

**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: Vanderbilt University (S411A220005)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	14
Sub Total	15	14
Strategy to Scale		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	35	26
Sub Total	35	26
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	15	15
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	35	0
Sub Total	100	55
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Equity	3	0
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. COVID-19	3	1
Sub Total	6	1
Total	106	56

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Vanderbilt University (S411A220005)

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 includes a thorough and relevant narrative supporting the assertion that social-emotional competence is low in our nation's young children based on evidence presented from numerous published studies. In addition, the narrative presents research-based evidence that teachers struggle to provide adequate supports to promote positive social-emotional development and of the negative impacts of exclusionary discipline practices on young children.

Weaknesses:

The application would be strengthened with inclusion of national data and data for the target population in target schools in addition to published studies to support 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 innovation of the addition of specific professional development will support implementation through teacher training, practice-based coaching, and coach training onto the evidence-based practices of the Pyramid Model (PM) in the promotion and prevention tiers which have demonstrated positive impacts on student social-emotional competence, challenging and disruptive behavior, and student-teacher relationships through measured significant effect sizes.

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:

The focus on the classwide intervention across both PreK and K classrooms has strong potential to assess effectiveness in promotion of social-emotional development and prevention of delays that interfere with learning. The proposed project is innovative in its examination of the tiered social-emotional intervention model and potential to reduce the need for exclusionary discipline practices that impede development and learning in young students.

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: 26

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 and distinctly identifies three barriers that previously prevented reaching the level of scale and provides accompanying well-developed solutions. The first barrier of insufficient training in promoting social-emotional competence and addressing challenging behaviors will be adequately addressed through the preparation of district personnel to provide training and ongoing coaching as well as providing the training and coaching to the teachers within districts. The second identified barrier is that competing priorities within districts result in lack of ownership. This barrier will be strongly addressed through alignment of the PM model with other initiatives and intentional use of data. The third barrier of sustainability of teacher supports for implementation will be addressed through intentional alignment of professional development supports and the building of networks of supports throughout communities, districts, and states.

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 management plan activities presented in Appendix J are relevant to the proposed goals and objectives that could be achieved within the proposed budget. Potentially achievable timelines are included for each project activity listed.

Weaknesses:

The narrative clearly states (p. 16) that the management plan has not been fully developed. As such, the extent to which it would adequately achieve the objectives cannot be fully determined. The management plan also lacks specificity of responsible personnel for activities that are relevant to the project objectives such that essentially all itemized activities are assigned to unidentified project staff. Also, it lacks appropriate milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

Reader's Score: 2

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:

Project personnel are highly qualified to fulfill the tasks needed to complete the objectives during the grant period. The applicant has provided strong letters of support outlining the expressed interest of potential partnering school districts across four states and an additional university partner increasing the probability of bringing the project to scale on the proposed 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:

The time allocated for the project personnel is less than adequate to achieve the objectives for a project based on this scope and scale which would require at least one full-time project administrator or manager. Neither the principal investigator, project coordinator, or research coordinator are full-time on the project. The only full-time staff is the coaching coordinator. In addition, the proposed teacher incentive honorarium of \$100 per teacher for completion of surveys and interviews may be inadequate to ensure full teacher buy-in and participation, especially since the teachers will also be required to attend project training and receive 16 individual coaching sessions with a support coach.

Reader's Score: 4

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 focus broad dissemination efforts in the areas of scholarly publications, implementation fidelity tools, coaching frameworks, and practitioner-oriented books to a wide audience that will be strong in supporting further replication. In addition, the applicant commits to disseminate at no cost all materials and processes developed through this project.

Sub

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 four core components of coach training, teacher training, practice-based coaching, and sustainability. These are directly relevant activities and outputs of the model to provide the training and implement the supports tied specifically to the proximal, short-, and long-term outcomes of the project.

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:

Each of the fourteen objectives identified for the four project goals tied to stated objectives (Appendix J) are clearly specified and measurable. In addition, several include target percentages for successful completion, e.g., fidelity of teacher implementation will be met and sustained after coaching in 90% of classrooms. The goals, objectives, and expected outcomes that are outlined in the narrative Appendix J are further detailed within other parts of the narrative (section C.2., p. 21-24).

