarity about which components of the grant will address specific needs within this population (e33-e34). Additionally, the applicant does not provide evidence that the strategies proposed to be used in the grant will effectively and successfully address the needs of the target population.

Reader's Score: 6

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 applicant provides a clear timeline and plan for how the project will be implemented and managed (e35-e37). This plan includes what will be done during each of the four phases and who will be responsible for each activity. These activities are aligned to the goals and objectives of the project.

In the second year of the project, the majority of key personnel are at 70% time on the project, which is a sufficient amount of time to ensure that the objectives of the project are met.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Sub

Strengths:

The project director has experience running large grants, including previous EIR grants, which indicates that there is a likelihood that the grant will operate successfully and meet all identified goals and objectives (e35). The co-project director has experience with SEL and the specific model utilized in this project (e35).

All key project personnel have relevant training and experience that will support their contributions to the project effectively (e58-e68).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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 applicant indicates that there is a per student cost of \$120 per year (e39). This cost seems reasonable given the objectives and significance of the proposed project.

The costs of the project are reasonable given the scope and objectives of the project. The budget is balanced in terms of the personnel costs, the number of students served, travel for meetings and conferences, and support materials (e112-e118).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides a clear plan for continuous feedback and improvement over the course of the grant (e39-e41).

The applicant provides a set of activities that will allow for feedback to be shared both among the research team, as well as with the project directors, other key leadership, and the school sites where the project is being conducted (e40-e41).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not clearly discuss the role of the teachers who are receiving the professional development and implementing the project in the feedback and improvement plan (e39-e41). Therefore, it is unclear how they will be able to successfully implement changes from the feedback as needed throughout the project.

Sub

Reader's Score: 4

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

Reader's Score: 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 provides details about specific strategies that will be utilized within the project to address the needs of those students most impacted by Covid-19. For example, strategies that will promote and support the development of self-regulation will be utilized as well as strategies to support individualized learning experiences for students (e29).

The applicant indicates that a family circle program will be created as part of the project (e29-e30). This is a way to integrate family support and strengthen home-school relationships which is an important aspect of serving the needs of those most affected by Covid-19.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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 indicates that a goal of the program is to create inclusive learning environments and a sense of belonging to the school community (e31). This is a good way to support equity and access for underserved students.

Weaknesses:

There is a lack of clarity about how the proposed activities will meet the specific needs of students and how the project will ensure that students' needs are being met (e29-e31). There is insufficient information that these strategies will specifically focus on equity needs and access for students or provide critical resources for underserved students.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 10/12/2021 11:25 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/13/2021 07:42 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Transcend Inc. (S411C210073)

Reader #3: *****

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

Technical Review Form

Panel #12 - EIR Early Phase - 12: 84.411C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Transcend Inc. (S411C210073)

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: 25

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 methods of evaluation are comprised of the main (confirmatory) impact and implementation impact (p. e41). The main impact evaluation analysis meets What Works Clearinghouse standards with reservations. Within the first cohort, there will be 10 treatment schools in fall 2022 and the second cohort will also consist of 10 treatment schools in fall 2023 (p. e42). The treatment schools will be compared to 20 comparison schools within the same district. The comparison schools will be selected using a combination of specific variable matching.

The applicant plans to estimate the impact on Student Well-Being Model (SWBM) on both teacher and student outcomes after the pilot phase and in years two and three of project implementation (p. e43). For the impact of the Student Well-Being Model on students, the applicant will analyze student-level social emotional learning (SEL) measures and annual state standardized test scores in math and English language arts (p. e43). Specifically, the proposed evaluation will focus on SEL outcomes regarding perseverance, self-management, self-efficacy, and social awareness (p. e96). For the impact of Student Well-Being Model on teachers, the applicant will analyze three sources of data: teacher surveys regarding engagement, social emotional learning efficacy, and beliefs about students (p. e44). The applicant has previously piloted the Student Well-Being Model in 2019-2020 within the proposed school district and found the SEL competencies were positively correlated with students' standardized test scores (p. e97).

