

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/02/2022 10:00 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Strategic Education Research Partnership Institute (S411A220004)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	13
<b>Sub Total</b>	15	13
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	35	35
<b>Sub Total</b>	35	35
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	15	15
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	35	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	63
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Equity	3	1
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. COVID-19	3	1
<b>Sub Total</b>	6	2
<b>Total</b>	106	65

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Expansion Panel - 1: 84.411A

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

Applicant: Strategic Education Research Partnership Institute (S411A220004)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 13

#### Sub

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

#### Strengths:

The applicant has provided relevant national statistics outlying the problem of low reading achievement in middle school students to support the national significance of the proposed project. This includes the relevant data confirming that high needs students are disproportionately impacted.

#### Weaknesses:

The application would be strengthened with the inclusion of data on needs assessments for the target population of middle school students at target schools to warrant justification of national significance.

Reader's Score: 4

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

#### Strengths:

The Strategic Adolescent Reading Intervention (STARI) program addresses engagement and efficacy that has shown to produce meaningful gains on multiple reading skills. The expansion study is designed to assess the extent by which the program can be replicated across a largely diverse sample and assess program effectiveness within particular subgroups to further demonstrate the effectiveness of this strategy.

#### Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

**Sub**

**Strengths:**

The project proposes to expand the programming for a larger, more geographically diverse sample. It is appropriate to attempt to address questions about what resources are needed to support the adoption in schools for sustained implementation.

**Weaknesses:**

The request for an expansion grant in part due to the reasoning of not completing testing and evaluation of the project during the previous mid-phase grant is somewhat a less compelling reason for an expansion regardless of the legitimate excuse of the pandemic impeding the previous grant.

**Reader's Score: 4**

**Strategy to Scale - Strategy to Scale**

- 1. The Secretary considers the strategy to scale the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**Reader's Score: 35**

**Sub**

- 1. (1) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant has clearly identified the development and utilization of a 17-session online professional development series that needs to be evaluated in its capacity to address the limitations of previously encountered program training that have resulted in weak instructional practice and student outcomes. In addition, the applicant provides recognition of the barrier of costs of implementation and sustainability with a comprehensive plan to assess two models of support (enhanced vs. standard).

**Weaknesses:**

None noted

**Reader's Score: 10**

- 2. (2) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.**

The time allocated for the project personnel is adequate to achieve the project's objectives. The management plan includes relevant activities that could be achieved within the proposed budget. The narrative describes a comprehensive management plan which includes timelines for major project activities in terms of milestones and assignment of responsibilities among the three main responsible parties. A detailed timeline for implementation by the group and school cohorts is also included to facilitate and organize workflow efficiently for the accomplishment of project tasks.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

Sub

Reader's Score: 5

3. (3) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) working directly, or through partners, during the grant period.

**Strengths:**

The project personnel are highly qualified and possess adequate experience to fulfill the roles assigned to complete the objectives during the grant period. The applicant has provided letters of support outlining expressed confidence in the applicant bringing the proposed project to scale on the national level. The applicant proposes a partnership with an established and successful external evaluator, shown to be capable of successfully evaluating a project of this scale. In addition, the resources are adequate to bring this proposed project to scale.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

4. (4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.

**Strengths:**

The project proposes to incorporate findings into published materials and the program website, as well as webinar hosting and written publications in peer-reviewed journals. In addition, the applicant will utilize social media on sites with exceptionally high visits which also is adequate to disseminate information to support further development or replication.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

**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: 15

Sub

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

**Strengths:**

The proposed project includes a well-organized and detailed logic model that clearly defines intervention resources and activities of curriculum and intervention support with well-articulated proximal and distal outcomes of the project.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

Sub

Reader's Score: 5

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides four well-developed and appropriate goals related to improving reading skills, building teacher capacity for effective literacy instruction, determining effectiveness of the program for diverse populations, creating a sustainable package of supports for replication, and disseminating accompanying objectives tied to specific outputs and outcomes which are clearly specified and measurable.

**Weaknesses:**

None 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.

**Strengths:**

The proposed project directly and appropriately addresses the established needs of the target population of middle school students who are reading below grade level. The design of the proposed project incorporates the identified need to enhance support for teachers and addresses this through providing individualized guidance, monitoring, and evaluation by literacy specialists.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

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

Reader's Score: 0

Sub

1. (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

**Strengths:**

**Weaknesses:**

Sub

Reader's Score:

2. (2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

## Priority Questions

### Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. 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 proposed project includes serving high-needs students in middle school to promote educational equity and adequacy of resources and opportunity.

