

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/13/2022 02:01 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Center for Educational Improvement (S423A220092)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	35	32
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	25	22
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	20	18
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	20
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	92
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Educator Diversity	5	4
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	3	3
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 3</b>		
1. Meeting Student Needs	2	2
<b>Sub Total</b>	10	9
<b>Total</b>	110	101

# Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - FY22 SEED Panel - 5: 84.423A

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

Applicant: Center for Educational Improvement (S423A220092)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

#### 1. A. Quality of Project Design (35 Points)

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:

(i) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.  
(7 points)

(ii) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.(7 points)

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

(iv) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services.  
(7 points)

(v) 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.  
(7 points)

Please provide Overview Statement on top of first Strength comment.

#### Strengths:

The project aims to support school leaders in high-need districts to provide evidence-based and trauma-informed social-emotional programming in their schools. There is a focus on training for compassionate leadership practice. School leaders will learn about mental health awareness and response.

(i) The application explains that participants will receive compassionate leadership practices, with a specific focus on trauma-informed social emotional learning (p.e14; e20). Principals will develop and individualized school plan for compassionate action (p.e22).

(ii) This project focuses on building leadership knowledge and skills to support students' mental health and wellbeing with an emphasis on compassionate leadership and trauma-informed social emotional learning (p.e20-21). This attention to meeting the needs for mental health and wellbeing in schools does provide a foundation for results extending beyond the grant period, especially given that mental health awareness and response is not a typical component of leadership preparation programs.

(iii) Pages e28-31 provide a conceptual framework for this project. The framework centers on multiple pillars, including leadership characteristics, implementation of compassionate practices, plus teacher and student engagement in learning and change. Each of these components is evidence-based and aligned with the project's goals.

(iv) This project is built on collaboration between the Center for Educational Improvement and Yale University's Program for Recovery and Community Health (p.e32). Each partner is committed to building compassionate leadership

for school mental health and wellbeing.

(v) This project is designed to meet the needs for compassionate leadership in schools nationwide (p.e34). By focusing on middle schools, the project is targeting a time when students are undergoing significant developmental challenges (e.g., puberty) and potential for mental health stressors is high.

**Weaknesses:**

(i) It is not clear how the project team plans to overcome potential barriers to recruitment. The goal of recruiting 5,000 middle schools is ambitious, and the application does not provide details on the supports for recruitment (p.e38).

**Reader's Score: 32**

**Selection Criteria - Significance**

**1. B. Significance (25 points)**

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

**(i) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project, especially improvements in teaching and student achievement. (7 points)**

**(ii) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits. (6 points)**

**(iii) The potential for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing program of the agency or organization at the end of Federal funding. (6 points)**

**(iv) 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. (6 points)**

**Please provide Overview Statement on top of first Strength comment.**

**Strengths:**

The plan to recruit 5,000 schools nationwide is ambitious and provides potential for significant impacts of this work. The focus on mental health awareness and response is important and much needed in leadership preparation. As a result of the pandemic, there is increasing need for mental health awareness and response in schools.

(i) This project aims to recruit 5,000 middle schools to participate in this work. School leaders will receive training in compassionate leadership and trauma-informed social emotional learning (p.e20; e38).

(ii) Project costs are detailed in the budget narrative (p.e98-e116) which demonstrates that the majority of costs are intended for personnel and program participants/teacher training. Project costs appear to be reasonable.

(iii) A focus on developing school leaders' knowledge, skills, and capacity for mental health awareness and response (p.e20-21;e38-39) provides a strong foundation for this work to become part of school culture and climate after the grant period.

(iv) The project team plans to disseminate findings from this work via peer-reviewed publications, conference presentations, and blog posts (p.e36-37).

**Weaknesses:**

(ii) It is not clear how the project might handle the challenges schools are facing with regard to substitute teachers (i.e., substitute shortage, p.e106-109).

**Reader's Score: 22**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

**1. C. Quality of the Management Plan (20 points)**

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

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

(10 points)

(ii) 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.

(10 points)

Please provide Overview Statement on top of first Strength comment.

