

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/02/2022 02:32 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Northern Humboldt Union High School District (S411C220126)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	30
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	10
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	0
Sub Total	100	70
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. COVID-19	3	2
Sub Total	6	5
Total	106	75

Technical Review Form

Panel #18 - EIR Early Phase - 18: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Northern Humboldt Union High School District (S411C220126)

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:

Reader's Score: 20

Sub

1. The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies. (20 points)

Strengths:

The proposed project involves the development of promising new strategies that build on existing strategies. Multi Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is an established strategy used in public schools across the nation. Acorn is new because it adds to existing MTSS at the high school level. The proposed project will deliver dropout prevention, student supports, and research-based learning modes for at risk students (e12).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 30

Sub

1. (1) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework. (10 points)

Strengths:

The applicant submits a clear conceptual framework that aligns to the proposed research. The applicant's research states "~30% of Gr. 9 and 10 students need Tier 2 academic supports to stay in the comprehensive schools." The main activities are conducted by creating Therapeutic Learning style Classrooms (TLCs). At risk 9th graders will be

Sub

identified and attend four periods of grade level instruction inside the Therapeutic Learning Style Classrooms. The Multi Layered Systems of Support (MTSS) can be implemented in these classes daily, while students are also engaging in grade level core subject instruction (e22).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

- 2. (2) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (5 points)**

Strengths:

There is a clear management plan in place that includes a detailed budget and timelines. These will support the project in meeting its outcomes on time and within budget. Monthly leadership team meetings will be held to review data, measure progress toward goals, and guide the program (e35).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

- 3. (3) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs. (15 points)**

Strengths:

The applicant has demonstrated that the proposed project is appropriate to and will successfully address the needs of at-risk 9th and 10th grade high school students. Students entering 9th grade will be identified using criteria such as: low/failing grades, chronic absenteeism, suspensions and/3+ office referrals, socio-economic status, and being Hispanic or Native American. Only students with documentation of struggles in 7th and 8th grade will qualify (e27).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers:**

Reader's Score: 10

Sub

- 1. The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the**

Sub

qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel. (10 points)

Strengths:

The applicant has clearly identified ways in which the program will encourage applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented. Members of traditionally underrepresented groups will be sought out for the certificated and classified positions. Also, the hiring qualifications will stress a strong understanding of and experience working with students and communities of traditionally underrepresented groups. The key personnel have excellent educational qualifications and most have experience working with Grants, Social Emotional Learning, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, and/or Evaluation (e33).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

Reader's Score: 10

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. (10 points)**

Strengths:

The clear and detailed management plan is adequate to achieve the objectives of the proposal. There are clearly defined roles for all personnel and a detailed budget. Northern Humbolt has experience in managing successful US Education grants. The applicant plans to use the protocols that were successful on previous grants to achieve the goals of this proposal (e35).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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). (20 points)

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. (5 points)

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

3. (3) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation. (5 points)

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:

Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 3 points).

Projects designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students in middle school or high school that examine the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implement responses, including rigorous, engaging, and well-rounded (e.g., that include music and the arts) approaches to learning that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status and prepare students for college, career, and civic life, including one or more of the following:

(a) Student-centered learning models that may leverage technology to address learner variability (e.g., universal design for learning (as defined in this notice), K–12 competency-based education (as defined in this notice), project-based learning, or hybrid/blended learning) and provide high-quality learning content, applications, or tools.

(b) Middle school courses or projects that prepare students to participate in advanced coursework in high school.

(c) Advanced courses and programs, including dual enrollment and early college programs.

(d) Project-based and experiential learning, including service and work-based learning.

(e) High-quality career and technical education courses, pathways, and industry-recognized credentials that are integrated into the curriculum.

Strengths:

The project is clearly designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources. Using the information from the pilot, the majority of Acorn students will be members of one or more of the priority groups. Keeping at-risk students enrolled in schools connects them with opportunities, supports and high-achieving peers. Acorn aims to make all of its student college and/or career ready by using student centered learning models such as Universal Design for Learning (e28).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2:

Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty (up to 3 points).