**Weaknesses:**

The proposed program elements do not specifically address any of the approaches to learning within the technical criteria (a-e).

**Reader's Score: 1**

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

1. **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 proposed project includes relevant needs assessments in areas of reading deficiencies as foundational to the project implementation and measured outcomes.

**Weaknesses:**

The ongoing and worsened problems of depressed reading scores within high needs students are noted, yet are not specific to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though evidence-based instructional approaches and supports are being proposed, community asset mapping has not been addressed as required in the competitive preference priority criteria.

**Reader's Score: 1**

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**Status:** Submitted  
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## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Strategic Education Research Partnership Institute (S411A220004)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	14
<b>Sub Total</b>	15	14
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	35	34
<b>Sub Total</b>	35	34
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	15	14
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	35	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	62
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Equity	3	1
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. COVID-19	3	1
<b>Sub Total</b>	6	2
<b>Total</b>	106	64

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Expansion Panel - 1: 84.411A

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

Applicant: Strategic Education Research Partnership Institute (S411A220004)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 14

#### Sub

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

#### Strengths:

The applicant has made a good case for the project significance nationally (pages e17-e18). The context of the national importance of the project is in the fact that only 34% of U.S. graders read at proficient level. Moreover, the reading proficiency of students based on ethnicity already showed a gap of students of color behind the other groups. The applicant has also demonstrated that because of the pandemic, this gap in reading achievement further increased and it was important to give them opportunity to make up lost ground. The applicant has made a case that the proposed STAR! approach integrates instruction in foundational skills with instruction in deep comprehension and grade-level skills.

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

#### Strengths:

The applicant has adequately described how the project strategy is an expansion of the current scope of schools (pages e18-e22). The applicant discusses how the STAR! is designed to accelerate adolescents' reading comprehension, to improve world-level skills and reading fluency to address gaps in background knowledge. The applicant has also made a case that the approach differs from other interventions as it incorporates features aimed at addressing engagement and efficacy. The applicant has cited the research base of the STAR! (page e20), and the applicant in their mid-phase implementation of the grant, found some preliminary promising results, with a development of new program components.

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant has provided a good case of how the project will contribute to increase knowledge of the educational issues (page e22). The applicant has stated that the potential expansion of the strategy to a larger geographically diverse sample will address questions such as support needed by the schools to adopt the strategy, sustainability, and national implementation. The project will also be able to assess the strategy for particular subgroups.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant has not provided adequate details of how the pandemic affected their study at the mid-phase grant (page e22). The applicant has not provided sufficient details of how the expansion will bridge the gap that existed because of the issues associated with the EIR mid-phase implementation. For example, the applicant has not discussed what would be different from the earlier project beyond expanded scope to address the issues of low participation of students in the project.

**Reader's Score: 4**

**Strategy to Scale - Strategy to Scale**

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

**Reader's Score: 34**

**Sub**

**1. (1) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant has provided a comprehensive set of strategies that will potentially address barriers and enable expansion of the program (pages e21-e27). The applicant has listed all the potential barriers and the manner by which the project will address these barriers. For example, the applicant stated that one of the main barriers is the cost and feasibility of professional learning. To address this, the applicant proposes the use of 17-session online PL series which have already been developed and which will provide flexible professional learning. These PL series will also be available even after the grant funding. Similarly, the project seeks to test a version of the project that can be offered to schools at marginal additional costs beyond the project funding.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

2. **(2) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant has discussed a viable management plan (pages e28-e31, e89-e91). The strength of the management plan is a clear timeline from January 2023 and the responsible parties (pages e89-e91). Moreover, the applicant has provided specific information about the management structure, the methods of recruitment of partnering schools, the gradual expansion of the project, and the involvement of the state-level leaders to identify districts and their fit for the project. On pages e31-e34, the applicant has provided impressive information of the education and experiences of the project leaders. Their qualifications enable them to take on specific project related responsibilities. The management plan has indicated a need for being responsive to local conditions as a part of project implementation. This will be achieved through strong partnerships with district-level employees and the hiring of a local project support associate (page e31).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 5**

3. **(3) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) working directly, or through partners, during the grant period.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant has provided good information about the capacity of the applicant to implement the project (pages e31-e34). The project will be led by an experienced and qualified principal investigator, co-PI, assistant project director, literacy specialist, independent evaluator, and technical consultants. The applicant has also indicated that the two main partners, SERP and MDRC have expertise in areas of implementing research projects. The applicants also have prior experience with large-scale evaluations of reading interventions, and experience with the preparation of products aimed at disseminating research findings.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant has not substantiated their capacity to scale by providing examples of successful past projects. For example, the applicant has not listed other similar projects that the applicant has implemented.