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides a strong management plan with clear and measurable goals and objectives. Details on timeline and responsibilities is presented.

(i) Pages e37-38 provide details on the project goals, process objective, and outcome objectives. For example, by end of year one at least 75% of participating educators will report on assessments of individualized resources (p.e38). Each of the goals and objectives is clear and measurable.

(ii) The management plan details timelines and work roles; details presented provide support for the project team to complete work on time (p.e38-39). The timeline presented on pages e38-39 includes information for each year, broken down by quarter.

**Weaknesses:**

(ii) The application does not provide sufficient detail on which team members will be responsible for different components of this work (p.e38-39).

**Reader's Score: 18**

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

**1. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (20 points)**

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:

(i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence

about the project's effectiveness that would meet the WWC standards with or without reservations as described in the WWC Handbook.

(4 points)

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

(4 points)

(iii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

(4 points)

(iv) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on Relevant Outcomes.

(4 points)

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

(4 points)

**Please provide Overview Statement on top of first Strength comment.**

**Strengths:**

The plan for evaluation, if well implemented, would allow this study to meet What Works Clearinghouse Standards without reservations. The investigation of program impacts rests on a cluster randomized trial where schools are assigned to either intervention or comparison group status. The evaluation plan includes use of valid and reliable measures to determine project outcomes.

(i) The evaluation plan includes a stepped-edge, cluster randomized trial design which, if well implemented, will allow a study of this work to meet What Works Clearinghouse standards (WWC) without reservations. The evaluation team will randomly assign a subset of participating schools to either intervention or control status in order to investigate the program impacts (p.e42).

(ii) Performance feedback in the form of participant feedback, program completion rates, as well as other measures (e.g., teachers' burnout) will be provided to the project team in order to shape decision-making and improve project performance (p.e44-45).

(iii) Objective measures of program outcomes including content knowledge and participants' job satisfaction and school climate (p.e44-45) will be used to explore program outcomes.

(iv) The project team plans to use valid and reliable measures (e.g., S-CCATE; program completion rates; p.e44) to determine program impacts. In addition, the team will collect school administrative data to measure school discipline actions (p.e44).

(v) The evaluation team will provide a summative evaluation report detailing project findings and lessons learned by the project team (p.e46). This report will offer guidance for potential replication.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 20**

**Priority Questions**

## Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

### 1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: Increasing Educator Diversity (Up to 5 points)

Under this priority, applicants must develop projects that are designed to improve the recruitment, outreach, preparation, support, development, and retention of a diverse educator workforce through adopting, implementing, or expanding high-quality, comprehensive teacher preparation programs that have a track record of attracting, supporting, graduating, and placing underrepresented teacher candidates, and that include one year of high-quality clinical experiences (prior to becoming the teacher of record) in high-need schools.

#### Strengths:

This project is designed to build leadership capacity for mental health awareness and response in schools. Part of this work involves a focus on diversity and inclusion and supporting socially just practices in schools (p.e22). This work to support diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice might allow school personnel who would otherwise feel a lack of belonging to experience greater belonging in their work settings.

#### Weaknesses:

It is not clear how the plan for recruitment (p.e94) is designed to support diversity (i.e., recruit diverse participants).

Reader's Score: 4

## Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

### 1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 3 points)

Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that the applicant proposes a project designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for Underserved Students—

#### (1) In one or more of the following educational settings:

- (i) Early learning programs.
- (ii) Elementary school.
- (iii) Middle school.
- (iv) High school.
- (v) Career and technical education programs.
- (vi) Out-of-school-time settings.
- (vii) Alternative schools and programs.
- (viii) Juvenile justice system or correctional facilities;

(2) That examines the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implements responses that include pedagogical practices in Educator preparation programs and professional development programs that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status so that educators are better prepared to create inclusive, supportive, equitable, unbiased, and identity-safe learning environments for their students.