Weaknesses:

None 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.

The applicant includes, within the budget, funds to pay for coaches during the first two years. The applicant includes a sustainability plan with a determination of how coaches will be paid beyond the grant cycle which will be beneficial to addressing the barriers of cost that would prevent scaling and replication. More directly, the PM program addresses the identified need for support for PreK and K students in developing social-emotional competencies within the context of established barriers for sustained implementation.

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

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:

Not addressed.

Weaknesses:
Not addressed.

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:

The proposed project includes areas of identified low social-emotional competence as foundational to the project implementation and measured outcomes.

Weaknesses:

The problems of low social-emotional competence 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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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Vanderbilt University (S411A220005)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	14
Sub Total	15	14
Strategy to Scale		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	35	27
Sub Total	35	27
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	15	14
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	35	0
Sub Total	100	55
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Equity	3	0
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. COVID-19	3	1
Sub Total	6	1
Total	106	56

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Vanderbilt University (S411A220005)

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 e24-e29). The project is contextualized in the current research on the importance of social-emotional competence. The applicant has provided a convincing survey of the research that shows the importance of early childhood in development of social-emotional competence (pages e26-e27). The applicant has also summarized the national importance of the project in providing effective interventions for supporting young students' social-emotional development, the continuity of the pyramid model, and targeted practices.

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 provided strong evidence of how the project will build upon a promising strategy of the Pyramid Model (PM) (pages e29-e32). The applicant has provided a survey of the importance of the tiered level support to foster nurturing and responsive relationships with students, team members and families (pages e29-e30). The applicant has specified how the project will build upon strategies of professional development, teacher training, practice-based coaching, and training of the coaches. Overall, the applicant has provided a rationale for the expansion of the pyramid model.

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 good information of the potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge (pages e32-e33). For example, the project will potentially contribute to the knowledge base by demonstrating the effectiveness of a class-wide intervention, an increased understanding of transition of young children into formal schooling, the efficacy of the project in a tiered level, and the viability of the coaching model.

Weaknesses:

The applicant discussion of the potential contribution of the proposed project has some limitations (pages e32-e33). For example, the project seeks to examine the potential contribution to increase knowledge about strategies that are already found to be effective. For example, the efficacy of the coaching model has already been established. Moreover, the applicant has not related how the project model will address the issue of exclusionary discipline practices, as it is not explained as an element of the pyramid model

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: 27

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 e33-e38). The applicant has described barriers to the strategies such as insufficient training, competing priorities, and sustainability of teacher supports for implementation, and how the project will address the barriers. For example, in response to the barrier of competing priorities for the school districts/teachers, the project will help the school districts/teachers to adopt the pyramid model by aligning the model with ongoing initiatives, provide a tiered level of support, and work with the districts' strategic goals. The strength of the project is that it will align existing staff development and other school initiatives within the project strategies to ensure administrative buy-in.

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 provided a brief management plan (pages e38-e39). The strength of the management plan is that the project will employ a management-by-objectives approach, and there will be a team of highly qualified personnel (pages e70-e109) with clear roles and responsibilities. Figure 1 on page e153 provides a viable management structure. The project management includes the active work of an implementation team.

Weaknesses:

The applicant management plan is not comprehensive. For example, the applicant has indicated but not discussed adequate details of the management plan in the appendix (e148-e153) The applicant has not adequately developed details of the management plan such as the milestones for accomplishing project tasks. For example, in the management plan table, the applicant has not provided explanation of the sequence of 1-8 that is specified in the annual timeline. The insufficient details of the time factors and limited description of the milestones makes it unclear if the project management plan is adequate to achieve project objectives on time and within budget.