**Reader's Score: 9**

4. **(4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant has described a detailed dissemination plan (pages e34-e35). The strength of the dissemination plan is diverse methods of dissemination such as email, social media campaigns, advertising in education publications and use of other non-profit organizations. Other effective methods would be search engine optimization techniques, attendance and presentations at national literacy conferences. The applicant also seeks to leverage academic and policy conferences to disseminate interim and summative findings. The applicant is also aware of the diversity of the audience. For example, the project also seeks to prepare written products for general audience, practitioners, researchers and policymakers in portals such as briefs, online publication, and articles in peer-reviewed journals.

**Sub**

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**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: 14**

**Sub**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant has discussed a comprehensive conceptual framework for the project (pages e35-e37). The project conceptual structure (figure1, page e36) clearly incorporates the project intervention resources, intervention activities, mediators and the proximal and distal outcomes. The conceptual framework takes into account assumptions and necessary critical components such as teachers' capacity to enact effective instructional practices, and adequate professional learning.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 5**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant has provided clear goals and objectives for the project (pages e37-e38, e118-e132). The strength of the project goals is that they systematically cover the expansion phase of the project strategies. Moreover, the goals and objectives are presented as a comprehensive study to contribute to the evidence base of the project model. On pages e37-e38, the applicant has listed the goals and target objectives. The five goals ranging from recruitment of schools, building capacity, providing a sustainable approach to implement the strategy, and finally disseminate the results comprehensively operationalizes the whole project.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

Sub

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.

**Strengths:**

The applicant has briefly discussed the broad needs of the target middle schools that will be the target population (pages e38-e39). The applicant has listed the ethnic make-up of the middle schools and specified that the project will meet the target audience's literacy needs as the strategy has demonstrated effectiveness of the target population needs.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant has not substantiated the needs of the target schools with data (page e39). For example, the applicant has not supported the need of the target school teachers for professional development.

Reader's Score: 4

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

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

Reader's Score: 0

Sub

1. (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

2. (2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.

**Strengths:**

N/A

Sub

**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.

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score: 0**

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

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score: 0**

### Priority Questions

#### Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. 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 strategy is designed with specific attention to high-need students with culturally responsive practices and thereby promotes educational equity. (e18)

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant has not adequately addressed the competitive preference priority (page e18). For example, the applicant has not included any of the strategies listed (a) to (e) as listed in the criteria expectations. For example, the applicant has not discussed, elements such as leveraging technology, advanced courses, dual enrollment, experiential learning or industry credentials.

**Reader's Score:** 1

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

**1. 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:**

According to the applicant, the pandemic has widened the gulf between white and students of color in reading achievement (page e18). The proposed projects seeks to integrate instruction in foundational skills to address that gulf.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant has not adequately addressed the competitive preference priority # 2 (page e18). For example, the applicant has not provided specific plans for community asset mapping to examine student disengagement. The applicant also does not provide specific information about access to rigorous coursework and content across K-12 and expanding learning time to help students.

**Reader's Score:** 1

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 08/02/2022 10:00 AM



Status: Submitted

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## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Strategic Education Research Partnership Institute (S411A220004)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	14
<b>Sub Total</b>	15	14
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	35	35
<b>Sub Total</b>	35	35
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	15	15
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	35	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	64
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Equity	3	1
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. COVID-19	3	1
<b>Sub Total</b>	6	2
<b>Total</b>	106	66

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Expansion Panel - 1: 84.411A

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

Applicant: Strategic Education Research Partnership Institute (S411A220004)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 14