#### Strengths:

This project is designed to build leadership capacity for mental health awareness and response in middle schools. Part of this work involves a focus on diversity and inclusion and supporting socially just practices in schools (p.e22; p.e94). In addition, a focus on students' mental health along with compassionate leadership is one way to promote equity in schools.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score:** 3

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 3**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 3: Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs  
(up to 2 points)**

Projects that are designed to improve students' social, emotional, academic, and career development, with a focus on Underserved Students, through developing and supporting Educator and school capacity to support social and emotional learning and development that—

- (1) Fosters skills and behaviors that enable academic progress;
- (2) Identifies and addresses conditions in the learning environment, that may negatively impact social and emotional well-being for Underserved Students, including conditions that affect physical safety; and
- (3) Is trauma-informed, such as addressing exposure to community-based violence and trauma specific to Military- or Veteran-Connected Students.

**Strengths:**

This project is focused on building leadership knowledge, skills, and attitudes for trauma-informed social-emotional learning (p.e31). This includes training on adverse childhood experiences and mental health awareness (p.e15-16).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score:** 2

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 07/13/2022 02:01 PM



Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/13/2022 06:35 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Center for Educational Improvement (S423A220092)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	35	33
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	25	22
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	20	15
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	20
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	90
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Educator Diversity	5	3
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	3	3
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 3</b>		
1. Meeting Student Needs	2	2
<b>Sub Total</b>	10	8
<b>Total</b>	110	98

# Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - FY22 SEED Panel - 5: 84.423A

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

Applicant: Center for Educational Improvement (S423A220092)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

#### 1. A. Quality of Project Design (35 Points)

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:

(i) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.  
(7 points)

(ii) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.(7 points)

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

(iv) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services.  
(7 points)

(v) 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.  
(7 points)

Please provide Overview Statement on top of first Strength comment.

#### Strengths:

The applicant proposes a socially and emotionally supportive intervention named "Compassionate School Leadership Academy" (CSLA) to integrate student achievement and SEL/trauma-focused supports into the curriculum. The project is founded on effective SEL research and has the backing of numerous federal agencies to address the mental health crisis in young people.

#### Strengths:

- (i) This project proposes sound combinations that incorporate social-emotional learning and trauma-healing into the curriculum (pg. e16). Compassion from a top-down approach through educator professional development will be used in conjunction with the use of individual teachers' compassion for their students (pg. e16) which will be delivered through a 4-phase model as presented on pages e23-24. Each of these phases are fully described in the narrative (pp. e24-28).
- (ii) The applicant asserts that teachers and school leaders who complete micro-credentials will then be able to mentor and coach new teachers.
- (iii) The research foundation of this project uses evidence from the What Works Clearinghouse which examined effectiveness of social-emotional learning on healthier learning environments, building social skills, and improving academic achievement (pg. e16). The conceptual framework is supported by Figure 1 on page e30. The applicant discusses the interaction between the components of the research on SEL and compassion training (pg. e29).
- (iv) The applicant presents a limited collaboration. The collaborations presented are between the host organization, Yale's

Program for Recovery and Community Health, Systems Change, and the New England Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (pp. e33-34).

(v) The organization is targeting early adolescence development through teacher training (pp. e34-35). The proposal will build on the research foundation through community-based participatory action research (pg. e35).

**Weaknesses:**

(i) Education is typically reluctant to change, thus it is often difficult to change current teacher approaches to be more compassionate (pg. e16). There is no discussion about the incorporation of these practices in new teacher preparation (pg. e16). The recruitment of 5,000 middle schools is an extremely ambitious goal without a detailed plan (pg. e16). 2 points not awarded.

(ii) No weaknesses noted.

(iii) No weaknesses noted.

(iv) No weaknesses noted.

(v) No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 33**

**Selection Criteria - Significance**

**1. B. Significance (25 points)**

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

**(i) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project, especially improvements in teaching and student achievement.**

**(7 points)**

**(ii) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits.**

**(6 points)**

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

**(6 points)**

**(iv) 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.**

**(6 points)**

**Please provide Overview Statement on top of first Strength comment.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant does an acceptable presentation of the project importance which has the potential to shift teaching focus to a more compassionate paradigm. The applicant will use the funding for building new courses and increase availability of those for rural teacher development. The evidence gathered by this intervention will measure effectiveness and increase dissemination potential.