Projects that are designed to address the impacts of the COVID–19 pandemic, including impacts that extend beyond the duration of the pandemic itself, on the students most impacted by the pandemic, with a focus on underserved students and the educators who serve them through:

(a) conducting community asset-mapping and needs assessments that may include an assessment of the extent to which students, including subgroups of students, have become disengaged from learning, including students not participating in in-person or remote instruction, and specific strategies for reengaging and supporting students and their families; and

(b) using evidence-based instructional approaches and supports, such as professional development, coaching, ongoing support for educators, high quality tutoring, expanded access to rigorous coursework and content across K–12, and expanded learning time to accelerate learning for students in ways that ensure all students have the opportunity to successfully meet challenging academic content standards without contributing to tracking or remedial courses.

Strengths:

a.) The applicant conducted a needs assessment of the community. The results determined core needs. The needs included 1) keeping students in the high school, 2) integration of supports and services, 3) focusing on the key role that teachers play in keeping students enrolled in high school (e31).

b) The proposed plan includes using evidence based instructional supports to serve students most impacted by the pandemic. These supports include levels of support by teachers and other school and community staff as part of the district's Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, intensive and focused PD for staff, and tutoring and extra support for students

(e29).

Weaknesses:

a) The applicant does not indicate that asset mapping was conducted.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/02/2022 02:32 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/02/2022 02:06 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Northern Humboldt Union High School District (S411C220126)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	30
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	10
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	0
Sub Total	100	70
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. COVID-19	3	2
Sub Total	6	5
Total	106	75

Technical Review Form

Panel #18 - EIR Early Phase - 18: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Northern Humboldt Union High School District (S411C220126)

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:

Reader's Score: 20

Sub

1. The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies. (20 points)

Strengths:

The applicant adequately addresses this criterion by describing how the project will build on existing strategies. For instance, the applicant proposes to build upon a pilot program, Acorn, that incorporates Multi-Tiered Systems of Support into a Therapeutic Learning Classroom to address the needs of students transitioning into ninth grade at risk of failing (e16).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 30

Sub

1. (1) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework. (10 points)

Strengths:

The applicant provides an exceptional conceptual framework underlying the proposed research and activities. The applicant provides a detailed explanation of the interventions, mediators, and expected student outcomes based on the project's activities. (e90) The conceptual framework is informed by research addressing students with a similar

Sub

demographic background (e22). The logic model presented by the applicant supports the proposed conceptual framework underlying the proposed research (e90).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

2. (2) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (5 points)

Strengths:

The applicant provides an excellent table of clearly aligned strategies and objectives to illustrate student outcomes. For example, Table 1 illustrates how research design elements and key indicators for meeting criteria will be achieved through evaluation design (e68-e74). Table 2 describes the conditions and interventions for both the treatment group and the control group, with the units and timing of measurements, with in the domains of the research. (e75).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

3. (3) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs. (15 points)

Strengths:

The applicant amply describes a project design that is intended to address the needs of the target population. For example, the applicant provides a graphic to illustrate the needs in the priority/at risk students to be served: socio-economically disadvantaged, chronically absent, previously suspended, IEP/504 students, poor-performing students academically (D and F grades), and American Indian/Hispanic Students who also fit into one of the previously mentioned criteria (e27-e28). With an aim on integrating five recommendations from the 2008 IES Practice Guide on Dropout Prevention and three recommendations from the 2009 IES Practice Guide Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making, the design of the proposed project suggests that there is the necessary tie between the needs of the target population and the design of the project (e29).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers:

Reader's Score: 10

Sub

1. **The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel. (10 points)**

Strengths:

The applicant amply addresses a portion of the first criterion regarding applications, and fully addresses the second criterion on qualifications. For instance, recognizing the importance of searching, recruiting and hiring qualified applicants from traditionally underrepresented groups, the applicant will seek members of these groups for the certificated teachers, instructional coaches, and other positions, stressing that a strong understanding of and experience working with students and communities of traditionally underrepresented groups is a necessary qualification (e33). The applicant adequately describes the qualifications and experiences of currently identified key personnel (e33-e34).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

Reader's Score: 10

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. (10 points)**

Strengths:

The applicant proposes a detailed plan to ensure that it will achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget. For instance, the applicant describes how the evaluators and the Project Director will develop a Fidelity Matrix to measure progress towards benchmarks; an identified Leadership Team will examine data reports for each site and project-wide on a monthly basis; and an identified Advisory Team including parents, will review implementation progress on a quarterly basis, to recalibrate elements to the proposed project with an aim towards sustainability (e35).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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). (20 points)

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. (5 points)

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

3. (3) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation. (5 points)

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:

Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 3 points).