Weaknesses:

There are no identified weaknesses in this section.

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 has provided evidence to demonstrate the extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback toward achieving intended outcomes. The applicant and the external evaluation team are planning to evaluate the project's outcomes and identify thresholds for implementation with fidelity at high, medium, and low level (p. e45). For example, the teacher survey results will be compared between the treatment and comparison schools in each year of the project (p. e46). In addition, an external evaluation team will conduct site visits in treatments schools in each year of the program to determine whether the Student Well-Being Model is being implemented with fidelity (p. e46). In addition, the external evaluation team plans to interview principals, design team members, and a sample of six teachers of core content areas who are implementing the Student Well-Being Model strategies in their classrooms (p. e46).

The applicant has provided evidence to demonstrate how the extent of the evaluation will permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. The external evaluation team will estimate the impact of the Student Well-Being Model on all target outcomes in the implementation phase (year 1), phase 2 (pilot in subset of classrooms), and mid-point of phase 3 (school-wide implementation).

Sub

Weaknesses:

There are no identified weaknesses in this section.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The applicant has provided evidence to demonstrate the project's potential contribution to increase knowledge of effective strategies through the implementation of a research-based Student Well-Being Model to support social emotional learning practices school-wide. Through the proposed project's unique community-driven approach, it would increase knowledge in implementing social emotional learning strategies as a collective effort opposed to individual classrooms (p. e47).

Weaknesses:

There are no identified weaknesses in this section.

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:

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/13/2021 07:08 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Transcend Inc. (S411C210073)

Reader #4: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	17
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	28
Sub Total	50	45
Resources & Management Plan		
Resources & Management Plan		
1. Resources & Manag. Plan	25	24
Sub Total	25	24
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	0
Sub Total	25	0
Priority Questions		
CPP1		
CPP1		
1. CPP1	5	
Sub Total	5	
CPP2		
CPP2		
1. CPP2	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
CPP3		
CPP3		
1. CPP3	5	3
Sub Total	5	3
Total	115	77

Technical Review Form

Panel #12 - EIR Early Phase - 12: 84.411C

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: Transcend Inc. (S411C210073)

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: 17

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 builds their case for Social-Emotional Learning, a promising new strategy, by stating that as many as 1 in 5 children experience a mental disorder each year and that approximately 79% of children aged 6-17 have an unmet need for mental health services. The applicant further explains that this situation is even more dire in low-income communities. (pg. e 24). The applicant also identifies a gap between mental health inequities and the current reality in schools of curriculum and lack of teacher training in SEL. (pg. e 25, 27, 48) Teachers and school leaders do not have the ability to research, test, and share information to develop a cohesive SEL approach. A cohesive model is required to support students' social and emotional needs. The applicant proposes a Student Well Being Model (SWBM) approach to provide a cohesive model with aligned practices for whole-child learning environments and schoolwide implementation.

Weaknesses:

The applicant needs to connect the research is a more direct way to the approach being used so that it is clearer how the project is supported through research. (pg. e 25, 27, 48)

Reader's Score: 13

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 states that they have an open online website where they post learnings and share resources. More than 76,000 users have accessed the website over 130,000 times this year. The organization presents papers and articles at conferences and conducts webinars on school issues. The applicant also shares evidence, learnings, and insights through social media channels and newsletters. This will make stakeholders, schools, and other interested parties aware of the research. (pg. e. 27)

Sub

Weaknesses:

The presentations and conference plans need to be more specific so that it could be determined if these would reach the target audience. (pg. e. 27)

Reader's Score: 4

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: 28

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 has a logic model and demonstrates a clear framework for the project using SWBM, which consists of three research-based components: CARE, Boost, and Family Circles. These components will be implemented across four phases to build conviction, adult well-being, and shift teacher mindsets and practices, which will increase student SEL skills and competencies. (pg. 25, 28, 29, 30)

Weaknesses:

None 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 applicant lays out each of the project goals and objectives in a chart (pg. e 32) The chart identifies clear, specific, and achievable goals. For example, in Year 1, 80% of educators will understand conditions for supporting student well-being. Another specific goal is to Improve students' SEL skills and competencies by 10% annually. (pg. e 33) The goals will guide the project to achievement.