**Strengths:**

(i) The applicant's proposes incorporation of compassionate-focused topics and approaches into the current curriculum (pg. e35). The basic foundation is presented to support the findings of a discernable effect from the teacher professional development to student SEL and trauma-informed care (pg. e35).

(ii) The applicant presents that the cost to the student will be \$6.82 per student on page e36. This seems like a low amount for the intervention. The applicant anticipates a potential of 300+ school leaders credentialed at Level 1, 150 leaders to complete the academy, and 50 will be certified as coaches (pg. e36). The impact will be over 15,000 staff and

375,000 students at 150 schools (pg. e36).

(iii) The applicant proposes to maintain the micro-credentialing network and SEL components through CASEL and state and local education agencies (pg. e36).

(iv) The applicant asserts that the findings of this proposal will be distributed in year 3 to professional journals and through conference presentations (pp. e36-37). The applicant states that participants will be supported by coaches who received the Level 3 mentoring credential (pg. e37).

**Weaknesses:**

(i) No weaknesses noted.

(ii) The applicant relies on substitute teachers for 20 school days (pgs. e102, e106, e109) which might be unrealistic due to lack of substitute teacher. Since the substitute teachers are part of the budget, this issue questions a small part of their budget being reasonable. 3 points not awarded.

(iii) No weaknesses noted.

(iv) No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 22**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

**1. C. Quality of the Management Plan (20 points)**

**The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

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

**(10 points)**

**(ii) 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.**

**(10 points)**

**Please provide Overview Statement on top of first Strength comment.**

**Strengths:**

The application clearly states achievable goals, objectives, and outcomes. The goals, objectives, and outcomes are measurable and the applicant is confident they can complete the project on time and within budget with the management plan in the proposal.

**Strengths:**

(i) The objectives stated within the proposal on pages e37-38 are: 1) to provide immediate, comprehensive assessment, and individualized resources to middle schools across the country, 2) to establish the evidence for trauma-informed, SEL practices into middle schools with traditionally underserved student populations, and 3) broadly disseminate findings of the project. These are clearly stated in the application and the majority are measurable.

(ii) Table X on pages e38-39 presents the goals with an attached timeline.

**Weaknesses:**

(i) Many of the outcome objectives are teacher self-reported upon self-reflection, such as feeling as if the assessments are useful, making changes on the assessment results, and better understanding by school leaders (pp. e37-38). 3 points not awarded.

(ii) The applicant does not indicate the major milestones for the project (pg. e39). The applicant does not address the key

personnel and the activities they will oversee that will ensure project completion (pg. e38). 2 points not awarded.

**Reader's Score: 15**

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

#### **1. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (20 points)**

**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:**

**(i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the WWC standards with or without reservations as described in the WWC Handbook.**

**(4 points)**

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

**(4 points)**

**(iii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.**

**(4 points)**

**(iv) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on Relevant Outcomes.**

**(4 points)**

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

**(4 points)**

**Please provide Overview Statement on top of first Strength comment.**

#### **Strengths:**

The applicant has partnered with Metis Associates to evaluate the effectiveness of this project through a randomized controlled trial (RCT). Periodic assessment and regular performance feedback are incorporated throughout the proposal and will generate qualitative and quantitative data. The project evaluation will include the replication of the intervention.

#### **Strengths:**

(i) The applicant presents the research methodology to support a clustered randomized controlled trial (RCT). The anticipated number of appropriate target audience schools will be identified as 80 with 40 in the intervention and 40 in the control group (pg. e42). The applicant indicates there are procedures in place to prevent attrition at the cluster and student level as well as a control for joiners.

(ii) Periodic evaluation will be given throughout the program primarily through educator surveys and will inform formative changes and allow for formative feedback. The table on pages e45-46 present a general timeline for the collection of participant feedback and the measures that will be used.

(iii) The methods of data collection are acceptable with the outcomes (pp. e45-46). The outcomes are measured through teacher self-evaluation, student standardized test scores, and school climate surveys.

(iv) The outcomes will be measured using valid and reliable instruments (pg. e49) and for instruments without reliability established, the evaluator will use an internal consistency analysis and confirmatory factor analysis (pg. e49).