Projects designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students in middle school or high school that examine the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implement responses, including rigorous, engaging, and well-rounded (e.g., that include music and the arts) approaches to learning that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status and prepare students for college, career, and civic life, including one or more of the following:

- (a) Student-centered learning models that may leverage technology to address learner variability (e.g., universal design for learning (as defined in this notice), K–12 competency-based education (as defined in this notice), project-based learning, or hybrid/blended learning) and provide high-quality learning content, applications, or tools.
- (b) Middle school courses or projects that prepare students to participate in advanced coursework in high school.
- (c) Advanced courses and programs, including dual enrollment and early college programs.
- (d) Project-based and experiential learning, including service and work-based learning.
- (e) High-quality career and technical education courses, pathways, and industry-recognized credentials that are integrated into the curriculum.

Strengths:

The applicant sufficiently addresses this Competitive Priority Preference, sub-criterion (b). For example, the proposed program will engage in an equity-based approach, meeting the needs of middle school students to participate in advance coursework in high school, by assessing where they are in their coursework and credit earnings, and recognizing and meeting the differing student needs, preferences, and interests. To address this variation, the proposed project will take an individualized approach to content curation that addresses not only individual participant reading levels and personal interests, but any sensory or physical limitations, emotional or behavioral challenges, learning disabilities, and English-language barriers. (e7)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2:

Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty (up to 3 points).

Projects that are designed to address the impacts of the COVID–19 pandemic, including impacts that extend beyond the duration of the pandemic itself, on the students most impacted by the pandemic, with a focus on underserved students and the educators who serve them through:

- (a) conducting community asset-mapping and needs assessments that may include an assessment of the extent to which students, including subgroups of students, have become disengaged from learning, including students not participating in in-person or remote instruction, and specific strategies for reengaging and supporting students and their families; and
- (b) using evidence-based instructional approaches and supports, such as professional development, coaching, ongoing support for educators, high quality tutoring, expanded access to rigorous coursework and content across K–12, and expanded learning time to accelerate learning for students in ways that ensure all students have the opportunity to successfully meet challenging academic content standards without contributing to tracking or remedial courses.

Strengths:

(a) The applicant suitably presents information to explain how the proposed project will address the impacts of the COVID–19 pandemic on the students most impacted by the pandemic including impacts that extend beyond the duration of the pandemic itself. For example, the applicant indicates that Acorn will promote equity and opportunity indicating that it will increase students' odds of earning a post-secondary degree or certificate/training program by over 5x. Recognizing as part of its needs assessment that college and career readiness is complex, especially for first generation rural students experiencing poverty, the applicant indicates that Acorn will provide the opportunities to ensure that participants who are first generation and/or rural are college and career ready (e28). The applicant maps how the components of the program will address the individualized needs of the participant (e29).

(b) The applicant adequately addresses this sub-criterion. For example, Acorn will provide extensive and ongoing teacher and administrator support in that the Instructional Coaches will work with the Therapeutic Learning Classroom teachers, site administrators, and counselors to ensure assistance to teachers and student success in the Acorn classrooms and after in grades 11-12 (e30). Furthermore, the applicant sufficiently presents information to show that the interventions delivered to the proposed participants, which will expand participants' access to rigorous coursework, are evidence-based (e22).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not make reference to conducting asset mapping as is required by the criterion.

Reader's Score: **2**

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/02/2022 02:06 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/02/2022 02:38 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Northern Humboldt Union High School District (S411C220126)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	30
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	10
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	0
Sub Total	100	70
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. COVID-19	3	2
Sub Total	6	5
Total	106	75

Technical Review Form

Panel #18 - EIR Early Phase - 18: 84.411C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Northern Humboldt Union High School District (S411C220126)

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:

Reader's Score: 20

Sub

1. The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies. (20 points)

Strengths:

The applicant's proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on the success of the pilot Acorn classroom concept (e17). Acorn involves the implementation of evidence-based, field-initiated innovations that support dropout prevention, formalized student supports, and research-based learning opportunities for at risk students.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 30

Sub

1. (1) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework. (10 points)

Strengths:

The applicant presents a convincing conceptual framework. Acorn is designed to be integrated into existing comprehensive schools and is not treated as a school within a school (e22). The project's conceptual framework is premised upon the Rural Principal's Guide's design. The model aligns well with the guide's 5 principles which are to