Sub

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

#### Strengths:

(1) The applicant addresses a high burden to increase reading proficiency scores, and includes data throughout the narrative that substantiates the need for their project. Low reading proficiency levels and documented data indicate only 34% of U.S. eighth graders could read at a proficient level. By middle school, these students have experienced repeated failures to meet grade-level expectations; complexity of grade level texts; and risk of dropping out. Additionally, students who drop out of school encounter lower wages, higher unemployment and rates of incarceration, poorer health, and outcomes that ripple through society and future generations. 2019 data show only 15% of Black students, 22% of Hispanic students, and 20% of students living in poverty scored proficient on NAEP, as compared to 42% of White students and 46% of students not eligible for free and reduced-price meals, and other relevant information and studies will substantiate the need for their proposed project. Disparities such as lack of teacher knowledge and professional learning; limited target school population, slow and inaccurate decoding, poor command of sentence structure, weak vocabulary, limited background knowledge; Covid pandemic impact; and other factors that are critical contributors to learning in the adolescent years will justify the need for the project. Literature substantiates a rationale for their intervention strategies and ensures that the needs of the target population are met. (p. e17-22).

#### Weaknesses:

The proposed project needs more descriptive information on the schools' approach to addressing the deficits in achievement. The applicant does not provide a needs assessment to justify the national significance of the project. (p. e 27).

Reader's Score: 4

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

#### Strengths:

(2) The proposed project clearly incorporates the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on existing strategies by providing documented interventions, resources, activities, services, programs and practices that can help to solve the persistent problems in education that prevent students, particularly high-need students, from succeeding. The project addresses the problem?? and demonstrates how the proposed project appeals to high needs students to accelerate student achievement. The proposed project will modify strategies for the target population; and expand access in the STARI (Strategic Adolescent Reading Intervention). This program also improves word-level skills and reading fluency and addresses gaps in background knowledge. Additionally, the project will implement and evaluate solutions to proposed barriers across a large and geographical area. The project will reach scale over time by expanding services and utilizing past success with a logic model that links the program inputs to the outcomes to ensure promising new strategies. (p. e 23-26).

#### Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

**Strengths:**

(3) The applicant describes a potential contribution of the proposed project to increase clear understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies. The potential dissemination of the proposed innovations increase efficiency by utilizing resources, replication operations, current research-based methods of assessment; adaptations of practices, and grant implementation. The proposed project provides community awareness by utilizing email and social media campaigns, advertising in education publications, and via other nonprofit organizations with broad reach. These initiatives provide information on project effectiveness to accelerate achievement and to implement strategies in a variety of new populations to ensure increased knowledge and understanding of educational issues. (p. e34).

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**Strategy to Scale - Strategy to Scale**

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

**Reader's Score: 35**

**Sub**

**1. (1) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant clearly identifies specific strategies that address a particular barrier that would address reaching the level of scale for the proposed project. The applicant proposes to address barriers such as, insufficient training and professional development; subgroup identification; and limited and ineffective STARI information. The project employs sufficient resources such as, ReadBasix assessments and STARI model in an implementation plan of stakeholders' support, feedback, assessments, past success, and a strong theory (logic model) that links the program inputs to the outcomes. Also, being a part of a larger network and sharing resources and operating procedures supports reach to the level of scale that is proposed in the application. (p. e 18, 25 -28, 36,42).

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**2. (2) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant has provided a management plan that will achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones. The applicant accomplishes

**Sub**

tasks by incorporating a detailed timeline (Year 1) to allow task monitoring and a clear roadmap for project implementation of key benchmarks with objectives (1.2 Implement STARI with -15,000 high-need students total across 4 years) illustrate concrete attainment to be achieved. Outputs, and outcomes (1.2 Class rosters from study schools) are outlined in the logic model and highlight specific deliverables from all key partners and stakeholders involved in the project. Project milestones drive continuous improvement by addressing data checkpoints where pivots in strategy of implementation are warranted. Additionally, the applicant clearly defined roles for key personnel and sufficient timeline to accomplish project tasks by improving results and productivity. The key personnel provide an opportunity for the project to have a systemic impact on the organization's overall operation to maximize the effectiveness of the project. The project is designed to achieve the goals and to complete activities to signal that are on track, on time, and within budget to ensure objectives of the proposed project are achieved. (p. e 30-37).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant has not provided an organizational chart that shows reporting lines for all project staff or a method to track progress, therefore, it is difficult to determine how to identify a tangible achievement of proposed objectives. (p. e 30-37).