(v) The project is presented such that the yet-to-be-named partner middle schools will provide data and salient factors will be included in the analysis that might inform the effectiveness for comparable middle schools (pg. e50). The micro-credentials will remain available for those middle schools and thus, the project is replicable (pg. e36).

**Weaknesses:**

- (i) No weaknesses noted.
- (ii) No weaknesses noted.
- (iii) No weaknesses noted.
- (iv) No weaknesses noted.
- (v) No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 20**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: Increasing Educator Diversity  
(Up to 5 points)**

**Under this priority, applicants must develop projects that are designed to improve the recruitment, outreach, preparation, support, development, and retention of a diverse educator workforce through adopting, implementing, or expanding high-quality, comprehensive teacher preparation programs that have a track record of attracting, supporting, graduating, and placing underrepresented teacher candidates, and that include one year of high-quality clinical experiences (prior to becoming the teacher of record) in high-need schools.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant has a social-emotional learning focus in the compassionate training (pg. e22). There are also topics within the school leadership training which include equity, diversity, and inclusion (pg. e22). The applicant's goal of targeting underserved, diverse teachers also clearly indicate their design to improve educator diversity (pg. e94).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not state if the current schools that are being targeted are diverse in their composition (pg. e16). Thus, there is no demonstration if recruiting from within the middle schools will result in increasing educator diversity. 2 points not awarded.

**Reader's Score: 3**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities  
(up to 3 points)**

**Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that the applicant proposes a project designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for Underserved Students—**

**(1) In one or more of the following educational settings:**

- (i) Early learning programs.**
- (ii) Elementary school.**
- (iii) Middle school.**
- (iv) High school.**
- (v) Career and technical education programs.**
- (vi) Out-of-school-time settings.**

- (vii) Alternative schools and programs.
- (viii) Juvenile justice system or correctional facilities;

(2) That examines the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implements responses that include pedagogical practices in Educator preparation programs and professional development programs that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status so that educators are better prepared to create inclusive, supportive, equitable, unbiased, and identity-safe learning environments for their students.

**Strengths:**

The proposal is focused on school leadership development in middle schools (pg. e11). The applicant proposes diversity components within the compassion components of the project (pg. e30). Additionally, there are school practices topics that cover equity and inclusion (pg. e30).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 3**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 3**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 3: Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs (up to 2 points)**

Projects that are designed to improve students' social, emotional, academic, and career development, with a focus on Underserved Students, through developing and supporting Educator and school capacity to support social and emotional learning and development that—

- (1) Fosters skills and behaviors that enable academic progress;
- (2) Identifies and addresses conditions in the learning environment, that may negatively impact social and emotional well-being for Underserved Students, including conditions that affect physical safety; and
- (3) Is trauma-informed, such as addressing exposure to community-based violence and trauma specific to Military- or Veteran-Connected Students.

**Strengths:**

The applicant has designed activities with a major goal of understanding social-emotional learning (SEL) implementation through culturally competent trainings (pg. e16). SEL research is included in the evidence and rationale of the project (pg. e16) and the outcomes are focused on academic skills and behavioral adjustments (pg. e30). The trauma-informed training for school leaders has the potential to change the school environment and improve teacher compassion practices (pgs.e15, e31).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 2**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 07/13/2022 06:35 PM





Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/13/2022 01:32 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Center for Educational Improvement (S423A220092)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	35	33
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	25	23
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	20	15
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	20
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	91
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Educator Diversity	5	3
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	3	3
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 3</b>		
1. Meeting Student Needs	2	2
<b>Sub Total</b>	10	8
<b>Total</b>	110	99

# Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - FY22 SEED Panel - 5: 84.423A

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

Applicant: Center for Educational Improvement (S423A220092)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

#### 1. A. Quality of Project Design (35 Points)

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:

(i) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.  
(7 points)

(ii) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.(7 points)

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

(iv) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services.  
(7 points)

(v) 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.  
(7 points)

Please provide Overview Statement on top of first Strength comment.