Reader's Score: 2

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 a brief discussion of the applicant's capacity to implement the project (pages e39-e40). The applicant has identified qualified personnel (pages e80-e109). The applicant has stated that they already have resources such as training materials (in print and web-based format) in both English and Spanish. The applicant will use strategies such as the PM fidelity tool, TPOT, and the PBC to support teachers' implementation of the PM. Moreover, the PM developers also have two entities that will help the applicant with mechanisms for scaling, sustaining and dissemination.

Weaknesses:

The project does not have a fulltime administrator or principal investigators have adequate time commitment to the project (pages e39-e40). The lack of adequate time commitment from the administrators may affect the quality and availability of project leadership. Moreover, the applicant also put several expectations on the teachers to implement the project. These expectations are not realistic based on the amount of time and effort the teachers have to put towards the project, especially with the limited remuneration/stipends that has been budgeted.

Reader's Score: 5

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 an effective dissemination plan (pages e40-e42). The strength of the dissemination plan is the use of scholarly publications, implementation of the fidelity tools, and documents associated with the coaching framework. The applicant is aware of the diversity of the audience (school staff, teachers, administrators, coaches, mental health consultants and researchers). The hallmark of the dissemination strategy is that they will through a federally funded technical assistance center and at no cost to interested parties. The applicant has also listed the different audiences and specific methods for dissemination. For example, school administrators and practitioners will be provided project information through the federally funded assistance center social media, website and manuscripts (page e41).

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

Strengths:

There is a comprehensive conceptual framework for the project (pages e42-e43, e138). The logic model incorporates the key project elements of core components, project activities/outputs, proximal outcomes and short- and long-term outcomes (page e138). The strength of the project logic model is that it is contextualized in the hypothesized moderators. The project model has been found to have strong research support. The project conceptual framework is also supported theoretically by the connection between behavior support interventions and academic outcomes. The logic model and the project conceptual framework incorporates the critical element of project sustainability and partnership support.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

- (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 e43-e46, e171-e175). The project goals are comprehensive as they seek to develop the infrastructure and capacity required for the project (goal # 1), through planning and delivering implementation support for PM model (goal # 2) and finally the evaluation of the PM implementation (goal # 3). The applicant has also developed clear project objectives and outcome measures (pages e171-e175). For example, objective # 4 discussed the project element of refining sustainability materials and tools for target schools and districts. This is achieved by the active involvement of the eight school districts in reviewing and refining materials suitable for the specific district.

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 rural schools that will be the target population (pages e46-e47). The applicant has provided a general description for the need for supporting PreK and K students in developing social-emotional competencies. The needs identified by the applicant include evidence-based professional development, especially for public schools. The project will address the general need of sustainability of teachers' practices. This is achieved by a collaborative plan between the district and the project leaders.

Weaknesses:

The applicant has not substantiated the needs of the target schools with data (pages e46-e47). For example, the applicant has not supported the need for supporting PreK and K students in developing social-emotional competencies of the schools targeted by the project. The applicant has also not described the nature and extent of the need for evidence-based 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:

Not addressed.

Weaknesses:
Not addressed.

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:

The project partly addresses the competitive preference priority (page e18) because the applicant has identified their high-need students as those impacted by COVID-19 (page e18).

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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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Vanderbilt University (S411A220005)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	14
Sub Total	15	14
Strategy to Scale		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	35	26
Sub Total	35	26
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	15	15
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	35	0
Sub Total	100	55
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Equity	3	0
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. COVID-19	3	1
Sub Total	6	1
Total	106	56

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Vanderbilt University (S411A220005)

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 application clearly addresses a high burden to increase social -emotional competence and academic success and includes data throughout the narrative that substantiate the need for their project. A high accelerating learning burden and documented data (30 % children demonstrate challenging behavior that interfere with learning). A national survey showed 27% of families reported increases in child behavior. Other issues of concern include challenging and disruptive behavior, and improving teacher-student relationships which are associated with improved academic achievement and success and success. Disparities such as impact of COVID-19, social -emotional delays and challenging behavior in young children is a growing concern. The impact of COVID-19 is estimated to be more detrimental to high needs students. Data indicates unmet needs continue to cycle through negative interaction with teachers and peers. Literature substantiates a rationale for intervention strategies, and ensures that the needs of the target population are met. (p. e 19-26).