Sub

identify students early, build strong community partnerships, reduce social isolationism, create options, and implement creative interventions (e22). The project's guiding concept involves, identifying incoming 9th graders at risk of failure, put them into four Therapeutic Learning style Classroom, have them take PE and one hands-on elective class outside Acorn to integrate into the school, ensure their teachers focus on not letting them fail and bring in Tier 2 and 3 MTSS support as necessary (e21).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 10

2. (2) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (5 points)

Strengths:

The applicant's goals, and performance measures are clearly stated. The project seeks to achieve four clearly stated goals. These are, to enable 80% of Acorn students to graduate comprehensive schools' college ready, develop integrated student supports to serve Acorn students and alumni, prepare teachers and staff to teach and support Acorn and Priority students and finally to sustain the program beyond federal funding. There are specific and measurable objectives for each of the goals (e32). For example, to achieve goal one, the applicant must improve Acorn student attendance to or above state levels, ensure that at-least 93% of Acorn students pass Grade 9 and 10 classes and earn 110 credits by the end of Gr 10 etc. (e31).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 5

3. (3) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs. (15 points)

Strengths:

The design of the project is convincing and appropriate to the needs of the target population. The project targets and will successfully address at-risk 9th and 10th grade students. These are socially and economically disadvantaged students, chronically absent students, suspended students, D and F students and American Indian /Hispanic students (e59).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers:

Reader's Score: 10

Sub

1. **The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel. (10 points)**

Strengths:

The applicant's key personnel have appropriate experience relevant to the project. The project director has directed, evaluated, or supported over 75 federal, state and foundation projects (e33). Furthermore, the applicant encourages the applications for employment from members of groups traditionally underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, age, or disability (e32).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

Reader's Score: 10

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. (10 points)**

Strengths:

The applicant has a convincing management plan. Each team member has clearly defined responsibilities (e34). The plan includes strong coordination between participants, clearly delineated activities and comprehensive procedures for evaluation and stakeholder feedback (e35). For example, the evaluators and project director and teachers will implement a systematic, MTSS aligned data collection system. Also, site-level and project-wide data reports will be reviewed in monthly leadership teams (e35). To achieve the objectives within budget the project director manages all fiscal matters and contracts (e33).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 10

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). (20 points)

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

2. (2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. (5 points)

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

3. (3) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation. (5 points)

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:

Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 3 points).

Projects designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students in middle school or high school that examine the sources of inequity

and inadequacy and implement responses, including rigorous, engaging, and well-rounded (e.g., that include music and the arts) approaches to learning that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status and prepare students for college, career, and civic life, including one or more of the following:

- (a) Student-centered learning models that may leverage technology to address learner variability (e.g., universal design for learning (as defined in this notice), K–12 competency-based education (as defined in this notice), project-based learning, or hybrid/blended learning) and provide high-quality learning content, applications, or tools.
- (b) Middle school courses or projects that prepare students to participate in advanced coursework in high school.
- (c) Advanced courses and programs, including dual enrollment and early college programs.
- (d) Project-based and experiential learning, including service and work-based learning.
- (e) High-quality career and technical education courses, pathways, and industry-recognized credentials that are integrated into the curriculum.

Strengths:

The applicant's model qualifies under (a) as the applicant will be working with the K-8 districts identifying 9th graders experiencing barriers to learning (e27). The project convincingly promotes educational equity by identifying 9th graders using the following criteria (a) low grades/failing class, (b) chronic absenteeism, (c) any suspension and (d) socio-economic status and (e) being American Indian/Hispanic (e26-e27). The applicant convincingly leverage technology to address learner variability using instructional approaches such as the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (e23). Furthermore, the applicant's sample schedule for Acorn students at Arcata details the high-quality learning content the project will offer. For example, students will be taught Math, Life Science, PE, Study Skills with SEL (e23).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2:

Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty (up to 3 points).

Projects that are designed to address the impacts of the COVID–19 pandemic, including impacts that extend beyond the duration of the pandemic itself, on the students most impacted by the pandemic, with a focus on underserved students and the educators who serve them through:

(a) conducting community asset-mapping and needs assessments that may include an assessment of the extent to which students, including subgroups of students, have become disengaged from learning, including students not participating in in-person or remote instruction, and specific strategies for reengaging and supporting students and their families; and

(b) using evidence-based instructional approaches and supports, such as professional development, coaching, ongoing support for educators, high quality tutoring, expanded access to rigorous coursework and content across K–12, and expanded learning time to accelerate learning for students in ways that ensure all students have the opportunity to successfully meet challenging academic content standards without contributing to tracking or remedial courses.