#### Strengths:

The intervention is of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients but supports for recruitment are unclear. The proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that extend beyond federal funding. The proposed activities and measure are both based on a conceptual framework that is evidence-based and tested. The proposed collaboration partners are appropriate for the services proposed. The design of the project will successfully address the needs of the target population.

(i) The applicant plans to use an evidence-based and tested program nationwide to improve student SEL (e21-e22), which includes four months of intensive training followed by less intensive support and learning community participation (e23). The project proposes to first measure school climate using the School-Compassionate Culture Analytical Tool for Educators (S-CCATE) at a large number of middle schools nationwide (e24) then provide tested training that fits the needs of a pilot of 10 schools in Michigan and Massachusetts (e25-e26), then implement an RCT to evaluate it (e27).

(ii) The project is designed to be self-sustaining (e28) because the participants learn how to train future participants and once developed, the micro- credentials will be available to others.

(iii) The applicant presents the conceptual framework that undergirds their project and measure thoroughly (e29-e31).

(iv) The project team is made up of appropriate partners who have expertise in mental health, education, and the use of

large datasets (e33) (including previously leading the SAMHSA funded Mental Health Technology Transfer Center [e18]) and expertise and leadership in Principals groups (e34).

**Weaknesses:**

- (i) Supports for recruitment is unclear. It is not clear how the applicant will recruit 5,000 middle schools nationally (e15-e33, e94).
- (i) The applicant plans to impact new principal training but there is no connection to teaching new teachers (e15-e27)

**Reader's Score: 33**

**Selection Criteria - Significance**

**1. B. Significance (25 points)**

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

- (i) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project, especially improvements in teaching and student achievement. (7 points)**
- (ii) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits. (6 points)**
- (iii) The potential for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing program of the agency or organization at the end of Federal funding. (6 points)**
- (iv) 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. (6 points)**

**Please provide Overview Statement on top of first Strength comment.**

**Strengths:**

The results or outcomes of this proposed project are important and likely large. The cost per student and staff served is reasonable. The program intends to incorporate the project activities into the program of their organization after federal funding ceases. The applicant intends to disseminate the project results in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies.

- (i) Given that the project will work with middle schools nationwide, the project has the potential for large scale results (e35-e36). The applicant has established that improving youth mental health and well-being is an important goal because current measures of youth mental health are so poor (e13-e14).
- (ii) Costs are very reasonable given the intensity of the intervention (e35, e98-e119).
- (iii) The applicant intends to continue offering the micro-credentials after the project ceases so there is a great likelihood that the project purposes, activities, or benefits will be incorporated into their ongoing program (e36).
- (iv) Dissemination will take multiple forms to target multiple types of potential stakeholders (e.g., professional conferences, posts and reports available on the internet, audio reports) (e36).

**Weaknesses:**

(ii) The applicant requires the use of substitute teachers (e102, e109) to give instructors time to participate but there is currently a national substitute teacher shortage. The applicant does not provide a contingency for not being able to find substitute teachers or having to pay subs more.

**Reader's Score: 23**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

**1. C. Quality of the Management Plan (20 points)**

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

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

(ii) 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.  
(10 points)

Please provide Overview Statement on top of first Strength comment.

**Strengths:**

Some goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable, while some objectives are not entirely clear and so not entirely measurable. The management plan does not clearly define responsibilities but timelines and milestones are defined.

(i) The applicant presents a management plan with goals, process objectives, outcome objectives, as well as a timeline of activities in each of the project's phases (e37-e39). Many outcomes are based on school or project records rather than subjective sources (e37).

(ii) The applicants do intend to have leadership meet several times a year to review reports and amend the project as needed (e40). There is a good description of how data will be shared within the project (e39).

**Weaknesses:**

(i) Self-report measures of project helpfulness or use of project skills may not be reliable measures of the intended outcomes because of social biases (e37-e38). It is unclear how burnout will be measured (e38).

(ii) Who is responsible for what task is not clear from the information presented (e38-e40).

**Reader's Score: 15**

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

**1. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (20 points)**

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:

(i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the WWC standards with or without reservations as described in the WWC Handbook.