Weaknesses:

The proposed project needs more descriptive information on the Pre=K school 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 19-26)

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 proposed project clearly incorporates the development of 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 high-need students from succeeding. The project addresses the problem and demonstrates how the program appeals to high needs students and accelerates student achievement. The proposed project will modify strategies for the target population; and expands access in the Pyramid Model. This program is also addressing Pre-K and K to ensure a more successful transition for young children into formal schooling. Additionally, the proposed Pyramid Model demonstrates the effectiveness of a classroom wide intervention and prevent social, emotional, and behavioral delays that interfere with children's learning and development. 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 19-23)

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:

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 services in a manner that offers access to individuals with disabilities through accessible documents, captioning, and other accommodations. 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. e28-34)

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: 26

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 reduce challenging and disruptive behavior, and ineffective teacher-student relationships which are associated with improved academic achievement and success. The project employs sufficient resource of the Pyramid Model as an implementation plan of stakeholders' support, feedback, assessments, past success, and a strong theory (logic model) that links the program inputs (teacher skills) to the outcome. 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. e15-19,138).

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 provided objectives, defined responsibilities, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks by incorporating a timeline (Jan-Feb) to allow task monitoring. The applicant provided a roadmap for project implementation by positioning key benchmarks with objectives (Identify District Coordinator Jan-Feb) that illustrate concrete attainment to be achieved. Outputs, and outcomes (Trained classroom coaches) are outlined in the logic model and highlight specific deliverables from all key partners and stakeholders involved in the project. Project milestones will drive continuous improvement by addressing data checkpoints where information collected is analyzed and used to identify areas where pivots in strategy of implementation may be warranted. Defined roles for key personnel and timeline (March-April) will allow task monitoring. The key personnel assigned to the proposed project stem from multiple departments within the organization. (p.149).

Weaknesses:

On p. 16, the applicant states that the management plan has not been fully developed. The applicant management plan is not comprehensive (pages e38-e39). The proposed plan does not reflect clear timelines and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

Reader's Score: 2

- 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 discusses how the project utilizes, financial resources, management capacity, or staff to ensure that objectives are attained. A connection is made between activities, partners, resources, and staff in the achievement of each objective. Principal Investigator oversees budgetary monitoring and oversees all project activities at the Vanderbilt site and ensures the coordination of all activities across sites. The project will provide collaborative efforts among Vanderbilt University, the University of South Florida (Fox) and 8 partner school districts. Effort of qualified personnel, such as the Project Coordinator, Coaching Coordinator, Research Coordinator, staff are responsible for tasks and activities to appropriately oversee the project. The applicant has described the role of the Principal Investigator and how the program integrates into the organizational structure of the project. Dissemination of the proposed innovations, up-to-date technology, and research-based methods are addressed within the narrative. (p. e 115).

Weaknesses:

The time allocated for the project personnel is less than adequate to achieve the objectives. Neither the principal investigator, project coordinator, or research coordinator are full-time on the project. Lack of full-time personnel prevents the organization from effectively or efficiently practicing its policies at all angles. The applicant's capacity for scaling on a national or regional level has not been initiated. (pages e39-e40).

Reader's Score: 4

- 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 clearly uses a plan to broadly disseminate information on its project to support further development. The plan contributes to accessible documents, captioning, and other accommodations for disabilities. The disseminating of the Pyramid Model is within one's school, district, state and, exemplar classrooms. Proposed project provides community awareness of the project and provides nonparticipants with information by sharing information during meetings and traveling events to ensure broad dissemination and project effectiveness to accelerate achievement of successful evidence-based practices in new schools, districts, and states. (p. e159).