**Reader's Score: 5**

**3. (3) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) working directly, or through partners, during the grant period.**

**Strengths:**

The proposal clearly discusses how the project will utilize, financial resources, management capacity, or staff to ensure that objectives are attained. A clear connection is made between activities, partners (District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), resources, and staff in the achievement of each objective. Project Director /Principal Investigator will manage and coordinate all aspects of the project. Finance/Legal staff will provide fiscal and legal oversight to the project. Time and effort of qualified personnel such as the Project Director, Executive Directors, Implementation Director, and Technology Director, staff will be responsible for tasks and activities, and are appropriately addressed to oversee the project. Dissemination of the proposed innovations will clearly increase efficiency and effective strategies by utilizing dissemination operations; and utilizing up-to-date and research-based methods to ensure applicant's capacity to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level working directly, or through partners, during the grant period. (p. e34-37,40,108, 103).

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**4. (4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.**

**Strengths:**

(4) The applicant clearly uses a plan to broadly disseminate information on its project to support further development. The plan contributes to Google Ad, emails and publications. The disseminating of the STARI is within one's school, district, state and, exemplar classrooms. The proposed project promotes community awareness and provides nonparticipants with information by employing ongoing posts about the project via social media campaigns to ensure broad dissemination and project effectiveness to accelerate achievement of successful evidence-based practices in new schools, districts, and states. (p. e33-35).

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

## 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: 15

Sub

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

**Strengths:**

The proposed project's conceptual framework is well-conceived and leads to sound project implementation by employing strong alignment between the proposed project activities and outcomes outlined in the logic model. The applicant's strategic revisions improve and adjust activities and build the evidence based on effective educational practices with proposed outcomes and goals. Additionally, specific tasks (meetings) are employed with tangible results logically linked to a rationale for the implementation strategy and referenced in the study by Tatum, 2008. (p. e38-e39).

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

**Strengths:**

Specified measurable goals (e.g. Goal 2: To build teacher capacity for effective literacy instruction and to measure the impact of STARI professional learning on teachers' knowledge and instructional practice), objectives, and outcomes are specified. The overall rate of change anticipated across the project period and aligned objectives are determined by rates of increase from performance indicators. Project objectives such as, (2.2 Increase teachers' knowledge for literacy Instruction) are outlined and include corresponding program purpose and clear outcomes (List of participating teachers). These components describe the specific desired programmatic operations that are achieved by implementing measurable terms such as measuring tools, quantitative qualitative levels of success, baselines, indicators, targets timelines (Winter/Spring) and population to achieve measurable goals, objectives, and outcomes of the project. (p.e36-38).

**Weaknesses:**

None 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.

**Strengths:**

The applicant clearly provides services to address the needs of intended recipients or beneficiaries by providing sufficient quantity and quality educational services; training, assessments, and remedial instruction to raise student achievement. Additionally, appropriate personnel, activities, research-based programs, and STARI Professional Learning Online Modules will be provided to address persistent challenges that other educators can build upon. Services will successfully address the needs of the target population or other identified needs and to improve achievement for high-need students. (p. e 99).

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

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

Reader's Score: 0

Sub

1. (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

2. (2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

Reader's Score: 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.

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score: 0**

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

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score: 0**

### Priority Questions

#### Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. 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 noted that STAR1 is designed with specific attention to high-need populations including culturally responsive practices and highly engaging texts. The applicant will be employing projects and services to support and promote equity for students (grades 6, 7, 8) to foster knowledge. Additionally, STAR1 integrates instruction in foundational skills with instruction in deep comprehension and grade-level skills, and addresses engagement and efficacy, critical factors in supporting adolescent readers to ensure equity in student access to educational resources. (p. e 14, 18).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not address initiatives 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. (p. e 14, 18).

**Reader's Score:** 1

1

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

1. **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 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 proposes to provide STAR! professional learning series for all teacher, facilitator, and administrator registrations, and technical assistance The applicant also proposes to merge the teaching foundational skills with deep comprehension skills, and grade-level skills to address the impacts of COVID-19 on students, educators and faculty. (p. e18, 107).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not address required methods for addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty. The proposed project needs more descriptive information on the schools' approach to addressing the deficits in achievement. The applicant does not provide a needs assessment to justify addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty. (p. e 18,27).

**Reader's Score:** 1

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 08/01/2022 10:00 AM



Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/02/2022 10:00 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Strategic Education Research Partnership Institute (S411A220004)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	15	0
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	35	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	35	0
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	15	0
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	35	33
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	33
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Equity	3	0
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. COVID-19	3	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	6	0
<b>Total</b>	106	33

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Expansion Panel - 1: 84.411A

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

Applicant: Strategic Education Research Partnership Institute (S411A220004)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 0

#### Sub

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

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

Sub

Reader's Score: 0

**Strategy to Scale - Strategy to Scale**

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

Reader's Score: 0

Sub

1. (1) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

Reader's Score: 0

2. (2) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

Reader's Score: 0

3. (3) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) working directly, or through partners, during the grant period.