Strengths:

The applicant's project adequately addresses criterion (b). The project encompasses evidence-based field-initiated innovations that support dropout prevention, formalized student supports, and research-based learning opportunities for at-risk students (e22). The applicant adequately conducted needs assessment in order to address the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. The needs analysis included identification of current multi-tiered behavior components in the project

schools, collection and review of school level and subgroup level student data and school environment surveys, family, and staff surveys (e31).

Weaknesses:

There is no adequate evidence that the applicant conducted community asset mapping(e31).

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/02/2022 02:38 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/04/2022 11:56 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Northern Humboldt Union High School District (S411C220126)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	17
Total	30	17

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - EIR Tier 2 - 8: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Northern Humboldt Union High School District (S411C220126)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

Reader's Score: 17

Sub

1. (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards with or without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in this notice). (20 points)

Strengths:

Measurement: The overall outcomes of interest in this evaluation are presented with clarity with strong support for more directly observable sub-outcomes (e.g., increase student retention in comprehensive high schools, attendance, units/credits earned). The use of administrative and programmatic data makes consistent collection across comparison groups very feasible. Design: The intervention structure avoids major issues of treatment diffusion even with treatment and control students attending the same school. The use of the same students within a school for comparison also strengthens the equivalency of comparison groups. The quasi-experimental design includes baseline data collection and a process to assess the equivalence of comparison groups which reduces the threat of confounding variables leading to biased treatment effect estimates. The estimated sample of students per year and overall sample of students in the evaluation is clearly stated with clustering within schools addressed in the design and analysis. Analysis: A regression-based approach is detailed for this evaluation and is appropriate given the design.

Weaknesses:

Design: The utilization of baseline data to approximate equivalent comparison groups is well described in the evaluation plan but the sufficiency of the plan is unclear because no evidence is included to support the variable used to check equivalence. Relatedly, the evaluation only notes that the comparison group students will be selected to be similar to treatment but this selection process is unclear. This increases the possibility that treatment and control students will differ in systematic ways that are related to outcomes of interest. Several components related to the sample are not addressed. Attrition with this student population is likely to be an issue but not considered. Attrition can lead to unequal comparison groups (i.e., differential attrition) or inadequate sample sizes. Missing data is also likely to be an issue with this student population but is not addressed leading to greater concern about bias if the missingness is not completely at random or sample adequacy issues. Compounding the threat to sample adequacy is the lack of evidence the sample is adequate for planned analyses and expected effects. Another threat to the accuracy of estimates and inferences is the disregard of partial nesting in the treatment arm stemming from students nested within teachers and coaches. The large role of teachers in the interventions suggests possible variation across these classrooms that should be accounted for or at least assessed. Analysis: A regression approach is suitable for the evaluation design but nature of the outcomes (count data involving attendance and

Sub

earned credits) suggests specific types of regression may be necessary (e.g., Poisson or Negative Binomial) or detailed assessments of assumptions are warranted.

Reader's Score: 12

2. (2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. (5 points)

Strengths:

While not completed, the planned use of a Fidelity matrix with measurable outcomes based on the provided example has promise to provide assessment of progress and performance feedback. Goals and year-by-year performance measures are also well presented in the narrative (p. 31). These detailed plans increase the ability of the evaluation to track progress and performance. Planned meetings from different stakeholders (Leadership team, Advisory Committee, parent/student stakeholders) provide strong and varied evidence of progress and performance.

Weaknesses:

The primary weakness is the lack of details regarding several components of the performance and progress assessments. A fidelity matrix is planned but details are omitted. The noted meetings (leadership and advisory) are important but the planned analysis of data that informs their decisions and possible process to apply or implement recommended changes from these groups is unclear. The planned observations are missing details involving their structure and analysis. As is the use of parent and student feedback.

Reader's Score: 3

3. (3) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation. (5 points)

Strengths:

Program components are described in text and presented in a logic model that provides a sufficient description and their relations. Overall outcomes and related measurable proximal outcomes are described in text and well presented in a table with measurable implementation and performance benchmarks.