Sub

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 adjusts 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 studies. (p. e138, 181)

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:

Goals (Develop infrastructure and capacity to remove barriers and support scaling of the Pyramid Model in PreK and K classrooms), objectives, and outcomes are specific and measurable. The overall rate of change anticipated across the project period and aligned objectives are determined by rates of increase from performance indicators. Project objectives are outlined and include corresponding program purpose and clear outcomes (Coaches hired in all Districts). 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 (100%) timelines, and population to achieve measurable goals, objectives, and outcomes of the project. (p. e 19, 149).

Weaknesses:

None 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 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; a Pyramid Model, coaching and fidelity and program monitoring 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.e140,155).

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

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:

Not addressed.

Weaknesses:
Not addressed.

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:

The applicant noted that they would address the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty. The Individualized Classroom Assessment Scoring System will be used to measure students' interactions in classrooms with teachers, peers, and tasks. The applicant will implement the Pyramid Model as an evidence-based strategy for engaging students; and provide evidence-based professional training (p.e8, 13,18)

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide strategies or methods that are required 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. 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 specific to learning about the effects of COVID.

Reader's Score: 1

Status: Submitted

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

Status: Submitted

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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Vanderbilt University (S411A220005)

Reader #4: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	0
Sub Total	15	0
Strategy to Scale		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	35	0
Sub Total	35	0
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	15	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	35	30
Sub Total	100	30
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Equity	3	0
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. COVID-19	3	0
Sub Total	6	0
Total	106	30

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: Vanderbilt University (S411A220005)

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: 30

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 includes a cluster randomized control trial for each of the schools participating in the project (page e 47). The trials will be focused on students pre-K through grade 8. The applicant further indicates that it has a target sample of ten students per classroom across 200 pre-K-K classrooms resulting in a projected sample of 1000 treatment students and 1000 control group students. Both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected to assess coach training, teacher training, and coaching support activities during the implementation process. Included also will be fidelity checklists, surveys, and interviews. Other methods employed in the evaluation will be teacher reported measures of student outcomes, direct assessment of student skills, direct observations of teacher child interactions, and demographic information concerning cost, discipline, and other characteristics of the schools, classrooms, and students. The evaluation plan will be conducted by SRI International in conjunction with eight partner school districts. The applicant further indicates that it will track attrition rates to minimize the process where possible. The applicant indicates that its use of a randomized trial design that is rigorous will meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations (page e19). The applicant further indicates that regardless of attrition rates it will examine the equivalence of the intervention in control classrooms to assess the extent to which randomization resulted in significant equivalent groups.

Weaknesses:

The applicant addresses the issue of attrition in a very general manner. It is unclear how it will manage attrition to ensure that a sufficient sample is available for its overall study. Specifically, the applicant states that it expects "no attrition at the school level" and "small" levels of teacher attrition without providing assurance of sufficient sample size (page e54). In addition, the applicant does not describe in detail how it will recruit and randomly select teachers and ensure against any bias in the selection process.

Reader's Score: 15

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 will collect data and information on the overall implementation of the project as illustrated by the project design and logic model. The focus will be on the core aspects of training district coaches, preparing teachers, and providing support focusing on improving instructional skills related to social and emotional learning (pages e49-e50). The documentation of the implementation will provide critical information enabling others to replicate the proposed activities within school districts and across districts in different states. The implementation process will be monitored closely by the project staff and will employ a number of statistical processes that will collect reliable information helpful to other districts (page e51). Included in the process will be measures to collect cost data as well as the results of cost effective analysis.

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 evaluation plan focuses on project components, mediators, and performance outcomes that are directly related to effective implementation. The plan will consider teacher implementation measures, student outcomes, social skills and challenging behaviors, teacher child interactions, academic skills, and executive function skills. For each of these areas, the applicant appropriately describes key research studies as well as the assessment strategies that will be used to support the outcomes. The overall design is supported by the logic model (page e138). The logic model illustrates how the core components will interact with each other to achieve the expected outputs. The model further illustrates how the various activities will result in the proximal outcomes as well as the short term and long term outcomes. The information provided by the applicant is detailed and appropriate and will ensure that measurable thresholds are identified.