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

Reader's Score: 0

4. (4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.

Sub

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

**Reader's Score: 0**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design**

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

**Reader's Score: 0**

Sub

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

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

**Reader's Score: 0**

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

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

**Reader's Score: 0**

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

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

Sub

Reader's Score: 0

**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: 33

Sub

1. **(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).**

**Strengths:**

The evaluation plan appropriately includes an impact study. The plan will focus on a two-stage school level random assignment study design. The initial stage will begin with an implementation group of 40 schools. A second stage will be a delayed implementation group that will begin later in the project. Included in the plan will be the use of a reading assessment survey that will be conducted in the 1st and 2nd year in order to measure the use of reading strategies by the students, motivation levels, and reading self-efficacy. Data and information will also be collected on training, attendance, online teacher training platforms, intervention software, fidelity ratings of the teachers, and periodic surveys of the participating instructors. This overall process is expected to improve instruction for struggling students in English language arts in grade six and seven. The focus on student outcomes are directly related to the domains prioritized by the What Works Clearinghouse in terms of alphabeticity, reading fluency, comprehension, and general literacy achievement (page e41). The applicant further indicates that in order to meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservation, the evaluation plan will be limited to the use of students who join the program in the study schools in the first six weeks of year one (page e44). The applicant further indicates that it will use a compiler average causal effect (CACE) in order to compare students who have received the proposed program and those students who have not.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant estimates that the attrition rate will be 23.5% based on student attendance during testing days as well as assumptions about passive consent to participate. It is unclear if the applicant will take any proactive measures to improve the attrition rate in order to enhance the results of the testing process.

Reader's Score: 18

2. **(2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.**

Sub

**Strengths:**

The applicant indicates that it is committed to providing insights and information about the strategies, conditions, and settings that would lead to stronger implementation and improved effects in terms of replication (page e51). For example, the applicant indicates It will make available the results of annual semi-structured phone interviews of participating teachers in order to identify facilitators and barriers to fidelity of implementation. The documentation would also identify any adaptations made to the intended implementation of the reading program (page e51). Additional annual interviews with stakeholders will also document the types of challenges encountered by schools in strategies in the implementation of the project. The applicant will also conduct a cost study that will employ an ingredients approach and also provide an average per student cost for the project (page e52).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 5**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides a well-developed project design that includes a rationale and explanation on how the various components of the project are driven by such mediators as student self-efficacy and social and cognitive engagement (page e36). The design is supported by a logic model that identifies the specific project components, mediators, and outcomes. The logic model (page e36) identifies the intervention resources, the proposed activities, and the anticipated outcomes. The information on the logic model is detailed and is consistent with the proposed activities and services provided by the applicant. The logic model provides an appropriate overview of how the applicant will evaluate the project and identify measurable thresholds for implementation.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 5**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant indicates that it clearly plans to provide an annual analysis of implementation. In addition, the project will also analyze student data annually for periodic feedback and continuous improvement (page e52). In addition, the project staff will prepare annual internal memos summarizing the implementation process and any findings that it can make concerning progress toward objectives. The applicant will also provide a two page project synopsis report to the various stakeholders as well as part of conference presentations. The applicant also indicates in the management plan that the project staff will hold bimonthly reviews that will ensure close attention to markers of progress and enable a quick response to any reported challenges (page e28).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 5**

## Priority Questions

### Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. **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:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

**Reader's Score: 0**

### Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. **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:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

**Reader's Score:** 0

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 08/02/2022 10:00 AM



Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/02/2022 10:00 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Strategic Education Research Partnership Institute (S411A220004)

**Reader #5:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	15	0
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	35	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	35	0
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	15	0
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	35	32
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	32
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Equity	3	0
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. COVID-19	3	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	6	0
<b>Total</b>	106	32

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Expansion Panel - 1: 84.411A

Reader #5: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: Strategic Education Research Partnership Institute (S411A220004)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 0

#### Sub

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

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

Sub

Reader's Score: 0

**Strategy to Scale - Strategy to Scale**

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

Reader's Score: 0

Sub

1. (1) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

Reader's Score: 0

2. (2) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

Reader's Score: 0

3. (3) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) working directly, or through partners, during the grant period.