(4 points)

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

(4 points)

(iii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

(4 points)

(iv) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on Relevant Outcomes.

(4 points)

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

(4 points)

**Please provide Overview Statement on top of first Strength comment.**

**Strengths:**

The methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence of the project's effectiveness that would meet WWC standards with or without reservations. The evaluation methods will permit periodic assessment of progress and feedback. The methods of evaluation include objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes, are valid, and reliable. The design of the evaluation, both formative and summative, has great potential to guide possible replication of project activities and strategies.

(i) The applicant intends to complete a randomized controlled trial that will meet WWC group design standards without reservations (e40), if attrition is low. While the implementation research questions will not help the project evaluation meet WWC standards, they will help in future implementations of the intervention (e42). There is at least one exploratory or confirmatory impact measure that could meet WWC group design standards without reservations (e.g., student attendance, staff retention, disciplinary actions) and are measured with objective school records (e42).

(ii) The applicant has previously described how data will be periodically collected and shared within the project and with project leadership (e39-e40), and also describes measures that will be collected annually (e45) so that periodic feedback is possible, and in fact, planned as part of the project (346).

(iii, iv)The applicant plans to use school-wide administrative data, which is an objective measure that is both reliable and valid, for some outcomes, (such as discipline actions and teacher turnover) (e45-e46).

(v) Given the summative feedback and evaluation built into the project, there is great potential for a lot of information to be collected and shared to aid in replication if the activities are deemed effective (e50-e51).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 20

## Priority Questions

### Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

#### 1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: Increasing Educator Diversity (Up to 5 points)

Under this priority, applicants must develop projects that are designed to improve the recruitment, outreach, preparation, support, development, and retention of a diverse educator workforce through adopting, implementing, or expanding high-quality, comprehensive teacher preparation programs that have a track record of attracting, supporting, graduating, and placing underrepresented teacher candidates, and that include one year of high-quality clinical experiences (prior to becoming the teacher of record) in high-need schools.

#### Strengths:

The applicant has a consistent focus on SEL, equity (e22), and diversity and inclusion. The applicant intends to target traditionally underserved, ethnically, and racially diverse communities (e3, e94)

#### Weaknesses:

It is not clear whether leadership in those schools is not necessarily diverse (e37).

Reader's Score: 3

### Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

#### 1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 3 points)

Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that the applicant proposes a project designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for Underserved Students—

##### (1) In one or more of the following educational settings:

- (i) Early learning programs.
- (ii) Elementary school.
- (iii) Middle school.
- (iv) High school.
- (v) Career and technical education programs.
- (vi) Out-of-school-time settings.
- (vii) Alternative schools and programs.
- (viii) Juvenile justice system or correctional facilities;

(2) That examines the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implements responses that include pedagogical practices in Educator preparation programs and professional development programs that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status so that educators are better prepared to create inclusive, supportive, equitable, unbiased, and identity-safe learning environments for their students.

**Strengths:**

The proposal focuses on middle schools. The compassionate school leadership portion focuses on “innovation, dynamic leadership, diversity...” (e30), while the compassionate school practices portion includes “understanding of equity” (e30).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 3**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 3**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 3: Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs (up to 2 points)**

**Projects that are designed to improve students' social, emotional, academic, and career development, with a focus on Underserved Students, through developing and supporting Educator and school capacity to support social and emotional learning and development that—**

- (1) Fosters skills and behaviors that enable academic progress;**
- (2) Identifies and addresses conditions in the learning environment, that may negatively impact social and emotional well-being for Underserved Students, including conditions that affect physical safety; and**
- (3) Is trauma-informed, such as addressing exposure to community-based violence and trauma specific to Military- or Veteran-Connected Students.**

**Strengths:**

The intervention is intended to have student outcomes that improve academic achievement, reduce absences and disciplinary actions (e30).

The applicant intends to influence several parts of the learning environment that might impact social and emotional well-being for students including school leadership culture; teacher knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs; and school-wide compassionate school practices (e29-e31)

The applicant intends to provide training to leaders that is trauma-informed, and evidence based (e11, e15).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 2**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 07/13/2022 01:32 PM