Weaknesses:

None 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 addresses the needs of the target population by using SEL. The applicant cites a recent CASEL study that found that although 83% of principals strongly endorse SEL and 98% believe it would benefit students from all backgrounds, only 35% have a plan for teaching SEL. The applicant's plan is to provide a model and concrete

Sub

practices for the implementation of SWBM in schools. Furthermore, the applicant is targeting high-needs students who are most at risk for mental health issues and suffer from systemic inequities. The plan includes teacher training and supports for increased social and academic outcomes for students. (pg. e. 33) A chart that broke down the student population at the proposed project school showed that a large population of minority students were at disproportionate risk for poor academic outcomes and exclusionary discipline practices due to historically unfair school policies and practices. The applicant explained that the district has realized these student obstacles and has invested in developing roadmaps for social and emotional well-being aimed at educators and families, which demonstrates a willingness to be a part of the SWBM. (pg. e. 34)

Weaknesses:

The applicant should provide more specificity about how it will address target needs tied to the specific strategy they propose.

Reader's Score: 8

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 applicant includes two charts in the proposal. One chart outlines the activities and milestones, and another chart outlines the experience of the project personnel. (pg. e. 36, 37) These charts provide information about for activities and milestones of the project and the responsible party for each activity. The chart demonstrates that the two cohort approach set out in the applicant's proposal is designed to achieve project goals. The budget provided details on salaries, supplies, and travel for each project year that were reasonable to accomplish project tasks. (pg. e. 110 – 117)

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The key personnel chart lists each team member's role and the experience they bring to the project. Resumes of key project personnel were also included to provide a more detailed understanding of the staff experience. (pg. e. 40, 72- 81) For example, one of the project directors has over 10 years of experience managing and implementing

Sub

large-scale grants that focused on integrating SEL skills into school programs and experience in improving teacher practices and student experiences. The evaluator also has experience leading multi-year mixed-methods program evaluations. The evaluator has expertise in experimental and quasi-experimental designs and methods for estimating the impacts of interventions on students and teachers.

Weaknesses:

None 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 applicant states that the SWBM offers a cohesive approach to improving adult well-being, student SEL skills, and student learning for reasonable costs. The model is being tested at a cost of approximately \$120.00 a year/student. (pg. e. 39, 110 – 117) Salaries of staff and costs to support the program were reasonable in relation to the accomplishment of objectives.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The applicant explains a feedback loop that will be used to improve project design and implementation. The applicant states the main hypotheses they are testing, and the data being used to assess project progress and adjustments reviews will be reviewed on a monthly, quarterly, and yearly basis. For example, the project evaluation staff will use observation rubrics and teacher interviews to test whether group training and 1:1 coaching is enabling teachers to implement changes in their classrooms. (pg. e. 39, 40) The evaluation will address six areas of impact: improved teacher engagement, SEL efficacy, commitment to educating all students, improved retention of teachers, improved student achievement in math and ELA, improved student SEL competencies, improved student behavior, and improved school-level outcomes. (pg. e. 41) The regular reviews in these six areas will provide the project information about how to make continuous improvements.

Weaknesses:

Teachers' interviews should be included in the improvement discussions, and the role of the teachers should be better defined in the process of program improvement.

Reader's Score: 4

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project.

In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 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 explains that their project is focused on social and emotional development and also promotes overall well-being by promoting happiness and prosocial behaviors, reducing depression, and helping students to become well-adjusted and able to be successful in both in academics and in life. The applicant explains this will help address the needs of students who were most impacted by COVID. (pg. e 24)

Weaknesses:

None 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 explains that the project will support students' well-being and meet the need of each student to create equity. To support equity a redesign of the schools is needed that uses a cohesive approach. (pg. e. 24, 90)

Weaknesses:

Not all grade levels are being addressed in the proposed plan and a clearer connection needs to be made to the target population. (pg. e. 24, 90)

Reader's Score: 3

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