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

Reader's Score: 0

4. (4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.

Sub

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

**Reader's Score: 0**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design**

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

**Reader's Score: 0**

Sub

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

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

**Reader's Score: 0**

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

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

**Reader's Score: 0**

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

**Strengths:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

Sub

Reader's Score: 0

### 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: 32

Sub

1. (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

#### Strengths:

The portion of the evaluation plan focused on the impact study presents an adequate approach to measuring the effectiveness of the intervention. For example, the applicant plans to use valid and reliable measures, such as ReadBasix and state ELA tests, to measure academic outcomes. (p.e42/26) The use of z-scores to pool across state assessments is also a solid approach. The plan adequately addresses how evaluators will limit the risk of bias due to late joiners, as outlined by WWC standards. (p. e44) In addition, the plan presents a thorough discussion of attrition, both overall and differential, and a plan to ensure representativeness of clusters through the use of a passive consent process. (p.e45) The applicant also specifies which covariates will be included in the analysis in order to adjust for baseline differences in prior ELA achievement, which is a strong approach to creating precise estimates of impact. (p.e46/30) Supplementing the 'intent-to-treat' analysis with a 'treatment-on-treated' (i.e. CACE, p.e47/31) analysis demonstrates a thorough understanding of the steps to determine effectiveness of the intervention under different conditions.

#### Weaknesses:

While the applicant plans to measure implementation fidelity, a school's level of fidelity is not included as a covariate in Level 2 of the model described on page e45-46/29. The applicant states the mid-phase EIR study includes a fidelity tool and "pre-specified benchmarks for acceptable implementation" (p.e48/32) and they plan to report fidelity scores for schools. It could have strengthened the design for the impact study if this variable were included as a Level 2 covariate in the model to determine whether there was a significant cross-level interaction between fidelity and outcomes. On page e51/35, the applicant states an intent to "examine whether higher fidelity scores are associated with larger impacts on students" but minimal detail is provided on the methods to "examine" this aspect of the intervention so it is difficult to determine the strength of the approach.

Reader's Score: 18

2. (2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.

Sub

**Strengths:**

The design for measuring implementation fidelity relies heavily on lessons learned during the EIR mid-phase which is an excellent approach to supporting replication in other setting. (p.e48/32) For example, the applicant states their intent to provide guidance about "adaptations" to newer features of the intervention such as the online PL series and the new app which should support replication. In addition, the evaluation plan includes a description of exploratory work related to "drivers of implementation fidelity and impacts" based on teacher and school characteristics which is a good approach to generating guidance on effective strategies and conditions to guide replication. (p.e51/35) Semi-structured interviews to identify barriers to implementation is also a strong approach to generating guidance for future replication.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were noted.

**Reader's Score: 5**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides a thorough discussion of possible student and teacher mediators, such as reading self-efficacy and instructional quality. (p.e48-49/32-33) Specific research questions and data sources are also provided in Table 4 on page e50/34) The plan includes a strong approach for developing and validating an instrument to measure teachers' content and pedagogical content knowledge which is an important mediator in this intervention. (p.e49-50/34) Project components along with proximal and distal outcomes are clearly stated in the conceptual framework on page e36/20.

**Weaknesses:**

While the applicant states that "implementation fidelity and mediators will be measured annually" in treatment and control schools, information is lacking on what is considered the threshold for acceptable implementation. Further, output 2.3 on page e37/21 states annual observations "meet thresholds for fidelity and quality of instruction" but does not specifically state what those thresholds might be. It would have been helpful if the plan included information from previous studies indicating an anticipated or actual threshold for acceptable implementation.

**Reader's Score: 4**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant and the evaluation team have a history of collaboration on implementation of this intervention which demonstrates a solid infrastructure for periodic assessment of progress. The applicant plans to meet with the evaluation team "twice per month in years 1-4" (p.e28/12) which is a sound approach to maintaining periodic communication on progress. The applicant's project management team plans to meet "weekly during the launch, then bimonthly for the rest of the project period" to provide support and "debrief areas of strength and required improvements" which is an adequate approach for providing formative feedback. Further, the applicant states on page e28 that semi-monthly meetings between MDRC and SERP will provide a continuous feedback loop between the evaluation team and the implementation team.

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score: 5**

## Priority Questions

### Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. **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:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

**Reader's Score: 0**

### Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. **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:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

**Reader's Score:** 0

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 08/02/2022 10:00 AM