Weaknesses:

Mediators were not directly or sufficiently addressed. Additionally, measurable thresholds for acceptable implementation are not clearly presented or are vague. While a fidelity matrix is planned the details are omitted. Together these make the articulation of implementation unclear.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 10/04/2022 11:56 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/04/2022 07:59 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Northern Humboldt Union High School District (S411C220126)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	16
Total	30	16

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - EIR Tier 2 - 8: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Northern Humboldt Union High School District (S411C220126)

Questions

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: 16

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). (20 points)

Strengths:

The applicant will conduct an evaluation using a quasi-experimental design, with students in grade 9 assigned to treatment and control groups within two participating schools (and three classrooms) for a total of approximately 90 students in each of 4 cohorts over 4 years. This design is eligible to meet What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards with reservations. The evaluation team will have access to the data needed to determine baseline equivalence, to assign students to treatment and control groups, and to serve as covariates in the estimation of treatment effects. Baseline equivalence will be assessed with grade 8 data, which is consistent with the WWC standards. Students in the business-as-usual control groups will also attend the same two schools, which allows for similar contexts and resources. There is at least one valid and reliable measure for use in the impact analyses (student attendance) and this outcome measure will be determined in the same way for both treatment and control groups. Regression models will be used to estimate treatment effects, controlling for the student demographic characteristics and the effect of the baseline variable. The statistical model also adjusts for the effect of blocking by school. The applicant will apply a correction for multiple confirmatory contrasts, as required by the WWC.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide specific information on the level of support that students in the control condition will receive. While students in the control condition will not be served by the three treatment classes, it is reasonable to expect that they will receive some level of support if they are like the students in the treatment group due to their at-risk status. The sample is small, and any sample loss could lead to the need to look at the representativeness of the sample and this is not discussed by the applicant. The applicant does not provide the percentage of students and teachers included in the treatment each year at each of these schools to determine the representativeness of the sample. The applicant proposes that a variety of student-level variables will be used to create a match sample, with some of these variables being objective measures and some of them very subjective (such as recommendations for treatment from parents and teachers). There is not enough information to understand the methodology that will be used to form statistically similar groups. Due to the lack of clarity around the formation of the treatment and control groups, the applicant does not demonstrate a clearly internally valid design. The credits earned variable could be more clearly specified so that it is consistently measured. For example, the applicant could specify that credits earned will only apply to the available credits offered within the standard school day and that each school offers the

Sub

same number of periods per day. No missing data procedures are discussed. The applicant does not support the proposed sample size with a power analysis or with a minimum detectable effect size based on a power analysis. This information is necessary to understand whether the study sample is large enough to estimate treatment effects with sufficient reliability. Also, the applicant does not specify the procedures for combining the cohorts over time. It is likely that there will be cohort differences due to the selection process and these differences may create bias in the impact analyses.

Reader's Score: 12

2. (2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. (5 points)

Strengths:

The independent evaluator will develop a program implementation fidelity matrix and this matrix will be used to assess progress toward achieving the intended outcomes on an annual basis along with individual student progress. The evaluator will share this feedback with the project's leadership team and advisory council. Project staff (not including the evaluator) will meet weekly throughout the implementation period to discuss individual student progress and make changes to the treatment program as necessary.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide sufficient details on whether the evaluation plan includes the use of multiple measures at multiple time points to provide performance feedback. The timeline includes 200-300 student engagement/classroom observations each year by the evaluator, but the narrative does not explain the purpose of these observations in the evaluation, including how observations will be conducted, how the reliability of the observations will be determined, and how the results will be analyzed and reported on. The applicant does not clearly articulate how the independent evaluator will provide performance feedback beyond the annual yearly reports.

Reader's Score: 2

3. (3) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation. (5 points)

Strengths:

The logic model specifies the inputs, outputs, short-term, mid-term, and long-term outcomes, as well as the conceptual framework for the process and impact evaluations. The key components are also clearly identified, and include building local capacity through professional development, accountability, effective and engaging instruction, and stakeholder involvement. The evaluation is conceptually aligned to the logic model. There is a good plan for developing an implementation fidelity matrix with a points system after funding is awarded. Once developed, an overall score of 85/100 will be evidence of acceptable program implementation which may serve as a reasonable threshold depending on the details of the matrix.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide clearly worded questions for the impact analyses that specify the confirmatory contrasts that will be conducted. The confirmatory contrasts can be inferred from the linear regression model, but they are not clearly articulated in the narrative. Several of the short-term and mid-term outcomes could potentially serve as mediators in the evaluation analyses, but they are not identified as such. The narrative nor the regression model identify the measurement or use of mediators to understand their effect on student outcomes. A measurable threshold for student participation in the treatment and for teacher implementation of the treatment are not provided and could not be evaluated.

Sub

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/04/2022 07:59 AM