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 effectively describes how it will employ a management by objectives approach to continuously review objectives, activities, and outcomes (page e57). In addition to project staff, the applicant will employ sustainability teams at the district level to provide interim data that will be used to guide the progress of the project. In addition, the applicant will take advantage of the research personnel participating in the project to provide assessments. The applicant will also collect ongoing fidelity data on the project participants that will result in regular feedback (page e57). These activities are in addition to the external evaluator who will provide ongoing information to assist the staff in making periodic assessments of progress.

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

Status: Submitted

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

Status: Submitted

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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Vanderbilt University (S411A220005)

Reader #5: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	0
Sub Total	15	0
Strategy to Scale		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	35	0
Sub Total	35	0
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	15	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	35	27
Sub Total	100	27
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Equity	3	0
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. COVID-19	3	0
Sub Total	6	0
Total	106	27

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: Vanderbilt University (S411A220005)

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: 27

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)).

The evaluation plan includes a blocked cluster-RCT randomly assigning half of the PreK and K teachers within each school to treatment and control conditions, which is a design likely to meet WWC standards without reservations. (p.e48/26) In addition, the applicant presents an adequate plan for monitoring and minimizing teacher-level attrition which is an important consideration when designing a study to meet WWC standards without reservations. The tools proposed to collect data on student outcomes also meet WWC standards for validity and reliability. (p.e52-53/30)

Weaknesses:

Since collaboration within grade-level teams is a common practice in most schools, random assignment at the teacher level, within each participating school, has the potential to result in contamination. In addition, some of the letters of support (i.e., Caldwell, Wake, Bellevue) indicate the Pyramid Model is already being implemented in some of their schools which could also result in contamination. No details are provided on how this was addressed in previous studies or how the evaluation team plans to account for this in their data collection or recruitment plan. In addition, Table 3 on p.e49/27 only indicates the number of classrooms expected in each district with no information on the expected number of schools that will need to be recruited in order to reach the targeted numbers of classrooms. Since the plan states "SRI will block by schools...and grade level and randomly assign teachers" (p.e48/26) it would have been helpful, in determining the likelihood of being 'well implemented', to provide information on the number of schools. Given that the letters of support in Appendix C (p.e114-e128) indicate districts have many more Kindergarten and PreK classrooms than what are needed to hit recruitment targets, more information is needed on how a subset of schools will be selected for the blocked random assignment process. The evaluation plan does not address how the applicant will limit the risk of bias due to joiners or measure the representativeness of clusters, as required by WWC evidence review protocols.

Reader's Score: 12

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 describes a comprehensive plan for documenting effective strategies in support of replication. For example, the applicant's plan to audiotape interactions between coaches and teachers is a sound approach to documenting effective strategies. Through prior projects, the applicant has developed extensive resources, presentation materials and guides for implementation (p.e151-e152) that are available at no cost, to support replication. In addition, a "coaching framework and practitioner-oriented books" have been developed to provide guidance about effective strategies. (p.e41/19)

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 plan to include "within- and cross-level intervention-by-covariate interaction terms to the HLM" demonstrates an excellent approach to analyzing the relationship between various student, teacher and school variables and outcomes. The logic model on page e138 does a thorough job of describing the key project components and expected outcomes. The applicant also indicates a threshold of 90% of classrooms implementing with fidelity to be considered acceptable implementation as measured by the TPOT. (p.e150)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

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 plan provides adequate details of a support and feedback cycle between the project staff and the district coaches, which will include "biweekly meetings" focused on "discussing barriers and challenges and offering suggestions", which will be helpful in maintaining progress toward intended outcomes.(p.e45/23) Similarly, the coaches, in turn, provide performance feedback to teachers as part of the intervention and the evaluation team will audiotape these meetings which demonstrates a solid approach to assessing fidelity and progress. (p.e46/24) The evaluation team also plans to "provide feedback when practices fall below acceptable fidelity levels". The use of annual reports along with appointing a "research lead" to communicate regularly with districts' sustainability teams is also a sound approach to providing performance feedback on an interim basis to shape implementation in subsequent cohorts. (p.e57/35)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

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

Status: Submitted

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